

Child and Youth Risk Management Strategies

Yasodhara Sinhala School

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QLD

Australia

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1. Statement of Commitment

Yasodhara Sinhala School (YSS) is committed to facilitate teaching of Sinhala language, Sri Lankan history and culture to Australian children with Sri Lankan descendant with the help of a volunteer staff.

Our organisation is committed to ensuring the safety and wellbeing of all children through its Child and Youth Risk Management Strategy. The Strategy encompasses the policies and procedures contained within this document and adherence to them is compulsory for all staff members. This will be the primary focus of our care and decision-making. YSS has a commitment to zero tolerance of child abuse.

We want children to be safe, happy and empowered. We support and respect all children, as well as our staff and volunteers.

We are committed to the safety, participation and empowerment of all children.

We have zero tolerance of child abuse, and all allegations and safety concerns will be treated very seriously and consistently with our robust policies and procedures.

We have legal and moral obligations to contact authorities when we are worried about a child's safety, which we follow rigorously.

Our organisation is committed to preventing child abuse and identifying risks early, and removing and reducing these risks.

Our organisation has robust human resources and recruitment practices for all staff and volunteers.

Our Schools is committed to regularly training and educating our staff and volunteers on child abuse risks.

Our School nominates one child safety officer for each campus. The officer should be aware of Child Safety requirement and making sure schools are compliance with all eight standards outlined by Blue Card Services.

We support and respect all children, as well as our staff and volunteers. We are committed to the cultural safety of children from culturally and/or linguistically diverse backgrounds, and to providing a safe environment for children with a disability.

We have specific policies, procedures and training in place that support our leadership team, staff and volunteers to achieve these commitments.

The following values reflect the culture that we are committed to promoting within our organisation.

- (1) Caring for children
- (2) Mutual respect

- (3) Equal opportunity
- (4) Commitment
- (5) Thriving for excellence.
- (6) Social responsibility

If you believe a child is at immediate risk of abuse phone 000.

- <https://www.csyw.qld.gov.au/child-family/protecting-children/reporting-child-abuse>
- <https://www.csyw.qld.gov.au/resources/dcsyw/child-family/protecting-children/info-sheet-1-mandatory-reporting.pdf>

2. Code of conduct

YSS volunteer staff must meet the following requirements in regard to their conduct during any activity held by YSS within or outside the school premises:

- Respect the rights, dignity and worth of others irrespective of individual differences
- Be fair, equitable, considerate and honest in all dealing with others
- Be professional in all your dealings, and accept responsibility for your actions
- Acting in good faith to the organization in all dealing with other external organizations
- Be committed towards organizational goals
- Make a commitment to providing quality service
- Be aware of, and maintain an uncompromising adherence to the organization’s standards, rules, regulations and policies;
- Adhere to the rules, regulations and guidelines provided by QCAA and Queensland Education in all academic related activities.
- Do not use YSS to promote your own beliefs, behaviours or practices where these are inconsistent with those of YSS.
- Do not use YSS premises to promote or sell any materials without the permission of YSS administration
- Demonstrate a high degree of individual responsibility especially when dealing with persons less than 18 years of age, as your words and actions are an example
- Avoid unaccompanied and unobserved activities with persons less than 18 years of age, wherever possible
- Refrain from any form of harassment of others (verbal or physical)
- Refrain from any behaviour that may bring YSS into disrepute

Standard of appropriate behaviour for YSS

Behaviour	Appropriate	Inappropriate
Supervision of children	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Allocate two teachers for each class • Maintain appropriate voice level in class • Playground supervision 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Students loitering in the premises during school time • Teacher leave the class temporarily without appointing another adult to

