



**SOUTH WEST OPERA COMPANY (INC)**

**CHILD PROTECTION POLICY  
(FULL POLICY DOCUMENT)**

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# 1 Preliminary

## 1.1 Terminology

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In this document:

- a *child* is a person under the age of 18 years;
- the *Child Protection Officer* means the committee member responsible for managing and implementing SWOC's Child Protection Policy, or a person acting in lieu as provided for in this Policy;
- *Exempt Parents* are parents who are not required to have a Working with Children Check to undertake roles or tasks that involve contact with children (Refer to Policy Subsection 2.2.2);
- *Junior member* means a member of SWOC who is a child;
- *Office holder* means the President, Vice-president, Secretary or Treasurer of SWOC;
- *Parent* includes *guardian* or other adult with responsibility for a child;
- *Policy* means SWOC's Child Protection Policy;
- *Protective behaviours* refers to the principles of child safety recommended by Protective Behaviours WA Inc.;
- *Regulations* means the *Working with Children (Criminal Record Checking) Regulations 2005*;
- *SWOC* means the South West Opera Company (Inc);
- *We* and *our* are references to SWOC;
- *WWC Act* means the *Working with Children (Criminal Record Checking) Act 2004*; and
- *WWC Card* means the card issued to a person by the Department of Communities following a successful Working with Children Check.

## 1.2 Statement of commitment

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Children taking part in SWOC activities are entitled to participate in an enjoyable and safe environment.

SWOC has developed this Policy to safeguard their interests.

The Policy sets out how we will care for children and conduct ourselves. It outlines:

- those things we must do to comply with the law (legislative requirements);
- those things we choose to do to promote child protection (SWOC requirements);
- our administrative arrangements for child protection; and
- associated information.

### **1.3 Operations of SWOC**

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SWOC operates in three sub-groups:

- a main chorus which is predominantly for adults but may at times include children;
- a Musical Theatre Group which is a mix of adults and children; and
- SWOClets which is a choral group exclusively for children.

SWOC also performs concerts and theatrical productions which may include children in rehearsals and performances.

### **1.4 Names, telephone numbers and web addresses**

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Names of departments and agencies, telephone numbers and web addresses in this document were correct at the time the document was prepared (January 2019).

## 2 Legislative requirements

### 2.1 Working with Children legislation

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#### 2.1.1 The legislation

SWOC is required to comply with:

- the *Working with Children (Criminal Record Checking) Act 2004*; and
- the *Working with Children (Criminal Record Checking) Regulations 2005*.

The *WWC Act* and *Regulations* can be downloaded from the Department of Justice - Parliamentary Counsel's Office website: [www.legislation.wa.gov.au](http://www.legislation.wa.gov.au) or from <https://workingwithchildren.wa.gov.au>.

#### 2.1.2 Purpose of the legislation

The legislation seeks to protect children against abuse by requiring compulsory screening (Working with Children Checks) of people who engage in certain paid or unpaid work with children.

People considered suitable to work with children receive an assessment notice in the form of a Working with Children Card (WWC Card).

Unsuitable people receive a negative notice.

The legislation exempts some people from needing a Working with Children Check.

#### 2.1.3 Administration of the legislation

The legislation and Working with Children Checks are administered by the Western Australian Department of Communities - Child Protection and Family Support.

The Child Protection section of its website [www.dcp.wa.gov.au](http://www.dcp.wa.gov.au) contains useful information. The website <https://workingwithchildren.wa.gov.au> deals specifically with the WWC Act and Working with Children Checks.

### 2.2 Applying the legislation to SWOC

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#### 2.2.1 Guidance from Department of Communities

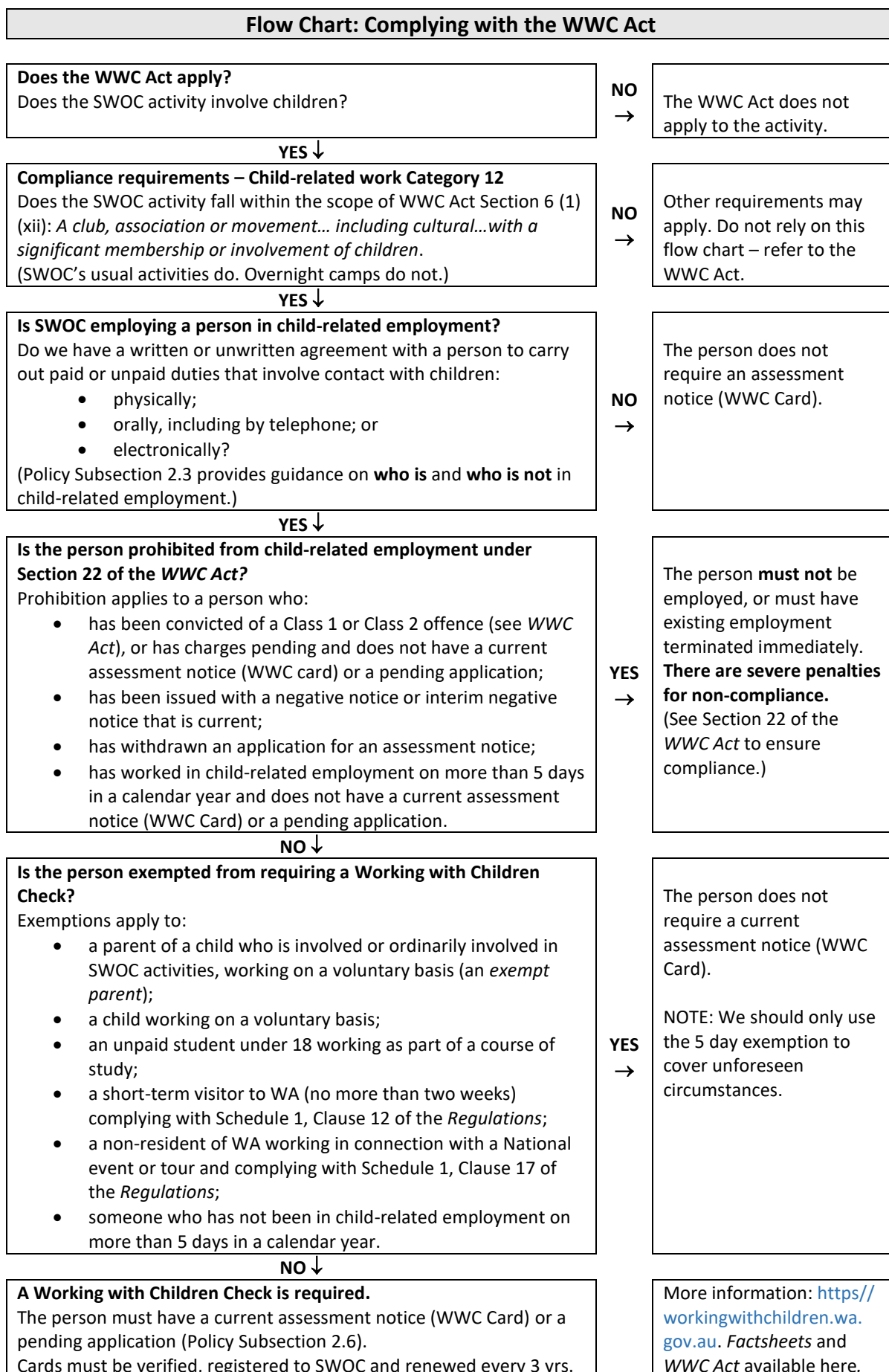
Applying legislative requirements to SWOC activities is not clear cut. This Policy is based on guidance from the Department of Communities (Lynnette Ryan and Susan Burton) which was obtained in May 2018.

