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CHILD PROTECTION POLICY

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Code CPP00003

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Acknowledgements

Australian Sports Commission (ASC) Ethics – Child Protection, Policies, Guidelines and Forms
Website: <http://www.ausport.gov.au/ethics/cpstrategies.asp>

Play by The Rules - Guidelines for Coaches and Officials
Website: <http://www.playbytherules.net.au>

Gymnastics Queensland Child Protection Policy



CHILD PROTECTION POLICY

1. POSITION STATEMENT

1.1 Every person, business and organisation bound by this policy must always place the safety and welfare of children above all other considerations. AGDA acknowledges that our Management, staff and volunteers provide a valuable contribution to the positive experiences of our athletes.

1.2 AGDA aims to ensure this continues and to protect the safety and welfare of its athletes. Several measures will be used to achieve this such as:

- 1.2.1 Prohibiting any form of abuse against children;
- 1.2.2 Providing opportunities for our athletes to contribute to and provide feedback on our program development;
- 1.2.3 Carefully selecting and screening people whose role requires them to have regular contact with children (refer to Appendix A for Screening procedures & guidelines as per state legislation);
- 1.2.4 Ensuring our codes of conduct, particularly for roles associated with junior sport, are promoted, enforced and reviewed;
- 1.2.5 Providing procedures for raising concerns or complaints; and
- 1.2.6 Providing education and/or information to those involved in our sport on child abuse and child protection.

1.3 AGDA requires that any child who is abused, or anyone who reasonably suspects that a child has been or is being abused by someone within our sport, reports it immediately to the nominated Member Protection Information Officer (MPIO)

1.4 All allegations of child abuse will be dealt with promptly, seriously, sensitively and confidentially. A person will not be victimised for reporting an allegation of child abuse and the privacy of all persons concerned will be respected.

1.5 If anyone bound by this policy reasonably suspects that a child is being abused by his or her parent/s, they are advised to contact the Commission for Children and Young People and Child Guardian or the relevant government department for youth, family and community services in Queensland (refer to Appendix B - Important Contact Information).

2. PURPOSE

2.1 The purpose of this policy is to form part of AGDA's overall Child Protection Risk Management Strategy. This policy will work in conjunction with the Member Protection Policy and supporting procedures to ensure that AGDA and its affiliates are aware of the process for handling allegations of child abuse, the screening requirements under current legislation and how they apply to the sport of gymnastics, and disciplinary measures for the breaches in policy.



3. SCOPE

3.1 This policy applies to the following, whether they are in a paid or unpaid/voluntary capacity:

- 3.1.1 Individuals sitting on boards, committees and sub-committees;
- 3.1.2 Employees and volunteers;
- 3.1.3 Support personnel (e.g. managers, physiotherapists, psychologists, masseurs, sport trainers) ;
- 3.1.4 Coaches and trainee coaches;
- 3.1.5 Athletes;
- 3.1.6 Officials;
- 3.1.7 Members, including life members;
- 3.1.8 Affiliated Clubs and associated organisations;
- 3.1.9 Peak associations and the national body;
- 3.1.10 Any other person or organisation that is a member of or affiliated to AGDA;
- 3.1.11 Parents, guardians, spectators and sponsors to the full extent that is possible.

3.2 This policy will continue to apply to a person even after they have stopped their association or employment with AGDA and its affiliated organisations if disciplinary action, relating to an allegation of child abuse against that person, has commenced.

4. DEFINITIONS

4.1 Child Abuse

Child abuse relates to children (under 18 years) at risk of harm (usually by adults, sometimes by other children) and often by those they know and trust. It can take many forms. Children may be harmed by both verbal and physical actions and by people failing to provide them with basic care. Child abuse may include:

- 4.1.1 Physical abuse by hurting a child or a child's development (e.g. hitting, shaking or other physical harm; giving a child alcohol or drugs).
- 4.1.2 Sexual abuse by adults or other children where a child is encouraged or forced to watch or engage in sexual activity or where a child is subject to any other inappropriate conduct of a sexual nature (e.g. sexual intercourse, masturbation, oral sex, pornography including child pornography or inappropriate touching or conversations).
- 4.1.3 Emotional abuse by ill-treating a child (e.g. humiliation, taunting, sarcasm, yelling, negative criticism, name calling, ignoring or placing unrealistic expectations on a child).
- 4.1.4 Neglect (e.g. failing to give food, water, shelter or clothing or to protect a child from danger or foreseeable risk of harm or injury).

4.2 Member Protection Information Officer (MPIO)

Member Protection Information Officer (MPIO) means a person trained to be the first point of contact for a person reporting a complaint under, or a breach of, this policy. The MPIO provides confidential information and moral support to the person with the concern or who is alleging a child protection issue or a breach of this policy. They help the complainant deal with any emotions they may have about what has happened and operate as a sounding board as the complainant decides what they want to do. All Clubs need to ensure that they have a dedicated person who is responsible for filing this role at club level, and they may give this person a different title such as Grievance or Complaints Officer.



4.3 Volunteer

A person who is employed by another person not for financial reward but who may receive reimbursement for out of pocket expenses.

5. ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES

5.1 AGDA General Code of Conduct

AGDA requires every individual and organisation bound by this policy to:

- 5.1.1 Be ethical, fair and honest in all their dealings with other people associated with the sport of Gymnastics;
- 5.1.2 Treat all persons with respect and courtesy and have proper regard for their dignity, rights and obligations ;
- 5.1.3 Always place the safety and welfare of children above other considerations;
- 5.1.4 Comply with AGDA's Constitution, By-laws and policies including this child protection policy;
- 5.1.5 Operate within the rules and spirit of the sport;
- 5.1.6 Comply with all relevant Australian laws (Federal and State), particularly anti-discrimination and child protection laws;
- 5.1.7 Be responsible and accountable for their conduct; and
- 5.1.8 Abide by the relevant Role-Specific Codes of Conduct. For a full copy of these codes refer to AGDA's Member Protection Policy, Appendix B – Role-specific Codes of Conduct.

5.2 Academy Responsibilities

5.2.1 AGDA must:

- 5.2.1.1 Adopt, implement and comply with this policy;
- 5.2.1.2 Widely publish, distribute, and otherwise promote this policy and the consequences for breaching it;
- 5.2.1.3 Promote appropriate standards of conduct at all times;
- 5.2.1.4 Promptly deal with any breaches of, or complaints made under this policy in an impartial, sensitive, fair, timely and confidential manner;
- 5.2.1.5 Apply this policy consistently without fear or favour;
- 5.2.1.6 Recognise and enforce any penalty imposed under this policy;
- 5.2.1.7 Ensure that a copy of this policy is available or accessible to the persons to whom this policy applies;
- 5.2.1.8 Provide updated management procedures for staff to handle recruitment, training and management of child protection matters;
- 5.2.1.9 Appoint appropriately trained people i.e. Member Protection Information Officers, to receive and handle complaints and allegations and display their names and contact details in a way that is readily accessible. If not available ensure appropriate training is provided;
- 5.2.1.10 Continually conduct risk assessments specific to child protection on the Association's activities conducted and implement guidelines as appropriate. Such guidelines will be documented and are included in Appendix E – Child Protection Guidelines for Clubs; and
- 5.2.1.11 Monitor and review this policy at least annually.

- 5.2.2 Affiliated Businesses/Organisations must:**
- 5.2.2.1 Adopt, implement and comply with this policy;
 - 5.2.2.2 Widely publish, distribute, and otherwise promote the Child Protection Policy and the consequences for breaching it;
 - 5.2.2.3 Promote appropriate standards of conduct at all times;
 - 5.2.2.4 Promptly deal with any breaches of or complaints made under child protection policy in an impartial, sensitive, fair, timely and confidential manner;
 - 5.2.2.5 Apply child protection policies consistently without fear or favour;
 - 5.2.2.6 Recognise and enforce any penalty imposed under child protection policies;
 - 5.2.2.7 Ensure that a copy of this, or club specific child protection policy is available or accessible to the persons to whom the policy applies;
 - 5.2.2.8 Appoint appropriately trained people i.e. Member Protection Information Officers, to receive and handle complaints and allegations and display their names and contact details in a way that is readily accessible;
 - 5.2.2.9 Continually conduct risk assessments specific to child protection on the Club's activities conducted and implement procedures as appropriate. Such procedures will be documented as part of the Club's Risk Management Strategies;
 - 5.2.2.10 Monitor and review child protection policies at least annually.

5.3 Individual Responsibilities

Individuals bound by this policy are responsible for:

- 5.3.1 Making themselves aware of the policy and complying with the standards of conduct outlined in this policy;
- 5.3.2 Consenting to a national police check if the individual holds or applies for a role that involves regular contact with people under the age of 18 years;
- 5.3.3 Complying with all other requirements of this policy;
- 5.3.4 Co-operating in providing discrimination, child abuse and harassment free sporting environment;
- 5.3.5 Understanding the possible consequences of breaching this policy.

6. BREACH OF POLICY

6.1 Policy Breaches

It is a breach of this policy for any person or organisation to which this policy applies, to have been found to have:

- 6.1.1 Done anything contrary to this policy;
- 6.1.2 Breached the General Code of Conduct (Section 5.1) and/or the Role-Specific Codes of Conduct (Appendix B – Member Protection Policy);
- 6.1.3 Brought AGDA and/or the sport of Gymnastics into disrepute;
- 6.1.4 Failed to follow AGDA policies and procedures for the protection, safety and welfare of children;
- 6.1.5 Appointed or continued to appoint a person to a role that involves working with children and young people contrary to this policy;
- 6.1.6 Discriminated against or harassed any child;
- 6.1.7 Victimised another person for reporting a complaint;
- 6.1.8 Engaged in child abuse (as defined in Section 4.1) with a child that the person supervises, or has influence, authority or power over;
- 6.1.9 Made a complaint they **know** to be untrue, vexatious, malicious or improper;
- 6.1.10 Failed to comply with a penalty imposed after a finding that the individual has breached this policy;
- 6.1.11 Failed to comply with a direction given to the individual during the discipline process.

