



Child safety policy and procedures

Statement from Spectrum Quest

- Spectrum Quest will not tolerate any actions or behaviours that hinder the safety and/or wellbeing of any child nor anyone else Spectrum Quest comes into contact with.
 - Spectrum Quest has a zero tolerance policy towards abuse.
- Spectrum Quest will make effort to foster an environment that keeps children safe, and allows them to develop and grow their wellbeing.
- Spectrum Quest will make effort to keep its approach to child safety in line with its Vision, Mission, and values, in ways that do not create unnecessary risk. See Spectrum Quest's purpose for more information on our Vision, Mission and Values, which you can view here: <https://spectrumquest.com.au/spectrum-quest-purpose/>
- The Child Safety Policy is not expected to be read in isolation, and is instead expected to be read alongside all other Spectrum Quest policies, procedures, and codes. Most notably alongside the Code of Conduct which you can view here: <https://spectrumquest.com.au/code-of-conduct/>
- Spectrum Quest is committed to adhering to both the Victorian Child Safe Standards, and the National Principles for Child Safe Organisations.
 - You can read more about the Victorian Child Safe Standards here: <https://ccyp.vic.gov.au/child-safe-standards/the-11-child-safe-standards/>
 - You can read more about the National Principles for Child Safe Organisations here: <https://www.childsafety.gov.au/system/files/2024-04/national-principles-for-child-safe-organisations.PDF>
- Spectrum Quest will make regular efforts to identify and evaluate risks, take steps to mitigate them, and prepare for their occurrence.
- Spectrum Quest will take any concerns to child safety seriously, and make effort to respond appropriately.

Definitions of abuse

Spectrum Quest is opposed to abuse in all its forms. Here we define some, but not all, of the primary forms of abuse. These terms should not be considered limited to these definitions.

- **Sexual abuse:** Any sexual act, behaviour, or exposure, that is non-consensual, age inappropriate, or exploitative, and/or violates a person's boundaries, dignity, or autonomy.
- **Emotional/psychological abuse:** Any act or Behaviour that manipulates, intimidates, isolates, dehumanizes, or diminishes a person's sense of self-worth, autonomy, connection to community, or dignity.
- **Physical abuse:** Any act or behaviour results in reasonably avoidable physical damage, harm or injury.
- **Spiritual/religious abuse:** Any act or behaviour that misuses religion, faith or spiritual belief, to control, manipulate, exploit, oppress, harm, undermine identity, or bring about emotional/psychological abuse to someone.
- **Neglect:** Any failure to act or behave in a way that reasonably seeks to meet a person's physical, emotional, medical or social needs, respect their autonomy, dignity, or cultural identity, resulting in harm or deprivation, where it is recognized that the person who failed to act or behave reasonably could have acted, and reasonably should have acted, or had a duty of care to do so.

Expectations of Spectrum Quest

The following outlines expectations of, but not limited to, Spectrum Quest's: staff, volunteers, and contractors providing service for Spectrum Quest.

- To adhere to this Child Safety policy and procedures document.
- To adhere to all Spectrum Quest policies, procedures, and most importantly the Code of Conduct.
- When expected to engage in Spectrum Quest training, they complete and adhere to the training in full.
- Report all they can reasonably identify of abuse or neglect to Spectrum Quest. Following relevant training, otherwise following the procedures for reporting outlined in this document
- Adhere to the Victorian Child Safe Standards and the National Principles for Child Safe Organisations.

Procedures to report when signs of abuse or child endangerment are identified

The following is how to proceed if you believe a person connected with Spectrum Quest has their safety or wellbeing at risk, particularly if the person in question is a child.

1. If you have any reason to believe a person is in immediate danger, you should intervene if it is safe to do so, and you are capable of doing so safely. You should also call 000, and then seek the aid of Spectrum Quest staff in the matter.
2. Otherwise, if the person is not in immediate danger, and if you have the means, speak with Spectrum Quest staff on the matter. If possible you should favour speaking to the Child Safety Officer, or contact staff in charge of the Child Safety Officer, if the officer is the one whom you are concerned is not acting safely. From there, they will ask questions, and seek to record relevant details.
3. In the event you cannot speak with staff, email:
ChildSafetyOfficer@SpectrumQuest.com.au seeking to adhere to the following:
 - Act as soon as possible, so that
 - You are more likely to give an accurate account
 - Relevant action can be taken swiftly to ensure the safety of the person involved.
 - If you are concerned about the behaviour of the Child Safety Officer, email Luke@SpectrumQuest.com.au, or any staff you know that have authority over the safety officer. If you do not have confidence that there is anyone at Spectrum Quest who can handle the matter appropriately, seek advice from the police.
 - In the subject line of the email, begin the subject line with “REPORT” followed by an appropriate title.
 - This will help the officer quickly identify the email, providing opportunity to respond more quickly.
 - In the email, provide your:
 - Full Name
 - Phone number
 - Regarding the incident or sign of abuse/endangerment you saw, provide:
 - Where it occurred
 - When it occurred, as close to the minute as you are able
 - The events
 - The events leading up to the occurrence
 - The events of the occurrence itself
 - The events after the occurrence
 - Include what you did
 - Detailing
 - What you saw
 - What you heard
 - Separate what you believe happened, and people’s intent. You are welcome to say what you believe, but it is important to make clear the facts of what you know for certain. For example
 - You hear a thud, turn around to see an injured person, and another with blood on their hand.
In this example, you might believe the one with blood on their hand punched the injured person, and you may say “I believe they punched the injured person”. But you should make clear what you

actually saw and heard.

le. “I heard a thud, saw an injured person, and blood on another person’s hand.” You should not say you saw them punch the injured person, nor should say “They punched the injured person” implying that you saw them punch, which, in this example, you did not.

