

Child Safe Environment Policy and Code of Conduct

The Student Robotics Club of South Australia Incorporated



Table of Contents

1. Change Register.....	2
2. Purpose.....	3
3. Objectives.....	3
4. Context.....	3
5. Scope.....	3
6. Commitment to Child Safety.....	3
7. Communication.....	4
8. Code of Conduct.....	4
9. Recruitment.....	5
10. Training, Supervision and Support.....	6
11. Reporting and Responding.....	6
12. Reports or Concerns Relating to the Actions of a Volunteer of our Organisation.....	7
13. Supporting Children, Young People, and their Families.....	7
14. Professional Conduct.....	7
15. Risk Management.....	8
16. Related Policies and Procedures.....	10
17. Policy Review.....	10
Appendix 1.....	12
Appendix 2.....	13

1. Change Register

Version	Date	Description	Author
1	2019	Initial Draft	WS
2	09/10/2024	Compliance updates	BS

2. Purpose

This policy has been written to demonstrate the strong commitment of the Student Robotics Club of South Australia Incorporated (SRCSA) to child safety and establishing and maintaining child safe and child friendly environments. The SRCSA takes all practicable steps to ensure all members feel safe within an environment of mutual respect.

3. Objectives

These policies and procedures concerning Child protection have the following goals:

- To provide ways to minimise the risk of child abuse to youth members; and
- To ensure adults involved in the SRCSA act within professional boundaries and are committed towards appropriate behaviour to children and young people; and
- To ensure any allegations of child abuse and/or inappropriate adult behaviour are handled in a consistent and appropriate manner.

4. Context

This policy reflects our commitment to provide a safe environment where every person has the right to be treated with respect and is safe and protected from harm. It complies with our obligations under the Children and Youth (Safety) Act 2017, Child Safety (Prohibited Persons) Act 2016, and aligns with the National Principles of Child Safe Organisations.

This policy also complies with the SA Mandatory Reporting Guide 2018 and FIRST Youth Protection Program.

5. Scope

This policy applies to all people involved in the organisation, including:

- Volunteers; and
- Mentors; and
- Alumni members; and
- Students; and
- Parents of students, particularly accompanying members to competitions outside of SA; and
- Indirect service providers; and
- Any other individuals, consultants or sponsors involved in this organisation.

All members are required to agree to this policy upon commencement or renewal of their membership.

6. Commitment to Child Safety

All young people who come to the SRCSA have a right to feel and be safe.

We are committed to the safety and well-being of all children and young people accessing our club 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 all young people are valued and feel safe.

We provide advice and support to youth members, parents, mentors, alumni members and volunteers regarding the safety and well-being of children in our organisation.

This policy was developed in collaboration with all our volunteers, the young people who use our services and their parents.

7. Communication

The SRCSA will ensure that everyone to whom this policy applies is aware of and has had an opportunity to read the policy.

We also request volunteers, mentors, alumni members and parents (where appropriate) to sign a written statement indicating that they have read and will comply with our child-safe policy. This forms part of the registration to become a mentor, volunteer or alumni member with the SRCSA. We retain a copy of all signed statements and these are stored securely in a protected area of the club drive.

8. Code of Conduct

All members are made aware of, and must comply with, our code of conduct. Our code of conduct was developed in collaboration with all our volunteers, mentors, the young people who use our services and their parents. This code of conduct is based on the US FIRST Young Person's protection program code of conduct. All members, volunteers, mentors and parents are able to access and discuss this document and all provide agreement to compliance.

Caring for children and young people brings additional responsibilities for mentors, alumni members and volunteers of this organisation. All mentors, alumni members and volunteers of this organisation are responsible for promoting the safety and well being of children and young people by:

- Treating all children and young people and other volunteers/mentors with dignity, equality and respect; and
- Adhering to this child safe policy at all times; and
- Listening and responding appropriately to the views and concerns of others particularly children and young people, within the organisation; and
- Taking all reasonable steps to ensure the safety and protection of children and young people within the organisation; and
- Ensuring children and young people understand their rights and explaining this in age appropriate language what they can expect when participating in SRCSA through competition activities, training and social activities; and
- Responding quickly, fairly and transparently to any serious complaints made by a child, young person or their parent/guardian; and

