

Child and Youth Safe Organisation Policy

Policy background and purpose

The Child Safe Standards are a central feature of the Victorian Government's response to the Family and Community Development Committee of the Victorian Parliament's *Betrayal of Trust: Inquiry into the Handling of Child Abuse by Religious and Other Non-Government Organisations* (Betrayal of Trust Inquiry).

The standards are compulsory for all organisations providing services to children and are intended to assist organisations to prevent child abuse, encourage reporting of abuse that occurs and improve responses to allegations of child abuse.

The Brotherhood of St Laurence (BSL) acknowledges and understands its obligations under Articles 1-54 of the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child and recognises that all children and young people have the right to be treated with respect and care, and to be safe from all forms of abuse. This includes respecting the cultural identity of children and young people.

BSL recognises that staff, volunteers and students have a duty of care to ensure that services are delivered in a way that protect children and uphold young people's right to be safe.

Staff, volunteers and students have a duty of care to report concerns they have about a child or young person's safety and well-being that arise through their work at BSL.

Through its service delivery BSL ensures that children and young people are safe, respected and empowered through active listening and a zero tolerance towards child abuse.

<p>Child Safe Standards</p>	<p>The Child Safe Standards are as follows:</p> <p>Standard 1: Strategies to embed an organisational culture of child safety, through effective leadership arrangements</p> <p>Standard 2: A Child Safety Policy or Statement of Commitment to Child Safety</p> <p>Standard 3: A Code of Conduct that establishes clear expectations for appropriate behaviour with children</p> <p>Standard 4: Screening, supervision, training and other human resources practices that reduce the risk of child abuse by new and existing personnel</p> <p>Standard 5: Process for responding to and reporting suspected child abuse</p> <p>Standard 6: Strategies to identify and reduce or remove risks of child abuse</p> <p>Standard 7: Strategies to promote the participation and empowerment of children</p>
<p>Policy objectives</p>	<p>To ensure that BSL has effective leadership arrangements in place for the protection and safety of children.</p> <p>To ensure everyone is aware of their responsibilities under the Child Safe Standards in ensuring the safety and well-being of children and young people that arise through their work or interactions with BSL.</p> <p>To ensure BSL has processes in place to inform and empower children and young people to address abuse that may occur or that they may be part of in other aspects of their lives.</p> <p>To ensure child safety is incorporated into activity design and risk assessment processes.</p> <p>In programs which provide services to children and young people:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Questions related to child safety are included in the interview and recruitment process. • Staff and volunteers know how to respond to suspected misconduct or child safety concerns. • Staff and volunteers understand the mandated response to disclosures of suspicions and child abuse.
<p>Scope</p>	<p>This policy applies to:</p> <p>All staff, volunteers and students at BSL.</p> <p>All children who access services including those who identify as Aboriginal, from culturally and/or linguistically diverse backgrounds and children with a disability.</p>

Definitions	
Child or young person	Any person under the age of 18.
Child abuse	<p>Abuse constitutes any act committed against a child involving:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • physical violence • sexual offences • serious emotional or psychological abuse • serious neglect. • Abandonment. <p>See Appendix A for further information.</p>
Responsibilities	
BSL Board	<p>Demonstrate commitment to the safety of children and young people.</p> <p>Have an understanding of child safe obligations.</p> <p>Where appropriate ensure decision-making includes consideration of child safety implications.</p>
Executive Director and BSL Executive	<p>Ensure that the relevant Act and Regulations are observed and enforced.</p> <p>Ensure all staff and volunteers who interact with children and young people are aware of this policy and the BSL Code of Ethical Behaviour.</p> <p>Provide formal processes for reporting, recording, investigating and responding to allegations and disclosures of child abuse that are in accordance with the relevant Act and Regulations.</p> <p>Appoint a Child Safety Officer.</p> <p>Oversee the efficacy of child safe systems and procedures, including incident review systems.</p> <p>Ensure the Board receives regular reports on Child Safe Standards compliance and incidents as part of the incident reporting and risk management framework.</p> <p>In programs which provide services to children and young people ensure:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Staff and volunteers are screened, appropriately supervised and trained in relation to child safety. • Risk assessments are undertaken for all existing activities and in the design phase of proposed activities to identify and minimise risk to children and young people.

<p>Senior Managers and Program Managers</p>	<p>As part of the departmental induction process, ensure that staff and volunteers are familiar with this policy, the BSL Code of Ethical Behaviour and mandatory reporting requirements.</p> <p>Ensure staff are trained in relation to Child Safety obligations and responsibilities.</p> <p>Follow processes for reporting, recording, investigating and responding to allegations and disclosures of child abuse.</p> <p>Ensure risk assessments are undertaken for all existing and proposed activities and services to identify and minimise risk to children and young adults.</p> <p>In programs which provide services to children and young people:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Utilise appropriate screening processes when selecting and appointing new staff and volunteers. • Provide tailored training in relation to child safety and mandatory reporting requirements. • Discuss child safety as needed at team meetings.
<p>Staff and Volunteers</p>	<p>Ensure children and young people accessing BSL services are safe, respected and empowered.</p> <p>Recognise and respect children and young people’s cultural identity and diversity.</p> <p>Uphold the BSL Code of Ethical Behaviour and adhere to the requirements of this policy, legislation and standards.</p> <p>Participate in screening processes during the recruitment phase and in ongoing checks.</p> <p>Participate in risk assessments where required to identify and minimise risks to the safety of children and young people.</p>
<p>Child Safety Officers</p>	<p>The BSL Child Safety Officer is responsible for providing advice on legislative requirements and standards, and on reporting and responding to concerns regarding child safety and reports of child abuse.</p> <p>The BSL Child Safety Officer role is currently undertaken by the General Manager Service Development.</p> <p>Additional Child Safety Officers are available at the local level. These Officers act as the first point of contact for reporting any child safety concerns and assist the BSL Child Safety Officer where needed in relation to reporting and in ensuring the organisation is child friendly.</p> <p>Contact details of the Child Safety Officers will be displayed at each site.</p>

