

## Child Protection & Intervention Policy

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**EXECUTIVE  
STATEMENT**

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The issue of child abuse is a complex problem that has an impact on all areas of society, including participation in recreation activities.

The Wood Royal Commission into the NSW Police Service, led to increased community awareness of the significant number of child sexual assaults and incidents of abuse which occur. It also highlighted the need for the development and implementation of strategies to protect children from abusive situations.

Protecting children from abuse is a responsibility that we must all undertake. Through the implementation of strategies that assist in preventing child abuse from occurring, Southern Highlands Youth Arts Council Inc. (SHYAC) has taken a pro-active role in relation to child protection and intervention. These strategies will help to foster a safe and positive environment for children and young people to participate in artistic and physical activities.

In addition, development of Child Protection and Intervention Policy and Guidelines provides the Organisation with an excellent risk management tool for developing prevention strategies and for the effective management of child abuse issues.

Information contained in this document will create a framework and provide direction for officials, volunteers, members and parents of children and young people involved in SHYAC, and affiliated organisations. It will help deliver a consistent approach to child abuse prevention for SHYAC .

Allen Cupitt

11<sup>th</sup> May 2009

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President of SHYAC

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Date

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**P O L I C Y  
S T A T E M E N T**

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SHYAC is committed to ensuring that the safety, welfare and wellbeing of children are maintained at all times during their participation in activities run by SHYAC.

SHYAC aims to promote a safe environment for all children and to assist all officials, members and volunteers to recognise child abuse and neglect and follow the appropriate notification procedures when reporting alleged abuse.

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**R A T I O N A L E**

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The focus of the policy and guidelines is the prevention of child abuse in the SHYAC environment.

This policy and guidelines promote the care and protection of children participating in all aspects of the Arts programs and events run or supported by SHYAC and to provide information and direction for, official, volunteers and members of the Organisation.

This policy and guidelines will assist SHYAC in establishing coordinated strategies for dealing with the problem of child abuse and neglect in a responsible, effective and consistent manner.

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**O B J E C T I V E S**

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Through the development of this policy SHYAC objectives are to:

1. provide information to assist volunteers in dealing with all forms of child abuse
2. provide comprehensive guidelines relating to risk minimisation and reporting/notification procedures
3. provide direction to all volunteers regarding their legal responsibilities under child protection legislation
4. promote and adopt SHYAC principles for child protection and intervention amongst volunteers, members and parents of children participating in the Organisation's programs and events.

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**S C O P E O F  
P O L I C Y**

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The Child Protection Intervention Policy of SHYAC are applicable to all management and staff (paid, voluntary, permanent or casual) of SHYAC, its affiliates and contractors.

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**I M P L E M E N T A T I O N  
O F L E G I S L A T I O N**

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In order to implement the child protection legislation SHYAC will undertake to:

1. implement strategies and procedures that focus on the best interests of children and meet the requirements of child protection legislation
2. promote a safe and supportive environment for all children and young people participating in activities which come under the umbrella of SHYAC.
3. increase awareness and emphasise the importance of child protection issues in our environment to all those involved with the activities of SHYAC. This includes administrators, officials, supporters, parents and their children.

4. ensure that all staff if any of SHYAC are aware of their responsibilities arising from recent child protection legislation, in particular, the requirement under the Child Protection (Prohibited Employment) Act 1998, to inform their employers if they have been convicted of a serious sex offence.

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**EXPECTATIONS**

Administrators, officials, members and volunteers often have a high level of contact with children in the Arts environment and play a major part in the successful operation of Arts activities.

Officials are often seen as role models. They have significant influence on the children they come into contact with and therefore have significant responsibilities. SHYAC expects that all administrators and officials whether paid or unpaid, who participate in organised activities under the banner of this Organisation will commit to implementing risk management strategies developed by SHYAC for child protection and intervention.

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**POLICY  
REVIEW**

SHYAC Child Protection and Intervention Policy and Guidelines will be reviewed annually and updated in line with any legislative changes that have significant impact on the manner in which child protection and intervention issues are to be dealt with.

Signed Allen Cupitt Date 11<sup>th</sup> May 2009  
President of SHYAC

## Notification Procedures for Allegations of Child Abuse

### RATIONALE

SHYAC acknowledges that issues regarding child abuse and the reporting of allegations of child abuse is highly sensitive, and should be dealt with in a confidential manner.

SHYAC has developed these notification procedures to ensure that confidentiality is maintained throughout the process and that consistent procedures for reporting are encouraged.

SHYAC will be proactive in its role to protect children and encourage an open environment that allows employees and members to be aware of their rights and responsibilities within the Organisation.

### CHILD PROTECTION OFFICER

To deal appropriately with these issues and to ensure that the confidentiality of all parties involved is maintained, one person within SHYAC will be designated as the child protection officer.

The child protection officer is responsible for reporting any allegations of child abuse that occur in SHYAC to the local branch of the Department of Community Services (DoCS), and the NSW Police Service. If the child protection officer is not available then the most senior person within SHYAC should be notified.

#### Child Protection Officer:

**Name:** Allen Cupitt

**Position:** President

**Mobile:** 0418 425 013

**Email:** cpo@shyac.org.au

### WHAT SHOULD BE REPORTED?

Some incidents **may seem minor**, however, they may in fact reveal more serious concerns of misconduct or a pattern of behaviour that requires further scrutiny. All people associated with SHYAC should be aware of the indicators for child abuse and sexual abuse so that they may make an informed decision on what to report.

If you have reasonable grounds to suspect that a child participating in any organised activities conducted by SHYAC is at risk report the matter to the child protection officer.

### WRITTEN NOTIFICATION

Verbal notification of alleged child abuse must be followed up in writing within 24 hours to the local Department of Community Services using the child protection notification form provided.

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**INVESTIGATION**

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If an incident of child abuse occurs in SHYAC it is not the responsibility of persons within SHYAC to take it upon themselves to determine whether the allegation is true or false. This responsibility belongs with the NSW Department of Community Service and the Judiciary.

Depending on the nature of the allegations and the extent of the situation, the NSW Department of Community Service will determine the manner in which the matter will be investigated. This may involve the NSW Police Service.

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**CONFIDENTIALITY**

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All matters regarding allegations of child abuse are to be treated as confidential. The person designated as the child protection officer is the contact person for any incident involving allegations of child abuse. This is essential for confidentiality. Confidentiality protects all individuals involved:

- the alleged victim
- the alleged offender, and
- the person making the notification.

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**COMMISSION  
FOR  
CHILDREN  
AND YOUNG  
PEOPLE ACT  
1998**

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Under the **Commission for Children and Young People Act 1998** SHYAC is required to:

1. notify the Commission for Children and Young People of the name and other identifying details of any employee against whom relevant disciplinary proceedings have been completed by SHYAC irrespective of the findings (except where the allegation has been proven to be vexatious, mischievous or false)
2. provide details of child abuse allegations/ convictions against employees to the Commission
3. notify the Commission of any applicants for child-related employment, rejected as a result of risks identified through employment screening processes
4. ensure that records of all information required to be submitted to the Commission for Children and Young People are retained by SHYAC

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**CHILD  
PROTECTION  
(PROHIBITED  
EMPLOYMENT)  
ACT 1998**

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Under the **Child Protection (Prohibited Employment) Act 1998** SHYAC

1. **will not** commence employing a person in a child-related position without first requiring them to disclose whether or not they are a 'prohibited person'
2. **will not** commence employing, or continue to employ, in child-related employment, a person that has been identified as a 'prohibited person'.