

HENDERSONS CHILD SAFE STANDARDS

HENDERSONS EDUCATIONAL SERVICES PTY LTD (HENDERSONS)

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CHILD SAFETY & WELLBEING POLICY HANDBOOK

Purpose

This document serves as a comprehensive handbook outlining Hendersons' commitment to child safety and wellbeing. It consolidates all relevant policies, procedures, and reporting frameworks to ensure compliance with the *Child Wellbeing and Safety Act 2005 (Vic)*, the *Child Safe Standards*, and the *Crimes Act 1958 (Vic)*.

This handbook aims to:

- Provide clear policies and procedures for ensuring a child-safe environment.
 - Inform staff, families, and contractors of their roles and responsibilities in protecting children.
 - Ensure Hendersons' legal and ethical obligations are met.
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Scope

This handbook applies to:

- All Hendersons staff, contractors, and leadership.
- Parents, carers, and families involved in Hendersons' services.
- Children and young people who participate in Hendersons' programs.

Legal and Compliance Framework

Hendersons complies with the following legislation and standards:

- **Child Wellbeing and Safety Act 2005 (Vic)**
 - **Children, Youth and Families Act 2005 (Vic)**
 - **Crimes Act 1958 (Vic)** (including Failure to Disclose and Failure to Protect obligations)
 - **Working with Children Act 2005 (Vic)**
 - **Victorian Child Safe Standards**
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Implementation and Review

This handbook will be reviewed annually or in response to changes in legislation, incidents, or organisational needs. Feedback from staff, parents, and students will inform updates.

CHILD SAFETY AND WELLBEING POLICY

Purpose

Hendersons is committed to the safety and wellbeing of all children and young people who engage with our services. This policy outlines our approach to child safety and wellbeing, ensuring compliance with the **Child Wellbeing and Safety Act 2005 (Vic)**, the **Child Safe Standards**, and relevant Victorian laws, including the **Crimes Act 1958 (Vic)** and **Working with Children Act 2005 (Vic)**.

This policy aims to:

- Demonstrate Hendersons' commitment to creating and maintaining a safe and inclusive environment.
 - Inform staff, contractors, parents, and children of their roles and responsibilities in promoting child safety.
 - Provide clear procedures for identifying, responding to, and reporting concerns of child harm or abuse.
 - Fulfil legal obligations under Victorian child protection laws.
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Scope

This policy applies to:

- All Hendersons staff, contractors, and board members.
- Parents, carers, and guardians engaged with Hendersons.
- Children and young people who participate in Hendersons' programs and activities.

This policy covers:

- All activities that involve, result in, or relate to contact with children and young people, including physical and online environments.
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Definitions

- **Child/Children:** Any individual under the age of 18.
 - **Child Harm or Abuse:** Includes physical, emotional, or sexual abuse, neglect, and exposure to violence.
 - **Mandatory Reporting:** The legal obligation to report suspected child abuse or neglect to authorities.
 - **Failure to Disclose:** Under the **Crimes Act 1958 (Vic)**, the obligation for all adults to report sexual offences against children to police.
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- Failure to Protect: Under the *Crimes Act 1958 (Vic)*, the obligation to take reasonable steps to reduce the risk of sexual abuse if a person in authority knows of a substantial risk.
 - *Working with Children Act 2005 (Vic)*: Legislation requiring individuals working with children to hold a valid Working with Children Check.
 - Cultural Safety: The provision of a safe and respectful environment where children's cultural identities are valued and supported.
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Responsibilities

Board Members and Leadership Team

- Oversee the implementation and compliance of child safety policies and practices.
- Allocate adequate resources for child safety initiatives.
- Monitor and evaluate the effectiveness of child safety measures.

Managers and Staff

- Implement child safety processes, including recruitment, training, and risk management.
- Comply with the policy, Code of Conduct, and mandatory reporting obligations.
- Use only Hendersons-approved platforms (e.g., official email, learning management systems) for all communications with children.
- Maintain professional, transparent communication directly related to Hendersons' programs and activities.
- Complete child safety training and stay informed of legal obligations.

Parents and Carers

- Support Hendersons' child safety commitments and model respectful behaviour.
- Report any concerns about child safety to a Hendersons Staff Member.

Children and Young People

- Treat others with respect and speak up if they feel unsafe.
-

Recruitment and Screening

Hendersons ensures that all recruitment and screening processes prioritise child safety by:

- Requiring all prospective staff to hold a valid Working with Children Check or current teacher registration in their respective state (e.g., VIT in Victoria) are automatically deemed to have met the WWCC requirement.
 - Conducting thorough reference checks, specifically addressing any concerns about suitability to work with children.
 - Including child safety criteria in all job descriptions and advertisements.
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- Asking child safety-specific questions during interviews to assess candidates' understanding and commitment to maintaining a safe environment for children.
 - Ensuring all new staff complete a probation period during which their suitability for working with children is assessed.
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Legal Obligations

Hendersons is committed to fulfilling its legal obligations to protect children from harm, including:

- **Crimes Act 1958 (Vic):**
 - Failure to Disclose: All adults, including Hendersons' staff, must report to police if they form a reasonable belief that a sexual offence has been committed against a child.
 - Failure to Protect: Staff in positions of authority must act if they know of a substantial risk of sexual abuse to a child and fail to take reasonable steps to protect them.
 - **Mandatory Reporting:** Certain staff are mandated to report suspected child abuse or neglect under the *Children, Youth and Families Act 2005 (Vic)*.
 - **Working with Children Act 2005 (Vic):** All staff must hold valid Working with Children Checks to engage in child-related work.
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Reporting Procedures

Identifying Concerns

Concerns about child safety, including incidents occurring in physical or online environments, must be promptly reported. Specific online concerns may include inappropriate digital communication, online grooming, or exposure to harmful content.

