

## Professional Boundaries Policy

### 1. Purpose

The purpose of this policy is to ensure that all staff, volunteers, contractors and board members maintain clear and appropriate professional boundaries when working with children and young people.

Maintaining professional boundaries helps create safe, respectful and supportive environments where children can participate in programs free from harm, exploitation or inappropriate relationships.

This policy supports our commitment to child safety and complies with the National Principles for Child Safe Organisations and relevant state child protection legislation.

### 2. Scope

This policy applies to:

- Employees
- Volunteers
- Contractors and consultants
- Artists, presenters and facilitators engaged by the organisation
- Board members
- Anyone representing the organisation or participating in its programs

The policy applies whenever individuals are acting in their capacity with the organisation, including:

- Events and programs
- School visits
- Workshops and festivals
- Online interactions
- Travel or off-site activities

### 3. Definition of Professional Boundaries

Professional boundaries are the limits that protect the space between adults working with children and the children themselves.

These boundaries ensure relationships remain appropriate, respectful and focused on the child's wellbeing and learning.

#### Somerset Storyfest

Somerset Drive, Mudgeeraba, Queensland 4213  
Telephone 07 5559 7377 email [events@storyfest.com.au](mailto:events@storyfest.com.au)  
[storyfest.com.au](http://storyfest.com.au)

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## 4. Expected Behaviour

All representatives of the organisation must:

- Treat children with dignity, respect and fairness
- Act as positive role models
- Maintain clear professional relationships with children
- Follow organisational policies and procedures
- Work in open and observable environments where possible
- Ensure interactions are appropriate to the child's age and development
- Use appropriate language at all times
- Respect cultural differences and diversity
- Ensure communication with children is transparent and accountable

## 5. Maintaining Appropriate Boundaries

Appropriate professional boundaries include:

### Physical contact

Physical contact with children should:

- Be appropriate to the situation
- Be non-intrusive and non-sexual
- Occur only when necessary
- Be in response to the child's needs

Examples of acceptable contact may include:

- Guiding a child in an activity
- Handshakes or high-fives
- Assisting a child if they are injured

Physical contact must never be secretive or isolating.

### Communication

Communication with children must:

- Be respectful and professional
- Relate to program or organisational activities
- Occur through approved channels when possible

Individuals must not:

- Communicate privately with children through personal social media
- Exchange personal contact details with children

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- Send private messages unrelated to organisational activities

## **One-on-one situations**

Staff and volunteers should avoid being alone with a child where possible.

If unavoidable:

- The interaction should occur in an open, visible environment
- Another adult should be within sight or aware
- Doors should remain open where possible

## **Favouritism and special relationships**

Staff and volunteers must not:

- Show favouritism toward individual children
- Form relationships with children that could be interpreted as personal or exclusive
- Give gifts to individual children without organisational approval
- Spend time with children outside authorised organisational activities

## **Transporting children**

Individuals must not transport children in private vehicles unless:

- It is part of an authorised program
- Written permission has been obtained
- Another adult is present where possible

## **Photography and digital media**

Photographs or recordings of children must only be taken:

- With appropriate consent
- For approved organisational purposes
- Using approved devices

Images must not be shared on personal social media.

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## 6. Unacceptable Behaviour

The following behaviours are strictly prohibited:

- Grooming behaviour
- Sexualised language or jokes
- Inappropriate physical contact
- Private meetings with children outside organisational activities
- Online communication with children through personal accounts
- Sharing personal information with children
- Encouraging secrecy
- Bullying, intimidation or humiliation
- Discriminatory behaviour

## 7. Recognising Boundary Breaches

Boundary breaches may occur when:

- Relationships become overly familiar
- A staff member spends excessive time with one child
- Communication becomes personal or secretive
- A child receives special treatment

Early recognition helps prevent harm.

## 8. Reporting Concerns

All staff and volunteers have a responsibility to report:

- Boundary concerns
- Inappropriate behaviour
- Suspected grooming
- Child safety concerns

Reports should be made immediately to:

- The Child Safety Officer or
- The CEO or designated safeguarding lead

Where required, concerns will be reported to relevant authorities. Reports will be treated seriously and confidentially.

## 9. Breaches of Policy

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Failure to comply with this policy may result in:

- Disciplinary action
- Termination of employment or volunteer role
- Removal from programs
- Reporting to authorities where required

## **10. Training and Awareness**

All staff, volunteers and contractors working with children must:

- Complete child safety training
- Read and acknowledge this policy
- Understand their obligations regarding professional boundaries

## **11. Policy Review**

This policy will be reviewed regularly to ensure it aligns with:

- Child Safe Standards
- Legislative requirements
- Best practice in child safeguarding

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