

RISK MANAGEMENT STRATEGY FOR CHILD PROTECTION



2011

SOUTH QUEENSLAND REGIONAL COMMITTEE OF
HIGHLAND DANCING INC

*Updated and endorsed at the General Meeting held at Arana Leagues
Club Brisbane – 3 March 2011*

South Queensland Regional Committee of Highland Dancing Inc (SQRCHDI)

Affiliated with the Australian Board of Highland Dancing

RISK MANAGEMENT STRATEGY FOR CHILD PROTECTION - 2011

STATEMENT OF INTENT

As a professional organisation SQRCHDI believes it is part of a wider community of care. While working with children and young people to develop their skills and appreciation of Highland Dancing in a positive supportive environment, SQRCHDI is committed to their safety and well being.

SQRCHDI will treat them with respect and understanding at all times.

In order to ensure children and young people are kept safe from harm ** (refer Appendix 1) SQRCHDI **will**:

- Supervise the children at all times during any workshops, concerts, competitions and displays where SQRCHDI is the Principal Organiser.
- Take all reasonable steps to ensure any member of SQRCHDI with whom a child may come in contact is aware of the Legislation relating to child abuse and child protection.
- Take all reasonable steps to ensure that no visitors or outsiders have contact with the children at any event it conducts.
- Only allow the child to go home with a nominated person for whom permission has been given.
- Notify the Department of Child Safety any member suspects or is told that a child is being harmed at home.
- Notify the police if it suspects or is informed that a child is being harmed outside the home.
- Notify the Department of Child Safety if any member becomes concerned at (a) significant changes in the behaviour of a child or young person, or the presence of new unexplained and suspicious injuries; or (b) sees the harm happening.
- Insist all affiliated members are in possession of current Blue Cards (or provide explanation as to why they have exemption to same).
- Require all active Affiliated Teachers and Organisations to provide evidence of their Risk Management Strategies (or approved exemptions) no later than 31 August in each calendar year.
- Request that Organisers provide a copy of all those rostered to work at SQRCHDI championships and competitions.
- Maintain a master list of Blue Card Holders and make it available on request to Organisers
- Adhere, where applicable to the ABHDI Member Protection Policy passed in its Meetings 151 dated 4/5 October 2008. This includes the appointment of a Member Protection Officer within its Executive. Such Officer is deemed by SQRCHDI to be the Volunteer Blue Card Co-ordinator.

Code of Conduct as a Competition organiser, Workshop and Event Provider

Principles: SQRCHDI will demonstrate:

- Fostering of mutual respect between our members, children and young people
- An understanding of children and young people, their ages, stages of development, special circumstances and special needs
- Use of language which is age/stage appropriate, clear, non- bullying, non-sexual, and non harassing
- Use of physical contact only in the circumstance where it is necessary to assist learning or ensure the safety and wellbeing of the child and only after the reason is explained and the permission of the child and parent has been given.
- A willingness to listen to a child's or young person's concerns/issues
- Openness to suggestions, feedback and complaints from parents, children and young people.

Dancers must demonstrate:

- A willingness to learn
- A willingness to listen and receive instructions
- Respect for others.
- A willingness to adhere to procedures designed to keep them safe.
- Responsibility for appropriate behaviour and reporting inappropriate behaviour and unsafe situations or harm.

In order to make the activities conducted by SQRCHDI a positive experience for our Dancers, Parents should:

- Stay to observe activities where possible (other than workshops where proper and adequate supervision will be provided by the Committee)
- Raise any issues or concerns with Regional Executive members (list of the 2009 SQRCHDI Executive attached).
- Drop off and collect child/ren in a timely fashion.
- Give positive and negative feedback on policies and procedures, mindful some of these policies and procedures have been put in place by the Scottish Official Board of Highland Dancing and/or the Australian Board of Highland Dancing
- Have any personal information treated confidentially and in accordance with current privacy legislation.

In order to make the most of the time Dancers are involved in workshops, highland dancing competitions, concerts or displays where SQRCHDI is the principal Organiser, the Committee has the right to:

- Cease to allow the child/young person to participate if they are non-compliant or obstructive.
- raise concerns with child/young person and/or parent.
- expect the child/young person/parent makes their concerns known as soon as they arise so that prompt resolution may occur.