6.2 Consequences of Breach

Should a person be in breach of the policy and meet any of the above breaches they will be subject to Section 9, Disciplinary Measures, of this policy.

7. COMPLAINT PROCEDURES

7.1 AGDA aims to provide an easy to use, confidential and trustworthy procedure for complaints based on the principles of natural justice. Any person may report a complaint (complainant) about a person/s or organisation bound by this policy if they reasonably believe that a person/s or a sporting organisation has breached this policy.

7.2 A complaint should be reported, in the first instance, to AGDA's nominated Member Protection Information Officer refer to Appendix B – Important Contact Information.

7.3 A complaint may be reported either in writing or verbally, as per the procedure in Appendix A of the Member Protection Policy.

7.4 All complaints will be dealt with promptly, seriously, sensitively and confidentially.

7.5 The investigation procedure for child abuse is outlined in Section 8 below.

8. INVESTIGATION PROCEDURE

An allegation of child abuse is a very serious matter and must be handled with a high degree of sensitivity. The initial response to a complaint that a child has allegedly been abused should be immediate if the incident/s are serious or criminal in nature while less serious/urgent allegations should be actioned as soon as possible, preferably within 24 hours.

The following is a basic outline of the key processes to follow. More information can be obtained from Commission for Children and Young People and Child Guardian – refer to Appendix B for contact details.

Step 1 - Clarify basic details of the allegation

- Any complaints, concerns or allegations of child abuse should be made or referred to the AGDA's MPIO.
- The initial response of the person that receives the complaint from the child (or person on behalf of the child) is crucial to the well-being of the child. It is important for the person receiving the information to:
 - Listen to, be supportive and do not dispute what the child says
 - Reassure the child that what has occurred is not the fault of the child
 - Ensure the child is safe
 - Be honest with the child and explain that other people may need to be told in order to stop what is happening and
 - Ensure that what the child says is quite clear but do not elicit detailed information about the abuse. You should avoid suggestive or leading questions.
- The person receiving the complaint should obtain and clarify basic details (if possible) such as:
 1. Child's name, age, and address;
 2. Person's reason for suspecting abuse (observation, injury or other); and
 3. Names and contact details of all people involved, including witnesses.

Step 2 – Protect the child

- The AGDA MPIO should assess the risks and take interim action to ensure the child/children's safety. Some options that the MPIO could recommend include:
 1. Redeployment of the alleged offender to a non-child related position;
 2. Supervision of the alleged offender; or
 3. Removal/suspension from their duties until the allegations are finally determined.
- The AGDA MPIO should also address the support needs of the person against whom the complaint is made. Supervision of the person should ideally occur with the knowledge of the person. If stood down, it should be made clear to all parties that are aware of the incident that this does not mean the person is guilty and a proper investigation still needs to be undertaken.

Step 3 – Determine whether the allegation is of a less serious nature (e.g. verbal abuse) or is a serious or criminal allegation (e.g. sexual or physical abuse)

- Any allegation of a serious or criminal nature referred to the AGDA MPIO must immediately be reported to the Police or the relevant Government Agency.
- Allegations of a less serious nature are handled internally under the leadership of the AGDA Member Protection Information Officer & Club MPIO.

8.1 For Allegations of a Less Serious Nature

Step 1 – Further clarify and investigate allegation

- Normally this is carried out by an appropriate AGDA representative/investigator, to make contact and meet with each of the people involved to obtain details of the allegation.
- The investigation should follow the procedure set out below:
 - a) The complainant will be interviewed and the complaint documented in writing.
 - b) The details of the complaint will be conveyed to the person/people complained about (respondent(s)) in full. The respondent(s) must be given sufficient information to enable them to properly respond to the complaint.
 - c) The respondent(s) will be interviewed and given the opportunity to respond. The respondent(s) response to the complaint will be documented in writing.
 - d) If there is a dispute over the facts, then statements from witnesses and other relevant evidence will be obtained to assist in a determination.
 - e) The investigator will make a finding as to whether the complaint is:
 - substantiated (there is sufficient evidence to support the complaint);
 - inconclusive (there is insufficient evidence either way);
 - unsubstantiated (there is sufficient evidence to show that the complaint is unfounded); and/or
 - mischievous, vexatious or knowingly untrue.
- A report documenting the complaint and summarising the investigation process and key points that were found to be substantiated, inconclusive, unsubstantiated and/or mischievous will be provided to the Executive Director along with recommendations for future actions.
- Strict confidentiality, impartiality, fairness, and due process must be maintained at all times.

Step 2 – Undertake disciplinary action

- If disciplinary action is to be taken, follow the procedures outlined in Section 9 of this policy.
- Implement any disciplinary decision recommended by the AGDA Management. The action should be immediate.

Step 3 – Right of Appeal

- In the event that any member so disciplined, suspended, or expelled wishes to appeal against the decision, such an appeal shall be lodged with the Director according to the rules within the AGDA Appeals & Grievance Regulations.

The appellant will be entitled to be heard on the appeal.

