

## POLICY STATEMENT

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Pages:	
Distributed to:	BOM, staff, trainers, volunteers, parents/legal guardians, students and the wider community.
Document No:	37
Initialed by:	Gloria Conte – President, Board

### **POLICY No.37 – Child Safe Policy Statement**

#### **Background:**

The State Government reinforced laws following the release of the “Betrayal of Trust Report” to better protect children from sexual abuse and exposure to offenders.

The three new criminal offences are:

- **a grooming offence** - predatory conduct undertaken to prepare a child with the intent of committing child sexual abuse.
- **a failure to disclose offence** – failure to report child abuse to the police.
- **a failure to protect offence** – failure by those in authority to remove or reduce a substantial risk that a child may be abused.

The seven Child Safe Standards are recommendations from the “Betrayal of Trust” Report to prevent child abuse in our community. The standards are compulsory for all organisations that provide services to children and young people 18 years and under.

#### **Definitions:**

For the purposes of this policy, child refers to anyone under 18 years of age and staff refers to all paid staff including trainers and volunteers.

#### **Our Commitment:**

- Pines Learning is committed to child safety.
- We support and respect all children, as well as our staff and volunteers.
- We are committed to the safety, participation and empowerment of all children.
- We have zero tolerance of child abuse and all allegations and safety concerns will be treated very seriously and consistently with our robust policies and procedures.
- We have legal and moral obligations to contact authorities when we are concerned about a child’s safety, which we will follow rigorously.
- Pines Learning is committed to preventing child abuse and identifying risks early and removing and reducing these risks.
- Pines Learning has robust human resources and recruitment practices for all staff and volunteers.
- Pines Learning is committed to regularly training and educating our staff and volunteers on child abuse risks.
- We support and respect all children, as well as our staff and volunteers. We are committed to the cultural safety of Aboriginal children, the cultural safety of children from a culturally linguistically diverse backgrounds and to providing a safe environment for children with a disability.

- We have a range of policies and procedures in place to support our Board, management, staff and volunteers to achieve these commitments.

### **Purpose:**

1. To clearly communicate Pines Learning's commitment to child safety.
2. To ensure the development of policies and procedures create and maintain a child safe environment.
3. To ensure children are protected.
4. To support, encourage and enable staff, parents, and children to understand, identify, discuss and report child safety matters.
5. To include support systems for children who disclose or are otherwise linked to suspected child abuse.

### **Applicability:**

This Policy applies to all staff, volunteers and Board members.

### **Related Policies:**

<G:\POLICIES\Organisational Policies\CURRENT\Policy 13- Student Welfare Policy and Procedure v2.docx>  
<G:\POLICIES\Organisational Policies\CURRENT\Policy 15 - Supervision of VCAL Students Policy and Procedure.docx>  
<G:\POLICIES\Childcare Policies\Policies for Approved Service 2015\Policy 11 Child Safe Environment.docx>  
<G:\POLICIES\Childcare Policies\Policies for Approved Service 2015\Policy 21 Supervision of Children.docx>  
<G:\POLICIES\Childcare Policies\Policies for Approved Service 2015\Policy 18 Code of Conduct.docx>  
<G:\PROCEDURES\Staff recruitment procedure.docx>  
<G:\PROCEDURES\Trainer recruitment procedure v4.docx>  
<G:\PROCEDURES\Code of Conduct Staff.docx>  
<G:\PROCEDURES\Code of Conduct Trainers.docx>  
<G:\PROCEDURES\Reporting of suspected or disclosed child abuse.docx>  
<PRIVACY POLICY.doc>

<b>Policy:</b>		<b>Responsible party</b>
<b>1.</b>	<b>Welfare</b>	<b>CM/BOM</b>
i	The welfare of children is of paramount importance to Pines Learning. The predominant cohorts of children at Pines Learning attend childcare or the VCAL program. The organisation also allows other young learners to attend classes at Pines Learning. As such we have specific policies and procedures for each cohort.	
ii	The safety and wellbeing of children is our primary concern. We are also fair and just to personnel. The decisions we make when recruiting, assessing incidents and undertaking disciplinary action will always be thorough, transparent and evidence based.	
iii	We report and record all allegations of abuse and safety concerns using our "reporting of suspected or disclosed child abuse" procedure. All records are stored securely.	
iv	The privacy of individuals will be respected under the Pines Learning privacy policy, unless there is a risk to someone's safety.	
<b>2.</b>	<b>Recruitment</b>	<b>Manager / Coord</b>

