

Child Protection Policy

This Child Protection Policy has been developed by Domabotics and outlines the legislative and other requirements pertaining to the safety and wellbeing of children and young people whilst participating in Domabotics workshops

1. Purpose

The purpose of this Policy is to promote children and young people's wellbeing and to protect them from harm. It outlines the organisation's commitment to developing a culture that recognises and promotes the safety and wellbeing of children and young people, and the implementation of risk management strategies that minimise and eliminate harm to them.

2. Date of Effect

The Policy came into effect on 1 January 2007 and is reviewed annually in January.

3. Reference Documents

The Policy has been developed under s.99G of the Commission for Children and Young People and Child Guardian Act 2001 and Regulation QLD (Schedule 1).

4. Desired Outcomes

Domabotics hopes to achieve the following outcomes by implementing this Policy:

- Comply with legislation, including the risk management strategies and blue card provisions for employees and volunteers, unless exempt, whose usual functions of employment include or are likely to include providing services directed mainly towards children and young people, or conducting activities mainly involving children and young people.
- Create an environment which is safe and enjoyable for children and young people by identifying, minimising and eliminating risks to them.
- Promote a culture that ensures employees and volunteers, whose usual functions of employment include or are likely to include providing services directed mainly towards children and young people, or conducting activities mainly involving children and young people act in the best interests of children and young people and not cause harm to them.
- Document the protocols for handling incidents involving children and young people, and managing disclosures to relevant parties and authorities.
- Reinforce the importance of child safety at all levels of volunteering, employment and administration at the organisation.

5. Scope of Coverage

The Policy applies to the activities organised and run by Domabotics that are directed mainly towards or involving children and young people. The predominant activities performed are Robotics Workshops.

Employees and volunteers participating in Domabotics activities, whose usual functions of employment include or are likely to include providing services directed mainly towards children and young people, or conducting activities mainly involving children and young people are covered by this Policy.

6. Policy Realisation

a. Statement of Commitment

Domabotics will ensure that employees and volunteers whose usual functions of employment include providing services directed mainly towards children and young people, or conducting activities mainly involving children and young people subscribe to the following Statement of Commitment to demonstrate their commitment to safety and wellbeing of children and young people and the protection of children and young people from harm:

We recognise and promote the importance of safety and wellbeing of children and young people through a culture of awareness, harm minimisation and proactive monitoring of all activities run by Domabotics.

Employees and volunteers whose usual functions of employment include providing services directed mainly towards children and young people, or conducting activities mainly involving children and young people must sign-off on the Statement of Commitment (Schedule 3).

b. Code of Conduct

Domabotics will ensure that employees and volunteers whose usual functions of employment include providing services directed mainly towards children and young people, or conducting activities mainly involving children and young people adhere to the following Code of Conduct in their interaction with children and young people:

- I will put as paramount the welfare and best interests of children and young people and their right to protection from harm.
- I will exercise a satisfactory level of care and diligence when working with or supervising children and young people and will not expose them to an unacceptable level of risk.
- I will report an incident relating to harm or potential or suspected harm to children and young people and will cooperate with relevant statutory and regulatory authorities involved in child protection.
- I will support a child who is a victim of harm or potential or suspected victim of harm and safeguard their privacy and dignity.

Employees and volunteers whose usual functions of employment include providing services directed mainly towards children and young people, or conducting activities mainly involving children and young people must sign-off on the Code of Conduct (Schedule 3).

c. Declaration of Care

Domabotics will ensure that employees and volunteers whose usual functions of employment include providing services directed mainly towards children and young people, or conducting activities mainly involving children and young people observe the following Declaration of Care:

- I will not allow harm to be caused to children and young people.
- I will not cause harm to children and young people in my care.
- I will eliminate, or else minimise, harm to children or young people in my care.
- I will support children and young people who are victims or potential or suspected victims of harm.
- I will report harm to children and young people to relevant authorities, regardless of who has caused the harm.

Employees and volunteers whose usual functions of employment include providing services directed mainly towards children and young people, or conducting activities mainly involving children and young people must sign-off on the Declaration of Care (Schedule 3).