Child safety concerns include:

- Disclosures of harm or abuse made by a child.
- Observations of inappropriate behaviour by staff, contractors, or other adults.
- Concerns raised by parents, carers, or staff about a child's safety.

Internal Reporting

1. **Immediate Safety:** If a child is in immediate danger, contact emergency services (000) immediately.
2. **General Manager:** Report all concerns, including online safety issues, to the General Manager as soon as possible. Use the Hendersons Child Safety Incident Reporting Form for documentation.
3. **Online Safety Concerns:** Any concerns specifically related to online safety, such as breaches of the Online Safety Policy, must also follow the reporting steps outlined in that policy.

External Reporting

Hendersons complies with all mandatory reporting obligations for child safety concerns, whether in physical or online environments. Concerns involving online abuse or cyberbullying must be escalated to relevant authorities. If a child is in immediate danger, contact:

- **Emergency Services (Police): 000**

For suspected child abuse or neglect, contact:

- **Child Protection Services (13 12 78)**
- **Victoria Police** (if the situation involves criminal behaviour)

Hendersons will support staff in fulfilling their mandatory reporting obligations.

Confidentiality

All reports will remain confidential, with details shared only on a need-to-know basis or as required by law.

Support Services

Hendersons will provide support for:

- The child and their family.
- Staff involved in the reporting process.

Support services may include counselling and referrals to external agencies.

Risk Management

Risk Identification

Hendersons identifies risks to child safety, including:

- **Physical Risks:** Unsafe facilities or equipment.
- **Online Risks:** Inappropriate communication, cyberbullying, or unauthorised access.
- **Behavioural Risks:** Misconduct by staff or other adults or children.

Risk Mitigation

- Conduct regular safety audits.
- Implement recruitment screening, including Working with Children Checks.
- Use approved platforms for communication.

IT Security Measures

- Maintain secure IT systems to protect children's data and online interactions.
 - Monitor and restrict unauthorised access to organisational platforms.
 - Ensure all staff follow Hendersons' Digital Safety and Cybersecurity Policy.
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Digital Safety Measures

Hendersons ensures safe online environments for children through the following measures:

- **Secure Platforms:** All online interactions between staff and students must occur on Hendersons-approved platforms (e.g., official email, learning management systems).
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- Monitoring and Controls: Hendersons monitors digital communications to ensure compliance with the Online Safety Policy and prevent unauthorised access.
 - Training: All staff are trained in identifying and responding to online safety risks, including cyberbullying, grooming, and inappropriate online behaviour.
 - Policy Integration: Detailed guidelines for safe online practices are outlined in the Online Safety Policy.
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Training and Induction

- Induction: All new staff receive child safety policies, including mandatory reporting obligations and the use of the Child Safety Incident Reporting Form.
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CHILD SAFE CODE OF CONDUCT

Purpose

This Code of Conduct outlines the expected behaviours and interactions for all individuals engaged with Hendersons, including leaders, staff, volunteers, contractors, parents, and children. It aims to:

- Protect and promote the safety and wellbeing of children and young people.
- Establish clear behavioural standards for all individuals, including parents and children, in both physical and online environments.
- Foster a community-wide commitment to child safety through shared understanding and responsibility.
- Be accessible, easy to understand, and reinforced during induction, training, and community engagement.

This Code aligns with the Child Wellbeing and Safety Act 2005, relevant legislation, and Hendersons' policies and procedures.

Applicability

This Code applies to all:

- Paid and unpaid staff
- Contractors and consultants.
- Board members and executive leadership.
- Parents, carers, and guardians of children present during any Hendersons service.
- Children and young people who participate in Hendersons' programs and activities.

It governs all interactions with children and young people under 18 years of age in any physical or online setting associated with Hendersons.

Responsibilities

All Staff, Volunteers, and Contractors

- Act in accordance with Hendersons' child safety and wellbeing policies and procedures.
 - Behave respectfully, courteously, and ethically towards children, families, and colleagues.
 - Listen to and respond appropriately to children's views and concerns.
 - Promote a welcoming, inclusive, and culturally safe environment.
 - Follow professional boundaries and Hendersons' protocols for communicating with children.
 - Report concerns about child safety promptly to the General Manager.
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Parents and Carers

- Support Hendersons' commitment to child safety by adhering to this Code of Conduct.
- Model respectful and appropriate behaviour in all interactions with children, staff, and other families.
- Encourage children to express their concerns or discomfort about safety issues.
- Avoid actions or language that could cause harm, distress, or discrimination to any child or staff member.
- Raise concerns regarding child safety with the General Manager in a timely manner.

Children and Young People

- Treat others with respect and kindness.
 - Speak up if they feel unsafe or uncomfortable in any situation.
 - Follow the rules and expectations of Hendersons' programs.
 - Behave in a manner that ensures their own safety and the safety of others.
 - Report any behaviour that makes them feel unsafe to a trusted adult or staff member.
-

Expected Behaviours

For Staff, Volunteers, and Contractors

All staff, volunteers, and contractors must:

- Create safe and inclusive environments that encourage participation and engagement.
- Respect the cultural, linguistic, and personal diversity of children and families.
- Respond promptly to concerns or complaints of child harm or abuse.
- Report all suspected or disclosed child harm or abuse in accordance with Hendersons' policies and relevant legislation.

For Parents and Carers

Parents and carers must:

- Engage respectfully with Hendersons' staff, volunteers, and other families.
- Encourage children to participate fully in Hendersons' programs in a safe and respectful manner.
- Support Hendersons' commitment to child safety by adhering to this Code.
- Avoid using language or actions that could harm, exclude, or disrespect others.

