Child Protection
Risk Management
Strategy
Preamble

Under the Commission for Children and Young People and Child Guardian Act 2000, all regulated businesses are required to prepare and adopt a written risk management strategy.

This strategy is to include:

1. a policy with a statement of commitment to the safety and wellbeing of children and then protection of children from harm
2. a Code of Conduct for interacting with children and young people
3. recruitment, training and management procedures for staff (including appropriate employment screening – i.e. blue cards and registers of staff who hold blue cards)
4. reporting guidelines and directions for handling disclosures and suspicions of harm
5. a policy for managing breaches of the risk management strategy
6. policies and procedures for compliance with blue card legislation
7. risk management plans for high risk activities and special events, and
8. strategies for communication and support such as:
   - information sheets for staff, volunteers and parents about policies, procedures and Codes of Conduct, and
   - training materials and strategies to help staff, volunteers and parents identify and manage risks of harm

While this strategy is a mandatory requirement for all regulated business, ratification by the Commission for Children and Young People and Child Guardian is not required and no mechanism to do so exists. Compliance with this requirement will be monitored through random audits. Where a child is harmed in some way, the organisation caring for them may be required to produce this strategy as a way of assessing the organisation’s preparedness in this regard.

This strategy is required to be updated and endorsed annually.

Under the relevant legislation The Boys’ Brigade Queensland is a regulated business and therefore required to produce a risk management strategy.

Specifically, The Boys' Brigade Queensland is only required to produce such a strategy in relation to its own operations as a State body. It is not required to produce a strategy covering individual Brigade Company considerations.

Scope

This strategy applies to the operations of and events run by The Boys’ Brigade Queensland, the various Queensland Battalions and Group Councils, The Boys’ Brigade Australia within Queensland state boundaries.

In line with the principle that each Company is a ministry of a local church, affiliated with The Boys’ Brigade Queensland, this strategy does not directly apply to the operations of and events run by individual Companies. The operations and events of individual Companies are covered by the Child Protection Risk Management Strategy adopted by their parent Church. Similarly, events run between two or more Companies, not under the guise of a Battalion or Group Council, will be covered by the strategies of the relevant parent Churches.

Source Documents

In compiling this strategy, reference is made to the following documents produced by The Boys’ Brigade Australia:

9. Child Protection Policy (version 3.2)
10. Safe Environments – Leaders Guide (Draft)
11. Safe Environments – Manual (Draft)
Requirement 1:
“A policy with a statement of commitment to the safety and wellbeing of children and then protection of children from harm”

On p3 of the document, *Safe Environments – Leaders Guide (Draft)*, it states that:

“The Boys’ Brigade Australia is committed to the safety and wellbeing of all members within the organisation. Leaders will treat all members with respect and understanding at all times. Boys’ Brigade Australia and individual Church-based Groups also support the rights and wellbeing of leaders, and encourages their active participation in building and maintaining a secure and safe environment for all participants. The Boys’ Brigade Australia is committed to assisting Groups to develop and implement procedures for managing Child Safety.”

Further, it also states in the document, *Child Protection Policy (version 3.2)*, that:

“The Boys’ Brigade Australia does not tolerate any acts of harm towards children or adults and will actively seek to prevent its occurrence. To this end, any adult leader with recorded convictions for violence, sexual assault, acts of indecency, child pornography, or any crime against a minor will not be eligible, nor allowed, to undertake any leadership roles within the organisation and if currently a leader will immediately be disqualified from being a leader.”

