



Child Safe Policy

Purpose

All children at GDA have a right to feel safe, protected and included.

This policy is part of our organisation's ongoing commitment to protecting the children in our care from harm and abuse. It:

- outlines the child safe practices our organisation has put in place to minimise the risks to child safety
- sets out what is required from members, including volunteers and others who interact with our organisation, so they know what is expected from them to keep children safe.

Our commitment to child safety

At GDA we commit to the safety and wellbeing of every child in our care. Please read our Statement of Commitment to Child Safety, which is available on our website

<https://www.gardindanceacademy.com.au/policies>.

Our organisation ensures services and activities are inclusive of all children, including children with diverse needs.

Scope and audience for this policy

The policy describes what is required from all GDA members, volunteers, parents, children and other individuals in the organisation and applies to all activities conducted by GDA.

Responsibilities for children's safety

Everyone in our organisation is expected to carry out the requirements specific to their role to keep children safe. This includes:

- upholding our organisation's commitment to child safety
- reading, signing and upholding the behaviours set out in our Child Safe Code of Conduct
- meeting requirements across all other child safe policies and procedures, including child safe recruitment practices and risk management
- taking part in our regular reviews of our child safe documents
- reporting all breaches of our policies or any allegations of child harm or abuse, and meeting all external reporting obligations
- holding and maintaining a valid Blue Card and notifying GDA of any change to my status
- completing all child safe training as required by GDA

- the Executive Committee (Executive) has the role of making sure GDA prioritises children's safety and that, when anyone raises concerns about children's safety, the matter is referred to the Child Safety Officer
- the Executive will champion and model a child safe culture at GDA. We encourage anyone involved with the organisation to report a child safety concern. The Executive will work to create a positive culture around reporting so that people feel comfortable to raise concerns
- the Executive will conduct an annual review of how effectively GDA are delivering child safety and wellbeing.

Please contact the Child Safety Officer at admin@gardindanceacademy.com.au with any of your child-safety related questions or concerns.

Active participation of children, families and communities

- All our child-related policies and procedures are easily accessible on our website and offline for everyone who accesses our services and events, including children, parents, carers and community members.
- Children, parents and carers from diverse backgrounds and circumstances are encouraged to provide feedback on our child-related policies and procedures, including our Child Safe Code of Conduct that describes acceptable and non-acceptable behaviours.
- We provide opportunities for children to provide feedback to our management, board or committee on what makes them feel safe, supported and included.

Child Safe Code of Conduct

- GDA has a Child Safe Code of Conduct. GDA Members and volunteers must comply with the Code of Conduct at all times. Breaches of the Code of Conduct may result in disciplinary action including termination of a person's involvement with the organisation.
- All third-party contractors (e.g., Adjudicators) are also expected to abide by the Child Safe Code of Conduct, and where they are engaging with children will have to sign an agreement to comply with the code, prior to delivering any services.

Recruiting volunteers

- We require a Blue Card for all GDA members and volunteers who have a role with children.

Supporting GDA members and volunteers

- GDA is committed to ensuring that all GDA members and volunteers receive training to ensure they understand their responsibilities in relation to child safety and to support their engagement with children. GDA assists its members and volunteers to incorporate child safety considerations into decisions and to promote a safe environment where children are empowered to speak up about issues that affect them.
- Issues or concerns about behaviour with children will be raised immediately and addressed in line with the GDA Child Safe Code of Conduct and GDA Child Safety and Wellbeing Policy containing the Child Safety Complaints Process.

Information sharing

- GDA may share relevant information to promote the safety and wellbeing of children, where it is appropriate and in their best interests. GDA will keep information about complaints confidential, except where it is necessary to share information to respond properly to a complaint or to prioritise child.

Definitions of harm and abuse

General definitions

Psychological abuse (also known as emotional abuse)

This includes bullying, threatening and abusive language, intimidation, shaming and name calling, ignoring and isolating a child, and exposure to domestic and family violence.