#### 2.2.2 Flow Chart: Complying with the WWC Act

The following Flow Chart summarises the process to determine:

- whether the WWC Act applies to a SWOC activity;
- who is prohibited from working with children;
- who does not need a Working with Children Check; and
- who must have a Working with Children Check.

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## 2.3 Child-related employment

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### 2.3.1 What is child-related employment?

The Department of Communities advised that simply having contact with a child is not sufficient to trigger the WWC Act. A person must be in child related employment.

SWOC “employs” a person in child-related employment if we have a written or unwritten agreement with them to carry out paid or unpaid duties that involve contact with children:

- physically;
- orally, including by telephone; or
- electronically.

This applies to both members and non-members of SWOC.

Except where exemptions apply (see Flow Chart), every person in child-related employment must:

- have had a successful Working with Children Check and have current assessment notice (WWC card); or
- have submitted an application for a Working with Children Check to the Department of Communities with the outcome pending.

For SWOC activities, it is not always obvious who is considered to be in child-related employment and who is not. Guidance is provided below.

### 2.3.2 People in child related employment

When children are involved, the following people are considered to be in child-related employment:

- President of SWOC, the Child Protection Officer and committee members as determined from time to time who will have contact with children as part of their duties;
- event managers and deputies whose duties involve contact with children;
- musical directors and deputies;
- directors and deputies;
- choreographers and deputies;
- accompanists;
- all personnel working and assisting with SWOClets, Musical Theatre Group and any other group containing children;
- supervisors of children (including during performances);
- stage managers and deputies;
- costume fitters, dressers, make-up artists and hair stylists;
- backstage personnel who may have dealings with children;
- props personnel interfacing with children;

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- people fitting audio equipment to children; and
- any other people whose work or functions have duties that involve contact with children.

### 2.3.3 People NOT in child-related employment

Based on discussions with the Department of Communities, the following people are not considered to be in child-related employment even though they may have incidental contact with children:

- general members of SWOC;
- exempt parents and others listed as exempt in the Flow Chart;
- event managers and deputies whose duties do not involve contact with children;
- performers in theatrical performances or concerts;
- members of orchestras;
- wardrobe personnel who are not fitting or dressing children;
- set constructors;
- lighting technicians;
- stage mechanics and riggers;
- audio technicians who are not dealing with children;
- front of house;
- anyone whose normal duties do not require contact with children.

## 2.4 Prohibited persons

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The WWC Act prohibits some people from child-related employment. Refer to the Flow Chart.

If we become aware that a person is prohibited, we MUST take IMMEDIATE action to prevent that person engaging in child-related work. Severe penalties apply for non-compliance.

## 2.5 Exemptions from Working with Children Checks

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The WWC Act exempts some people from needing Working with Children Checks. Some exemptions depend on the category of child-related work. SWOC's usual activities fall under Category 12 (Section 6 (1) (xii) of the WWC Act) and the Flow Chart lists people who are exempted.

If SWOC undertakes activities in another category we must comply with the requirements for that category. In particular, exemptions for parents do not apply for overnight camps.

The WWC Act, Section 4, defines a "parent" for the purposes of the Act and exemptions apply only to people conforming with that definition. The definition excludes grandparents and other relatives.

## 2.6 Working with Children Checks

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### 2.6.1 Information on Working with Children Checks

Information on Working with Children Checks is obtainable at:

<https://workingwithchildren.wa.gov.au> .

### 2.6.2 Obtaining Working with Children Checks

Where a person needs to apply for a Working with Children Check, the application form may be obtained from a Post Office.

The Child Protection Officer, or a SWOC representative will need to complete Parts 5, 6 and 7 of the application form before it is submitted.

The Department of Communities will notify SWOC by letter whether or not the application has been approved. If the application has been approved, the letter will include a copy of the issued WWC Card. This letter must be filed in the child protection file.

If we want to use the applicant in child-related employment before a WWC Card is issued we must obtain a copy of the application receipt from the applicant, file it in the child protection file, and enter the applicant's details into *SWOC WWC RecordMaster.xlsx* (Policy Subsection 7.6).

