

CHILD SAFE POLICY AND PROCEDURES

Document history: Approved by the Board on 21 June 2018.

Review date: Every two years, and following every reportable incident, a review shall be conducted to assess whether the organisation's child protection policies or procedures require modification to better protect the children under the organisation's care.

Related Documents and Resources

- HCV Conflict of interest & code of conduct policy
- HCV Board duties and governance standards policy
- HCV Privacy policy

PART 1 CHILD SAFE POLICY

Policy purpose: To ensure HCV compliance with the *Child Wellbeing and Safety Act 2005* (as amended), and with the Child Safe Standards of the Commission for Children and Young People.

A. Background

The Board acknowledges that:

1. It has approved policies that guide:
 - Conflict of interest – code of conduct; and
 - Board duties and governance standards.
2. It uses a matrix to identify and manage risks to the organisation, its personnel, its clients and supporters.
3. It is aware of the information and resources available from the Commission for Children and Young People: <https://ccyp.vic.gov.au>
4. It has drawn on guidance available from: <https://www.communitydirectors.com.au/icda/policybank>

B. Definitions

1. **Child** means a person below the age of 18 years unless, under the law applicable to the child, majority is attained earlier.
2. **Child protection** means any responsibility, measure or activity undertaken to safeguard children from harm.
3. **Child abuse** means all forms of physical abuse, emotional ill-treatment, sexual abuse and exploitation, neglect or negligent treatment, commercial (e.g. for financial gain) or other exploitation of a child and includes any actions that results in actual or potential harm to a child.

C. Purposes

The purposes of this policy are

1. To prevent child abuse within the HCV.
2. To maintain an organisational culture of child safety.
3. To ensure that all parties are aware of their responsibilities for identifying possible occasions for child abuse and for establishing controls and procedures for preventing such abuse and/or detecting such abuse when it occurs.
4. To provide guidance to staff/volunteers/contractors as to action that should be taken where they suspect any abuse within or outside of the organisation.
5. To provide a clear statement to staff/volunteers/contractors forbidding any such abuse.
6. To provide assurance that any and all suspected abuse will be reported and fully investigated.

D. Child Safe – policy

1. The HCV is committed to promoting and protecting the interests and safety of children involved in its programs.
2. The HCV believes that all children, regardless of their gender, race, religious beliefs, age, disability, sexual orientation, or family or social background, have equal rights to protection from abuse.
3. The HCV has zero tolerance for child abuse.
4. Everyone working with and for the HCV is responsible for the care and protection of children within the HCV's care, and for reporting information about suspected child abuse.
5. Child protection is a shared responsibility between the HCV, all employees, workers, volunteers, contractors, associates, and members of the HCV community.
6. The HCV recognises that all children are vulnerable; it acknowledges the increased vulnerability of:

- Aboriginal children;
 - Children from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds; and
 - Children with disabilities.
7. The HCV is committed to and implements the seven Child Safe Standards, namely:
- Standard 1: Strategies to embed an organisational culture of child safety, including through effective leadership arrangements
 - Standard 2: A clear commitment to child safety
 - Standard 3: A code of conduct that establishes clear expectations for appropriate behaviour with children
 - Standard 4: Screening, supervision, training and other human resources practices that reduce the risk of child abuse by new and existing personnel
 - Standard 5: Processes for responding to and reporting suspected child abuse
 - Standard 6: Strategies to identify and reduce or remove risks of child abuse
 - Standard 7: Strategies to promote the participation and empowerment of children

PART 2 CHILD SAFE PROCEDURES

Procedures purpose: To assist the HCV in implementing its Child Safe Policy.

E. Organisational culture and leadership

This section aims to assist the HCV with the implementation of **Child Safe Standard 1**.

