

LEGAL POLICY

Child Safe Policy and Commitment to Child

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Our Child Safe Policy: our commitment to keeping children safe, the legislative context, definitions of abuse and harm, roles and

DATE

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ABN

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1. Scope

This policy applies to any adult person (18 years of age or older) engaged by Real World Technology Solutions that may work or interact with children at any time including:

- employees (permanent and casual): leadership and management roles; administration; education instructors and youth workshop facilitators; production and venue personnel (actors, stage management, chaperones, technical crew, ushers, etc.)
- volunteers
- contractors and sub-contractors
- tutors
- work experience students/interns/secondments
- any other individual in the organisation that may deal with children
- board members.

(Note: In this Policy, the term “employee” is used to cover all persons occupying any position listed above.)

A child includes children and young people up to the age of 18 (unless otherwise specified).

2. Commitment to Child Safety

All children working with or engaged by Real World Technology Solutions have a right to feel and be safe, respected, valued, and protected from harm. Children should be made aware of and feel confident in their rights and responsibilities.

Real World Technology Solutions is strongly committed to the safety and wellbeing of all children that interact with our organisation as employees, audience members, education program participants, or otherwise by creating and maintaining a child safe environment. The welfare of children entrusted under our care is our first priority.

- Real World Technology Solutions believes that all children have the right to be safe and feel safe.
- Real World Technology Solutions recognises that the safety and wellbeing of children is everyone's responsibility.
- Real World Technology Solutions has zero tolerance toward child abuse and neglect.
- Real World Technology Solutions supports the participation and empowerment of children.
- Real World Technology Solutions commits to providing a safe environment for all children.
- Real World Technology Solutions commits to implementing the National Principles for Child Safe Organisations (National Principles) and providing the appropriate resources to do so.

3. Legislative, Regulatory and Policy Context

Real World Technology Solutions aims to uphold and support the following requirements, guidelines and principles in its endeavour to provide a child safe environment for all children.

The Royal Commission into Institutional Responses to Child Sexual Abuse. In 2017, the Royal Commission tabled both general and specific recommendations for institutions that provide care and support to

children. A range of legislative changes were recommended following the conclusion of the Royal Commission, and a number of states and territories have implemented or are implementing legislative reform to better reflect those recommendations.

National Principles for a Child Safe Organisation. Following the Royal Commission, the National Principles were tabled on 19 February 2019. The Council of Australian Governments (COAG) endorsed these principles with a view to future national consistency in relation to child safety standards. The 10 principles provide a framework for ensuring organisations can detect and respond to child safety concerns and more effectively prevent risk from occurring.

Duty of Care. Organisations that work or interact with children and young people have an obligation to ensure processes are in place to avoid acts or omissions that place children in circumstances that may lead to harm. Real World Technology Solutions will:

- Ensure that all reasonable steps are taken so that children are safe from child abuse and that they feel safe at all times.
- Enable all employees to understand their role and responsibility in protecting the safety and wellbeing of children — that is, to ensure that employees who have the power or responsibility to reduce or remove a substantial risk take steps to reduce or remove any substantial risk that a child will become the victim of child abuse.
- Ensure all employees aged 18 and over understand their reporting obligations — that is, to ensure all employees aged 18 and over (who are not Mandatory Reporters) who form a reasonable belief that a child abuse offence has been committed by an adult against a child report that information to police.
- Ensure that all employees aged 18 and over that directly engage with children have a current Working With Children Check (WWCC).

Failure to Protect. An offence applies where there is a substantial risk that a child under the age of 16 under the care, supervision or authority of a relevant organisation will become a victim of a sexual offence committed by an adult associated with that organisation. A person in a position of authority will commit an offence if they know of the risk of abuse and have the power or responsibility to reduce or remove the risk, but negligently fail to do so.

Failure to Disclose. The ‘failure to disclose’ offence applies to adults that have information that leads them to form a ‘reasonable belief’ that another adult has sexually offended against a child under 16 years of age. Such adults must report the information to police and/or child protection authority as soon as possible, unless they have a ‘reasonable excuse’ for not reporting or are exempt. A reasonable excuse may include a fear of safety or the reasonable belief that the information has already been disclosed to appropriate authorities. It does not include concerns such as damage to reputation or financial status.

4. Definitions of Child Abuse

Child abuse describes an act or omission which results in actual or potential harm to the child’s health, survival, development or dignity in the context of a relationship of responsibility, trust or power. This can be a single event or a series of traumatic events. Child abuse can be perpetrated by parents/carers, other adults, or other children and young people. Where sexual abuse is perpetrated by children or young people it is usually referred to as ‘sexually harmful behaviour’. Child abuse, including child harm

and neglect, is commonly divided into: physical abuse, emotional abuse, neglect, sexual abuse, grooming, and exposure to family violence.

Physical abuse can consist of any non-accidental infliction of physical violence on a child by any person.

Emotional abuse occurs when a child is repeatedly rejected, isolated or frightened by threats, including hostility, derogatory name-calling and put-downs, and persistent coldness to the extent that the child suffers, or is likely to suffer, emotional or psychological harm.

Neglect is the failure to provide for the child's basic needs for life (food, clothing, shelter, medical attention, supervision or care) to the extent that the child's health and development are, or are likely to be, placed at risk.

Sexual abuse occurs when a person uses power, force or authority to involve a child in any form of sexual activity. It may include contact and non-contact offences, and does not always involve force; a child may be manipulated through a process of grooming. Sexually harmful behaviour in children refers to harmful behaviour perpetrated by a child (17 years of age or younger) to another child, and is often an indicator that the child has experienced abuse or neglect.

Grooming is predatory behaviour designed to prepare a child for sexual abuse, including online grooming using electronic communication. Other members of the child's community may also be groomed in order to establish trust and a connection with the child.