Children and young people who attend workshops, highland dancing competitions, concerts or displays have the right to:

- feel safe
- be listened to
- be involved in decisions that affect them
- have their cultural values respected
- have their best interests considered
- ask if they don't understand
- be respected
- be understood
- be safe and free from harassment, bullying or abuse of any kind

Parents and caregivers have the right to :-

- Make complaints to SQRCHDI **as per attached procedures (See appendix 1)**
- Stay and observe activities unless there is an issue for the child if the parent is present and provided their presence is in accordance with current Regional Policy.(viz parents are encouraged to remain for all activities other than Workshops conducted by SQRCHDI.)

**CURRENT COMPLIANCE STATEMENT OF THE SOUTH QUEENSLAND REGIONAL
COMMITTEE OF HIGHLAND DANCING**

- ✓ SQRCHDI acknowledges that child abuse affects the whole community, not just the child and family involved.
- ✓ SQRCHDI acknowledges that child abuse is anything which individuals, institutions or processes do (or fail to do) which directly or indirectly harms children in the 'here and now' and /or damages their prospects of safe and healthy development into adulthood.
- ✓ SQRCHDI acknowledges that stopping child abuse starts with our Committee. Everyone associated with SQRCHDI and it's activities: - parents and caregivers, professionals, family and friends, are needed to protect children and young people.
- ✓ SQRCHDI states that it has made affiliated Teachers and Member Organisations aware of their responsibility to establish a written Risk Management strategy under the provisions of the ***Subordinate Legislation 2006 No 102 made under the Commission for children and Young People and Child Guardian Act (effective 1 January 2007)***. Members have been further advised that this strategy must be dated and reviewed annually to be considered compliant (See Appendix 4).
- ✓ SQRCHDI attaches :-
 - (a) Procedures for handling suspicions or disclosures of harm (including courses of action for currently identified risks; ***hereby*** to be known as Appendix 1
 - (b) Contact numbers for relevant action ***hereby*** to be known as Appendix 2
 - (c) Contact numbers of the 2011 SQRCHDI Executive ***hereby*** to be known as Appendix 3
 - (d) Copy of 2011 Technical and SQRCHDI Regional Committee Minutes substantiating advice to members of their requirement to comply under the subordinate legislation (Appendix 4 ***hereby*** to be tendered as evidence of compliance under the Act)
- ✓ Members of the SQRCHDI Executive have personally attended training provided by the Commission for Children and Young People and Child Guardian on developing the Risk Management Strategy for Child Protection as contained in the ***Subordinate Legislation 2006 No 102 made under the Commission for children and Young People and Child Guardian Act (effective 1 January 2007)***
Certificates of attendance are available on request.
- ✓ A current register of Blue Card Holders within SQRCHDI is available as required by the Commission.

If you have any concerns regarding the Risk Management Strategy of the South Queensland Regional Committee of Highland Dancing for Child Protection contact the Committee Secretary Mrs Ellen Sommerville on (07) 3851 0890 – mobile 0438 510 890), or via Email communication <sqrsecretary@bigpond.com

Margaret Cherine Johnston
(President)

Signatory to adopted strategy

3 March 2011

APPENDIX 1

Procedures SQRCHDI will adhere to for handling suspicions or disclosures of harm

What is *harm* – (Section 9– Queensland Child Protection Act 1999)

- (1) **Harm**, to a child, is any detrimental effect of a significant nature on the child's physical, psychological or emotional wellbeing.
- (2) It is immaterial how the harm is caused.
- (3) Harm can be caused by—
 - (a) physical, psychological or emotional abuse or neglect;
 - or
 - (b) sexual abuse or exploitation.

Disclosures of harm

When confronted with disclosures of harm to children and young people members of SQRCHDI are to respond professionally and in the best interests of the child or young person subjected to the alleged harm.

Any disclosure or suspicion of harm must be acted on.