1. The HCV maintains strategies to embed an organisational culture of child safety, including through effective leadership arrangements.
2. The HCV understands that, for compliance with the Child Safe Standards, it is a Category 2 organisation because it:
 - has limited funding from government
 - has no regulatory arrangements with government
 - provides services for children
3. The Chair of the HCV Board is the person who is primarily responsible for the HCV's compliance with the Reportable Conduct Scheme.
4. In accordance with Section 16K of the *Children Wellbeing and Safety Act 2005*, and with guidance provided by [Information sheet 3 from the Commission for Children and Young People](#), the HCV will support the Chair in:
 - a) Taking a preventative approach to keeping children safe;
 - b) Having systems in place to enable anyone to notify their concern or allegation that conduct in line with reportable conduct may have occurred;

- c) Having systems in place to allow other people to report to the Commission if the reportable allegation concerns the head of the organisation; and
 - d) Having investigation processes clearly defined and developed.
5. The Board will nominate a Child Protection Officer (CPO) to provide information and support to all staff, volunteers, children, young people and their carers regarding child protection matters. Unless otherwise determined, the nominated CPO is the Executive Officer.

F. Commitment to child safety

This section aims to assist the HCV with the implementation of **Child Safe Standard 2**.

- 1. The HCV's commitment to child safety will be demonstrated in all its activities that involve children.
- 2. To ensure transparency, the current version of this document will be available to the public on the HCV website.

G. Code of Conduct

This section aims to assist the HCV with the implementation of **Child Safe Standard 3**.

Based on guidance from the 'Child Safety Code of Conduct' (published February 2018 at <https://www.communitydirectors.com.au/icda/policybank>) the HCV's *Code of Conduct for Employees, Volunteers and Contractors Working with Children and Young People* is:

- 1. All HCV personnel (including staff, volunteers (including Board members) and contractors) are required to abide by this Code.
- 2. With guidance from the Chair, the Executive Officer will:
 - e) Be responsible for the overall welfare and wellbeing of staff and volunteers; and
 - f) Be accountable for managing and maintaining a duty of care towards staff, volunteers and contractors
- 3. All people involved in the care of children on behalf of the HCV will:
 - a) Work towards the achievement of the aims and purposes of the organisation;
 - b) Be responsible for relevant administration of programs and activities in their area;
 - c) Maintain a duty of care towards others involved in these programs and activities;
 - d) Establish and maintain a child-safe environment in the course of their work;
 - e) Be fair, considerate and honest with others;
 - f) Treat children and young people with respect and value their ideas and opinions;
 - g) Act as positive role models in their conduct with children and young people.
 - h) Be professional in their actions;
 - i) Maintain strict impartiality;
 - j) Comply with specific organisational guidelines on physical contact with children;

- k) Respect the privacy of children, their families and teachers/carers, and only disclose information to people who have a need to know;
 - l) Maintain a child-safe environment for children and young people;
 - m) Operate within the policies and guidelines of the HCV; and
 - n) Contact the police if a child is at immediate risk of abuse, phone 000.
4. No person shall:
- a) Shame, humiliate, oppress, belittle or degrade children or young people;
 - b) Unlawfully discriminate against any child;
 - c) Engage in any activity with a child or young person that is likely to physically or emotionally harm them;
 - d) Initiate unnecessary physical contact with a child or young person, or do things of a personal nature for them that they can do for themselves;
 - e) Be alone with a child or young person unnecessarily and for more than a very short time;
 - f) Develop a 'special' relationship with a specific child or young person for their own needs;
 - g) Show favouritism through the provision of gifts or inappropriate attention;
 - h) Arrange contact, including online contact, with children or young people outside of the organisation's programs and activities;
 - i) Photograph or video a child or young person without the consent of the child and his/her parents or guardians;
 - j) Work with children or young people while under the influence of alcohol or illegal drugs;
 - k) Engage in open discussions of a mature or adult nature in the presence of children;
 - l) Use inappropriate language in the presence of children; or
 - m) Do anything in contravention of the organisation's policies, procedures or this Code of Conduct.
5. If any person affiliated with the HCV breaches this Code of Conduct, he or she will face disciplinary action, including and up to termination of employment or cessation of engagement with the organisation.