8.2 For Allegations of a Serious or Criminal Nature

Step 1 – If child is at risk of harm (e.g. sexual or physical abuse), report it to the authorities

- If the allegation involves a child at risk of harm, the incident should immediately be reported to the police or other appropriate authority. You may need to report to both the police and the relevant government agency – refer to the Appendix B for contact information.
- The Commission for Children and Young People and Child Guardian should be contacted for advice if there is **any** doubt about whether the complaint should be reported.
- If the child's parent/s is suspected of committing the abuse, report the allegation to the Police or Department of Child Safety.
- The MPIO must advise the Director about the complaint and the actions taken.

Step 2 – Undertake disciplinary action

- For incidents of a serious or criminal nature, no disciplinary action should be taken until the Police investigation/action is concluded.
- If disciplinary action is to be taken, follow the procedures as outlined in Section 9 – Disciplinary Measures.

9. DISCIPLINARY MEASURES

It must be noted that allegations of a serious or criminal nature must be reported to the police or other Government agencies as appropriate.

9.1 Forms of Discipline

9.1 If an individual or organisation to which this policy applies breaches this policy, the Board is empowered to discipline members of the Association by one or more forms of discipline:

- 9.1.1 Reprimand;
- 9.1.2 Fine;
- 9.1.3 Suspension; or
- 9.1.4 Expulsion.

9.2 Any resolutions must be passed by the Director and AGDA Management. As per the Appeal & Grievance Regulations.

9.2 Factors to Consider When Imposing Discipline

- 9.2.1 Any disciplinary measure imposed by AGDA under this policy must:
- 9.2.1.1 Observe any contractual and employment rules and requirements;
 - 9.2.1.2 Conform to the principles of natural justice;
 - 9.2.1.3 Be fair and reasonable;
 - 9.2.1.4 Be based on the evidence and information presented;
 - 9.2.1.5 Be within the powers of the disciplinary powers of the Association's Constitution.
- 9.2.2 The form of discipline to be imposed on an individual will depend on factors such as:
- 9.2.2.1 Nature and seriousness of the behaviour or incidents;
 - 9.2.2.2 In a case where action is taken concurrently with or in lieu of a resolution of a formal complaint, the wishes of the complainant;
 - 9.2.2.3 If the individual concerned knew or should have known that the behaviour was a breach of the policy;
 - 9.2.2.4 Level of contrition of the respondent(s);
 - 9.2.2.5 The effect of the proposed disciplinary measures on the respondent(s) including any personal, professional or financial consequences;
 - 9.2.2.6 If there have been relevant prior warnings or disciplinary action; and/or
 - 9.2.2.7 If there are any mitigating circumstances such that the respondent(s) should not be disciplined at all or not disciplined so seriously.

10. CONFIDENTIALITY AND REPORTING

10.1 AGDA's administration responsible for implementing this Policy will keep confidential, in-line with their Privacy Policy, the names and details relating to complaints, unless disclosure is:

- 10.1.1 Necessary as part of the corrective process or
- 10.1.2 Required by law.

11. ADDITIONS AND CHANGES TO POLICY

- 11.1 Recommended changes to this policy may be submitted to AGDA Policy & Planning Subcommittee for consideration. Management will review the recommendations and forward to the Director who have the authority to make any changes to this policy.
- 11.2 Should changes be accepted the policy would be updated, dated and circulate to members.
- 11.3 In addition, AGDA is committed to ensuring all policies are up to date and reflect current times, therefore, reviews are undertaken annually. The next review date is detailed in the header of this policy.



APPENDIX

APPENDIX A - QUEENSLAND BLUE CARD REQUIREMENTS¹

This information is subject to change at any time. Refer to *the Queensland Commission for Children and Young People and Child Guardian's (Commission) website*: www.bluecard.qld.gov.au or contact 1800 113 611 if you have any queries about your obligations under their legislation.

In Queensland the *Commission for Children and Young People and Child Guardian Act 2000* requires people who work with children under 18 years of age in certain categories of employment regulated by the Act, and people carrying on certain categories of business regulated by the Act to hold a blue card, unless specifically exempt.

When a person applies for a blue card the Commission conducts a Working with Children Check which is an assessment of a person's eligibility to work with children based on their criminal history, certain disciplinary information (if any) and investigative information (if any) held by the police commissioner. If a person is eligible for a blue card, the Commission issues a positive notice letter and a blue card which remains current for a period of 2 years.

Association/club requirements

AGDA and affiliated clubs are responsible for applying for a blue card on behalf of their paid employees and volunteers where the nature of their work falls under one of the categories regulated by the Act.

Interstate sporting organisations, associations and clubs visiting Queensland for sporting training camps, competition or other activities taking place in Queensland may also need to apply for a blue card if the nature of their activities falls under one of the categories in the Act.

People carrying on a regulated business are responsible for applying for a blue card if the activities of the business are regulated under one of the categories in the Act.

Relevant categories of employment regulated by the Act

Note: Only those categories of employment relevant to the sport and recreation industry have been listed below.

Paid employees who commenced work in one of the following categories of employment after 1 May 2001 will need to apply for a blue card unless exempt under the relevant category:

- private teaching, coaching or tutoring
- sport and active recreation
- clubs and associations involving children
- child accommodation services (which incorporates billets).