Requirement 2:
“A Code of Conduct for interacting with children and young people”

On p7 of *Safe Environments – Leaders Guide (Draft)*, the following Code of Conduct is provided:

**Standards for Leaders:**

A Leader Shall

in **Christian Principles:**
- demonstrate Biblical principles of leadership, including to lead diligently [Rom 12:8]; to be above reproach, worthy of respect and sincere [1Tim 3:2,8]; holding to the deep truths of the faith with clear conscience [1Tim 3:9]; being shepherds of those “under” them, eager to serve them, not lording it over them and being as example to them [1Pet 5:2,3];
- in their relationships with each other and with members and families, demonstrate in their lives evidence of the fruit of the Spirit – love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness and self-control [Gal 5:22,23] and shall not demonstrate evidence of the sinful nature – eg. hatred, discord, jealousy, fits of rage, selfish ambition, dissentions [Gal 5:19,20];
- ensure their involvement in Boys’ Brigade positively contributes to an effective, efficient and accountable ministry within the church;

in **Ethical Standards:**
- not gain any real or apparent benefit or personal advantage from their role as a leader [this refers to things like financial benefits; it does not include the personal growth, knowledge and satisfaction one gains from leadership];
- keep confidences given them by members [excepting reporting of suspected harm to that member], but not expect or ask members to keep confidences about them;
- respect the role of members’ families and seek to work in partnership with parents;
- avoid any real or apparent conflict between their own needs and the needs of members in their motivation for service and their actual service;
- respect the personal privacy of members;
- not cause harm to any members, and shall not allow their behaviour to give rise to any emotional advantage in any relationship with members and shall not engage in any exploitive or manipulative behaviour with members;
- be mindful of ‘at-risk’ situations –camps or residential programs, motor vehicle travel – where an accusation of improper behaviour on the part of the leader could be made. To this end all situations where a leader and a member are alone together and not able to be seen by others must be avoided;
- not possess or provide to members any drugs (including alcohol and cigarettes) or sexual visual material;

**in Relationships:**
- seek always to develop and maintain positive and wholesome relationships with and between members;
- ensure there is never any hint which gives the impression of favouritism, or encourages “special” relationships with individual members;
- gain approval from the Church, from parents and from other Brigade leaders before visiting members at their home, or before inviting members, as a group, to your home;
- avoid inappropriate touching and physical contact with members;
- develop and maintain good quality relationships with other leaders, both male and female;
- develop good working relationships with church leaders and those involved in other ministries of the church;

**in Communications:**
- in their communication with members (spoken, written, emails and text messages), always use language which affirms worth, dignity and significance of the individual, and not engage in inappropriate correspondence, both in the type of communication and the frequency of the correspondence;
- perform their role and relate to members in a spirit of honesty and openness; mean what they say; keep their word;
- when possible, involve members in decisions making in matters which effect them;

**in Discipline:**
- treat all members in a fair and just way; in all instances where there is a breach of the accepted behaviour standard, due regard should be given to the principle of natural justice and the individual circumstances. At all times the best interests of the member should be considered;
- in disciplining members, never use abusive language or try to belittle or make fun of them;
- never use any form of physical discipline to control or punish inappropriate behaviour; however this does not include physically restraining a person who is imminent danger of inflicting an injury on themselves or another, or is in a situation of danger from which they must be withdrawn;

**in General:**
- provide a safe environment, and maintain safe practices for all activities;
- not accept responsibility for activities beyond personal ability, competency or training;
- respect, and not inappropriately use, any private property or property of the Church;
- be committed to on-going training, personal development and skill maintenance/ enhancement;
- be subject to supervision and performance review.
Requirement 3:
“Recruitment, training and management procedures for staff (including appropriate employment screening – i.e. Blue Cards and registers of staff that hold blue cards)”

Qualifications of Leaders, Recruitment and Training

On p6 of *Safe Environments – Leaders Guide (Draft)*, the following is stated:

The Church will, therefore, have a leader selection and appointment process which will need to be followed. There may be some differences in the process from Church to Church but the following steps will probably be common to most Churches:

The prospective leader should -

- Be known by the Church – possibly as a member – and have been in regular attendance for a period of over six months
- Gain the Police Check as required within your State *
- Submit a formal application for voluntary work in children’s ministry in the way required by the Church and provide references as required
- Undertake an interview with the designated Church ministry leaders [if required by the Church]
- Agree to abide by the “Code of Conduct”, and acknowledge an understanding of the “Role Description” for a Leader/Church Ministry position
- Complete any additional forms if intending to be registered as a Leader with the State Office of Boys’ Brigade

There is also an expectation that the leader will complete any training – including a Church based induction session - as required by the Church and the Boys’ Brigade Australia.