H. Human Resources Practices

This section aims to assist the HCV with the implementation of **Child Safe Standard 4**.

1. The HCV requires all personnel (including volunteers and contractors) attending HCV events that involve children (for example, History Roadshow events) to hold, carry and (on request) show:
EITHER a current Victorian Institute of Teaching (VIT) registration card
OR a current Working With Children Check (WWCC) card or application number.
2. The HCV requires all personnel (including volunteers and contractors) attending HCV events that involve children (for example, History Roadshow events) to declare or reconfirm their current VIT or WWCC number prior to their first event in a calendar year.

3. The HCV requires all personnel with a WWCC number (including volunteers and contractors) to add the HCV's organisational details to their personal WWCC registration details.

I. Response and Reporting Process

This section aims to assist the HCV with the implementation of **Child Safe Standard 5**.

The HCV's *Child Safety Response and Reporting Process* is based on [the flowchart published by the Victorian Commission for Children and Young People](#).

1. **Who can report?** The HCV will receive a report from a Parent, a Child, an adult at an HCV event, or HCV personnel (including staff, voluntary or contracted personnel).
2. **What to report?** A report can relate to any child safety concerns, including:
 - a) disclosure of abuse or harm
 - b) allegation, suspicion or observation
 - c) breach of Code of Conduct
 - d) environmental safety issues.
3. **If a child is in immediate danger, the HCV will call 000.**
4. **How should a report be made?** The HCV will receive reports via face-to-face conversations, letters, emails, telephone calls or meetings.
5. **To whom should a report be made?** Reports can be addressed to either the HCV's Child Protection Officer or the HCV Chair. (Contact details are available on request.)
6. **What happens next?** The person to whom the report is made will:
 - a) offer support to the child, the parents, the person who reports and the accused person
 - b) initiate internal processes to ensure the safety of the child, clarify the nature of the complaint and commence disciplinary process (if required)
 - c) decide, in accordance with legal requirements and duty of care, whether the matter should / must be reported to the police or Child Protection and make report as soon as possible if required.
7. **How will privacy be protected?**
 - a) All personal information considered or recorded will respect the privacy of the individuals involved unless there is a risk to someone's safety. The HCV has safeguards and practices in place to ensure any personal information is protected.
 - b) In accordance with the HCV's *Privacy Policy*, everyone involved is entitled to know how their personal information is recorded, what will be done with it, and who will be able to access it.
8. **What outcomes are expected?** The HCV expects that, following investigation, an outcome will be decided; relevant personnel, parents and child will be notified of the outcome of the investigation; HCV policies and procedures will be updated where necessary.

J. Risk Management

This section aims to assist the HCV with the implementation of **Child Safe Standard 6**.

1. The HCV will ensure that child safety is a part of its overall risk management approach.
2. The HCV will maintain and update its risk management matrix to identify and reduce or remove risks of child abuse.
3. The HCV acknowledges that risks always exist for children and there may be some risks that are beyond the HCV's control, but the HCV will do what is in its power to reduce the risk of children being harmed.

K. Participation and Empowerment of Children

This section aims to assist the HCV with the implementation of **Child Safe Standard 7**.

Whenever possible, the HCV will promote the participation and empowerment of children by:

1. supporting children and young people to understand their rights, contribute to child safety planning and raise concerns;
2. promoting and encouraging children's participation in decision-making;
3. valuing and respecting children's opinions;
4. seeking children's views about what makes them feel safe and unsafe; and
5. establishing an environment of trust and inclusion that enables children to ask questions and speak up if they are worried or feeling unsafe.

PART 3 AUTHORISATION

[Signed by the Board Chair]

Date of approval by the Board: 21 June 2018

History Council of Victoria Inc.