**AUSTRALIAN IRISH DANCING ASSOCIATION**

**(SA) BRANCH INCORPORATED**



**CHILD PROTECTION POLICY**

**AND MANDATORY REPORTING PROCEDURES**

**April 2014.**

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**The Australian Irish Dancing Association (SA) Incorporated**

**Child Protection and Mandatory Reporting Policy and Procedures**

1. **POLICY**

The Australian Irish Dancing Association South Australia Incorporated (AIDA SA Inc.) recognises that children and young people form a vulnerable group in society and have the right to feel safe and protected at all times.

AIDA SA Inc. acknowledges and strongly supports the vital role that children and young people play in the development of vibrant and positive communities.

As an organisation AIDA SA Inc. is committed to ensuring that all children and young people who are involved in AIDA SA Inc. activities are emotionally and physically safe at all times. AIDA SA Inc. activities may include, but are not limited to, participating in dancing activities through member schools who are registered with AIDA SA Inc., participating in competitions within South Australia, interstate, or internationally, assisting as a “volunteer” in various capacities within the member schools and various fundraising activities on behalf of AIDA SA Inc or its member schools.

This policy outlines AIDA SA Inc.’s commitment to ensuring the safety of children and young people who partake in AIDA SA Inc activities and the reporting framework to be followed by AIDA SA Inc Members/Teachers and affiliates in the event that abuse of a child/young person is suspected on reasonable grounds or disclosed.

When responding to suspected child abuse it is important to remember that abuse of a child/young person can take place in a range of settings including, but not restricted to the home, community, school or through AIDA SA Inc activities. Alleged perpetrators of abuse may include an adult, male or female, another child/young person or an AIDA SA Inc Member.

As a child-safe organisation, AIDA SA Inc. has a commitment to providing a comfortable and protective environment in which children/young people can feel safe and empowered.

1. **DEFINITIONS**

Child abuse is categorised in four ways [[1]](#footnote-1)

**“Physical abuse** is commonly characterised by physical injury resulting from practices such as punching, beating, shaking, biting, burning or otherwise harming a child”

**“Sexual abuse** occurs when someone in a position of power to the child or young person uses his or her power to involve the child/young person in sexual activity. This can include a range of behaviours including: sexual suggestion, exhibitionism, mutual masturbation, oral sex, penile or other penetration of the genital or anal area”

**“Emotional abuse** tends to be a chronic behavioural pattern directed at the child/young person whereby their self esteem and social competence is undermined or eroded over time”. A child/young person can also experience emotional abuse by being exposed to a dysfunctional environment which includes domestic violence**”**

“**Neglect** ischaracterised by the failure to provide for the child/young person’s basis needs. This can occur through direct and deliberate action or by omission or deliberate inaction to care for the child/young person”

**Child/Young person includes any person under the age of 18 years.**

**AIDA SA INC Member** are teachers who are registered with the South Australian Branch of the Australian Irish Dancing Association; the Australian Irish Dancing Association Incorporated and An Coimisiun le Rinci Gaelacha (the Irish Dancing Commission, Dublin, Ireland, as ADCRG, (Adjudicator) TCRG, (Teacher) TRMF (Ceili only Teacher) SDCRG,(Examiner) or Honorary Members.

AIDA SA Inc. Members may also have responsibility for affiliates, assistants, paid staff including permanent and or casual, or volunteers as part of their respective Schools.

**Program and/or Service** is an AIDA SA Inc co-ordinated activity

**Criminal History Check** is a national check of the records of all police services for evidence of whether a person has any recorded convictions, or has been convicted or charged of an offence, and whether found guilty or discharged without conviction. It also includes any criminal charges still pending before a Court.

**Mandated Notifier** is outlined in the South Australian Children’s Protection Act 1992, and the Children’s Protection (Keeping Them Safe) Amendment Bill 2005 – as any “person who is an employee of, or volunteer in a government department, agency or a local government or non government agency or instrumentality that provides, health, welfare, educational, sporting or recreational, religious or spiritual, childcare or residential services wholly or partly for children, being a person who is engaged in the actual delivery of those services to children” [[2]](#footnote-2) . By law, a Mandated Notifier must notify upon disclosure or suspicion on reasonable grounds any abuse and/or neglect to a child or young person. A Mandated Notifier who does not report an incident of child abuse or neglect upon suspicion on reasonable grounds or disclosure can be fined up to $10,000.

