

About this document

This document is provided as a supplementary document to the Girl Guides Australia (GGA) Child Safe Child Friendly (CSCF) Policy. It supports the Procedures for Element 9 - Responding to Feedback, Concerns and Complaints. Your supervisor will be able to provide support if you need to respond to an allegation that you become aware of as an Adult in Guiding.

1. **Immediate consideration on receipt of a complaint - ensure child or young person is not currently at risk**

Immediately on receipt of a complaint:

- Assess whether any child or young person is at risk. If so, take the appropriate action to minimise the risk (refer to CSCF Procedure for Element 8: Reporting Abuse and Neglect).
- Assess whether any Member, Volunteer or Employee or any other person is at risk. If so, take the appropriate action to minimise the risk.

2. **Are reports required? - Action when child safety allegations are raised**

- 2.1 Child safety allegations can be that a person has abused, neglected, harmed, is posing, or have posed, a risk of harm to any child or young person i.e., it can be current, or have happened in the past. An initial consideration of the allegation(s) is made using any information already in existence e.g., the 'Tell us what you are worried about?' - Youth Members Form, the Girl Guide Incident Report, the Event Report submitted by the Leader-in-Charge (LIC) of any event or the Girl Guide Complaint Form.
- 2.2 Determine, on the basis of the information available, and without reference to the person who is the subject of the allegation, if a report needs to be made to the police and/or relevant statutory child protection agency.
- 2.3 It is important to remember that where allegations look like they involve child safety allegations under no circumstances should the person named in the allegation be contacted. Contact with the person may only be appropriate after police and child protection agencies have completed their investigation and processes. It may never be appropriate to contact them in some circumstances.
- 2.4 If child safety allegations are identified then:
- Assess whether a report to police and/or relevant statutory child protection agency is/are required. It is VERY likely that it will be required. You will need to either make a report or be satisfied that a report has been made. This must be done promptly. If time and circumstances allow, consult the relevant Commissioner and/or CEO to .

confirm whether they are aware of a report having been made and to seek support in making a report if it has not. See the Guidance Note - [Reporting Abuse and Neglect – Who needs to know?](#)

2.5 If child safety allegations are not raised, refer to the Guidance Note: Process for **MUST-REFER** Matters and Guidance Note: Process for **NON-REFER** Matters for next steps.

3. Reporting to police and/or statutory child protection agency

3.1 A quick guide can be found at Reporting Abuse and Neglect – Who needs to know?.

Always remember that where there is immediate danger to a child or any other person ring 000.

If there is no immediate danger and steps have been taken to secure the safety of the child in the short term, take the opportunity to discuss with your supervisor or seek other support should you require it. Remember it is GGA policy that even if your supervisor doesn't think you should tell the police and/or relevant statutory child protection agency, the decision and responsibility to do so is yours as the safety of children within Guiding is the responsibility of every Adult Member, Volunteer and Employee. All Adults in Guiding have an obligation to make reports as if they are a Mandated Reporter, even if their state or territory legislation does not designate them as a Mandated Reporter.

Be prepared to report:

- The 'Tell us what you are worried about?' Youth Member Form, the Girl Guide Incident Report and the Girl Guide Complaint Form are designed to capture the information the police and /or the relevant statutory child protection agency are likely to ask you. You will need to provide your details, the child's details (as far as you have access) and if possible, the details of other witnesses - do not delay reporting whilst searching for these details. If you have not had a chance to complete the GGA Incident Form from a verbal report made to you by a child, then gather the details as best as you can in the circumstances and complete the GGA Incident Form within 24 hours.
- Reports can be made to the local police station or on the police assistance line on **131444** – this operates in every state and territory in Australia.
- For details of who to report to in each state or territory refer to *Guide Lines: [Contact Details for Reporting Under CSCF](#)*.
- Provide the police and/or relevant child protection agency with a clear indication of your concerns about the harm or risk of harm to the child ('[Responding to abuse & neglect – How will I know?](#)' is a useful resource). The people answering the phone for the statutory child protection agency will have expertise in supporting people in making reports.
- A report to the police and/or relevant child protection agency should be made promptly and, in a timeframe, responsive to the situation – most often this will be as soon as you have formed the view that a child has been or is at risk of harm (abuse and/or neglect).
- If time permits you can seek the support of your supervisor or another senior person

within Guiding to make the report.

3.2 After you have made the report add the details of who you spoke to, and the actions they recommended in the Girl Guide Incident Report and as soon as you have made the report confirm with your supervisor. Where the conduct involves a Member, Volunteer (Casual or Ongoing) or Employee of GGIA, or if the incident occurred at a Guiding event, the facts of these reports must also be advised to the State office by lodging the relevant form by email to [incidentsandcomplaints@\[insert the details of the relevant SGGO\].org.au](mailto:incidentsandcomplaints@[insert the details of the relevant SGGO].org.au) and calling the CEO during office hours to follow up receipt of the form. There are important reasons why you must report these matters or this include:

- The State office has mechanisms in place to consider and take the appropriate action to the circumstances e.g., the person may be suspended from their leadership role while the police undertake an investigation.
- As the matter involves child safety it is handled at the State office level – see Guidance Note: Receiving Complaints Process
- A Reportable Conduct Scheme (RCS) applies to some of our SGGOs. For more information refer to the Guidance Note: Reportable Conduct Schemes. If the RCS applies, the relevant person within your SGGO must comply with RCS or significant penalties apply.

3.3 Check you have attended to the additional steps detailed in the procedures for Elements 8 and 9 of the CSCF Policy; this includes seeking support for yourself.