Child Safe Environments (Child Protection) Policy

1.0 Purpose
The purpose of this document is to demonstrate the strong commitment of the Mt Barker Waldorf School to providing and maintaining a physically, psychologically, emotionally and socially safe environment for children and young people.

2.0 Context
This policy reflects our commitment to providing a safe environment where every person has the right to be treated with respect and is safe and protected from harm and abuse.

It complies with our obligations under the Children’s Protection Act 1993, including:

- Section 8B-8D – Child Safe Environments and Criminal History Assessments for people working with children and
- Section 11 – Mandatory reporting (Reporting Abuse and Neglect)

It also complies with the following directives issued by the Chief Executive, DECD:

- Child Safe Environments: Principles of Good Practice (DECD 2012) and
- Child Safe Environments: Standards for dealing with information obtained about the criminal history of employees and volunteers who work with children (DECD 2012)

3.0 Scope
This policy applies to all staff, volunteers, parents/carers, children and other individuals involved with the school, whether on a regular or occasional basis.

It applies:

- On school premises
- At functions, excursions or camps organised by the school
- When members of the school community are representing the school
4.0 Summary overview

Mt Barker Waldorf School is committed to the care, safety and protection of all children and young people attending the school. We support the rights and wellbeing of our students, our staff and volunteers and encourage their active participation in building and maintaining a secure, positive and respectful environment for all.

All staff are trained in identifying and reporting on children at risk of harm. Clear procedures provide step by step guidance on actions to be taken when there are concerns about a child’s safety or welfare and on responding to suspected abuse or neglect.

Appropriate background checks occur prior to employment of staff and engaging others who may have contact with students – eg all volunteers including drivers and parents attending camps, music tutors, etc.

5.0 Student Participation

At Mt Barker Waldorf School, we actively encourage students to provide feedback on matters that are of importance to them. We teach children and young people what they can do if they feel unsafe. We listen to and act on any concerns children or their parents/carers raise with us.

Building strong and positive relationships between teachers and students, teachers and parents/carers and between members of staff is foundational to our work in a Waldorf school. In the Primary school, teachers generally spend a number of years with their class, building strong bonds that support and enable learning in all domains. Children generally feel very comfortable sharing any concerns with their class teacher. Apart from individual conversations, developmentally appropriate opportunities for groups and whole classes are provided, to encourage and enable the sharing of perceptions and concerns arising from school experiences.

In the upper primary and High School years, Class Guardians continue in the pastoral care role, and students may also form strong attachments to specialist teachers. Formal student input is sought on a regular basis, eg via the standard written feedback forms provided at the end of Main Lessons and camps. Students and parents/carers are regularly made aware of the relevant formal Grievance Procedures. There is a Student Representative Council which also on occasion acts as a conduit for student concerns, and a Student Welfare Worker who is available to support students who feel unable to speak to a teacher.
6.0 Recruitment Practices

Mt Barker Waldorf School takes all reasonable steps to ensure that it engages the most suitable and appropriate people to work with children and young people. We employ a range of screening measures and apply best practice standards in the screening and recruitment of employees and volunteers. We interview and conduct referee checks on all prospective employees. We ensure that criminal history information is dealt with in accordance with the standards developed by the Chief Executive of the Department for Education and Child Development.

Mt Barker Waldorf School seeks to attract and retain exemplary employees and volunteers. We provide support and supervision to ensure that all staff and volunteers feel valued, respected and fairly treated. Volunteers and assistants who work with children have ongoing supervision, support and training to promote the establishment and maintenance of a child safe environment.

Induction for all new staff and volunteers includes familiarisation with procedures for acting on concerns about children’s/ young people’s wellbeing.

All staff members read, sign and must abide by our Code of Professional Conduct. A Volunteers Code of Conduct must be signed by anyone wishing to volunteer in or for the school.