**Family SA** (FSA), is an agency of the South Australian State Government Department for Education and Child Development and is responsible for the safety and protection of children and young people through administration of the Children’s Protection Act 1993. This includes providing the statutory child protection service, and responsibility for supporting the development of policies and standards for child safe environments.

**Child Abuse Report Line** is astate-wide telephone advisory service co-ordinated by CYFS for the reporting of suspected or disclosed incidences of child abuse. The Child Abuse Report Line, also known as CARL, operates 24 hours a day, 365 days a year. The Child Abuse Report Line telephone number is 13 14 78.

**Investigation** isthe investigatory procedure to be followed in line with this Policy and Procedure, when suspected child abuse has been reported and the alleged perpetrator is an AIDA SA Inc. person**.**

1. **SCOPE**

This policy applies to all AIDA SA Inc Members who work, in any capacity, with children and young people through AIDA SA Inc. activities and is applicable when reporting suspected or disclosed abuse of children/young people.

**Definition of AIDA SA activities**

The terms of this policy will be applied to

* all AIDA SA Inc competitions
* all AIDA Inc. competitions intrastate and interstate
* all competitions run by individual members of AIDA SA Inc.
* all Examinations organised and held by AIDA SA Inc.
* all Fundraising and social functions organised and overseen by AIDA SA Inc.
* all Displays, performances, productions and workshops involving AIDA SA Inc Members and any other event run under the auspices of AIDA SA Inc. and/or involving any member of AIDA SA Inc.
* all Volunteers assisting AIDA SA Inc Members at competitions, examinations, fundraising, social functions, displays, performances and productions.

1. **AIM**

The primary aim of this Child Protection Policy is the prevention of abuse and AIDA SA Inc. is committed to a range of strategies that minimise the risk of abuse to children and young people participating in AIDA SA Inc. activities.

Fundamental to AIDA SA Inc.’s prevention strategy is the comprehensive and transparent recruitment, selection and training processes applied to all AIDA SA Inc. Members, involved in activities including children/young people.

This policy aims

* to ensure that all AIDA SA Inc Members are aware of their responsibility to ensure that the safety and wellbeing of children/young people is protected at all times, and that if there are reasonable grounds to suspect a child/young person is at risk of abuse or has been abused that the correct reporting procedure is followed and that all follow up support available through AIDA SA Inc is provided
* to ensure AIDA SA Inc. meets its legal obligation to ensure criminal history assessments are conducted on staff and volunteers (as required by the Children’s Protection Act).
* to ensure that all cases of abuse or suspected abuse are handled in a consistent and thorough manner, in line with the Children’s Protection Act 1993 and the Children’s Protection (Keeping them Safe) Amendment Bill 2005. [[3]](#footnote-3)
* to ensure that all members of AIDA SA Inc are trained as Mandated Notifiers under Section 11 (1) and (2) of the Children’s Protection Act 1993. Members are expected to refresh this training as required, and to also offer information sessions to volunteers on the scope, delivery and upholding of this policy and its contents.

1. **NOTIFICATION PROCEDURE**

In the event of an AIDA SA Inc Member becoming aware of, or suspecting that an incident of child abuse or neglect has occurred, or that the emotional and physical needs of a child/young person are not being met, or are at risk of not being met, all AIDA SA Inc members and volunteers of that Association are obliged to make a report.

**5.1 A notification on reasonable grounds can be supported by the following**

* Disclosure by child/young person of an incident, event, injury, showing fear or great emotional distress
* Background knowledge of the child/young person’s family and whether there are functional care-givers in the family
* Background knowledge of serious health concerns, alcohol and drug abuse, mental health concerns, violence, intellectual disabilities, domestic violence
* Was there a witness to the incident, event, injury?
* Evidence of injury and location of injury, bruising or other injury
* Has medical help been obtained?
* Has the incident been reported to the police?
* Who else is aware of the concerns?
* Are the caregivers protective of the child/young person?

