



Global Business College of Australia Pty Ltd

trading as

Global Business College of Australia (GBCA)

**POLICY 29 CHILD SAFE POLICY AND PROCEDURE V1.0**

**337-339 La Trobe Street, Melbourne VIC 3000**

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## DOCUMENT CONTROL

<b>Department</b>	Management	<b>Author(s)</b>	Gbca	
<b>Quality Controlled Policy No. &amp; Title Version</b>	Policy 29 Child Safe Policy And Procedure V1.0	<b>Approved</b>	GBCA Compliance	
		<b>Authorised</b>	Managing Director	
<b>Standards</b>	Standard 5 (NC 2018)	<b>Distribution</b>	Internal	All staff
			External	-

## REVISION RECORD

<b>Date</b>	<b>Version</b>	<b>Revision description</b>
29 Mar 2018	1.0	Original version

## 1.0 Purpose

1.1 The purpose of this policy and procedure is to demonstrate GBCA's commitment to child safety.

## 2.0 Responsibility

2.1 The Student Administrative and Support manager is responsible for the implementation of this procedure and to ensure that staff and are aware of its application and fulfil its requirements.

## 3.0 Requirements

- 3.1 All students under eighteen (18) years of age who are supported by GBCA have a right to feel and be safe. We want children to be safe, happy and empowered. We support and respect all children. We are committed to the safety, participation and empowerment of all children
- 3.2 GBCA promotes diversity and tolerance, and people from all walks of life and cultural backgrounds are welcome. We:
- Promote the cultural safety, participation and empowerment of Aboriginal children;
  - Promote the cultural safety, participation and empowerment of children from culturally and/or linguistically diverse backgrounds; and
  - Ensure that children with a disability are safe and can participate equally.
- 3.3 At GBCA, 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 worried about a child's safety, which we follow rigorously.
- 3.4 GBCA is committed to preventing child abuse and identifying risks early and removing and reducing these risks. We have robust human resources and recruitment practices for all personnel and committed to regularly training and education our personnel on child abuse risks.
- 3.5 As a child safe organisation, GBCA:
- Has a visible culture of child safety that is part of everyday practice;
  - Has strong leadership driving a culture of child safety;
  - Has the safety of children as its prime consideration;
  - Has well-articulated policies and procedures to implement its child safe approach;
  - Actively encourages participation, empowerment and serves to protect children;
  - Has actively considered risks of abuse within the organisation;
  - Engages with children to create a child safe environment and empowers children to speak up if something is wrong; and
  - Has inclusive approaches for children with a disability, Aboriginal children and children from culturally and/or linguistically diverse backgrounds.

## 4.0 Method

### 4.1 Child Abuse

Reporting child abuse is a community-wide responsibility. Child abuse includes any act committed against a child involving:

- Physical violence;
- Sexual offences;
- Serious emotional or psychological abuse; and
- Serious neglect.

**Call the police on 000 if you have immediate concerns for a child's safety**

- 4.2 All GBCA personnel are required to report to police 000 if they know or reasonably believe that a sexual offence has been committed by an adult against a child under the age of 18. *It is a criminal offence (failure to disclose) to fail to comply with this obligation across jurisdictions.* A 'reasonable belief' is not the same as having proof. A 'reasonable belief' is formed if a reasonable person in the same position would have formed the belief on the same grounds. For example, a 'reasonable belief' might be formed when:
- A child states that they have been sexually abused;
  - A child states that they know someone who has been sexually abused (sometimes the child may be talking about themselves);
  - Someone who knows a child states that the child has been sexually abused;

- Observations of the child's behaviour or development leads to a belief that the child has been sexually abused; or
- Signs of sexual abuse lead to a belief that the child has been sexually abused.

A reasonable belief is a deliberately low threshold. This enables authorities to investigate and take action.

If a person 18 year or older provided you with the information and they do not have an intellectual disability and they do not want the information reported to the police, an individual is then not required to report to police. Victoria Child Protection Crisis Line – 1300 664 977 or 13 12 78

- 4.3 GBCA has appointed a Welfare Support Officer for its operations, being the designated person to hear or be informed about all allegations or concerns and providing support to other personnel.

Welfare Support Officer: Ms Emily Cheng – Emily.cheng@gbca.edu.au

The designated welfare support officer provides a single contact for children, parents and personnel to seek advice and support regarding the safety and wellbeing of children.

- 4.4 Procedures - Allegations, Concerns and Complaints

GBCA takes all allegations seriously and has practices in place to investigate thoroughly and quickly.

Personnel are trained to deal appropriately with allegations.

We record all allegations of abuse and safety concerns using our incident reporting form, including investigation updates. All records are securely stored.