Physical abuse

This includes physical punishment, such as pushing, shoving, punching, slapping and kicking, resulting in injury, burns, choking or bruising.

Sexual abuse/sexual misconduct

This includes the sexual touching of a child, grooming, and production, distribution or possession of child abuse material.

Grooming

This is a process where a person manipulates a child or group of children and sometimes those looking after them, including parents, carers, teachers and leaders. They do this to establish a position of 'trust' so they can then later sexually abuse the child.

Misconduct

This is inappropriate behaviour that may not be as severe as abuse but could indicate that abuse is occurring and would often be in breach of an organisation's Child Safe Code of Conduct. This could include showing a child something inappropriate on a phone, having inappropriate conversations with a child or an adult sitting with a child on their lap.

Lack of appropriate care

This includes not providing adequate and proper supervision, nourishment, clothing, shelter, education or medical care.

Neglect

Failing to provide basic physical & emotional necessities, harming a child or putting a child at risk.

Discrimination

Prohibited on grounds of: Age, disability, marital status, parental/carers status, physical features, political belief, pregnancy, race, religious belief, sex/gender, sexual orientation or sexual identity. This also includes indirect discrimination – requesting, assisting, instructing, encouraging another person to engage in discrimination.

Victimisation

Where a person is subject to, or is threatened to suffer, any detriment or unfair treatment – because that person has or intends to pursue their legal rights under anti-harassment legislation.

What the policy covers

Transporting children

Best practice is to always have two adults travelling with children. If this is not possible, a suitable arrangement must be made between the organisation and the parents of the children. If a child is alone with an adult in a car they must sit on the back seat. Every child should be accounted for at the end of a journey.

Social media use and online communication

Members and volunteers must never communicate privately with children online or on social media. Any necessary online communication should include the child's parent or carer in the correspondence.

Photography and the use of images

Photos and videos of children can only be taken with the permission of parents or carers. Parents and carers must also approve any images used on our social media channels. It is unacceptable for members or volunteers to take photos or videos of children, other than their own, on personal devices, or to share images without permission.

Physical contact

Physical contact with children should be kept to a minimum. Everyone involved in the organisation is expected to have healthy physical boundaries with children, limited only to what is necessary for teaching dance safely.

Gifts and benefits

Members and volunteers must never give personal gifts to children, or bestow benefits of any kind to a child, unless they have direct permission from the child's parents or carers.

