

1- Statement of commitment

Persian Language School of Brisbane (the School) is committed to providing services to children and young people to assist them in learning the Persian Language (Farsi) as a second language. We understand that for children immigrating to Australia at a very young age or children born in Australia to Iranian parents it would be challenging to learn Persian as their first language. Nevertheless, we aim to develop all essential language skills in those pupils to become capable native Persian speakers. We value the importance of connecting with our background culture and we truly appreciate the opportunity which multicultural Australia is providing us to do so.

Our organisation is committed to ensure that the safety and wellbeing of all children and young people is our first priority and will endeavor to provide a safe and supportive environment by:

- Developing a Risk Management Strategy to ensure all potential risks are identified, strategies are provided to minimise them and in case of an incident it will be managed properly as per procedure.
- Providing a clear and consistent framework to guide and support the stakeholders or volunteers who work with our organisation or who benefit from our services.
- Supervising children and young people at all times during class sessions and also breaks.
- Ensuring all teachers and direct supervisors possess valid blue cards as per requirement by the applicable state and federal legislations.

Persian Language School of Brisbane has adopted values which underpin school policies and practices. These values are:

- Respect; always and everywhere and to all cultures
- Contribution; school, local and global community

We expect all members of the School to learn and apply these values, either in their behaviours or interaction within the school community.

Our vision is that Persian Language School of Brisbane will be a school where students:

- Thrive in a safe environment
- Are excited by their learning
- Enjoy positive and productive relationships with peers and teachers
- Are supported by involved parents and caregiver

This document will be reviewed and revised on an “as needed” basis to ensure it is aligned with the latest Queensland Government legislations.

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2- Code of Conduct

2-1- Language

People involved with our organisation should use polite and direct language, although default language during class and break sessions is Persian, teachers and caregivers can use English when it is necessary to effectively communicate with children or adults.

Use of offensive and aggressive language is not permitted.

2-2- Supervision of children

All parents should sign in and sign out their child / children when arriving at the school and before leaving the school.

All children must be supervised at all time.

Children can use toilets on their own without supervision. Parents should advise school if their child / children must be accompanied during their visit to restrooms.

A minimum staff to children ratio of 1 to 8 should be maintained during break sessions.

Parents can leave their child / children with the school after signing in as long as there is enough caregivers to ensure the minimum ratio is maintained at all times.

Parents should use school car park facilities with care during drop-off and pick-up time.

2-3- Physical contact

Physical contact with children is only allowed when and where it is absolutely necessary, e.g. in circumstances which is related to children safety or required for educational activities.

So, in the following cases physical contact with children is acceptable:

- injury management
- to demonstrate a skill or for instructional purposes as part of an activity, or
- to assist with toileting of young children

No inappropriate physical contact with children is allowed. Some examples of inappropriate physical contact are:

- violent or aggressive behavior such as hitting, kicking, slapping or pushing
- kissing, or
- touching of a sexual nature.

It is appropriate for a teacher / caregiver to be alone with a child as long as the child and the person are visible to others at all times.

2-4- Relationships

If advised by teachers, for outstanding educational achievements or for initiative purposes, a gift of appropriate value can be presented to children.

2-5- Behaviour management

Staff including teachers or volunteers are expected to manage their behaviour in accordance with this code of conduct ensuring their behavior is not punitive, humiliating or aggressive.

Also children are expected to listen to the teachers, parents and caregivers instructions and act accordingly and immediately.

2-6- Managing injuries or illnesses

In case of injury or illness;

- If a trained first aider is present during an injury, appropriate first aid will be given, using the School available facilities,
- Child's parents / emergency contact will be notified immediately via phone call or email,
- If required, an ambulance will be called.
- Adequate supervision of the sick or injured child shall be provided by a person directed by the school management.

2-7- Visitor policy

During school time either parents or teachers must be vigilant and if any unknown person is present at the school premises they will be approached politely and asked about their business.

2-8- Photography policy

In school application form there is a consent statement for parents to allow school to take photographs or videos of their child(ren) and publish it on social media websites such as school facebook page or use it for advertisement purposes.

When taking photograph or video it is important to ensure children are appropriately clothed and the photos are appropriate for the child's age.

2-9- Use of technology and social media

Use of the internet, computers, mobile phones and other electronic devices is permitted only at class time and under direct teacher supervision and only for educational purposes.

2-10- Smoking, alcohol consumption and the use of medications and drugs

Smoking, alcohol consumption and the use of drugs is strictly prohibited during School time and staff attending work while under the influence of alcohol or other drugs (prescribed medications are excluded) will be asked to leave the school premises immediately.

2-11- Organisation standards

Bullying, discrimination and sexual harassment is not tolerated at any level. Both business and casual dresses are considered as acceptable dress codes.

2-12- General safety

- Refer to 2.2.

2-13- Confidentiality of information

Only board members have access to student information and this information is only used for administrative and educational purposes.

