



OH&S 07 Child Protection Policy

Purpose

This purpose of this policy is to outline Christian Youth Camps (CYC) commitment to the protection of children and vulnerable people from all forms of abuse.

Scope

This policy applies to all CYC Ltd employees, contractors, sub-contractors, guests and visitors on all CYC Ltd sites, using CYC Ltd vehicles or off-site on CYC Ltd business.

Definitions

Child- In Victoria, a child is considered anyone under 17 years old.

Staff means a single person or group of people performing regular directed work/tasks (paid or unpaid) on behalf of CYC Ltd or any of its registered entities.

Guest means any paying or non-paying person legally using any CYC property or registered site to participate in any CYC advertised activity.

Child Protection means any responsibility, measure or activity undertaken to safeguard children from harm.

Child Abuse means all forms of physical abuse, emotional ill-treatment, sexual abuse and exploitation, neglect or negligent treatment, commercial (eg. For financial gain) or other exploitation of a child and includes any actions that results in actual or potential harm to a child.

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.

Reasonable grounds for belief is a belief based on reasonable grounds that child abuse has occurred when all known consideration or facts relevant to the formation of a belief are taken into account and these are objectively assessed. 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.

A reasonable belief is formed if a reasonable person believes that:

- a) The child is in need of protection.
- b) The child has suffered significant harm as a result of physical injury.
- 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.

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:

- a) A child states that they have been sexually abused.
- b) A child states that they know someone who has been physically or sexually abused (sometimes the child may be talking about themselves).
- c) Someone who knows that child states that the child has been physically or sexually abused.
- 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 likely to be abused; and/or
- e) Signs of abuse lead to a belief that the child has been physically or sexually abused.

Types and Indicators of Abuse

Sexual Abuse is when a child is used by an adolescent or adult for his or her own sexual stimulation or gratification. The abuse can be contact or non-contact.

Sexual Abuse Indicators

- a) Sexualised behaviour or promiscuity
- b) Inappropriate or persistent sexual play
- c) Knowledge of sexual behaviour
- d) Disclosures through art
- e) Problems with sexual areas
- f) Sudden unexplained fears
- g) Bed wetting and/or soiling
- h) Disrupted sleep patterns
- i) Unusual aggressive behaviour towards others or pets
- j) Unusual behaviours or changes in behaviours or appetites
- k) Questions about sexual topics
- l) Indicators involving parents, caregivers, siblings, other adults

Physical Abuse is the non-accidental use of physical force against a child that causes, or is likely to cause, harm to the child.

Physical Abuse Indicators

- a) Unexplained injuries – location, size, frequency and shape of bruises, burns, breaks
- b) Inconsistent explanations
- c) Child's Behaviour – submissive, anxious, fears going home, cowers
- d) Family history of violence/abuse
- e) Delay between injury and receiving medical assistance
- f) Parent who shows little concern
- g) Parent isolating a child
- h) Admission by parents

Child Emotional Abuse is a parent or caregiver's inappropriate verbal or symbolic acts toward a child and/or a pattern of failure over time to provide a child with adequate non-physical nurture and emotional availability.



Emotional Abuse Indicators

- a) Extremes of behaviour
- b) Lacks empathy
- c) Inappropriately destructive or cruel
- d) Poor peer relationships
- e) Delayed development
- f) Behaviours inappropriate for their age
- g) Negative emotions – anxiety, fears, shame, depression
- h) Compulsive behaviours
- i) Low self esteem
- j) Uncharacteristic seeking of attention or affection
- k) Erratic appetites
- l) Reluctance to go home
- m) Rocking, sucking thumbs or self-harming
- n) Concerning behaviour involving parent or caregiver

Neglect is the failure by a parent or caregiver to provide a child (where they are in a position to do so) with the conditions that are culturally accepted as being essential for their physical and emotional development and wellbeing.

Neglect Indicators

- a) Signs of malnutrition
- b) Poor hygiene
- c) Unattended physical or medical problems
- d) Inadequate supervision
- e) Child appears constantly tired
- f) Frequent lateness or absence
- g) Inappropriate clothing
- h) Alcohol or drug abuse present in the house
- i) Frequent illness
- j) Self-comforting behaviours or craving attention
- k) Home environment inappropriate

Policy

Christian Youth Camps Ltd (CYC) is committed to promoting and protecting the best interests of children involved in all CYC activities, at all times, while attending our facilities.

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.

CYC has zero tolerance for child abuse. Every person working at CYC is responsible for the care and protection of the children within CYC's care and reporting information about suspected child abuse.

Child protection is a shared responsibility between CYC, all employees, workers, contractors, volunteers and members of the CYC community.