7. Risk Management.

In the running of a typical Domabotics workshop, the following form of harm are most likely to occur:

- Student running and tripping, causing physical harm.

Employees and volunteers need to asses the location of each workshop prior to commencement to ensure a safe working environment. Particular attention must be paid to:

- Cables running across the floor.
- Sharp edges on tables and benches.
- Unsafe furniture.

The following are additional forms of harm that can occur to children and young people:

Categories of Harm	Examples
Physical	bruising, broken bones, burns, bleeding, internal injuries
Emotional	low self-esteem, eating disorder, depression, anxiety, isolation
Sexual	sexual jokes, exposure to pornography, inappropriate touching, child abuse, prostitution
Neglect	lack of supervision, denial or non-provision of basic necessities such as food, unhygienic living conditions
Combination of above harm	bullying, sexual assault, death

Domabotics recognises that sometimes it may be difficult to ascertain whether or not an action or measure may cause harm to children and young people. A volunteer, for example, may place his hand over a child's hand to instruct the child on the proper use of equipment. This activity may become inappropriate if the volunteer continues holding the child's hand longer than necessary after the child is able to demonstrate proper use of the equipment. In these circumstances, it is imperative that the following guidelines are followed:

- The action must be explained to the child or young person prior to the action taking place.
- The action must only take place with the permission of the child or young person.
- The action must be in the best interests of the child or young person.
- The action was necessary and for the benefit of the child or young person.
- The action was appropriate and reasonable in the circumstances in which it occurred.
- The action would be what a reasonable person would take in similar circumstances.
- The action does not invoke connotations of harm such as inappropriate touching.
- The action was unintentional or accidental.

Domabotics will, as far as reasonably practicable, support employees and volunteers who are subject to unfounded allegations of improper conduct.

8. Incident Reporting Procedures

Domabotics has appointed a nominated person (Damien Kee) to handle incidents involving children and young people. All incidents (actual or perceived) are to be reported directly to the nominated person either verbally or in writing and the nominated person must ensure the confidentiality of the complainant and other parties (e.g. child or young person and the alleged perpetrator).

The nominated person will evaluate the incident and respond with one or more of the following actions:

- Make changes to a service or activity and allow it to proceed or suspend or permanently stop it.
- Remove or replace the volunteers or employees who are providing or conducting the service or activity, subject to further investigation.
- Facilitate appropriate medical, counselling or other assistance to children and young people.
- Report the matter to relevant statutory or regulatory authority such as the Department of Child Safety or the Queensland Police Service.

The nominated person will record incidents reported to him/her, the action taken and other relevant details in the Incident Register in Schedule 4. The Incident Register will be kept securely on the premises and only able to be accessed by authorised personnel.

Domabotics will notify the parents/guardians of the children and young people about the incident and where practicable, extend to them the appropriate level of support. Domabotics will act fairly and reasonably towards all parties involved and will cooperate with relevant statutory or regulatory authorities in the event of an investigation.

Domabotics will put in place mechanisms such as an active monitoring program (in addition to implementing corrective measures) to ensure the incident does not reoccur.

9. Communication

Domabotics will communicate the Policy to relevant stakeholders, including parents/guardians as necessary.

This communication can take a number of forms, including:

- Internal publications (e.g. newsletter)
- Orientation, induction and training of employees and volunteers
- Information on the organisation's website
- Signage that the Policy is available upon request

Domabotics will also display the Statement of Commitment from Schedule 3 in areas that it has control over where children or young people are present.

10. Recruitment and Training

Domabotics will make appropriate background, including reference checks, on employees or volunteers whose usual functions of employment may include or may likely include providing services directed mainly towards children and young people, or conducting activities mainly involving children and young people as part of the recruitment and selection process.

Unless exempt, new and existing employees and volunteers whose usual functions of employment include providing services directed mainly towards children and young people, or conducting activities mainly involving children and young people will be required to hold a blue card. Domabotics will apply for the blue card on their behalf.

Domabotics will provide training on this Policy on a regular basis and volunteers and employees whose usual functions of employment include providing services directed mainly towards children and young people, or conducting activities mainly involving children and young people will be required to sign the Acknowledgment in Schedule 3 as part of the training process. Other employees and volunteers will be informed about this Policy in their induction and orientation or other relevant ways such as staff meetings.