**5.2 Requirement to Mandatory Report**

**All AIDA SA Inc Members are required to Mandatory Report if**

* the child/young person tells you that he/she has been abused or neglected
* you observe that a particular child/young person’s behaviour and /or injuries leads you to suspect that abuse/neglect has occurred
* a child/young person tells you that he/she knows someone who has been abused or neglected. The child/young person could possibly be referring to themselves.
* when someone else, who is in a position to provide reliable information that the child/young person is at risk. This could be a relative, neighbour, friend or sibling.

AIDA SA Inc Members are required to contact the Child Abuse Report Line on 13 14 78. This line is a centralised point of intake and all child protection concerns are to be reported to this line. AIDA SA Inc Members are required to furnish the following particulars to the Report Line. There is also a facility for on-line reporting.

**5.3 Information about the Child/Young Person at risk**

* Child/young person’s name, age and address
* Description of injury, abuse and/or neglect
* Current situation and whereabouts of the child/young person
* When and how did you find out about the abuse? Whereabouts of parent or caregiver
* Any knowledge of the alleged abuser, name, age, current address and relationship to the child/young person

You may also be asked

* Ethnicity of child
* Whether there are any Family Court/Violence Orders in place

**5.4** **Information required of the Mandatory Reporter**

* Your full name, address and contact number
* Your relationship to the child/young person of concern
* Type of contact you have with the family and how frequent Are you working with the child or the family and in what capacity?
* Is the child/young person aware that you are making a report?
* What has prompted you to call the Report Line?
* Have you already taken any action, and if so what, and has there been any results from such action
* As the notifier you will be advised whether the report is going to be recorded as “child protection” or otherwise. This is the only feedback you will receive.
  1. **AIDA SA Inc Member is the abuser**

In the event that the alleged perpetrator of the abuse is a member of AIDA SA Inc. the alleged incident must be reported to the President of AIDA SA Inc. The President will inform the Child Abuse Report Line (CARL) that an allegation of abuse has been made against an AIDA SA Inc. person as an acknowledgement of AIDA SA Inc.’s commitment to the safety and protection of children and young people. The AIDA SA Inc. President will have discretionary authority to suspend the alleged perpetrator from all AIDA SA Inc. activities until further notice, to ensure that any associated risk of further abuse to a child/young person is removed.

In the event that the alleged perpetrator of the abuse is the President of AIDA SA Inc. then the alleged incident must be reported to the Vice President of AIDA SA Inc. The Vice-President will inform the Child Abuse Report Line (CARL) that an allegation of abuse has been made against an AIDA SA Inc person as an acknowledgement of AIDA SA Inc.’s commitment to the safety and protection of children and young people. The AIDA SA Inc. Vice President will have discretionary authority to suspend the alleged perpetrator from all AIDA SA Inc. activities until further notice, to ensure that any associated risk of further abuse to a child/young person is removed.

If the perpetrator is found guilty of abuse, their membership with AIDA SA Inc will be terminated immediately.

Such incidents of abuse and procedures should not at any stage be discussed with colleagues, family members and friends. The incident is to be treated in the strictest of confidence in the first instance and should be reported directly to the Child Abuse Report Line before being discussed with the AIDA SA member.

It is important to remember the following points:

* You do not have to prove that abuse or neglect has occurred
  + - * You may consult with the Child Abuse Report Line without an official report being made if you wish to clarify any points
* Your identity as a notifier remains confidential
* You can make notification anonymously
* If acting in good faith you cannot incur civil or criminal liability
  + - * If acting in good faith you are not breaching any professional etiquette or ethics or confidentiality/privacy
* You are entitled to receive feedback of your notification and the course of action by CYFS

1. **PREVENTION**

AIDA SA Inc. strongly supports any measures that positively contribute to the safety and protection of children/young people. As an organization AIDA SA Inc acknowledges that working with children and young people is a great responsibility and therefore the implementation of processes that aid the prevention of abuse and neglect are essential.

As part of its commitment to prevent child abuse, AIDA SA Inc. will actively promote that it is a child-safe organisation (See 7.0). AIDA SA Inc. will reinforce at all times that commitment to the safety and protection of children/young people is a requisite for membership of the organisation.

To further enhance AIDA SA Inc.’s commitment to being a child-safe organisation, a set of guidelines have been developed to constitute and support appropriate behaviours for working with children/young people. It is a requirement that all AIDA SA Inc members adhere to these guidelines at all times.

