**Child Safety and Wellbeing Policy**

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| **Document Number** | ACC08 |
| **Version** | 0.4 Draft |
| **Scope/applies to:** | Everyone involved in ACC |
| **Date Approved** |  |
| **Approved by** |  |

**Purpose**

We prioritise the safety and wellbeing of children and expect that all staff, volunteers and anyone in our broader organisational community takes a role in ensuring children are safe and well.

**Policy**

We are a child-safe organisation. We are committed to creating and maintaining a safe and empowering environment for children. We have zero tolerance of child abuse, and preventing and responding to child abuse is embedded in our culture.

**Our Committee:**

* Understands the organizational expectations and responsibilities around child safety and reporting and champions a child safe culture
* Has a suite of policies in place to address child safety and wellbeing that are publicly available (hard copy and online) and regularly reviewed
* Maintains a budget for training and development that ensures staff and volunteers understand child safety requirements and how to take appropriate action to keep children safe and empowered.

Our Executive Officer:

* Acts as the Child/Youth Safety Officer
* Ensures the following are in place:

**Statement of Child Safety and Code of Conduct**

* Our **Statement of Child Safety** and **Code of Conduct** are posted in our Centre and online and apply to anyone who uses our space, whether formally or informally.

**Recruitment, Induction, Supervision and Performance Management**

We only recruit staff and volunteers (including our Committee) who are appropriate to engage with children. All staff and formal volunteers must complete a working with children check and a police check. All staff must also provide references.

All contractors directly engaged by our organisation and long-term room hirers (refer to **Venue Hire Policy**) must provide us with a copy of their working with children check and link it to our organisation.

Our **Staff Manual**, **Volunteer Manual** and **Committee Induction Kit** outline the responsibilities and reporting processes for everyone formally engaged in our organisation, and outline the relevant supervision, support and performance management they can expect relevant to their position.

On engagement all staff and volunteers (including our Committee) receive training/information to ensure they understand what is meant by child safety, our commitments to child safety and exactly how and when they are required to take action.

**Our programs and services**

* Are guided by formal and informal feedback from children, families and our broader community on how our space can best engage and empower children
* Periodically change to encourage and enable children to maximise opportunities for positive engagement

Create opportunities for children, parents, grandparents and carers to build community connections, form friendships and get peer support

* Are supported by our social media channels to build broader community understanding around child safety and wellbeing
* In line with our **Equity and Access Policy**, encourage and support access, equity and diversity
* In line with our **First Nations Recognition Policy**, celebrate Aboriginal culture and encourage Aboriginal children, families and community members to feel welcome.

**Risk management**

Our risk management plan addresses the risk of child abuse and harm.

**Non-compliance**

We actively enforce this policy. Potential breaches will be investigated and may result in termination of room hire, restriction of duties, suspension or termination of employment or engagement, reporting the incident to the police and other corrective action.

**Definitions**

**Child abuse** means:

• a sexual offence committed against a child

• an offence committed against a child under section 49M(1) of the Crimes Act 1958 (Vic), such as grooming

• physical violence against a child

• causing serious emotional or psychological harm to a child

• serious neglect of a child.

**Harm** is damage to the health, safety or wellbeing of a child or young person, including as a result of child abuse by adults or the conduct of other children. It includes physical, emotional, sexual and psychological harm.

Harm can arise from a single act or event and can also be cumulative, that is, arising as a result of a series of acts or events over a period of time.

**Child/Children** means a person who is under the age of 18 years.

**Concerns and complaints**

Will be handled in accordance with the **Concerns, Complaints and Incidents Policy**, and in accordance with the mandatory reporting requirements.

**Related external documents**

* Child Wellbeing and Safety Act 2005 (Vic) (including Child Safe Standards)
* Children, Youth and Families Act 2005 (Vic) (including reporting to Child Protection)
* Crimes Act 1958 (Vic) (including Failure to Protect and Failure to Disclose offences)
* Wrongs Act 1958 (Vic) (including Part XIII – Organisational liability for child abuse)