



Opti-MINDS Inc.

Child and Youth Risk Management Strategy

Effective Date: 15/10/2025

Review Date: 23/02/2026

1. Statement of Commitment

Opti-MINDS Inc. is committed to the safety, wellbeing, and empowerment of all children and young people participating in our programs. We support the rights of children and will act without hesitation to ensure a child-safe environment is maintained at all times.

Opti-MINDS Inc. values diversity and inclusion, welcoming the participation of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children, children from culturally and linguistically diverse communities, and children with disability.

2. Code of Conduct

All individuals involved in Opti-MINDS Inc., including volunteers, facilitators, organisers, judges, and staff, must:

- Treat all children and young people with respect, fairness, and dignity at all times.
- Always interact with children in a safe, inclusive, and professional manner.
- Act as a positive role model in both words and actions.
- Use positive reinforcement and encouragement rather than criticism or punishment.
- Encourage teamwork, creativity, and collaboration without pressure.
- Maintain appropriate physical, emotional, and verbal boundaries in all interactions.
- Be mindful and respectful of diverse cultural backgrounds, abilities, and identities.
- Avoid being alone with a child or young person wherever possible.

- Never engage in physical punishment, sexual suggestion, or any inappropriate behaviour.
- Comply fully with all Blue Card requirements, child protection laws, and Opti-MINDS Inc. risk management strategies.
- Report immediately any concerns, disclosures, or suspicions of harm or risk of harm to the designated Child Safeguarding Officer or relevant authority.

All personnel are required to sign and abide by this Code of Conduct as a condition of involvement.

3. Recruitment, Training, and Supervision of Staff and Volunteers

To safeguard children and young people, Opti-MINDS Inc. will:

- Require all staff, committee members, and volunteers who work with children or make decisions affecting them to hold a valid Queensland Blue Card (or exemption card), where applicable. Judges are exempt due to the infrequent nature of their involvement.
- Use a structured recruitment process including interviews, reference checks, and identity verification
- Provide training on child protection, appropriate boundaries, and risk minimisation strategies
- Provide ongoing supervision and support to ensure compliance with policies and procedures

4. Handling Disclosures and Suspicions of Harm

Opti-MINDS Inc. recognises that children and young people may at times disclose harm or that harm may be suspected. All individuals working with or representing Opti-MINDS Inc. must understand how to appropriately respond in such situations.

Staff and volunteers should remain alert to any warning signs and observe changes in a child's behaviour, language, or emotions.

Harm may be suspected when:

- A child or young person discloses they have been harmed.
- Another person (e.g., a child, parent, or staff member) reports harm has occurred or may occur.
- A child indicates someone they know has been harmed (possibly referring to themselves).
- There are significant changes in a child's behaviour or unexplained injuries.
- Harm is witnessed directly.

Anyone who observes or reasonably suspects harm must report it immediately to our **Dedicated Child Protection Person (DCPP)**:

Communications Director

Tel: 0404 523 091

Email: daniela@opti-minds.com

In the absence of the Communications Director:

Challenge Director

Tel: 0458 006 553

Email: deborah@opti-minds.com

Disclosures of harm must always be handled promptly, sensitively, and confidentially, in accordance with the **Opti-MINDS Inc. Privacy Policy**.

5. Managing High-Risk Activities and Special Events

Opti-MINDS Inc. will identify, assess, and manage potential risks through:

- Conducting risk assessments for all events and workshops.
- Maintaining appropriate adult-to-child ratios.
- Ensuring first aid trained personnel are present.
- Clearly outlining roles, responsibilities, and behaviour expectations for all participants.
- Obtaining parent/carer consent for external activities, including photography or media use.

6. Risk Management Plan

A comprehensive risk management plan is in place for:

- Regional Challenge Days and State Finals.
- Workshops and training events.
- Online engagement and digital submissions.
- Venues, transport, and public space use.
- Managing injuries, illness, or behavioural incidents.

This plan includes risk identification, likelihood and consequence assessment, and mitigation strategies. It is reviewed annually and updated after any incidents or significant events.

7. Policies and Procedures for Handling Breaches

A breach is any action or inaction by any Opti-MINDS Inc. employees, contractors, volunteers, children, parents or carers who fail to comply with any part of this

strategy and will be handled by the **Designated Child Protection Person (DCCP)** or in their absence the Challenge Director.