Out of hours contact with children

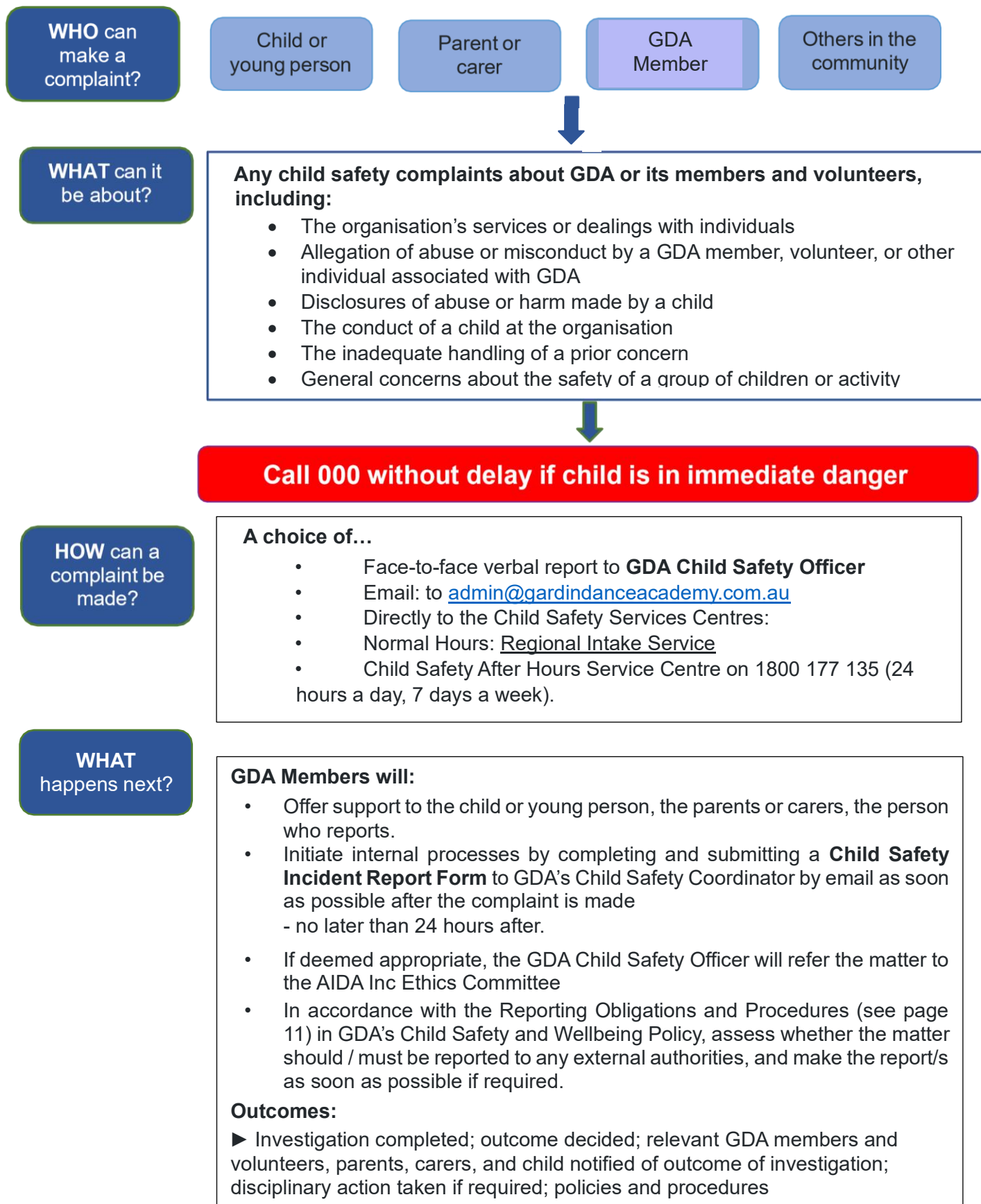
Members and volunteers must let us know about any out-of-hours contact they have with children in our care. It is unacceptable for members or volunteers to participate in the lives of children outside the organisation without a valid reason. Professional boundaries with the children in our care must be maintained at all times.

Illness and injury management

Injuries must be reported to the first aid officer on duty and first aid administered in a safe space within lines of sight of other adults.

Reporting requirements for different types of concerns or incidents

Child Safety Complaints Process



Child Safety Incident Procedures

The four steps that all GDA personnel (i.e., GDA members, volunteers, parents, students) must follow regarding any Child Safety Incident (including child safety complaints about GDA) are:

1. Recognise
2. Respond
3. Report
4. Support

1. Recognise

GDA may become aware of an incident, allegation or suspicion of child abuse or harm (either by adults or by other children) in a number of ways, such as:

- a. a complaint is made through GDA's complaints process.
- b. a child states they or someone they know has been abused (noting that sometimes the child may in fact be referring to themselves).
- c. behaviour consistent with that of an abuse victim is observed.
- d. someone else has raised a suspicion of abuse but is unwilling to report it.
- e. observing suspicious behaviour.

Signs that may indicate a child is being abused:

Sometimes a child may tell us if they are being harmed, and at other times we will need to look out for signs that may indicate a child is being abused, such as changes in behaviour, emotions, or physical appearance.