For Children and Young People

Children and young people must:

- Treat their peers, teachers, and staff with respect.
 - Report any behaviour that makes them feel unsafe or uncomfortable to a trusted adult or staff member.
 - Follow Hendersons' rules and guidelines during all programs and activities.
 - Avoid behaviours that could harm or distress others, including bullying or exclusion.
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Prohibited Behaviours

For Staff, Volunteers, and Contractors

Staff, volunteers, and contractors must NOT:

- Engage in unlawful activities with or in relation to children.
- Engage in any behaviour that is likely to harm children physically, emotionally, or sexually.
- Discriminate unlawfully against any child or their family members.
- Arrange personal or unauthorised contact with children outside Hendersons' programs.
- Use inappropriate language or provide access to inappropriate materials in the presence of children.
- Work under the influence of alcohol or prohibited drugs.
- Ignore or disregard suspected or disclosed harm or abuse.

For Parents and Carers

Parents and carers must NOT:

- Use language or behaviour that is abusive, discriminatory, or disrespectful towards staff, children, or other families.
- Interfere with Hendersons' operations or policies in a way that compromises child safety.
- Ignore or dismiss concerns raised about child safety.

For Children and Young People

Children and young people must NOT:

- Engage in bullying, harassment, or other behaviours that harm or distress others.
- Use language or behaviour that is discriminatory or disrespectful.
- Ignore Hendersons' safety rules or act in ways that compromise their own or others' safety.

Reporting Breaches

If a breach of this Code is suspected or observed:

- Prioritise the safety and wellbeing of children.
 - Act promptly to ensure children are safe.
 - Report concerns to the General Manager via accounts@hendersons.com.au or via phone 03 9813 0277
 - Follow Hendersons' procedures for complaints and reporting.
 - Comply with relevant legislation for internal and external reporting.
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RECRUITMENT AND SCREENING POLICY

Purpose

Hendersons is committed to ensuring the safety and wellbeing of all children and young people who engage with our services. This policy establishes clear recruitment and screening procedures to ensure all staff and contractors meet the highest standards of integrity and child safety. It aligns with the **Child Wellbeing and Safety Act 2005 (Vic)** and the **Victorian Child Safe Standards**.

Scope

This policy applies to all employees, contractors, and any individuals engaged in work with Hendersons where they may have direct or indirect contact with children. It outlines the mandatory recruitment, screening, and induction requirements for all personnel.

Principles of Safe Recruitment

Hendersons is committed to the following principles in recruitment and selection:

- Employing individuals who uphold child safety and wellbeing values.
 - Ensuring rigorous background screening for all candidates.
 - Providing all policies and procedures regarding child safety responsibilities upon commencement at Hendersons.
 - Ongoing monitoring and compliance with child safety obligations.
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Recruitment Process

4.1 Position Advertisement and Job Description

- All job advertisements must include a statement about Hendersons' commitment to child safety and the requirement for Working with Children Checks (WWCC) or equivalent background checks.
- Position descriptions must outline child safety responsibilities and expectations for staff.

4.3 Interview Process

- Interviews must assess candidates' understanding of child safety and their ability to uphold child-safe practices.
 - Interviewers will ask scenario-based questions to evaluate ethical decision-making and awareness of appropriate boundaries with children.
 - Any gaps in employment history must be explained by the candidate.
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Background and Screening Checks

5.1 Working with Children Check (WWCC) or Valid Teacher Registration

- A valid **Working with Children Check (WWCC)** is mandatory for all employees and contractors before they commence employment. However, individuals with current teacher registration in their respective state (e.g., VIT in Victoria) are automatically deemed to have met the WWCC requirement.
 - Applicants with disclosable court outcomes related to child safety concerns will not be employed.
 - WWCC must be renewed as required by legislation.
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Reference Checks

- At least one professional reference check must be conducted before confirming employment.
 - Referees must be asked about the applicant's previous work with children and any concerns regarding their suitability.
 - Referees must not be family members.
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Induction and Training

- All new staff must complete Child Safety Induction Training before commencing duties.
 - Induction includes:
 - Understanding Hendersons' Child Safety and Wellbeing Policy and Child Safe Code of Conduct.
 - Mandatory reporting obligations under the *Crimes Act 1958 (Vic)*.
 - Online safety protocols and professional boundaries with students.
 - Complaints and incident reporting procedures.
 - Staff must acknowledge that they have read and understand the Hendersons Child Safe Code of Conduct as part of their induction.
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Ongoing Compliance and Review

- Hendersons will conduct regular compliance audits to ensure all staff maintain current WWCC/Teacher registration.
 - Annual child safety policies updates will be provided to all staff.
 - Any breaches of child safety obligations may result in disciplinary action, including termination of employment.
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Reporting and Addressing Concerns

- Any concerns about a candidate's suitability or a staff member's conduct must be reported to the General Manager immediately.
 - If an employee fails to meet screening requirements or violates child safety policies, Hendersons reserves the right to terminate employment.
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INCIDENT REPORTING PROCEDURES

Purpose

Hendersons is committed to ensuring that all child safety concerns or incidents are managed appropriately, confidentially, and in line with legal and regulatory requirements. This policy establishes clear steps to be followed when reporting and responding to child safety concerns, disclosures, or incidents. It aligns with the *Child Wellbeing and Safety Act 2005 (Vic)*, the *Children, Youth and Families Act 2005 (Vic)*, and the *Victorian Child Safe Standards*.

Scope

This policy applies to all Hendersons employees, contractors, and individuals engaged in Hendersons' services who have concerns about the safety and wellbeing of a child.