7.0 Minimising the Risk of Harm

Mt Barker Waldorf School has a pro-active approach to risk management which includes-

Physical safety

- The Business Manager conducts an annual OHSW inspection which results in an action plan for the coming year
- The school maintains Sun Safe and Asthma Friendly School accreditation
- Smoking is not permitted at any time on the school premises or school events, including camps and excursions
- A specific Risk Assessment must be completed prior to each camp and excursion and prior to any Work Experience placement.

Positive Relationships

- As ours is a single stream school with a comprehensive curriculum, students will learn alongside the same group of class-mates for up to 14 years. Working in mixed ability groups, learning to appreciate everyone’s unique contribution, students develop a capacity for teamwork, an ability to respect others’ opinions and to clearly communicate their own.
- Staff model inclusive and respectful use of language, and no-blame/ restorative approaches to resolving social problems.
- Teachers work conscientiously to build strong and collaborative relationships with parents/ guardians, to ensure that children experience being strongly held by all those involved in supporting their emotional, social and educational development
Building resilience

- Beginning in their preschool years, children are exposed to appropriate physical challenge in a secure and supportive environment, enabling them to develop a capacity for resilience.
- The comprehensive camps program ensures that students encounter physically and socially challenging situations through which they develop resourcefulness and confidence in themselves as individuals and their class as a learning community or team.

Pastoral Care

- Primary School class teachers and High School class guardians provide pastoral care for a particular class of students over a period of up to 7 years. Students trust and confide in the teachers, who support them individually and also through class activities.
- A Student Welfare Worker, Class Assistants and other Learning Support staff provide an additional layer of support for individuals and class groups.
- All staff and volunteers are made aware of and are expected to abide by the Guidelines for Protective Practices relating to professional boundaries and responding to behaviour (see Related Documents and/or hyperlink)

Recruitment

- Parents or others wishing to provide voluntary support for school activities, including transporting children to camps etc must complete a National Police Check through SAPOL or a Working with Children Check though DCSI
- Thorough background checks are conducted before appointment of any person to the school’s staff, including relief staff
- Induction for all new staff and volunteers includes familiarisation with procedures for acting on concerns about children’s/ young people’s wellbeing.

Maintaining knowledge and expertise

- All staff undertake regular accredited training in Reporting Abuse and Neglect
- All teachers undertake regular accredited First Aid training
- Guidelines for Responding to Problem Sexual Behaviours and Protective Practices guidelines are reviewed each semester, at staff meetings
- Staff members in leadership roles maintain familiarity with guidelines for Information Sharing and Managing Allegations of Sexual Misconduct

Grievance and complaints

- Grievance and complaints procedures are provided to all new families in the Parent Handbook. Staff, students and parents are provided with regular reminders of these procedures, via class meetings, staff meetings and newsletter entries
Behaviour policies

- Behaviour policies are regularly reviewed by the three faculties and the Collegiate Leadership Group.
- Mt Barker Waldorf School does not tolerate any form of harassment, discrimination or bullying. Anyone who believes that they or another person has been harassed, discriminated against or bullied is encouraged to raise their concern with a trusted member of staff.
- All teaching and Learning Support staff and volunteers are provided with details of any special learning or behaviour support plans for individuals with whom they will work.

Supervision

- In the classroom, the school grounds and during activities outside the school, staff are in a constant state of vigilance in relation to possible risks to students' well-being.
- Playground duty rosters are constructed to ensure that all areas of the grounds, and toilet blocks, are adequately monitored during recess and lunch breaks, and for 25 minutes before the start and 25 minutes after the end of the school day.
- While on duty in the grounds, teachers are constantly on the move – ensuring they can see and be seen by all the students in that area.
- Teachers are on duty between 8.30am and 3.45pm. Arrangements must be made with the Education Administrator for any student to be at school outside these times. If no other arrangement is in place, children must remain at the office.
- All visitors to the school are required to sign in and out at the office, and to wear a Visitor badge for the duration of their visit.
- The Education Administrator makes unscheduled visits to rooms where students work 1:1 with teachers/tutors - e.g. learning support, instrumental music tuition.