3- Recruitment, selection, training and management

The blue card screening process is an assessment of a person's eligibility to work with children and young people, the recruitment and selection of our staff is the first opportunity to ascertain a person's suitability to work with children and young people in our organisation.

3-1- Recruitment

The goal of this process is to identify and recruit someone who has the skills and attributes to fulfill the role requirements.

Position description for teachers and selection criteria:

- keen desire to work with children including patience and enthusiasm
- values children's rights to feel safe and happy
- prior experience with working with children
- understanding of physical and emotional needs of children
- communication skills including rapport and trust building skills
- leadership skills
- problem solving and conflict resolution skills
- positive reinforcement/strength-based approach
- time management and planning skills

3-2- Advertising the position

Vacant positions will not be advertised on the job finding websites or local newspapers because it is only 2 hours worth of work each week and the school only reimburses the expenses associated with the positions e.g. commuting etc. Brisbane Persian community will be informed about available positions using opportunities in the events, gatherings and parties and school facebook page.

Applicants will be informed if they are going to be subjected to blue card screening, interview, referee checks, identification verification, and if the School will request that the candidate disclose any information relevant to their eligibility to engage in activities involving children and young people.

3-3- Training

All teachers are responsible for their own training requirements.

3-4- Induction programs

An induction program which includes details of the School's child and youth risk management strategy will be conducted for new staff to help them understand their role in providing a safe and supportive environment for children and young people.

3-5- Management

Parents and caregivers are able to access all the organisation's policies and procedures, to ensure that the organisation is living up to the expectations within the policies and procedures, and that they are reflected in the daily operations within the service environment.

4- Handling disclosures or suspicions of harm, including reporting guidelines

4-1- Defining harm

Harm is defined as 'any detrimental effect of a significant nature on the child's physical, psychological or emotional wellbeing'. Harm can be caused by physical, psychological, or emotional abuse or neglect; or sexual abuse or exploitation (section 9 of the Child Protection Act 1999).

Considerations when forming a reasonable suspicion about harm to a child include:

- whether there are detrimental effects on the child's body or the psychological state or emotional state - that are evident to the person, or
- that the person considers are likely to become evident in the future, and
- in relation to any detrimental effects mentioned above - their nature and severity, and
- the likelihood that they will continue, and
- the child's age (section 13C of the Child Protection Act 1999).

It is also important to remember that harm can be caused by a single act or omission or a series of acts or omissions.

4-2- What is a 'disclosure' of harm?

A disclosure of harm occurs when someone, including a child, tells you about harm that has happened, is happening, or is likely to happen to a child.

Disclosures of harm may start with:

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

It is important to act quickly and in the best interests of the child or young person after a disclosure of harm is received, irrespective of the alleged source of harm.

4-4- What is a 'suspicion' of harm?

A suspicion of harm is when someone has a reasonable suspicion that a child has suffered, is suffering, or is at an unacceptable risk of suffering, significant harm. This includes circumstances which relate to an unborn child who may be in need of protection after he or she is born. A child who has been, or may be experiencing, abuse may show behavioural, emotional or physical signs of stress and abuse.

There may also be other circumstances where there is concern for a child's welfare but it does not reach the threshold to be considered a disclosure or suspicion of harm.

The School has the duty of care to follow up any suspicions of harm or potential risk of harm to children and young people in the School care. This can be done by observing and recording the actions of children who might be at risk, and reporting concerns to the relevant authority. So, a procedure is in place to handle any potential risk to children and young people.

The contact officer for any harm relating matter is a member of the School board.

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The contact officers should listen to the raised concern calmly, actively and non-judgmentally in a private place.

The contact officers should encourage the person to talk in their own words and ensure just enough open-ended questions are asked to act protectively (e.g. 'Can you tell me what happened'...or 'Can you tell me more about that'). Leading questions which tend to suggest an answer should not be used. They ensure the person is advised that the disclosure cannot remain a secret and it is necessary to tell someone in order to get help.

Also the contact officer shall:

- reassure the person they have done the right thing by telling them
- advise the child that you need to tell someone else who can help the child
- document the disclosure clearly and accurately, including a detailed description of:
 - the relevant dates, times, locations and who was present
 - exactly what the person disclosing said, using "I said," "they said," statements
 - the questions you asked
 - any comments you made, and
 - your actions following the disclosure
- not attempt to investigate or mediate an outcome, and
- follow any relevant process for reporting a disclosure of harm and consider whether there are requirements to report matters to the Queensland Police Service or Child Safety

The disclosure or suspicion of harm will be reviewed by the School board member once received and will be assessed against guidelines in the Child and Youth Risk Management Strategy Toolkit to specify the next step. The board should hold the meeting in no later than a week after receiving the disclosure.

