



CHILD SAFE POLICY

FOODBANK VICTORIA

1. Executive Summary

1.1 Statement of commitment to child safety and wellbeing

Foodbank Victoria (**the Organisation**) acknowledges that each member of its team, and of the community broadly, have a responsibility to understand the important role they play as individuals, and collectively, in developing and maintaining a child-safe culture and an environment that ensures the wellbeing and safety of children and young people. The Organisation is committed to providing the resources and support to its team member and the community so that child safety underpins its operations on all levels.

As an Organisation which provides services for children in Victoria, including the School Breakfast Clubs Program, the Victorian Child Safe Standards apply, and the Organisation is fully committed to implementing and complying with all aspects of each of the Standards within our operations. The Organisation is also committed to taking a consistent approach to embedding a child safe culture as set out in the National Principles for Child Safe Organisations.

1.2 Reporting obligations

The Organisation takes a zero-tolerance approach to any form of child harm or abuse and is committed to ensuring that the risk of harm to children and young persons is mitigated as much as possible through the prompt reporting of any risk of harm.

If any person believes a child is in immediate danger, the following emergency service numbers are available:

- 000 (Emergency Services);
- 131 278 (After Hours Child Protection Emergency Services).

If you otherwise suspect, or are aware, that there is a risk of harm to or abuse of a child or young person, then you must also:

- immediately report your concerns to the People and Culture Team or an immediate manager;
- make a report to any other mandatory government body or police; and
- ensure any response to immediate risk of harm is appropriate to the known diverse needs of the child or young person, including but not limited to, cultural and



linguistically diverse backgrounds, whether the child is Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander and any disabilities.

If you need guidance on making a report or are unsure whether to do so, immediately contact People and Culture Team for guidance.

1.3 Policy requirements

For each individual to meet their obligations under legislation and in compliance with this Policy, it is essential that all team members familiarise themselves with the different forms of harm and abuse of a child or young person, so that they are adequately equipped to identify harm and achieve a child-safe culture.

This Executive Summary is a summary only of the obligations and responsibilities of the Organisation as a whole. The reading of this Executive Summary does not derogate from the responsibility of each individual to whom this applies to read and familiarise themselves with this Policy.

Failure to behave in a manner consistent with this Policy will result in disciplinary action up to and including termination of employment or engagement.

2. Introduction

The Organisation is committed to promoting and protecting the interests and safety of all children and young people. The Organisation takes a zero-tolerance approach to any form of child harm or abuse and is committed to ensuring that the risk of harm to children and young persons is mitigated as much as possible.

The intent of this Policy is to provide guidelines surrounding the Organisation's commitment to creating and maintaining an organisational culture and environment that promotes child safety.

The Organisation acknowledges that everyone working for the Organisation is responsible to understand the important role they play as individuals, and collectively, in developing and maintaining a child safe culture and an environment that ensures the wellbeing and safety of children and young people.



3. Purpose

The purpose of this Policy is to:

- provide guidance to all team members on how to meet their legislative responsibility under the Victorian Child Safe Standards (**Standards**) in order for the Organisation to create and sustain an environment where children and young persons are, and feel, safe and protected from harm and/or abuse;
- facilitate the prevention of harm and abuse of children and young people;
- implement and adopt an organisational culture of child safety;
- ensure that all team members are aware of their responsibilities for identifying possible incidents of child harm or abuse and for establishing controls and procedures for responding to any incident appropriately and with sensitivity;
- provide a clear statement on the expectations of the Organisation in regard to appropriate conduct towards children and young people and the appropriate response to any identified risks of harm or abuse towards children and/or young people;
- provide recruitment and training guidelines to enhance team members knowledge, compliance and understanding of their obligations under the Standards;
- provide clear processes for the disclosure and investigation of an allegation of harm towards or abuse of children or young persons.

4. Policy

4.1 General commitments

The Organisation is committed to promoting and protecting the best interests and safety of children and young people involved in its programs.

All children and young people, regardless of their gender, race, religious beliefs, age, disability, sexual orientation, or family or social background, have equal rights to protection from harm and abuse.

The Organisation has zero tolerance for child harm and abuse. Everyone working for the Organisation is responsible for the safety and protection of the children and young people we come into contact with via our work at the Organisation and reporting information about suspected child harm or abuse and in engaging with children and young people that is appropriate and that does not pose a risk to them.

