Example: Child Safe Recruitment Policy and Procedure

This template should be amended and expanded upon as applicable to your organisation’s individual circumstances, taking into account mitigating factors (including but not limited to):

* size of organisation
* level of engagement with children (e.g. regularly employ child performers, regularly run education programs, occasionally hire out venue for school performances, occasionally have child audience members that may be unsupervised)
* type of engagement with children (e.g. performers, employees, work experience, education program participants, audience members)
* exposure to risks of harm in the organisation (e.g. transport of children)
* state legislative requirements (e.g. child employment, WH&S).

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| [Organisation name]Child Safe Recruitment Policy and Procedure  |

## Scope

This document outlines the policy and process for screening applicants and candidates being considered for a role with *[Organisation name]*.

These roles may include:

* employees (permanent and casual):
* leadership and management roles
* administration
* education instructors and youth workshop facilitators
* production and venue personnel (actors, stage management, chaperones, technical crew, ushers, etc.)
* volunteers
* contractors and sub-contractors
* tutors
* work experience students/interns/secondments
* any other individual in the organisation that may engage with children
* board members.

## Introduction

*[Organisation name]’s* position is that a skilled, knowledgeable and experienced workforce is vital to the protection of children. It recognises that children are at an increased risk of harm and that rigorous recruitment processes will minimise risks to child safety.

*[Organisation name]* is committed to prioritising child safety in all its recruitment and selection activities. Even if a position does not involve working directly with children, *[Organisation name]* will consider the access to any child that a position may provide. All personnel within *[Organisation name]* are responsible for ensuring a culture of child safety and preventing any form of child abuse.

*[Organisation name]* takes a zero-tolerance stance to all forms of child abuse and harm.

The following outlines the steps that *[Organisation name]* will take to ensure that it recruits appropriate and qualified employees.

## Job Description & Advertisement

*[Organisation name]* will develop a job description that outlines the role, responsibilities, reporting lines and expectations. As part of this, the job description will include:

* the organisation’s statement of commitment to child safety
* legislative and regulatory requirements such as Working With Children Checks, professional registration or qualification
* promotion that the organisation is a Child Safe Organisation including links to the organisation’s Child Safe Policy and Child Safe Code of Conduct.

## Key Selection Criteria

*[Organisation name]* will develop key selection criteria to assess applicant’s capacity to work with children. The key selection criteria will vary depending on the role.

## Interviewing Applicants

*[Organisation name]* will seek child safety related information as part of ensuring that it recruits appropriate applicants, including the applicant’s:

* motivation to work with children
* understanding of a child’s physical and emotional needs and their rights
* experience and understanding of professional boundaries.

As part of this focus, *[Organisation name]* will develop interview questions and/or conduct a follow-up (informal) interview to gain better insight into the applicant’s background, experience and motivation to apply for the position.

## Reference checks

*[Organisation name]* is committed to ascertaining an accurate insight into the applicant’s background and experience. As part of this, *[Organisation name]* should:

* conduct at least two verbal reference checks with at least one referee from the applicant’s current or most recent employer
* conduct a reference check with a referee who has personally observed the applicant’s work or engagement with children.

The person conducting the reference check will have the requisite qualifications, skill level and experience to do so on the organisation’s behalf. Anyone with responsibility for conducting reference checks should be confident, assertive and probing in their approach, have an ability to identify and explore ‘red flag’ answers, record responses accurately and escalate if required.

Some ‘red flags’ during a reference checking process include:

* referees who describe their relationship with the applicant differently to that portrayed by the applicant
* referees who do not know the applicant well or cannot comment on recent performance
* referees refusing to answer questions or withholding information
* information that differs from the applicant’s account
* evasive or vague responses
* referees who cannot be contacted or wish to not be interviewed
* referees who were not informed or are unaware they would be required to provide a reference
* referees who hesitate or are reluctant to provide answers
* referees who would not re-hire the applicant (and may or may not provide a reason).

Where there are concerns with the applicant from a child safeguarding perspective, a panel will be convened that includes a member of the organisation’s executive, prospective line manager and a third employee of the organisation. The panel will outline whether the applicant should be offered a position and document the reasons.

## International Police Checks

*[Organisation name]* will conduct international police checks on individuals who have resided overseas for more six months or more in the past five years (provided they were above 18 years of age at this time). This will enable *[Organisation name]* to verify an applicant’s criminal history as part of the screening process. *[Organisation name]* considers that international Police Checks are an important component of child-safe recruitment and selection where candidates have spent significant time outside of Australia, as other checks may not adequately identify concerning behaviour.

## Review

This policy was approved *[insert date]* and last reviewed *[insert date]*.