- Complying with mandatory notification expectations as soon as practicable if they form a suspicion on reasonable grounds that a child or young person is being abused or neglected; and
- Ensuring there is another adult, parent or guardian present when working with children; and
- Mentors, volunteers and alumni members will not:
 - Take part in any unnecessary physical contact with a child or young person; or
 - Discriminate against any child or young person because of age, gender, cultural background, religion, vulnerability or sexuality; or
 - Make comments on the clubs' social media sites that would denigrate others or bring negative attention to SRCSA.
- When attending interstate and overseas competitions it is the policy of SRCSA that youth members are accompanied by a parent or guardian; and
- It is a requirement of membership of SRCSA and registration with US FIRST that a photography consent form is completed and members informed that their image may be obtained in the process of recording team events; and
- It is a mandatory requirement of SRCSA that all youth members, alumni members, mentors and volunteers attend club safety training including cyber safety, safe use of tools, and PPE training; and
- It is a requirement of membership of SRCSA that all children under the age of 14 must be accompanied by their guardian whilst attending team activities.

Breaches or suspected breaches of the Code of Conduct should be reported as soon as practicable to management either in person, or via email at safety@roborooos.org.au. Breaches or suspected breaches of the Code of Conduct will be taken seriously and dealt with quickly, fairly and transparently.

Any member who breaches the Code of Conduct will face disciplinary action and depending on severity of the breach, the worker may have their membership terminated.

9. Recruitment

The SRCSA takes all reasonable steps to ensure that it engages the most suitable and appropriate people to work with young people.

We employ a range of screening measures and apply best practice standards in the screening and recruitment of mentors and volunteers.

This includes maintaining a register of compliance in screening and training.

We conduct applications for DHS Working with Children Checks (WWCCs) for people working with children, as set out in Section 6 of the Child Safety (Prohibited Persons) Act 2016.

This is required for anyone within our organisation who:

- Has regular contact with children and is not directly supervised at all times; or
- Works in close proximity to children on a regular basis and is not directly supervised at all times; or
- Supervises or manages persons who:

- Have regular contact with children; or
- Work in close proximity to children on a regular basis; or
- Has access to sensitive records relating to children or young people; or
- Are supervising teams at interstate and/or overseas competitions which require overnight care and/or chaperone activities.

Exemptions from this requirement may apply in some circumstances.

10. Training, Supervision and Support

The SRCSA seeks to attract and retain the best mentors and volunteers.

We provide support and supervision so people feel valued, respected and fairly treated.

We ensure that volunteers who work with children have ongoing supervision, support and training so that their capacity is developed and enhanced to promote the establishment and maintenance of a child safe environment.

Strategies we have implemented include:

- All new volunteers undergo induction which includes information about the SRCSA, the club requirements for mentors, Volunteers and alumni members and how to access the SRCSA child safe policy and code of conduct through google drive and in hard copy at the workshop; and
This information includes outlines of acceptable boundaries and appropriate behaviours as well as actions necessary if these are not honoured.
- All mentors, volunteers and alumni members are requested to obtain a Working with Children Check, or supply a current check, and complete Responding to Risk of Harm, Abuse and Neglect (RRHAN-EC) training, Safe Place training or provide a current certificate; and
- Opportunities are also provided for members, mentors, volunteers and alumni members to access community training in Safe Place environments.

11. Reporting and Responding

The SRCSA will not tolerate incidents which place children at risk of hard, abuse or neglect.

All mentors and volunteers understand their obligation to notify the Child Abuse Report Line on 13 14 78 as soon as practicable if they have a suspicion on reasonable grounds that a child has been, or is being, abused or neglected or that an adult is observed or reported as acting inappropriately towards children and young people.

We ensure that all members have access to relevant information resources such as:

- Child safe environment: Mandated Reporting Guide.
- DHS reporting child abuse website
- US FIRST Young person's protection program and code of conduct.

We ensure that support is also available for the adult making the report, particularly where an ongoing service is provided to the child, young person and their family.

12. Reports or Concerns Relating to the Actions of a Volunteer of our Organisation

In addition to making a report to the Child Abuse Report Line, mentors, parents, alumni and volunteer members must also report to a Steering Committee member if they form a suspicion on reasonable grounds that a child has been, or is being, abused or neglected by another member, parent, mentor or volunteer.