Social Media

- Staff and Student Social Media policies acknowledge that while Social Media is a valuable tool for communication, posts on social media may have serious consequences for individuals and for the School. These policies require students and staff to be polite and respectful in their posts, and preclude online 'friendships' between students and staff.

Privacy

- Images of children are only used in school publications including publicity materials, newsletters and the school website with the permission of parents/guardians.
8.0 Reporting suspected child abuse and/or neglect

Definitions

Child abuse and neglect

Child abuse and neglect may be difficult to define. Many factors including cultural beliefs and individual/cultural experiences impact on the ability to clearly identify what constitutes child abuse and neglect.

The legal definition of abuse and neglect in relation to a child, means

a) sexual abuse of the child; or

b) physical or emotional abuse of the child, or neglect of the child to the extent that

   (i) the child has suffered, or is likely to suffer, physical or psychological injury detrimental to the child’s well being; or

   (ii) the child’s physical or psychological development is in jeopardy, and ‘abused’ or ‘neglected’ has a corresponding meaning.

(Section 6[1] Children’s Protection Act 1993)

The legal definition of ‘at risk’ (for the purpose of notification) is:

A child is at risk if:

a) the child has been, or is being abused or neglected; or

b) a person with whom the child resides (whether a guardian of the child or not):

   (i) has threatened to kill or injure the child and there is reasonable likelihood of the threat being carried out; or

   (ii) had killed, abused or neglected some other child or children and there is a reasonable likelihood of the child in question being killed, abused or neglected by that person; or

   (iii) are dead, have abandoned the child or cannot, after reasonable inquiry, be found; or

   d) the child is of compulsory school age but has been persistently absent from school without satisfactory explanation of the absence; or

   e) the child is under 15 years of age and is of no fixed address

(Children’s Protection Act 1993 section 6 [2])
Obligations of staff and volunteers

All staff and volunteers are regularly reminded of how to make timely and accurate reports of suspected abuse or neglect. Employees and regular volunteers must complete the relevant RAN training every three years. The school provides an annual opportunity for parents/carers to attend a RAN session designed for volunteers.

All employees and volunteers understand their obligation to notify the Child Abuse Report Line (CARL) on 131478 or via the FamiliesSA website www.reportchildabuse.families.sa.gov.au as soon as practicable, if they have a reasonable suspicion that a child has been or is being abused or neglected.

Reasonable grounds for reporting suspected abuse and/or neglect include:

- when a child reports being abused/neglected
- when the adult's own observations of a child's behaviour and/or injuries indicate abuse or neglect
- when a child reports knowing someone who has been abused (they are possibly referring to themselves)
- when a trusted source divulges suspicions of abuse or neglect

If a child/student discloses information which indicates that they may be at risk, the staff member/volunteer's role is to provide support and not to investigate the claim. The adult's questions must be open rather than 'leading' and responses must be recorded as soon as possible, before reporting to the Education Director and Families SA (via CARL).

Reporting Procedures

All employees are required to make a report to the Child Abuse Report Line when they form a suspicion on reasonable grounds that a child is being or has been abused or neglected. Discussion with the Education Director is recommended in order to enhance the quality of notifications to Families SA and to assess whether the school is fulfilling its duty of care obligations to the child/student, not to deter or otherwise influence staff against making a report.

At Mt Barker Waldorf School, notifiers are required to complete the pre-notification checklist (Appendix 2) attaching notes of all relevant observations and conversations. Relevant phone and face to face conversations should be recorded on the standard form (Appendix 3). Further notes should be made following the notification and stored securely with other documentation relating to it. Following the report, the Mandatory Notification Record must also be completed electronically and printed (http://www.decd.sa.gov.au/speced2/files/links/mandatory_notifications_r.doc). The Education Director must sign this form and store the compiled documents securely, separately from the student's personal file.

