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## Child Safe Policy

<b>Policy Number</b>	POL/18/41[v3]
<b>Effective date</b>	4 January 2019
<b>Review date</b>	August 2021
<b>Responsibility</b>	Manager Corporate Services

### Purpose

This policy demonstrates Whitehorse Manningham Libraries' (WML) commitment to child safety. WML aims to provide children with an environment that is safe and welcoming and encourages their participation.

This Policy supports WML systems to prevent and respond to child abuse, and should be read in conjunction with WML's Reportable Conduct Policy.

### Objective

- To reflect WML's commitment to provide a safe environment where every person has the right to be treated with respect and is safe and protected from harm.
- To provide employees with guidance on their responsibilities in relation to the Victorian Child Safe Standards.
- Ensure decisions and actions are consistent with the Victorian Child Safe Standards.

### Scope

This policy applies to all employees of Whitehorse Manningham Libraries. For the purposes of this policy, employees are defined as:

- All employees – part time, full time, contract and casual
- Volunteers
- Work experience students
- Industry placement students

## **Our commitment to child safety**

WML is committed to the safety and well-being of all children and young people participating in our programs and visiting our libraries. We aim to create a safe and friendly environment where all children and young people are valued and feel safe.

We will show our commitment by:

- Encouraging participation and respecting the views of children and young people who participate in our programs
- Providing students with information on what they can do if they feel unsafe
- Valuing diversity and not tolerating any discriminatory practices
- Having zero tolerance for child abuse
- Promoting cultural safety for Aboriginal children, cultural safety for children from culturally and/or linguistically diverse backgrounds, and to providing a safe environment for children with a disability.

## **Recruitment practices**

All reasonable steps are taken to ensure WML employs suitable and appropriate people to work with children. Selection criteria and position descriptions reflect our commitment to child safety and our legislative responsibilities.

Screening measures for new employees include:

- Working with Children Check for those engaged in child-related work, including volunteers and contractors
- Police checks and reference checks on all new employees and volunteers

If, throughout the recruitment process, a person's records indicate a criminal history, the applicant will be given the opportunity to provide further information and context.

Regular ongoing screening of staff will continue throughout employment with WML.

## **Training and supervision**

WML is committed to providing appropriate training, supervision and information to employees and volunteers.

We will show our commitment by:

- Providing induction training to all employees, students and volunteers that includes our obligation to ensure child safety
- Providing staff with procedures on how to report inappropriate behaviour towards children
- Having a robust Employee Code of Conduct which includes expectations on appropriate behaviour towards children
- Providing appropriate supervision for new staff who are required to work with children and deliver programs
- Providing staff with training and support to ensure the ongoing maintenance of a child safe environment

- Including this policy in induction programs for employees, volunteers and students
- Refreshing knowledge of this policy and our ongoing commitment to child safety through training and staff newsletters

### **Procedural Fairness**

We are committed to the safety and wellbeing of children attending our libraries and programs. We acknowledge that our staff are also entitled to being treated fairly and with respect. Any decisions made when recruiting, assessing incidents and undertaking disciplinary action will be thorough, transparent and based on evidence.

All incident reports in relation to abuse and safety concerns will be securely stored, including investigation details.

Where allegations involve the abuse or safety of a child, we will provide updates to children and families on progress and actions we as an organisation take.

### **Risk management**

We have management strategies in place to mitigate risk. Policies and procedures include, but are not limited to:

- Occupational Health and Safety Policy and Procedures: including incident reports
- Near miss/hazard reports to identify areas that may pose a risk to children or adults
- Employee Code of Conduct
- Recruitment and Selection Policy and Procedures
- Public Access Technology Conditions of Use
- Volunteer Policy
- Work Experience Policy
- eSmart Certification (Alannah and Madeleine Foundation and Telstra Foundation)
- Unattended Children Policy
- Reportable Conduct Policy

### **Reporting**

Reporting child abuse is a community-wide responsibility. All adults in Victoria who have a reasonable belief that an adult has committed a sexual offence against a child under 16 have an obligation to report that information to police.

We have a legal and moral obligation to contact authorities when we are concerned about a child's safety.

If you believe a child is at immediate risk of abuse phone 000.

Advice and support for staff and members of the community is available at the National Child Abuse Prevention Helpline: 1800 99 10 99.

Support for staff is also available through the Corporation's EAP provider, LifeWorks Helpline: 8650 6262.

In circumstances where the alleged offence is believed to have been committed by a WML employee, volunteer or person otherwise engaged by WML, the reporting requirements are as per the Reportable Conduct Policy.

### **Further Information**

Further information is available through the following sources:

Department of Human Services: <https://dhhs.vic.gov.au/publications/child-safe-standards>

Commission for Children and Young People: <https://ccyp.vic.gov.au/child-safety/>

Email: [childsafestandards@ccyp.vic.gov.au](mailto:childsafestandards@ccyp.vic.gov.au)

Phone: (03) 8601 5281

### **RELATED WML POLICIES AND DOCUMENTS**

Code of Conduct – Employee  
Recruitment and Selection Policy  
Volunteer Policy  
Position Descriptions  
Induction Procedures  
Work Experience Policy  
Occupational Health and Safety Policy  
Unattended Children Policy  
Incident Reports  
Reportable Conduct Policy

### **RELEVANT LEGISLATION**

Human Rights and Equal Opportunity Commission Act 1986  
Children, Youth and Families Act 2005  
Crimes Amendment (Protection of Children) Act 2014  
Victorian Working With Children Act 2005 (Amended 2014)  
Children Legislation Amendment (Reportable Conduct) Act 2017  
Child Wellbeing and Safety Act 2005  
Commission for Children and Young People Act 2012

### **REVIEW**

This policy will be reviewed as required.