



Reporting child abuse

South Australia

Legislation

Who is required to report child abuse?

Certain groups of people are required by law to make a confidential report to Families SA if they suspect on reasonable grounds that a child or young person (any person aged under 18 years) is being abused or neglected and this suspicion is formed in the course of their paid or voluntary work.

All staff and volunteers of sporting and recreation groups are mandated notifiers.

What are reporting responsibilities?

As a mandated notifier you must make a report to Families SA if you have any reasonable suspicion of neglect or abuse and you need to make that report without delay.

As a mandatory reporter you need to be aware that:

- it is **your personal responsibility**/obligation to report suspected child abuse and neglect – it is not the responsibility of your manager or employer.
- you **do not** have to **prove** that abuse has occurred.
- your notification needs to be accompanied by a statement of the observations, information and opinions on which your suspicions are based.
- You are immune from civil liability for reporting your suspicions in **good faith**.

Are there penalties involved for failing to report?

Yes. There is a penalty of up to \$10,000 for failing to meet the mandated notifier obligations.

Child Safe environments

All organisations within South Australia, including sporting and recreation organisations, are required under the *Children's Protection Act 1993* to establish policies and procedures for

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ensuring that child safe environments are established and maintained within the organisations.

Child Safe environment strategies are put in place to prevent and minimise opportunities for child abuse within your organisation including preventing offenders from gaining access to your organisation. Child safe environments include ensuring your staff and volunteers understand their child protection obligations and that staff and volunteers know who to go to should they have suspicions a child may be at risk of harm.

Organisations working to create child safe environments and strengthen their environment are committed to and understand the importance of children's safety.

Who is required under legislation to implement child safe environments?

All organisations within South Australia, including sporting and recreation organisations, are required under the *Children's Protection Act 1993* to establish policies and procedures for ensuring that:

- reports of suspected abuse and neglect are made by mandated notifiers
- child safe environments are established and maintained within the organisations.

Action

How do I make a report?

Call the Child Abuse Report Line – 13 14 78

If you believe a child is in immediate danger or in a life-threatening situation, contact the Police Service immediately by dialling **000**.

What does establishing a child-safe environment involve?

The *Child Safe Environments: Principles of Good Practice* are as follows:

1 Identify and analyse risk of harm

The organisation develops and implements a risk management strategy. This includes a review of existing child protection policies and practices to determine how child-safe and child-friendly the organisation is and the development of strategies to minimise and prevent risk of harm to children.

2 Develop codes of conduct for adults and children

The organisation has codes of conduct that specify standards of conduct and care when dealing and interacting with children, particularly those in the organisation's care. The organisation also has codes of conduct to address appropriate behaviour between children. These codes set out professional boundaries, ethical behaviour and unacceptable behaviour.

3 Choose suitable employees and volunteers

The organisation takes all reasonable steps to ensure that it engages the most suitable and appropriate people to work with children. This is more likely to be achieved using a range of screening measures. Such measures aim to minimise the likelihood of engaging (or retaining) people who are unsuitable to work with children.

If a criminal history report is obtained as part of their screening process, the organisation ensures that the criminal history information is dealt with in accordance with the standards developed by the Chief Executive of the Department for Families and Communities.¹

4 Support, train, supervise and enhance performance

The organisation ensures that volunteers and employees who work with children or their records have ongoing supervision, support and training such that their performance is developed and enhanced to promote the establishment and maintenance of a child safe environment.

5 Empower and promote the participation of children in decision-making and service development

The organisation promotes the involvement and participation of children and young people in developing and maintaining child safe environments.

6 Report and respond appropriately to suspected abuse and neglect

The organisation ensures that volunteers and employees are able to identify and respond to children at risk of harm. The organisation makes all volunteers and employees aware of their responsibilities under the *Children's Protection Act 1993* if they have suspicion on reasonable grounds that a child has been or is being abused or neglected.

Further information about these *Child Safe Environments: Principles of Good Practice* is available from the Families SA website (www.families.sa.gov.au).

What if my organisation is very small?

Under section 8C of the *Children's Protection Act 1993*, it is acknowledged that policies and procedures of organisations may vary according to the size, nature and resources of that organisation.

The SA Department of Recreation and Sport is assisting by developing documents and resources specifically to aid smaller organisations.

Resources

Where can I get further information or resources on reporting?

- [South Australian Department of Families and Communities - Families SA](#) – For a practical guide for organisations “Mandatory Notification” and for Guidelines for Reporting Child Abuse and Neglect booklet and other resources
- [South Australian Department of Recreation and Sport](#)
- [Australian Sports Commission](#)

¹ Department for Families and Communities Child Safe Environments: *Standards when dealing with information obtained about the criminal history of employees and volunteers who work with children*, Government of South Australia, Adelaide, 2007.

Where can I get further information or resources on Child Safe Environments?

- *Child Safe Environments: Principles of Good Practice* from the Families SA website (www.families.sa.gov.au)
- *Guidelines for Reporting Child Abuse and Neglect* from the Families SA website (www.families.sa.gov.au)
- *Practical Guide for Organisations on Child Safe Environments* from the Families SA website
- [South Australian Department of Recreation and Sport](#)
- [Australian Sports Commission](#)
- [Child Wise – "Choosing with Care" 12 Steps to a Child Safe Organisation](#)
- SA Office for Volunteers
- SA Office for Recreation and Sport