Paid employees commencing employment in the following category need a blue card irrespective of when they commenced their employment – i.e. before or after 1 May 2001:

- schools - employees other than teachers and parents

Paid employees

Paid employees falling under one of the above listed categories of employment regulated by the Act need a blue card, unless exempt, if they work or are likely to work over a period of 12 months for at least:

¹ This Appendix is copied directly from the ASC Member Protection Policy Template – Version 4 updated May 2006. It has not been modified at their advice.



eight consecutive days, or

- once a week, each week, over four weeks, or
- once a fortnight, each fortnight, over eight weeks, or
- once a month, each month over six months.

Once a blue card application has been lodged, a paid employee can commence or continue to work in regulated employment while waiting for the outcome of their blue card application.

Volunteers

Volunteers working with children who fall under one of the above listed categories of employment regulated by the Act need a blue card, unless exempt, **before** they can commence the child related activity, regardless of how often they come into contact with children and young people.

Exemptions

The following people are exempt from the Working with Children Check and do not need a blue card:

- children under 18 who are volunteers (except trainee students required to work in regulated employment as part of their studies with an education provider such as a registered training organisation, or university);
- a volunteer guest of a school or a registered charity, corporation or incorporated association:
- for the purpose of observing, supplying information or entertainment to 10 or more people, and
- the activity is for 10 days or less on no more than two occasions per year, and
- the person is unlikely to be physically present with a child without another adult being present, or
- an event volunteer performing the function of employment at a national or state event organised by a school or a registered charity, corporation or incorporated association (operating at a state or national level) for:
 - a sporting, cultural or skill based activity, and
 - the event is attended by more than 100 people, and
 - the work is for 10 days or less on no more than two occasions per year; and
 - the person is unlikely to be physically present with a child without another adult being present.

In addition, the following specific exemptions apply under each category regulated by the Act. It is critical to note that the exemptions below apply to the specific categories of regulated employment and business as stated, and therefore are not transferable. For example, a 'registered teacher' is only exempt in the first two categories of regulated employment mentioned below, as that specific exemption does not apply to the remaining three identified categories of employment.

1. Schools - employees other than teachers and parents

- a 'registered teacher'; and
- a volunteer parent of a child attending the school.

2. Private teaching, coaching or tutoring

- a 'registered teacher'; or
- a person carrying out work in their capacity as an employee of an 'education provider' .

3. Sport and active recreation

- the employment takes place at an 'amusement park'; or
- the person provides the service or conducts the activity in their capacity as an employee of a 'government entity'; or
- a volunteer parent of a child to whom the services are provided; or
- a volunteer parent of a child in relation to whom the activities are conducted
- the services are provided, or the activities are conducted by or within a club or association or similar entity and are regulated under that category (See Item 4: Clubs and associations involving children)).

4. Clubs and associations involving children

- the person carries out the work in their capacity as an employee of a 'government entity'; or
- a volunteer parent of a child who receives the same or similar services to which the employment relates; or
- a volunteer parent of a child who participates in the same or similar activities to which the employment.

5. Child accommodation services (including billets)

- the 'child accommodation service' is being provided to a relative of the home stay provider;
- the work is carried out for a 'government service provider' that carries on a business which includes arranging a 'child accommodation service'; or
- the employment is organised by a school or a registered charity, corporation or incorporated association and is for 10 days or less and provided on no more than two occasions per year.

Relevant categories of business regulated by the Act

Note: Only those categories of business relevant to sport and recreation industry have been listed below.

A person or a corporation carrying on the following regulated businesses in Queensland must also apply for a blue card:

- private teaching, coaching or tutoring
- child accommodation services including home stays (including billets)
- Sport and active recreation (which may include recreational activities such as sporting camps and programs (excluding amusement parks)

Exemptions

1. Private teaching, coaching or tutoring

If the business is conducted by an education provider

2. Child accommodation services including home stays (including billets)

If the business is conducted at a:

- boarding facility; or
- residential facility funded by the Commonwealth government, or the Department of Child Safety, Disabilities Services Queensland, Department of Communities, Qld Health; or licensed by the Child Protection Act; or



- or another place mainly providing accommodation for children which is funded by the Commonwealth government or Education Queensland.

3. Sport and active recreation

If the business takes place at an amusement park; or

The activities are conducted by or within a club, association or similar entity and are regulated under that category (See Item 4).

Where the business is a corporation, each person whose principal place of residence is in Australia, who takes part in the management of the corporation needs a blue card.

A person carrying on a regulated business must hold a blue card before they commence the regulated activity regardless of how often they come into contact with children and young people.

Application forms

Blue card application forms for a paid employee, volunteer, or person carrying on a regulated business can be downloaded from www.ccypcg.qld.gov.au. Volunteer applications are processed free of charge; there is a processing fee for paid employees and business applications. This fee for employees of AGDA is to be paid by the employees.

Change in criminal history

If AGDA knows or reasonably suspects that an employee who commenced employment prior to 1 May 2001 and therefore does not require a blue card, has a criminal history relevant to their work with children or young people, the AGDA can apply for a blue card for that person. In such a case, the relevant application form to submit is a 'current employee blue card application form'. This requirement also applies to interstate Sporting Organisations that visit Queensland and apply to the Commission for a Working with Children Check.