* In Queensland, the required police check is the BLUE CARD. All leaders, regardless of their level (Helper; Leader; Group Leader) are required to obtain such a card, prior to commencing, in accordance with the relevant Queensland legislation, subject to all relevant exemptions provided by the legislation.

On p1, Part A.2 of *Safe Environments – Manual (Draft)*, it is stated that:

All leaders working in programs, activities or events conducted by The Boys’ Brigade at a Regional, State or National level are selected, appointed and supervised by the State office of Boys’ Brigade in the State in which the activity is taking place. The selection, appointment and supervision of leaders for a Regional activity may be delegated to a Regional group responsible for the administration of that activity. That group must conform to all State procedures.

On p3-4, Part A.2 of *Safe Environments – Manual (Draft)*, it is stated that:

**Appointment Procedures:**

**A: Registration of Church Based Leaders:**

1. Provide proof of appointment to a Church-based Boys’ Brigade Leadership position;
2. Complete a “Boys’ Brigade Australia –Volunteer Leader Application” form;
3. Provide proof of a current police / criminal check. [In Queensland an “Authorisation to Confirm a Valid Blue Card” form must be provided];
4. Provide evidence that all required training has been completed;
5. Sign an agreement to abide by the Boys’ Brigade Australia Code of Conduct;
6. Undertake to upgrade training – particularly relating to the management of risks associated with Child Safety and Protection – as required.
B: Appointment of leaders to State supervised positions:

[Special activity or event leadership, state administrative and training positions]

Any Leader with current registration at State level may be appointed to any State supervised position within that State.

Special event / activity leadership: Any Leader with current registration at State Level – but not in the State in which the activity / event will take place - may be appointed to a leadership position for that special activity or event in accordance with the legislative requirements for Child Safety supervision of the State in which the activity / event is occurring.

Any person seeking a leadership appointment to a State supervised position who does not meet the criteria of a registered Church-based leader must:

1. Complete a “Boys’ Brigade Australia – Volunteer Leader Application” form;
2. Provide proof of a current police / criminal check. [In Queensland an “Authorisation to Confirm a Valid Blue Card” form must be provided];
3. Provide evidence of current Church involvement [and involvement in other Churches] over a period of at least 12 months.
4. Provide at least two references or contact details of at least two referees who will be required to provide written statements relating to your suitability for a leadership role;
5. Attend an interview with the State Executive (or their nominee/s) as required;
6. Acknowledge an understanding of the position description, including accountability and reporting requirements;
7. Provide evidence of required specialised training or qualifications;
8. Provide evidence that all required Boys’ Brigade specified training has been completed;
9. Sign an agreement to abide by the Boys’ Brigade Australia Code of Conduct.
10. Undertake to upgrade training – particularly relating to the management of risks associated with Child Safety and Protection – as required.
11. Undertake to maintain currency of any specialised qualifications essential for the safe conduct of your duties.

Management Procedures

On p3, Part A.2 of Safe Environments – Manual (Draft), it is stated that:

**The State Office of The Boys’ Brigade is responsible for:**

1. the selection, appointment and supervision of all leaders involved in a Regional, State or National activity held within that state. [The selection, appointment and supervision of leaders for a Regional activity may be delegated to a Regional body responsible for the administration of that activity. That Regional body must conform to all State procedures.]
2. the selection, appointment and supervision of leaders involved in administrative or training roles at a State or National level;
3. the provision of training to State registered leaders in the management of risks associated with Child Safety and Protection,
4. the registration of all Church based leaders who meet the requirements for registration,
5. manage all legislative requirements for child safety and protection and leader checking (including the maintenance of registers and conducting audits) within that State.
Requirement 4:
“Reporting guidelines and directions for handling disclosures and suspicions of harm”