SQRCHDI has 'reasonable grounds' to suspect harm if:-

- 1 A child or young person tells us they have been harmed;
- 2 Someone else, for example another child, a parent, or a staff member, tells us that harm has occurred or is likely to occur;
- 3 A child or young person tells us they know someone who has been harmed (it is possible that they may be referring to themselves);
- 4 We are concerned at significant changes in the behaviour of a child or young person, or the presence of new unexplained and suspicious injuries; or
- 5 We see the harm happening.

Disclosures of harm may sound like:

- 1 "I think I saw ..."
- 2 "Somebody told me that ..."
- 3 "Just think you should know ..."
- 4 "I'm not sure what I want you to do, but ..."

Any disclosure of harm is important and must be acted upon, regardless of whether:

- 1 the harm to a child or young person has been caused by a person from within or outside SQRCHDI or
 - 2 the child or young person disclosing the harm to us is from within or outside SQRCHDI.
- ✓ Irrespective of the source of the harm, ie. internal or external, a disclosure may be made to SQRCHDI.

What to do when a disclosure is made.

Stage one – receiving a disclosure

There is no one set of rules to follow when a child or young person tells us that harm has occurred to them, or another person discloses an incident of harm to a child or young person. However the following actions are deemed to be of assistance:-

We will not panic

We may be the first person to whom the disclosure is made. Our reaction may determine whether the person making the disclosure trusts us with the information. It is important we:

- 1 don't react in a shocked or critical way; and
- 2 tell the person we are glad they have told us.

We will find a private place to talk

Privacy may help the person making the disclosure feel more comfortable and less concerned about telling us what they have to say, especially if they are a child or young person.

We will listen

When presented with a disclosure of harm, we won't say, "We won't tell," and will not promise to keep secrets. However, we will:

- 1 reassure the person they have done the right thing in telling;
- 2 say they needed to tell someone else who can help them, and
- 3 reassure them we will only tell someone who will make them safe.

We will believe the person

It is not up to us to judge whether a child, young person or anyone else is telling the truth – we will always act on the basis that what we have been told is the truth. It is not up to us to decide if what we are being told did or did not happen.

We will not ask leading questions

Leading questions are those that tend to suggest an answer, for example:

- 1 "Did 'X' touch you?"
- 2 "Did they touch you where your underwear goes?"

We will not put words in the person's mouth

We will let you tell us what happened, and if we need to clarify anything, we will ask non-leading questions such as:

- 1 "Tell me what happened."
- 2 "What happened then?"
- 3 Can you tell us about that?"

It is not the role of SQRCHDI to investigate allegations of harm. We will only ask enough questions to confirm the need to report the matter to the Queensland Police Service or the Department of Child Safety. The safety of the child or young person is paramount to us. We understand that unnecessary questions or interviews could cause distress, confusion and interfere with any subsequent investigation authorities undertake.

We will take detailed notes

At the first opportunity after a disclosure has been made to us, we will make notes of what occurred. We will include information such as:

- 1 Dates;
- 2 Times;
- 3 Location; and
- 4 Who is present.

We will include a detailed description of:

- 1 Exactly what the person disclosing said, using 'I said,' 'they said,' statements;
 - 2 The questions that we asked;
 - 3 Any comments we made; and
 - 4 Your actions following the disclosure.
- ✓ If we are taking notes as the disclosure is occurring, we will explain why we are doing it and why it is important, ie. to ensure an accurate record for any subsequent investigation. If the disclosure is being made by a child or young person, we will remember to explain this to them in a way that is appropriate for their age and understanding.
 - ✓ Any reports or documentation on disclosures of harm will be kept confidential and secure with access strictly limited and on a 'need to know' basis.

Stage Two – reporting a disclosure

SQRCHDI understands that suspicions of harm which may involve an offence against a child or young person must always be taken seriously.

SQRCHDI's first responsibility is to report it either to the Queensland Police Service, or the Department of Child Safety, after confirming that it should. This will be done by the person to whom the disclosure was made, as they will have the best knowledge of what was said.

Under **no circumstances will** SQRCHDI members:-

- 1 Conduct their own investigation to substantiate claims;
- 2 Hold their own internal hearing or
- 3 Attempt to mediate a settlement of the matter instead of notifying relevant authorities.