	<p>after/before school</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Covering arrangement for absent teachers • Use of proper behavioural management techniques • Maintain equality among all children 	<p>supervise the class</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Excessive noise levels in class
Language	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Using encouraging/positive words and a pleasant tone of voice • Open and honest communication 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Insults or name calling • Hateful criticism about individuals • Spreading misinformation with malicious intentions. • Telling lies and gossip that may lead to personal conflicts • Bullying, swearing or yelling • Sexually suggestive comments/ jokes
Relationships	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Being a positive role model • Building relationships based on trust • Avoid any gender discrimination 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Spending excessive amounts of time alone with children • Bullying, harassment • ‘Grooming’ children or young people
Physical Contact	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Allowing for personal space • Physical contact required for teaching and learning (eg: in dancing) • Touching due to medical emergency or protecting from physical harm • Non-threatening 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Violent or aggressive behaviour including hitting, kicking, slapping or pushing • Kissing or touching of a sexual nature consistent with ‘grooming’
Use of washrooms	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Maintain cleanliness after using the washroom • Maintaining dry floor at all times 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Unnecessarily spend time in washroom during class time
Use of school data and information	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Only authorised persons access information • School data is stored securely with routine backups • Contact details are considered as confidential information and use only for school related activities 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Using contact details of parents/students for non-school related activities • Sharing school data with third parties
Other	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Appropriate attire/clothing for role • Use of internet/mobile phone for work related purposes only 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Smoking, consumption of alcohol or any narcotics

3. Policies for recruiting, selecting, training and managing employees

YSS employs volunteers as teachers, librarians, school coordinators and all other academic and non academic related positions. Vacant positions will be advertised by group e-mails to Sri Lankan community in Brisbane or just communicated to YSS parents during school meetings.

3.1 Recruitment of school coordinators

The candidates for school coordinators are selected by the principal and the deputy principals annually after considering the nominations from YSS community. New nominations should be provided well in advance for selections prior to the appointment date which is decided by the school board towards the end of the first term each year. The coordinators should be appointed only through the prior approval of the Principal and the deputy principal and the committee of the school.

Coordinators should be self-driven and passionate individuals with a visionary leadership who are committed towards performing and promoting the school activities as described in YSS process manual.

3.2 Recruitment of the Teachers, librarians and other academic staff

The coordinators should consult the principal or the deputy principal to appoint a teacher, librarian or any other academic staff and should handover their CVs in advance to gain approval before a teacher is being nominated to the school.

Duties and tasks	Skills and attributes
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Conducting lessons and activities • Talking and interacting with children • Communicating with parents and carers • Supervising children playing together • Training children on singing music dancing and comparing 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Proven proficiency in Sinhala • keen desire to work with children including patience and enthusiasm • values children’s rights to feel safe and happy • prior experience with working with children • understanding of physical and emotional needs of children • communication skills including rapport and trust building skills • leadership skills • problem solving and conflict resolution skills • positive reinforcement/strength-based approach

3.3 Staff training and development

YSS considers its staff as the key asset in the organization and hence continuously support their professional development. The following PD opportunities are available for both teaching and administration staff

- (1) PD sessions and conferences organised by ESAQ
- (2) Internal PD sessions organised by YSS using its own resource persons
- (3) Internal PD sessions organised by YSS using external resource persons
- (4) Subject matters discussed in the staff meeting by subject matter experts
- (5) On the job training

All employees are expected to participate in the PD sessions even though it is not mandatory. School board will decide on any special training registration or certification required by staff and facilitates them where necessary including the cost of the engagement.

3.4 Staff induction programs

An induction program will be conducted by the principal/deputy principal/coordinators which include details of the organisation's child and youth risk management strategy. This will assist staff to understand their role in providing a safe and supportive environment for children and young people. It is important that all employees participate in organisation's induction program prior to start working. The following requirements should be fulfilled before the induction.

- The code of conduct should be signed by all staff witness by principal/deputy principal at the inception of taking up their role and they are expected to act in good faith to the organization in all their dealings internally and externally.
- Blue card is checked or application is sent through to Blue Card Services for processing before a staff member commencing work at YSS
- All staff is required to hold a current blue card and staff members are continuously reminded to renew the blue cards during the staff meeting

3.5 Resignation procedure of Staff members

All coordinators are cordially expected to perform the role for at least one year unless special circumstances (personal or organizational) arise. Upon handing over the role to a successor the predecessor should support at least six months to make sure a smooth transition of duties. A coordinator should provide at least three months of notice in case of a resignation and it should be properly announced in a working committee meeting.

All teachers, librarians and other academic staff are expected to give at least three month of notice before resign from the position. The resignation has to be officially communicated to the relevant coordinator who handles staffing and human resource development.

3.6 Health and safety procedures

3.6.1 Evacuation procedure

Community languages schools are required to have an evacuation plan. For schools, which utilise government buildings, the evacuation that has been created by that facility needs to be known to all members of the school community. For schools, whose buildings do not have an evacuation plan, it is the responsibility of the school to create a plan and familiarise the school community with the procedure by placing the evacuation plan in a strategically located position which is accessible to the entire school community. Ideally, the evacuation

plan would be exhibited on a main wall, which would allow staff and students to become familiar with the plan.