In relation to sharing any other information about students with individuals or agencies outside the school, the school will follow the SA Government's Information Sharing Guidelines including the relevant Appendix for Independent Schools (http://www.ais.sa.edu.au/__files/f/78632/Information%20Sharing%20Guidelines%20Appendix%20FINAL.pdf)
Managing Allegations of Sexual Misconduct

Sexual misconduct includes but is not limited to sexual assaults of all kinds and other forms of unlawful sexual behaviour including such offences as being in possession of child pornography and acts of gross indecency. Allegations of sexual misconduct made against any adult who has a connection with the school will be dealt with according to the principles and procedures specified in the document Managing Allegations of Sexual Misconduct in SA Education and Care Settings (DECD 2013).

Responding to Sexualised Behaviour in children and young people

Any complaints or concerns received by staff regarding sexualised behaviour of any kind must be referred immediately to the Education Director. The Record of Allegations form (Appendix ...) must be completed by the staff member to whom the allegations are made. The document Responding to problem sexual behaviour in children and young people (DECD 2010) will guide the Education Director in responding to the complaints or concerns.

9.0 Ensuring Understanding of this Policy

Mt Barker Waldorf School ensures that everyone to whom this policy applies is aware of and has had an opportunity to read the policy. All staff and volunteers are expected to sign a statement indicating that they have read and will abide by our child-safe policy.

The policy is made available to parents via the school website.

The policy is reviewed annually.

10.0 Related Mt Barker Waldorf School policies and procedures

Employment policies and procedures

Volunteers policy

Social Media policies – staff and students

Codes of Conduct for Staff and Volunteers

Communication and Grievance policies and procedures

Behaviour policies - including Drug and Alcohol, Bullying, Harassment and Anti-discrimination policies

Camps and Excursions policies and procedures

Occupational Health, Safety and Welfare policies
11.0 Related Documents

Information Sharing Guidelines for promoting the Safety and Well being of Children, Young People and their Families

and the AISSA Appendix

Child Safe Environments: Principles of Good Practice (DECD 2012)

Child Safe Environments: Standards for dealing with information obtained about the criminal history of employees and volunteers who work with children (DECD 2012)

Protective Practices: Guidelines for staff in their interactions with children and young people

Responding to Abuse and Neglect: Education and Care Induction - Volunteer module

Managing Allegations of Sexual Misconduct in SA Education and Care settings

Responding to problem sexual behaviour in children and young people: Guidelines for staff in Education and Care settings

Mandatory Notification Record

12.0 Appendices: School forms and flowcharts

A 1 Flowchart: Child Protection matters
A 2 Pre-Notification Record Form: suspected abuse or neglect
A 3 Record of conversation re child protection issues
A 4 Record of allegation of sexual behaviour in children
15.0 Adoption of Policy by School Board

Date: July 29 2014

Next review: July 2015
Suspected child abuse or neglect: Procedure for Staff and Volunteers

Under the *Children’s Protection Act 1993* every adult working (whether in a paid or voluntary capacity) in an education and care environment is obliged to notify Families SA if they suspect on reasonable grounds that a child/young person has been or is being abused or neglected.

In the case of suspected sexual abuse, the staff member or volunteer should report to the Education Director immediately, providing a clear written report. If the allegation involves the Education Director, the report should be made to the Chairperson of the Board. The ED or Board Chair should follow the procedure outlined in the document *Managing Allegations of Sexual Misconduct in SA Education and Care Settings*. The allegation must be reported immediately to SA Police on 131 444.