This is because private investigations conducted could lead to:

- 1 The destruction of evidence by an accused person;
 - 2 Intimidation of the person disclosing the information; or
 - 3 Intimidation of the child or young person being harmed (if the disclosure was made by somebody else).
- ✓ The Queensland Police Service (QPS) – The QPS will investigate disclosures of suspected or substantiated harm to children or young people. This is usually done by officers of the Juvenile Aid Bureau or Child Abuse Unit.

If a disclosure is made to us, SQRCHDI will contact our closest Juvenile Aid Bureau or local police station and tell them we suspect, or have been told of, someone who has been harmed.

When contacting the police, we understand that they will want to know information such as:-

- 1 The details of any disclosure of harm;
 - 2 The name, age, and address of the child or young person harmed;
 - 3 Where the child or young person is at that point in time;
 - 4 Any identifying information regarding the alleged perpetrator of the harm; and
 - 5 Our details.
- ✓ The Department of Child Safety (DCS) -Where the disclosure indicates that harm may have been caused by a family member, or where parents are not acting to protect their child from harm, the incident must be reported to the (DCS) through our local service centre.

Disclosures of harm related to shared family care or residential services for children and young people must also be reported to the Department of Child Safety.

However, where the disclosure of harm indicates a criminal offence may have taken place, such a sexual assault of a child or young person, we understand that the matter should also be reported to the Queensland Police Service.

Stage Three – providing support

The table on the following page identifies possible courses of action for SQRCHDI, depending on where the alleged harm originated.

Source of Harm	Actions		
	Immediate	Short to Medium Term	Long Term
Staff (Judges Teachers Organisers Volunteers)	Contact the Queensland Police Service or the Department of Child Safety	Support all parties, including <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ The person making the disclosure ✓ The person receiving the disclosure ✓ The child or young person who has been harmed; and ✓ The alleged perpetrator. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Suspend the alleged perpetrator until the matter is resolved 	<p>If allegation is proven:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Terminate the employment ✓ Terminate the volunteer involvement <p>If the allegation is not proven:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Activate grievance procedures
Dancers	Contact the Queensland Police Service or the Department of Child Safety	<p>While the matter is being investigated by the Queensland Police Service or Department of Child Safety:-</p> <p>Support all parties, including</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ The person making the disclosure ✓ The person receiving the disclosure ✓ The child or young person who has been harmed; and ✓ The alleged perpetrator. <p>Determine whether the Dancer, as an alleged perpetrator is:-</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ allowed back on the premises ✓ allowed to participate in activities <p>allowed in areas where and young people are.</p>	<p>If allegation is proven:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Determine if the Dancers involvement is allowed to continue <p>If allegation is not proven:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Activate grievance procedures.
Members of the Public	Contact the Queensland Police Service or the Department of Child Safety	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Allow the Queensland Police Service or the Department of Child Safety to undertake an official investigation; ✓ Support the person who made the disclosure, the person who received the disclosure and the child or young person who has been harmed. 	

CURRENT REGISTER OF IDENTIFIED RISK AND CONTROL MEASURES – SQRCHDI

ACTIVITY	RISK	CAUSES	CONTROL	
			Current	Future
Provision of Billets	Inappropriate accommodation made available for young people	Lack of Education in Studios	None	Remind Studios via Regional Minutes that Billets provided must fall under the provisions Child Protection Act
Workshop (irrespective of location)	Children wandering off	Insufficient Supervision	Parents drop off and pick up children to venue. Children stay in venue until lesson is finished	Parents or approved delegated adult sign children in when they drop them off and sign children out when they pick them up. Requirements and Procedures to appear in all Workshop Notices
	Children are verbally or physically abused during workshop.	Teacher is unaware of code of conduct relevant to children. Guest Teachers not informed regarding “no touch without parental permission” policy Other children are not sufficiently supervised to prevent bullying other children.	None	Visiting teachers be given a copy of the Code of Conduct acceptable whilst conducting workshop and briefed regarding physical contact with children. A member in possession of a blue card is to be in the room at all times If non-compliant, the Teacher will be reported and escorted off the premises Children are to supervised by adequate numbers of adults during workshop, bearing in mind the containment of the area.
	Children are sexually abused or taken by strangers when at the venue.	Strangers wandering onto premises or lying in wait for the children in toilets or drink fountains.	Children are not to go anywhere unaccompanied whilst at workshops.	No further control required at this stage
SQ 2011 Championship & Competition	Children wandering off.	Insufficient supervision by parents or guardians. Insufficient control over entry/exit of children on their own or in groups.	A person sits at the entrance to the building where competition is being held.	Encourage parents/caregivers via frequent announcements and in the programme to closely supervise their children and know where they are and with who at all times.