Child safety is a shared responsibility between all team members who work for or on behalf of the Organisation and the broader community.



The Organisation will promote and provide an environment in which children and young people and their families can speak up when uncomfortable, concerned or harmed and are provided the genuine opportunity to provide their opinions regarding the development of child safety strategies and policies within the environment of the Organisation.

The Organisation supports and respects all children and young people in our community. The Organisation is committed to the cultural safety of Aboriginal children, and those from culturally and/or linguistically diverse backgrounds, and to providing a safe environment for children living with a disability.

4.2 Child Safe Standards

The Standards outline the minimum requirements and expected outcomes organisations must achieve to keep children and young people safe.

These Standards are:

- 1) Organisations establish a culturally safe environment in which the diverse and unique identities and experiences of Aboriginal children and young people are respected and valued;
- 2) Child safety and wellbeing is embedded in organisational leadership, governance and culture;
- 3) Children and young people are empowered about their rights, participate in decisions affecting them and are taken seriously;
- 4) Families and communities are informed and involved in promoting child safety and wellbeing;
- 5) Equity is upheld and diverse needs respected in policy and practice;
- 6) People working with children and young people are suitable and supported to reflect child safety and wellbeing values in practice;
- 7) Processes for complaints and concerns are child focused;
- 8) Staff and volunteers are equipped with the knowledge, skills and awareness to keep children and young people safe through ongoing education and training;
- 9) Physical and online environments promote safety and wellbeing while minimising the opportunity for children and young people to be harmed;
- 10) Implementation of the Child Safety Standards is regularly reviewed and improved;
- 11) Policies and procedures document how the organisation is safe for children and young people.

The Organisation is committed to complying with the Standards and achieving the outcome and minimum requirements for each Standard, including those set out in the compliance indicators provided by the Commission for Children and Young



People (**CCYP**) and regulated by the Social Services Regulator (**SSR**). By complying with the Standards, the Organisation adopts a consistent approach with the National Principles for Child Safe Organisations.

4.3 Expected standards of behaviour

The Organisation is committed to providing an environment and culture that promotes the safety, health and well-being of children and young people and which provides a voice to all children, including those from an Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander background, with disabilities and from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds. The Organisation has policies, procedures and training in place that support all team members to achieve these commitments and to ensure all children are listened to, their views respected and their contribution recognised to ensure the Organisation's programs are safe.

In accordance with the Standards, team members, volunteers and contractors must not:

- Engage in physical contact with a child that is not appropriate or necessary for the delivery of the Organisation's services or programs;
- Take photographs of children or young persons without obtaining prior written permission from their parent or guardian;
- Put children at risk of abuse (for example, by locking doors);
- Use, possess or be under the influence of any alcohol or illicit substances in the presence of any child/young person whilst at work or supply any alcohol or substances to any child/young person;
- Engage in open discussions of a mature or adult nature in the presence of children (for example, personal social activities);
- Use inappropriate language or tone of voice in the presence of children;
- Express personal views on cultures, race or sexuality in the presence of children;
- Discriminate against any child, because of culture, race, ethnicity, sexual orientation or disability; and
- Ignore or disregard any suspected or disclosed child abuse.

The Organisation is committed to developing and maintaining a culturally safe environment in which Aboriginal children and their unique identities and experiences are respected and valued.

5. Risk Management

The Organisation will ensure that child and young person safety and wellbeing is a part of its overall risk management approach adopted and implemented by the Organisation.



The Organisation commits to having a Risk and Audit committee who is committed to identifying and managing risks within the Organisation. The Risk and Audit Committee will ensure the operations and standards reflect the policy.