i	Pines Learning takes all reasonable steps to employ skilled people to work with children. We develop selection criteria which clearly demonstrate our commitment to child safety and an awareness of our social and legislative responsibilities. Our organisation understands that when recruiting staff and volunteers to work with children, we have ethical as well as legislative obligations.	
ii	The following is the link to the recruitment procedure and embedded checklist for paid and unpaid staff and trainers: <a href="G:\PROCEDURES\Staff recruitment procedure.docx">G:\PROCEDURES\Staff recruitment procedure.docx</a> <a href="G:\PROCEDURES\Trainer recruitment procedure v4.docx">G:\PROCEDURES\Trainer recruitment procedure v4.docx</a>	
iii	All Board members, staff, trainers and volunteers engaged by Pines Learning will be required to hold a current Working with Children Check. and to provide evidence of this.	
iv	In addition, Pines Learning will carry out reference checks and National Police Checks on all Board members, staff and volunteers. Police checks are used only for the purposes of recruitment.	
v	For staff, Board members or volunteers who have been citizens or residents of countries other than Australia will need to will need to complete the following Statutory Declaration declaring they have not been convicted or imprisoned for any form of abuse. <a href="G:\STAFF\STAT DEC of no conviction or imprisonment.pdf">G:\STAFF\STAT DEC of no conviction or imprisonment.pdf</a> or <a href="G:\BOARD OF MANAGEMENT\FORMS\STAT DEC of no conviction or imprisonment.pdf">G:\BOARD OF MANAGEMENT\FORMS\STAT DEC of no conviction or imprisonment.pdf</a>	
vi	It will be the responsibility of staff and Board members to disclose any criminal offences during their time of service at Pines Learning.	
vii	If during the recruitment process a person's records indicate a criminal history then the person will be given the opportunity to provide further information and context.	
<b>3</b>	<b>People who access the Centre</b>	<b>All Staff</b>
i	Learners who enrol in a course at Pines Learning are bound by the organisation's policies, procedures and code of conduct ( <a href="G:\PROCEDURES\Code of Conduct Learners.docx">G:\PROCEDURES\Code of Conduct Learners.docx</a> ) on signing their enrolment form.	
ii	Visitors to the Centre will need to sign the Visitor's Book acknowledging Pines Learning's commitment to child safety and their assistance in implementing this commitment.	
iii	Visitors will also be accompanied by a staff member at all times while at the Centre.	
iv	Contractors undertaking building maintenance will be requested to show their WWC on arrival. If they don't have a WWC they will be supervised by a staff member while in the building.	
v	U3A participants are not to access the Pines Learning section of the building unless they are scheduled to undertake a class in room 8.	
vi	U3A members and members of the public are not to use the toilet facilities in the Pines Learning area. Any exceptions to this will be approved by the Centre Manager.	
<b>4.</b>	<b>Human resources</b>	<b>Manager / Coord</b>
i	This policy guides our staff and volunteers on how to behave with children in our organisation. All our staff and volunteers must abide by our code of conduct which specifies the standards of conduct required when working with children.	

ii	Our organisational culture aims for all staff, volunteers, parents, carers and children to feel confident and comfortable in discussing any allegations of child abuse or child safety concerns.	
iii	We also support our staff and volunteers through ongoing training and supervision to: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• develop their skills to protect children from abuse</li> <li>• promote the cultural safety of Aboriginal children</li> <li>• the cultural safety of children from linguistically and/or diverse backgrounds</li> <li>• safety of children with a disability.</li> </ul>	
iv	New employees and volunteers will be supervised regularly to ensure they understand our organisation's commitment to child safety and that everyone has a role to play in protecting children from abuse, as well as checking that their behaviour towards children is safe and appropriate (see Pines Learning Code of Conduct: <a href="G:\PROCEDURES\Code of Conduct Staff.docx">G:\PROCEDURES\Code of Conduct Staff.docx</a> and <a href="G:\PROCEDURES\Code of Conduct Trainers.docx">G:\PROCEDURES\Code of Conduct Trainers.docx</a> ).	
<b>5.</b>	<b>Reporting</b>	<b>All Staff</b>
i	Pines Learning has a comprehensive procedure for reporting suspected or disclosed child abuse or any inappropriate behavior of staff and volunteers. <a href="G:\PROCEDURES\Reporting of suspected or disclosed child abuse.docx">G:\PROCEDURES\Reporting of suspected or disclosed child abuse.docx</a>	
<b>6.</b>	<b>Child empowerment and participation</b>	<b>All Staff</b>
i	It is the intent of this policy to empower children who are vital and active participants in our organisation. We involve them when making decisions, especially about matters that directly affect them. We listen to their views and respect what they have to say.	
ii	We promote diversity and tolerance in our organisation, and people from all walks of life and cultural backgrounds are welcome. In particular we: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Promote the cultural safety, participation and empowerment of Aboriginal children</li> <li>• Promote the cultural safety, participation and empowerment of children from culturally and/or linguistically diverse backgrounds</li> <li>• Ensure that children with a disability are safe and can participate equally.</li> </ul>	