Common behavioural indicators / signs across the different types of child abuse and harm include:

- unusual or regressive changes in behaviour, like a sudden decline in academic performance, anxiety, withdrawal, hyperactivity, bedwetting, sleep disturbances, drug, or alcohol misuse
- concerning behaviours that may be harmful to themselves or others
- being extremely sensitive and alert to their surroundings (hypervigilance)
- absences from school without reasonable explanation
- frequent headaches or stomach pains
- drawings or writing which depict violence or abuse
- raising a concern about a friend or someone they know
- attempted suicide or self-harm
- unexplained or inconsistent, vague, or unlikely explanations for an injury
- unexplained bruising, fractures, or other physical injuries
- unusual fear of physical contact
- harm to others or animals
- wariness or fear of someone including a parent, carer, other adult or child
- trying to protect friends or other family members from someone
- reluctance to go home
- the child is assessed as having experienced a significant delay in their emotional or intellectual development or that their functioning has been impaired
- taking on a caring or parental role with siblings prematurely
- watch for any changes in the child's general mood. The child may become anxious, irritable, depressed, angry, or show a combination of emotions. However, do not assume that just because you see these signs the child is being abused - these signs can apply to a child under stress and may not be related to abuse.

2. Respond

Children and young people raising complaints and safety concerns or disclose abuse should be treated with sensitivity and given support

A paramount consideration when managing any Child Safety Incident is to reduce actual and / or incidental harm experienced by the child or young person associated with the disclosure /reporting of the complaint.

GDA members role in further harm prevention or reduction

GDA members will prevent or reduce further harm to those impacted by the incident by:

- Calling Emergency Services on 000 if a child is at immediate risk of harm
- Making the surroundings safe to prevent immediate recurrence of the incident, for example:
 - removing potentially harmful person(s)
 - increasing supervision of children and young people
 - moving uninvolved children and young people away from the incident ○ move to a safe place
 - alerting others to risks that extend beyond the local environment,
- Providing immediate care and support to the child/young person and others involved in the incident by addressing:
 - physical wellbeing e.g., providing first aid
 - emotional/psychological wellbeing e.g., arranging for coverage of duties and supervision
 - ○ facilitating access to counselling for GDA members if needed

GDA members role upon receiving a complaint or concern

If a child or young person raises a child safety complaint or concern, including disclosing abuse, GDA members will:

- Let the child talk about their concerns in their own time and in their own words
- Listen to the allegation or disclosure supportively, without judgement or dispute
- Maintain a calm appearance and do not be afraid of saying the 'wrong' thing
- Be supportive, reassuring and comforting if they are upset
- Tell them you believe them; it is not their fault and that they were right to tell you
- Ask open-ended questions to clarify the basic details, without seeking detailed information or asking suggestive or leading questions
- Let them know you will act on this information, that you may need to let other people know, and explain why that is the case. Do not promise to keep any information a secret
- Do not make promises you cannot keep
- Write down what the child told you as soon as you can, using their words as best as you can remember
- Take note of their behaviour and appearance at the time
- Take notes of physical evidence, for example, bruising if the child shows you
- Help the child and their family to get appropriate support, such as counselling
- Thank or commend them for raising the concern and tell them that GDA will take immediate action in response to the disclosure / allegation
- Report the matter as per the Reporting Obligations and Procedures outlined next in this Policy.

In your responses you will need to consider the specific needs of the child or young person.

Consider the unique qualities of the child including, for example, whether the child is, or may be Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander, has a disability, identifies as LGBTIQ+, has a culturally and linguistically diverse background and/or is unable to live at home.

3. Report

Once the immediate response is completed, GDA will report Child Safety Incidents by:

1. Following the **Child Safety Incident Reporting Process for GDA**; and
2. Fulfilling the relevant **Reporting Obligations and Procedures** detailed below.

Reporting Obligations and Procedures

GDA members must report Child Safety Incidents in accordance with the relevant reporting obligations and procedures outlined below, **each time** they become aware of any further grounds for the reasonable belief of abuse or harm.

Internal Reporting

GDA Members must report **ALL Child Safety Incidents** internally, by:

- notifying the GDA Child Safety Officer verbally as soon as possible
- completing a Child Safety Incident Report Form, and
- submitting the completed form to GDA's Child Safety Officer by email as soon as possible - within 24 hours of the incident
- If deemed appropriate, the GDA Child Safety Officer will refer the matter to the AIDA Inc Ethics Committee

If GDA become aware of a Child Safety Incident via **any complaints process**, they must complete a Child Safe Incident Report Form by transferring the information contained within the complaint to that form and providing any other relevant information available and submit it as above.