6. Recruitment Guidelines

The Organisation undertakes a comprehensive recruitment and screening process for all Team Members, volunteers and contractors, based on best practice standards, which aims to, as far as is reasonably practicable:

- Promote and protect the safety of all children the Organisation comes into contact with;
- Identify the most appropriate and suitable people who share the Organisation's values and commitment to protect children and young people including to, where appropriate:
 - Provide selection criteria and advertisements that include statements demonstrating our commitment to the Standards and operating within a child safe culture; and
 - Maintain a recruitment process that encourages applications from Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people, people from culturally and/or linguistically diverse backgrounds and people with disabilities. Reasonable adjustments will be made to the process to ensure equitable access;
 - Requiring applicants, at its discretion, to undergo a police check or provide proof of a valid Working with Children Check in accordance with the law and as appropriate, as a precursor to commence work for the Organisation and/or as directed by the Organisation during their term of employment or engagement (see further below); and
 - Undertake thorough reference checks in accordance with the approved internal procedures of the Organisation.
- Reduce the risk of children and young people being exposed to Team Members of the Organisation who act in a manner contrary to this Policy and relevant legislation.



The Organisation requires all Team Members, volunteers and contractors to successfully meet the requirements of its recruitment and screening processes prior to commencing their work with the Organisation.

Once employed or engaged by the Organisation, Team Members, volunteers and contractors must review and acknowledge their understanding of this Policy.

7. Working with Children Checks and Police Checks

The Organisation requires all Team Members, contractors and volunteers (**workers**) who are undertaking work or activities on behalf of the Organisation where they may come into contact with children, or otherwise defined as 'child-related work', to have a valid and accurate Working with Children Check (**WWCC**).

In addition, all workers undertaking work relating to the Organisation's School Breakfast Clubs Program or any project subject to specific grant requirements, including any Team Member visiting the program, are required to have a current and valid WWCC at all times and are required to consent to the Organisation undertaking a police check at any time during their employment.

The Organisation will continually monitor its workers' WWCC and criminal history status and may require the worker to provide evidence of a current and relevant WWCC or updated police check. Compliance with any WWCC regulations and processes, or grant agreement requirements, and the provision of evidence confirming such to the Organisation may be a condition of continuing employment or engagement of the worker.

All WWCC and criminal history information will be kept on file by the Organisation, and in respect to workers involved the Organisation's School Breakfast Clubs Program or any government-funded project, this information may be provided to the Department of Education or any other government department on request.

8. Training

Child Safety is everyone's responsibility. The Organisation will make this Policy available to children, young people and their families and all workers of the Organisation where appropriate.

The Organisation's culture enables our Team Members to discuss any allegations of child abuse or child safety concerns confidently, appropriately and with sensitivity.

All workers are required to have a general awareness of child safety and their obligations under the Standards. The Organisation's induction and ongoing compliance training

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programs include appropriate content which outlines the Organisation's expectations and obligations in maintaining a child-safe culture. Such training will be provided on commencement during induction and at minimum every two years.

The Organisation's Team Member Code of Conduct Policy sets out clear guidelines regarding the difference between appropriate and inappropriate behaviour and it is the Organisation's expectation that Team Members familiarise themselves with these expectations.

8.1 Job role-related training

All employees who undertake work as part of the Organisation's School Breakfast Clubs Program, or who conduct child-related work as part of their role with the Organisation, will be required to complete induction training in respect of the Standards, including appropriate conduct and employee obligations reporting obligations, prior to commencing work for the Program.

In accordance with other sections of this Policy, Team Members will also be required to participate in further training as required by the Organisation in respect of the Standards from time to time, as directed. This includes position specific training for team members who are likely to come into regular contact with children and young people in the course of performing their duties with the Organisation in other contexts, such as 'child-connected work'. This training includes how to identify, assess and minimise risks of child harm and abuse and to detect potential signs of child harm and abuse. Team Members will also be educated as to how they can provide and maintain an environment where children are and feel safe when engaged in all programs or services of the Organisation and ensure they are not engaging in behaviour towards children that is inappropriate and prohibited, including in respect of the use of digital devices when undertaking work as part of the Organisation's School Breakfast Clubs Program.

Team Members are also trained to understand their professional and legal obligations. We take all reasonable steps to ensure our Team Members only have direct contact with children in the presence of other Team Members, adult volunteers or school staff unless otherwise necessary or unavoidable, to ensure that their behaviour towards children is safe and appropriate.

We practice ongoing supervision of support Team Members. Team Members are supported to develop their skills to protect children from abuse and promote, in particular:

- The cultural safety of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children;



- The cultural safety of children from linguistically and/or diverse backgrounds; and
- The safety of children with disabilities.

