

Child and Youth Safe Organisation Procedure

(People – Health, Safety and Environment)

Purpose

The Child Safe Standards are a central feature of the Victorian Government's response to the *Betrayal of Trust: Inquiry into the Handling of Child Abuse by Religious and Other Non-Government Organisations*. 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 and improve responses to allegations of 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 has a zero tolerance towards child abuse. BSL recognises that staff and volunteers 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 and volunteers have a duty of care to report concerns they have about a child or young person's safety and wellbeing that arise through their work at BSL.

The purpose of the procedure is to:

- Ensure that BSL has effective leadership arrangements in place for the protection and safety of children and young people.
- Ensure everyone is aware of their responsibilities under the Child Safe Standards in ensuring the safety and wellbeing of children and young people that arise through their work or interactions with BSL and understand the mandated response to disclosures of child abuse and safety concerns.
- Ensure BSL has processes in place to inform and empower children and young people to address abuse that may occur or that may be part of other aspects of their lives.
- Ensure child safety is incorporated into activity design and risk assessment processes.

Scope

All BSL staff and volunteers.

All children and young people who access BSL services and sites.

Definitions

Term

Definition

Child Safe Standards

Standard 1: Strategies to embed an organisational culture of child safety, through effective leadership arrangements

Standard 2: A Child Safety Policy or Statement of Commitment to Child Safety

Standard 3: A Code of Conduct that establishes clear expectations for appropriate behaviour with children

Standard 4: Screening, supervision, training and other human resources practices that reduce the risk of child abuse by new and existing personnel

Standard 5: Process for responding to and reporting suspected child abuse

Standard 6: Strategies to identify and reduce or remove risks of child abuse

Standard 7: Strategies to promote the participation and empowerment of children

Child or young person

Any person under the age of 18.

Child abuse

Abuse constitutes any act committed against a child involving: physical violence, sexual offences, serious emotional or psychological abuse, serious neglect, abandonment.

Procedure and Responsibilities

Recruitment

Programs which provide services to children and young people will include child safety as part of the staff recruitment process.

Position descriptions and advertisements will include BSL's commitment to child safety.

Police checks are undertaken every three years (or as required) and a Working with Children Check is sighted prior to starting employment and updated as required.

Activity design and risk assessments for programs provided to children and young people

Managers will consider child safety as an essential part of the design process when developing new program activities or services and will seek to minimise activities which place children and young people in unsupervised one-to-one contact with staff and volunteers.

Information

BSL's Statement of Commitment to child safety will be available on the intranet and displayed at all sites.

Details of the BSL Child Safety Officer and local Child Safety Officers will be displayed at all sites and available on the Child Safety intranet page.

All policies, procedures and related documents pertaining to child safety will be produced in child and youth friendly form.

Program areas will display information for children and young people regarding who to contact if they have a concern about their safety and wellbeing.

Information on relevant legislative requirements and updates will be distributed by the BSL Child Safety Officer.

Allegations of child abuse

All allegations and complaints regarding child abuse will be treated seriously and responded to promptly.

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, the BSL Child Safety Officer and relevant authorities in accordance with our obligations under the Act and relevant Regulations. Please refer to Child Safe Reporting Procedure.

Allegations against BSL staff will be managed according to the BSL Complaints Policy and reported immediately to the line manager and divisional Director who will respond promptly and in accordance with legislative requirements.

Staff support

Staff and volunteers may find that having concerns about a child's or young person's safety and wellbeing is a difficult experience.

Staff can seek support from BSL's Chaplaincy Service on 9483 1110 or the Employee Assistance Program on 1300 361 008.

Responsibilities:

BSL Board:

- Demonstrate commitment to the safety of children and young people.
- Understand child safe obligations.
- Where appropriate, decision-making includes consideration of child safety implications.

Executive Director and BSL Executive:

- Ensure that the relevant Act and Regulations are observed and enforced.
- Ensure all staff and volunteers who interact with children and young people are aware of this procedure and the BSL Code of Ethical Behaviour.
- 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.
- Appoint a Child Safety Officer.
- Oversee the efficacy of child safe systems and procedures, including incident review systems.
- Ensure the Board receives regular reports on Child Safe Standards compliance and incidents as part of the incident reporting and risk management framework.
- In programs which provide services to children and young people ensure: 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.

Senior Managers and Program Managers:

- Ensure that staff and volunteers are familiar with this procedure, the BSL Code of Ethical Behaviour and mandatory reporting requirements.
- Ensure staff are trained in relation to child safety obligations and responsibilities.

- Follow processes for reporting, recording, investigating and responding to allegations and disclosures of child abuse.
- Ensure risk assessments are undertaken for all existing and proposed activities and services to identify and minimise risk to children and young people.
- In programs which provide services to children and young people: 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.

Staff and volunteers:

- Ensure children and young people accessing BSL services are safe, respected and empowered.
- Recognise and respect children and young people's cultural identity and diversity.
- Uphold the BSL Code of Ethical Behaviour and adhere to the requirements of this procedure, relevant legislation and the Child Safe Standards.
- Participate in screening processes during the recruitment phase and in ongoing checks.
- Participate in risk assessments where required to identify and minimise risks to the safety of children and young people.

Child Safety Officers:

- 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 child abuse. This role is currently undertaken by Head Strategic Partnerships.
- Additional Child Safety Officers are available at the local level. These Officers act as first point of contact for reporting any child safety concerns and assist the BSL Child Safety Officer where needed in relation to reporting and ensuring the organisation is child friendly.
- Contact details of the Child Safety Officers are displayed at each site.

Associated Documents

[The Victorian Child Protection Practice Manual](#)

Pillar Linkage

People – Health, Safety and Environment

Relevant Legislation

Children Youth and Families Act 2005

Child Wellbeing and Safety Act 2005

Department of Health and Human Services Better Regulatory Practice Framework

All BSL's "documented information" is prepared taking into consideration Australian jurisdictional laws and regulations, including instructions received from the relevant regulator. All legislation that applies to this document is contained within the organisation's legislative framework.

Procedure Information

Approved by	Mara Erhardt-Rumpe BSL Child Safety Officer	Approved Date	November 2019
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Procedure Changes

Date	Reason for Change	Made By