**6.1 Member requirements**

AIDA SA Inc members must fulfil the following requirements prior to working with children/young people

* Completion of a National Police Clearance, Criminal History Check, with this to be undertaken prior to commencement and thereafter every three years
* Training to ensure adherence to this Policy and the associated responsibilities for working with children and young people as a Mandated Notifier
* Mandated Notification Training – covering the rights, responsibilities and obligation of Mandated Notifiers; when and how to notify that child abuse is suspected or has occurred and the scope of the government reporting framework. This training must be delivered by an authorised FSA training provider and proof of this training must be provided to AIDA (SA) Inc.
* Mandated Notification Training to be updated every three years.

**6.2 Obtaining and dealing with criminal history information**

Criminal history assessments are required for anyone within our organisation that:

* has regular contact with children and is not directly supervised at all times
* works in close proximity to children on a regular basis and is not directly supervised at all times: or
* supervises or manages persons who:
* have regular contact with children or
* work in close proximity to children on a regular basis: or
* has access to sensitive records relating to children or young people

**6.2.1 Assessment**[[4]](#footnote-4)

In the majority of cases, a person will have no criminal history and the assessment will be successfully completed and no further action will be required.

Where the report contains a criminal history AIDA SA Inc may request the applicant to undertake a more thorough assessment.

No person will be considered suitable for membership of AIDA SA or be accepted as a volunteer in any capacity if he or she has been convicted of

* murder or sexual assault
* violence in relation to a child
* an offence relating to child pornography
* an offence involving child prostitution
* a child abuse offence, for example criminal neglect

**6.2.2 Ensuring procedural fairness**

All current members of AIDA SA Inc and its volunteers are entitled to a due process, ie if they are denied any position because of the criminal history assessment, they may, depending on the constitution and rules and regulations of the Association be entitled to appeal the decision.

**6.2.3 Records Management**

AIDA SA Inc. must take measures to ensure that any information obtained through conducting a criminal history assessment is protected and confidentially stored and safeguarded to protect against loss, unauthorised access, modification, disclosure or other misuse.

AIDA SA Inc must retain the following information

* that a criminal history report was obtained
* how the criminal history information affected any decision making processes
* Statutory Declarations (where applicable)

No criminal history information will be retained after a period of three months from the time a decision is made and/or any appeal is lodged.

**6.2.4. Exemptions from the requirement to conduct criminal history assessments**

AIDA SA Inc will exempt the following persons from the requirement to undertake a criminal history assessment, unless that person is also involved in a function or event conducted by AIDA SA Inc its affiliated associations or clubs which involves the care of children in an overnight situation.

* A person volunteering in an activity in which their child ordinarily participates
* A person who volunteers who is less than 18 years of age
* A person working or volunteering for a short-term event or activity of less than 10 days duration or no more than 1 day per month
* A person occupying a position in which the physical presence of the parents of the child is evident
* Any organisation providing equipment, food, venues for the benefit of AIDA Inc. but does not provide any other services to children.
* A person who is a police officer of a registered teacher.

**6.3 Supervision and support**

All AIDA SA Inc activities must be supervised by an AIDA SA Inc. Member. Compliance with the terms of this policy means that AIDA SA Inc. Members must provide ongoing support to volunteers and casual/full time staff, to ensure that the activity is being delivered in accordance with this Policy. This strategy is in place to ensure children/people are safe and protected at all times and non-members of AIDA Inc. are supported in their line of work.

1. **ONGOING COMMITMENT TO CHILD/YOUNG PERSON SAFETY**

AIDA SA Inc. Members will commit to providing ongoing measures to protect the Child/Young Person in their care by instigating the following:-

* All AIDA SA Inc members will be issued with a hard copy of this Policy, as well as an electronic one
* All AIDA SA Inc members will undergo three yearly Police checks
* All AIDA SA Inc members will be required to attend a Mandatory Training Reporting Workshop organised and funded by AIDA SA Inc
* All AIDA SA Inc advertising, publications, letter-head, business cards, programs and web-sites will contain the words that AIDA SA Inc. offers a Safe Environment for children/young people
* All volunteers/non-members of AIDA SA Inc will be required to take part in an information session outlining the Child Protection Policy
* At all times all AIDA SA Inc members will be required to show awareness of, respect, and concern for, the protection and safety of all children/young people under their care.
* All AIDA SA Inc members will be encouraged to display sensitive and good leadership and be good role models to those in their care
* AIDA SA Inc. will make available to parents/carers a copy of the policy if it is requested
* AIDA SA Inc. will review its Child/Young Person Protection Policy at regular intervals to ensure it is current, appropriate and meeting the needs of AIDA SA Inc.
* AIDA SA Inc. will appoint a designated person to be responsible for the ongoing review, updating or dissemination of its Child/Young Person Protection Policy.