### 2.6.3 Validating Working with Children Cards

#### General

Before we rely on a WWC Card we must:

- obtain a photocopy of the WWC Card and file it in the child protection file;
- validate the card at <https://workingwithchildren.wa.gov.au/card-validation>; and
- enter the person's details into *SWOC WWC RecordMaster.xlsx* (Policy Subsection 7.6).

#### Existing WWC Cards

Where a person holds an existing WWC Card, and SWOC was not named in Parts 5-7 of the WWC application for the card, we must also:

- complete a *Register Card Holders* online form at <https://workingwithchildren.wa.gov.au/employers-organisations/online-services/registeremployees> so that the Department of Communities will notify us of any change in the card holder's approval status; and
- remove the card holder from the register if the cardholder ceases to be employed by SWOC in child-related work.

The above requirements apply to an existing card holder who will be employed in child-related work for an extended period or on a continuing basis.

We may opt not to register an existing card holder if the card holder will only be employed in child-rated work for less than one month after the date at which we have validated their WWC Card.

### 2.6.4 Monitoring WWC Cards

The Child Protection Officer shall monitor the dates of WWC Cards and give 3 months' notice to the holders to renew them.

In February and July, and if card validity is in doubt, the Child Protection Officer shall confirm the validity of WWC Cards on the website: [www.workingwithchildren.wa.gov.au/card-validation](http://www.workingwithchildren.wa.gov.au/card-validation) .

## **2.7 Managing working with children requirements**

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### **2.7.1 Membership applications**

SWOC membership application forms ask applicants to indicate whether they hold a Working with Children Card.

For ease of reference, the Secretary, or a person authorised by the committee to deal with membership matters, should transfer this information to the electronic *Membership Record*. (See Policy Subsection 7.6).

### **2.7.2 Day-to-day operations**

The day-to-day operations of SWOC consist of three sub-groups: a main chorus, a Musical Theatre Group and SWOClets.

For each of the three sub-groups, the Child Protection Officer in consultation with organisers of the sub-groups, must:

- determine all positions that involve child related employment (including deputies) and the names of people occupying those positions;
- enter details into *SWOC WWC RecordMaster.xlsx* (Policy Subsection 7.6);
- ensure that all nominated people are compliant with the requirements of the WWC Act. (Refer to the Flow Chart and Policy Subsection 2.6.3); and
- deal with changes to positions and personnel as they occur.

The organisers must advise the Child Protection Officer of changes and verify that people are compliant with the WWC Act before using them in child-related employment.

### **2.7.3 Single events**

Whenever a single event includes children, the Event Manager must ensure that everyone whom SWOC involves in child-related employment is compliant with the WWC Act. This applies to both members and non-members.

“Staffing” of all event activities must be planned in sufficient time for people to obtain Working with Children Checks if necessary.

The Event Manager, with the assistance of the Child Protection Officer, must:

- list all positions required for the event (see *List of Event Positions* form in Appendix C);
- indicate which positions involve child-related employment;
- put names against each position involving child-related employment;
- progressively update the list when changes occur; and
- ensure that all nominated people are compliant with the WWC Act before using them in child-related employment (Refer to the Flow Chart and Policy Subsection 2.6.3).

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The Event Manager must give a copy of the original list and each amendment to the Child Protection Officer who must:

- ensure details of all listed people are entered in *SWOC WWC RecordMaster.xlsx* (Policy Subsection 7.6);
- advise the Event Manager which of the listed people need to show us their WWC Card, (or application receipt) and provide a copy for our records; and
- verify WWC Cards, register them to SWOC as necessary, and confirm their validity to the Event Manager.

The Event Manager may delegate all or part of this work but remains responsible for ensuring compliance.

Membership records, held by the Secretary, include information on which SWOC members and parents of Junior Members have WWC Cards.

### 2.7.4 Keeping records

SWOC must keep records to demonstrate compliance with the WWC Act.

The Child Protection Officer is responsible for maintaining records.

Refer to Policy Subsection 7.6 for details of the records and how to use them.

## 2.8 Reporting to Authorities

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### 2.8.1 Reporting suspect persons

We are required to notify the Department of Communities WWC Screening Unit in writing if we reasonably suspect a person has been charged with, or convicted of, an offence which makes it inappropriate for them to continue to carry out child-related work.<sup>1</sup>

### 2.8.2 Reporting child abuse

We must report any claims of actual or suspected child abuse which occurs during SWOC activities to authorities. Refer to Policy Section 5 *Dealing with alleged child abuse*.

### 2.8.3 Children and Community Services Act 2004

Under the *Children and Community Services Act 2004*, it is a legal requirement in Western Australia for doctors, nurses, midwives, teachers, police officers and boarding supervisors to report all reasonable beliefs of child sexual abuse formed in the course of their work (paid or unpaid) to the Department of Communities - Child Protection and Family Support.

## 2.9 Auditing by Department of Communities

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The Department of Communities may audit SWOC for compliance with the WWC Act at any time.

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<sup>1</sup> This is a legal requirement. See Department of Communities, *Factsheet 5*: <https://workingwithchildren.wa.gov.au>

## 3 SWOC Requirements

### 3.1 Caring for Children

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- We are concerned for the welfare of children in our care and take reasonable steps to protect children from harm, discrimination and degrading treatment and to allow them to participate in SWOC's activities in a happy, safe and fair environment.
- We appoint a Child Protection Officer who is responsible for child protection matters.
- We respect the two basic principles taught by Protective Behaviours WA Inc.<sup>2</sup> that:
  - we all have the right to feel safe at all times; and
  - we can talk with someone about anything, no matter what it is.
- Where practical, we provide separate change facilities for adults and children. If change rooms must be shared, we provide supervision.
- We keep a record of any medical concerns relating to children in our care and take account of them if there is a medical incident.
- In an emergency, we will attempt to contact a parent but if we cannot we will act in what we consider to be the best interest of the child.
- We may withdraw a child from a SWOC activity because of illness, misadventure or misbehaviour and ask a parent to collect the child. If we cannot contact a parent, we will act in what we consider to be the best interest of the child.
- We keep written reports of any incidents or injuries that occur during SWOC activities.
- We provide personal accident insurance for junior members of SWOC during SWOC activities.