Risk management

Amendments to the Act, effective January 2005, require organisations engaging paid employees or volunteers that need a blue card, and persons or organisations carrying on a business for which a blue card is required to develop and implement annually, a risk management strategy to promote the well-being of children in their care and protect them from harm.

The key elements an organisation needs to consider in creating a risk management strategy includes:

- a child protection policy, which outlines:
- a Code of Conduct
- recruitment, training and management procedures for staff
- reporting guidelines and directions for handling disclosures or suspicions of harm, and
- consequences to staff for non-compliance with the policy

Communication and support strategies, such as:

- information sheets for staff, volunteers and parents about policies, procedures and Codes of Conduct, and
- training materials and communication strategies which help staff, volunteers and parents identify risks of harm

Documentation of risk management processes including:

- registers of staff
- strategies and plans for high-risk and special events
- complaints registers, and
- forms to ensure consistent handling of incidents, disclosures of harm, permissions and approvals for related activities.

APPENDIX B - IMPORTANT CONTACT INFORMATION

(Last Updated 12 April 2007)

QUEENSLAND CONTACTS – CHILD PROTECTION

	Website	Phone
Queensland Commission for Children and Young People and Child Guardian (CCYPCG)	www.ccypcg.qld.gov.au	1800 688 275
Department of Child Safety (DCS)	www.childsafety.qld.gov.au	1800 811 810 (during normal business hours) 1800 177 135 or (07) 3235 9999 (outside normal business hours & on weekends)
Queensland Police Service	www.police.qld.gov.au	Contact your local police station
Queensland Gymnastic Association Inc. (AGDA)	www.gymqld.org.au 10/866 Main St WOOLLOONGABBA QLD 4102	07 3036 5600 General Number 07 3036 5604 Club Services Manager,
Australasian Gymnastics and Dance Academy	www.agymda.com.au 9 North shore Drive Burpengary	07 3888 0135 info@agymda.com.au MPIO Karen Eckel

RELEVANT CONTACTS FOR STATE AUTHORITIES – CHILD PROTECTION

State	Authority	Website	Phone
NSW	NSW Commission for Children and Young People	www.kids.nsw.gov.au	02 9286 7219
WA	Department of Community Development Working with Children Screening Unit	www.checkwwc.wa.gov.au	1800 883 979
VIC	Department of Justice	http://www.justice.vic.gov.au (Follow the Working with Children Check link under Business Units or contact).	1300 652 879
SA	Department of Families and Communities	www.familiesandcommunities.sa.gov.au	
	South Australian Office for Recreation and Sport	www.resport.sa.gov.au	

<p>Nature of complaint (category/basis/grounds)</p> <p>Can tick more than one box</p>	<p><input type="checkbox"/> Harassment or <input type="checkbox"/> Discrimination</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Sexual/sexist <input type="checkbox"/> Selection dispute</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Sexuality <input type="checkbox"/> Personality clash</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Race <input type="checkbox"/> Bullying</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Religion <input type="checkbox"/> Verbal abuse</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Pregnancy <input type="checkbox"/> Physical abuse</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Disability <input type="checkbox"/> Victimisation</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Child Abuse</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Other</p>
<p>Feelings expressed by complainant</p> <p>(completing this may help to separate emotional content from facts)</p>	
<p>What they want to happen to fix issue</p>	
<p>What information I provided</p>	
<p>What they are going to do now</p>	



Government agency contacted	Who: When: Advice provided:
CEO contacted	Who: When:
Police and/or government agency investigation	Finding:
Internal investigation (if any)	Finding:
Action taken	
Completed by	Name: Position in AGDA: Signature: / /
Signed by	Complainant (if not a child)

This record and any notes must be kept in a confidential place and provided to the relevant authorities (police and government) should they require them.

APPENDIX E – CHILD PROTECTION GUIDELINES FOR CLUBS

As a support strategy for Clubs AGDA has provided the following guidelines which should be widely distributed to relevant personnel & be used by clubs to assist in their operational procedures surrounding child protection.

Gymnastics Clubs must always consider their own particular circumstances, identify and assess risks and implement appropriate risk management strategies. The following are guidelines only and are not legal advice.

Coaches and Officials

Coaches and officials need to be aware that not all children will understand an action or request in the same manner. One child may see an action as usual or acceptable behaviour while another may find it unacceptable. A child's interpretation of an action may also be influenced by cultural and religious differences, gender and prior experiences. It is important therefore to be aware of your communication style.

The following principles or actions may help coaches provide a safe environment.

