

Flinders Community Association Child Safety Policy 2024-2027

Introduction

The Flinders Community Association (FCA) believes that all children have a right to feel and be safe. The welfare of children if ever in our care is our top priority. We have zero tolerance to child abuse and treat all allegations and safety concerns very seriously.

The purpose of this policy is to demonstrate the strong commitment expected of FCA committee of management members, staff, and volunteers to child safety.

The policy incorporates all child safety requirements and standards as specified by the Commission for Children and Young People (2018).

Our commitment to child safety, includes:

- Supporting the prevention of child abuse, early risk identification and reducing risk.
- Acknowledgement and respect of legal and moral obligations to contact authorities when concerned about a child's safety.
- Recruitment practices for all staff and volunteers that include adequate screening and ensure support requirements are in place.
- Training and education for the leadership team, staff and volunteers (where relevant) on child abuse and to support the achievement of our commitment to child safety.
- Cultural safety of children from diverse cultural backgrounds / Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander /and for children with a disability.

Procedure

Children's Rights to Safety and Participation

We value the voices of children, and we seek to understand what makes children feel safe. We ensure children feel safe in our care, and act promptly on concerns raised by children or their families regarding their safety. We welcome all children from diverse backgrounds and children with a disability and act to promote their participation.

Recruiting and Supporting Staff and Volunteers

Recruitment processes must comply with FCA's recruitment policy and ensure that child safety requirements are addressed. Considerations in recruitment include:

- Assessment of the level of contact and responsibility the role will have with children.
- National Police Checks and Working with Children Checks.
- The training, guidance and supervision required and ensuring appropriate qualifications and skill level.
- Applicant's attitudes and values toward children.

All relevant staff and volunteers must sign and comply with FCA's Code of Conduct and will receive training and support to ensure they understand their responsibilities in relation to child safety. We aim for all relevant staff and volunteers to be trained to identify, assess, and minimise risks of child abuse and to detect potential signs of child abuse.

New employees and volunteers are supervised regularly to ensure they understand our organisation's commitment to child safety and to check that their behaviour towards children is safe and appropriate. Any inappropriate behaviour will be reported through the relevant channels, including the Department of Health and Human Services and Victoria Police, depending on the severity/urgency of the matter.

Incident Reporting

All reports of child abuse will be treated as serious, whether they are made by an adult or a child:

1. If a staff member, volunteer, or contractor becomes aware of an incident or allegation of abuse, they must immediately advise their supervisor and ensure that the child or children are safe, and the risks of further abuse are mitigated.
2. If the incident or allegation of abuse could involve criminal conduct, following discussion with your supervisor, the matter must be immediately reported to Victoria Police. If there is any ongoing risk to a child or children, the Department of Health and Human Services should also be notified.
3. In situations where the supervisor is suspected of involvement in the activity, or if the person having the suspicion does not believe that the matter is appropriately addressed or dealt with, the matter should be reported to the next highest level of supervision.

Record Keeping and Incident Monitoring

All reports of child abuse must be recorded within FCA's incident reporting system. Confidentiality and privacy for children and families as in accordance with legislation our policy, must always be maintained.

FCA's Committee of Management will monitor reports of child abuse and complaints about child safety to ensure they are appropriately managed.

Risk Management

FCA's risk management approach to minimise the potential of child abuse or harm, includes the assessment and mitigation of risks of child abuse at our organisation.

1. For all activities and facilities, assessment of risk includes both environmental (i.e. areas that obscure line of sight, contact on social media), and vulnerability risks.
2. All identified risks must be documented for all existing and new activities.
3. Families and children are made aware of how to report on identified risks of child abuse.

Non-compliance with this Policy and the Code of Conduct

FCA takes our legal responsibilities seriously and will enforce this policy and our Code of Conduct if there is non-compliance. Any non-compliance will result in FCA instigating a review that may result in restriction of duties, suspension or termination of employment.
