

## CHILD SAFE ENVIRONMENTS POLICY

Rexcel Training is committed to the safety and wellbeing of children, young people and other vulnerable people who access our services. We support the rights of children and vulnerable persons in the community and will act without hesitation to ensure a safe environment is maintained at all times. We also support the rights and wellbeing of our staff and volunteers and encourage their active participation in building and maintaining a secure environment for all children, young people and other vulnerable people.

In addition to children and young people, other vulnerable people could include frail aged, people with a disability, and or people who experience disadvantage, for example, some Aboriginal Australians and newly arrived immigrants and/or refugees.

The *Children's Protection (Implementation of Report Recommendations) Amendment Act 2009* also amends the *Children's Protection Act 1993* to strengthen provisions relating to child safe environments. These amendments commenced on 1 January 2011. The amendments will require organisations to:

- conduct criminal history assessments on certain employees, volunteers and contractors, and
- lodge a child safe environment compliance statement with the Department for Families and Communities

### Legal obligations

- Section 8C (1) of the Children's Protection Act requires Rexcel Training to establish policies and procedures which take account of Department for Families and Communities Child Safe Environment Standards to ensure:
  - Child safe environments are established and maintained within the organisation;
  - Reports of suspected abuse or neglect are made under Part 4 of the Act
- Section 11 (2) prescribes mandated notifiers as any Rexcel Training employee or volunteer providing education and /or welfare services wholly or partly for children. Mandated notifiers must report any suspicion of abuse or neglect of a child to the Department of Families and Communities Child Abuse Report Line.
- Section 8B requires criminal history screening to be undertaken by non-government organisations prescribed by regulation of people occupying or acting in a prescribed position:
  - Before a person is appointed to, or engaged in a prescribed position: and/or
  - At any time as the organisation thinks necessary or desirable for the purpose of establishing or maintaining child safe environments.

### Communication

- The Safe Environment Policy will be communicated to all relevant audiences to ensure awareness and understanding of Rexcel Training's commitment to ensuring a safe environment. This will include Rexcel Training Members, staff, volunteers, contractors, consultants, parents, carers, and children where relevant.
- This policy also aims to ensure that all relevant Rexcel Training managers, employers, volunteers, contractors and consultants are aware of their duty of care responsibilities for the protection, safety and wellbeing of children at all times.

## Organisation's Commitment

- This policy aims to ensure the Rexcel Training organisation and facilities are safe environments for children, young people and other vulnerable people and that they are protected from abuse and neglect.
- All children who come to Rexcel Training have a right to feel and be safe. Rexcel Training is committed to the safety and wellbeing of all children and young people accessing our services and the welfare of the children in our care will always be our first priority. We aim to create a child safe and child friendly environment where children feel safe and have fun.
- This policy applies to all employees, volunteers, children and individuals involved in the organisation.
- Rexcel Training provides an open, welcome and safe environment for everyone participating in our programs and accessing our services and facilities. We provide high quality programs, services and facilities for children, young people and other vulnerable people within our community.
- Everyone participating in Rexcel Training's programs and accessing services and facilities provided by Rexcel Training (including Rexcel Training staff, volunteers, consultants, contractors, learners, children, parents and visitors) must keep to the following codes of behaviour.
- **Do:**
  - Treat everyone with respect and honesty ( this includes Council Members, staff, volunteers, consultants, learners, children, young people, parents and other vulnerable people);
  - Remember to be a positive role model to children in all your conduct with them;
  - Set clear boundaries about appropriate behaviour between yourself and the children in our facilities, programs, services & organisations – boundaries help everyone carry out their roles appropriately;
  - Follow organisational policy for the safety of children and other vulnerable people as outlined in our Safe Environments Policy;
  - Always have another adult present or in sight when conducting one to one coaching, instruction etc.;
  - Record and act on serious complaints of abuse.
- **Do not:**
  - Develop any 'special' relationship with children that could be seen as favouritism such as the offering of gifts or special treatment;
  - Do things of a personal nature that a child can do for themselves, such as going to the toilet or changing clothes.

## Recruitment, Selection and ongoing support

- Rexcel Training will take all reasonable steps to ensure that it engages the most suitable and appropriate people to work with, and provide services to, children and other vulnerable people. Applicants for prescribed positions will be screened for their suitability to provide services. Screening may involve interviews, referee reports, checking qualifications and previous employment history in working with children, and obtaining criminal history reports. If a criminal history report is obtained that contains a previous criminal offence the information will be dealt with in a manner that reflects the standards developed and issued by the Chief Executive Officer, Department of Families and Communities.
- Rexcel Training will ensure that all staff and volunteers who work with children or who have access to their records have ongoing support and training to develop, enhance and maintain a child safe environment this includes all relevant employees undertaking Mandatory Notification Training.

## Responding to suspected abuse and neglect

- Rexcel Training will ensure that staff, volunteers, contractors and consultants providing services to and/or working with children are aware of and are trained, and appropriately supported to report any suspicion of abuse or neglect on reasonable grounds.
- Rexcel Training has appointed the RTO Manager and the Human Resource Manager as the Safe Environment Contact Officers.

## Definitions

The Children's Protection Act 1993 (SA) states that **child abuse and neglect** (or harm) in relation to a child means

- Sexual Abuse; or
- Physical or emotional abuse, or neglect to the extent that:
  - The child has suffered, or is likely to suffer, physical or psychological injury detrimental to the child's wellbeing; or
  - The child's physical and psychological development is in jeopardy.

**Child** means a person under the age of 18.

**Criminal History Screening** involves obtaining information about relevant potential employees, volunteers, contractors or consultants on the basis that the information is deemed relevant to working in a child-related area. The information gathered may include details concerning previous employment and relevant experience; verification of qualification and professional registration; criminal history information, reference checks and work history reports.

**Mandatory reporting obligation** means a mandated notifier (any person providing services solely or partly to children) must report any suspicion of abuse or neglect of a child to the Department of Families and Communities Child Abuse Report Line.

**Prescribed position** is one that requires or involves prescribed functions as follows:

- Regular contact with children or working in close proximity to children on a regular basis
  - Close proximity means in reasonable unaided visual sight that is physically being within eyeshot;
  - Regular contact includes contact that may facilitate deliberate use of positions and status to access and exploit children. This may include multiple instances of contact of limited duration (attendance at a weekly program) or few, extended and intense periods of contact which may be away from the child's usual environment.
- Supervision or management of above positions; and
- Access to records relating to children
- A prescribed position may also include one that involves provision of aged care services, or services to other vulnerable people.
- Identifying prescribed positions will involve consideration of the nature of the service provided (proximity or intimacy), the frequency (incidental contact, regular and/or ongoing contact), and the vulnerability of the child or other vulnerable person in the service provision context.