8.2 Child safety officer training and professional development

The Organisation is committed to appointing Child Safety Officers who have received appropriate training. This training provides Child Safety Officers with an understanding of how to identify instances of child harm or abuse, the Standards and relevant legislation and regulations.

Child Safe Officers will also be trained in how to ensure the processes and procedures under this Policy and in relation to child-safe practices are culturally and linguistically diverse and take into account disabilities, LGBTQI preferences and age of those involved.

Our Child Safety Officers will implement and monitor our response to the Standards. They also monitor the risk management, governance and compliance measures. Overall, they are responsible for our organisational child safeguarding practice.

8.3 Refresher job role training

Refresher Child Safe training will be implemented with workers who have direct contact with children and undertake child related work, generally every two years. Ongoing supervision and support are also provided to Team Members to increase their capacity to establish and maintain a child-safe culture.

9. Responding

It is an expectation of the Organisation that when concerns regarding harm or potential harm to a child arise, those made aware of these concerns or allegations act immediately to mitigate the risk of further harm or abuse occurring.

To mitigate the immediate risk of harm to those affected by the concerns or allegations:

- Call 000;
- Make every effort to make the environment and its surroundings safe to reduce the risk of further harm or abuse. For example, remove the alleged perpetrator of harm, increase care and supervision of the affected children, relocate other children who are unaffected by the harmful conduct to a safer environment and alert others who may be affected;
- Provide immediate care and support to the affected child/young person and their



family/ies, including ensuring physical wellbeing through the provision of first aid and emotional wellbeing through the provision of access to Employee Assistance Programs or specialist psychological care if available and age appropriate activities.

When responding to a disclosure by a child or young person of harmful conduct or an allegation of abuse, it is recommended the Organisation's workers:

- Listen to the child/young person without dispute or judgement;
- Gently clarify basic details and avoid asking probing or leading questions or requesting detailed information;
- Reassure the child/young person that they have done the right thing in disclosing the information and reinforce that they are believed and that immediate action will be taken and support will be provided;
- Inform the child/young person that other people may need to be told to stop the alleged conduct. Do not promise to keep the information a secret;
- Report the matter in line with this Policy and any other Organisation policies and procedure and in accordance with legislative requirements.

It is important when responding to allegations or incidents of child harm or abuse that the response is appropriate to the diverse needs of the child or young person, including but not limited to taking into account cultural and linguistically diverse backgrounds, whether the child is of Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander background, disabilities and LGBTQI identification.

10. Reporting

There are two types of reports – Child Safety and Mandatory Reporting. These are explained in further detail below.

10.1 Child Safety Concern

The Organisation will treat all allegations of child harm and abuse and all child-safety concerns very seriously and consistently in accordance with the Organisation's policies and procedures and the Standards.

If a reasonable belief is formed by a worker that a child is in need of protection and that they have been subjected to harm and/or abuse, a report must be made to the People and Culture Team at first instance.

The CEO must also be informed immediately upon a Team Member or Child Safety Officer becoming aware of allegations or incidents of child harm or abuse. Any report of allegations or incidents of abuse or harm of a child must be made or recorded in writing



(email is sufficient) and can be followed up verbally to ensure the recipient is aware of the report.

Forms of harm and abuse against children are complex and varied.

If a report of child harm or abuse involves suspected criminal behaviour, the Organisation must notify Victoria police. If you are unsure how to proceed, speak in the first instance to People and Culture Team. If further guidance is needed, then Victoria Police can be contacted for further assistance.

10.2 Mandatory Reporting

Under the *Crimes Act 1958* (Vic), If you are an adult who forms a reasonable belief that a sexual offence has been committed against a child under the age of 16 you must report that information to the police, regardless of your role within the community or the Organisation. Failure to do so is a criminal offence.

Further, those who hold a position of authority within the Organisation and become aware that an adult associated with the Organisation poses a risk of sexual abuse to a child under the Organisation's care, authority or supervision, must take all reasonable steps to remove or reduce the risk. Failure to take reasonable steps may amount to a criminal offence.

Any worker of the Organisation who forms a reasonable belief that a sexual offence has been committed or there is a risk posed of such an offence being committed, must inform People and Culture Team immediately and log a Child Safe Report with the Organisation.

See the definitions relating to Failure to Disclose and Failure to Protect below for more information.