3.6.2 First Aid

In line with the First Aid Regulation of the *Occupational Health and Safety Act, 2004*.

First aid: is the immediate treatment or care given to a person suffering from an injury or illness

until more advanced care is provided or the person recovers.

First aider: is a person who has successfully completed a nationally accredited training course or

an equivalent level of training that has given them the competencies required to administer first aid.

First aid equipment: includes first aid kits and other equipment used to treat injuries and illnesses.

First aid facilities: include first aid rooms, health centres, clean water supplies and other facilities needed for administering first aid.

The following policy in relation to first aid applies to Community Languages Schools:

- Each school must ensure that a first aid kit is stored on site;
- Each school must nominate the First Aid officer and first aiders
- Schools need to have first aid policy and procedures
- The First Aid officer is in charge of the kit and must ensure it is properly maintained
- The First Aid officer is responsible for ensuring that a Register of Injuries and Treatment is maintained up-to-date and all First aiders having current certificate.
- Schools must ensure that there is an adequate number of trained first aid officers on site. For further training or information, schools can contact ESAV.
- Schools must ensure they are having the list of student's names with allergy and their allergy plan. Individual Anaphylaxis Management Plans.

Displaying well-recognised, standardised first aid signs will assist in easily locating first aid equipment and facilities

4. Procedures for handling disclosures and suspicions of harm

Harm is defined under the Child Protection Act 1999 as “any detrimental effect of a significant nature on the child’s physical, psychological or emotional wellbeing. For harm to be significant, the detrimental effect on the child’s wellbeing must be substantial or serious, more than transitory and must be demonstrable in the child’s presentation, functioning or behaviour”.

The following policy and procedures will ensure that staff respond as quickly as possible and in the best interests of the child or young person less than 18 years of age, when disclosures or suspicions of harm are received. YSS recognises that children and young people are vulnerable members of the community and that extra measures must be taken to protect and support them. All YSS staff members will report disclosed or suspected harm to either the Department of Communities (Child Safety Services) or the Queensland Police Service who will decide on an appropriate course of action.

4.1 Categorisation of types of Harm

Harm may be categorised into following types in YSS

- physical abuse, for example, beating, shaking, burning, biting, causing bruise or fractures by inappropriate discipline, giving children alcohol, drugs or inappropriate medication
- emotional or psychological abuse, for example, constant yelling, insults, swearing, criticism, bullying, not giving children positive support and encouragement
- neglect, for example, not giving children sufficient food, clothing, enough sleep, hygiene, medical care, leaving children alone or children missing school, and
- sexual abuse or exploitation, for example, sexual jokes or touching, exposing children to sexual acts or pornography or having sexual intercourse with a child or young person under 16 years of age (even if the child appears to have consented).

4.2 Reasonable grounds to suspect harm

YSS staff members may have ‘reasonable grounds’ to suspect harm if:

- A child or young person informs YSS employee that they have been harmed
- Someone else, for example, another child or young person, a parent, or a staff member, tells a YSS staff member that harm has occurred or is likely to occur
- A child or young person informs a YSS staff member they know someone who has been harmed. It is possible the child may be referring to themselves

4.3 Disclosure of Harm

A disclosure of harm occurs when someone, including a child, tells you about harm that has happened or is likely to happen. Disclosures of harm may start with:

- “I think I saw...”
- “Somebody told me that...”
- “Just think you should know...”
- “I’m not sure what I want you to do, but...”

Regarding any such complain further information should be collected by asking more questions such as

- Tell me more about that
- Where did you hear that
- Where did you see that

Complete an **incident report form** (Template provided) or record the details as soon as possible so that they are accurately captured. Include:

- time, date and place of the disclosure
- ‘word for word ‘what happened and what was said, including anything you said and any actions that have been taken, and
- date of report and signature

If you need to take notes as the person is telling you, explain that you are taking a record in case any later enquiry occurs.

4.4 Handling disclosures and suspicions of harm

School staff and volunteers are committed to protecting a child’s right to be safe from abuse of any kind. These procedures must be applied in any circumstance where there is an incident.

Call the police on 000 if you have immediate concerns for a child’s safety.