Principles of Incident Reporting

Hendersons upholds the following principles in its incident reporting procedures:

- All concerns regarding child safety must be taken seriously and acted upon promptly.
 - Confidentiality must be maintained, and information shared only with relevant parties.
 - Staff have a duty to report all concerns, disclosures, or suspicions of child abuse.
 - The safety and wellbeing of the child is the primary consideration in all decision-making.
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Identifying Child Safety Concerns

A child safety concern may include:

- A disclosure made by a child or another person.
- An incident where harm or abuse is witnessed.
- A suspicion based on physical, emotional, or behavioural indicators.

Types of reportable concerns include:

- Physical violence
 - Sexual abuse or grooming behaviours
 - Emotional or psychological abuse
 - Neglect
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- Student sexual offending
 - Cyber abuse or inappropriate online behaviour
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Steps for Reporting Child Safety Concerns

Step 1: Immediate Response in an Emergency

- If a child is in immediate danger or risk of harm, call 000 for emergency assistance.
- Provide any necessary immediate support (e.g., first aid, ensuring the child is in a safe location).

Step 2: Internal Reporting

- Complete the Child Safety Incident Reporting Form immediately.
- Submit the form to the General Manager as soon as practicable.
- If necessary, seek guidance from the General Manager on the appropriate next steps.

Step 3: External Reporting (Mandatory & Reportable Conduct Obligations)

Mandatory Reporting (to Child Protection Services or Police)

Under the *Children, Youth and Families Act 2005 (Vic)*, all staff at Hendersons are mandatory reporters and must report child safety concerns where they believe a child is at risk of significant harm. The General Manager will determine the need for external reporting to:

- Victoria Police (000) – if a crime has been committed.
- Child Protection Services (DHHS) (13 12 78) – if there are concerns about a child's immediate safety or wellbeing.
- Child FIRST – for early intervention where child welfare concerns exist.

Failure to Report:

- Failure to Disclose: It is an offence for an adult to fail to report known child sexual abuse to police.
- Failure to Protect: If an adult in an organisation fails to reduce or remove a substantial risk of a child being sexually abused by someone associated with the organisation, this is an offence.

Reportable Conduct Scheme (Reporting to CCYP)

Under the Reportable Conduct Scheme (RCS), the General Manager must notify the Commission for Children and Young People (CCYP) when there is an allegation of reportable conduct against an employee, contractor, or volunteer.

Reportable Conduct includes:

- Sexual offences or sexual misconduct involving a child.
- Physical violence against, with, or in the presence of a child.
- Behaviour that causes significant emotional or psychological harm.
- Neglect that places a child at risk of harm.

Reporting Timeframes:



- The General Manager must notify CCYP within 3 business days of becoming aware of an allegation.
- A detailed report must be submitted to CCYP within 30 calendar days.
- Hendersons must investigate allegations and provide findings to CCYP as required.

How the Two Reporting Systems Work Together:

- If there is a concern that a child is at risk of significant harm, a mandatory report to Child Protection Services is required.
- If the concern involves staff misconduct, a report to CCYP under the Reportable Conduct Scheme is also required.
- Some cases may require both reports to be made.

Step 4: Contacting Parents/Carers (Where Appropriate)

- Hendersons will consult Victoria Police or DHHS Child Protection to determine whether it is appropriate to contact the child's parent or carer.
- If approved, the parent/carer must be contacted as soon as possible, preferably on the same day of the disclosure, incident, or suspicion.
- If it is not appropriate to contact the parent/carer, reasons must be documented.

Step 5: Providing Ongoing Support

- Hendersons will ensure appropriate support is provided to the affected child, including referrals to counselling or external services.
 - Staff members involved in reporting may also require support.
 - Additional risk management strategies may be implemented if required.
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Confidentiality and Record-Keeping

- All reports and documents related to child safety concerns must be securely stored.
 - Reports must be documented in the Child Safety Incident Register, with restricted access for authorised personnel.
 - Information regarding reports must only be shared with those directly involved in managing the concern or required by law.
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Consequences for Non-Compliance

Failure to report a child safety concern or incident may result in the following:

- Disciplinary action, including termination of employment.
 - Criminal penalties for failing to report known or suspected child abuse under failure to disclose and failure to protect laws.
 - Regulatory consequences for failure to comply with the Reportable Conduct Scheme.
 - Professional misconduct charges for breaches of mandatory reporting obligations.
-

COMPLAINTS HANDLING POLICY

Purpose

Hendersons is committed to providing a transparent and accessible process for managing complaints. This policy outlines how complaints are received, handled, and resolved in alignment with Hendersons' values and legal obligations, including compliance with child safety standards, the *Privacy Act 1988 (Cth)*, and the *Child Wellbeing and Safety Act 2005 (Vic)*.

Scope

This policy applies to:

- All complaints raised by students, parents, guardians, staff, contractors, or other stakeholders.
 - Complaints relating to any aspect of Hendersons' services, including:
 - Educational programs and operations.
 - Child safety and physical and emotional wellbeing.
 - Staff behaviour or professional conduct.
 - Privacy and data protection concerns.
 - Cyber safety or digital interactions.
 - Systemic gaps, that could impact child safety (eg. administrative errors)
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Policy Objectives

- Provide a consistent, fair, and confidential process for handling complaints.
 - Resolve complaints promptly and effectively.
 - Ensure compliance with legal obligations and child safety standards.
 - Use feedback from complaints to improve services and practices.
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Definitions

- Complaint: Any expression of dissatisfaction made to Hendersons about its services, staff, or operations, where a response or resolution is explicitly or implicitly expected.
 - Complainant: The individual or group raising a complaint.
 - Respondent: The individual or group against whom the complaint is directed.
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Key Principles

1. Transparency: The complaints process will be clearly communicated and accessible.
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2. Confidentiality: Information shared during the complaints process will be kept confidential, except where disclosure is required by law (e.g., child protection concerns).
 3. Fairness: Complaints will be handled impartially and without bias.
 4. Accountability: Hendersons will take responsibility for resolving complaints promptly and appropriately.
 5. Continuous Improvement: Feedback from complaints will inform organisational improvements.
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Complaints Process

Step 1: Receiving Complaints

Complaints may be submitted via:

- Email: info@hendersons.com.au
- Phone: (03) 9813 0277
- In Person: By speaking with the General Manager or a designated staff member.