### 3.2 Parental consent

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- We obtain written consent for us to act in place of the parent in the case of first aid or an emergency.
- We obtain written consent to use appropriate and relevant images of junior members in SWOC publications and publicity material.

### 3.3 Code of conduct for children and parents

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- We expect children to be well behaved and respectful to adults and each other.
- We expect children to remain within supervised areas unless given permission by the supervisor to leave.

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<sup>2</sup> Protective behaviours are commonly taught in schools using material from Protective Behaviours WA Inc.: [www.protectivebehaviourswa.org.au](http://www.protectivebehaviourswa.org.au) .

- Parents, or people delegated by them, are responsible for dropping off and picking up their children at the designated places and times for SWOC activities. If this is not possible, parents must contact us to tell us what alternative arrangements have been made.

### 3.4 Code of conduct for adults

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All adults taking part in SWOC activities that involve children, must comply with the following code of conduct.

- Adult interactions with children shall be safe, respectful and appropriate for the ages of the children. Adults shall treat children fairly and shall not bully or intimidate them.
- Adults shall not do things of a personal nature for a child that the child can do for themselves.
- The protective behaviours principle of *Safe Touch* between adults and children shall be followed at all times (i.e. only public areas of the body may be touched and only with the child's permission in the presence of another adult).
- Adults shall not say anything to a child in private that they would not be prepared to say in public.
- When children are present or in earshot, an adult shall not make sexual references, or engage in activities that could be considered inappropriate for children.
- An adult shall not remain alone with a child out of sight of others and shall take prompt action to remedy the situation if it occurs.
- Except with the prior consent of the child's parent, an adult shall not transport or accompany a child alone.
- Adults may correct inappropriate language and behaviour by children. If prolonged intervention is required it should be carried out by a person whom SWOC recognises as complying with the *WWC Act*.
- If an adult observes behaviour by a person that is inconsistent with this code of conduct, the observer should politely remind the person of the requirements of the code. If the behaviour persists, the matter shall be referred to a member of the SWOC committee.
- An adult who suspects or becomes aware of allegations of child abuse related to SWOC activities must advise a SWOC committee member immediately. The matter will then be handled in accordance with this Policy. The adult may also choose to report the matter directly to the Department of Communities; or to the WA Police.
- If a child is distressed or in imminent danger, or in the case of emergency, an adult may take whatever action is considered necessary in the best interest of the child. If the action taken is inconsistent with other requirements of this Policy, the incident must be reported to a SWOC committee member as soon as possible and details recorded on an *Incident Report Form*.

## **3.5 Supervision of children**

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### **3.5.1 General requirement**

We must supervise children participating in SWOC activities when they are not in the custody of a parent or someone appointed by a parent.

Supervisors must be compliant with the WWC Act and have consented to SWOC's *Child Protection Policy Summary* document.

### **3.5.2 At SWOC venues**

At SWOC's regular rehearsal venues, SWOC personnel running the activity are responsible for supervising the children.

If necessary, they should request assistance from other people who are known to be compliant with the WWC Act.

### **3.5.3 Rehearsals and Performances at non-SWOC venues**

When rehearsals and performances for single events are not held at SWOC's regular rehearsal venues, the Event Manager, in consultation with the Child Protection Officer, must ensure that children are properly supervised.

The Event Manager is responsible for:

- determining how many supervisors are needed;
- appointing and rostering them;
- ensuring they are compliant with the WWC act;
- explaining their duties; and
- telling children who is supervising them.

The Event Manager may delegate all or part of this work to someone else but remains responsible for ensuring compliance.

### **3.5.4 Guidance for supervision**

Appendix A contains guidance for the supervision of children.



## 4 Reporting incidents

### 4.1 Incidents to be reported

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An *Incident Report Form* (Appendix C) must be completed if any of the following occur:

- we withdraw a child from an activity because of illness, misadventure, or misbehaviour;
- we provide first aid or arrange for medical treatment for a child;
- we receive a report that an adult is not complying with the Code of Conduct for Adults;
- a person acts contrary to the Code of Conduct for Adults because of an emergency, or because a child is distressed or in imminent danger; and
- other child-related matters which we think should be recorded (except child abuse).

Child abuse must be reported with in accordance with Policy Section 5 *Dealing with alleged child abuse*.

### 4.2 Making a report

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Any person may report an incident but the SWOC office holder, committee member or subsidiary office holder (musical director and similar) who is made aware of the incident must ensure that an *Incident Report Form* is completed and forwarded to the Child Protection Officer.

### 4.3 Action in response to a report

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The Child Protection Officer, in consultation with the President, other office holders and other persons as appropriate, is responsible for taking action, as necessary, in response to an incident report.

The action taken shall be noted on the *Incident Report Form*.

## 5 Dealing with alleged child abuse

### 5.1 General information

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Five types of child abuse, which may overlap, are generally recognised:

- physical abuse;
- sexual abuse;
- emotional abuse;
- psychological abuse, and
- neglect.

General information of what to do if you are concerned that a child is being abused or neglected is contained in Appendix B. SWOC requirements are detailed below.

### 5.2 Reporting suspected child abuse

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#### 5.2.1 Methods of reporting

A person who suspects an incident of child abuse may report the incident in three ways:

- to the WA Police on 000 (if a child is suspected of being in immediate danger or for emergencies);
- to the Department of Communities Child Protection and Family Support or to the WA Police as soon as possible; or
- to the SWOC Child Protection Officer who will deal with the report in accordance with this Policy.