The following requirements appear in the Child Protection Policy (version 3.2) document:

Upon appropriate notification of any possible breach of the policy The Boys’ Brigade Australia in partnership with the local Church Leadership will:

- Notify the Group Leader and local Church Leadership, and appropriate authorities (if required) if not already advised.
- Immediately remove the person from contact with children until the report has been investigated and resolved.
- Ensure a compassionate, honest, and appropriate response to the victim including providing an opportunity for the victim to be heard.
- Ensure adequate counselling and support is provided for the victim, Staff and members and possibly affected families of the Group.
- Facilitate appropriate counselling and support is provided for the alleged offender, this does not necessarily include financial assistance. This is negated if the person removes him or herself from BB fellowship and refuses assistance

Elaboration of these guidelines, as well as practical guidelines and resources for handling disclosures and suspicions of harm can be found in:

- p14 of Safe Environments – Leaders Guide (Draft)
- Part C.8 of Safe Environments – Manual (Draft)

Requirement 5:
“A policy for managing breaches of the risk management strategy”

The following requirements appear on p8 of Safe Environments – Leaders Guide (Draft):

Breaches of the Church Code of Conduct will be investigated and dealt with in accordance with the policy of the Church. If the action of the leader is also a breach of The Boys’ Brigade Australia Code of Conduct, the State Office may also take action.

In all cases where the alleged breach involves a suspicion of harm which may involve an offence against a child, or an illegal activity, the case must be reported to the Police Service and the State Government authority for child protection. All allegations of this type can not be investigated by the Church but the designated authority within the Church and the designated person within the Boys’ Brigade State administration should be informed.
Requirement 6:
“Policies and procedures for compliance with blue card legislation”

On p6 of Safe Environments – Leaders Guide (Draft), the following is stated:

The Church will, therefore, have a leader selection and appointment process which will need to be followed. There may be some differences in the process from Church to Church but the following steps will probably be common to most Churches:

The prospective leader should -

- Be known by the Church – possibly as a member – and have been in regular attendance for a period of over six months
- Gain the Police Check as required within your State *
- Submit a formal application for voluntary work in children’s ministry in the way required by the Church and provide references as required
- Undertake an interview with designated Church ministry leaders [if required by the Church]
- Agree to abide by the “Code of Conduct”, and acknowledge an understanding of the “Role Description” for a Leader/Church Ministry position
- Complete any additional forms if intending to be registered as a Leader with the State Office

There is also an expectation that the leader will complete any training – including a Church based induction session - as required by the Church and the Boys’ Brigade Australia.

* In Queensland, the required police check is the BLUE CARD. All leaders, regardless of level (Helper; Leader; Group Leader) are required to obtain such a card, prior to commencing, in accordance with the relevant Queensland legislation.

Requirement 7:
“Risk management plans for high risk activities and special events”

The section entitled “Safe Places, Safe Programs” on pp17-23 and “Additional Aspects of Safety” on pp24-26 of Safe Environments – Leaders Guide (Draft), provides detailed information on various high risk areas that need to be accounted for in Boys’ Brigade activities.

Further, Part C of Safe Environments – Manual (Draft), provides supplementary information on various high risk areas that need to be accounted for in Boys’ Brigade activities.

Requirement 8a:
“Strategies for communication & support – Information sheets for staff, volunteers and parents about policies, procedures and Codes of Conduct”

Both Safe Environments – Leaders Guide (Draft) and Safe Environments – Manual (Draft), contains various materials that comply with this requirement.

Requirement 8b:
“Strategies for communication & support – Training materials and strategies to help staff, volunteers and parents identify and manage risks of harm”

Both Safe Environments – Leaders Guide (Draft) and Safe Environments – Manual (Draft), contains various materials that comply with this requirement.