The following information should be provided:

- Complainant's name and contact details.
- Nature of the complaint (what happened, when, and where).
- Names of individuals involved (if applicable).
- Desired resolution or outcome.

Step 2: Acknowledging Complaints

- Complaints will be acknowledged within 2 business days of receipt and include confirmation that the issue will be documented and reviewed for systemic improvements.
- The complainant will be informed of the next steps and expected timelines for resolution.

Step 3: Assessing and Investigating Complaints

- **Initial Assessment:**
 - Determine if the complaint relates to child safety, privacy, or another critical issue requiring immediate action.
 - If the complaint involves child safety concerns, follow **the Child Safety and Wellbeing Policy** and report to the appropriate authorities if required.
- **Investigation:**
 - Appoint an impartial investigator (e.g., the General Manager or an independent party).
 - Gather relevant information, including statements from involved parties and supporting documentation.
 - Ensure all parties are treated respectfully and given the opportunity to respond.

Step 4: Resolving Complaints

- Resolutions may include:
 - Apologies or explanations.

- Changes to processes or procedures.
- Disciplinary action for staff, if appropriate.
- Referral to external authorities for serious matters.
- Complainants will be informed of the resolution in writing within 10 business days, unless an extension is required due to complexity.

Step 5: Follow-Up

- Ensure any agreed actions are implemented.
- Seek feedback from the complainant to confirm satisfaction with the resolution.

Step 6: Appeals

- If a complainant is dissatisfied with the outcome, they may request a review by the General Manager or an independent party.
 - Appeals must be lodged within 10 business days of receiving the resolution.
-

Special Considerations for Child Safety Complaints

If the complaint involves child safety:

- Immediate action will be taken to ensure the child's safety and wellbeing.
 - The complaint will be handled in accordance with the **Child Safety and Wellbeing Policy**.
 - Mandatory reporting obligations under *the Children, Youth and Families Act 2005 (Vic)* and the *Crimes Act 1958 (Vic)* will be fulfilled.
-

Confidentiality

- All complaints will be handled confidentially to protect the privacy of all parties involved.
 - Information will only be shared with those directly involved in resolving the complaint or as required by law.
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Record-Keeping

Hendersons will maintain records of all complaints, including:

- The nature of the complaint.
- Actions taken to resolve the complaint.
- Outcomes and feedback from the complainant.

These records will be retained securely for a minimum of 7 years and reviewed periodically to identify trends or areas for improvement.

Roles and Responsibilities

General Manager

- Oversee the complaints process and ensure compliance with this policy.
- Act as the final decision-maker for unresolved or escalated complaints.

Staff and Contractors

- Respond to complaints respectfully and refer them to the appropriate channels.
- Cooperate fully with investigations and resolution processes.

Students / Parents / Guardians / Visitors

- Provide honest, legitimate and accurate complaints in a timely manner using our Complaints Submission Form.
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RECORD-KEEPING PROCEDURES

Purpose

The purpose of these procedures is to ensure that Hendersons Educational Services Pty Ltd maintains accurate, secure, and compliant records related to child safety, complaints, and other operational matters. This aligns with our commitment to transparency, accountability, and compliance with legal and regulatory requirements, including the *Child Wellbeing and Safety Act 2005 (Vic)* and the *Privacy Act 1988 (Cth)*.

Scope

These procedures apply to all Hendersons staff, contractors, and board members involved in collecting, storing, managing, or accessing organisational records. It covers:

- Child safety records.
 - Complaint submissions and resolutions.
 - Incident reports.
 - Student and family information.
 - Operational and governance documents.
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Key Principles

1. Confidentiality: Records will be handled with strict confidentiality to protect the privacy of children, families, and staff.
 2. Accuracy: Records must be accurate, up to date, and reflective of the information provided.
 3. Security: Records will be stored securely to prevent unauthorised access, alteration, or loss.
 4. Retention: Records will be retained for the legally required period and securely disposed of when no longer needed.
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Procedures

Types of Records Maintained

Hendersons maintains the following types of records:

- **Child Safety Records:**
 - Incident reports (e.g., Child Safety Incident Reporting Form).
 - Risk assessments and management plans.
 - Reports made to external authorities (e.g., police, child protection).
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- **Complaints Records:**
 - Complaint Submission Forms.
 - Investigation notes and resolutions.
 - **Student and Family Records:**
 - Personal and medical information.
 - Educational action plans.
 - **Operational Records:**
 - Staff training logs (e.g., child safety training).
 - Recruitment and screening records (e.g., Working with Children Checks).
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Collection and Recording

- Records must be collected through approved organisational processes (e.g., forms, interviews, assessments).
 - All information must be:
 - Accurate, complete, and free of bias.
 - Documented promptly after an incident or interaction.
-

Storage and Security

- **Physical Records:**
 - Stored in locked filing cabinets accessible only to authorised personnel.
 - Located in a secure area of the organisation's premises.
 - **Digital Records:**
 - Stored on Hendersons' secure IT systems with access controls.
 - **Access Control:**
 - Only authorised personnel may access records, with permissions granted based on role and necessity.
-

Retention Periods

Hendersons adheres to the following retention guidelines:

- **Child Safety Records:** Retained for a minimum of 7 years or until the child turns 25, whichever is longer.
 - **Complaints Records:** Retained for 7 years from the date of resolution.
 - **Student Records:** Retained for the duration of their engagement with Hendersons and securely disposed of within 7 years after disengagement.
-