#### 5.2.2 Contact telephone numbers

##### Emergencies and life-threatening situations

- WA Police: 000

##### Non-life-threatening situations

- Department of Communities Child Protection and Family Support:
  - Business hours: 08 9222 2555 / 1800 622 258,
  - after hours/crisis care 08 9223 1111/ 1800 199 008
- WA Police: 131 444
- Kids Helpline: 1800 55 1800

#### 5.2.3 Legal protection

There is legal protection for people who report suspected child abuse in good faith.

See: [www.dcp.wa.gov.au/ChildProtection/Pages/Ifyouareconcernedaboutachild.aspx](http://www.dcp.wa.gov.au/ChildProtection/Pages/Ifyouareconcernedaboutachild.aspx) .

## 5.3 Dealing with allegations of child abuse

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### 5.3.1 Recording allegations

Every allegation of child abuse that is reported or disclosed to an office holder, ordinary committee member or subsidiary office holder (musical director, event manager and similar) of SWOC must be:

- recorded on the *Report of Alleged Child Abuse Form* (see Appendix C); and
- referred urgently to the Child Protection Officer or, if the Child Protection Officer is not available, to a SWOC office holder.

This requirement applies whether or not the child abuse is alleged to be related to SWOC activities.

The grounds for the allegation must be documented on the form or an attachment to the form.

It is important **NOT TO INTERROGATE** a child who makes an allegation.

### 5.3.2 Responsibility for acting on a report or disclosure

After receiving a report of alleged child abuse, the Child Protection Officer must act promptly in accordance with this Policy.

If the Child Protection Officer is not available, a SWOC office holder (President, Vice-president, Secretary or Treasurer) with a current WWC Card must handle the matter.

### 5.3.3 Required action

#### Disclosure by a child

If a child discloses that he or she has been abused, the Child Protection Officer must report the disclosure to Department of Communities Child Protection and Family Support or the WA Police. (Policy Subsection 5.2.)

This requirement applies whether or not the alleged abuse is related to SWOC activities.

Unless the disclosure relates to a parent of the child making the disclosure, the Child Protection Officer must advise the parents of the child.

#### Report of suspected abuse related to SWOC activities

If:

- an **adult** reports suspected child abuse that is related to SWOC activities; or
- a **child** reports suspected abuse of **another child** that is related to SWOC activities

the Child Protection Officer must assess whether there are reasonable grounds for the report without reference to the alleged abuser.

Unless it can be determined that reasonable grounds do not exist, the Child Protection Officer must report the incident to Department of Communities Child Protection and Family Support or the WA Police (Policy Subsection 5.2).

If a **child** reports suspected abuse of **another child**, the Child Protection Officer must advise the parents of both the affected child and the child making the report, except that the Child Protection Officer shall not advise parents if one of them is suspected of being the abuser.

### Report of suspected abuse not related to SWOC activities

If an **adult** reports suspected child abuse that is not related to SWOC activities, the person should be encouraged to report the matter directly to authorities (Policy Subsection 5.2). If the person declines to do so, the Child Protection Officer will need to consider whether there are sufficient grounds for SWOC to take action on the matter.

If a **child** reports suspected abuse of **another child**, not related to SWOC activities, the Child Protection Officer should discuss the report with the parents of the child making the report and decide what action should be taken.

#### 5.3.4 Recording Action Taken

Actions taken by SWOC and the reasons for them, including any decision not to refer a matter to the authorities, must be recorded on the *Report of Alleged Child Abuse Form*. (Appendix C).

#### 5.3.5 Confidentiality

Allegations of child abuse should be treated as confidential while they are processed and only those people who need to know should be told.

However, the Child Protection Officer should inform and consult with the President and other office holders as appropriate, but not with any person who is the subject of allegations.

## 5.4 Responding to a child disclosing abuse

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If a child makes a disclosure of abuse we should follow the Department of Communities guidelines<sup>3</sup> in the box below.

### **RESPONDING TO A CHILD DISCLOSING ABUSE**

*When a child or young person tells you that he or she is being abused or neglected, the most important things you can do are:*

- *believe the child;*
- *reassure the child that telling you was the right thing to do;*
- *maintain a calm appearance;*
- *find a quiet place to talk with the child;*
- *be truthful;*
- *listen to the child and let them take their time;*
- *let the child use their own words to tell you what happened;*
- *let the child know what you will do next;*
- *do not confront the person alleged to be the abuser;*
- *call the Department's district office nearest to where the child lives;*

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<sup>3</sup> These guidelines are from the Department of Communities website:  
[www.dcp.wa.gov.au/ChildProtection/Pages/ChildDisclosingAbuse.aspx](http://www.dcp.wa.gov.au/ChildProtection/Pages/ChildDisclosingAbuse.aspx) .

***RESPONDING TO A CHILD DISCLOSING ABUSE (Cont.)***

- *be respectful of the sensitive nature of the information and only discuss the child's situation with professionals who are dealing with the matter;*
- *if possible, write down what the child has said.*

## 6 Protective behaviours for children

### 6.1 What are protective behaviours?

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Children are less likely to be victims of abuse if they understand the following protective behaviours<sup>4</sup> in the box below as taught by Protective Behaviours WA Inc.

