

Child Safety - Standards of Behaviour

In addition to the Foundation's Code of Conduct, Child Safe Standards of Behaviour have been developed for all employees, volunteers, contractors / consultants and Directors that provide detailed guidance on appropriate behaviour and conduct when working with children, young people and their families.

While everyone is required to comply, it does not replace any legislative or regulatory obligations or other professional or occupational codes of conduct specifically where workforce has direct contact or supervisory roles with children or young people.

These standards aim to protect children and young people and reduce any opportunities for abuse or harm to occur. It also helps employees, volunteers, contractors / consultants and Directors by providing guidance on how to best support children and young people and how to avoid or better manage difficult situations.

The Foundation's Child Safety - Standards of Behaviour aim to:

- promote children and young people's safety across the Foundation
- set expectations on how to behave with children and young people including details of acceptable and unacceptable behaviours
- protect the employees, volunteers, contractors / consultants and Directors from potential accusations of inappropriate behaviour.

There are some underpinning principles and requirements for adult behaviour in undertaking work with children and young people at the Foundation including but not limited to the following.

- The adult / child relationship must always be professional and kept within the boundaries of the respective position description.
- An adult's response to a child or young person's behaviour or circumstance should be appropriate to their age, development and vulnerability and the adult's level of responsibility for the care, safety and welfare of the child or young person.
- An understanding of the impacts of trauma and working from a trauma informed practice lens will support staff to develop responses to children which are child safe and promote the safety and wellbeing of children and young people.
- As far as practicable, an adult should not be alone with a child or young person unless there is line of sight to other adults.
- An adult should not initiate or seek any contact with a child or young person outside of the work or volunteer setting including in person, online or phone contact. Where this is required in order to provide a service to a child or young person, consent must be provided by legal guardians for this contact and all contact to be case noted in the client file and reported to the relevant People Leader.
- Children / young people will be supported to express their culture and have their cultural rights acknowledged and respected.

Acceptable behaviours

Foundation employees, volunteers, contractors / consultants and Directors are responsible for supporting the safety of children and young people by:

- adhering to the Foundation's Child Safeguarding – Policy & Framework, Child Safe Recruitment (including screening) requirements, Code of Conduct and these Child Safe Standards of Behaviour.
- taking all reasonable steps to protect children and young people from harm and abuse and report any reasonable belief that a child has been or is likely to be harmed
- treating everyone with respect
- upholding a zero-tolerance of racism and reporting / acting on incidents of racism
- listening and responding to the views and concerns of children and young people, particularly if they are telling you that they or another child or young person has been abused or that they are concerned about their safety / the safety of another child or young person
- ensuring *as far as practicable*, that staff or volunteers working with children are not alone with a child or young person
- ensuring that communication with children and young people online, including via social media channels and academic collaboration spaces (eg. Google Docs or virtual classrooms) is done from a shared Foundation log-in, not a personal account
- ensuring no information (contact details, photographic portraits, online handle names) of a child or young person is shared with other service providers, community groups, or other units within the Foundation without their, or their parents or carer's, expressed consent.
- reporting any allegations of abuse or safety concerns regarding children and young people
- understanding and complying with all reporting obligations as they relate to mandatory reporting and reporting under the Crimes Act 1958
- ensuring as quickly as possible, if an allegation of abuse towards a child or young person is made, that the child(ren) or young person(s) are safe and have access to appropriate support services
- reporting any charges, committals for trial or convictions in relation to a sexual offence, or certain allegations or concerns about a workforce member
- linking the Foundation as their employer on the Department of Justice [Working with Children Card Website](#), and/ or [Victorian Institute of Teaching Card](#) within 21 days of commencement of employment
- ensuring employees, volunteers, contractors / consultants and Directors who have direct care responsibility disclose any social relationship (including online) that develops with children or their families that are only known through their engagement / employment within the Foundation
- ensuring employees, volunteers, contractors / consultants and Directors who have a direct care responsibility disclose (before it occurs) any paid or unpaid transaction that is planned with a child, young person or their family outside of the Foundations work setting.

Unacceptable behaviours

Foundation employees, volunteers, contractors / consultants and Directors must not:

- ignore or disregard any suspected or disclosed child abuse or harm, including where this is not observed as a direct result of their work role
- develop any 'special' relationships with children or young people that could be seen as favouritism (eg. the offering of gifts or special treatment for specific children or young people)
- personally give a gift (unless it is from the Foundation) or accept a significant or valuable gift from a child or young person, their parent, carer, or family members (See the Foundation's Code of Conduct)
- exhibit behaviours with children and young people which may be construed as unnecessarily physical (eg. inappropriate sitting on laps). See Physical Contact below
- put children or young people at risk of abuse (for example by locking doors or posting information about them online)

- initiate unnecessary physical contact with children or young people or do things of a personal nature that they can do for themselves, such as toileting or changing clothes
- engage in open discussions of a mature or adult nature in the presence of children (eg. personal social activities) or via online forums shared with children and young people
- use inappropriate language in the presence of children and young people
- express personal views on appearance, gender, cultures, religion, race, or sexuality in the presence of children and young people.
- discriminate against any child or young person, including because of age, gender, race, religion, culture, vulnerability, appearance, sexuality, ethnicity or disability
- through the opportunity presented by a role with the Foundation, instigate a personal relationship with a child or young person or their family members outside of work including providing babysitting, private tutoring, coaching, meeting socially outside of work for coffee, a meal or other or visiting a child and their family outside of work or having them visit staff at home. This also includes any kind of personal communication online such as via social media (See the Foundation's Media & Social Media – Policy & Procedures)
- photograph or video a child or young person without their consent AND the consent of their parent or guardian
- take photographs or videos of a child or young person on personal devices
- keep photographs or videos of a child or young person on any work devices for more than one week and/or sharing these images without the consent of the parent or guardian
- work with children and young people whilst under the influence of alcohol or illegal drugs, or the sharing of alcohol or any drugs with children or young people
- invite any other adults into online platforms where collaboration with children and young people is occurring (eg, online classrooms or closed forums)
- communicate with children and young people online using a personal account.

Physical contact

As a general rule employees, volunteers, contractors / consultants and Directors must avoid physical contact with children and young people.

Physical contact in the following situations is not permitted:

- without permission from the child or young person, unless it is required to ensure the child or young person's immediate safety
- without another staff member or parent / carer present
- without a clear purpose or not required in order to provide the service or program
- any unnecessary and/or repeated contact that does not relate to the needs of the child or young person.

Any sexual (private areas of body) or sexualised contact with a child is **never acceptable under any circumstances**.