Domabotics will manage relevant information such as the blue card status and training requirements of employees and volunteers, unless exempt, whose usual functions of employment include providing services directed mainly towards children and young people, or conducting activities mainly involving children and young people in the Blue Card Information and Training Records Register (Schedule 5).. This Register will be kept securely by Domabotics and only to be accessed by authorised personnel.

Overall, Domabotics recognises that while employment screening is a vital child protection measure, the blue card in itself is not a guarantee of a person's suitability to work with children and young people and is no substitute for an appropriate range of risk management strategies (in addition to blue card requirements) such as training and awareness and other measures provided in this Policy and elsewhere.

11. Breaches and Disclosures

Domabotics recognises that minor breaches of this Policy could be handled internally through remedial measures such as education, training and review of existing policies and procedures. However, a major breach will be reported to external authorities such as the Department of Child Safety or the Queensland Police Service.

Domabotics will strive to keep relevant parties, including parents/guardians of the children and young people, informed of the breach and as far as reasonably practicable, extend to them appropriate support.

Depending on the circumstances, a breach of this Policy may result in actions such as the following:

- suspension or termination of employment (employees) or service (volunteers)
- partial withdrawal of privileges or suspension or termination of membership (members)
- criminal charges (any one)

In the event of media attention of a breach:

- Domabotics will authorise a person to liaise with the media.
- Domabotics will protect the interests, wellbeing and privacy of the parties involved.

12. Enforcement and Review

Domabotics will proactively enforce, monitor and review the Policy on an ongoing basis.

13. More Information

More information or any clarification on this Policy or the way in which Domabotics strives to protect children and young people from harm can be obtained by contacting Domabotics.

Schedule 1

Commission for Children and Young People Amendment Regulation (reprint 1C) 2001

3A Matters to be included in risk management strategies—Act, s 99G(4)

1. (1) For section 99G(4) of the Act, a risk management strategy of an operator relating to regulated employment or a regulated business must include the following matters—
 - a) a statement about commitment to the safety and wellbeing of children and the protection of children from harm;
 - b) a code of conduct for interacting with children and young people;
 - c) procedures for recruiting, selecting, training and managing persons engaged or proposed to be engaged by the operator, as the procedures relate to the safety and wellbeing of children and the protection of children from harm;
 - d) policies and procedures for handling disclosures or suspicions of harm, including reporting guidelines;
 - e) a plan for managing breaches of the risk management strategy;
 - f) policies and procedures for compliance with part 6 of the Act, including—
 - i. implementing and reviewing the risk management strategy; and
 - ii. keeping a written record, in relation to matters under part 6, about each person engaged by the operator, for example—
 - A. whether or not the operator considers the operator must apply for a prescribed notice about the person; and
 - B. whether or not an application for a prescribed notice has been made by the operator about the person; and
 - C. if a positive notice has been issued for the person—the date of expiry of the notice;
 - g) risk management plans for high risk activities and special events;
 - h) strategies for communication and support, including—
 - i. written information for parents and persons engaged by the operator that includes details of the operator's risk management strategy or where the strategy can be accessed; and
 - ii. training materials for persons engaged by the operator to—
 - A. help identify risks of harm and how to handle disclosures or suspicions of harm; and
 - B. outline the operator's risk management strategy.
2. 'In this section—
 - a) operator means a person to whom section 99G of the Act applies.'

Schedule 2

Blue Card requirements as stipulated by the Commission for children and young people and child guardian (www.ccypcg.qld.gov.au) are as follows:

Volunteers

Volunteers need a blue card if they are employed by or within a church, club, association or similar entity and the usual functions of their employment include or are likely to include:

- providing services directed mainly towards children; or
- conducting activities mainly involving children.