In response to any report, the Steering Committee may determine to take disciplinary action.

Other protective actions may also be introduced to ensure the safety of children and young people within our organisation.

13. Supporting Children, Young People, and their Families

Child Protection is everyone's responsibility.

The SRCSA recognises that even where a report is made, we may still have a role in supporting the child or young person.

This support may include:

- Referring the child, young person or their family to other appropriate services; or
- Providing a child safe environment; or
- Displaying information about services that can assist children and their families (such as the Kids Helpline and Headstart Intervention services) in areas accessed by children and their families.

14. Professional Conduct

All adults working with youth members in the SRCSA are expected to maintain professional boundaries in their interactions and relationships with youth members.

This represents a key component of their duty of care towards the wellbeing and safety of children and young people.

This responsibility refers to:

- Expectations of their own conduct; and
- Intervening in any inappropriate conduct of other adults towards members; and
- Reporting inappropriate behaviour of other adults if they observe or are informed of such behaviour.

Some examples below are to assist adults in establishing and maintaining expected boundaries. This list is not exhaustive.

- Treat all people with respect and honesty eg volunteers, alumni, mentors, members, and parents; and
- Be a positive role model to children and young people in all your conduct with them; and
- Follow organisational policy and guidelines for the safety of children as outlined in Child Safe Organisations Policy and US FIRST Youth Protection Program guidelines; and
- Always have another adult present or in sight when conducting one to one mentoring; and
- Conduct mentoring activities where possible in visible environments and public spaces; and
- Always have another youth member present if transporting a youth member or gain parental consent; and
- Refrain from developing any special relationships with children or young people that could be seen as favouritism, such as the offering of gifts or special treatment; and
- Refrain from any comments about a youth member’s appearance including excessive flattering comments; and
- Photographing or recording any youth member must be done with parental consent and where possible use SRCSA equipment rather than personal equipment; and
- Storage of images and videos to be uploaded to SRCSA drive as soon as practicable rather than storing on personal equipment; and
- Raise any concerns, problems or issues with a committee member as soon as possible; and
- Record and act on complaints of abuse; and
- Refrain from unwarranted or unwanted touching of a youth member including engaging in rough physical games.

Any concerns are dealt with in the following manner:

- Phone call or email to the Steering Group expressing a concern
- Appropriate disciplinary action will be taken if deemed necessary
- Mentors will be replaced if personality/mentoring style does not match student/club learning needs

15. Risk Management

Identified Risk	Strategies to Minimise Risk
Online communication/ activities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Online accounts given to members are restricted against communicating with outside users ● Members are not allowed to contact young people directly without their guardian “CC’d” in

Identified Risk	Strategies to Minimise Risk
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Communication with young people outside of club activities is not permitted • Supervision is provided for all online activities • Policies are in place to prevent members accessing inappropriate content online
Physical contact	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Any physical contact must be appropriate to the delivery of services being provided • Where physical contact is required, this is undertaken in a safe way by explaining why contact is required and what will happen, and asking the young person for their permission (and/or their guardian's where relevant) before proceeding
Supervision	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Members under the age of 14 are required to be supervised by their guardian at all times during club activities • If a young person has not been collected at the end of a session, at least two adults are required to stay with the young person until they are collected • Young people will never be in a 1-on-1 situation with an adult. At least 2 adult members must be present
Physical environment	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A risk register is maintained and reviewed annually • Risk assessments are conducted for all activities • Ensure all equipment is in good safe working order
Privacy and confidentiality	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • All documents containing confidential and/or private information are stored in accordance with the club's Data Protection and Information Security Policy • Members with access must not disclose information regarding any young person without consent of the young person and their guardian
Images and videos of young people	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Consent of the young person and their guardian is required • Images and videos are required to be stored on the SRCSA Drive, not on personal devices • Where personal devices are used to capture media, the media must be transferred to the SRCSA Drive and removed from the personal device • Media of young people must be presented in a way that de-identifies the young person. i.e. without their full name
Transport of young people	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Members must not transport a young child unless specifically approved • A young person's guardian must consent • The transporting member must have a valid, unrestricted driver's licence • The vehicle must be registered, insured, and in a roadworthy condition • A member must not be alone with a young person, at least 2 adults must be present

