



CHILD SAFETY AND WELLBEING POLICY

1. Commitment to Child Safety

The health and welfare of all children in care is paramount. The Brighton Recreational Centre ('Centre') is committed to providing a safe and secure environment for all its Employees, Members, Visitors, and Volunteers and particularly to Children. The Child Safety and Wellbeing Policy aims to reduce the risk of abuse occurring, and to ensure that a caring and appropriate response is taken should abuse occur.

Statement of Commitment to Child Safety and Wellbeing

The Brighton Recreational Centre is committed to the safety, wellbeing, and empowerment of all children and young people accessing our programs and services. We have a zero tolerance approach to any form of child abuse. We support the rights of children and we will act immediately to ensure an environment is maintained where children and all participants feel safe, respected, valued and empowered at all times

2. Purpose

This policy outlines how Brighton Recreational centre prioritises the safety and wellbeing of children and what steps we will take to do this.

3. Responsibilities

The Board and Management of the Brighton Recreational Centre are committed to implementing the Child Safety and Wellbeing Policy and to training its Employees, Contractors and Volunteers in its content and application.

The General Manager will fulfil the role of the centre's Child Safety Officer. All matters relating to child safety, including, but not limited to reporting of child abuse, the receipt of complaints, the delivery of training, the screening of staff/volunteers, the reviewing of the policy and the compliance with the policy are to be managed by the General Manager.

All staff and volunteers of the centre will comply with the Child Safety and Wellbeing Policy and actively ensure that the safety of children is at the forefront of their actions, and the fulfilment of their roles.

4. Scope

This policy applies to all board members, staff, volunteers, contractors, hirers, children and other individuals involved in our organisation.

5. Definitions

Child abuse means:

Physical Abuse, any non-accidental physical injury resulting from practices such as:

- hitting, punching, kicking, shaking, burning (irons, cigarettes), biting, pulling out hair, alcohol and/or other drug administration.

Sexual Abuse, any assault or abuse of a sexual nature, sexual molestation, indecent exposure, sexual harassment or intimidation. An offence committed against a child under section 49M(1) of the Crimes Act 1958 (Vic) such as grooming

Emotional and Psychological Abuse, the chronic attitude or behaviour of one person which is directed at another person, or, the creation of an emotional environment which erodes a person's self-esteem and social confidence over time. Behaviours may include:

- Insulting, bullying, devaluing, ignoring, rejecting, corrupting, isolating, terrorising or other extreme acts in the child's presence.

Neglect, is characterised by the failure to provide for basic needs. Any serious omission or commission which jeopardises or impairs a person's health or development.

Child, any person under the age of 18.

Leader, any person (paid or unpaid) over the age of 18 who is responsible for the control and safety of members placed in their care whilst holding a formal position in a named Organisation. A leader could include but is not limited to, Staff, Tutors, Contractors, Coaches, Childcare Workers, Educators.

Member, any person, including children, who attends or participates in the Centre's activities, classes or services.

Organisation, the Brighton Recreational Centre (the Centre).

Volunteer any unpaid person over the age of 16 who is invited to assist in the care of children, aged and/or vulnerable people.

Vulnerable Personnel, any person who is or may be in need of community care services by reason of mental or other disability, age or illness.

6. Relevant Legislation and Standards

The Brighton Recreational Centre will align with, and comply with all relevant legislation and standards, including:

- United Nations Convention on the rights of the child
- Section 64 of the Children and Young Persons Act 1989.
- The Child Wellbeing and Safety Act 2005 (Vic)
- The Reportable Conduct Scheme (as it may apply to the programs and services of the Brighton Recreational Centre)
- The Victorian Child Safe Standards

In accordance with the Victorian Child Safe Standards we will comply with each of the 11 standards:

Child Safe Standard 1: Organisations establish a culturally safe environment in which the diverse and unique identities and experiences of Aboriginal children and young people are respected and valued

Child Safe Standard 2: Child safety and wellbeing is embedded in organisational leadership, governance and culture.