11. Investigations

If an allegation involves conduct that amounts to a criminal offence, or suspected criminal offence, you **MUST** get clearance from People and Culture Team and Victoria Police before commencing an investigation.

If any appropriate authority decides to investigate an allegation of child harm or abuse, workers are expected to cooperate fully with the external investigation.

If an allegation of actual or suspected child harm or abuse is made, the Organisation will inform Victoria Police when necessary, and may commence an investigation into the allegations as soon as is practicable.



An investigation by the Organisation into allegations of child harm or abuse is a workplace investigation which is aimed at gathering and examining facts in order to make findings based on the balance of probabilities regarding the allegations made.

An authorised person to investigate allegations of child harm or abuse (Authorised Investigator) includes:

- a Child Safety Officer;
- Head of People and Culture or their authorised delegate;
- External investigator engaged by the Organisation and authorised by the CEO; and
- Any other suitably qualified person who has been nominated as the investigator.

In undertaking an investigation into allegations of child harm or abuse, an authorised investigator is required to follow the Organisation's Code of Conduct and other workplace policies and procedures, including the Organisation's Grievance Policy and Performance and Behaviour Policy and procedures. All investigations must be undertaken in a fair and reasonable manner and in line with the Organisation's disciplinary investigation process.

In conducting an investigation, the following process is recommended:

- Identify and assess the child harm or abuse allegations;
- Establish and plan an investigation;
- Conduct a thorough and fair investigation;
- Complete an investigation report; and
- Make or recommend findings.

A child harm or abuse investigation can be stressful and at times, distressing, for all parties involved. Steps must be taken to support those involved in the investigation process and to mitigate any risk of the child/young person being re-traumatised by the investigation process. Please refer to the Support clause of this Policy for further information.

Any such investigation will be conducted according to the rules of natural justice.

11.1 Findings of an investigation

Findings of an investigation into alleged conduct of child harm or abuse must be made on the balance of probabilities as to whether the conduct did or didn't occur.

Making a finding on the 'balance of probabilities' means that it was more likely than not that the alleged conduct did, or didn't, occur.



It is important that the investigator not be deterred in making a finding that the conduct happened out of concern of the serious consequences the alleged perpetrator of the conduct may face.

Types of findings that may be made are:

- Substantiated;
- Unsubstantiated – insufficient evidence;;
- Unsubstantiated – lack of evidence of weight;
- Unfounded.

In making their findings, investigator must make judgement about how strong the evidence is, or how much weight can be placed on each piece of evidence. Evidence that holds more weight will be more influential to the outcome arrived at by the decision maker.

11.2 Reasons for the findings

The Organisation, in making its findings in respect of child harm or abuse, will complete a report detailing the investigation findings and reasons for the findings as soon as practicable after the investigation has finished.

Reasons for the findings of an investigation should generally explain:

- How the investigation was done;
- The evidence collected and how it was assessed;
- Whether the evidence was relevant and/or reliable;
- How the evidence supported or contradicted the allegation; and
- How convincing the evidence was, in all the circumstances.

12. Support

The Organisation is committed to supporting the needs of those impacted by allegations of child harm or abuse, and in ensuring the support provided incorporates cultural safety and wellbeing for:

- The child/young person and their family, including but not limited to providing culturally and diversity-specific support for those from an Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander background, those who are culturally and linguistically diverse or a person with a disability;
- Any Team Member against whom a complaint is made by, for example, offering access to the Organisation's Employee Assistance Program; and
- Any other worker who is impacted by the allegations.

All Team Members affected will be afforded procedural fairness and all information pertaining to allegations, reports and investigations under this Policy will be subject to



privacy and confidentiality provisions embodied in the Organisation's policies and procedures and in accordance with applicable legislation.

13. Privacy

It is an expectation of the Organisation that all information obtained and received, including whilst responding to and investigating allegations or incidents, of harm or abuse of a child will be treated in accordance with the Organisation's policies and in accordance with applicable legislation.

Where appropriate, the Organisation will maintain the confidentiality and privacy of all parties concerned and will ensure that any information sharing will be age-appropriate and situation appropriate, including to ensure the health and safety of the child/young person is maintained at all times.

In instances where the police are conducting an investigation into the allegations, the Organisation will provide detailed information it has obtained regarding the allegations or incident and will not do anything to intentionally hinder the investigation.

