

Southern Cross Kids' Camps Communication with Children Policy (Phone, Zoom and Social Media)

Policy number:	1.6	Version:	2
Drafted by:	Moores	Approved by Board on:	04/ 2024
Responsible person:	COO	Scheduled review date:	2 Years

1. Title

Southern Cross Kids' Camps Communication with Children Policy (Phone and Zoom) (**SCKC Communication with Children Policy**)

2. Purpose

The purpose of this SCKC Communication with Children Policy is to:

- 2.1 Promote a child safe environment and culture at Southern Cross Kids' Camps (**SCKC**) where children are safe and feel safe.
- 2.2 Recognise the inherent risks associated with adults communicating with children and young people, especially in relation to the risk of grooming.
- 2.3 Mitigate the risk of harm to children and young people who communicate with all SCKC staff including employees, volunteers, contractors, board members, interns and students on placement (**staff**);
- 2.4 provide clear responsibilities on all SCKC staff who are required to contact children by telephone, Zoom or other communication device.
- 2.5 Clarify appropriate communication channels with junior leaders

3. Scope

The SCKC Communication with Children Policy applies to all SCKC staff working with children and young people.

4. Introduction

- 4.1 SCKC do not encourage contact with children outside of the structured scheduled programs.

- 4.2 SCKC recognise that on occasion, circumstances may occur where contact with children outside the structured scheduled programs is necessary for the health, safety, wellbeing or care of the child. For example when a child is unable to attend a scheduled program due to unforeseen circumstances.
- 4.3 SCKC has zero tolerance for all forms of child abuse or harm against children and young people, and all allegations will be treated seriously in accordance with the Child Safety Policy and Procedure.
- 4.4 SCKC recognises that grooming is a crime and a form of serious misconduct which occurs when an adult engages in predatory conduct to facilitate later sexual activity with a child, whether or not sexual activity or communication about sexual activity has occurred.
- 4.5 SCKC recognises that grooming has significant detrimental long-term effects on a child's wellbeing and is committed to reducing the risk of grooming and other misconduct occurring.
- 4.6 The safety, welfare and best interests of the child are paramount.
- 4.7 SCKC defines all young people under the age of 18 to be children. This can pose some challenges relating to including junior leaders in communication about their volunteering on camp. Care needs to be taken to include these leaders in important volunteering communications & training activities, without compromising child safety.

5. Obligations on Staff

- 5.1 Should a staff member consider that it is in a child's best interests to communicate with a child outside of the structured scheduled program the staff member must:
 - (a) obtain permission from the Camp Director to contact the child or young person, prior to making contact;
 - (b) wherever possible, and only after 5.1(a), obtain written permission from the parent or carer to contact the child or young person, prior to making contact; and
 - (c) disclose to the parent or carer the reason for making contact with the child or young person, prior to making contact.
- 5.2 If the above permission is not granted, the staff member must not make contact with the child or young person.
- 5.3 If permission is granted for contact, when making contact with the child or young person, the staff member must:
 - (a) follow the SCKC 2 Deep Rule at all times when speaking with the child, ensuring that two approved SCKC volunteers are present in the conversation at all times;

- (b) ensure that the communication with the child or young person is for their benefit and not the benefit of the staff member;
- (c) must adhere to the SCKC Child Safety Code of Conduct at all times;
- (d) ensure that the mode of contact is through the SCKC Zoom Account unless the SCKC Zoom account is unavailable or not practical;
- (e) focus the discussion on the needs and wellbeing of the child or young person;
- (f) limit the disclosure of personal information about themselves.

5.4 Staff members must not under any circumstances:

- (a) Follow a child or young person on any social media platform;
- (b) Communicate with a child or young person on any social media platform; or
- (c) Allow a child or young person to follow them on any social media platform.

6. Communicating with underage volunteers at SCKC

- 6.1 Junior leaders play an important role on camp and need to be included in communications to ensure they receive relevant camp information, safety information and training.
- 6.2 Parental permission should be sought when a young person applies to volunteer, and expectations and permission should be sought to communicate with the junior leader. Parents or carers of should be given the option to be included in key email information, if that is their preference.
- 6.3 Communication with young leaders should be limited to as-required, for the purposes of serving on camp. Communication should be done by the Director, or their delegate via SCKC provided platforms (e.g SCKC email). Contact details of the young person should not be made available to the broader team.
Care should be taken to bcc, rather than cc in emails.
- 6.4 No adult SCKC volunteer may follow or 'friend' a junior leader on a social media platform, unless they are already connected outside camp.
- 6.5 Junior Leaders cannot join SCKC Facebook pages, WhatsApp groups or any platform that would allow other adults to see or gain their contact details.

6.6 2 Deep rules apply to junior leaders at all SCKC events and camps. 2 adults must be present at all times. A second junior leader does not fulfill this requirement.

7. Breach of the SCKC Communication with Children Policy

Breaches of this Communication with Children Policy may result in disciplinary action including termination of employment or dismissal from SCKC. Allegations of misconduct involving children will be managed in accordance with any relevant Reportable Conduct Scheme and may be the subject of a referral to Police or other government authority.

8. Monitoring, Evaluation and Review

The SCKC Communication with Children Policy will be reviewed on an as needs basis, or every two years.