Recruitment	<p>In programs which provide services to children and young people:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Child safety is included as part of the recruitment process. • BSL's commitment to child safety is included in position descriptions and advertisements. • Police checks are undertaken every three years (or as required) and a Working with Children Check is sighted and updated.
Activity Design and Risk Assessments for Programs for Children and Young People	<p>In developing new activities/services Managers will consider child safety as a core part of the design process and will seek to minimise activities which place children and young people in unsupervised one-to-one contact with staff and volunteers.</p>
Information	<p>BSL's Statement of Commitment to child safety will be placed on the intranet and will be displayed at all sites. The Statement of Commitment will include contact details of the BSL Child Safety Officer.</p> <p>All policies, procedures and codes of conduct pertaining to child safety will be produced in child and youth friendly form.</p> <p>Program areas will display information for children and young people regarding who to contact if they have a concern about their safety and wellbeing.</p> <p>Information on relevant legislative requirements and updates will be distributed by the BSL Child Safety Officer.</p>
Complaints re child abuse	<p>All allegations and complaints regarding child abuse will be treated seriously and responded to promptly.</p> <p>Staff and volunteers have a responsibility to report an allegation of abuse if they have a reasonable belief that an incident has taken place. Allegations of abuse or child safety concerns must be reported to the line Manager and to relevant authorities in accordance with our obligations under the Act and relevant regulations.</p> <p>Allegations against BSL staff will be managed according to the BSL Complaints Policy and reported immediately to the line Manager and Divisional General Manager who will respond promptly and in accordance with legislative requirements.</p>
Staff Support	<p>Staff and volunteers may find that having concerns about a child or young person's well-being and safety is a difficult experience. Staff can seek support through BSL's Chaplaincy service 9483 1110 or the Employee Assistance Program on 1300 361 008.</p>
Relevant Legislation	<p>The Children Youth and Families Act 2005</p>
Related documents	<p>The BSL Code of Ethical Behaviour Recruitment Policy Privacy Policy Working with Children Check Policy Police Check Policy</p>

Key Performance Indicators	<p>Board members are aware of their obligations</p> <p>Risk Assessment are carried where child services are delivered</p> <p>Risk Assessment are carried where child services are proposed</p> <p>Child Safety is included in PD's and advertisements for all position for child related service delivery programs</p> <p>All employees who are designated to have WWC check attend BSL Child Safety Training as part of their induction</p> <p>Commitment to child safety is displayed at all services</p>
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Appendix A

Physical Violence	<p>Physical violence occurs when a child suffers or is likely to suffer significant harm from a non-accidental injury or injuries inflicted by another person. Physical violence can be inflicted in many ways, including beating, shaking, burning or use of weapons (such as, belts and paddles).</p>
Sexual Offence	<p>Sexual offences occur when a person involves the child in sexual activity or deliberately puts the child in the presence of sexual behaviours that are exploitative or inappropriate to his/her age and development. Child sexual abuse can involve a range of sexual activity including fondling, masturbation, penetration, voyeurism and exhibitionism. It can also include exposure to or exploitation through pornography or prostitution, as well as grooming behaviour.</p>
Emotional or Psychological Abuse	<p>Serious emotional or psychological abuse occurs when harm is inflicted on a child through repeated rejection, isolation, or by threats or violence. It can include derogatory name-calling and put-downs, or persistent and deliberate coldness from a person, to the extent where the behaviour of the child is disturbed or their emotional development is at serious risk of being impaired. Serious emotional or psychological abuse could also result from conduct that exploits a child without necessarily being criminal, such as encouraging a child to engage in inappropriate or risky behaviours.</p>
Serious Neglect	<p>Serious neglect is the continued failure to provide a child with the basic necessities of life, such as food, clothing, shelter, hygiene, medical attention or adequate supervision, to the extent that the child's health, safety and/or development is, or is likely to be, jeopardised. Serious neglect can also occur if an adult fails to adequately ensure the safety of a child where the child is exposed to extremely dangerous or life threatening situations.</p>

Source: Based on the Victorian Child Protection Practice Manual

Policy & Procedure Information

Approved by	BSL Child Safety Officer
Approved Date	February 2017
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Authorising Department	Community Services
Prepared by	Mark Savage Quality Assurance Manager Mara Erhardt-Rumpe General Manager Service Development / Child Safety Officer
Control File title	Child and Youth Safe Organisation Policy
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Superseded documents	NA

Procedure Changes

Date	Reason for Change	Made By
Feb 2017	Further feedback from the Executive Team incorporated.	Mara Erhardt-Rumpe
May 2018	Changes made to reflect additional local Child Safety Officers.	Mara Erhardt-Rumpe