- **Operational Records:** Retained in line with organisational and legal requirements (e.g., financial records retained for 7 years under the **Corporations Act 2001 (Cth)**).
-

Access and Confidentiality

- Staff must only access records necessary for their role.
 - Confidential information must not be shared externally without:
 - Consent from the individual or their legal guardian.
 - Legal requirements, such as mandatory reporting obligations.
-

Record Disposal

- Physical records will be shredded or incinerated under secure conditions.
 - Digital records will be permanently deleted using secure data erasure methods.
 - Disposal logs will be maintained to document when and how records were destroyed.
-

Reporting and Audit

- Hendersons will conduct regular audits of record-keeping practices to:
 - Ensure compliance with legal obligations.
 - Identify and address risks or inefficiencies.
 - Any breaches of record-keeping procedures must be reported immediately to the General Manager .
-

Responsibilities

- **General Manager**
 - Oversee the implementation of record-keeping procedures.
 - Approve access permissions and ensure compliance with retention and disposal policies.
 - **Staff and Contractors:**
 - Comply with these procedures and ensure records are handled securely and accurately.
 - Report any breaches or concerns regarding records.
 - **Students / Parents / Guardians / Visitors**
 - Provide honest, legitimate and accurate information relating to young person attending our services.
-

FAMILY AND COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT STRATEGY

Purpose

The purpose of this strategy is to strengthen relationships between Hendersons, families, and the wider community to promote a safe, inclusive, and supportive environment for children. This strategy outlines how Hendersons will engage families and the community to enhance child safety, build trust, and support the educational and personal development of children.

Scope

This strategy applies to:

- All Hendersons staff and contractors.
 - Parents, guardians, and families of children participating in Hendersons' programs.
 - Members of the wider community who engage with Hendersons.
-

Goals

1. **Child Safety:** Partner with families and the community to uphold Hendersons' commitment to child safety.
 2. **Transparency:** Provide clear and consistent communication about policies, practices, and educational programs.
 3. **Inclusion:** Create opportunities for families and community members to contribute to the organisation's operations and decision-making.
 4. **Trust:** Build trust and mutual respect through open and respectful engagement.
-

Engagement Principles

1. **Collaboration:** Work together with families and the community to ensure the safety and wellbeing of children.
 2. **Respect:** Recognise and respect the diverse backgrounds, cultures, and needs of families and community members.
 3. **Transparency:** Share information openly while maintaining confidentiality where required.
 4. **Responsiveness:** Actively listen to feedback and respond to concerns in a timely manner.
-

Engagement Activities

1. Communication

- **Regular Updates:** Provide families with updates through:
 - Emails or newsletters.
 - Announcements on the Hendersons website.
- **Policies and Procedures:**
 - Share key policies (e.g., Child Safety and Wellbeing Policy, Privacy Policy) via the website and in enrolment materials.
 - Offer easy access to reporting procedures for child safety concerns or complaints.

2. Feedback Mechanisms

- **Surveys:**
 - Conduct regular surveys to gather feedback from families about child safety, educational programs, and engagement practices.
- **Feedback Channels:**
 - Provide multiple channels for feedback (e.g., email, online forms, in-person meetings).
- **Action and Follow-Up:**
 - Act on feedback promptly and communicate any changes or improvements made as a result.

3. Involvement Opportunities

- **Parent and Guardian Participation:**
 - Invite families to contribute to activities such as workshops, events, or advisory groups.

4. Education and Resources

- **Information Packs:**
 - Provide families with clear, accessible resources during enrolment and throughout their child's engagement with Hendersons.

5. Cultural Inclusion

- **Cultural Safety:**
 - Ensure all families feel valued and respected, and that the environment supports the cultural identities of children.

Responsibilities

- **General Manager:**
 - Oversee the implementation of this strategy and ensure alignment with organisational goals.
- **Staff:**
 - Actively engage with families' members through respectful communication and collaboration.

- **Families and Guardians:**
 - Provide feedback and participate in engagement opportunities to support child safety and wellbeing.
-

Evaluation and Review

To ensure the effectiveness of this strategy:

1. **Regular Evaluation:**
 - Review strategy annually to assess their impact and relevance.
 2. **Feedback Analysis:**
 - Use feedback from families to identify areas for improvement.
 3. **Adjustments:**
 - Update the strategy based on evaluation findings and changes in organisational needs.
-

ONLINE SAFETY POLICY

Purpose

Hendersons is committed to providing a safe online environment for all staff, students, and families. This policy outlines expectations, procedures, and safeguards to promote the responsible use of technology and protect against online risks, ensuring compliance with the *Child Wellbeing and Safety Act 2005 (Vic)* and the *Privacy Act 1988 (Cth)*.

Scope

This policy applies to:

- All staff, contractors, and students who use Hendersons' technology, systems, or online platforms.
 - Online interactions between staff, students, and families in the context of Hendersons' educational programs and operations.
 - Privately owned devices, when used to access Hendersons' online platforms or engage in Hendersons' activities.
-

Objectives

- Promote the safe and responsible use of technology in Hendersons' programs.
 - Prevent and address risks such as cyberbullying, grooming, and exposure to harmful content.
 - Ensure online communication aligns with Hendersons' values and child safety standards.
 - Safeguard the privacy and personal information of all stakeholders.
-

Policy Principles

- **Safety First:** Protecting children's safety and wellbeing is Hendersons' top priority.
 - **Respectful Online Behaviour:** All online interactions must be respectful, professional, and aligned with Hendersons' Child Safe Code of Conduct.
 - **Privacy:** Personal information shared online must be protected in line with Hendersons' Privacy Policy.
 - **Education:** Hendersons will educate staff, students, and families about online risks and safe practices.
-

Online Safety Guidelines

1. Appropriate Use of Technology

- Staff must use only Hendersons-approved platforms (e.g., database and official email) for online communication with students.
- Personal email accounts, private messaging apps, and social media platforms must not be used for interactions with students.
- Students must use online platforms responsibly and in alignment with Hendersons' policies.