External Reporting

GDA is subject to legal obligations regarding reporting child abuse, harm, or other child-related misconduct to external authorities, which are outlined below. The external reporting obligations for each Child Safety Incident will depend on the nature and circumstances of that incident.

Sometimes it may not be a legal requirement for GDA to report a complaint or concern to external authorities, but it may still be advisable to report so the safety of children can be prioritised. At all times, child safety must be GDA's main consideration when considering reporting to external authorities.

Alleged or suspected criminal conduct

Physical or sexual abuse, including grooming, of children is a crime and should be reported to the police. Family violence, regardless of if a child has been physically or sexually abused, is serious. If a concern relates to family violence it should be reported to the police. If anyone is in imminent or immediate danger, call 000 immediately.

Failure to disclose a sexual offence.

If an adult reasonably believes a sexual offence has been committed by an adult against a child under the age of 16, they must report it to Queensland Police by calling 000 or going to their local police station.

Failure to disclose the information may be a criminal offence. The offence applies to all adults in Queensland, not just professionals who work with children, unless they have a 'reasonable excuse' or are exempt.

Child Safety Incident and Reporting Obligations and Procedures Summary

External reporting obligations vary depending on the nature and circumstances of the Child Safety Incident. Therefore, the reporting obligations and procedures for different types of Child Safety Incidents are summarised in the table below.

Type of Child Safety Incident	Reporting Obligations and Procedures
Physical abuse (against or in the presence of a child)	Report to: • The Child Safety Officer, verbally or via email as soon as possible; AND/OR by submitting a Complaints and Allegations Record Form. If deemed appropriate, the GDA Child Safety Officer will refer the matter to the AIDA Inc Ethics Committee • Child Safety Services Centre, <u>if</u> the child or young person has suffered or is likely to suffer significant harm because of the abuse; AND • Queensland Police, <u>if</u>: ○ The child or young person is in immediate danger; and/or ○ Alleged or suspected criminal conduct has occurred, such as physical or sexual abuse (including grooming) of children, or family violence; and/or ○ You have a reasonable belief that an adult has committed or attempted a sexual offence (including grooming) against a child under 16 years of age
Sexual abuse (against or in the presence of a child, including attempted)	
Grooming	
Emotional or psychological abuse	Report to: • The Child Safety Officer, verbally or via email as soon as possible; AND/OR by submitting a Complaints and Allegations Record Form. If deemed appropriate, the GDA Child Safety Officer will refer the matter to the AIDA Inc Ethics Committee • Child Safety Services Centre, <u>if</u> the child or young person has suffered or is likely to suffer significant harm because of the abuse or neglect; AND • Queensland Police, <u>if</u> the child or young person is in immediate danger.
Neglect	

Reportable Conduct	If the alleged perpetrator is an GDA member, volunteer, or student the abuse or harm may constitute Reportable Conduct under the Reportable Conduct Scheme. In these situations, you must still complete the above reporting requirements and processes
--------------------	--

Child Safety Incident Reporting Process for GDA

WHO must report?

GDA Member

Volunteers

Parents/Students



WHAT to report?

Any Child Safety Incident (i.e., all child safety concerns or complaints), including:

- Direct or indirect disclosure of child abuse or harm (i.e. sexual, physical, emotional, psychological, neglect, grooming or exposure to family violence)
- Allegation, suspicion or observation of child abuse or harm
- Breach of GDA's Child Safe Policy, including the Child Safe Code of Conduct
- Child safety complaints against GDA or its members/volunteers
- Environmental risks that could increase the likelihood of abuse occurring.



Call 000 without delay if child is in immediate danger



HOW to report?

