

2.3 DNC Child Safe Code of Conduct1/

VERSION NUMBER	2 (implemented 1 May 2023)		
DATE RATIFIED	26/04/2023	DATE FOR REVIEW	By no later than 1 July 2024

Policy Declaration

Embedding a culture of empowering children and upholding child safety within the Daylesford Neighbourhood Centre (DNC) is integral to our ability to meet the needs of and serve our community. Our Child Safe Code of Conduct outlines the child safe principles and minimum expectations for appropriate behaviour when in the company of children at DNC.

Policy Description

Application:

This policy applies to all people who conduct work for, or are connected to, DNC in a paid or unpaid capacity, including staff, CoM Members, volunteers and DNC users. It applies to a broad range of situations where interaction with a person under the age of 18 years (children) may occur including all activities in and organised by DNC which involve, result in or relate to contact with children.

It is important everyone is aware of DNC's child safety obligations. Allegations of misconduct involving children can be made against a person even if the conduct occurred outside of their work.

Background:

The Victorian Government Child Safe Standards (The Standards) are compulsory minimum standards for organisations which provide services for children (or are used by children) to help protect them from harm.

Objectives: The Standards require organisations who provide services for children to have a Child Safe Code of Conduct which establishes clear expectations for appropriate behaviour with children.

Statement of Commitment

Daylesford Neighbourhood Centre is committed to the safety, wellbeing and best interests of children. DNC requires all staff to uphold the following commitments. DNC has specific policies, procedures and training in place to achieve these commitments.

DNC

- will uphold the rights of children who come into contact with DNC so they feel heard on matters relevant to their safety and so they feel safe and protected
- has zero tolerance for child abuse and will take all allegations of reportable conduct and safety concerns very seriously, ensuring such conduct is dealt with in accordance with DNC policies, procedures and the law
- is committed to preventing child abuse and identifying risk early, and removing and reducing these risks in both physical and online environments
- will actively work to listen to and empower children who come into contact with DNC
- has legal and moral obligations to contact authorities when there are concerns about a child, which will be followed rigorously
- has robust human resources and recruitment practices for all staff and volunteers
- will provide a culturally safe environment for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children and those from culturally and/or linguistically diverse backgrounds, and consider their needs in providing this environment
- will provide a safe environment for, and consider the needs of, children, and consider their needs in providing this environment recognising gender diversity, disability and cultural diversity

Legislative responsibilities

DNC takes our legal responsibilities seriously, including:

- **Failure to disclose:** Reporting child sexual abuse is a community-wide responsibility. All adults in Victoria who have a reasonable belief an adult has committed a sexual offence against a child under 16 have an obligation to report this information to the police. Failure to disclose the information may be a criminal offence.
- **Failure to protect:** People of authority in DNC will commit an offence if they know of a substantial risk of child sexual abuse and have the power or responsibility to reduce or remove the risk, but negligently fail to do so.

Related Policies and Procedures:

- Code of Ethics and Conduct Policy
- Continuous Improvement Policy
- All policies within the DNC Policy and Procedures Manual

Related Documents:

- Child Safe Code of Conduct Acknowledgement Form

Child Safe Code of Conduct Procedures

To manifest the DNC Child Safe Code Conduct in real and meaningful actions, we will:

- Require staff and CoM members to read and sign the **Child Safe Code of Conduct Acknowledgement Form** as part of the Induction Process. A copy of the signed document is provided to the individual, and a copy is maintained in their file.
- Display and maintain information related to our Child Safe Code of Conduct, and other relevant policies, in key locations within our facilities.
- Incorporate use of our Child Safe Code of Conduct in our Induction Process, Performance Management Procedures and other organisational activities.
- Provide training and education to staff and CoM Members on the Child Safe Standards and creating a child safe organisation
- Expect CoM members and the CM to role model the expected conduct and business practices outlined in this Code, acting with honesty and integrity at all times.
- Expect all staff and CoM members to understand the factors contributing to reasonable belief an incident has occurred includes:
 - a child states they or someone they know has been abused (noting sometimes the child may in fact be referring to themselves).
 - behaviour consistent with behaviour of an abuse victim is observed.
 - someone else has raised a suspicion of abuse but is unwilling to report it.
 - observing suspicious behaviour.
- Undertake action when there is a reasonable belief an incident has occurred to
 - act in the best interest of the child
 - act promptly to ensure the child is safe
 - report the incident to the CM (Child Safety Officer).
- In our child safety conduct we:
 1. Take all reasonable steps to protect children and children's right to safety, in our organisation and in our community, avoiding:
 - 1.1. Developing 'special' relationships with children constituting favouritism (i.e. by giving specific children gifts).
 - 1.2. Unnecessary physical contact (i.e. by massaging).
 - 1.3. Putting children at risk of abuse (i.e. by locking doors).
 - 1.4. Doing personal things which the child could do for themselves, (i.e. changing clothes).
 - 1.5. Using inappropriate language or discussing topics of an adult nature.
 - 1.6. Initiating contact with children or their families outside of DNC, including through online platforms.

- 1.7. Ignoring or disregarding suspected or disclosed child abuse.
2. Listen and respond to the views and concerns of children, particularly if they are telling you that they or another child has been abused and/or are worried about their safety or the safety of another.
3. Ensure as far as practicable that adults are not left alone with a child.
4. Report any child safety concerns or allegations of child abuse to the Manager, acting to ensure children are removed from potential harm.
5. Communicate our commitment to children's safety and inclusion in key locations in our organisation, including media, online platforms, and facilities.

Consequences of breaching the Child Safe Code of Conduct

DNC will enforce this policy, the Child Safety and Wellbeing Policy and any other child safety and wellbeing policies by ensuring all staff, volunteers and CoM members are trained and aware of their child safe legal obligations and requirements. A breach of this Child Safe Code of Conduct may be subject to disciplinary procedures in accordance with the relevant industrial instrument and/or relevant terms of engagement. More information can be found in our disciplinary policy and the Child Safety and Wellbeing Policy.