*In order to work towards preventing children becoming victims of abuse, particularly sexual abuse, it is important to educate children on their rights to personal safety and the way we do this is by teaching children the following:*

- 1) Theme One “We all have the right to feel safe at all times” and feelings.**
- 2) *Early Warning Signs (the physical sensations we experience in our body when feeling unsafe or excited.)*
- 3) *Safety continuum (safe/fun to feel scared/risking on purpose/unsafe) and Problem Solving (How could someone feel safe even if...?)*
- 4) **Theme Two “We can talk with someone about anything, no matter what it is” and safe secrets/ unsafe secrets**
- 5) *Networks (Identifying adults that we can talk with and ask for help if we feel unsafe/scared/worried.)*
- 6) *Persistence expectation (Persisting in asking for help until you feel safe again.)*
- 7) *Body Awareness and Ownership and Private and Public parts of the body (including teaching and using the correct anatomical names for private parts of the body) Private and Public clothing/Private and Public places/Private and Public Behaviours/ Private and Public Information.*
- 8) *Personal space (social distance) and safe and unsafe touch*
- 9) *Assertiveness (body language/ tone of voice/ NO GO TELL)*
- 10) *Theme and Program Reinforcement*

Protective Behaviours WA Inc. is an organisation that teaches protective behaviours to school children and provides resource material for parents and teachers.

### 6.2 Our responsibilities

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While it is not the role of SWOC to teach protective behaviours, we should be aware of what they are and act in ways that are consistent with, and supportive of, them.

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<sup>4</sup> The protective behaviours are from Protective Behaviours WA Inc.:  
[www.protectivebehaviourswa.org.au/what-we-teach](http://www.protectivebehaviourswa.org.au/what-we-teach) .

## 7 Other administrative arrangements

### 7.1 Child Protection Policy

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#### 7.1.1 Requirement for the Policy

SWOC's by-laws require that there is a Child Protection Policy for children who take part in its activities.

#### 7.1.2 Requirement for a Child Protection Officer

SWOC's by-laws require the committee of SWOC to appoint a Child Protection Officer to:

- manage the implementation of SWOC's Child Protection Policy;
- maintain records related to the Policy; and
- undertake such other matters relating to the Policy as the committee may direct.

#### 7.1.3 Qualifications for the Child Protection Officer

The Child Protection Officer must have a current WWC Card or must obtain one on appointment.

The Child Protection Officer must become familiar with the WWC Act and Regulations and, in particular:

- Sections 1-4, 6, 7, 9, 14, 22, 23, 24 and 25 of the WWC Act; and
- Regulations 3, 4, and Schedule 1 of the Regulations.

The Child Protection Officer should become familiar with the website:

<https://workingwithchildren.wa.gov.au> .

#### 7.1.4 Child Protection Policy Documents

The policy shall be available in two versions:

- this document, the *Child Protection Policy (Full Policy Document)*, which sets out the entire Policy; and
- the *Child Protection Policy Summary* which sets out the key requirements of the Policy for people taking part in SWOC activities.

#### 7.1.5 Making the Policy available

The *Child Protection Policy (Full Policy Document)* and the *Child Protection Policy Summary* document shall be downloadable from the SWOC website.

Everyone involved in SWOC activities should receive a paper copy of the *Policy Summary*, and a paper copy should be issued with membership application forms.

### 7.2 Consent to the *Child Protection Policy Summary*

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#### 7.2.1 Required consent

We must obtain signed consent to abide by the *Child Protection Policy Summary* from:

## South West Opera Company (Inc)

- all adult membership applicants and the parents of child applicants;
- all existing adult members of SWOC, and parents of existing junior members of SWOC; and
- all adult non-members, paid or unpaid, engaged in SWOC activities that involve children.

We must also obtain signed consent from the parents of child applicants and existing junior members for SWOC:

- to act in place of the parent; and
- to use images of children.

### 7.2.2 Methods of obtaining consent

#### Applicants for membership

Membership applications forms incorporate the necessary consent declarations and consent is given when a form is signed.

Signed forms must be filed in the Membership file.

#### Existing members

Because membership forms prior to the adoption of this Policy did not contain the necessary consent declarations, existing adult members, and parents of existing junior members, must sign the *SWOC Consent Form*.

Signed consent forms should be filed in the Membership file with associated member information.

#### Non-members

Adult non-members must sign the *SWOC Consent Form*.

If an Event Manager uses non-members for a single event, the Event Manager must:

- list the non-members and keep the list up-to-date;
- give a copy of the list and all amendments to the Child Protection Officer;
- obtain signed consent to the *Child Protection Policy Summary* from everyone on the list for whom we do not have consent on file;
- give a copy of the signed consent forms to the Child Protection Officer.

The Child Protection Officer is responsible for advising the Event Manager who on the list needs to submit signed consent forms.

The signed consent forms from non-members must be filed in the Child Protection file.

### 7.2.3 Failure to provide consent

Unless the committee decides otherwise, applicants will not be accepted as members if they, or the parents of child applicants, do not provide consent.

An adult, whose consent is not on file, **MUST NOT** take part in any SWOC activity that involves children.



### **7.3 Awareness of the *Full Policy* document**

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Office holders, ordinary committee members, event managers and persons running the main chorus, the Musical Theatre Group and SWOClets must become familiar with the requirements of the *Child Protection Policy (Full Policy Document)*.

### **7.4 Review of Child Protection Policy**

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The committee and the Child Protection Officer must review and, if necessary, update the Policy every two years and when:

- there is a change to SWOC's organisation that affects the Policy;
- there is a legislative change that affects the Policy;
- the committee considers a review is warranted.

### **7.5 Recruitment**

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In recruiting people to roles that involve child related employment, we must:

- point out our commitment to child protection;
- explain that a Working with Children Check is required;
- explain that consent to the *Child Protection Policy Summary* is required;
- explain that persons occupying roles listed in Policy Subsection 7.3 are required to be familiar with the requirements of the *Child Protection Policy (Full Policy Document)*.

We should also seek the advice of two referees if we are proposing to appoint an unfamiliar person to a significant long-term position.