Exposure to family violence is behaviour by a person towards a family member that is physically, sexually, emotionally or psychologically abusive; economically abusive; threatening or coercive; or that in any other way controls or dominates the family member and causes fear for safety or wellbeing. A child can be a direct victim, or be exposed to the effects of these behaviours.

5. Definitions of harm

Multidimensional harm occurs when more than one harm type is experienced at the same time.

Cumulative harm refers to the effects of multiple adverse or harmful circumstances and events in a child's life, whether a single recurring adverse circumstance or multiple circumstances or events.

6. Roles and responsibilities

Leadership. The Executive/Leadership will: ensure awareness and commitment to children's rights and child safe practices; ensure all employees, volunteers and contractors are aware of their obligations and complete appropriate recruitment, screening and employment practices; authorise, review and promote this policy and the related Code of Conduct and Reporting Procedure; strategically shape policies and procedures, including child friendly complaints mechanisms; offer support to children, families and personnel who have identified, responded to or reported child harm; and ensure continuous improvement by evaluating complaints and incidents, monitoring compliance, and allocating adequate resources.

Employees, volunteers and contractors will: understand the signs of child abuse, harm and neglect and how to respond; advocate and promote children's rights; undertake relevant induction and training; comply with this policy, the Code of Conduct and the Reporting Procedure; seek guidance from a supervisor or manager when unsure; help create and maintain a child safe culture; take action to protect children from all forms of abuse and neglect, including by reporting any abuse (where a child is in

immediate danger, call 000); and support peers and children who have identified, responded to or reported abuse, harm, risk of harm or neglect.

7. Supporting Children's Participation and Satisfaction

Real World Technology Solutions supports, enables and promotes the active participation of children by encouraging and respecting their views and those of parents/carers, empowering them to raise concerns, listening and acting on concerns, seeking children's input on decisions that concern them, ensuring children understand their rights and the behaviour expected of adults and children, teaching children who they can turn to if they feel unsafe, ensuring employees are skilful in facilitating participation, and valuing diversity.

8. Valuing Diversity

Real World Technology Solutions values diversity and does not tolerate any discriminatory practices. We are committed to protecting children from abuse and neglect, as well as from contempt, ridicule, hatred or negativity because of their race, culture, religion, gender (including transgender status), sexual orientation or disability. We promote the cultural safety of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children and of children from culturally and/or linguistically diverse backgrounds, the safety of children with a disability, the safety of children and young people who identify as LGBTQIA+, and the safety of children who live in out-of-home care.

9. Recruitment Practices

Real World Technology Solutions takes all reasonable steps to engage suitable people to work with children, maintaining a rigorous and consistent recruitment, screening and selection process. This includes interviews and referee checks, clear duty statements for roles involving children, keeping records of Working With Children or criminal history/police checks for anyone with direct and unsupervised contact with children, ensuring supervisors and chaperones are suitably experienced and qualified, and requiring compulsory Working With Children Checks for all staff, contractors, students on placement and volunteers who directly engage with children. Where an employee fails to provide proof of their Working With Children Check, or is charged with, convicted of or found guilty of a relevant offence, Real World Technology Solutions reserves the right to terminate employment without notice. The cost of Working With Children Check renewals is the employee's or volunteer's responsibility.

10. Support for Employees

Real World Technology Solutions supports employees by inducting them to our child safe policies and procedures, encouraging attendance at periodical information sessions, appointing a Child Safety Officer as the first point of contact, ensuring employees feel encouraged and empowered to report concerns, and ensuring new supervisors and chaperones work with experienced supervisors before working alone.

11. Child Safe Code of Conduct

Real World Technology Solutions has developed a Child Safe Code of Conduct to guide employees on expected behaviours when in direct contact with or working around children. All employees must abide by it. We ask employees who work directly with children to sign a written statement confirming they have

read, understood and will comply with the Code of Conduct, and we retain a copy of all signed statements.

12. Communication

Real World Technology Solutions encourages employees, children and parents/carers to raise any concerns or provide their views on the wellbeing of children. We keep everyone informed of our child safe policies and procedures, make relevant documents easily accessible (including on our website), and provide children and parents/carers with relevant and accessible child safe materials. Parents/carers of children employed as performers are provided with at least one contact who is available to speak with them or facilitate speaking with their children at any time during periods of work.

13. Child Safe Reporting Procedure

We believe employees, parents/carers and children should feel enabled, empowered and supported to safely raise any concerns or complaints about perceived risks to a child's safety or signs of abuse. Real World Technology Solutions has developed a procedure to respond to any complaint of abuse or conduct not in keeping with this Policy and the Code of Conduct, including means to take disciplinary action or rectify issues when necessary.

14. Risk Management

Real World Technology Solutions takes a preventative and proactive approach to minimising the risk of harm to children, periodically conducting reviews to identify potential risks as part of our WH&S risk management process.

15. Breaches of the Child Safe Policy

All staff, board members, volunteers, contractors and students on placement must adhere to the Child Safe Policy. Where a breach is identified, Real World Technology Solutions will respond. Those who breach this policy will face disciplinary action, up to and including termination of engagement. Serious breaches of this policy and/or its related procedure will be reported to the appropriate authorities.

16. Implementation and Review

Andrew and Elizabeth Yager have been appointed as Child Safety Officer/s, responsible for being the first point of contact to provide advice and support to children, parents/carers and employees regarding the safety and wellbeing of children engaged with Real World Technology Solutions. This includes being the first point of contact for dealing with any complaint of abuse or conduct not in keeping with this Policy and the Child Safe Code of Conduct. This policy will be reviewed every year, incorporating feedback from children, parents/carers, employees and other relevant personnel. This Policy was approved on 4 December 2023 and last reviewed on 4 December 2023.