1. Determine what **immediate action** needs to take place to protect the child or young person from harm (or further harm), including whether the Police or Child Safety Services need to be contacted ASAP.
2. Start completing a **Complaints and Allegations Record Form**, which will provide guidance on whether a report also needs to be made to any external authorities.
3. Decide if further advice is needed about how to proceed. If further advice is needed, contact the GDA Child Safety Officer, who can provide advice on child safety matters and reporting requirements.

THEN:

4. **Complete and submit the Complaints and Allegations Record Form** (including details of all external reports made) to GDA's **Child Safety Officer** by email – no later than 24hrs after incident.
5. Reportable Conduct notifications to the Queensland Family and Child Commission, which must be done by the GDA Child Safety Officer.

4. Support

GDA will provide appropriate post-incident support to those impacted by the incident, such as:

- The child / young person and their family (this includes any specific support needs for those who are Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander; Culturally and Linguistically Diverse; LGBTIQ+; have a disability; or are unable to live at home)
- Other children or young people who witnessed the incident
- Any GDA member or volunteer who witnessed and/or reported the incident, or are otherwise impacted by the incident
- Any GDA member or volunteer against whom a complaint is made. Post-incident support options include:
- Facilitating a referral to appropriate community support services for any children, young people or family members involved in or impacted by the incident, such as:
 - Queensland Police Service (000 in emergencies)
 - Child Safety Service Centres or Child Safety Enquiries Unit 1800 811 810, or Child Safety After Hours 1800 177 135
 - Kids Helpline 1800 551 800
 - Lifeline 13 11 14
 - Beyond Blue 1300 224 636
 - DV Connect 1800 811 811
 - Family and Child Connect (FACC) 13 32 64
 - Queensland Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Child Protection Peak (QATSICPP)
 - WellMob
- Facilitating access to incident debriefing or counselling for GDA Members who report (or are impacted by) Child Safety Incidents. GDA members and volunteers who are aware of the incident will be reminded that:
 - Any allegation does not mean the person is guilty, and that the allegation will be properly investigated and will include the right to 'procedural fairness'; and
 - They are not to discuss the matter with any person, except as directed by police, child protection authorities and / or GDA's Child Safety Officer or unless required or authorised to do so by law, and only in direct relation to investigation of the allegation.

Record Keeping

- GDA is committed to making and keeping full and accurate records about all child-related complaints or safety concerns.
- All child safety complaints, concerns, incidents and near misses will be recorded in the incident reporting system.
- Records which may assist with the investigation of a complaint or safety concern will be identified and kept as part of the record of an investigation. Records will be kept even if an investigation does not substantiate a complaint.

- We will record and keep the outcome of any investigations, and the resolution of any complaints. This includes findings made, reasons for decisions and actions taken.

Other related child safe documents

GDA has a range of other key documents that relate to child safety. These can be accessed at , <https://www.gardindanceacademy.com.au/policies> and include:

- Statement of Commitment to Child Safety
- Child Safe Code of Conduct

Publication, communication and engagement

Our Child Safe Policy and other child safe documents can be found on our website at <https://www.gardindanceacademy.com.au/policies>. We also email out a copy with all new registrations. Anyone involved in our community can request a copy via email at any time. We send out regular email reminders to our community about our child safe documents and invite feedback whenever one of our organisation's child safe documents is up for review.

Related legislation, regulations and standards

GDA has to understand and comply with a number of Queensland child protection laws and schemes. These include:

- [Queensland Child Protection Act 1999](#)
- [Child Protection Regulation 2023](#)
- [Child Safe Organisations Act](#)
- [Queensland's Working with Children \(Risk Management and Screening\) Act 2020](#)
- [Queensland's Working with Children \(Risk Management and Screening\) Regulation 2020](#)
- [Child Safe Standards](#)

Date last updated

29/08/2025

Next review date

GDA will review all child safe practices and policies at least every two years. We also review relevant practices and policies in response to a child safety incident or 'near miss'. Findings from reviews will be reported to the people involved in our organisation and also inform our approach to continuous improvement of our child safety practices.

Next review date will be:

1/11/2027, or earlier if there are any critical incidents