Breaches will be managed in a fair, unbiased and supportive manner. Where a Opti-MINDS Inc. employee is alleged to have committed a breach, the individual may be subject to disciplinary action up to and including termination of employment.

Where an external party is alleged to have committed a breach the DCCP will consider the report and either refer this immediately to the authorities or, after taking appropriate advice (which may include discussing the circumstances on a confidential basis with the Child Safety and Disability Services Unit within the Department of Communities in the Queensland Government), decide not to refer the concerns to the authorities but keep a full record of the concerns.

8. Compliance with the Blue Card System

Opti-MINDS Inc. complies with the requirements of the Queensland Blue Card system and the *Working with Children (Risk Management and Screening) Act 2000*. Opti-MINDS Inc. has processes to verify, manage and maintain Blue Cards for its workers.

8.1 Identification of positions requiring a Blue Card

Not every position at Opti-MINDS Inc. requires a Blue Card. Positions are assessed based on the frequency and nature of contact with children and young people. A Blue Card is required when activities are directed mainly at children for at least:

- Eight consecutive days;
- Once a week, each week, over four weeks;
- Once a fortnight, each fortnight, over eight weeks; or
- Once a month, each month, over six months.

Positions that do not meet this threshold do not require a Blue Card. However, **members of the Management Committee** must hold a Blue Card as they make decisions that directly affect children.

8.2 Nomination of a contact person and their responsibilities

The **Secretary and Communications Director** is the nominated contact person for managing Blue Cards and Exemption Cards.

Responsibilities include:

- Accessing and maintaining records within the Blue Card Organisation Portal.
- Receiving and acting on notifications from Blue Card Services regarding card status changes.
- Ensuring ongoing compliance across all relevant personnel.

8.3 Managing Blue Card applications

Opti-MINDS Inc. adheres to the 'no card, no start' law. Employees and volunteers who require a Blue Card will not be able to start work until their application for a Blue Card has been approved by Blue Card Services.

8.4 Managing existing Blue Card holders

Opti-MINDS Inc. has an ongoing process for managing compliance related to the Blue Cards of existing employees and volunteers. When a person joins the organisation and already has a Blue Card, the validity of the card is verified by the Secretary and Communications Director.

8.5 Managing changes in police information

Opti-MINDS Inc. Blue Card Policy requires all employees and volunteers to notify Blue Card Services when there is a change in their police information.

8.6 Managing high risk individuals

Opti-MINDS Inc. will ensure that high risk individuals do not undertake any child-related work within Opti-MINDS Inc. Appropriate procedures are in place to manage potential risks of harm to children and young people that may arise as a result of the person's ongoing employment or engagement.

When Opti-MINDS Inc. receives a notification that an employee or volunteer has been identified as high risk, the Communications Director will be notified. If the employee or volunteer is undertaking child-related work, they will be immediately removed from that role and be classified as non-compliant for that role.

High risk individuals are employees or volunteers who:

- Receive a negative notice or is a known disqualified person;
- Have their Blue Card or Exemption Card cancelled or suspended; or
- Have their Blue Card application withdrawn.

8.7 Managing Blue Card registers

Opti-MINDS Inc. maintains an up-to-date register of all employees and volunteers who hold a Blue Card through the **Blue Card Services Organisation Portal**.

This register records the cardholder's details, card status, and expiry date, and is regularly reviewed to ensure ongoing compliance.

9. Strategies for Communication and Support

Opti-MINDS Inc. is committed to open communication, education, and continuous improvement in child safety practices. The organisation will:

- Provide this Strategy to all staff, volunteers, and partner schools.
- Publish a **Child-Safe Statement** on its website.
- Display clear signage and instructions for reporting concerns at all events.
- Encourage feedback from participants, families, and schools to enhance child safety measures.
- Provide information to children and young people about their rights, safe behaviours, and who to contact if they feel unsafe.

10. Regular Review

This Strategy will be:

- **Reviewed annually** to ensure continued relevance and effectiveness.
- **Updated** as required following legislative changes, incidents, or stakeholder feedback.
- **Recorded with version history** and documented review notes for accountability and transparency.

Contacts

Dedicated Child Protection Person:

Daniela Clever, Communications Director

Tel: 0404 523 091

Email: daniela@opti-minds.com

Blue Card Services QLD:

Phone: 1800 113 611

Website: <https://www.qld.gov.au/bluecard>

Child Safety Services (if you suspect harm):

Phone: 1800 177 135 (24/7)