1. **PUBLIC OFFICER**

AIDA SA Inc. has at its Annual General Meeting appointed a Public Officer, whose role includes the distribution, enforcement and updating of its Child/Young Person Protection Policy.

1. **CODE OF CONDUCT**

AIDA SA Inc. Members are governed by the “*Rules and Regulations for Teachers and Adjudicators”* as set out by *An Coimisiun le Rinci Gaelacha* and upon application for annual registration members agree to comply with and uphold those Rules and Regulations.

AIDA Inc. has undertaken to provide a “Code of Conduct” for teachers and adjudicators. When distributed AIDA SA Inc. members will be bound by the rules of this document.

AIDA SA Inc has undertaken to provide a “Code of Conduct” for its members to identify unacceptable/high risk behaviour such as

* Unwarranted/unwanted inappropriate touching of a child
* Bullying or harassment of a child
* Inappropriate contact or relationships between AIDA SA Inc, its members, volunteers and children
* Management of situations where adults are alone with children

AIDA SA Inc. also has established a Photography Policy to ensure protection of the child/young person participation in AIDA SA Inc. organised competitions.

**ANNEX 1. AUSTRALIAN IRISH DANCING ASSOCIATION (SA) INC. EXECUTIVE AND MEMBERSHIP**

**EXECUTIVE**

AIDA SA Inc. has at the date of this Policy being distributed a duly elected executive committee as under:

PRESIDENT Kelli-Rai Howden

VICE PRESIDENT Alison Pickett

SECRETARY Bianca Nicholls

TREASURER Heather Fraser

PUPIL REGISTRAR Kathryn Challen

FEIS REGISTRAR Sarah Fletcher

GRADING REGISTRAR Andrew Roberts

PUBLIC OFFICER Carmel Doyle

**MEMBERSHIP**

AIDA SA Inc. has as at the date of this Policy being distributed membership in the following categories

SDCRG Carmel Doyle

ADCRG Margaret Atkinson

ADCRG Kathryn Challen

ADCRG Elizabeth Howe

ADCRG Patricia McMenamin

ADCRG Deirdre Murphy

ADCRG Therese Murphy

ADCRG Andrew Roberts

TCRG Kelli-Rai Howden

TCRG Heather Fraser

TCRG Jackie Miller

TCRG Amanda Parry

TCRG Eilis Melino

TCRG Sarah Fletcher

TCRG Cathy Seidel

TCRG Martine Micklem

TCRG Bernadette Helbig

TCRG Alison Pickett

TCRG Bianca Nicholls

TCRG Michelle Burgess

HON Frances Stokes

HON Colleen Kirby

**ANNEX 2. AUSTRALIAN IRISH DANCING ASSOCIATION (SA) BRANCH**

**AFFILIATED SCHOOLS OF IRISH DANCING**

Adelaide Academy of Irish Dancing and Performing Arts

Doyle School of Irish Dancing

Howe School of Irish Dancing

Kerry School of Irish Dancing

Miller School of Irish Dancing

Newry Studio of Irish Dancing

Roberts Academy of Irish Dancing

Scoil Rince Cashel

Scoil Rince ni Murchu

MFK Academy

1. *Children, Young and Family Services, Reporting Child Abuse and Neglect-Mandated Notofication Guidelines, Department for Families and Communities, Government of South Australia, 2005.* [↑](#footnote-ref-1)
2. *Children’s Protection Act 1993 South Australia* [↑](#footnote-ref-2)
3. *Children’s Protection Act 1993 South Australia* [↑](#footnote-ref-3)
4. *Department for Recreation and Sport, September 2012 Office for Recreation & Sport SA : Training & Development : Child Protection & Safe Environment* [↑](#footnote-ref-4)