### **7.6 SWOC child protection records**

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#### **7.6.1 Departmental requirements**

SWOC must comply with Departmental requirements for keeping and managing child protection records. See:

<https://workingwithchildren.wa.gov.au/employers-organisations/managing-wwc-checks/record-keeping>

#### **7.6.2 SWOC child protection records**

The Child Protection Officer holds:

- a paper file for containing copies of WWC Cards and other paper records including records of consent by non-members as required by this Policy; and

## South West Opera Company (Inc)

- An Excel spreadsheet *SWOC WWC RecordMaster.xlsx*<sup>5</sup> which records the working with children status of all people who are employed by SWOC in child-related work. It contains instructions on how to use it.

Files must be kept up-to-date and are confidential.

The file *SWOC WWC RecordMaster.xlsx* is the master file to be updated as things change.

For record purposes, save a copy of the master file at intervals with the naming convention *SWOC WWC Recordyyyyymmdd.xlsx*, where *yyyyymmdd* = year, month, day: eg 20180728. (This ensures that electronic copies of the file list in date order). Print a copy and place it on the paper file. The date of printing will automatically show in the footer.

### 7.6.3 Membership records

The Secretary, or a person authorised by the committee to deal with membership matters, holds:

- a paper file containing membership records
- an Excel spreadsheet *SWOCmemregMaster.xlsx* which contains key membership data in *Membership Record* worksheet.

The membership record:

- provides information on which adult members and parents of junior members have WWC Cards; and
- contains records of consent by adult members and parents of junior members as required by this Policy.

Note that the membership record is for information only. We must comply with the procedures in Policy Subsection 2.6.3 *Validating Working with Children Cards* before using a person with an existing WWC Card.

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<sup>5</sup> *SWOC WWC RecordMaster.xlsx* is a slightly modified version of the *Record Keeping Sheet* downloaded from Department of Communities website: [www.workingwithchildren.wa.gov.au](http://www.workingwithchildren.wa.gov.au).

Appendix A

**Guidance for supervision**

## Appendix A – Guidance for Supervision

### Achieving effective supervision

For effective supervision, both supervisors and children need to understand what is expected of them. Some considerations are listed below. Others may be necessary depending on the event or venue.

#### Supervisors need to:

- take charge of children and look after their well-being when they are not with their parents, and especially at times when the children are “off stage” in rehearsals and performances;
- know how many children they are supervising, who they are, and monitor their movements;
- monitor the behaviour of the children and ensure acceptable standards are observed;
- monitor compliance with the *Codes of Conduct* in this Policy and intervene if necessary; and
- know others who are WWC compliant and be willing to ask for assistance if needed.

#### Children need to be informed:

- who is supervising them, what is expected of them and what permissions are required;
- where they are to stay, and where they cannot go without permission; and
- who to speak to for information or about any concerns.

### Some strategies for supervision

The following strategies may be useful in planning supervision.

- Where a venue is unfamiliar, the Event Manager and Child Protection Officer may need to carry out a preliminary visit to assess safety issues and the level of supervision that will be necessary.
- Consider the number of supervisors that will be required. This may depend on the nature of the venue, the distribution of the children, the number of rehearsals/performances and the availability of WWC compliant people.
- The need for supervision can be minimised by having children remain with their parents as much as possible.
- Ideally, at outdoor venues, the places designated for children should be away from areas accessible to the general public.
- For outdoor venues and places where there is public access, children should not be allowed to go to toilets unaccompanied. A strategy to mitigate this is to have “toilet time” where all the children are taken to the toilet together.
- At outdoor venues, or venues where children may wander, it is useful to have two supervisors, preferably one of each gender. Ideally, supervisors should remain in sight of each other.
- If a lot of waiting time is involved, parents can be encouraged to provide board games or other suitable amusements to occupy their children during spare time.

Appendix B

Information poster from Department of Communities

The poster in Appendix B is from the Department of Communities, Child Protection and Family Support website:

[www.dcp.wa.gov.au/ChildProtection/ChildAbuseAndNeglect/Pages/Childabuseandneglect.aspx](http://www.dcp.wa.gov.au/ChildProtection/ChildAbuseAndNeglect/Pages/Childabuseandneglect.aspx).

The website also includes other useful information and resources.

# WHAT TO DO... when you are concerned that a child is being abused or neglected



## PROTECTING CHILDREN IS EVERYONE'S BUSINESS

Children and young people rely on responsible adults to help them be safe.

- Focus on the best interests of the child or young person.
- Listen carefully to what they say.
- Write down the information.

If your agency has child protection guidelines, refer to them.

Ask yourself:

- Is the child behaving or saying things which suggests abuse or neglect?
- Does new information increase your concern about the child?
- Do you continue to worry after the child visits your service?
- Do you need to 'do something' to help the child?

## ABUSE AND NEGLECT

**Physical abuse** - being severely hurt or injured - excessive physical punishment, beating, shaking babies, giving alcohol and drugs, strangling, scalding/burning, punching, leaving a child alone in a car.

**Sexual abuse** - being touched or involved in sexual activities not appropriate to the child's age and development - sexual penetration, inappropriate touching, seeing sexual acts or pornographic materials.

**Emotional abuse** - being repeatedly treated in ways that damages a child's ability to feel and express a range of emotions - verbal abuse, rejection, threatening, bullying and teasing.

**Psychological abuse** - being repeatedly treated in ways that damages the child's self esteem, personal and moral development and intelligence - belittling, causing the child to feel worthless, unloved, dumb and having no self value.

**Neglect** - not providing enough care or supervision so that the child is injured or their development is damaged - lack of food, shelter or affection, no one providing supervision, untreated medical problems, abandonment.

## WHAT TO DO WHEN...

You are worried but there is nothing specific to report:

- Try to stay in touch with the family.
- Talk about services which can help families.
- Encourage their involvement in parenting activities.
- Link them with community groups from similar cultural or religious backgrounds.
- Link the family with day care or play activities.
- Talk with someone experienced in supporting families or in child protection (a colleague, or worker in another agency).

You can describe the abuse or neglect, or the risk.

Contact:

- the Department for Child Protection;
- after hours Crisis Care; or
- the Police if concerned about the child's immediate safety or where criminal acts have occurred.