- Ensure your actions at all times are unambiguously professional. Give a verbal explanation, in front of all athletes (and preferably parents as well) of how, where, when and why you may need to touch athletes.
- Remember that the welfare of the child or children is always of paramount importance.
- Know the policies, complaint processes and guidelines under the Child Protection Risk Management Program and how they apply to you.
- Understand and commit to the AGDA coaches and judges codes of ethics.
- Understand how the child protection legislation in Queensland may affect you.
- Ensure that any physical contact with children is appropriate to the skills being developed within the gymnastics program (eg: it may be appropriate to make contact with a child, who is holding a handstand, on the ankles, legs or back for the purpose of improving skill shape/technique but it would not be appropriate to make contact around other parts of the body where it is not essential to shaping/technique development). Generally physical contact with athletes should be relevant to skills development, technique or safety, to treat an injury or to prevent or respond to an injury. Always seek permission to make physical contact when skill development is required to ensure the athlete is aware of the contact that is required.
- Be careful about which part of your body is and how much of it is in contact with a child's body.
- Avoid unaccompanied and unobserved activities with children. Try not to separate yourself and a child from the line of sight of other people. If you need to have a private talk with a child about their ability or behaviour, do this in an open place near others. Invite another coach or support person to join the conversation or talk to more than one child at a time.
- Have sufficient coaches/ assistants for effective supervision based on the age and number of children involved. Provide for disability considerations in regard to supervision.
- Have a club policy that during training and competition, children go to the toilet in pairs or small groups.

- Use positive and age-appropriate language when talking to and in the presence of children. Avoid bad or aggressive language that could intimidate a child or set a bad example.
- Before entering change rooms knock or announce that you will be coming in and try to have at least one other adult with you. Do not isolate yourself and a child from others in the change room.
- Have a club policy that if a parent is late picking up their child that the second to last child and their parent or guardian will wait with you and the child. This will also enable you to concentrate on making contact with the parent.
- Avoid the risk of being left alone with a child by having a parent, guardian or support person assist you with the training. Require that person to wait with you until all children have left.
- Do not engage in or let others engage in any of the following:
 - Abusive initiation or bonding activities
 - Forcing children into 'macho type' activities
 - Rough, physical hurtful or sexually provocative games
 - Regular scapegoating, ridiculing, rejecting, isolating or taking the 'mickey' out of a child.
- Maintain control – avoid losing your temper (verbally or physically). If you find you regularly lose your temper with children you should seek support or consider whether you have the patience to work with children. Some ideas to assist with maintaining control include:
 - Set up basic rules; at the beginning of the season, such as follow instructions, have a go, no put-downs. Make sure children are aware of these rules.
 - Give positive messages.
 - Have a time out area for children that are not behaving.
 - Adopt a card system to express concerns with a child's behaviour rather than becoming verbally agitated e.g. a yellow card is a warning, two yellow cards means time out for 2 minutes, a red card could mean the child misses out on next weeks training.

Coaching Children with Special Needs

Coaching or working with children with special needs may require more frequent physical contact and touch as a means of meeting the duty of care to them. Touch may be an agreed form of communication between a child, their parent and coach where the child has a communication disability. A coach and others may need to be more vigilant and thoughtful in their physical interactions and different approaches may be required. However, the basic practices and information outlined previously remain applicable to all children. Sporting organisations, coaches and others have a duty of care to protect children from physical and emotional harm and, while the ways of meeting this duty may differ for different groups, the duty itself remains unqualified. Everyone expected to meet this duty should do so in a manner that respects the dignity of all children as well as their vulnerabilities.

For more information on coaching children with special needs visit:
www.ausport.gov.au/dsu/index



Cultural Considerations

Different cultures have different attitudes and traditions surrounding the concept of appropriate touch. It is important that coaches and others appreciate culturally specific expectations regarding touch so that embarrassment or offence can be avoided for everyone. Where children (and families) are known or suspected to have escaped traumatic circumstances, considerable diplomacy, care and effort in early interactions will need to be taken. Many culturally based community organisations are very keen to establish understanding and respect – it may help to invite or seek their advice so that sport personnel become more familiar with the cultural groups of the children participating in their sport.

Parents

Parents often turn to sport as a safe place for children to build character, develop skills, and learn valuable lessons and to have fun. While involvement in sport remains a positive experience for most participants, parents are now aware that children can face the risk of being harassed and abused in sport. In addition to Clubs, parents can also play a key role in creating a safe environment for children in sport.

The following actions will help parents contribute to providing a safe environment.

- Get involved and get to know your child's coach. Maintain open and frank communication. If things occur that disturb you, talk to the coach about them.
- Speak out when you hear language or attitudes that contribute to a negative or unsafe environment. You may wish to pursue your issues with the Club's Executive.
- Be careful not to put coaches on pedestals. Tell your children it's okay to say 'no' if the coach is doing something that makes them feel uncomfortable.
- Make an effort to attend training and games whenever you can.
- Be wary of private, closed training sessions. If they occur on a regular basis ask the coach for an explanation.
- Be wary of any increases of the amount of time the coach spends with your children beyond the training session.
- If you volunteer in sport and ask to take part in screening, accept this as a positive step to keep children safe.
- Make sure you are not part of the problem. Don't sling verbal abuse at officials, coaches or others.
- Know and abide by the Parents Code of Conduct and encourage others to do the same.
- Encourage your child to play by the rules.
- Never ridicule your child for making a mistake.

Drop off and pick up of participants by parents/guardians

Children may be dropped off before an activity and picked up afterwards by their parents or guardians. In no circumstances should children may make their own way to and from an activity. On their way to and from children may be exposed to potential risk.

