



BALLARAT EAST NEIGHBOURHOOD HOUSE – CHILD SAFE POLICY

2.1 Child Safe Code of Conduct

VERSION NUMBER	1		
DATE RATIFIED	20/07/2022	DATE FOR REVIEW	30/11/2022

Policy Declaration

Embedding a culture of empowering children and upholding child safety within the Ballarat East Neighbourhood House (BENH) 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, including young people, at BENH.

Policy Description

Application:

This policy applies to all people who conduct work for, or are connected to, BENH in a paid or unpaid capacity, including staff, CoM Members, volunteers and BENH participants/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 BENH which involve, result in or relate to contact with children.

It is important that everyone is aware of BENH'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 that provide services for children (or are used by children) to help protect them from harm.



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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

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

- Will uphold the rights of children who come into contact with BENH so that they feel heard on matters relevant to their safety and so that 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 BENH 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 BENH.
- 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 that environment.
- Will provide a safe environment for, and consider the needs of, children, and consider their needs in providing that environment recognising gender diversity, disability and cultural diversity.



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Legislative responsibilities

BENH takes our legal responsibilities seriously, including:

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

Related Policies and Procedures:

- Ethics and Code of Conduct Policy
- Child Safety and Wellbeing Policy
- Recruitment and Appointment of Staff Policy
- Induction Policy
- Appropriate Use of Technology Policy
- Feedback and Grievance Policy
- Incident Reporting and Response Policy
- Safe Workplace Policy
- Strategy, Business, and Risk Policy

3.1.1 Child Safe Code of Conduct Procedures

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

- Require staff, volunteers and CoM members to read and sign the Child Safe Code of Conduct 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.



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- 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, volunteers and CoM Members on the Child Safe Standards and creating a child safe organisation.
- Expect CoM members and the Manager to role model the expected conduct and business practices outlined in this Code, acting with honesty and integrity at all times.
- Expect all staff, volunteers 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 that sometimes the child may in fact be referring to themselves).
 - Behaviour consistent with that 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** that an incident has occurred to
 - Act in the best interest of the child.
 - Act promptly to ensure that the child is safe.
 - Report the incident to the Manager (Child Safety Officer).

Consequences of breaching the Child Safe Code of Conduct

BENH 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.