If any staff member or volunteer has suspicions of abuse they must consult the Department of **Child Safety, Youth and Women**. During normal business hours-contact the Regional Intake Service <http://www.communities.qld.gov.au/childsafety/about-us/contact-us/child-safety-service-centres/regional-intake-services>. After hours and on weekends-contact the Child Safety After Hours Service Centre on 1800 177 135or (07) 3235 9999.

The service operates 24 hours a day, seven days a week. If individuals working with your organisation are not sure who to call, or for assistance to locate their nearest Child Safety Service Centre, contact Child Safety Services' Enquiries Unit on 1800 811 810.

Child Safety Service Centres have professionally trained child protection staff members who are skilled in dealing with information about harm or risk of harm to children.

Further, if there are any breach of the code of conduct, they should be addressed promptly to the working committee, and later to the school board (SLBM Management committee) to take necessary actions. Creating an environment with deceitful communication and actions to distort the actual facts or tarnish the reputation of the school and staff is considered as a severe offence and will be dealt strictly. The Management committee of the SLBM then becomes the school board to resolve the issues connected to the incident and report back to the school working committee. Any breach of code of conduct will lead to suspension of work and will be further dealt according to the Australian law depending on the circumstances.

5. Policies and procedures for compliance with the blue card system

All YSS staff members other than QLD registered teachers must hold a valid Working with Children Blue Card to ensure the safety of children. Without a valid blue card no staff member should access any facility or equipment related to YSS at any cost.

5.1 Employee register

YSS maintains a confidential register containing the personal details and Blue Card details of all existing employees and officials.

- When the person applied and/or the date of issue of the positive notice and blue card
- The expiry date of the blue card, and
- The renewal date (this will be set at least 30 business days before expiry to allow employees to continue working in child-related employment).

All staff members must submit a renewal application before the expiry date of their blue card. Staff will be reminded about this during periodic staff meetings.

5.2 Notifying Blue Card Services

Where an employee or volunteer holding a blue card advises that there has been a change in their police information, YSS is to be informed and will advise Blue Card Services immediately through submitting a change in police information notification form. YSS must not continue to employ the staff member until the form has been submitted. The employee is not required to disclose the specific nature of the change, only that a change has occurred.

Where an employee or contractor stops being employed, YSS will also submit a 'no longer with organisation' form.

6. Strategies for communication and support

YSS is committed to communicating the Strategy, as well as the consequences of breaching the Strategy, to all stakeholders including employees, contractors, officials, volunteers, children and young people, coaches, parents and guardians.

These stakeholders will be made aware of the Strategy through the following avenues

- Policy and supporting material on the YSS website
- Hard copy of policy document is hanged on a wall in common area area of the school
- Updates and reminders on child and youth risk management strategy through school e-mails
- YSS employees will be trained in the child and youth risk management during their induction program and will be on hand to help/inform any stakeholders where assistance is required

7. Risk management plans for high risk activities and special events

YSS is committed to developing and reviewing risk management plans, as required, for high risk activities and special events. These plans are documented separately to this Strategy and developed with input from the following groups' stakeholders:

- School working team
- School teaching and academic staff
- The school board staff and management,

Plans are communicated to all stakeholders involved prior to the activity/event with a review conducted following.

7.1 Risk Management Process

There are six steps to consider when developing an effective risk management plan:

- Establish the Context (describe the activity)
- Identify the Risks
- Analyse the Risks
- Evaluate the Risks
- Manage the Risks and reassess, and
- Review

Step 1 – Establish the context (describe the activity)

- what is the activity and what are your objectives
- where is the activity going to take place – what environmental factors need to be considered
- identify the stakeholders, staff, parents, and children and young people involved in the activity, and
- identify all elements of the event from beginning to end

Step 2 – identify the risks

Consider involving a wide range of stakeholders, including children and young people, to identify the risks associated with the high risk activity or special event. Checklists may identify general risks that should always be considered, however, it is important to brainstorm with your stakeholders to ensure all potential risks that might result in harm to a child or young person are identified.

Workplace health and safety processes consider environment and equipment risks. Once the workplace health and safety requirements are fulfilled, the risks associated with the child and youth should be identified. These risks are physical, emotional, sexual and cultural in nature

In relation to potential risks of harm associated with the high risk activities and special events YSS provides to children and young people, ask you questions such as:

- How might harm occur?
- Why might harm occur?
- When might harm occur?

Step 3 – analyse the risks

The purpose of risk evaluation is to make decisions, based on the outcomes of risk analysis. The level of risk will determine whether the high risk activity or special event is practical.

Consider here –

- How likely is it that the risk will occur? (Likelihood)
- What would happen if the risk did occur? (Consequences)

Step 4 – evaluate the risks

The fourth step requires you to evaluate the level of risk, which will depend on your answers to the questions asked at Step 3. For example, if a risk is likely to occur and the consequences could result in major harm to a child, then this would be considered high risk.

Below is an example of a risk analysis matrix for analysing and evaluating risks in organisational activities. To determine the likelihood of risk using this matrix, refer to the left hand column of the risk analysis matrix. Then use the impact information to determine the level of consequence. Finally, combine the consequence and likelihood rating to arrive at the risk level.

Likelihood	Minor	Moderate	Major	Extreme
Very likely	Medium	High	Critical	Critical
Likely	Medium	High	High	Critical
Possible	Medium	Medium	High	High
Unlikely	Low	Medium	Medium	High
Rare	Low	Low	Medium	Medium

Step 5 – manage the risks

Risk management involves assessing the options in order to reduce the risk and the preparation and implementation of risk management plans, for example:

- Reduce the risk – will the proposed additional controls reduce the risk?
- Retain the risk - some risks will have to be retained and will require close monitoring.

Risk management options should consider the values and perceptions of stakeholders and the most appropriate way to communicate with them.

You now should consider how likely it is for the risk to occur after control measures have been put in place, and how bad the outcome would be if the risk was to occur. If you assess that a risk is still highly likely to occur and the outcome could result in harm to a child then you may need to rethink the activity.

Step 6 – review

Ongoing review is essential to ensure that the risk management plan your organisation develops for your high risk activity or special event is effective. Reviewing controls and responsibilities can be useful for future planning. You should consider who will review the risk management plan after the event or activity.

Each stage of the risk management process should be recorded appropriately.

8. A plan for managing breaches of your child and youth risk management strategy

This section outlines the steps to be taken following a breach of the child and youth risk management strategy in order to address the breach in a fair and supportive manner. A breach is any action or inaction by any member of the organisation, including children and young people, that fails to comply with any part of the strategy. This includes any breach in relation to:

- Statement of commitment to the safety and wellbeing of children and the protection of children from harm
- Code of conduct for interacting with children and young people
- Procedures for recruiting, selecting, training and managing staff
- Policies and procedures for handling disclosures or suspicions of harm, including reporting guidelines
- Policies and procedures for implementing and reviewing the children and youth risk management strategy and maintaining an employee register
- Risk management plans for high risk activities and special events, and
- Strategies for communication and support

All stakeholders of YSS are to be made aware of the actions or inactions that form a breach as well as the potential outcomes of breaching the child and youth risk management strategy.

8.1 Who Must Comply With This Plan

- Principal
- Deputy Principals
- Coordinators
- Teachers and other academic staff
- Librarians
- Parents and carers
- Children

- All third parties those who provide services to YSS (eg: cleaning)

Processes to Manage a Breach Breaches will be managed in a fair, unbiased and supportive manner.

The following activities will be conducted:

- All people concerned will be advised of the process
- All people concerned will be able to provide their version of events
- The details of the breach, including the versions of all parties and the outcome will be recorded
- Matters discussed in relation to the breach will be kept confidential, and
- an appropriate outcome will be decided by the school board (SLBM management committee)

8.2 Suitable Outcomes for Breaches

Depending on the nature of the breach, outcomes may include:

- emphasising the relevant component of the child and youth risk management strategy, for example, the code of conduct
- providing closer supervision
- further education and training
- mediating between those involved in the incident (where appropriate)
- disciplinary procedures if necessary, or
- reviewing current policies and procedures and developing new policies and procedures if necessary

9. Annual Review

To ensure that the Strategy remains current and effective in identifying and minimising risks of harm to children, the documents forming part of the Strategy are monitored and reviewed annually. These documents will also be reviewed after any incident where a child or young person or is at risk of harm or a breach of the strategy is identified.

The review is to consider any issues YSS has identified with the Strategy, such as:

- Whether policies and procedures were followed;
- Whether any incidents relating to children and young people risk management issues occurred;
- Issues with the actual process used to manage any incidents;
- The effectiveness of YSS's policies and procedures in preventing or minimising harm to children and young people; and
- Issues with the content and frequency of training in relation to the Strategy