Procedures should be put in place to minimise these risks. Whilst Clubs may have different strategies to meet specific circumstances, the following considerations provide a guideline.

- Agree with parents a set procedure for drop off and pick up arrangements. Let children and their parents/guardians know the times of training and competitions and when they can expect to collect their children. Advise them that it is not your responsibility to transport children home if parents are delayed.
- Ensure there is a buffer period where a coach or official arrives a certain period of time before an activity starts and stays a certain period of time after it ends.
- Have a Club policy that the second to last child and their parent/guardian will wait with the coach/official and the child. This will also enable the coach/official to concentrate on making contact with the parent/guardian.
- If you have a Club where there will be other people, have a policy that latecomers are to collect their children from the Club. Wait with the child if possible (in the presence of others) and make contact with the parent/guardian if necessary.
- If there are other people at the facility, wait for the parent/guardian closer to those people. In the meantime attempt to make contact with the parent/guardian.
- Avoid the risk of being alone with a child by having a parent/guardian or support person assist you with the training. Require that person to wait until all children have left.
- Have a Club policy that there is a register of parent/guardian emergency contact numbers and make sure coaches/officials have access to a phone.

Transport of Athletes/Participants

Ideally all athletes/participants should have their own transportation to and from sporting events.

You should only provide transportation when:

- The driver is properly licenced
- Other athletes/participants/parents/guardians are in the vehicle
- The ride has been approved by parents/guardians
- The ride is directly to or from sport or recreation facilities
- You should also call the parent/guardian and tell them what you are doing, the exact time you are leaving – so that you are accountable for your time.

Overnight Trips

- Always have more than one adult with children on an overnight trip/camp.
- There should always be more than one adult with a group of children, even if the number of children is small.
- Familiarise yourself with surroundings and note any possible risk areas and promote this to the other staff/parents on the trip to ensure suitable measures are implemented to avoid them if possible.
- Do not separate yourself and children from other adults.
- Obtain separate sleeping accommodation from the children (adults in separate rooms).
- However, ensure that adults are within hearing distance of the children to be able to respond to any alarm raised by a child.
- If an alarm is raised by a child more than one adult should respond.

The Use of Images of Children

There have been concerns about the risks posed directly and indirectly to children and young people through the use of photographs on sports web sites and other publications. Evidence in Australia indicates that information posted on an Internet site or published in a magazine or newspaper can be used to target children, to locate them, and then to condition or groom them. Additionally images can be used or adapted for inappropriate use. The end result is that in spite of the best intentions on the part of the publisher, children can end up being victims of abuse. Gymnastics Clubs need to be aware of these potential risks and take appropriate steps to address them.

Acquiring Images

- Permission needs to be obtained from the athlete's parent/guardian prior to taking the image. Ensure that they are aware of the way in which the image may be used.
- Request that professional photographers and/or spectators taking photographic/video images register with the Club and gain permission.
- Clearly outline and publicise what is considered appropriate behaviour and content to those taking photographic/video images.
- Do not allow unsupervised or individual access to athletes.
- Do not approve photo/video sessions outside the event venue or at an athlete's home.
- Provide details of who to contact if concerns or complaints of inappropriate photographic behaviour or content are raised.

Displaying Images

- Consider using models or illustrations for promotional/advertising purposes.
- Permission needs to be obtained from the athlete's parent/guardian prior to using their image. Ensure that they are aware of the way in which the image is to be used and how long the image will be displayed when used on a website.
- If the athlete is named, avoid using their image.
- If an image is used, avoid naming the athlete. If this is not possible avoid using both a first name and surname.
- Do not display personal information such as residential address, Email address or telephone numbers without gaining consent from a parent/guardian first.

- Do not display information about hobbies, likes/dislikes, school etc. as these can be used as grooming tools by paedophiles or other persons.
- Only use appropriate images of the athlete, relevant to the sport or activity, and suitably clothed. Images of athletes in an activity that involves minimal clothing or unusual body positions/poses, which could potentially be misused, should focus on the activity not on a particular child and avoid full face and body shots.
- Reduce the ability for the direct copying of pictures from a website to another source (i.e. disable the 'right mouse click' function).
- Provide details of who to contact if concerns or complaints of inappropriate image use are raised.

Activity Induction

Before your activity goes ahead it is a good idea to provide an induction about what will happen, regardless of whether it is a 'one off' activity or an activity conducted over a period of time. Provide this information to parents, carers and the children or young people taking part.

Your organisation, or the person conducting the activity on your behalf, should ensure the induction:

- Clearly identifies what should happen and what is expected of the activity
- Highlights anything that may be of concern to parents, carers, children, or young people
- Answers any questions people may have
- Lets people know what will happen if anything goes wrong, and
- Lets people know who they can talk to if they have issues or concerns.

From the perspective of parents, carers, children and young people, the induction should:

- Provide an opportunity to ask questions and clarify issues
- Help them understand what is expected of them
- Make them aware of what will happen if an issue arises, and
- Let them know who to contact if they have any concerns in the future.

An induction is a good opportunity to provide people with your organisation's Code of Conduct/s. It is recommended that you have a separate Code of Conduct for staff, parents, carers, children and young people.