In cases where the likely outcome of the meeting is step 1 as follows, the board should have the meeting held on the same day of receiving the disclosure. The outcome of the meeting is to make a decision whether:

1. The disclosure or suspicion needs to be reported to the Queensland Police Service; this is required where a child is at imminent risk of harm, in a life-threatening situation or a child has been the victim of a criminal offence. This should be done immediately by dialing 000.
2. The disclosure or reasonable suspicion of harm needs to be reported to Child Safety. If there are Mandatory reporters in the school Board (doctors, registered nurses, approved teachers, police officers) they should act based on the guidelines in Section 13A, 13C and 13G of the Child Protection Act 1999. Reports by non-mandatory reporters can be done by contacting the Regional Intake Service <http://www.communities.qld.gov.au/childsafety/about-us/contact-us/child-safety-service-centres/regional-intake-services> during normal business hours or Child Safety After Hours Service Centre on 1800 177 135 or (07) 3235 9999. A person making a report is protected from liability under the Child Protection Act 1999 from civil or criminal legal actions and is not considered to have broken any code of conduct or ethics.
3. Referral is required to other support services, including Family and Child Connect. To deal with concerns for a child that do not amount to a reasonable suspicion of harm the School board can offer support and help to the child family, for example by referring them to a

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Family and Child Connect service which can provide information and advice about connecting families with support services.

A mandatory reporter can refer a family without their consent, but others require the consent of the family to make a referral.

The School board should ensure information is not accidentally mishandled in the internal reporting procedures, prior to the matter being reported to the authorities, and where there is immediate risk of harm to a child, all staff or volunteers are aware they can act immediately to protect that child and contact the authorities.

Queensland Police Service or Child Safety should be consulted as to who should tell the child or young person's parents or caregivers about the disclosure and the action taken, and who can give ongoing help and trained support to the child or young person.

4-5- Media attention

A disclosure or suspicion of harm may attract media notice. It is critical to avoid giving out protected or potentially damaging information. The School board shall consider limiting contact with the media to one person in the board.

5- Managing breaches of risk management strategy

A breach is any action or inaction by any member of the School, including parents, children and young people that fail to comply with any part of the strategy.

The board president is responsible for the management of all types of breaches or he / she can make a delegation to another board member. The breach report should include the name of person(s) involved, the incident description, date, time and location of the incident, action taken (if any) or outcome, and the contact details of the person completing the report.

The consequences should be proportionate to the breach, outcomes may include:

- emphasising the relevant component of the risk management strategy, – providing closer supervision
- providing further education
- mediating between those involved in the incident (where appropriate)
- disciplinary procedures (if necessary)
- reviewing current policies and procedures, and
- developing new policies and procedures (if necessary).

6- Risk management plans for high risk activities and special events

This section is not applicable to the activities undertaken in the School. However, in case an additional activity or special event is considered by the board to be a high risk, a separate risk

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management plan including detailed steps as follow should be prepared before activity commencement.

1. Describe the activity
2. Identify the risks
3. Analyse the risks
4. Evaluate the risks
5. Manage the risks and reassess
6. Review.

7- Compliance with the requirements of the blue card system

This plan needs to be reviewed to ensure:

- whether the policies and procedures were followed
- whether any incidents relating to children and young people's risk management issues occurred
- the actual process used to manage any incidents
- the effectiveness of the policies and procedures in preventing or minimising harm to children and young people, and
- the content and frequency of training in relation to your child and youth risk management strategy.

This review is based on an “as-needed” basis and should be documented.

All teachers and teacher aids must have valid blue cards. Also, board members who are in frequent direct contact with the children and young people should also have valid blue cards. Any board member can be nominated as the contact person on the blue card application form. However, the school address must be mentioned on the form to make sure all future communications will be received directly.

The school board shall maintain a blue card register which at the beginning of each year shall be reviewed for any further action such as asking a teacher for applying for a card renewal.

If a person joins and already has a blue card, the school need to:

- Verify the validity of the blue card, AND Lodge an *Authorisation to confirm a valid card/application form* with Blue Card Services. This will ensure that the school receives important notifications in relation to the blue card holder, including that the card has been cancelled or suspended.

If a person ceases working with the school, the school should lodge an *Applicant/cardholder no longer with organisation (for organisations)* form to advise Blue Card Services immediately.

The school will not be involved in working with high risk individuals.

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8- Communication and support

This plan will be sent to all parent and caregivers for information via email or in hard copies. All feedbacks are welcomed and will be considered in the next scheduled review of the plan.

The school board members are prepared to provide or facilitate required support to all people involved with the learning activities and educational tasks.

For further information, more guidelines, Additional methodologies, refer to the Child and Youth Risk Management Strategy Toolkit, published on

<https://www.bluecard.qld.gov.au/pdf/rmst/201506-Child-and-youth-risk-management-strategy-toolkit.pdf>

Also refer to

<https://www.bluecard.qld.gov.au/risk-management.html>