If an allegation of abuse or a safety concern is raised, we provide updates to children and families on progress and any actions we as an organisation take.

#### **Privacy**

All personal information considered or recorded will respect the privacy of the individuals involved, whether they be personnel, parents or children, unless there is a risk to someone's safety. GBCA has safeguards and practices in place to ensure any personal information is protected.

#### **If a child discloses an incident of abuse**

- Try and separate them from the other children discreetly and listen to them carefully.
- Let the child use their own words to explain what has occurred.
- Reassure the child that you take what they are saying seriously, and it is not their fault and that they are doing the right thing.
- Explain to them that this information may need to be shared others, such as with their parent/carer, specific people in your organisation, or the police.
- Do not make promises to the child such as promising not to tell anyone about the incident, except that you will do your best to keep them safe.
- Do not leave the child in a distressed state. If they seem at ease in your company, stay with them.
- Provide them with an incident report form to complete, or complete it together, if you think the child is able to do this.
- As soon as possible after the disclosure, record the information using the child's words and report the disclosure to the Welfare Support Officer and GBCA management as well as police or child protection as relevant.
- Ensure the disclosure is recorded accurately, and that the record is stored securely.

#### **If a parent/carer says their child has been abused or raises a concern**

- Explain that GBCA has processes to ensure all abuse allegations are taken very seriously.
- Ask about the wellbeing of the child.
- Allow the parent/carer to talk through the incident in their own words.
- Advise the parent/carer that you will take notes during the discussion to capture all details.
- Explain to them the information may need to be repeated to authorities or others, such as the GBCA management or Child Safety Officer, the police or child protection.
- Do not make promises at this early stage, except that you will do your best to keep the child safe.
- Provide them with an incident report form to complete, or complete it together.
- Ask them what action they would like to take and advise them of what the immediate next steps will be.
- Ensure the report is recorded accurately, and that the record is stored securely.
- Be aware that:
  - Individuals from Aboriginal, culturally and/or linguistically diverse backgrounds may face barriers in reporting allegations of abuse.

- Individuals with a disability may experience barriers disclosing an incident.

You need to be sensitive to these issues and meet individuals' needs where possible.

Personnel must follow the Critical Actions below every time you become aware of a further instance or risk of abuse. This includes reporting new information to authorities.

If personnel believe that a child is not subject to abuse, but still hold significant concerns for their wellbeing they must still act.

### **YOU MUST TAKE ACTION**

Personnel play a critical role in protecting children in our care.

You must act, by following the Four Critical Actions below, as soon as you witness an incident, receive a disclosure or form a reasonable belief that a child has, or is at risk of being abused.

You must act if you form a suspicion/reasonable belief, even if you are unsure and have not directly observed child abuse (e.g. if the victim or another person tells you about the abuse).

You must use an incident reporting form to keep clear and comprehensive notes.

#### **ACTION 1: Responding to an emergency**

If there is no risk of immediate harm go to ACTION 2.

If a child is at immediate risk of harm you must ensure their safety by:

- Separating alleged victims and others involved.
- Administering first aid.
- Calling 000 for urgent medical and/or police assistance to respond to immediate health or safety concerns.
- Identifying a contact person in your organisation for future liaison with Police.

Where necessary you may also need to maintain the integrity of the potential crime scene and preserve evidence.

#### **Action 2: Reporting to authorities**

As soon as immediate health and safety concerns are addressed you must report all incidents, suspicions and disclosures of child abuse as soon as possible. Failure to report physical and sexual child abuse may amount to a criminal offence.

You must report all instances of suspected child abuse or suspected sexual abuse (including grooming) to Police.

You must also report internally to the Welfare Support Officer and GBCA management.

If the source of suspected abuse is from within the family or community, you must report the suspected abuse to the relevant Child Protection Authority in the State or Territory jurisdiction.

This includes if a child is considered to be:

- In need of protection from child abuse
- At risk of being harmed (or has been harmed) and the harm has had, or is likely to have, a serious impact on the child's safety, stability or development.

#### **Action 3: Contacting parents / carers**

The Welfare Support Officer and GBCA management must consult with Child Protection and / or Victoria Police to determine what information can be shared with parents/carers. They may advise:

- Not to contact the parents/carers (e.g. in circumstances where the parents are alleged to have engaged in the abuse, or the child is a mature minor and does not wish for their parents/carers to be contacted); or
- To contact the parents/carers and provide agreed information (this must be done as soon as possible, preferably on the same day of the incident, disclosure or suspicion).

**Action 4: Providing ongoing support**

GBCA must provide support for children impacted by abuse. This includes the development of a Student Support Plan developed in consultation with wellbeing professional and/or counselling staff.

Strategies may include development of a safety plan, direct support and referral to wellbeing professionals.