2. Cyberbullying Prevention

- Hendersons has a zero-tolerance policy for cyberbullying. Examples include:
 - Threatening or harassing emails or messages.
 - Sharing inappropriate or harmful content.
 - Online exclusion or impersonation.
- All incidents of cyberbullying must be reported immediately to the General Manager.

3. Monitoring and Security

- Hendersons reserves the right to monitor online interactions on its platforms to ensure compliance with this policy.
- Online platforms will be secured with appropriate IT measures, including:
 - Password protection.
 - Regular system updates and audits.

4. Managing Online Risks

- Hendersons will actively assess and mitigate risks such as:
 - Unauthorised access to systems or information.
 - Grooming or exploitation of children online.
 - Exposure to harmful or inappropriate content.
- Staff must report any suspicious online behaviour or security concerns to the General Manager.

5. Rules for Online Classes

To ensure a **safe and controlled learning environment**, Hendersons has established the following rules:

- **Students must have their cameras turned on** at all times during online classes so that teachers can verify their presence.
- **No unauthorised adults should be present in the background** or observing online sessions, to protect the privacy of other students.
- If a student cannot turn on their camera due to **privacy or safety reasons**, they must notify their teacher and seek an alternative arrangement.
- **Recording of online classes is not permitted** without explicit approval from the General Manager and the informed consent of parents/guardians.

5. Social Media

- Staff must not engage with students via personal social media accounts.
 - Any official Hendersons social media activity must be approved by the General Manager and comply with organisational guidelines.
-

Reporting Online Safety Concerns

All online safety concerns, including suspected breaches of this policy, must be reported promptly. Reports can be made to:

- General Manager: accounts@hendersons.com.au
-

Education and Training

- **Staff:** All staff will required to read and understand all policies and procedures relating to Child Safety.
 - **Students and Families:** Families must ensure they understand and agree to all Hendersons Child safety and Wellbeing Policies.
-

Roles and Responsibilities

General Manager

- Ensure the implementation and enforcement of this policy.
- Address serious breaches of online safety practices.

Staff

- Follow this policy in all online interactions.
- Report any concerns or breaches immediately.

Students and Families

- Use online platforms responsibly.
 - Report any concerns or incidents involving online safety.
 - Ensure students who are attending online workshops or classes have their camera on at all times.
-

Compliance

Non-compliance with this policy may result in:

- Disciplinary action for staff or contractors, up to and including termination.
 - Suspension or other consequences for students, in line with Hendersons' Code of Conduct.
-

APPENDICES

1. Child Safety Incident Reporting Form

Part 1: To Be Completed By Incident Reporter

Report Details	
Who is completing this form? (click to select)	<input type="checkbox"/> Hendersons Employee <input type="checkbox"/> Student <input type="checkbox"/> Parent/Carer
Incident reporter wishes to remain anonymous?	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No If no, provide name / email / phone number of reporter:
Time/Date of Report:	
Type of Report	<input type="checkbox"/> Disclosure <input type="checkbox"/> Incident <input type="checkbox"/> Suspicion
Child's Information	
Name(s) of child/children involved:	
Age/Date of birth:	
Gender:	
Address:	
Workshop/service attending at time of incident/disclosure/suspicion:	
Name(s) of additional individuals involved:	



Does the child identify as Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander?	<input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/> Yes, Aboriginal <input type="checkbox"/> Yes, Torres Strait Islander
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Critical Action 1: Immediate Response to an Incident

If you believe a child is at immediate risk of abuse phone 000.
Please detail any immediate responses made to an emergency situation e.g. was first aid administered, did the child require immediate medical assistance?

Details of the Incident / Disclosure / Suspicion:

Date and time of incident/disclosure/suspicion:	
Please categorise the suspected abuse	<input type="checkbox"/> Physical violence <input type="checkbox"/> Sexual offence <input type="checkbox"/> Serious emotional or psychological abuse <input type="checkbox"/> Serious neglect <input type="checkbox"/> Student sexual offending <input type="checkbox"/> Bullying <input type="checkbox"/> Physical/Violent behaviour/communications <input type="checkbox"/> Concern for safety of other children as a result of this child.



Grounds for your belief that a child has been or is at risk of abuse

Please describe details of the disclosure, incident or suspicion of child abuse, including: names, times and dates, documenting a child's exact words, as far as possible.

Use the following dot points to assist in completing this section:

- *details – the child's or young person's name, age and address*
- *indicators of harm – the reason for believing that the injury or behaviour is the result of abuse or neglect*
- *reason for reporting – the reason why the call is being made now*
- *safety assessment – assessment of immediate danger to the child or children. For example, information may be sought on the whereabouts of the alleged abuser or abusers*
- *description – description of the injury or behaviour observed*
- *child's whereabouts – the current whereabouts of the child or young person*
- *other services – your knowledge of other services involved with the family*
- *family information – any other information about the family*
- *cultural characteristics – any specific cultural or other details that will help to care for the child, for example, cultural origins, interpreter or disability needs.*

This form is to be handed to the General Manager as soon as practical.

Critical Action 2: Reporting to Authorities

General Manager to complete in consultation with reporting person as per the Hendersons Child Safety Policy, Reporting and Responding to Allegations of Child Abuse procedures.