SQ 2011 Championship & Competition	Children being photographed getting dressed or undressed. Children being photographed getting dressed or undressed	People wandering into dressing room. Unsupervised dressing rooms. Unrestricted use of cameras at competition.	Individual Male/Female dressing rooms provided (not supervised) Ruling in Competition schedule and announcemen ts that dancers must be modestly attired at all times	Roster a same sex volunteer to conduct random and regular checks of dressing room activity. Continue to reinforce required dress standard by announcements, education and personal approaches
SQ 2011 Championship & Competition	Children having a video or photo taken and posted onto a website.	Unrestricted use of videos and cameras.	Rule in Competition schedule and in the programme that video can only be taken of their own child/ren. Permission is obtained prior to posting photos of children on SQRCHDI website	Announcements that posting photos of children other than their own requires the permission of their parents
SQ 2011 Championship & Competition	Children being inappropriatel y spoken to or touched during competition.	Parents abusing children verbally or physically for mistakes made or poor results. Teachers verbally abusing children for mistakes or poor performances. Adults touching children inappropriately whilst sitting and watching competition or whilst assisting children to dress.	Observe behaviour	Code of Conduct on Pages ½ of this strategy to be inserted into the SQ Schedule
SQ 2011 Championship & Competition	Children abused or bullied by other competitors.	Competitiveness and poor supervision by parents, guardians or teachers.	None	On request, provide adequate supervision and training for teachers and volunteers at competitions in what to look for and how to deal appropriately with inappropriate behavior.

SQRCHDI Procedure for making complaints

- Contact a member of the current Executive:-
 - ✓ Either at beginning or end of workshop, dancing competition, concert or display or a time convenient to both parties when there is sufficient time to discuss issues
 - ✓ Not in the hearing of other parents or children

This will ensure the matter can be actioned as quickly as possible (See Appendix 3 for contact details)

APPENDIX 2

Contact numbers:-

1. Commission for Children and Young People and Child Guardian (CCYPCG) – www.ccypcg.qld.gov.au
 - a) Complaints and Investigations 1800 688 275
2. Department of Child Safety (DCS) – policies, procedures, guidelines – child protection, Youth Justice statutes, fact sheets, website www.communities.qld.gov.au or 1800 811 810
3. Queensland Police Service – www.police.qld.gov.au
4. Kids Help Line – 24 hour counselling service 1800 55 1800; www.kidshelp.com.au.

APPENDIX 3

NAMES AND CONTACT NUMBERS OF THE CURRENT EXECUTIVE of SQRCHDI – 2010-11

Name	Position	Contact
Margaret Johnston	President	07 – 33511667 (home) 07 – 3235 2954 (work) 0414815237 (Mobile) margj1.highland@bigpond.com
Amanda Skidmore	Vice-President	07 -32044681 amandask@bigpond.net.au
Ellen Sommerville	Secretary	(07) 3851 0890 0438 510 890 (mobile) sqrsecretary@bigpond.com
Janene Simpson	Assistant Secretary	07 3266 3035 haveajig@bigpond.com
Val Watt	Dancer Registrar	07 38627136 joyval@bigpond.com
Sarah Palfrey	Technical Secretary	07 32452819 0421035680 (mobile) sarahjadelouise@hotmail.com
Sandra Supranowicz	Treasurer	(07) 33960072 04142 699 800 (mobile) s.supranowicz@gmail.com
Lyndel Gollan-Gray	Competition Registrar <i>Member Protection Officer</i>	(07) 3886 0011 0409373480 (mobile) scotia@acenet.net.au