Identified Risk	Strategies to Minimise Risk
Overnight/offsite activities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Consent of guardian must be given ● Young people must be supervised by a minimum of 2 adults of the same gender as the children attending ● Privacy when young parole are bathing, toileting and dressing must be provided ● Young people will not be left under the supervision of unauthorised persons ● Sleeping arrangements will not compromise the safety of young people such as unsupervised sleeping arrangements, or young people sharing a bed or an adult sleeping in the same bed as the young person ● All members have the right to contact their parents, or another adult, if they feel unsafe, uncomfortable, or distressed during the stay ● In the event of billeting arrangements, host adults should have a child or young person attending the same event from the same household, and have a not prohibited WWCC
Bathroom/change room requirements	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● A minimum of 2 adults of the same gender as the young person must be present, or the young person's guardian ● Supervision will be provided ensuring the young person's privacy ● Adults must not shower or change whilst supervising young people ● Phones, cameras and recording devices must not be used in bathrooms or change rooms

16. Related Policies and Procedures

- *Data Protection and Information Security Policy*
- *US FIRST Youth Protection Program guidelines*

17. Policy Review

We will, at a minimum, review this policy and the related procedures once every 5 years as required by the Children and Young People (Safety) Act 2017. We will also review this policy whenever:

- New or added risks are identified for young people, which may require a change in the policy or procedure; or
- A critical incident where a young person has experienced harm through involvement in the organisation; or
- Concerns are raised by anyone involved in your organisation about child safety or welfare in the organisation; or
- Awareness or compliance to the child safety policy and/or procedures is low; or

- Legislative changes/requirements.

We will lodge a new child safe environments compliance statement with the Department of Human Services each time we review and update this policy.

Policy Date: 09/10/2024

Review Date: 01/05/2029

Appendix 1

Conducting relevant history assessments applications

Assessments required for prescribed positions

All mentors, alumni members, members over 18 years and volunteers of the SRCSA who occupy a prescribed position are required to make an application for a DHS Working with Children Check once every five years as required and outlined in Working with Children Check - Information for Organisations document 2020.

This requirement applies to all volunteers, mentors and alumni members who regularly work with or around children in an unsupervised capacity or have access to prescribed records relating to children.

This also includes parents who will be accompanying their children to competitions outside of South Australia including world competitions overseas where they are likely to be chaperoning other students apart from their own child.

Procedure for conducting Working with Children Checks

Mentors, volunteers, parents and adult alumni members must provide a current Working with Children Check from the DHS (Department of Human Services).

Prior to the appointment of a new mentor, volunteer or alumni members and then at five yearly intervals, the SRCSA will direct those with ongoing involvement to make another application as evidence that the applicant does not pose an increased risk of harm to children and young people.

The SRCSA may obtain a DHS Working with Children Check for any mentor, volunteer or alumni member at any time that club believes it necessary or desirable for the purpose of maintaining a child safe environment.

Information relating to a person's relevant history and the assessment process is managed securely and confidentially.

Appendix 2

SRCSA overview of compliance document

The Student Robotics Club of South Australia (RoboRoos) has a strong commitment to child safety and establishing and maintaining child safe and child friendly environments.

Why Compliance?

- Legislated under the Child and Youth (Safety) Act (2017) and Child Safety (Prohibited Persons) Act 2016; and
- Working with Children relevant history check assessments will be compulsory as of 1st July 2019 for all people aged 18 years+ volunteering and working with children; and
- It is expected by *FIRST.org* that all competing teams are child safe and meet legislative requirements of your country.

THESE CHECKS ARE FREE AND CAN BE USED IN ALTERNATIVE SETTINGS

DHS - Working With Children Check

If you are over 18 & your function in the SRCSA - RoboRoos is:

- Regular contact with children on a regular basis; or
- Are in close proximity to children during any overnight or outside of State event; or
- Supervise or manage persons who have regular contact with children; or
- Have access to sensitive records relating to children or young people; or
- This includes:
 - Mentors; and
 - Students and alumni aged 18 or over; and
 - Parents and carers who are supporting children other than their own at times during build, competition and club training and events; and
 - Members of steering committee; and
 - Volunteers over 18 years involved in school outreach.

You should also undertake training for Compliance

- Responding to Risks of Harm, Abuse and Neglect - Education and Care (RRHAN-EC); and
- Safe Environments training