Child Safe Standard 3: Children and young people are empowered about their rights, participate in decisions affecting them and are taken seriously.

Child Safe Standard 4: Families and communities are informed and involved in promoting child safety and wellbeing.

Child Safe Standard 5: Equity is upheld and diverse needs respected in policy and practice.

Child Safe Standard 6: People working with children and young people are suitable and supported to reflect child safety and wellbeing values in practice.

Child Safe Standard 7: Processes for complaints and concerns are child-focused.

Child Safe Standard 8: Staff and volunteers are equipped with the knowledge, skills and awareness to keep children and young people safe through ongoing education and training.

Child Safe Standard 9: Physical and online environments promote safety and wellbeing while minimising the opportunity for children and young people to be harmed.

Child Safe Standard 10: Implementation of the Child Safe Standards is regularly reviewed and improved.

Child Safe Standard 11: Policies and procedures document how the organisation is safe for children and young people.

7. Access to the Policy

The Brighton Recreational Centre's Child Safety and Wellbeing Policy can be accessed within the centre's website.

8. Policy Status and Review

The policy will be reviewed by the Board of Directors, no less than every 2 years.

The Board of Directors and/or management will also review relevant practices and policies in response to a child safety incident or "near miss".

9. Children's Empowerment

We will actively seek to include children's views and ideas in our planning and delivery of services.

We do not tolerate bullying or abusive behaviour between children and take care if this occurs. We want children to develop new friends and at the Brighton Recreational Centre and to be supportive of one another.

We respect the rights of children and will provide them with information about their rights including the right to be safe, and will act on safety concerns raised by children or their families.

10. Families and Communities

Parents, families and communities are welcome to provide feedback at any time through our contact email address and are encouraged to raise any concerns they have with us.

The opportunity to provide feedback will be communicated within parent/guardian handbooks, newsletters and within our website.

11. Creating culturally safe environments for aboriginal children and their families

Brighton Recreational Centre is committed to creating environments where aboriginal culture is celebrated and aboriginal children, families and community members are welcomed and included.

12. Valuing diversity

We value diversity and equity for all children. To achieve this, we will

- provide training for staff and volunteers on understanding diversity and how to support inclusion and cultural safety
- welcome and support participation of all children, including children with disability, children from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds, those who are unable to live at home, LGBT IQ children and aboriginal children and their families
- have zero tolerance of racism and other forms of discrimination and take action when discrimination or exclusion is identified
- strive to reflect the diversity of our community through representation of our staff and management committee members
- commit to ensuring our facilities and online activities promote inclusion of children of all abilities

13. Code of Conduct

All staff and volunteers will comply with the Brighton Recreational Centre Code of Conduct Policy

Breaches of the code of conduct may result in disciplinary action including termination of a person's involvement with the organisation.

All third party contractors and hirers are also expected to abide by the Code of Conduct Policy, and will have to sign an agreement to comply with the code, prior to delivering any services.

14. Recruiting Staff and Volunteers

Employees, Contractors and Volunteers involved in activities or programs with children, aged and/or vulnerable people must be carefully selected and screened. Prior to commencing employment or volunteer services, the following precautions will be taken:

- All employees and/or volunteers must provide details of relevant past experience, positions held, details of two referees and permission to contact them. Both referees will be checked and spoken to with regards to the applicant's employment history and to seek to establish the applicant's suitability for the position. The conversation will be documented and retained on file. All short-listed candidates must undertake a formal interview which includes an analysis of past experience working with children, the elderly or vulnerable people. A Police and/or Working with Children's Check which complies with the legislative requirements of Victoria must be requested and received prior to the Employee or Volunteer commencing their proposed role. The check must show that the individual is not precluded from working in childcare or aged care.