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



CYC supports and respects all children, employees and volunteers. CYC 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.

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

Accommodation Arrangements

CYC maintains the stance that male and female sleeping accommodation should be segregated at all times and supervision of the same must be carried out by a person of the same gender as the children occupying the accommodation. This also applies to off-site camp outs.

Responsibilities

CYC Board:

The CYC board has ultimate responsibility for the detection and prevention of child abuse and is responsible for ensuring that appropriate effective internal control systems are in place to prevent it. The Board is also responsible for ensuring that appropriate policies and procedures and a Child Protection Code of Conduct are in place.

CYC CEO:

The CEO of CYC is responsible for:

1. Dealing with and investigating reports of child abuse.
2. Ensuring that all staff, contractors and volunteers are aware of relevant laws, organizational policies and procedures and the CYC Code of Conduct.
3. Ensuring that all adults within the CYC community are aware of their obligation to report suspected sexual abuse of a child in accordance with these policies and procedures.
4. Ensuring that all staff, contractors and volunteers are aware of their obligation to observe the Code of Conduct.
5. Providing support for staff, contractors and volunteers in undertaking their child protection responsibilities.

Site Managers:

Site Managers are responsible for:

1. Promoting child safety at all times
2. Assessing the risk of child abuse at their site and minimising any risks where reasonably practicable.
3. Educating staff about the prevention and detection of child abuse and;
4. Reporting any inappropriate behavior or suspected abusive activities to the General Manager.

Staff and Volunteers

All staff and volunteers share in the responsibility for the prevention and detection of child abuse and must:

1. Familiarise themselves with the relevant laws, the CYC Code of Conduct and CYC's procedures in relation to child protection, and comply with all requirements.



2. Report any suspicion or reasonable belief that a child's safety is at risk to the Site Manager immediately.
3. Provide an environment that is supportive of all children's emotional and physical safety.

Employment of New Staff

CYC undertakes a comprehensive recruitment and screening process for all workers and volunteers which aim to:

- Promote and protect the safety of all children under the care of CYC.
- Identify the safest and most suitable people who share CYC's values and commitment to protect children.
- Prevent a person from working at CYC if they pose a risk to children.

CYC requires all workers and volunteers to pass through the organisation's recruitment and screening processes prior to commencing work with CYC. This includes, but is not limited to:

- Interview with the Site Manager/Head of Department
- Reference checking
- Obtaining a Working With Children Check
- Completing the In Safe Hands Child Protection online course

Reporting Abuse

Any staff member or volunteer who has grounds to suspect abusive activity must immediately notify their supervisor who must then notify the Site Manager as per the OH&S 07.2 Child Protection Reporting Procedures.

In situations where the supervisor is suspected of involvement in the activity, or if the person with the suspicion does not believe the matter is being appropriately addressed or dealt with, the matter should be reported to the next highest level of authority.

Site Managers must report complaints of suspected abusive behavior or misconduct to the General Manager who will report it to the appropriate external regulatory body such as Victoria Police or Child Protection Services.

The above does not eliminate the employee's ability to contact Child Protection Services at their own discretion.

Investigating Reports of Abuse

If the appropriate child protection services or police conduct an investigation, all staff and/or volunteers must co-operate fully with the investigation.

Whether or not the authorities decide to conduct an investigation, the General Manager will consult with the authorities to determine whether an internal investigation is appropriate.

The General Manager will make every effort to keep any such investigation confidential; however from time to time other members of staff may need to be consulted in conjunction with the investigation.

Responding to alleged abuse by a CYC staff member or volunteer

If it is alleged that a member of staff or volunteer may have committed an offence or have breached CYC's Policies, Procedures or Code of Conduct, the person concerned may be stood down while an investigation is conducted.



If the investigation concludes that an offence has occurred then disciplinary action may follow, up to and including dismissal. The findings of the investigation will also be reported to any external body as required.

Privacy

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

Reviewing this Policy

Every two years, and following every reportable incident, a review will be conducted to assess whether CYC's child protection policies and procedures require modification to better protect the children under CYC's care.

Related Documents

OH&S 07.2 Child Protection Reporting Procedure

OH&S 07.2a Code Of Conduct

OH&S 07.1 Child Abuse Disclosure Form

CP8 Privacy Policy

Authorised by: Glyn Mahon (General Manager, Christian Youth Camps)
Effective Date: 22nd December 2016 (This document replaces OH&S 07 Child Protection Policy & Reporting Procedures.)
Next Review Date: December 2018

A copy of this policy is retained at all Christian Youth Camps offices and sites.