In all other cases, follow this procedure:

1. Thoroughly document all relevant observations/disclosures.
2. Record who, what, where, when (date and time).
3. For information sharing by adults, use the form – Record of face to face or telephone discussion.
4. When a suspicion has been formed on reasonable grounds, complete the Pre-Notification Record Form.
5. Advise the Education Director of your intention to make a Notification and seek his/her support. If the ED is the subject of the report, advise the Chairperson of the School Board.
6. Phone the Families SA Child Abuse Report Line (CARL) 131478.
7. Make further notes as necessary during and after the call to Families SA.
9. Follow any other suggestions of Families SA staff – eg debrief with a counsellor or ED.
10. If deemed appropriate by the ED, participate in creating a Student Support plan.
PRE-NOTIFICATION RECORD FORM

REPORTING SUSPECTED ABUSE OR NEGLECT

This form must be completed by the volunteer or staff member who has a reasonable suspicion that a child/young person has been or is being abused or neglected. Staff at Families SA will expect this information to be available when you contact the Child Abuse Report Line (13 14 78)

This form will be filed securely by the Education Director with other relevant documentation

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>1. Reporter’s Details</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Name</td>
<td>Role at MBWS</td>
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<tr>
<td>Relationship to child/young person</td>
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<tr>
<td>Type and frequency of contact with family</td>
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<th>2. Child/Young Person Details</th>
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<tr>
<td>Full Name</td>
<td>Year Level</td>
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<tr>
<td>Also known as</td>
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<tr>
<td>Date of Birth</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Aboriginal/Torres Strait identity/non-English speaking</td>
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<tr>
<td>Disability/special needs</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Address: (1) Current</td>
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<td></td>
<td>(2) Other</td>
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<th>3. Alleged perpetrator</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Name</td>
<td>Age:</td>
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<tr>
<td>Address:</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Relationship to Child:</td>
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### 4. Other Family Details

<table>
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<tr>
<th>Are parents separated?</th>
<th>Family Court orders?</th>
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<table>
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<tr>
<th>Name of mother’s partner</th>
<th>Father’s partner</th>
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Family doctor – name and phone number (if known)

Knowledge about the functioning of the family or family violence/animal cruelty/violence to people outside of the family or drug/alcohol abuse/mental health problems or extended family or other support networks/child care arrangement or nature of involvement with any agencies/any relevant health factors.

### 5. Details of Concerns (attach further pages if space not sufficient)

What did the child/young person say? What was the emotional presentation?

Description of any injuries – type/location

Behaviours of concern and frequency/severity/dates and times observed

1. Child/young person’s behaviours

2. Carer behaviours

### 6. History of education/care actions

Have concerns been raised with parents/carers?

How did they respond?

How has the school supported the child/family?

Involvement of other government or non-government services

### 7. Site Leader Discussion

Notes re your discussion with Education Director about this notification

If you are advised that your notification is likely to result in a child protection response, you should indicate clearly that you want contact from Child Protection staff before that action occurs.

### 8. Signatures

Reporter’s signature ___________________________  Education Director’s signature ___________________________  Date ___________________________
Appendix 3  
Record of face to face or telephone discussion

This document should be completed during or after all face to face or telephone discussions relating to possible abuse or neglect, or sexualised behaviour, and stored in a confidential file

Date of meeting or phone call:

Location of meeting:

Attendees: (Include full name and titles eg Ann White, Principal; John Black, mother of Jason)

Purpose of discussion:

Issues discussed: (include as much detail as possible. Attach separate sheet if necessary)

Actions taken to date:

Future actions: (list future actions and person responsible)

Contact names and contact details:

Endorsed as a true and correct record:

Name:  
Signature:  
Date:

Name:  
Signature:  
Date:

Name:  
Signature:  
Date:
Appendix 4  Record of allegation of sexual behaviour in children

This document should be completed by the staff member who first received the complaint or allegation relating to sexual behaviour

Name of complainant:

Date and time of complaint:

Name of complainant’s child (where parent is complainant)

Age of complainant’s child:

Class:

Gender of complainant child:

Names of other alleged involved child(ren):

Incident details:

Do not interview child.

Complete below what you are told about the alleged incident(s).

Refer to Education Director without delay. Clarifying questions such as who, what, when, where, how should be asked by ED if not provided by the complainant.

Name: (person receiving complaint)

Signature: Date: