



Children's Program National Child Safe Environments Policy

1. Purpose

Adults interacting with children and young people occupy a position of trust and influence. This Policy aims to ensure the safety and protection of children and young people whilst in the care of BSF, consistent with BSF's legal requirements in Australia.

2. Commitment to the safety of children and young people

- 2.1 BSF is committed to providing children and young people with a safe and nurturing environment in which they can learn and thrive.
- 2.2 BSF supports, values and respects all children and young people, and is committed to their safety, participation and empowerment.
- 2.3 BSF welcomes and encourages children, young people and their families to be engaged in facilitating a child safe environment at BSF to inform our operations and build the capability of children, young people and their families to understand their rights and responsibilities.
- 2.4 BSF has zero tolerance for all forms of harm against children and young people, and all allegations will be treated seriously in accordance with our policies and procedures.
- 2.5 BSF promotes a culture of child safety and wellbeing including by ensuring that physical and online environments promote safety and wellbeing while minimising the opportunity for children and young people to experience harm or be at risk of harm.
- 2.6 BSF provides a culturally safe and inclusive environment for the diverse needs of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children and young people, children and young people from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds, children and young people with disabilities, children and young people who are gender and sexually diverse, and children and young people who are vulnerable.
- 2.7 The safety, welfare and best interests of the child are paramount.

3. Definitions

- 3.1 **Applicant or Applicants** means a person or persons who have applied to commence a position as BSF Children's Staff.
- 3.2 **BSF** means BSF International (Australia) Ltd and all other entities associated with Bible Study Fellowship in Australia.
- 3.3 **BSF Procedure** means any procedure BSF has in place, including but not limited to those procedures annexed to this Policy.
- 3.4 **Child or young person** means a person who is under 18 years of age, unless otherwise defined by law or as noted in this Policy and BSF Procedures.
- 3.5 **Child abuse or harm** means conduct towards, with or in the presence of a child, or threatening

to engage in such conduct, which includes:

- (a) physical violence;
 - (b) conduct of a sexual nature, including a sexual offence against a child and grooming behaviour;
 - (c) serious emotional or psychological harm; or
 - (d) serious neglect of a child.
- 3.6 **Child Safe Code of Conduct** means the code of conduct annexed to this Policy at Annexure A.
- 3.7 **Child Safety** means matters related to BSF's duty of care to children in its care, protecting all children from harm, managing the risk of child abuse and harm, providing support to a child at risk of child abuse, and responding to incidents or allegations of harm to children or child abuse.
- 3.8 **Child Safety Training** means formal training provided by BSF or an organisation engaged by BSF which provides education to BSF Children's Staff, and Leaders/Volunteers on matters relating to child safety, including:
- (a) identifying and responding to risks to children;
 - (b) responding to disclosures of abuse and allegations of harm to children;
 - (c) empowering children; and
 - (d) child safety policies and procedures.
- 3.9 **Leaders/Volunteers** means all employees, contractors, volunteers and BSF Leaders and includes Children's Staff.
- 3.10 **Local Policy** means a current child safe policy that BSF has implemented in relation to a specific State or Territory to comply with specific requirements of State or Territory law.
- 3.11 **Children's Staff** or **BSF Children's Staff** means all BSF leaders who work with children or have oversight of a Children's Program including the Teaching Leaders, Substitute Teaching Leaders, Class Administrators, Children's Program Leaders, including the Children's Supervisors, Children's Leader, Assistant Children's Supervisors, Regular Volunteers, Area Team, Distance Online Trainers and Distant Assistant Online Trainers.
- 3.12 **Policy** means this National Child Safe Environments Policy.
- 3.13 **WWCC** means the following in each State and Territory:
- (a) In Victoria, a Working with Children Check issued pursuant to the *Worker Screening Act 2020* (VIC), as amended;
 - (b) In New South Wales, a Working with Children Check issued pursuant to the *Child Protection (Working with Children) Act 2012* (NSW), as amended;
 - (c) In the Australian Capital Territory, a Working with Vulnerable People registration issued under the *Working with Vulnerable People (Background Checking) Act 2011* (ACT), as amended;
 - (d) In Queensland, a Blue Card issued under the *Working with Children (Risk Management and Screening) Act 2000* (QLD), as amended;
 - (e) In Western Australia, a Working with Children Check issued under the *Working with Children (Criminal Record Checking) Act 2004* (WA), as amended; and
 - (f) In South Australia, a Working with Children Check issued under the *Child Safety*

(Prohibited Persons) Act 2016 (SA).

4. Scope

- 4.1 This Policy applies to all Leaders/Volunteers engaged by BSF in Australia, in conjunction with any Local Policy, Child Safe Code of Conduct, and BSF Procedures.
- 4.2 This Policy applies to BSF's physical and virtual environments, including MyBSF, email and other online communication and telecommunication.
- 4.3 Where there is a conflict in the application of this Policy and a Local Policy, the provisions of the Local Policy will prevail.

5. Responsibilities

- 5.1 The safety of children and young people is everyone's responsibility.
- 5.2 At BSF, all Leaders/Volunteers have a shared responsibility for contributing to the safety and protection of children and young people. .
- 5.3 BSF will ensure, as far as possible, that all Leaders/Volunteers are aware of:
 - (a) their responsibilities to create and maintain child safe environments, including their obligations under this Policy; and
 - (b) the appropriate standard of conduct and behaviour which BSF requires of them.
- 5.4 All Children's Staff are required to:
 - (a) read and agree to comply with this Policy, any Local Policy, BSF Procedures, and the Child Safe Code of Conduct;
 - (b) participate in BSF's child safety induction / training, as directed by BSF;
 - (c) take all reasonable steps to maintain an environment that prevents the commission of harm against children and young people;
 - (d) report concerns about actual or suspected harm or risks of harm towards a child as soon as possible; and
 - (e) report any breach or suspected breach of this Policy, BSF Procedures or the Child Safe Code of Conduct in line with this Policy as soon as possible.
- 5.5 Teaching Leaders:
 - (a) are responsible for providing Children's Staff and Applicants with training on their reporting obligations, this Policy, any Local Policy, BSF Procedures, and the Child Safe Code of Conduct;
 - (b) are responsible for ensuring, as far as possible, that all Children's Staff comply with this Policy, any Local Policy, BSF Procedures, and the Child Safe Code of Conduct; and
 - (c) must ensure that thorough background checks are completed and recorded for all Children's Staff and Applicants prior to their commencement.
- 5.6 Children's Supervisors are responsible for:
 - (a) providing Children's Staff and Applicants with training on their reporting obligations, this Policy, any Local Policy, BSF Procedures, and the Child Safe Code of Conduct; and
 - (b) supervising children and young people who access BSF's services and programs.

6. Code of Conduct

- 6.1 BSF's Child Safe Code of Conduct is publicly available on the BSF website at <https://www.bsfindernational.org/australia-and-new-zealand/>. A copy of the Child Safe Code of Conduct is annexed to this Policy as Annexure A.
- 6.2 The Child Safe Code of Conduct applies to all Leaders/Volunteers. Before working with children, Leaders/Volunteers must read and agree to comply with the Child Safe Code of Conduct as a part of BSF's child safety induction/ training.
- 6.3 This Policy, any Local Policy, BSF Procedures and the Child Safe Code of Conduct apply to interactions with children in person and via any telecommunication method, including online such as via social media or email.

7. Breaches

- 7.1 If BSF becomes aware of a suspected breach of this Policy, any Local Policy, BSF Procedures, or the Child Safe Code of Conduct, BSF will take immediate steps to ensure the safety and wellbeing of any child or young person which may be at risk or endanger as a result of or in relation to the breach.
- 7.2 BSF will respond to a suspected breach of this Policy, any Local Policy, BSF Procedures, or the Child Safe Code of Conduct by following the applicable procedure for the State or Territory in which the breach occurred, annexed to this Policy as:
 - (a) Annexure D: South Australia;
 - (b) Annexure E: Victoria;
 - (c) Annexure F: New South Wales;
 - (d) Annexure G: Australian Capital Territory;
 - (e) Annexure H: Queensland; and
 - (f) Annexure I: Western Australia.
- 7.3 Suspected breaches of this Policy, any Local Policy, BSF Procedures, and the Child Safe Code of Conduct are treated seriously by BSF and will be investigated (either internally or externally, depending on the severity of the suspected breach) in a manner which affords procedural fairness to the respondent to the investigation.
- 7.4 Following an investigation into a suspected breach, any person who is found to be in breach of this Policy, any Local Policy, BSF procedures, or the Child Safe Code of Conduct may face disciplinary action (including termination of their engagement with BSF).

8. Children and young people's participation

- 8.1 BSF provides a structured and engaging learning experience to children and young people, and actively encourages them to participate in group bible study and lesson activities in a safe and inclusive environment.
- 8.2 BSF is responsive to the needs of children and young people.
- 8.3 BSF listens to and involves children and young people by:
 - (a) supporting Leaders/Volunteers to develop their knowledge and skills to help children and young people participate, express their views and raise their concerns;
 - (b) using consultation methods which are suited to the age, cultural background, and developmental level of the children and young people who access BSF's services and programs;

- (c) clearly communicating with children and young people and their families regarding how they can report any concerns or provide feedback, using age and developmentally appropriate language;
 - (d) making documents available to children and young people and their families online so they are informed about how adults in the organisation should behave and know how to raise safety concerns for themselves, their friends or peers;
 - (e) building supportive communities of children and young people to encourage friendships and support from peers;
 - (f) communicating key messages about child safety and this Policy in a culturally sensitive and age appropriate way;
 - (g) inviting informal feedback from children and young people about their experiences; and
 - (h) listening to feedback provided by children and young people and their families and reflecting on how that feedback can improve BSF's operations and keep children and young people safe from harm or the risk of harm.
- 8.4 BSF is committed to providing a culturally safe environment in which the diverse and unique identities and experiences of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children and young people are respected and valued.
- 8.5 To ensure that BSF ensures equity and responds to diverse needs in policy and practice, BSF pays particular attention to the needs of children and young people:
- (a) with a disability;
 - (b) from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds;
 - (c) who are unable to live at home;
 - (d) who are lesbian, gay, bisexual, trans, gender diverse, intersex and queer; and
 - (e) who are Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander.

9. Family engagement and communication

- 9.1 To ensure families and communities are informed and involved in promoting child safety and wellbeing and have a say in the development of child safety and wellbeing-related policies and practices, BSF:
- (a) communicates with families, carers and the BSF community about its child safe approach; and
 - (b) publishes this Policy, related Procedures (including complaint processes), the Child Safety Code of Conduct, and other information on its website so families and the BSF community are informed about the operations and governance of BSF relating to child safety and wellbeing.
- 9.2 BSF provides information about child safety to children, young people and their families (including this Policy, related Procedures, complaints processes, and the Child Safety Code of Conduct), via the methods set out in clause 15.

10. Recruitment practices

- 10.1 BSF engages in a range of recruitment strategies to help ensure the safety of children and young people, including:
- (a) developing clear position descriptions;

- (b) examining written applications and engaging in face-to-face interviews for Applicants who will or may work with children (where possible);
 - (c) engaging in a thorough examination of a person’s suitability to work with children prior to inviting them to take a leadership position with children;
 - (d) undertaking screening, in accordance with applicable State and Territory obligations, on all persons that will (or could reasonably) work with children to verify that they have a current valid “not prohibited” WWCC before they commence working with children and young people at BSF and do not pose a risk of harm to children and young people;
 - (e) providing ongoing supervision for Leaders/Volunteers;
- 10.2 All information obtained from these screening processes is:
- (a) treated by BSF as confidential; and
 - (b) stored and managed in the BSF Class Database, which is validated as to the expiration date continuously, and not less than twice yearly, by Area Personnel and updated as needed.

WWCC Screening

- 10.3 Prior to appointing a Leader/Volunteer or Applicant to commence work with BSF and perform a role that will (or could reasonably) work with children and young people, BSF will verify that:
- (a) A WWCC clearance has been obtained in relation to the Leader/Volunteer or Applicant within the preceding:
 - (i) five years for sites located in New South Wales, South Australia, Victoria and the Australian Capital Territory; or
 - (ii) three years for sites located in Queensland and Western Australia;
 - (b) the following information has been collected by BSF from the Leader/Volunteer or Applicant:
 - (i) their full name;
 - (ii) current residential address (and mailing address, if different);
 - (iii) date of birth;
 - (iv) WWCC number or WWCC application number; and
 - (v) WWCC expiry date;
 - (c) BSF has retained copies of:
 - (i) the person’s WWCC; and
 - (d) the person is not prohibited or restricted from working with children.
- 10.4 Where a Leader/Volunteer is required to apply for a new WWCC, the following procedure applies:
- (a) in Victoria, New South Wales, and the Australian Capital Territory:
 - (i) the Applicant or Leader/Volunteer must complete and submit their application using the online portal and provide BSF with their application number within two business days of making the application or receiving a request to do so; and
 - (ii) BSF will complete a validity check using the online portal to link the Applicant or Leader/Volunteer to the organisation;

- (b) in Queensland:
 - (i) the Applicant or Leader/Volunteer must create an account in the online portal and provide their account number to BSF;
 - (ii) BSF will then link the Applicant or Leader/Volunteer to the organisation; and
 - (iii) the Applicant or Leader/Volunteer will then complete and submit their application as soon as it is reasonably practicable for them to do so;
- (c) in Western Australia:
 - (i) the Applicant or Leader/Volunteer will obtain a paper application form and provide it to BSF within two business days of receiving a request to do so;
 - (ii) BSF will complete its section of the application form and return it to the Applicant or Leader/Volunteer; and
 - (iii) the Applicant or Leader/Volunteer will then complete and submit their application as soon as it is reasonably practicable for them to do so;
- (d) in South Australia:
 - (i) the Applicant or Leader/Volunteer will provide written consent to BSF to commence a WWCC application on their behalf;
 - (ii) upon receipt of written consent, BSF will commence and submit the application in the online portal.

10.5 BSF will conduct a WWCC verification of each of its Leaders/Volunteers at least once every 5 years or every 3 years, as required by applicable law, from the commencement of their engagement.

10.6 A person is not permitted to commence as a Leader/Volunteer until a valid WWCC has been issued by the relevant agency, irrespective of:

- (a) an exemption; or
- (b) permission to commence work after an application has been made and prior to a result being returned by the relevant authority;

which may be applicable under an Act from any State or Territory.

10.7 A person who is a Prohibited Person under Section 9 of the *Prohibited Persons Act 2016* (SA) is not permitted to commence or continue to work as a Leader/Volunteer at BSF.

10.8 Notwithstanding clause 10.6(a) of this Policy, if a Leader/Volunteer or Applicant is either:

- (a) engaged in Western Australia and is unable to apply for a WWCC as they are subject to an exemption or are not engaging in child-related work within the definition applied by the *Working with Children (Criminal Record Checking) Act 2004* (WA); or
- (b) engaged in South Australia and is unable to apply for a WWCC as they are precluded from obtaining a WWCC due to:
 - (i) their profession (e.g. as a member of the Australian Federal Police); or
 - (ii) the person does not meet a time related threshold for child-related work as set out under that Act;

that Leader/Volunteer or Applicant must:

- (c) prior to commencing work with BSF, obtain and provide to BSF a valid National Police

Check which has been issued within the last six months; and

- (d) provide an updated National Police Check to BSF every three or five years as required by applicable law or upon request by BSF, as soon as it is reasonably practicable for them to do so.
- 10.9 If BSF becomes aware of any information that may impact the eligibility of any Applicant or Leader/Volunteer from retaining or obtaining a WWCC or may require them to have restrictions placed on their ability to work with children, BSF will notify the relevant authority in accordance with the relevant Act as outlined at 3.13 in the respective State or Territory of the Applicant or Leader/Volunteer.
- 10.10 Information that may impact the eligibility of any Applicant or Leader/Volunteer from retaining or obtaining a WWCC or may require them to have restrictions placed on their ability to work with children includes, but is not limited to:
- (a) witnessing or receiving reports of inappropriate behaviour which occurs inside or outside of BSF;
 - (b) new convictions or charges (including in relation to family violence);
 - (c) registration on a sex offender registry; or
 - (d) a prohibition from working with children issued by a WWCC authority in another State or Territory.
- 10.11 Any reports made pursuant to clause 10.9 which are made with malicious intent or not within the scope of the Purpose of this Policy will not be tolerated by BSF and will be considered a breach of this Policy pursuant to clause 7 herein.

11. Supervision, training, development, and support for Leaders/Volunteers

- 11.1 BSF has strategies and safeguards in place to ensure that all Leaders/Volunteers are adequately supervised, trained and supported to understand their obligations and responsibilities to create a child safe environment. Those strategies and safeguards include:
- (a) induction and/or refresher training for all Leaders/Volunteers to support their understanding of their reporting obligations;
 - (b) ongoing supervision by a Children's Supervisor trained in BSF policies and procedures;
 - (c) safety monitoring by a trained assistant Children's Supervisor, and oversight of Children's Supervisor's responsibilities if a Children's Supervisor is absent;
 - (d) training for Children's Leaders before assuming teaching duties and weekly training throughout a BSF class year;
 - (e) compliance with Child Protection Policy monitored by trained Area Personnel overseeing classes; and
 - (f) instructing leaders in procedures for suspected harms and risks of harm towards children.

12. Reporting and responding to child abuse or harm or risk of harm to a child

- 12.1 BSF is committed to ensuring that children and young people who access BSF's services and programs are kept safe from harm and the risk of harm.
- 12.2 When BSF suspects that a child or young person has been harmed or is at risk of harm, BSF will handle that suspicion in an appropriate manner which prioritizes the safety of children and young people.

- 12.3 When information regarding child abuse, harm to a child, or risk of harm to a child is received by BSF, BSF will:
- (a) record and listen to the complaint or disclosure;
 - (b) take the complaint or disclosure seriously and check their understanding of the complaint or disclosure before proceeding;
 - (c) consider whether immediate action must be taken (such as making a report to Police on 000 if there is an immediate risk to a child or young person);
 - (d) consider whether the subject of the complaint or disclosure is a child or young person and, if so, consider whether the complaint or disclosure requires a report to be made or action to be taken, and if so, follow the relevant reporting procedure;
 - (e) consider whether the complaint or feedback involves discrimination, bullying or harassment, and if so, follow the process set out in clauses 12.7 to 12.10 below and refer the concern to the BSF Children’s Director;
 - (f) clearly document and securely store decisions and actions taken in response to the complaint or disclosure; and
 - (g) give timely updates to the children, families and relevant staff involved in the complaint or disclosure, where appropriate.
- 12.4 All Leaders/Volunteers are required to follow the relevant procedure applicable to the State or Territory in which the child is situated. Leaders/Volunteers are referred to the following procedures, which are annexed to this Policy:
- (a) Annexure D: South Australia;
 - (b) Annexure E: Victoria;
 - (c) Annexure F: New South Wales;
 - (d) Annexure G: Australian Capital Territory;
 - (e) Annexure H: Queensland; and
 - (f) Annexure I: Western Australia.

Recognising signs of risk or harm

- 12.5 A child or young person may be at risk of harm if they are behaving irregularly.
- 12.6 The following indicators may indicate that a child or young person is or may be at risk of harm:
- (a) change in usual behaviour;
 - (b) usually and persistently compliant, shy, withdrawn, passive, uncommunicative and unwilling to join group activity;
 - (c) excessively nervous, hyperactive, aggressive, disruptive, or destructive behaviour;
 - (d) persistently fearful of other children and adults, especially if this is a changed behaviour;
 - (e) has an unexplained injury such as a cut, a burn, a limp, broken bone or bruises; or
 - (f) is emaciated, constantly tired, or showing evidence of malnutrition and dehydration.

Responding to a child or young person who discloses harm

- 12.7 Leaders/Volunteers are not engaged as counsellors and are not authorised to provide

professional support or hold themselves out as being able to provide professional support when approached by a child or young person who discloses (or wishes to disclose) harm.

- 12.8 The first response to any disclosure made by a child or young person is extremely important. All Leaders/Volunteers must follow the HEARTS technique as part of a first response:
- (a) **Hear** – Listen, believe and remain clam.
 - (b) **Empathise** – Encourage, give them your attention, let them use their own words.
 - (c) **Affirm** that is not their fault – Reassure them and acknowledge that this happens.
 - (d) **Record Observations** – Keep a record of what has happened.
 - (e) **Tell someone** – Privately report your concern to relevant authorities as soon as possible. If appropriate, discretely notify a member of Children’s Staff, Children’s Leader or Children’s Supervisor. Reporting your concerns to the relevant authority in accordance with your statutory obligations must always take precedence over any internal notification.
 - (f) **Self-care** – Take care of yourself and seek help if you need it.
- 12.9 Practice confidentiality. Give no information to anyone else. You may call your Area Team for prayer support.
- 12.10 Leaders/Volunteers must not, under any circumstances:
- (a) promise not to tell anyone else or make any other promises that they cannot keep. Instead, Leaders/Volunteers should consider telling the disclosing child or young person in age appropriate language that they are required to report to the relevant authority to help stop the harm and explain the role of these authorities if appropriate. For example, a Leader or volunteer could simply say ‘I will need to talk to people to work out what to do next to help you’;
 - (b) pressure the disclosing child or young person into disclosing more than they want to;
 - (c) bring another child or young person into the disclosure, even if the disclosing child or young person requests this;
 - (d) keep the disclosure a secret;
 - (e) provide any information that the Leader/Volunteer is unsure about;
 - (f) give any opinions about the disclosing child or young person’s next choices. Leaders/Volunteers should never tell the disclosing child or young person that they should report or that they should say nothing, as this is entirely up to the disclosing child or young person;
 - (g) ask leading questions; rather, Leaders/Volunteers could ask ‘what happened next?’; or
 - (h) give the disclosing child or young person any of their personal contact information.

13. Responding to complaints or feedback about BSF

- 13.1 All Leaders/Volunteers are responsible for reporting complaints or feedback about BSF’s services or programs.
- 13.2 All complaints or feedback received by BSF about BSF’s services or programs or the conduct of a leader or volunteer will be dealt with:
- (a) promptly, sensitively and fairly;
 - (b) in a manner which reinforces that the safety and protection of children and young

people from harm or risk of harm is always of utmost importance; and

- (c) in a manner which affords procedural fairness to the subject(s) of the complaint or feedback.

13.3 When a complaint or feedback is received by a Children's Supervisor or Teaching Leader about BSF's services or programs or the conduct of a Leader/Volunteer, the Children's Supervisor or Teaching Leader will:

- (a) record and listen to the complaint or feedback;
- (b) take the complaint or feedback seriously and check their understanding of the complaint or disclosure before proceeding;
- (c) consider whether consider whether the subject of the complaint or disclosure is a child or young person and, if so, consider whether the complaint or disclosure warrants further action (such as making a notification pursuant to section 12 above);the complaint or feedback requires a report to be made or action to be taken as set out in clause 121 above, and if so, follow the relevant reporting procedure;
- (d) consider whether the complaint or feedback involves discrimination, bullying or harassment, and if so, follow the process set out in clauses 12.7 to 12.10 above and refer the concern to the BSF Children's Director;
- (e) clearly document and securely store decisions and actions taken in response to the complaint or feedback; and
- (f) give timely updates to the children, families and Children's Staff involved in the complaint or feedback, where appropriate.

14. Risk management

14.1 BSF understands that there are a number of risks associated with its services and programs which may arise in relation to:

- (a) images taken of children and young people throughout the provision of BSF's services and programs;
- (b) the supervision of children and young people;
- (c) the physical environment in which children and young people engage in BSF's services and programs;
- (d) any physical contact which may occur between Leaders/Volunteers and children and young people; and
- (e) the protection of privacy and confidentiality.

14.2 To mitigate or prevent those risks, BSF:

- (a) prohibits photos or videos of children being taken without the consent of a parent or guardian;
- (b) requires that children only attend BSF when their enrolled registered adult is on the host church premises;
- (c) prohibits children being taken off church property for BSF programs;
- (d) prohibits contact with children outside the BSF setting, including email/telephone/social media;
- (e) reviews its risks and implements strategies to minimize its risks on a regular basis; and

- (f) provides all Children’s Staff with training to support their understanding of their obligations.

15. Communication

- 15.1 This Policy, Child Safe Code of Conduct, Online Safety and Code of Conduct, Student Program Zoom Protocol and Tips:
 - (a) included in appropriate staff and leaders manuals;
 - (b) distributed to all Children’s Staff during their induction and for review on an annual basis; and
 - (c) accessible to parents, carers and the general public on the BSF website at <https://www.bsfindernational.org/australia-and-new-zealand/>.
- 15.2 BSF will provide a link or copy of this Policy to any person in relation to whom BSF provides its services and programs, or at the request of that person.
- 15.3 By commencing or continuing work with BSF, all Leaders/Volunteers acknowledge that they have read, understood and agree to this Policy.

16. Related policies and procedures

- 16.1 Children’s Supervisor Manual, accessible only to Children’s Supervisors, Assistant Children’s Supervisors and Class Staff via personal accounts on myBSF.
- 16.2 Child Safe Code of Conduct, annexed to this policy as Annexure A.
- 16.3 Child Safety Reporting Procedures for each State and Territory, which are annexed to this Policy as:
 - (a) Annexure D: South Australia;
 - (b) Annexure E: Victoria;
 - (c) Annexure F: New South Wales;
 - (d) Annexure G: Australian Capital Territory;
 - (e) Annexure H: Queensland; and
 - (f) Annexure I: Western Australia.

17. Policy review

- 17.1 BSF will review this Policy in August 2023 and annually thereafter in accordance with relevant legislation and will welcome input from students, parents /carers, Leaders/Volunteers, and the BSF community.
- 17.2 Following any revision or update to this Policy, the revised Policy will be lodged with any relevant statutory authority as required by law.

{Signatures appear on the following page}

18. Agreement

By signing this document, you confirm that you have read, understood and agreed to adhere to the guidelines, practices and policies stated in it.

I, _____, have read, understood and agreed to this Policy. I further acknowledge the terms and conditions outlined in this document and agree to operate within the guidelines set out.

Name: _____

Commencement date: _____

Signature: _____

Date: _____

Annexure A

Child Safe Code of Conduct

As a leader, member or volunteer, I am responsible for promoting the safety and wellbeing of all children and young people involved in BSF (collectively referred to in this Code as **‘child or children’**).

I will:

- Uphold BSF’s Statement of Commitment to the Safety of Children and Young People at all times and adhere to BSF’s National Child Safe Environments Policy, any Local Policy and/or BSF Procedure.
- Behave as a positive role model to children.
- Promote the safety, welfare and wellbeing of children.
- Maintain a duty of care towards children.
- Be vigilant and proactive with regard to child safety and child protection issues.
- Take all reasonable steps to protect children from child abuse or harm or risk of harm , violence, bullying, torment, ridicule and neglect.
- Provide age appropriate supervision for children.
- Comply with requests, directions and guidelines published by BSF with respect to child protection.
- Treat everyone within the BSF community with respect both within and outside the BSF environment.
- Promote the safety, participation and empowerment of children with a disability.
- Promote the cultural safety, participation and empowerment of all children, regardless of age, gender, religion, vulnerability, sexuality, ability, ethnicity, culture or language background, including Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children.
- Use positive and affirming language towards children.
- Encourage children to ‘have a say’ and then listen to them with respect.
- Listen and respond to the views and concerns of children, particularly if they are communicating that they or another child has been abused or they are worried about their safety or the safety of another child.
- Respect cultural, religious and political differences, including the language, customs and religion of a child’s family.
- Help provide an open, safe and supportive environment for all children to interact, and socialise.
- Intervene when children are engaging in inappropriate bullying behaviour towards others or acting in a humiliating or vilifying way.
- Avoid covert or overt sexual behaviours when interacting with children.
- Maintain appropriate physical and emotional boundaries when interacting with children.
- Ensure I am not alone with a child unless they are visible to other adults.
- Wherever possible, report any breaches of this Child Safe Code of Conduct to Children’s Supervisor or another member of BSF’s leadership team as soon as possible.

- Understand and comply with all reporting or disclosure obligations and procedures related to protecting children from harm or risk of harm (including mandatory reporting procedures).
- Once statutory reporting requirements have been met, wherever possible, report concerns about child safety including any reasonable belief or suspicion that a child has been harmed, abused or is at risk of harm to a Children’s Supervisor so that BSF can take steps to support or protect that child.
- Where an allegation of child abuse or harm to a child is made or a child is at risk of harm, ensure as quickly as possible that the child/ren involved is/are safe.
- Call the Police on 000 if I have immediate concerns for a child’s safety.
- Report to the appropriate statutory authority
- Respect the privacy of children and their families and only disclose information to people who have a need to know.

I will not:

- Engage in, or expose any child to, any form of sexual or discriminatory behaviour.
- Use prejudicial, oppressive, or threatening behaviour or inappropriate or abusive language with children.
- Engage in conduct towards or in the presence of a child that suggests contempt, ridicule or intolerance, including because of the child’s or another person’s race, culture, religion, gender, sexuality or disability.
- Discriminate against any child based on culture, race, sexuality, ethnicity or disability.
- Engage in open discussions of an adult nature in the presence of children.
- Work with children while under the influence of alcohol or illegal drugs, or consume alcohol or illegal drugs at BSF or BSF events in the presence of children.
- Engage in any form of sexual conduct with a child including making sexually suggestive comments and sharing sexually suggestive material.
- Engage in inappropriate or unnecessary physical conduct or behaviours including doing things of a personal nature that a child can do for themselves, such as toileting or changing clothes.
- Engage in any form of physical violence towards a child including inappropriately rough physical play.
- Use physical means or corporal punishment to discipline or control a child.
- Engage in any form of behaviour that has the potential to cause a child serious emotional or psychological harm.
- Develop ‘special’ relationships with children that could be seen as favouritism (for example, the offering of gifts or special treatment for specific children).
- Engage in undisclosed private meetings with a child.
- Engage in inappropriate personal communications with a child through any medium, including any online contact or interactions with a child.
- Exchange personal contact details or have any online contact with a child or their family unless necessary for a legitimate BSF purpose or disclosed to BSF.
- Take, share or publish (including online) photos, videos or recordings of a child;
- Post online any information about a child that may identify them such as their: full name, age, email

address, telephone number, residence, school, or details of a club or group they may attend.

- Ignore or disregard any suspected or disclosed child abuse.

Annexure B

Online Safety and Code of Conduct

Online Safety Measures

1. All BSF Student Program Leaders have successfully completed a Background Screening process as required by BSF and local government regulations.
2. A class cannot begin or be conducted without at least two leaders present in a classroom, whether physical or virtual.
3. Leaders receive ongoing training for the safety and security of students and are observed regularly by a Children's Supervisor.

Code of Conduct for Participants in BSF Student Program Online

1. All students are to use their first and last names when signing on to the session. If dialing in from a phone, participants must state their names aloud because Zoom will display their ID as a phone number. If possible, change the phone number to the student's name.
2. Elementary students should have a BSF Adult or parent nearby during class, in case the student needs assistance during the class meeting.
3. All profile pictures and backgrounds must be appropriate for a Bible Study environment.
4. Obscene, profane, threatening or disrespectful language, images, or web links are not permitted.
5. All chat messages must be polite, courteous and respectful and should pertain to the topic of discussion.
6. No "Private Chats" are allowed.
7. To avoid distraction, do not make filter or background changes during the class unless directed by the leader. Avatars should not be used unless directed by the leader.
8. Keep your microphone muted and your video turned on unless directed by the leader. If circumstances require the students to turn the video off, please inform the leader.
9. Photographs, screenshots, and video recording of the online class are not permitted except by Children's Leaders to be used in accordance with the BSF Video/Photographic Image Release.
10. Zoom invitation links may be shared in a private e-mail or text when inviting a friend to the class as a guest, but a Zoom invitation link is never to be posted on any social media platform or any public platform.
11. BSF has a zero-tolerance policy regarding grooming behaviors or suspected grooming behaviors. Grooming behavior is a manipulative behavior used by abusers to gain access to and the trust of potential victims. Class Staff, leaders, and regular volunteers are not to have contact with children or students through private chats on Zoom or outside of the classroom, including social media interactions.
12. Joining a Student Program online class implies agreement to this Code of Conduct. Any participant who violates this policy will be subject to disciplinary action that may result in removal from the online Student Program.

Annexure C

Student Program Zoom Protocols & Tips

Zoom is the platform BSF uses to create strong and connected groups meeting online. As you prepare to meet students on Zoom, these basic settings are in your CS/CL Zoom license to ensure safety protocol for Zoom meetings.

- Pre-Configured Safety Settings**
- The following are the customized safety settings for your CS/CL Zoom account:
- “Waiting room” is enabled
 - “Private chat” will be disabled with the SP Zoom enhancements. Students should not send private chats to each other. All chat messages should be seen by everyone in the class.
 - Private chat to the host/co-host is enabled. Leaders may not chat privately with students. Respond verbally as appropriate to their chat.
 - “Screen sharing” is enabled. Only CLs share screens unless the student is given permission by the CL. If a student shares their screen without permission, click on “View Options,” then “Stop Participants Sharing.” If the problem persists, remove the student from the breakout room. The CS/ACS would then proceed through the action steps under “Incident Response Plan” on the next page.
 - “File transfer” is disabled
 - “Annotation” is enabled
 - “Whiteboard” is enabled
 - “Allow participants to rename themselves” is enabled
 - “Breakout rooms” are enabled. Guidelines for using breakout rooms within a class level will be provided with the system update.
 - When the CS/ACS makes CLs co-hosts, CLs can:
 - Mute students
 - Remove a student from the breakout room
 - Screen share within the breakout room
 - Spotlight speakers
 - Stop participants from annotating

**Required
Safety
Procedures**

Include these safety procedures:

- Two trained leaders must be present for a classroom to begin or be conducted, whether meeting in-person or online.
- When signing on to a meeting, students display their first and last names and turn on their video. Non-video participants (phone or non-functioning web camera) must verbally identify themselves upon entry.
- Leaders only admit students who are registered in the class and expected guests.
- Elementary students should have a BSF Adult or parent nearby during class, in case the student needs assistance during the class meeting.
- Photographs, screenshots, and video recording of the class are permitted by the CS/ACS and CL only when parental/guardian consent has been given for all students on the call.
- All participants are known and verified members or guests of the class.
- Remind students of the Code of Conduct at least twice a year.
- Utilize Online Discussion Groups to volunteer in Online Student Program classes, as they do in In-Person Student Program classes. This will enable a CL to step out of the breakout room with the student to discuss behaviors of concern with the student and CS/ACS.

**Incident
Response Plan**

Should an incident occur while conducting a BSF Zoom call, take immediate action and follow up with the Class Staff to report the incident, if necessary. Practice these action steps like you would practice emergency procedures.

Action Steps	
Children’s Leaders	CS/Class Staff (Not necessarily in the following order)
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Attendee without video on: Ask to turn on video and/or identify themselves. If no response, return the attendee to the Waiting Room. Once identified, the video may be turned off. • Uninvited Participant: Warmly welcome this person to BSF. Politely let them know that they need to be registered by a BSF Adult prior to returning to the class the following week. • Zoom bomber: Promptly remove the participant from the meeting. • Inappropriate message or visual in the Chat: Tap and hold the item you want to delete. Tap Delete. • Inappropriate message or drawing on a shared screen: Stop screen share. • Obscene/inappropriate behavior or background image: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Mute participant/Mute all participants ○ Turn off participant’s video ○ Remove participant from the meeting 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Determine whom to inform about the incident and in what order. Do you: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ contact all participants/BSF adults from the meeting? ○ file an Incident Report? ○ contact Police or Child Services? Consult AP as necessary. • Determine the level of detail shared and ensure privacy as required. • Determine the action steps to take. Are these action steps communicated internally (AP/HQ) and/or externally (class members/BSF adults)? <p>Complete and file a <i>G105 Incident Report</i> if necessary.</p>

**Download
the
Application**

For the optimum Zoom experience, download the free and most recent app on a desktop computer or to your mobile device. Meetings can be accessed without the app, but this limits the experience. Some student devices may have Zoom limitations. As a leader, be prepared to adapt to students missing various functionalities such as annotate.

**Hosting and
Inviting to
Meetings**

CS and ACS share responsibility for hosting the Zoom meeting and sending Zoom invitations for class to the BSF Adult each week. These links can be found on MyBSF.

Tech Check

Introduce students to Zoom features and assist as needed.

View: Help students find the button or setting on the screen that enables toggling between views.

- Gallery View – displays all participants in multiple same size windows.
- Speaker View – displays a large view of the active speaker and smaller videos (thumbnails) of other participants. Help students go to Speaker View when screen sharing as well, so they can see the shared screen and participants at the same time.

Chat: Help students find the in-meeting chat function to chat with the entire group. CLs use Chat for greetings and instructions. Private chats are not allowed between any leader and a student, between students, or a volunteer and a student.

Annexure D

Child Safety Reporting Procedure – South Australia

1. Overview

- 1.1 BSF is committed to ensuring that children and young people who access BSF's services and programs are kept safe from harm and the risk of harm.
- 1.2 When BSF suspects that a child or young person has been harmed or is at risk of harm, BSF will handle that suspicion in a manner which prioritises the safety of children and young people.
- 1.3 All Leaders/Volunteers are responsible for reporting reasonable beliefs that a child or young person has been harmed or is at risk of harm in accordance with this procedure.
- 1.4 All Leaders/Volunteers will follow the process outlined at steps 1 to 8 below.

2. Step 1: Determine whether the child is in immediate danger

- 2.1 The Leader/Volunteer will stay with the child (if within their presence) and take all reasonable steps to ensure their safety.
- 2.2 If the Leader/Volunteer believes the child is at immediate risk of harm or risk of harm, they will notify police immediately by telephoning 000.

3. Step 2: Consider whether there is an obligation to report

- 3.1 If, in the course of work with BSF, a Leader/Volunteer suspects on reasonable grounds that a child or young person is, or may be, at risk of harm, then the Leader/Volunteer must report that suspicion.
- 3.2 For the purpose of this procedure:
 - (a) **BSF Children's Staff** or **Children's Staff** means BSF class leaders including the Teaching Leader, Substitute Teaching Leader, Class Administrator, Children's Program Leaders, including the Children's Supervisor, Children's Leader, Assistant Children's Supervisor and Area Team;
 - (b) **Leader/Volunteer** means all employees, contractors, volunteers and leaders of BSF and includes Children's Staff.
 - (c) a child is **at risk** if:
 - (i) they have suffered harm or are likely to suffer harm;
 - (ii) they are likely to be removed from the State for a medical procedure that would be illegal in South Australia (e.g. genital mutilation, to take part in a marriage ceremony that would be void or invalid in South Australia, or to take part in an activity that would constitute a criminal offence in South Australia);

- (iii) they are persistently absent from school;
- (iv) the parents or guardians of the child are dead, unable or unwilling to care for the child, have abandoned the child, or cannot be found; or
- (v) they are of no fixed address;
- (d) a **child** means a person under 18 years of age;
- (e) **harm** means:
 - (i) physical abuse, which may present as:
 - (A) bruises in unlikely places (face, back, ears, hands, buttocks, upper thighs and soft parts of the body);
 - (B) inconsistent or absent explanation of bruises;
 - (C) any bruising on a baby;
 - (D) pressure marks from fingers on the face, chest or back;
 - (E) weal, ligature or bite marks;
 - (F) skull fracture, subdural bleeding, multiple fractures of different ages;
 - (G) suspicious burns; or
 - (H) poisoning or significant over medicating;
 - (ii) sexual abuse, which may present as:
 - (A) genital injuries;
 - (B) bite marks;
 - (C) sleep disturbance;
 - (D) inappropriate sexual behaviour based on the child's age;
 - (E) promiscuous affection seeking behaviour;
 - (F) obsessive and compulsive washing;
 - (G) wary of physical contact with others;
 - (iii) emotional or psychological abuse, which may present as:
 - (A) avoiding home (particularly if the abuser is in the family home);
 - (B) running away or continually staying at friend's houses;
 - (C) lying or stealing;
 - (D) lack of trust in adults;
 - (E) poor self-image/self-esteem, poor academic performance, poor peer relationships; or
 - (F) secretive, demanding or disruptive behaviour; or
 - (iv) neglect, which may present as:
 - (A) failure to thrive;
 - (B) developmental delay;

- (C) prone to illness;
 - (D) sallow or sickly appearance;
 - (E) abnormally high appetite, stealing or hoarding food;
 - (F) smelly or dirty appearance; or
 - (G) untreated medical conditions;
- (f) all Leaders/Volunteers are **mandated notifiers**;
- (g) a **serious concern** means that a person suspects a child is in imminent or immediate danger of:
- (i) serious harm;
 - (ii) serious injury;
 - (iii) chronic neglect; or
 - (iv) when a child is in care of the Department for Child Protection and you suspect they are being harmed or at risk of harm;
- 3.3 The Leader/Volunteer who suspects on reasonable grounds that a child or young person is, or may be, at risk of harm is responsible for making a notification of that suspicion.
- 3.4 If a Leader/Volunteer is uncertain as to whether they need to make a report, they should discuss their observations and concerns with a Children’s Supervisor or the Child Abuse Report Line officer.
- 3.5 Leaders/Volunteers are not required to consult with BSF or gain the support of BSF prior to making a report.

Responding to a child or young person who is harmed or at risk of being harmed by a BSF leader or volunteer

- 3.6 If a Leader/Volunteer suspects on reasonable grounds that a child or young person is, or may be, at risk of harm by another leader or volunteer, then:
- (a) that suspicion must be reported in the same way as if it arose in relation to a person outside of BSF; and
 - (b) the person is strongly encouraged to report that suspicion to a Children’s Supervisor or Teaching Leader so that steps can be taken to minimise potential harm to children.

4. Step 3: Make a report (if required)

- 4.1 If a person determines the child has been harmed or at risk of harm, the person must report that suspicion by:
- (a) making a telephone notification to the Child Abuse Report Line (**CARL**) on 131 478 (noting that all serious concerns must be reported to CARL); or
 - (b) SA Police on 000; or
 - (c) making an electronic notification at <http://www.reportchildabuse.families.sa.gov.au/>.
- 4.2 If a Leader/Volunteer makes a notification in accordance with paragraph 4.1, the person is strongly encouraged to notify the Children’s Supervisor that they have made that notification.

- 4.3 If a Children’s Supervisor or Children’s Staff member is notified that a child is, or may be, at risk of harm, they must:
- (a) take immediate steps to ensure the safety and wellbeing of any child or young person which may be at risk of harm;
 - (b) confirm that the concern has been reported in accordance with paragraph 4.1, and if not, assist the person who identified the harm or risk or harm to make the report or make the report themselves; and
 - (c) complete the *Report of Suspected Child Abuse (CP 113)* and submit the original to HQ in the *Confidential Envelope for CS (CP 114)*.
- 4.4 Leaders/Volunteers must prioritise making a report to authorities over notifying a Children’s Supervisor or Children’s Staff member.
- 4.5 Once the Department for Child Protection and/or SA Police has confirmed that BSF can commence an internal investigation into the concern, a Children’s Supervisor or Children’s Staff member must ensure that BSF takes the necessary steps to investigate the suspicion in accordance with the Children’s Supervisor Manual, noting that an independent investigation may be appropriate.

Stand down

- 4.6 Where BSF has allegations or concerns that any Leader/Volunteer may have engaged in conduct that could give rise to risk of harm to a child, BSF may, at its discretion:
- (a) stand the Leader/Volunteer down while an investigation is conducted (which will involve removing or limiting their contact with children, and liaising with authorities); and
 - (b) direct the Leader/Volunteer to return any keys, passes or equipment and to provide any access codes or passwords.

5. Step 4: Cooperate with regulatory authorities

- 5.1 The Leader/Volunteer and BSF will cooperate with any investigation by the police or the Department for Child Protection.
- 5.2 Support will be provided to the child(ren) as deemed appropriate by the Children’s Supervisor.
- 5.3 All correspondence from regulatory authorities should be directed to a Children’s Supervisor.
- 5.4 BSF will not interview the child(ren) further or otherwise investigate until the police or the Department for Child Protection have provided it with permission to do so.
- 5.5 The Department for Child Protection or the police may conduct interviews of BSF students without their parents’ knowledge or consent.
- 5.6 When an officer from the Department for Child Protection or the police attend BSF premises, a member of the leadership team should request to see identification before permitting them to have access to a student.
- 5.7 BSF will notify the Department of Human Services Screening Unit and Central Assessment Unit of the allegations.

6. Step 5: Internal investigation

- 6.1 Once clearance has been provided to BSF by the relevant regulatory authorities, it may decide to conduct its own internal investigation.
- 6.2 The President will appoint a relevant person to manage the internal investigation. If required, an external investigator will be appointed.
- 6.3 The investigation will be undertaken in accordance with the principles of procedural fairness and natural justice.
- 6.4 All Leaders/Volunteers are expected to fully cooperate with any internal investigation.

7. Step 6: Confidentiality

- 7.1 Following a report and during an investigation, Leaders/Volunteers will take all reasonable steps to protect the confidentiality and the interests of:
 - (a) the child(ren) and their family;
 - (b) the individual(s) who made the report; and
 - (c) any representative of or another person associated with BSF who is implicated in the report or disclosure.

8. Step 7: Internal investigation finalized

- 8.1 Following any internal investigation, findings and recommendations should be made.
- 8.2 BSF has full discretion to put in place safety management plans or take disciplinary action where it forms a reasonable belief that it is not safe for a Leader/Volunteer to interact with children.
- 8.3 The findings of the investigation will also be reported to any external body as required.
- 8.4 BSF will endeavour to offer support to any Leader/Volunteer or member of the BSF community involved where appropriate.

9. Step 8: Evaluation

- 9.1 The BSF Board or Directors will be notified as needed and policies and procedures may need to be reviewed.

Annexure E

Child Safety Reporting Procedure – Victoria

1. Overview

- 1.1 BSF is committed to ensuring that children and young people who access BSF's services and programs are kept safe from harm and the risk of harm.
- 1.2 When BSF suspects that a child or young person has been harmed or is at risk of harm, BSF will handle that suspicion in a manner which prioritises the safety of children and young people.
- 1.3 All Leaders/Volunteers are responsible for reporting reasonable beliefs that a child or young person has been harmed or is at risk of harm in accordance with this procedure.
- 1.4 All Leaders/Volunteers will follow the process outlined at steps 1 to 8 below.

2. Step 1: Determine whether the child is in immediate danger

- 2.1 The Leader/Volunteer will stay with the child (if within their presence) and take all reasonable steps to ensure their safety.
- 2.2 If the Leader/Volunteer believes the child is at immediate risk of abuse, they will notify police immediately by telephoning 000.

3. Step 2: Consider whether there is an obligation to report

- 3.1 A Leader/Volunteer:
 - (a) who, in the course of carrying out their duties, forms a belief on reasonable grounds that a child is in need of protection because they have suffered or are likely to suffer from significant harm as a result of physical injury or sexual abuse, and the child's parents cannot or will not protect the child:
 - (i) **must** disclose that information to the police or the Department of Families, Fairness and Housing (DFFH) if they are a **mandatory reporter**; or
 - (ii) may **voluntarily** disclose that information to the police or the DFFH if they are not a mandatory reporter;
 - (b) who forms a belief on reasonable grounds that a child is in need of protection from child abuse (physical, sexual, emotional, psychological or neglect) may make a **voluntary report** to DFFH or the police;
 - (c) who is an adult and forms a belief, on reasonable grounds, that a sexual offence has been committed in Victoria against a child under the age of 16 years by an adult, **must** make a report to the police as soon as practicable;
 - (d) who is aware of a substantial risk that a child will become the victim of a sexual offence committed by another adult associated with BSF **must not** negligently fail to reduce or remove that risk, noting that reporting to DFFH or police is one way to reduce or remove that risk; or
 - (e) who is an adult and holds a reasonable belief that another adult is grooming;

- (i) a child under the age of 16 years for unlawful sexual activity; or
- (ii) a caregiver of a child for unlawful sexual activity with a child under the age of 16 years in their care;

must report that information to police.

3.2 BSF will report any reportable allegation made against a Leader/Volunteer to the CCYP within 3 business days of becoming aware of the allegations in accordance with the reportable conduct scheme. Leaders/Volunteers are strongly encouraged to advise a Children’s Supervisor if they become aware of conduct which may constitute a reportable allegation.

3.3 For the purpose of this procedure:

- (a) **Children’s Staff** or **BSF Children’s Staff** means all BSF leaders who work with children or have oversight of a Children’s Program including the Teaching Leaders, Substitute Teaching Leaders, Class Administrators, Children’s Program Leaders, including the Children’s Supervisors, Children’s Leader, Assistant Children’s Supervisors, Regular Volunteers, Area Team, Distance Online Trainers and Distant Assistant Online Trainers.
- (b) **Leaders/Volunteers** means all employees, contractors, volunteers and leaders of BSF and includes Children’s Staff.
- (c) a **child** is a person under 17 years of age;
- (d) the **CCYP** means the Commissioner for Children and Young People;
- (e) the **Head of BSF** for the purpose of the reportable Conduct Scheme is the Executive Director;
- (f) a **mandatory reporter** includes people in religious ministry, which means people appointed, ordained or otherwise recognised as a religious or spiritual leader in a religious institution;
- (g) BSF is considered a **religious institution**, which means an entity that operates under the auspices of any faith; and provides activities, facilities, programs or services of any kind through which adults interact with children;
- (h) a **reportable allegation** arises when a Leader/Volunteer forms a reasonable belief that there has been:
 - (i) a sexual offence, sexual misconduct or physical violence committed against, with or in the presence of a child,
 - (ii) behaviour causing significant emotional or psychological harm to a child,
 - (iii) significant neglect of a child, or
 - (iv) misconduct involving any of the above;

3.4 If a Leader/Volunteer is uncertain as to whether they need to make a report, they should discuss their observations and concerns with a Children’s Supervisor.

3.5 Leaders/Volunteers are not required to consult with BSF or gain the support of BSF prior to making a report.

Responding to a child or young person who is harmed or at risk of being harmed by a Leader/Volunteer

3.6 If a Leader/Volunteer suspects on reasonable grounds that a child or young person is, or may be, at risk of harm by another Leader/Volunteer, then:

- (a) that suspicion must be reported in the same way as if it arose in relation to a person outside of BSF; and
- (b) the person is strongly encouraged to report that suspicion to a Children’s Supervisor or Teaching Leader so that steps can be taken to minimise potential harm to children.

4. Step 3: Make a report (if required)

Mandatory and voluntary reporting

4.1 If a Leader/Volunteer determines they must make a report or should make a voluntary report, the Leader/Volunteer must report that suspicion by making a telephone notification to the relevant authority referred to at 3.1 above by contacting:

- (a) DFFH:
 - (i) during business hours by contacting the relevant Division Intake team (determined by the location of the child – see <https://services.dffh.vic.gov.au/child-protection-contacts>):
 - (A) North Division intake: 1300 664 977;
 - (B) South Division intake: 1300 655 795;
 - (C) East Division intake: 1300 360 391;
 - (D) West Division intake - metropolitan: 1300 664 977;
 - (E) West Division intake - rural and regional: 1800 075 599; or
 - (ii) if between 5:00pm and 9:00am Monday to Friday, or at any time on a weekend, by calling the After Hours Child Protection Emergency Service on 13 12 78; or
- (b) Victoria Police:
 - (i) by dialing 000 if it is an emergency;
 - (ii) by contacting your local police station (contact details available at: <https://www.police.vic.gov.au/location>); or
 - (iii) by contacting the Sexual Offences and Child Abuse Investigation Team (SOCIT) in your area (contact details available at: <https://www.police.vic.gov.au/sexual-offences-and-child-abuse-investigation-teams>).

4.2 A report must be made by a mandatory reporter each time that person becomes aware of any further grounds for their belief a child may have suffered or is likely to suffer harm as a result of physical injury or sexual abuse.

4.3 If a Leader/Volunteer makes a notification in accordance with paragraph 4.1, the person is strongly encouraged to notify the Children’s Supervisor that they have made that notification.

4.4 If a Children’s Supervisor or Children’s Staff member is notified that a child is, or may be, at risk of harm, they must:

- (a) take immediate steps to ensure the safety and wellbeing of any child or young person which may be at risk or danger;
- (b) confirm that the concern has been reported in accordance with paragraph 4.1, and if not, assist the Leader/Volunteer to make the report;

- (c) complete the *Report of Suspected Child Abuse (CP 113)* and submit the original to HQ in the *Confidential Envelope for CS (CP 114)*; and
- (d) investigate the suspicion in accordance with the Children's Supervisor Manual, noting that an independent investigation may be appropriate.

Reportable Conduct Scheme

- 4.5 If the Head of BSF determines that a reportable allegation has been made in relation to a current Leader/Volunteer in Victoria:
- (a) the Head of BSF must make a report to the CCYP within three business days of forming a reasonable belief that a Leader/Volunteer has committed reportable conduct or engaged in misconduct that may involve reportable conduct, irrespective of whether the conduct in question is alleged to have occurred within the course of the Leader/Volunteer's engagement with BSF;
 - (b) BSF will seek external guidance regarding conducting an internal or external investigation;
 - (c) the Head of BSF must provide the CCYP with updates as required under the Reportable Conduct Scheme, including providing a 30 day report; and
 - (d) BSF will cooperate with all regulatory authorities in relation to the investigation, including DFFH, police and the CCYP.

Stand down

- 4.6 Where BSF has allegations or concerns that any Leader/Volunteer may have engaged in conduct that could give rise to risk of harm to a child, BSF may, at its discretion:
- (a) stand the Leader/Volunteer down while an investigation is conducted (which will involve removing or limiting their contact with children, and liaising with authorities); and
 - (b) direct the Leader/Volunteer to return any keys, passes or equipment and to provide any access codes or passwords.

5. Step 4: Cooperate with regulatory authorities

- 5.1 The Leader/Volunteer and BSF will cooperate with any investigation by the police or DFFH.
- 5.2 Support will be provided to the child(ren) as deemed appropriate by the Children's Supervisor.
- 5.3 All correspondence from regulatory authorities should be directed to a Children's Supervisor.
- 5.4 BSF will not interview the child(ren) further or otherwise investigate until the police or the DFFH have provided it with permission to do so.
- 5.5 DFFH or the police may conduct interviews of BSF students without their parents' knowledge or consent.
- 5.6 When an officer from DFFH or the police attend BSF premises, a member of the leadership team should request to see identification before permitting them to have access to a student.
- 5.7 BSF will notify Working with Children Check Victoria of the allegations.

6. Step 5: Internal investigation

- 6.1 Once clearance has been provided to BSF by the relevant regulatory authorities, it may decide to conduct its own internal investigation.
- 6.2 The President will appoint a relevant person to manage the internal investigation. If required, an external investigator will be appointed.
- 6.3 The investigation will be undertaken in accordance with the principles of procedural fairness and natural justice.
- 6.4 All Leaders/Volunteers are expected to fully cooperate with any internal investigation.

7. Step 6: Confidentiality

- 7.1 Following a report and during an investigation, Leaders/Volunteers are required to protect confidentiality and the interests of:
 - (a) the child(ren) and their family;
 - (b) the individual(s) who made the report; and
 - (c) any representative of or another person associated with BSF who is implicated in the report.

8. Step 7: Internal investigation finalized

- 8.1 Following an internal investigation, findings and recommendations should be made.
- 8.2 BSF has full discretion to put in place safety management plans or take disciplinary action where it forms a reasonable belief that it is not safe for a Leader/Volunteer to interact with children in accordance with its duty of care.
- 8.3 The findings of the investigation will also be reported to any external body as required.
- 8.4 BSF will endeavour to offer support to any Leader/Volunteer or member of the BSF community involved where appropriate.

9. Step 8: Evaluation

- 9.1 The BSF Board of Directors will be notified as needed and policies and procedures may need to be reviewed.

Annexure F

Child Safety Reporting Procedure – New South Wales

1. Overview

- 1.1 BSF is committed to ensuring that children and young people who access BSF's services and programs are kept safe from harm and the risk of harm.
- 1.2 When BSF suspects that a child or young person has been harmed or is at risk of harm, BSF will handle that suspicion in an appropriate manner which prioritises the safety of children and young people.
- 1.3 All Leaders/Volunteers are responsible for reporting reasonable beliefs that a child or young person has been harmed or is at risk of harm.
- 1.4 BSF will ensure that it is registered for eReporting with the DoCJ.
- 1.5 All Leaders/Volunteers will follow the process outlined at steps 1 to 8 below.

2. Step 1: Determine whether the child is in immediate danger

- 2.1 The Leader/Volunteer will stay with the child (if within their presence) and take all reasonable steps to ensure their safety.
- 2.2 If the Leader/Volunteer believes the child is at immediate risk of abuse, they will notify police immediately by telephoning 000.

3. Step 2: Consider whether there is an obligation to report

- 3.1 A Leader/Volunteer:
 - (a) who has reasonable grounds to suspect that a child is *at risk of significant harm*:
 - (i) **must** disclose that information to the DoCJ if the child is aged 0 to 15 years and they are a *mandatory reporter*; or
 - (ii) may **voluntarily** disclose that information to DoCJ if:
 - (A) the child is aged 16 to 17 years;
 - (B) the child is an unborn child, or
 - (C) the Leader/Volunteer is not a mandatory reporter;
 - (b) who is an adult who knows or believes that a child under 18 years has suffered sexual abuse, serious physical abuse or extreme neglect **must** report that information to police;
 - (c) who is an adult who knows that a Leader/Volunteer poses a serious risk of sexually or physically abusing a child under 18 years **must** report that knowledge to BSF in order for BSF to reduce or remove that risk; and
 - (d) who is an adult and holds a reasonable belief that another adult is grooming:
 - (i) a child under the age of 16 years for unlawful sexual activity; or
 - (ii) a caregiver of a child for unlawful sexual activity with a child under the

age of 16 years in their care;

must report that information to police.

- 3.2 BSF will report any reportable allegation made against BSF Children’s Staff or any reportable conviction that it becomes aware of to the Office of the Children’s Guardian within 7 business days of becoming aware of the allegations, in accordance with the reportable conduct scheme.
- 3.3 BSF Children’s Staff must advise the BSF President if they become aware of conduct which may constitute a reportable allegation or a reportable conviction.
- 3.4 For the purpose of this procedure:
- (a) a child is ***at risk of serious harm*** if:
 - (i) the child’s basic physical or psychological needs are not being met or are at risk of not being met;
 - (ii) the parents or other caregivers have not arranged and are unable or unwilling to arrange for the child to receive necessary medical care;
 - (iii) the parents or other caregivers have not arranged and are unable or unwilling to arrange for the child or young person to receive an education;
 - (iv) the child has been, or is at risk of being, physically or sexually abused or ill-treated;
 - (v) the child is living in a household where there have been incidents of domestic violence and, as a consequence, the child is at risk of serious physical or psychological harm;
 - (vi) a parent or other caregiver has behaved in such a way towards the child that the child has suffered or is at risk of suffering serious psychological harm;
 - (vii) before the birth of a child, the child may be at risk of significant harm after his or her birth (**pre-natal report**); or
 - (viii) the child was the subject of a pre-natal report and the birth mother of the child did not engage successfully with support services to eliminate, or minimise to the lowest level reasonably practical, the risk factors that gave rise to the report.
 - (b) ***Children’s Staff*** or ***BSF Children’s Staff*** means all BSF leaders who work with children or have oversight of a Children’s Program including the Teaching Leaders, Substitute Teaching Leaders, Class Administrators, Children’s Program Leaders, including the Children’s Supervisors, Children’s Leader, Assistant Children’s Supervisors, Regular Volunteers, Area Team, Distance Online Trainers and Distant Assistant Online Trainers;
 - (c) ***Leaders/Volunteers*** means all employees, contractors, volunteers and leaders of BSF and includes Children’s Staff.
 - (d) ***DoCJ*** means Department of Communities and Justice;
 - (e) all Leaders/Volunteers are considered to be a ***mandatory reporter***, which includes a person in religious ministry, or a person providing religion-based activities to children;
 - (f) a ***reportable allegation*** is an allegation that a Leader/Volunteer has engaged in conduct which may be reportable conduct, whether or not that conduct occurred

during the course of the Leader's/Volunteer's engagement with BSF;

- (g) **reportable conduct** means the following conduct, irrespective of whether criminal proceedings have commenced or are concluded:
- (i) a sexual offence or sexual misconduct;
 - (ii) ill-treatment or neglect of a child;
 - (iii) an assault against a child;
 - (iv) concealing or failing to report child abuse, or failing to reduce or remove a risk to a child becoming the victim of child abuse;
 - (v) behaviour that causes significant emotional or psychological harm to a child. Indicators that a child has experienced significant emotional or psychological harm include:
 - (A) displaying behaviour patterns that are out of character;
 - (B) regressive behaviour; or
 - (C) anxiety or self-harm;
- (h) a **reportable conviction** is a conviction, including a finding of guilt without the court proceeding to a conviction of an offence involving reportable conduct, whether or not the conduct occurred in the course of the Leader's/Volunteer's engagement with BSF.

3.5 If a Leader/Volunteer is uncertain as to whether they need to make a report, they should discuss their observations and concerns with a Children's Supervisor and refer to the NSW Mandatory Reporter Guide (accessible at: <https://reporter.childstory.nsw.gov.au/s/article/Process-For-Completing-Mandatory-Reporter-Guide>).

3.6 Leaders/Volunteers are not required to consult with BSF or gain the support of BSF prior to making a report.

Responding to a child or young person who is harmed or at risk of being harmed by a BSF Leader or volunteer

- 3.7 If a Leader/Volunteer suspects on reasonable grounds that a child or young person is, or may be, at risk of harm by another Leader or volunteer, then:
- (a) that suspicion must be reported in the same way as if it arose in relation to a person outside of BSF; and
 - (b) the person is strongly encouraged to report that suspicion to a Children's Supervisor or Teaching Leader so that steps can be taken to minimise potential harm to children.

4. Step 3: Make a report (if required)

Mandatory and voluntary reporting

4.1 If a Leader/Volunteer determines they are required to make a report or have decided to make a voluntary report, the Leader/Volunteer must:

- (a) notify DoCJ by:
 - (i) gaining access to the eReporting Community by following the necessary steps outlined at <https://reporter.childstory.nsw.gov.au/s/article/How-do-I-get-access-to-the-Reporter-Community>;

- (ii) completing a decision tree using the NSW Mandatory Reporter Guide at <https://reporter.childstory.nsw.gov.au/s/mrg>; and
 - (iii) following the recommendations of the NSW Mandatory Reporter Guide, including reporting their suspicion by making a telephone notification to the NSW Child Protection Helpline on 132 111; or
 - (b) notify NSW Police by:
 - (i) dialling 000 in an emergency; or
 - (ii) contacting your local police station (phone numbers available at: https://www.police.nsw.gov.au/about_us/regions_commands_districts/police_station_search).
- 4.2 A report must be made by a mandatory reporter each time that person becomes aware of any further grounds for their belief a child may have suffered or is likely to suffer harm as a result of physical injury or sexual abuse.
- 4.3 If a Leader/Volunteer makes a notification in accordance with paragraph 4.1, the person is strongly encouraged to notify the Children’s Supervisor that they have made that notification.
- 4.4 If a Children’s Supervisor or Children’s Staff member is notified that a child is, or may be, at risk of harm, they must:
- (a) take immediate steps to ensure the safety and wellbeing of any child or young person which may be at risk or danger;
 - (b) confirm that the concern has been reported in accordance with paragraph 4.1, and if not, assist the Leader/Volunteer to make the report;
 - (c) complete the *Report of Suspected Child Abuse (CP 113)* and submit the original to HQ in the *Confidential Envelope for CS (CP 114)*; and
 - (d) investigate the suspicion in accordance with the Children’s Supervisor Manual, noting that an independent investigation may be appropriate.

Reportable Conduct Scheme

- 4.5 If a Leader/Volunteer becomes aware of a reportable allegation or a reportable conviction of another Leader/Volunteer they must report that allegation or conviction to the President, or if the report relates to the President, then to the Office of the Children’s Guardian.
- 4.6 If the President becomes aware of a reportable allegation or a reportable conviction in relation to a Leader/Volunteer, they will:
- (a) make a written report to the Office of the Children’s Guardian within 7 business days;
 - (b) seek external guidance regarding conducting an internal or external investigation, noting Step 5 below;
 - (c) provide the Office of the Children’s Guardian with updates are required under the Reportable Conduct Scheme, including providing an interim 30 day report if the final report is not prepared by that date; and
 - (d) cooperate with all regulatory authorities, including DoCJ, police and the Office of the Children’s Guardian.

Stand down

- 4.7 Where BSF has allegations or concerns that any Leader/Volunteer may have engaged in

conduct that could give rise to risk of harm to a child, BSF may, at its discretion:

- (a) stand the Leader/Volunteer down while an investigation is conducted (which will involve removing or limiting their contact with children, and liaising with authorities); and
- (b) direct the Leader/Volunteer to return any keys, passes or equipment and to provide any access codes or passwords.

5. Step 4: Cooperate with regulatory authorities

- 5.1 The Leader/Volunteer and BSF will cooperate with any investigation by the police or DoCJ.
- 5.2 Support will be provided to the child(ren) as deemed appropriate by the Children's Supervisor.
- 5.3 All correspondence from regulatory authorities should be directed to a Children's Supervisor.
- 5.4 BSF will not interview the child(ren) further or otherwise investigate until the police or the DoCJ have provided it with permission to do so.
- 5.5 DoCJ or the police may conduct interviews of BSF students without their parents' knowledge or consent.
- 5.6 When an officer from DoCJ or the police attend BSF premises, a member of the leadership team should request to see identification before permitting them to have access to a student.
- 5.7 BSF will notify the Office of the Children's Guardian of the allegations, if they have not already received a notification.

6. Step 5: Internal investigation

- 6.1 Once clearance has been provided to BSF by the relevant regulatory authorities in respect of a mandatory or voluntary report, it may decide to conduct its own internal investigation.
- 6.2 The President will appoint a relevant person to manage the internal investigation. If required, an external investigator will be appointed.
- 6.3 The investigation will be undertaken in accordance with the principles of procedural fairness and natural justice.
- 6.4 All Leaders/Volunteers are expected to fully cooperate with any internal investigation.

7. Step 6: Confidentiality

- 7.1 Following a report and during an investigation, Leaders/Volunteers are required to protect confidentiality and the interests of:
 - (a) the child(ren) and their family;
 - (b) the individual(s) who made the report; and
 - (c) any representative of or another person associated with BSF who is implicated in the report.

8. Step 7: Internal investigation finalized

- 8.1 Following an internal investigation, findings and recommendations should be made.

- 8.2 BSF has full discretion to put in place safety management plans or take disciplinary action where it forms a reasonable belief that it is not safe for a Leader/Volunteer to interact with children in accordance with its duty of care.
- 8.3 The findings of the investigation will also be reported to any external body as required.
- 8.4 BSF will endeavour to offer support to any Leader/Volunteer or member of the BSF community involved where appropriate.

9. Step 8: Evaluation

- 9.1 The BSF Board or Directors will be notified as needed and policies and procedures may need to be reviewed.

Annexure G

Child Safety Reporting Procedure – Australian Capital Territory

Overview

BSF is committed to ensuring that children and young people who access BSF's services and programs are kept safe from harm and the risk of harm.

When BSF suspects that a child or young person has been harmed or is at risk of harm, BSF will handle that suspicion in an appropriate manner which prioritises the safety of children and young people.

All Leaders/Volunteers are responsible for reporting reasonable beliefs that a child or young person has been harmed or is at risk of harm in accordance with this procedure.

All Leaders/Volunteers will follow the process outlined at steps 1 to 8 below.

Step 1: Determine whether the child is in immediate danger

The Leader/Volunteer will stay with the child (if within their presence) and take all reasonable steps to ensure their safety.

If the Leader/Volunteer believes the child is at immediate risk of abuse, they will notify police immediately by telephoning 000.

Step 2: Consider whether there is an obligation to report

A Leader/Volunteer:

who believes or suspects that a child or young person is being abused, is being neglected, is exposed to family violence, or is at risk of abuse or neglect may make a **voluntary report** to CYPS;

who believes or suspects that an unborn child is at risk of abuse or neglect after being born may make a **voluntary report** to CYPS;

who is an adult **mandated reporter** and believes on reasonable grounds that a child or young person has experienced or is experiencing sexual abuse or non-accidental physical injury based on information obtained during the course of their engagement with BSF **must** make a report to the CYPS as soon as practicable after forming the belief;

who is an adult and forms a reasonable belief that a sexual offence has been committed against a child or young person by an adult, **must** make a report to the police as soon as practicable after forming the belief;

who is an adult and forms a reasonable belief that another adult is engaging in conduct with a child or young person, or a person who is the caregiver of a child or young person, with the intent to make a child or young person to commit, take part in or watch someone else commit or take part in, an act of a sexual nature, **must** make a report to the police as soon as practicable after forming the belief;

who is in a position of authority at BSF and is aware of a substantial risk that a sexual offence will be committed against a child or young person in the care of BSF **must** reduce or remove that risk; or

who is a Leader/Volunteer who is not in a position of authority and is aware of a substantial risk that a sexual offence will be committed against a child or young person in the care of BSF must notify a person in position of authority at BSF of that risk.

BSF will report any reportable conduct made against a Leader/Volunteer to the ACT Ombudsman within 30 business days of becoming aware of the reportable conduct in accordance with the reportable conduct scheme.

Leaders/Volunteers are strongly encouraged to advise a Children's Supervisor if they become aware of conduct which may constitute reportable conduct.

For the purpose of this procedure:

Children's Staff or **BSF Children's Staff** means all BSF leaders who work with children or have oversight of a Children's Program including the Teaching Leaders, Substitute Teaching Leaders, Class Administrators, Children's Program Leaders, including the Children's Supervisors, Children's Leader, Assistant Children's Supervisors, Regular Volunteers, Area Team, Distance Online Trainers and Distant Assistant Online Trainers;

Leaders/Volunteers means all employees, contractors, volunteers and leaders of BSF and includes Staff.

a **child** is a person under 12 years;

CYPS means Child and Youth Protection Services;

a **young person** means a person who is 12 years old or older but not yet an adult;

a **mandated reporter** includes a minister of religion, religious leader or member of the clergy of a church or religious denomination;

reportable conduct includes conduct engaged in by a Leader/Volunteer, whether or not in the course of their engagement with BSF that results in:

ill treatment or neglect of a child;

exposing or subjecting the child to:

circumstances or behaviour which psychologically harms the child;

misconduct of a sexual nature;

an offence for which the child is present or a victim at the time of the conduct including:

offences against the person;

sexual offences;

female genital mutilation;

sexual servitude;

a conviction, or finding of guilt, under a Territory law or a State or Commonwealth law, involving reportable conduct;

offences against the Education and Care Service National Law (inappropriate discipline or offences relating to protecting children from harm); and

ill-treatment of a child or young person (including emotional abuse, hostile use of force/physical contact, neglect and restrictive intervention);

A mandated reporter is not required to make a report but may make a voluntary report when they believe that:

the same information has already been provided to the police or CYPS by another person;
the abuse was by another child; or
the reasons for their belief do not arise from information obtained because of or during the course of their engagement with BSF.

If a Leader/Volunteer is uncertain as to whether they need to make a report, they should discuss their observations and concerns with a Children's Supervisor.

Leaders/Volunteers are not required to consult with BSF or gain the support of BSF prior to making a report.

Responding to a child or young person who is harmed or at risk of being harmed by a BSF Leader or volunteer

If a Leader/Volunteer suspects on reasonable grounds that a child or young person is, or may be, at risk of harm by another Leader or volunteer, then:

that suspicion must be reported in the same way as if it arose in relation to a person outside of BSF; and

the person is strongly encouraged to report that suspicion to a Children's Supervisor or Teaching Leader so that steps can be taken to minimise potential harm to children.

Step 3: Make a report (if required)

Mandatory and voluntary reporting

If a Leader/Volunteer is satisfied that they are required to make a report or have decided to make a voluntary report, the Leader/Volunteer must report that suspicion by making a telephone notification to the relevant authority referred to at 3.1 above by contacting

CYPS:

by making a report using the online portal at: <https://form.act.gov.au/smartforms/csd/child-concern-report>;

or calling 1300 556 729 for further guidance;

ACT Police:

- (i) by dialling 000 if it is an emergency;
- (ii) by dialling 131 444 to make a report.

A report must be made by a mandatory reporter each time that person becomes aware of any further grounds for their belief a child may have suffered or is likely to suffer harm as a result of physical injury or sexual abuse.

If a Leader/Volunteer makes a notification in accordance with paragraph 4.1, the person is strongly encouraged to notify the Children's Supervisor that they have made that notification.

If a Children's Supervisor or Leader is notified that a child is, or may be, at risk of harm, they must:

take immediate steps to ensure the safety and wellbeing of any child or young person which may be at risk or danger;

confirm that the concern has been reported in accordance with paragraph 4.1, and if not, assist the Leader/Volunteer to make the report;

complete the Report of Suspected Child Abuse (CP 113) and submit the original

to HQ in the Confidential Envelope for CS (CP 114); and
investigate the suspicion in accordance with the Children's Supervisor Manual, noting that an independent investigation may be appropriate.

Reportable Conduct Scheme

If BSF determines that a reportable allegation has been made, it will:

make a report to the ACT Ombudsman that a Leader/Volunteer has engaged in reportable conduct, irrespective of whether the conduct in question is alleged to have occurred within the course of the Leader's/Volunteer's engagement with BSF;

within 30 days of being notified that a Leader/Volunteer has engaged in reportable conduct, complete the section 17G notification form available online on the ACT Ombudsman's website at: https://www.ombudsman.act.gov.au/data/assets/pdf_file/0025/48166/s-17G-Notification-coversheet.pdf and email it to the ACT Ombudsman at act@ombudsman.gov.au;

seek external guidance to arrange an internal or external investigation, noting Step 5 below;

provide the ACT Ombudsman with:

details of the allegation or conviction;

BSF's intended response, including an investigation plan and risk assessment;

updates as required under the Reportable Conduct Scheme;

a final section 17J report;

whether BSF will take any action against the Leader/Volunteer and the reasons for taking action or not taking action;

respond to any further queries made by the ACT Ombudsman; and

cooperate with all regulatory authorities, including police and CYPS.

Stand down

Where BSF has allegations or concerns that any Leader/Volunteer may have engaged in conduct that could give rise to risk of harm to a child, BSF may, at its discretion:

stand the Leader/Volunteer down while an investigation is conducted (which will involve removing or limiting their contact with children, and liaising with authorities); and

direct the Leader/Volunteer to return any keys, passes or equipment and to provide any access codes or passwords.

Step 4: Cooperate with regulatory authorities

The Leader/Volunteer and BSF will cooperate with any investigation by the police, ACT Ombudsman or CYPS.

Support will be provided to the child(ren) as deemed appropriate by the Children's Supervisor.

All correspondence from regulatory authorities should be directed to a Children's Supervisor.

BSF will not interview the child(ren) further or otherwise investigate until the police or CYPS have provided it with permission to do so.

CYPS, the ACT Ombudsman or the police may conduct interviews of BSF students without their parents' knowledge or consent.

When an officer from CYPS, the ACT Ombudsman or the police attend BSF premises, a member of the leadership team should request to see identification before permitting them to have access to a student.

BSF will notify the department handling Working with Vulnerable People Registrations in Access Canberra of the allegations.

Step 5: Internal investigation

Once clearance has been provided to BSF by the relevant regulatory authorities, it may decide to conduct its own internal investigation in respect of a voluntary or mandatory report.

The President will appoint a relevant person to manage the internal investigation. If required, an external investigator will be appointed.

The investigation will be undertaken in accordance with the principles of procedural fairness and natural justice.

All Leaders/Volunteers are expected to fully cooperate with any internal investigation.

Step 6: Confidentiality

Following a report and during an investigation, Leaders/Volunteers are required to protect confidentiality and the interests of:

- the child(ren) and their family;

- the individual(s) who made the report; and

- any representative of or another person associated with BSF who is implicated in the report.

Step 7: Internal investigation finalised

Following an internal investigation, findings and recommendations should be made.

BSF has full discretion to put in place safety management plans or take disciplinary action where it forms a reasonable belief that it is not safe for a Leader/Volunteer to interact with children in accordance with its duty of care.

The findings of the investigation will also be reported to any external body as required.

BSF will endeavour to offer support to any Leader/Volunteer or member of the BSF community involved where appropriate.

Step 8: Evaluation

The BSF Board of Directors will be notified as needed and policies and procedures may need to be reviewed.

Annexure H

Child Safety Reporting Procedure – Queensland

1. Overview

- 1.1 BSF is committed to ensuring that children and young people who access BSF's services and programs are kept safe from harm and the risk of harm.
- 1.2 When BSF suspects that a child or young person has been harmed or is at risk of harm, BSF will handle that suspicion in an appropriate manner which prioritises the safety of children and young people.
- 1.3 All Leaders/Volunteers are responsible for reporting reasonable beliefs that a child or young person has been harmed or is at risk of harm in accordance with this procedure.
- 1.4 All Leaders/Volunteers will follow the process outlined at steps 1 to 8 below.

2. Step 1: Determine whether the child is in immediate danger

- 2.1 The Leader/Volunteer will stay with the child (if within their presence) and take all reasonable steps to ensure their safety.
- 2.2 If the Leader/Volunteer believes the child is at immediate risk of abuse, they will notify police immediately by telephoning 000.

3. Step 2: Consider whether there is an obligation to report

- 3.1 A Leader/Volunteer:
 - (a) who reasonably suspects that a child is in need of protection may make a **voluntary report** to CSS or the police;
 - (b) who reasonably suspects that an unborn child is in need of protection after he or she is born may make a **voluntary report** to CSS or the police;
 - (c) who does not have a reportable suspicion about a child but considers that the child is likely to become in need of protection if no preventative support is given may take other appropriate action, such as giving information to a service provider so that the service provider can offer support to the child or their family;
 - (d) who is an adult and reasonably believes that a child sexual offence has been committed against a child under the age of 16 years or a child under the age of 18 years who has an impairment of the mind, **must** make a report to the police as soon as practicable;
 - (e) who is an adult and reasonably believes that another adult is engaging in conduct with a child under the age of 16 years, or the caregiver of a child under the age of 16 years, with the intent to engage in a sexual act or expose the child to any indecent matter, **must** make a report to the police as soon as practicable;
 - (f) who:
 - (i) is an adult;
 - (ii) is aware of a significant risk that a child under the age of 16 years or a child under the age of 18 years who has an impairment of the mind will

become the victim of a sexual offence committed by another adult associated with BSF; and

(iii) has the power or responsibility to remove that risk;

must not wilfully or negligently fail to reduce or remove that risk; or

(g) who is:

(i) an adult; and

(ii) aware of a significant risk that a child under the age of 16 years or a child under the age of 18 years who has an impairment of the mind will become the victim of a sexual offence committed by another adult associated with BSF;

must immediately notify a Children's Supervisor or other BSF management in order for them to reduce or remove that risk.

3.2 For the purpose of this procedure:

(a) **Children's Staff** or **BSF Children's Staff** means all BSF leaders who work with children or have oversight of a Children's Program including the Teaching Leaders, Substitute Teaching Leaders, Class Administrators, Children's Program Leaders, including the Children's Supervisors, Children's Leader, Assistant Children's Supervisors, Regular Volunteers, Area Team, Distance Online Trainers and Distant Assistant Online Trainers;

(b) **Leaders/Volunteers** means all employees, contractors, volunteers and leaders of BSF and includes Children's Staff.

(c) a **child** is a person under 18 years of age;

(d) a **child in need of protection** is a child who:

(i) has suffered significant harm, is suffering significant harm, or is at unacceptable risk of suffering significant harm; and

(ii) does not have a parent able and willing to protect the child from the harm;

(e) a **child sexual offence** is an offence of a sexual nature committed against a child including:

(i) indecent treatment of a child;

(ii) carnal knowledge with or of a child;

(iii) rape;

(iv) incest;

(v) grooming a child (or their parent or carer);

(vi) making child exploitation material; or

(vii) maintaining a sexual relationship with a child;

(f) **CSS** means Child Safety Services;

(g) **harm** to a child:

(i) is any detrimental effect of a significant nature on the child's physical, psychological or emotional wellbeing;

(ii) can be caused by:

- (A) physical, psychological or emotional abuse or neglect;
 - (B) sexual abuse or exploitation
 - (C) a single act, omission or circumstance;
 - (D) a series or combination of acts, omissions or circumstances; and
- (iii) can occur irrespective of how the harm is caused.
- 3.3 If a Leader/Volunteer is uncertain as to whether they need to make a report, they should:
- (a) use the online Queensland Child Protection Guide at: <https://secure.communities.qld.gov.au/cpguide/engine.aspx>; and
 - (b) discuss their observations and concerns with a Children’s Supervisor.
- 3.4 Leaders/Volunteers are not required to consult with BSF or gain the support of BSF prior to making a report.

Responding to a child or young person who is harmed or at risk of being harmed by a Leader/Volunteer

- 3.5 If a Leader/Volunteer suspects on reasonable grounds that a child or young person is, or may be, at risk of harm by another Leader/Volunteer, then:
- (a) that suspicion must be reported in the same way as if it arose in relation to a person outside of BSF; and
 - (b) the person is strongly encouraged to report that suspicion to a Children’s Supervisor or Teaching Leader so that steps can be taken to minimise potential harm to children.

4. Step 3: Make a report (if required)

- 4.1 If a Leader/Volunteer decides to make a voluntary report or determines they are required to make a report, the Leader/Volunteer must report that suspicion by making a telephone notification to the relevant authority referred to at 3.1 above by contacting:
- (a) CSS:
 - (i) by making a report online at <https://secure.communities.qld.gov.au/cbir/ChildSafety#>;
 - (ii) by telephone during business hours by contacting the relevant Regional Intake Service:
 - (A) Brisbane: 1300 682 254;
 - (B) Central Queensland: 1300 703 762;
 - (C) Far North Queensland: 1300 684 062;
 - (D) North Coast: 1300 703 921;
 - (E) North Queensland: 1300 706 147;
 - (F) South East 1300 679 849;
 - (G) South West (Darling Downs): 1300 683 390;
 - (H) South West (West Moreton): 1800 316 855; or
 - (iii) by telephone outside of business hours, by calling the Child Safety After Hours Service Centre on 1800 177 135; or

- (iv) the CSS Enquiry Unit on 1800 811 810, if you are unsure who to call; or
- (b) Queensland Police:
 - (i) by dialing 000 if it is an emergency; or
 - (ii) by contacting Police Link on 131 444.
- 4.2 A report should be made each time a Leader/Volunteer becomes aware of any further grounds for their belief a child may have suffered or is likely to suffer harm as a result of physical injury or sexual abuse.
- 4.3 If a Leader/Volunteer makes a notification in accordance with paragraph 4.1, the person is strongly encouraged to notify the Children's Supervisor that they have made that notification.
- 4.4 If a Children's Supervisor or Children's Leader is notified that a child is, or may be, at risk of harm, they must:
 - (a) take immediate steps to ensure the safety and wellbeing of any child or young person which may be at risk or danger;
 - (b) confirm that the concern has been reported in accordance with paragraph 4.1, and if not, assist the Leader/Volunteer to make the report;
 - (c) complete the *Report of Suspected Child Abuse (CP 113)* and submit the original to HQ in the *Confidential Envelope for CS (CP 114)*; and
 - (d) investigate the suspicion in accordance with the Children's Supervisor Manual, noting that an independent investigation may be appropriate.

Stand down

- 4.5 Where BSF has allegations or concerns that any Leader/Volunteer may have engaged in conduct that could give rise to risk of harm to a child, BSF may, at its discretion:
 - (a) stand the Leader/Volunteer down while an investigation is conducted (which will involve removing or limiting their contact with children, and liaising with authorities); and
 - (b) direct the Leader/Volunteer to return any keys, passes or equipment and to provide any access codes or passwords.
- 4.6 The Leader/Volunteer and BSF will cooperate with any investigation by the police or CSS.
- 4.7 Support will be provided to the child(ren) as deemed appropriate by the Children's Supervisor.
- 4.8 All correspondence from regulatory authorities should be directed to a Children's Supervisor.
- 4.9 BSF will not interview the child(ren) further or otherwise investigate until the police or the CSS have provided it with permission to do so.
- 4.10 CSS or the police may conduct interviews of BSF students without their parents' knowledge or consent.
- 4.11 When an officer from CSS or the police attend BSF premises, a member of the leadership team should request to see identification before permitting them to have access to a student.
- 4.12 BSF will notify Blue Card Services of the allegations.

5. Step 4: Cooperate with regulatory authorities

- 5.1 The Leader/Volunteer and BSF will cooperate with any investigation by the police or CSS.
- 5.2 Support will be provided to the child(ren) as deemed appropriate by the Children's Supervisor.
- 5.3 All correspondence from regulatory authorities should be directed to a Children's Supervisor.
- 5.4 BSF will not interview the child(ren) further or otherwise investigate until the police or the CSS have provided it with permission to do so.
- 5.5 CSS or the police may conduct interviews of BSF students without their parents' knowledge or consent.
- 5.6 When an officer from CSS or the police attend BSF premises, a member of the leadership team should request to see identification before permitting them to have access to a student.
- 5.7 BSF will notify the appropriate agencies of the allegations, if they have not already received a notification.

6. Step 5: Internal investigation

- 6.1 Once clearance has been provided to BSF by the relevant regulatory authorities, it may decide to conduct its own internal investigation.
- 6.2 The President will appoint a relevant person to manage the internal investigation. If required, an external investigator will be appointed.
- 6.3 The investigation will be undertaken in accordance with the principles of procedural fairness and natural justice.
- 6.4 All Leaders/Volunteers are expected to fully cooperate with any internal investigation.

7. Step 6: Confidentiality

- 7.1 Following a report and during an investigation, Leaders/Volunteers are required to protect confidentiality and the interests of:
 - (a) the child(ren) and their family;
 - (b) the individual(s) who made the report; and
 - (c) any representative of or another person associated with BSF who is implicated in the report.

8. Step 7: Internal investigation finalised

- 8.1 Following an internal investigation, findings and recommendations should be made.
- 8.2 BSF has full discretion to put in place safety management plans or take disciplinary action where it forms a reasonable belief that it is not safe for a Leader/Volunteer to interact with children in accordance with its duty of care.
- 8.3 The findings of the investigation will also be reported to any external body as required.
- 8.4 BSF will endeavour to offer support to any Leader/Volunteer or member of the BSF community involved where appropriate.

9. Step 8: Evaluation

- 9.1 The Board of Directors will be notified as needed and policies and procedures may need to be reviewed.

Annexure I

Child Safety Reporting Procedure – Western Australia

1. Overview

- 1.1 BSF is committed to ensuring that children and young people who access BSF's services and programs are kept safe from harm and the risk of harm.
- 1.2 When BSF suspects that a child or young person has been harmed or is at risk of harm, BSF will handle that suspicion in an appropriate manner which prioritises the safety of children and young people.
- 1.3 All Leader/Volunteer are responsible for reporting reasonable beliefs that a child or young person has been harmed or is at risk of harm in accordance with this procedure.
- 1.4 All Leader/Volunteer will follow the process outlined at steps 1 to 8 below.

2. Step 1: Determine whether the child is in immediate danger

- 2.1 The Leader/Volunteer will stay with the child (if within their presence) and take all reasonable steps to ensure their safety.
- 2.2 If the Leader/Volunteer believes the child is at immediate risk of abuse, they will notify police immediately by telephoning 000.

3. Step 2: Consider whether there is an obligation to report

- 3.1 A Leader/Volunteer who forms a belief on reasonable grounds that a child is suffering any form of abuse or neglect may make a **voluntary report** to Child Protection or the police.
- 3.2 For the purpose of this procedure:
 - (a) **Children's Staff** or **BSF Children's Staff** means all BSF leaders who work with children or have oversight of a Children's Program including the Teaching Leaders, Substitute Teaching Leaders, Class Administrators, Children's Program Leaders, including the Children's Supervisors, Children's Leader, Assistant Children's Supervisors, Regular Volunteers, Area Team, Distance Online Trainers and Distant Assistant Online Trainers;
 - (b) **Leaders/Volunteers** means all employees, contractors, volunteers and leaders of BSF and includes Children's Staff.
 - (c) a **child** is a person under 18 years of age;
 - (d) **child abuse and neglect** includes:
 - (i) physical abuse, such as:
 - (A) hitting, shaking, punching;
 - (B) burning and scolding;
 - (C) excessive physical punishment or discipline;
 - (D) attempted suffocation; or

- (E) shaking a baby;
- (ii) sexual abuse, such as:
 - (A) letting a child watch or read pornography;
 - (B) allowing a child to watch sexual acts;
 - (C) fondling the child's genitals;
 - (D) having oral sex with a child;
 - (E) vaginal or anal penetration; or
 - (F) using the internet to find a child for sexual exploitation;
- (iii) emotional abuse, such as:
 - (A) constantly putting a child down;
 - (B) humiliating or shaming a child;
 - (C) not showing love, support or guidance;
 - (D) continually ignoring or rejecting the child;
 - (E) exposing the child to family and domestic violence;
 - (F) threatening abuse or bullying a child; or
 - (G) threats to harm loved ones, property or pets;
- (iv) psychological abuse, such as:
 - (A) constantly belittling, shaming and humiliating a child;
 - (B) calling the child names to minimise their self-worth;
 - (C) threatening a child;
 - (D) keeping a child isolated from other people or friends;
 - (E) constantly ignoring a child; or
 - (F) encouraging a child to act inappropriately; and
- (v) child neglect, such as:
 - (A) leaving a child alone without appropriate supervision;
 - (B) not ensuring the child attends school, or not enrolling the child at school;
 - (C) infection because of poor hygiene or lack of medication;
 - (D) not giving a child affection or emotional support; or
 - (E) not getting medical help when required;
- (e) **Child Protection** means the Child Protection Team in the Department of Communities.

3.3 If a Leader/Volunteer is uncertain as to whether they should make a report, they should discuss their observations and concerns with a Children's Supervisor.

- 3.4 Leaders/Volunteers are not required to consult with BSF or gain the support of BSF prior to making a report.

Responding to a child or young person who is harmed or at risk of being harmed by a BSF Leader/Volunteer

- 3.5 If a Leader/Volunteer suspects on reasonable grounds that a child or young person is, or may be, at risk of harm by another Leader/Volunteer, then:
- (a) that suspicion must be reported in the same way as if it arose in relation to a person outside of BSF; and
 - (b) the person is strongly encouraged to report that suspicion to a Children's Supervisor or Teaching Leader so that steps can be taken to minimise potential harm to children.

4. Step 3: Make a report (if required)

- 4.1 If a Leader/Volunteer decides to make a voluntary report, the Leader/Volunteer may report that suspicion by contacting:
- (a) Child Protection:
 - (i) within the metropolitan area, the Central Intake Team:
 - (A) by telephone on 1800 273 889; or
 - (B) via email cpduty@communities.wa.gov.au;
 - (ii) within a regional area, by contacting the relevant Country District Office, listed at: https://mandatoryreporting.dcp.wa.gov.au/Pages/DCP_District_Offices.aspx; or
 - (iii) after hours, by contacting the Crisis Care Unit on 1800 199 008;
 - (b) WA Police:
 - (i) by dialling 000 if it is an emergency;
 - (ii) by contacting your local police station (contact details available at: <https://www.police.wa.gov.au/Contact-Us/Police>), who will notify the Child Abuse Squad; or
 - (iii) by calling 131 444.
- 4.2 A report should be made each time that a person becomes aware of any further grounds for their belief a child may have suffered or is likely to suffer harm as a result of child abuse or neglect.
- 4.3 If a Leader/Volunteer member makes a notification in accordance with paragraph 4.1, the person is strongly encouraged to notify the Children's Supervisor that they have made that notification.
- 4.4 If a Children's Supervisor or Children's Leader is notified that a child is, or may be, at risk of harm, they must:
- (a) take immediate steps to ensure the safety and wellbeing of any child or young person which may be at risk or danger;

- (b) confirm that the concern has been reported in accordance with paragraph 4.1, and if not, assist the Leader/Volunteer to make the report;
- (c) complete the Report of Suspected Child Abuse (CP 113) and submit the original to HQ in the Confidential Envelope for CS (CP 114); and
- (d) investigate the suspicion in accordance with the Children’s Supervisor Manual, noting that an independent investigation may be appropriate.

Stand down

- 4.5 Where BSF has allegations or concerns that any Leader/Volunteer may have engaged in conduct that could give rise to risk of harm to a child, BSF may, at its discretion:
 - (a) stand the Leader/Volunteer down while an investigation is conducted (which will involve removing or limiting their contact with children, and liaising with authorities); and
 - (b) direct the Leader/Volunteer to return any keys, passes or equipment and to provide any access codes or passwords.

5. Step 4: Cooperate with regulatory authorities

- 5.1 The Leader/Volunteer and BSF will cooperate with any investigation by the police or Child Protection.
- 5.2 Support will be provided to the child(ren) as deemed appropriate by the Children’s Supervisor.
- 5.3 All correspondence from regulatory authorities should be directed to a Children’s Supervisor.
- 5.4 BSF will not interview the child(ren) further or otherwise investigate until the police or the Child Protection have provided it with permission to do so.
- 5.5 Child Protection or the police may conduct interviews of BSF students without their parents’ knowledge or consent.
- 5.6 When an officer from Child Protection or the police attend BSF premises, a member of the leadership team should request to see identification before permitting them to have access to a student.
- 5.7 BSF will notify the Working with Children Check Screening Unit of the allegations.

6. Step 5: Internal investigation

- 6.1 Once clearance has been provided to BSF by the relevant regulatory authorities, it may decide to conduct its own internal investigation.
- 6.2 The President will appoint a relevant person to manage the internal investigation. If required, an external investigator will be appointed.
- 6.3 The investigation will be undertaken in accordance with the principles of procedural fairness and natural justice.
- 6.4 All Leaders/Volunteers are expected to fully cooperate with any internal investigation.

7. Step 6: Confidentiality

- 7.1 Following a report and during an investigation, Leaders/Volunteers are required to protect confidentiality and the interests of:
- (a) the child(ren) and their family;
 - (b) the individual(s) who made the report; and
 - (c) any representative of or another person associated with BSF who is implicated in the report.

8. Step 7: Internal investigation finalised

- 8.1 Following an internal investigation, findings and recommendations should be made.
- 8.2 BSF has full discretion to put in place safety management plans or take disciplinary action where it forms a reasonable belief that it is not safe for a Leader/Volunteer to interact with children in accordance with its duty of care.
- 8.3 The findings of the investigation will also be reported to any external body as required.
- 8.4 BSF will endeavour to offer support to any Leader/Volunteer or member of the BSF community involved where appropriate.

9. Step 8: Evaluation

- 9.1 The BSF Board of Directors will be notified as needed and policies and procedures may need to be reviewed.