A child tells you he or she has been abused:

- Believe them.
- Let the child know that:
  - Δ It's not their fault.
  - Δ Telling you is the right thing to do.
  - Δ You will need to tell the authorities to stop the abuse.
- Let them use their own words. You may need to ask open questions (what? when? who? etc) to work out if they need immediate protection by the authorities. Avoid asking questions that may lead or influence their response or that provide you with more details than you need.
- Contact the Department for Child Protection.
- Only discuss the child's situation with people dealing with this matter.



## REFERRING TO THE DEPARTMENT FOR CHILD PROTECTION

An officer will discuss your concerns and ask about:

- The child's details.
- Why you believe the child has been abused or neglected, or is at risk.
- The child's immediate risk.
- The person suspected of causing the harm.
- Your ongoing contact with the child.

The Department will make decisions about the kind of action that needs to be taken.

There is  
**LEGAL PROTECTION**  
for people who provide information to the  
**Department for Child Protection**  
'in good faith'.

## CONTACTS AND RESOURCES

**Department for Child Protection**

Contact the district office closest to where the child lives.  
See the White Pages or [www.childprotection.wa.gov.au](http://www.childprotection.wa.gov.au).

**Crisis Care - 24 hour telephone service**  
(08) 9223 1111 or free call 1800 199 008

**Family Helpline**  
(08) 9223 1100 or free call 1800 643 000

**Western Australia Police**  
131 444 or 000 (emergencies only)

**Parenting Line**  
(08) 6279 1200 or free call 1800 654 432

**Kids Helpline**  
1800 55 1800

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## Appendix C

### Forms

Incident Report Form

Report of Alleged Child Abuse Form

List of Event Positions



### INCIDENT REPORT FORM

Use this form to record the following incidents:

- we withdraw a child from an activity because of illness, misadventure, or misbehaviour;
- we provide first aid or arrange for medical treatment for a child;
- we receive a report that an adult is not complying with the *Code of Conduct for Adults*;
- a person reports acting contrary to the *Code of Conduct for Adults* because of an emergency, or because a child is distressed or in imminent danger; and
- other child-related matters which we think should be recorded (except child abuse).

Give a signed copy of this report to the Child Protection Officer or a SWOC office holder (President, Vice-president, Secretary or Treasurer).

Concerns or allegations of child abuse shall be reported on the *Report of Alleged Child Abuse Form*.

-----  
**INCIDENT REPORT**

Names of children directly affected by the incident (if any):

\_\_\_\_\_

Date of incident: \_\_\_\_\_

Nature of the incident:

Action taken in response to the incident (by SWOC or others) prior to completing this form:

Have parents of affected children been informed of the incident?    Yes   No   Not applicable

By whom? \_\_\_\_\_

When? \_\_\_\_\_

Name of person reporting the incident: \_\_\_\_\_

Signature: \_\_\_\_\_

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

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**ACTION BY SWOC FOLLOWING RECEIPT OF REPORT**

Name: \_\_\_\_\_ Signature: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_





**REPORT OF ALLEGED CHILD ABUSE FORM**

This Form is to be completed by the person who hears a disclosure of child abuse or wishes to report suspected child abuse. The completed form should be given only to the SWOC Child Protection Officer who should keep in a secure place. The information will be used for reporting to the Department of Communities or, in emergencies, the WA Police. There is LEGAL PROTECTION for people who provide information "in good faith".

**DETAILS ALLEGED ABUSE**

Name and contact number of reporter:

Nature of alleged abuse: physical sexual emotional psychological neglect

Is the occurrence of the alleged abuse related to SWOC activities? Yes No

Is this a report of direct disclosure by a child of abuse to him or herself? Yes No

Disclosure: Date: \_\_\_\_\_ Time: \_\_\_\_\_

What did the child say? (Report the child's actual words if possible and any other relevant information. Use the back of the form if needed or add pages.)

Is this a report of suspected child abuse (but not a direct disclosure)? Yes No

Is the report from an adult? Yes No Is the report from a child? Yes No

Describe why you have reasonable grounds for this report (on the back of this form, or add pages). Include when and how you became aware of the information, names of other witnesses, description of any injuries, description of the behaviour of the child and other relevant information.

**DETAILS OF THE ALLEGED ABUSE VICTIM**

Name: \_\_\_\_\_ Age: \_\_\_\_\_ Male Female

Address: \_\_\_\_\_

Phone: \_\_\_\_\_ Parent/Guardian \_\_\_\_\_

State any immediate safety concerns: \_\_\_\_\_

**DETAILS OF ALLEGED PERPETRATOR OF THE ABUSE (IF KNOWN)**

Name: \_\_\_\_\_ Age: \_\_\_\_\_ Male Female

Address: \_\_\_\_\_ Phone: \_\_\_\_\_

Does the alleged perpetrator know about the report? Yes No

If yes, who spoke to him/her? \_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_

What were they told? \_\_\_\_\_

**REPORTER'S SIGNATURE**

Date \_\_\_\_\_

**SWOC'S RESPONSE TO THE REPORT**

Does SWOC consider there are reasonable grounds for the report? Yes No

If not, why not? \_\_\_\_\_

Have the parents/guardians of the victim been notified? Yes No

If yes, person(s) spoken to: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

What were they told, or why were they not told?

Have the parents/guardians of a child reporting abuse to another been told Yes No

If not, why not? \_\_\_\_\_

Has the Department of Communities been notified? Yes No

By whom? \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Name of Department of Communities contact: \_\_\_\_\_

Reference number: \_\_\_\_\_

Have the WA Police been notified? Yes No

By whom? \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Name of officer and station: \_\_\_\_\_

Advice given by police officer \_\_\_\_\_

If SWOC has not notified Department of Communities or the WA Police, state why.

Comments (if any).

Signed for SWOC: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

