



# Child Safe Standards Policy

## Purpose

The purpose of this policy is:

1. To facilitate the prevention of child abuse occurring within WCIG's physical and online environment.
2. To work towards an organisational culture of child safety.
3. To prevent child abuse within the organisation.
4. To ensure that all parties are aware of their responsibilities for identifying possible occasions for child abuse and for establishing controls and procedures for preventing such abuse and/or detecting such abuse when it occurs.
5. To provide guidance to staff/volunteers/contractors as to action that should be taken where they suspect any abuse within or outside of the organisation.
6. To provide a clear statement to staff/volunteers/contractors forbidding any such abuse.
7. To provide assurance that any and all suspected abuse will be reported and fully investigated.

## Scope

All staff of WCIG including any volunteers or contractors.

Everyone working at the organisation are responsible for the care and protection of children and reporting information about child abuse.

## Policy Statement

WCIG 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, culture, religious beliefs, age, disability, sexual orientation, or family or social background, have equal rights to protection from abuse.

WCIG supports and respects all children, staff, contractors and volunteers and 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.

WCIG has zero tolerance for child abuse. Everyone working at the organisation is responsible for the care and protection of the children within our programs and reporting information about suspected child abuse.

Child protection is a shared responsibility between the organisation, all staff, contractors, associates, and members of the WCIG community.

WCIG shall provide information about its child safe approach by sharing this policy and related information within client handbooks and on its website

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

## Definitions

<b>Child</b>	Child means a person below the age of 18 years unless, under the law applicable to the child, majority is attained earlier.
<b>Child Protection</b>	Child protection means any responsibility, measure or activity undertaken to safeguard children from harm.
<b>Child Abuse</b>	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 actions that results in actual or potential harm to a child.
<b>Child Sexual Assault</b>	Child sexual assault is any act which exposes a child to, or involves a child in, sexual processes beyond his or her understanding or contrary to accepted community standards. Sexually abusive behaviours can include the fondling of genitals, masturbation, oral sex, vaginal or anal penetration by a penis, finger or any other object, fondling of breasts, voyeurism, exhibitionism, and exposing the child to or involving the child in pornography. It includes child grooming, which refers to actions deliberately undertaken with the aim of befriending and establishing an emotional connection with a child to lower the child's inhibitions in preparation for sexual activity with the child.
<b>Reasonable Grounds for Belief</b>	<p>Reasonable grounds for belief is a belief based on reasonable grounds that child abuse has occurred when all known considerations or facts relevant to the formation of a belief are taken into account and these are objectively assessed.</p> <p>Circumstances or considerations may include the source of the allegation and how it was communicated, the nature of and details of the allegation, and whether there are any other related matters known regarding the alleged perpetrator.</p> <p>A reasonable belief is formed if a reasonable person believes that:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>(a) The child is in need of protection,</li> <li>(b) The child has suffered or is likely to suffer "significant harm as a result of physical injury"</li> <li>(c) The parents are unable or unwilling to protect the child. A 'reasonable belief' or a 'belief on reasonable grounds' is not the same as having proof, but is more than mere rumour or speculation.</li> </ul> <p>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:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a) A child states that they have been physically or sexually abused;</li> <li>b) A child states that they know someone who has been physically or sexually abused (sometimes the child may be talking about themselves);</li> <li>c) Someone who knows a child states that the child has been physically or sexually abused;</li> <li>d) Professional observations of the child's behaviour or development leads a professional to form a belief that the child has been physically or sexually abused or is likely to be abused; and/or</li> <li>e) Signs of abuse lead to a belief that the child has been physically or sexually abused.</li> </ul>

<b>Reportable Conduct</b>	Reportable conduct is defined in the Children Legislation Amendment (Reportable Conduct) Act 2017 to include offences and misconduct involving children, including: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a) sexual offence; or</li> <li>b) sexual misconduct; or</li> <li>c) physical violence; or</li> <li>d) significant emotional or psychological harm; or</li> <li>e) significant neglect.</li> </ul>
<b>Sexual Orientation</b>	Includes lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender and intersex children and young people

**References**

- Victorian Crimes Act (1958)
- Victorian Children, Youth and Families Act (2005)
- Education, Training and Reform Act 2006
- Privacy Act and Data Protection Act (2014)