Where the Organisation has identified that an applicant has previously committed a violent or sexually related offence, they cannot, under any circumstances, be considered for employment or engagement with the Centre

15. Training

All new Staff, including Tutors, Educators, Coaches, Childcare Workers, Contractors and Volunteers will be issued with a copy of this policy and receive formal training in;

- The content and application of the Organisation's Child Safety and Wellbeing Policy.
- Reporting procedures and the associated legal requirements.

Annual child safety training will be provided, and staff and volunteers will be required to attend, ensuring that staff and volunteers attend training on the Child Safety and Wellbeing Policy no less than every 2 years

16 A Safe Environment

Incidents of abuse are unlikely to take place in front of another person and the presence of a witness can assist in clarifying questionable allegations. For these reasons, working alongside other staff is the preferred method.

Child safety will be incorporated into the centre's broader risk management, including the conducting of risk assessments for the centres programs and services, and the undertaking of the required risk mitigation strategies.

17. Reporting Procedures

The Brighton Recreational Centre actively encourages the reporting of all abuse including Sexual Abuse.

The Centre is committed to building an environment where either a victim or employee/volunteer feels able to report such abuse.

Employees and/or volunteers must report reasonable suspicions of abuse to the General Manager.

Reasonable Suspicion means fair and practical reason to believe an incident involving abuse has occurred based on verbal communication, hearsay, rumour or observation of behaviour. An independent person will be appointed by the Centre with the specific duty of dealing with any allegations of harm or abuse that may arise. The details of those reporting abuse will be kept private and confidential. A documented reporting process with escalating procedures has been established by the Centre for handling allegations of abuse. The escalating procedures will be as follows:

- The automatic suspension from all work or other duties within the Centre of any person while under investigation by either the Brighton Recreational Centre, or by the police, for committing abuse;
- The automatic termination of their employment, or involvement with the Centre if found guilty of committing abuse, either by internal investigation or by a court. If there is reasonable suspicion that a member has been or is suffering abuse, the Police and the Centre's Insurer will be contacted immediately.

The Police will also be notified if a member or customer discloses an incident of abuse that has occurred somewhere other than the Centre's premises, (e.g. an excursion).

If a disclosure of abuse is made, the person who receives the disclosure will maintain appropriate pastoral care to the one making the disclosure.

This will include:

- Treating each allegation seriously and not attempting to deny the allegation or minimise its impact on the alleged victim. The matter should not be swept under the carpet.
- Not pushing the member or customer to disclose details of the alleged assault or attempting to investigate the allegation.
- Assuring the member that they are understood, that their disclosure is being taken seriously, that what has happened is not their fault, and that they are correct in disclosing the incident.
- Reporting the abuse to the police and the Centre's insurer.
- Not making contact with the alleged perpetrator. If the Worker or Volunteer is already providing counsel to the alleged perpetrator, it may be advisable for another person to assume this responsibility for the duration of any investigation.
- If the alleged assault has taken place recently, clothing worn by the member should be, if reasonably practical, retained and handed to the police for forensic examination.
- Maintaining confidentiality. Any disclosures by a Member or customer, reports of suspected abuse and all details of the subsequent investigation will be documented promptly and the documents will be held in a secure location where a breach of privacy cannot occur.

If there is concern for the immediate safety of a child, immediately call 000.

18. Record Keeping and Information Sharing

Brighton Recreational Centre is committed to making and keeping full and accurate records about all child related complaints or safety concerns. All child safety complaints, concerns, incidents and near misses will be recorded in an incident reporting system. Records will be kept even if an investigation does not substantiate a complaint.

Brighton Recreational Centre may share relevant information to ensure the safety and well-being of children, where it is appropriate and in their best interests. We will keep information about complaints confidential, except where it is necessary to share information to respond properly to a complaint or to prioritise child safety. We may also need to share information about incidents or complaints with external authorities to comply with the law or to prioritise safety.

Date Approved 10th June 2021

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