



Child-Safe Child-Friendly Policy

At Story Factory, we want young people who participate in our programs to have a safe and happy experience.

This policy guides staff and volunteers on how to behave with young people at Story Factory. It focuses on how we can promote young people's participation and make it safer for them.

Story Factory supports the active participation of young people. We listen to young people's views, respect what they say and involve them when we make decisions, especially about matters that will directly affect them.

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Current Contacts:

Child Safety Contact Officer (standard programs): Matt Roden - matt@storyfactory.org.au / 0404 707 209

Child Safety Contact Officer (special projects): Richard Short - richard@storyfactory.org.au / 0402 599 557

Child Safety Contact Officer Support: Craig New - craig@storyfactory.org.au / 0419 437 350

Our Vision, Values and Aims

Our Vision

We want to see an Australia where all young people have the skills and confidence to tell their stories.

Our Values

Young people come first

Writing is agency

Creativity unleashes potential

Diversity makes us better

We have high expectations of ourselves and the young people we work with

We have heart. Passion matters.

How we treat students and our colleagues:

Positive. We see strengths.

Inclusive. Every young person belongs at Story Factory.

Respectful. We acknowledge young people's skills and experience.

Generous. We choose the more edifying interpretation.

Fun. Because writing should be joyful. At least some of the time.

Our Aims

We will put children first in everything we do.

We will provide a fun, safe environment.

We will provide opportunities for children to have a voice, to be listened to and to have their input and feedback incorporated.

We will act with honesty and openness and make decisions that are ethical and fair.

We recognise the diversity and cultures within our community and embrace the rights of all children.

We will recruit and keep the best people to work with children.

We will value our staff and invest in their professional development to ensure we keep children safe.

Support for young people, staff and volunteers and selection processes:

1. We promote respect, fairness and consideration for all staff and volunteers. Bullying, discrimination and harassment in any form or at any level will not be tolerated.
2. All staff and volunteers will have a supervisor (who has satisfied a Working with Children Check and National Police Check) assigned to support them and their work. Staff and volunteers will at all times be directly supervised in their interactions with young people at Story Factory, by a supervisor who has satisfied a Working with Children Check.
3. Story Factory will maintain a rigorous and consistent staff and volunteer screening and selection process. All potential staff and volunteers will be required to declare that they are not prohibited persons under the Commission for Children and Young People Act 1998. Working with Children Checks will be undertaken where required by law and all potential employees and volunteers will have to provide police criminal record certificates. All potential staff will be interviewed and reference checks will be conducted.
4. All new staff and volunteers will receive a copy of Story Factory's Child-Safe Child-Friendly Policy and Code of Conduct. All staff and volunteers will be expected to sign agreements acknowledging that they have received, read and understood Story Factory's policies and procedures and that they agree to be bound by them.
5. Probationary or trial periods may be imposed on employees or volunteers in relation to their provision of services to Story Factory.

Dealing with complaints:

For complaints about child safety:

A nominated Child Safety Contact Officer (CSCO) will manage all formal complaints. As at 1st Jan 2021, the CSCOs for Story Factory are Matt Roden (matt@storyfactory.org.au) and Richard Short (richard@storyfactory.org.au). Complaints about any child safety or welfare issue may be addressed to the CSCO orally or in writing (including anonymously). Child safety is paramount.

For general complaints:

Should the complaint relate to something not involving children - for example, workshop content or delivery, bullying, discrimination or harassment, aggressive behavior, offences that are criminal but not related to child safety such as fraud, etc - the complaint should be made to the Volunteer Managers (volunteer@storyfactory.org.au).

If either of these areas of complaint relate to either a CSCO or a Volunteer Manager, a complaint can be filed with the Operations Manager, Craig New (craig@storyfactory.org.au).

All complaints are taken seriously at Story Factory, and all are confidential. Once you have reported the incident the following steps will take place.

Steps for child-safety complaints:

The CSCO or other senior staff will follow our internal child safety procedures, which may include making a formal report or conducting an internal investigation. You will be kept informed as to progress where legally possible, and of any action resulting from the complaint.

