

**ROYAL LIFE  
SAVING CHILD  
SAFE HANDLING  
AND PHYSICAL  
CONTACT  
GUIDELINES**

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December 2020



**ROYAL LIFE SAVING**  
WESTERN AUSTRALIA

## 1. INTRODUCTION

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Children and young people are considered to be vulnerable because of their age. It is therefore essential that extra safeguards are in place to ensure they are protected.

## 2. PURPOSE

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The Child Safe Handling and Physical Contact Guidelines outline the requirements and appropriate standards of behaviour for contact and physical handling of a child or young person when carrying out duties and responsibilities for Royal Life Saving WA (RLSWA).

RLS implements a range of policies to ensure the safety of our people. These guidelines sit alongside other organisational and governance policies and provides a framework to better all our people (children, young people, our staff, volunteers and community).

## 3. RESPONSIBILITY

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These guidelines apply to the following groups of people at RLS, regardless of whether they are in a paid, unpaid or trainee position:

- Board members
- Executives and facility managers
- Program coordinators
- Swim school supervisors
- Course trainers
- Swim school instructors, coaches, and lifeguards
- Contractors
- Trainees
- Parents and guardians, or other accompanying family
- Spectators

RLS Senior Management will support the implementation and of the Child Safe Handling and Physical Contact Guidelines.

All RLS management will enable this Child Safe Handling and Physical Contact Guidelines (and associated policies, procedures and processes) to operate effectively through communication, practice and support.

All staff, contractors, volunteers and any other member of the RLS community involved in child related work are required to comply with the Child Safe Handling and Physical Contact Guidelines by complying with the standards, responsibilities and requirements provided in this document

## 4. HANDLING AND PHYSICAL CONTACT GUIDELINES

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### Consent

RLS informs parents and guardians of the methods of manual handling that will be applied to children and young people in programs and activities.

Staff must ensure that they obtain a child or young person's consent prior to engaging in physical contact. The staff member must ensure that the child understands what assistance is being provided, where the physical contact will occur and why it is necessary in relation to the specific skill being taught.

### Use of Toilets

- Parents should encourage their child to use the toilet prior to the commencement of their class or activity
- Staff members should not leave their class unattended to take a child to use the toilet
- Staff members must ensure that all students are accompanied by a parent or guardian if they leave the class to use the toilet
- If the student's parent or guardian is unavailable to accompany the child to the toilet, the staff member must inform their Activity Supervisor.

### Physical Contact

All staff members should:

- Avoid one-on-one situations with a child
- Only use physical contact when necessary
- Inform parents of the methods of manual support being used
- Respect the child's personal space and should adjust teaching methods according to the preference of the child.

Please note that in an emergency situation, it may be necessary for a staff member to grab a child quickly, with a proportionate use of manual handling, in order to ensure the child's safety.

### Appropriate Handling and Physical Contact

Physical contact is considered appropriate if it is necessary to promote a child's development of skills, to ensure the child's safety, and if it is performed with the consent of the child.

Guidelines on appropriate handling and physical contact include:

- Gentle handling when making stroke corrections or stroke manipulations
- Moving the child's body within a comfortable and suitable range of motion
- Keeping hands visible above the water's surface when using manual support
- Use of teaching aids to minimise use of unnecessary physical contact
- Use of non-intrusive touch to comfort a child or young person who is upset
- Use of non-intrusive touch to encourage a child to participate

### Inappropriate Handling and Physical Contact

Physical contact is considered inappropriate if the child has not provided prior consent, if it is not required to promote the development of a skill, if the contact occurs outside the class environment and if it poses risk of harm to the child.

Examples of inappropriate handling and physical contact include:

- Acts that are of a personal nature with the child, if the child is capable of doing so themselves for example, changing clothes and going to the bathroom
- Touching private areas such as the breasts, buttocks or genitals
- Hugging a child in a private setting, or when it is not wanted by the child
- Kissing a child
- Aggressive handling when using manual support or demonstrations
- Forcing a child into the water, under the water or preventing a child from coming up from under water
- Intrusive forms of discipline, for example smacking or hitting

## 5. CHANGE ROOM GUIDELINES

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RLS is committed to providing a safe environment for all children and families who visit RLS facilities.