14. Definitions

Child or Children means a child or young person up to the age of 18 years.

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 act committed against a child involving:
 - a sexual offence; or
 - an offence under s49M of the Crimes Act 1958 (grooming).
- The infliction, on a child, of:
 - physical violence;
 - serious emotional or psychological harm; and
 - serious neglect of a child.

Child-connected work is performed by an adult in an environment (including schools, community and face to face or online) while children are present or reasonably expected to be present.

Child-related work is work that:

- involves an adult working with children under 18 years old (both paid and unpaid work);



- usually involves direct contact with a child or children, including physical, face-to-face, written, oral or electronic contact; and
- involves contact with the child or children as a usual part of the person's duties and is not occasional direct contact which is incidental to their work.

Child safety covers matters relating to the protection of children from child abuse, managing the risk of child abuse, providing support to a child at risk of child abuse and responding in incidents or allegations of child abuse.

Failure to Disclose requires any adult who holds a reasonable belief that a sexual offence has been committed in Victoria by an adult against a child (aged under 16) must disclose that information to police or Child Protection. Applies to everyone in the community, not just mandated professionals. Maximum penalty 3 years imprisonment.

Failure to Protect applies to people who hold a position of authority within organisations who know of a risk of child sexual abuse by someone in the organisation and have the authority to reduce or remove the risk, BUT negligently fail to do so. Maximum penalty 5 years imprisonment.

Reasonable belief

If any adult has a belief based on reasonable grounds that a child has been subject to harm or abuse, or is informed of an allegation of harm or abuse, then they have a responsibility to report the incident or allegation to the relevant authorities, otherwise this will be seen as a failure to disclose and may attract penalties under applicable legislation, including to be charged with a criminal offence.

A 'reasonable belief' or a 'belief on reasonable grounds' is not the same as having proof, but is more than suspicion upon which there is some objective basis for the belief. However, the belief that someone may have committed reportable conduct does not require certainty or initial proof.

A 'reasonable belief' is formed if a reasonable person in the same position would have formed the belief on the same grounds. For example, a 'reasonable belief' might be formed if:

- 1) A child states that they have been physically or sexually abused;
- 2) A child states that they know someone who has been physically or sexually abused (sometimes the child may be talking about themselves);
- 3) Someone who knows a child states that the child has been physically or sexually abused;
- 4) Observations of behaviour are consistent with that of an abuse victim;
- 5) Someone else has raised a suspicion of abuse but is unwilling to report it; and/or
- 6) Suspicious behaviour is observed.



15. Responsibilities

The Organisation has ultimate responsibility for the prevention and detection of child and young person harm and/or abuse and is responsible for ensuring that appropriate and effective internal systems are in place to appropriately train Team Members, implement and maintain systems that are in accordance with child safe responsibilities under this Policy, the Standards and applicable legislation.

The **CEO** of the Organisation is responsible for:

- Overseeing the investigation and reporting of any reports of child harm or abuse;
- Driving the cultural change of zero tolerance for child abuse, so that protecting children from risks of child harm and abuse is embedded in everyday thinking and practice across the Organisation;
- Ensuring that the Organisation has effective controls in place to prevent child harm and abuse occurring and to ensure that any instances of child harm and abuse are responded to promptly and in accordance with all authority guidelines and applicable legislative frameworks;
- Ensuring that all workers are aware of their child safe responsibilities through the effective implementation of Organisation, policies and procedures and targeted training of Team Member;
- Ensuring that all Team Members within the Organisation's community are aware of their obligation to report suspected harm or abuse of a child or young person in accordance with the procedures outlined in the Organisation's policies and procedures and in accordance with relevant legislation;
- Ensuring the Organisation is acting in compliance with any child safety terms of any applicable government grant;
- Maintaining an organisational framework that supports workers in undertaking their child safety responsibilities.

All **Line Managers** must ensure that they:

- Promote and implement child safety measures;
- Assess the risk of any potential child and young person harm and/or abuse within their area of control and eradicate / minimise any risk to the extent possible;
- Educate employees about the prevention and detection of child and young person harm and abuse; and
- Facilitate the prompt reporting and investigation of any suspected or actual harm and/or abuse of children and young people.