Notable identified risks and mitigation

Below are a few of the risks Spectrum Quest has identified in the services it provides, and what will be, and is being done to mitigate the risks. This list is not, and is not meant to be, exhaustive, but rather intended to be publicly open about some of the risks that are present in the nature of Spectrum Quest’s operations, and how we handle them. Keeping in line with our values of “Honesty” and “Accountability”, which you can read more about here:

<https://spectrumquest.com.au/spectrum-quest-purpose/>

There are more risks considered than what is below, that is kept in a risk registry that is reviewed regularly. If you are concerned about something regarding Spectrum Quest that may be a risk, you are welcome to email: Admin@SpectrumQuest.com.au. Within reason, Spectrum Quest will respond to your email, and seek to provide you with how the risk is sought to be mitigated. Or if the risk had not been considered, we will (in line with the mentioned values) consider the risk, add it to our risk registry if appropriate, and/or review the risk at the appropriate time.

● Volunteer training

- **CONTEXT:** Spectrum Quest recognizes that having multiple adults present during a program at Spectrum Quest has benefits to significantly increase the safety of children involved. That is why we ask parents to optionally volunteer to sit in. (As well as other benefits not listed here).
However, beyond certain expectations we have of volunteer parents (such as obtaining a Working with Children’s Check), by law, Spectrum Quest must adhere to the Victoria Child Safe Standards. Therefore, Spectrum Quest must, by law, train volunteers such that they have the ability to keep children safe.
- **RISK:** The risk with this is that if too much training is asked of parents, they may be inclined to not volunteer to begin with, resulting in the very benefit being negated.
- **MITIGATION:** Spectrum Quest mitigates this by balancing between: quantity of training (keeping it as small as possible), and essential training.
 - Spectrum Quest will make every effort to ensure that it does not compromise the safety and wellbeing of participants in any training content they choose to forgo.
- **MITIGATION 2:** Spectrum Quest as much as possible keeps the responsibilities of volunteers minimal. For example, volunteers are not expected to attend to participant behaviours. Such as conflict between players. Therefore, volunteers

do not need to be *trained* in how to attend to participant behaviours, thereby, continuing to keep training minimal.

● Singular child in a session

- **CONTEXT:** On the rarer occasion, sometimes no parent can volunteer, and only one participant can make the program.
- **RISK:** With no other adult present, and no other children, the child is in the care of a single Spectrum Quest staff, and any risk brought about by that staff.
- **MITIGATION:** The Spectrum Quest staff is required to immediately notify the parent of the child of the situation, and ideally in written format. Verbal notification is acceptable, but must be followed up in writing, stating in the message to the parent that the parent gave verbal acknowledgement. Steps staff should take include:
 - Staff must invite a parent(s) to sit in during the session.
 - They must inform other local Spectrum Quest staff of the situation if applicable, seeking a solution to avoid the staff member running the program alone.
 - Staff should seek to leave doors open to where the program is taking place, and do what they can to remain visible to others in the area, if these are viable options.
- **DECISION:** Spectrum Quest staff must meet strict requirements before being allowed to provide services to child participants. Such as, but not limited to: Working with Children's Checks, Police checks, References, and NDIS screening checks. Spectrum Quest has decided that **programs will still run, even if some, or all of the above mitigations are unable to be applied.** Spectrum Quest believes the mitigation is adequate, and occurrence of the risk would be infrequent and inconsistent, thereby, having a low impact on increasing the risk towards the participant. The risk is seen as less than the risks others take in other industries, such as private tuition for maths or piano, where the teacher is alone with children for the duration of their lessons.
 - In particular, while Spectrum Quest operates as a sole trader, ie. it is just Luke running Spectrum Quest: Luke already takes such a risk as a disability support worker with the children he serves/has served.

● Addressing social skills

- **CONTEXT:** Any group program with children and/or people with mental and/or cognitive challenges will always have some risk of conflict between participants, however, Spectrum Quest recognizes that it aims to nurture those areas they find challenging, and increase the skills and capacity of the participants.
- **RISK:** To engage in such growth typically will come at greater risk, particularly as Spectrum Quest seeks to facilitate and set the participants up to practice such social skills, rather than resolving such social situations entirely for them. Additionally, as mentioned, these are areas that the participant(s) may already find challenging, therefore, this poses a higher risk that social situations may lead to conflict.

- **MITIGATION:** The mitigation for this has many components, and is fundamentally the core of Spectrum Quest's entire services, therefore, will not be wholly outlined here. Please see out "Methodology" for more information here:

<https://spectrumquest.com.au/spectrum-quest-purpose/>

While an outline of Spectrum Quest's mitigation cannot reasonably outlined here, some elements it can be stated to include, are, but not limited to:

- Thorough veto and training of Spectrum Quest staff, in order to make sure they can handle such situations.
- Research and revision to continuously update Spectrum Quest practices.
- Listening to participants, but listening to more than just what they say.
- Deescalating situations
- Encouraging the practice of character distancing, and thereby, emotional regulation. This is the practice of separating the emotions of one's character a participant is acting out in a game, versus their own personal emotions.
- Staff using their authority to make sure all participants involved are heard and understood.
 - Spectrum Quest staff will generally avoid using authority to resolve conflict for participants.
- Asking questions that help the participant get closer to expressing their emotions.
- Providing space for participants to step out of the room and calm down.
- When a participant handles a social situation poorly with consequences:
 - Listening to them
 - Praising them for what they tried to do, even if they did not do it well.
 - Helping them identify what was not their fault.
 - Helping them identify what is in their control, and therefore, their responsibility.
 - Consider the intention of others involved, assuming good intention, and seeking to check their intention
 - Consider how to move forward
 - Consider what can be done in the future