RLS adopts the following guidelines in relation to the use of change rooms to ensure the safety of children and young people:

- Children over the age of 7 are not permitted in the change rooms of the opposite sex
- Children under the age of 7 must be supervised by a parent/guardian in the change room at all times
- If for any reason a staff member accompanies a child to the change room or toilet, ensure that they are supervised by another staff member
- Staff members should not undress when children or young persons are present in the change room. If there are children present, staff should use a private cubicle.
- Do not enter the change room of the opposite sex, under any circumstances
- Knock or announce yourself before entering change rooms or toilets to supervise
- Respect the privacy of children and young people when changing in the public area of the change room
- The use of mobile phones, cameras and video cameras are strictly prohibited in change room areas and showers
- Routine checks should be performed by Duty Managers or Supervisors to ensure all children are supervised.

## 6. GUIDELINES ON PHOTOGRAPHY AND VIDEO

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RLS recognises the safety and privacy issues related to the use of photography and video devices in an aquatic facility.

Staff and patrons must:

- Obtain informed consent through the Photo Permission Form from parents/guardians before taking photos and videos of children & young people.
- Avoid taking photos or videos of a child or young person where the individual can be identified. For example, try to take the photo or video from a side angle or from the back.
- Ensure photographs or videos taken do not include other children or young people (who have not provided consent), especially where the individual can be identified
- Seek consent from the child or young person and their parent/guardian prior to posting a photo or video on the online environment
- Ensure photography or video devices are not used in change rooms.

## 7. ONLINE ENVIRONMENT

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RLS recognises safety risks to children and young people in relation to the online environment.

RLS ensures that staff adhere to the Code of Conduct regarding interactions with parents/guardians and children in the online environment.

RLS staff will:

- Interact with the online environment in a manner which supports a positive and safe online culture for children and young people
- Share information online which contains appropriate language and content, suitable for children and young people
- Accept that RLS is not responsible for any comments, advice, opinions, statements or information posted by an RLS staff member.

RLS staff will not:

- Share information which contains inappropriate language or content which may cause harm to children or young people
- Share personal information, including photos of children or young people without the informed consent of children and their parents/guardians
- Tag a child or young person in a photo on social media platforms
- Publish any content which may embarrass or cause harm to a child or young person.

## 8. TERMS AND DEFINITIONS

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|-------------------|--|
| Child             | A child is a person under the age of 18 years.   |
| Child Abuse       | Acts or omissions (neglect) that result in, or have the likelihood to result in, harm to a child or young person.  |
| RLS Staff (staff) | Anyone who performs work, in any capacity, for RLS is considered a worker. This includes paid workers and unpaid workers such as volunteers, trainees or work experience students. |

## 9. RELEVANT LEGISLATION, POLICIES AND DOCUMENTS

### Policies and documents

- Royal Life Saving Child Safe Policy
- Royal Life Saving Child Safe Code of Conduct

### Relevant Legislation

- Working with Children (Criminal Record Checking) Act 2004

## 10. GUIDELINES STATUS AND REVIEW

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The contents of the document represent the current Child Safe Handling and Physical Contact Guidelines of RLS.

**Endorsed by:** Peter Leaversuch  
**Role:** Chief Executive Officer

### Modifications and review

These guidelines are due to be reviewed on annually (or earlier, where indicated as part of the Work Health and Safety review process). The Chief Executive Officer is responsible for the review of this policy.

### Document information

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|----------------|---|
| Document Ref   | CSGUIDE01   |
| Document Title | Royal Life Saving Child Safe Handling and Physical Contact Guidelines |
| Document Type  | Guidelines  |
| Document Owner | Royal Life Saving   |
| Version        | 1.0   |

## 11. CONTACTS

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The Member Protection Officers (MPO) are the nominated people who oversee child safe practices and address child safety concerns. The CSO's details are below.

| Name           | Contact Number | Email                              |
|----------------|----------------|------------------------------------|
| Trent Hotchkin | 08 9383 8200   | THotchkin@royallifesavingwa.com.au |



**ROYAL LIFE SAVING**  
WESTERN AUSTRALIA

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#### FOR MORE INFORMATION

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