Management should be familiar with the types of conduct that amount to harm and/or abuse under the Standards and be alert for any indications of such conduct.

Child Safety Officers are responsible for:

- Acting as the first point of contact for Team Members who have a child safety concern or allegation of abuse within the Organisation;
- Supporting the notification of child safety concerns or allegations to relevant

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authorities (Victoria Police, Child Protection etc);

- Ensuring that staff who report incidents and organisational obligations in relation to reporting are managed effectively, efficiently and in compliance with all legislative obligations and governing body timeframes;
- Actioning findings from child safety reviews or investigations, ensuring changes to the relevant Organisation policies are facilitated where appropriate;
- Ensuring the Organisation is at the forefront of being a child safe organisation, operating within a child-safe culture and providing a child-safe environment/s;
- Managing and maintaining a robust governance framework, ensuring it is updated to reflect any legislative or governance changes; and
- Focusing on the total management and compliance of reported incidents relating to child safety.

Child Safety Officers are to be made aware of any relationships between staff and children to which Organisation provides services. They are required to act if the risk assessment of potential conflict identifies that the relationship should not continue.

People & Culture Team Members must ensure:

- The principles of the Standards are embedded in the Organisation's procedures including recruitment and pre-employment screening processes;
- Employees and volunteers have access to and are aware of the Child Safe Policy;
- The Organisation strictly adheres to procedures as they apply to Standards and takes appropriate action when a non-compliance arises;
- They manage the Organisation's disciplinary procedure as it applies to the Standards;
- They support employees who have been impacted by a child abuse incident and make appropriate referrals to the Employee Assistance Program;
- They incorporate child safety in the Organisation's inductions and learning and development programs; and
- Provide advice about this policy, circulate and evaluate the policy and its implementation in consultation with the Head of People & Culture and /or the CEO.

All **Team Members** share in the responsibility for the prevention and detection of child and young person harm and/or abuse, and must:

- Familiarise themselves and comply with this Policy, the relevant laws, the Standards and the Organisation's Code of Conduct and other relevant policies and procedures relating to child safety;



- Report to the Organisation and relevant authorities any concerns they may have regarding any potential or actual risk of harm and/or abuse of a child or young person (such as the police); and
- Always act in a manner that promotes the emotional and physical safety of all children and young persons.

Volunteers share the responsibility for the prevention and detection of child abuse and must report any suspected cases to their direct Supervisor.

16. Consequences of Breaching this Policy

The consequences of a breach of this Policy will vary depending on the type and seriousness of the breach and will be at the discretion of the Organisation.

Depending on the circumstances, the Organisation may take disciplinary action against Team Members up to and including termination of employment in line with the Organisation's Performance and Behaviour Policy and procedures and, when required by legislation, will report the matter to Victoria Police.

Individuals who have failed to report allegations of child harm or abuse may also be subject to criminal charges being brought under applicable legislation.

A breach of this Policy by a contractor or volunteer may result in the Organisation terminating their engagement with the Organisation.

17. Assistance and Support

Employees involved in matters dealt with under this Policy may access the Organisation's Employee Assistance Program (TELUS EAP), their designated People and Culture representative or Line Manager for support.

TELUS EAP details are: 1300 361 008.

18. Review

The Organisation is committed to conducting a review of this Policy at least every two years, and following any updates of the legislative and regulatory structure pertaining to child safety, to ensure the performance of the Organisation's child safety systems are assessed, expanded and amended to ensure they are meeting the needs of all persons to whom the Organisation's child safety obligations apply.

19. Related Policies / Procedures

- FBV Code of Conduct
- FBV Bullying, Discrimination and Harassment Policy
- FBV Equal Employment Opportunity



- FBV Grievance Policy
- Workplace Behaviour Policy and Procedure
- FBV Values
- FBV Occupational Health and Safety Policy

20. Key Policy Information

Policy number: O29
Responsible department: People and Culture
Date of next review: 16 March 2028

Version history:

Version no.	Date revised	Revision description	Updated by
3	16 March 2026	Revision	People & Culture
2	4 February 2025	Update re Gov. Grants (clause 7)	People & Culture
1	24 August 2023	New policy	People & Culture

This Policy may be reviewed, amended or withdrawn by the Organisation at any time, at its absolute discretion. This policy does not form part of contracts of employment or engagement.