Volunteers do not need a blue card if:

- they carry out the work in their capacity as an employee of a "government entity"; or
- they are a volunteer parent of a child who receives the same or similar services to which the employment relates; or
- they are a volunteer parent of a child who participates in the same or similar activities to which the employment relates;
- a guest of a school or "recognised body":
 - for the purpose of observing, supplying information or entertainment to 10 or more people, and
 - the activity is for 10 days or less on no more than two occasions per year, and
 - the person is unlikely to be physically present with a child without another adult being present, or
- performing the function of employment at a national or state event organised by a school or "recognised body" (operating at a state or national level):
 - for a sporting, cultural or skill based activity, and
 - the event is attended by more than 100 people, and
 - the work is for 10 days or less on no more than two occasions per year; and
 - the person is unlikely to be physically present with a child without another adult being present.
- a child under 18 years of age volunteering (except "trainee students" undertaking a course of study with an "education provider")

Paid employees

Paid employees need a blue card if, over the course of 12 months, they are employed by or within a church, club, association or similar entity and the usual functions of their employment include or are likely to include:

- providing services directed mainly towards children; or
- conducting activities mainly involve children.

for at least:

- eight consecutive days, or
- once a week, each week, over four weeks, or
- once a fortnight, each fortnight, over eight weeks, or
- once a month, each month over six months.

Paid employees do not need a card if they carry out this work in their capacity as an employee of a "government entity".

Schedule 3

Acknowledgment

I declare that I have read and understood the Child Protection Policy and agree to abide by its provisions during my service with Domabotics.

I explicitly agree to observe and comply with the following:

Statement of Commitment

We recognise and promote the importance of safety and wellbeing of children and young people through a culture of awareness, harm minimisation and proactive monitoring of Domabotics activities, in particular where children are present.

Code of Conduct

- I will put as paramount the welfare and best interests of children and young people and their right to protection from harm.
- I will exercise a satisfactory level of care and diligence when working with or supervising children and young people and will not expose them to an unacceptable level of risk.
- I will report an incident relating to harm or potential or suspected harm to children and young people and will cooperate with relevant statutory and regulatory authorities involved in child protection.
- I will support a child who is a victim of harm or potential or suspected victim of harm and safeguard their privacy and dignity.

Declaration of Care

- I will not allow harm to be caused to children and young people.
- I will not cause harm to children and young people in my care.
- I will eliminate, or else minimise harm to children or young people in my care.
- I will support children and young people who are victims or potential or suspected victims of harm.
- I will report harm to children and young people to relevant authorities, regardless of who has caused the harm.

Consequences for Non--Compliance

I understand a significant breach of this Policy may result in disciplinary action including:

- partial withdrawal of privileges
- suspension of membership and possible expulsion
- termination of employment
- criminal charges

Name

Signature

Date

Schedule 4

Incident Register

A. Incident reported or observed by:

B. Description of the incident:

C. Date and time and the location where the incident occurred:

___/___/___ :___ (am/pm) _____

D. Name of person/s involved:

E. Describe the actions taken (or explain why no action was taken):

G. Name and contact details of the person completing this report:

I. Date and time this report was completed:

___/___/___ :___ (am/pm)

J. Signature of the person completing this report:

Schedule 5

Blue Card Information and Training Records Register

A. Name of Employee or Volunteer: _____

B. Contact Details: _____

C. Summary of Background Check/s: _____

D. Date of Commencement: ____/____/____

E. Responsibilities (if any) involving children and young people: _____

F. Blue Card Status

- Is this employee or volunteer required to hold a blue card: Yes / No
If yes, date blue card application lodged: ____/____/____
- Outcome of the application: Positive Notice / Negative Notice
If Positive Notice, card number: _____ and expiry date: ____/____/____
[Make photocopy of the Positive Notice Letter for employee's file]
If Negative Notice, date the employee / volunteer ceased working with the children and young people: ____/____/____

G. Orientation and Induction

- Employee or volunteer made aware of the Child Protection Policy: Yes / No
- If employee or volunteer is not exempt, was training requirement communicated: Yes / No

H. Training (for non-exempt employees or volunteers)

- Date of Training: ____/____/____
- Date training acknowledgment (Statement of Commitment, Code of Conduct and Declaration of Care) signed: ____/____/____

I. General Comments: _____

_____/_____/____

Signature of employee or volunteer

Signature of Manager

Date