

Deadly Descendants Child Safe Reporting Policy

Purpose

At Deadly Descendants, we prioritise the safety and welfare of children and young people involved in our programs. This policy outlines our commitment to fostering, maintaining, and continually improving our child-safe reporting practices, ensuring that:

- There's clear guidance on what to report, to whom, and how.
- Immediate reporting of any safety or welfare concerns is practised.
- A culture of honesty, fairness, and support in dealing with concerns and allegations is maintained.
- The safety and wellbeing of children and young people are always paramount.

Reporting Obligations and Processes

Reporting Criminal Conduct

- **Contact NSW Police on 131 444** for any situation considered to be a criminal offence, including sexual assault, physical assault, grooming offences, and the production, dissemination, or possession of child abuse material.
- **Note:** Adults are legally obligated to report to the police if they know or believe a child abuse offence has been committed. People in child-related work must act to reduce or remove the risk of a child becoming a victim of child abuse.

Reporting Risk of Significant Harm

- Anyone with reasonable grounds to believe a child is at risk of significant harm should report to the Department of Communities and Justice (DCJ) on **132 111** (24-hour service).
- Mandatory reporters must use the ChildStory Reporter Community for suspicions of significant harm.
- All staff and volunteers are required to inform the Deadly Descendants Child Safeguarding Officer if they have made a mandatory report via email csso@deadlydescendants.com.au

Reporting Allegations and Convictions

- A member of Deadly Descendants leadership team will inform the Office of the Children’s Guardian about reportable allegations or convictions, including sexual offences, misconduct, ill-treatment, neglect, assault against a child, failure to protect a child, or any behaviour causing significant psychological harm.

Reporting Breaches of Our Child Safe Code of Conduct

- All complaints must be directed to our designated Child Safeguarding Officer, Tracee Wilcock csso@deadlydescendants.com.au or Anastasia Elliott, Founding Director anastasia@deadlydescendants.com.au

Risk Management Strategies

- Ensure the child's immediate and ongoing safety by:
 - Assessing and removing any risk to the child.
 - Providing reassurance and remaining calm.
 - Listening carefully without asking leading or probing questions.
 - Supporting the child and affirming their decision to report.
 - Clearly explaining the next steps without making unkeepable promises.
 - Avoiding confrontation with the alleged perpetrator.
 - Conducting a risk assessment to protect all involved and ensure investigative integrity.

Procedural Fairness, Privacy, and Confidentiality

At Deadly Descendants, we are committed to handling all allegations of abuse with utmost fairness, transparency, and efficiency. Our procedures ensure that:

- **Fair Treatment:** Every allegation is approached impartially and thoughtfully, respecting the rights of all involved.
- **Notification:** Workers subject to an allegation will be informed about the timing and process of any disciplinary hearings.
- **Privacy Compliance:** We adhere to the Privacy Act 1988 (Commonwealth) and conduct relevant investigations in coordination with the OCG’s Reportable Conduct Directorate.

- **Record Keeping:** Information related to complaints and allegations is meticulously documented and stored securely. Access is strictly limited to individuals with oversight responsibilities.
- **Information Sharing:** Under Chapter 16A of the Child and Young Persons (Care and Protection) Act 1998, information may be shared with agencies involved in child welfare and safety, ensuring compliance with privacy laws.
- **Privacy Maintenance:** The privacy of all parties is protected in line with the Privacy and Personal Information Protection Act 1998.
- **Outcome Determination:** Should an incident be substantiated, HR or relevant authorities (such as the police, DCJ, or OCG) will advise on appropriate responses or outcomes.

Complaint Process

To ensure efficient and effective handling of complaints, Deadly Descendants follows a step-by-step process:

Immediate Action: Upon receiving a complaint, immediate steps are taken to safeguard the child from harm.

Documentation: The incident is thoroughly documented, creating a clear record of the complaint.

Reporting Compliance: We ensure all legal and organisational reporting requirements are met.

Investigation: A comprehensive investigation is initiated, with a commitment to keep all parties informed throughout the process.

Support: Continuous support is offered to the child, addressing their emotional and physical well-being.

Review and Update: Following the investigation, we review the incident and our response to it. This may lead to updates in our child safe policies and procedures to prevent future occurrences.

Legislation

This policy adheres to relevant NSW and Australian legislation, including but not limited to:

- **Crimes Act 1900:** Governs criminal offences, including those against children.
- **Child and Young Persons (Care and Protection) Act 1998:** Focuses on the welfare and protection of children.

- **Children’s Guardian Act 2019:** Establishes the Office of the Children's Guardian and its roles, including oversight of child-safe organisations.
- **Privacy Act 1988 (Commonwealth):** Regulates the handling of personal information.
- **Privacy and Personal Information Protection Act 1998:** Covers the privacy of individuals' personal information in NSW.

Publicising Our Policy

To ensure our community is informed of this policy and their reporting obligations, we:

- Conduct informational sessions with staff, stakeholders and community members.
- Distribute relevant materials including brochures and materials
- Offer training on reporting processes.
- Develop child-friendly programs for expressing safety concerns.

Policy Status and Review Date

This policy has been approved by Deadly Descendants Founding Director Anastasia Elliott and Child Safeguarding Officer Tracee Wilcock on 26/3/2024 and will be reviewed on 26/9/2024 or following a critical incident. This Policy will be reviewed annually, incorporating feedback to ensure it remains effective and aligned with legislative updates and best practices.