	Name of person who took your report	Date and Time
Authority (tick the authorities you have reported to)	<input type="checkbox"/> Police	
	<input type="checkbox"/> DHHS Child Protection	
	<input type="checkbox"/> Child First	



Decision not to report <i>If you did not report to an authority, list the reasons for this decision here.</i> <i>(Who was consulted?)</i>	
Reporting Internally <i>Provide details of any discussion regarding report or concerns about safety of the student and rationale for not reporting.</i> <i>(Who? Time, Date, outcome/recommendations)</i>	
Outcome of Report	
Follow Up actions undertaken	
Review of existing Child Safe risk assessment controls	

Critical Action 3: Contacting Parents/Carers

Hendersons must consult with Victoria Police and/or DHHS Child Protection to determine if it is appropriate to contact parents. If it is, parents must be contacted as soon as possible (preferably on the same day of the disclosure, incident, or suspicion.

Have you sought advice from DHHS Child Protection or Victoria Police?	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No – advice must be sought
Is it appropriate to contact parent/carer?	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes – note approval from also Principal required <input type="checkbox"/> No – advice must be sought
List reason if it is not appropriate to contact parent/carer:	



Provide details of your discussion with parent/carer's (if appropriate)	
Name of staff member making call:	
Name of parent/carer receiving the call:	
Discussion outcomes:	

Critical Action 4: Providing Ongoing Support

Follow-up actions to support the student:	
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<p>Support provided:</p>	
<p>Referral(s):</p>	

Part 3: Review of Actions Taken

Complete this section between 4 – 6 weeks after an incident, suspicion or disclosure of abuse.

SAFETY AND WELLBEING	
Current safety and wellbeing of the child	
Is the child safe from abuse and harm – including exposure to family violence? <i>If not, consider the need to make a further report</i>	<input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/> Yes
Does the child have any wellbeing issues that are not currently being addressed? <i>If so, consider how these can be addressed and captured within a student support plan.</i>	<input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/> Yes
Current wellbeing of other children who may be impacted by the abuse	
Are there any other children who may be impacted by the abuse?	<input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/> Yes
If so, have their wellbeing needs been met? <i>If so, consider how these can be addressed and captured within a student support plan.</i>	<input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/> Yes
Current wellbeing of impacted staff members	
Does the staff member who made the report/ witnessed the incident, formed a suspicion or received a disclosure require any support (e.g., EAP referral)?	<input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/> Yes
If so, has this been received?	<input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/> Yes

Review of actions taken	
Were the four critical actions followed: responding to incidents, disclosures or suspicions of child abuse?	
Was an appropriate decision made in relation to when to act?	<input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/> Yes
Have the parents continued to be engaged if appropriate?	<input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/> Yes
Could the suspected abuse have been detected earlier?	<input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/> Yes
Action 1	
Did the Hendersons take appropriate action in an emergency?	<input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/> Yes
Action 2	
Was a report made to the appropriate authorities and internally?	<input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/> Yes
Were subsequent reports made if necessary?	<input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/> Yes



Action 3	
Did the Hendersons contact the parents/carers asap?	<input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/> Yes
Action 4	
Has Hendersons provided any support for the student?	<input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/> Yes
Have any complaints been received?	<input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/> Yes
Have the complaints been resolved?	<input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/> Yes
Was the student appropriately supported in any interviews?	<input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/> Yes
Consider and list actions that can be taken to build Hendersons capacity to identify and respond to incidents, allegations or reports of child abuse or student sexual offending in the future.	

2. Complaint Submission Form

Section 1: Complainant Information

Name: _____

Phone Number: _____

Email Address: _____

Preferred Contact Method:

Phone Email In Person

Section 2: Complaint Details

1. Date of Incident: _____

2. Time of Incident (if applicable): _____ 3. Location:

4. Nature of Complaint:

Child Safety Concern

Staff Behaviour

Educational Program or Operations

Privacy or Data Protection

Cyber Safety or Online Interactions

Other (please specify): _____

5. Description of Complaint:

(Provide as much detail as possible, including what happened, who was involved, and any relevant context.)

6. Have you raised this issue before?

Yes No

7. If yes, provide details of previous discussions or actions taken:

Section 3: Desired Outcome

What resolution or outcome are you seeking?

(e.g., apology, process improvement, specific action)

Section 4: Additional Information

Supporting Documentation:

(List or attach any supporting documents, such as emails, screenshots, or other evidence.)

Witnesses (if any):

(Provide the names and contact details of any witnesses who may have relevant information.)

Section 5: Acknowledgment

I confirm that the information provided is accurate to the best of my knowledge. I understand that Hendersons will handle this complaint confidentially and in accordance with its Complaints Handling Policy.

Signature: _____ Date: _____

Office Use Only

Received By: _____

Date Received: _____

Complaint Reference Number:

_____ Next Steps:

- Acknowledgment Sent
- Investigation Initiated
- Resolved
- Escalated

Comments/Notes:

3. Charter of Commitment to Children and Young People



Charter of Commitment to Children and young people

 Phone Number
00 9013 0277

 Website
www.hendersons.com.au

 Email
info@hendersons.com.au

Our promise to you....

Respect

We will treat everyone equally no matter where they are from or who they are. We will make sure everyone feels included and welcome.

Inform

We will give you information about your physical, emotional and online safety, and what to do if you feel unsafe.

Give you a voice

We will make sure there are lots of ways for you to have a say and be involved.

Help

We will listen and act on what you tell us. We will help you with your hopes and dreams as well as your worries and fears.

Trust

You can trust that we will care about your needs and feelings and will support you. We will continue to get better at what we do.

Safety

We will make our place happy and comfortable for you.

GOVERNANCE

Document Details

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Policy Approver:	General Manager
Policy Owner:	General Manager
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Date of Next Review:	December 2026

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V2	December 2024	Minor updates by Executive Director
V3	December 2025	Minor updates by General Manager