Child Abuse Allegation and Reporting Procedure

Section 1 - Preamble

(1) Charles Darwin University ('the University', 'CDU') is committed to ensuring the safety and wellbeing of children (understood as individuals under 18 years of age) who are involved in, or may be affected by, University activities. The University is committed to an effective, robust and fair approach to reporting allegations of child exploitation or abuse.

Section 2 - Purpose

(2) This procedure outlines the process that must be followed in responding to, and reporting, suspected or alleged cases of child exploitation or abuse.

a. This procedure should be read in conjunction with the Child Safety Policy.

Section 3 - Scope

(3) This procedure applies to all University staff, students, contractors, volunteers and authorised visitors.

Section 4 - Procedure

(4) Child exploitation or abuse may reasonably be suspected where:

a. a child states that they have been physically or sexually abused;
b. a child states that they know someone who has been physically or sexually abused;
c. a child shows signs of being physically or sexually abused;
d. a child's actions or behaviours place them at risk of significant harm;
e. someone who knows a child states that the child has been physically or sexually abused;
f. there are signs or indicators of abuse, including non-accidental or unexplained injury, persistent neglect, poor care, and lack of appropriate supervision; or
g. there is evidence of family violence, parental substance misuse or other factors impacting adversely on a child's safety, stability or development.

(5) Where a child is believed to be at an immediate risk of exploitation or abuse, this must be immediately reported to the Northern Territory Police Force by telephoning 000 if the reporter reasonably believes that not reporting the risk to police would result in the actual abuse of the child.

a. The immediate risk must also be notified to the:
    i. Director People and Culture where a staff member is alleged to be involved; and/or
    ii. Director Student Engagement where a student is alleged to be involved.
b. The relevant Director is to inform the Vice-Chancellor of the report immediately.

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(6) Where a University student on a placement or practicum activity is aware of any such immediate risk of exploitation or abuse, the placement supervisor or the teacher supervisor must be immediately notified of the risk with a request to report the matter to the police.

(7) Where it is reasonably suspected that child exploitation or abuse (including possession of child exploitation material) is occurring on University premises, or in connection with University activities, this must be immediately reported to the Northern Territory Child Protection reporting line 1800 700 250 or to the Northern Territory Police Force by telephoning 000.

a. The suspicion must also be notified within 24 hours to the:
    i. Director People and Culture where a staff member is alleged to be involved; and/or
    ii. Director Student Engagement where a student is alleged to be involved.
b. The relevant Director is to inform the Vice-Chancellor of the report immediately.

(8) Where an individual has reported instances of suspected child exploitation or abuse, but becomes aware of additional information, the individual must also report that additional information.

Responding to an allegation or disclosure

(9) Upon learning of an allegation or a disclosure of child exploitation or abuse, the Director People and Culture and/or Director Student Engagement as relevant, will:

a. ensure a safe environment and support for the alleged victim and any other children alleged to be involved or affected, taking account of whether a child is First Nations, from a culturally or linguistically diverse background, or has a disability;
b. provide clear information to the alleged victim and their parent or guardian about what will be done in response to the allegation or disclosure, including any reporting obligations;
c. explain to those reporting the allegation or disclosure their external reporting obligations; and
d. keep notes and records of all conversations, disclosures and of all follow-up actions, which records are to be marked ‘Private and Confidential’.

(10) Where an allegation of child abuse is made against staff, students, contractors, volunteers or authorised visitors, the University may initiate a precautionary action, in accordance with the Code of Conduct - Employees or the Code of Conduct - Students, pending the outcome of either a disciplinary or legal process. Precautionary actions are not penalties and are not intended to prejudice the outcome of a University disciplinary process.

(11) Where staff, students, contractors, volunteers or authorised visitors, are found guilty of an offense, then action will be taken under the Code of Conduct – Staff or the Code of Conduct - Students.

(12) Any investigation by the University into alleged child exploitation or abuse will be conducted in a way that avoids interference, or perceived interference, with any current external agency process.

(13) Where a matter has been reported to the police or an external agency and is subject to a criminal investigation, the University will suspend its internal investigation.

Confidentiality and record keeping

(14) When dealing with a case of suspected child exploitation or abuse, confidentiality must be respected and in accordance with the Privacy and Confidentiality Policy and Records and Information Management Policy and Procedure.

(15) Only persons directly involved in the management of the relevant child’s situation, and responsible for meeting

the relevant reporting obligations, are to be involved in any discussions, or view any information, which might reveal the child's identity, the identity of the child's family, details of injury or suspected abuse.

Section 5 - Non-Compliance

(16) Non-compliance with Governance Documents is considered a breach of the Code of Conduct – Staff or the Code of Conduct – Students, as applicable, and is treated seriously by the University. Reports of concerns about non-compliance will be managed in accordance with the applicable disciplinary procedures outlined in the Charles Darwin University and Union Enterprise Agreement 2025 and the Code of Conduct – Students.

(17) Complaints may be raised in accordance with the Complaints and Grievance Policy and Procedure - Employees and Complaints Policy - Students.

(18) All staff members have an individual responsibility to raise any suspicion, allegation or report of fraud or corruption in accordance with the Fraud and Corruption Control Policy and Whistleblower Reporting (Improper Conduct) Procedure.

Status and Details

Status	Historic
Effective Date	30th June 2022
Review Date	30th June 2025
Approval Authority	Vice-Chancellor
Approval Date	30th June 2022
Expiry Date	17th December 2025
Responsible Executive	Fiona Coulson Vice-Chancellor
Implementation Officer	Peta Preo Director People and Culture
Enquiries Contact	Peta Preo Director People and Culture People and Culture

Glossary Terms and Definitions

"Authorised visitor" - Bona fide visitors that the University may, from time to time, provide with access to facilities to enhance their ability to complete tasks for the University or to liaise with the University. Such visitors may include, but are not limited to: emeritus, adjunct or honorary academic staff; alumni; external auditors or consultants; potential clients or business partners; contractors or vendors; conference delegates; and students and staff of other universities with reciprocal arrangements.

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