

# Child Safe policy

## Introduction

Ashburton Community Centre is committed to promoting and protecting the interests and safety of children. We have zero tolerance for child abuse.

Everyone working at Ashburton Community Centre is responsible for the care and protection of children and reporting information about child abuse.

## Purpose

The purpose of this policy is:

- To facilitate the prevention of child abuse occurring within Ashburton Community Centre.
- To work towards an organisational culture of child safety.
- To ensure that all staff, volunteers, contractors and Committee members are aware of their responsibilities for identifying possible occasions for child abuse and for establishing controls and procedures for preventing such abuse or detecting such abuse when it occurs.
- To provide guidance to staff, volunteers, contractors and committee members as to action that should be taken where they suspect any abuse within or outside of the organisation.
- To provide a clear statement to staff, volunteers and contractors forbidding any such abuse.
- To provide assurance that any and all suspected abuse will be reported and fully investigated.

## Policy

### Commitment to child safety

Ashburton Community Centre is committed to promoting and protecting at all times the best interests of children involved in its programs.

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.

We have zero tolerance for child abuse. All employees, workers, contractors and volunteers have a shared responsibility for the care and protection of the children within our care and reporting information about suspected child abuse.

We will consider the opinions of children and use their opinions to develop child protection policies.

We support and respect all children, staff and volunteers.

We are committed to the cultural safety, participation and empowerment of Aboriginal children and their families and of those from linguistically diverse backgrounds.

We welcome children living with a disability and their families and act to promote their participation.

If any person believes a child is in immediate risk of abuse, telephone 000.

### Children's rights to safety and participation

Ashburton Community Centre staff and volunteers will encourage children to express their views. We will listen to their suggestions, especially on matters that directly affect them and we will actively encourage all children who use our services to have a say about things that are important to them.

We will teach children about what they can do if they feel unsafe. We will listen to and act on any concerns children or their parents raise with us.

### **Recruitment of staff and volunteers**

Ashburton Community Centre will undertake a comprehensive recruitment and screening process for all workers and volunteers. Interviews and reference checks will be conducted for all staff and volunteers as well as police checks and Working with Children Checks for relevant positions.

All staff and volunteers must agree to abide by our Child Safe Code of Conduct which specifies the standards of conduct required when working with children.

Our commitment to Child Safety and our screening requirements will be included in all advertisements.

### **Supporting staff and volunteers**

Ashburton Community Centre will provide support and supervision for staff and volunteers so they feel valued, respected and fairly treated.

We will ensure that training and education is undertaken by staff and volunteers to ensure that everyone in our organisation understands child abuse and child safety concerns and the role they play in protecting children from abuse.

We will ensure an organisational culture that allows for all staff and volunteers, parents and carers and children, to feel confident and comfortable in discussing any allegations of child abuse or child safety concerns.

### **Risk Management**

Ashburton Community Centre will ensure that child safety is a part of its overall risk management approach. In addition to general occupational health and safety risks, we will proactively manage risks of abuse to our children.

We will have a risk and compliance sub-committee committed to identifying and managing all risks at Ashburton Community Centre. Risk and compliance sub-committee members will have access to regular training and information in relation to child safety.

### **Reporting**

Ashburton Community Centre will take all allegations seriously and have practices in place to investigate thoroughly and quickly. Staff and volunteers will be briefed regarding their responsibility to report any allegation of abuse, if they have a reasonable belief that an incident has taken place.

The Child Safety person must be informed of the allegation and will work with the person reporting the allegation to ensure that all necessary action is taken.

### **Privacy**

All personal information considered or recorded will respect the privacy of the individuals involved unless there is a risk to someone's safety. Ashburton Community Centre will have safeguards and practices in place to ensure any personal information is protected.

Everyone is entitled to know how the personal information is recorded, what will be done with it, and who will be able to access it.

### **Reviewing**

This policy will be reviewed every two years, and following significant incidents. The 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

Code of Conduct – Child Safety Policy

Prevention of Abuse – Client Protection Policy

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Child Safe policy - Ashburton Community Centre

Ratified by Committee of Management December 2016