

Child Safety Policy and Code of Conduct

September 2018



BUSHWALKING VICTORIA CHILD SAFETY POLICY

1. INTRODUCTION

Bushwalking Victoria is committed to promoting and protecting the interests and safety of children. We have zero tolerance for child abuse. Everyone working or volunteering at Bushwalking Victoria is responsible for the care and protection of children and reporting information about child abuse.

2. PURPOSE

The purpose of this policy is:

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

3. POLICY

Bushwalking Victoria is committed to promoting and protecting the best interests of children involved in our activities.

All children, regardless of their gender, race, religious beliefs, age, abilities, sexual orientation, or family or social background, have equal rights to protection from abuse.

Everyone working or volunteering at Bushwalking Victoria is responsible for the care and protection of the children within our care and reporting information about suspected child abuse.

Child protection is a shared responsibility between the Bushwalking Victoria Board, all employees, workers, contractors, associates, and members of Bushwalking Victoria.

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

Bushwalking Victoria supports and respects all children, staff and volunteers. Bushwalking Victoria 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.

Any person conducting activities on behalf of Bushwalking Victoria, be they Bushwalking Tracks and Conservation (BTAC), Bush Search and Rescue (BSAR), Federation Walks or the BWV office, that are directed at children, must possess a current Working with Children Check (WWCC). This includes family walks, base camps and any child /family directed activities.

For activities directed at adults, such as track clearing, where there is a possibility that families may wish to attend, the need for Project Leaders to have a WWCC will be determined by the BTAC Convenor based on a risk assessment. It should be noted that the presence of parents or guardians does not counter the need for leaders to possess a WWCC.

BWV is not legally required to implement the reporting requirements of the [Reportable Conduct Scheme](#) at this time. However, it has adopted the principles and Code of Conduct in the interests of ensuring Child Safety.

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

4. CONSIDERATIONS FOR BWV AFFILIATED CLUBS

BWV affiliated clubs are separate legal entities. As such they are advised to develop and implement Child Safety Policies and Procedures that are specific to their club needs.

Working with Children Checks (WWCC)

Where trip and activity leaders have direct contact with children during activities that are directed at children or open to families, clubs must ensure leaders have a current Working with Children Check. This is irrespective of the presence of parents/guardians on the activity concerned. This includes assistant leaders if they are present.

For walks directed at adults, a Working with Children Check for leaders is not required, however, if there is a possibility that children may be present then the need for a Working with Children Check should be determined by the Walks Coordinator based on assessed risk.

How to apply for a WWCC

As community groups it is important for bushwalking clubs to be known and seen as child-friendly and compliant with current laws. It will be an asset to a club if all leaders have current Working with Children Checks (WWCC). It is a simple, free and quick process that can be done at a local post office or [online](#). A WWCC is valid for 4 years.

Reporting

Clubs should have a process in place where any child safety incidents can be reported and have a clear policy on how incidents will be handled once reported.

Risk Assessment

In a general sense, with an increased focus on encouraging family walks, Trip Risk Assessment forms may also need to be adjusted to reflect what parents must agree to when going on a family walk and that they acknowledge that they have been advised on what to wear, what to bring, sunscreen, hats, first aid, emergency procedures (e.g. a child gets lost), inappropriate/unruly behaviour, special needs children, walk hazards, etc.



Mike Grant
Secretary: Bushwalking Victoria
18 September 2018

BUSHWALKING VICTORIA CHILD SAFETY CODE OF CONDUCT

All management, staff, volunteers and contractors at Bushwalking Victoria are required to abide by this Code.

Under the BWV President, the BWV team will:

1. Be responsible for the overall welfare and wellbeing of staff and volunteers;
2. Be accountable for managing and maintaining a duty of care towards staff and volunteers; and
3. Nominate the Convenor of the BWV Safety Committee as a Child Safety Officer to provide information and support to all staff, volunteers, children, young people and their caregivers regarding child protection matters.

All people involved in the care of children on behalf of Bushwalking Victoria will:

1. Work towards the achievement of the aims and purposes of the organisation;
2. Be responsible for relevant administration of programs and activities in their area;
3. Maintain a duty of care towards others involved in these programs and activities;
4. Establish and maintain a child-safe environment in the course of their work;
5. Be fair, considerate and honest with others;
6. Treat children and young people with respect and value their ideas and opinions;
7. Act as positive role models in their conduct with children and young people.
8. Be professional in their actions;
9. Maintain strict impartiality;
10. Comply with specific organisational guidelines on physical contact with children;
11. Respect the privacy of children, their families and teachers/caregivers, and only disclose information to people who have a need to know;
12. Maintain a child-safe environment for children and young people;
13. Operate within the policies and guidelines of Bushwalking Victoria; and
14. Contact the police if a child is at immediate risk of abuse.

No person shall:

1. Shame, humiliate, oppress, belittle or degrade children or young people;
2. Unlawfully discriminate against any child;

3. Engage in any activity with a child or young person that is likely to physically or emotionally harm them;
4. Initiate unnecessary physical contact with a child or young person, or do things of a personal nature for them that they can do for themselves;
5. Be alone with a child or young person unnecessarily and for more than a very short time;
6. Develop a 'special' relationship with a specific child or young person for their own needs;
7. Show favouritism through the provision of gifts or inappropriate attention;
8. Arrange contact, including online contact, with children or young people outside of the organisation's programs and activities;
9. Photograph or video a child or young person without the consent of the child and his/her parents or guardians;
10. Work with children or young people while under the influence of alcohol or illegal drugs;
11. Engage in open discussions of a mature or adult nature in the presence of children;
12. Use inappropriate language in the presence of children; or
13. Do anything in contravention of the organisation's policies, procedures or this Code of Conduct.

What happens if you breach this Code of Conduct

If you breach this Code of Conduct you will face disciplinary action, including and up to termination of employment or cessation of engagement with Bushwalking Victoria.



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