Steps for general complaints:

We always encourage you to try first speaking with the person who did the wrong. If this is not possible, the staff member handling the complaint will consult with senior staff on how best to proceed. You will be kept informed as to progress and of any action resulting from the complaint.

Steps for discrimination complaints:

You will be asked for a detailed description of the incident. This can be done in writing, over the phone, or in person.

We may discuss the incident with other senior staff members to determine further actions, and to better support you in regards to the environment where this took place. If the incident directly involves other senior staff, they will not be involved in this step of the proceedings.

We will be guided by the course of action you wish to pursue. This is in regards to whether you would like to address the incident with the parties involved, whether you would like to continue working in that environment, and whether you would like a response from the parties involved.

You will not be judged on the actions you choose - Story Factory is here to support your needs around this incident and the resulting actions.

The staff member you reported to, or the appropriate senior staff member, will address the incident with the parties involved (or their supervisor). As stated above, you do not need to be part of this process if you do not wish to be.

Communicating this policy:

1. Our policy will be discussed during induction sessions for all new staff and volunteers and additionally when there is any change to the policy, the Code of Conduct or the relevant legislation.
2. Young people and parents joining our programs will easily be able to access a copy of Story Factory's Child-Safe Child-Friendly Policy and Code of Conduct from Story Factory's website.

Disciplinary Procedures:

Breaches of Child Safety Policies

Breaches of any parts of any Child Safety policy, including but not limited to the Code of Conduct Policy, the Child-Safe Child-Friendly Policy, the Social Media and Online Engagement Policy, or the Publishing Policies and Procedures, will result in an internal investigation that may involve the Executive Director and/or the Child Safety Contact Officers.

Consequences of a breach

Generally, an alleged breach is reported to either the Executive Director or a Child Safety Contact Officer or, if of a serious nature, to the Police.

Story Factory may conduct an internal investigation of misconduct. In this instance, the person who has allegedly made the breach will be informed as soon as is practicable. This may result in being stood down from duties for a period of time (either paid or unpaid), or terminated from employment (either paid or volunteer roles).

Employees or volunteers who have made an alleged breach will have every opportunity to speak to their actions and put forward a case as to any justification for the alleged breach to have occurred, before a final decision about consequences has been made.

Training & Support:

Paid Staff

Every year, all staff (both storytelling and administrative) must complete either online or in-person child safety training as held by the Office of Children's Guardian or other relevant entity as directed by Story Factory. This training will always be paid for by Story Factory if any fees apply. This should happen by June 30 every year, ideally during Term 1.

All staff are given copies of all relevant child safety policies and procedures, which are reviewed annually and updated where necessary. Staff are advised as to any changes on an annual basis, or sooner if required.

Volunteers

At the start of their volunteering activity, Story Factory provides free in-person or online training which incorporates a child-safety module.

All volunteers are given copies of all relevant child safety policies and procedures, which are reviewed annually and updated where necessary. Volunteers are also sent this paperwork annually, and reminded of child safety policies in reminder emails for every workshop or workshop series.

Support and guidance

Should any staff member require support around any issues of child safety - understanding policies, making mandatory reports, clarifying definitions or decisions - they can speak with either the relevant Child Safety Contact Officer or the Executive Director. Staff can also seek support from their direct manager in weekly meetings, or through scheduled storyteller discussions around workshop concerns.

Should any volunteer require support around any issues of child safety, they can speak with a Volunteer Manager, who can either provide support or assist in obtaining support. Volunteers can also seek support from end-of-term volunteer meetings, or their direct supervising storyteller in workshops.

Evaluation

All staff are supervised by a manager, who either oversees their work in the centres, or who periodically visits workshops to oversee and support. All volunteers are supervised by a Storyteller and/or the Volunteer Managers in their volunteering work. They are the best source of evaluation as to how a staff member is doing their job, and what support they may need.

Supervising managers may request formal meetings with staff or volunteers if they are concerned there is risk of any Child Safety Policy being breached or misunderstood. This will always be handled in a non-judgemental and open manner. Further support or training may be offered or discussed.