

CHILD SAFETY & WELLBEING POLICY

This Child Safety and Wellbeing Policy ('Policy') sets out the strong commitment of CDC Victoria and its related bodies corporate (collectively referred to as 'CDC') to child safety and wellbeing. It outlines how CDC prioritises the safety and wellbeing of children and what steps CDC will take to do this in accordance with the Victorian Child Safe Standards.

If there is concern for the immediate safety of a child, immediately call 000.

Commitment to Child Safety

All children who travel on CDC bus services have a right to feel and be safe. The safety of passengers on our services, especially children, is our first priority and CDC has a zero-tolerance policy towards child abuse and harm. CDC aims to create an environment where children feel safe when travelling in our fleet.

CDC has undertaken a Child Safety Review using a checklist adapted from the Commission for Children and Young People's guidelines to identify child safety measures in place and areas for improvement. As a result of this review, CDC has adopted this Policy and a Child Safe Code of Conduct, with the approval of the Chief Executive Officer.

The Manager, Process Improvement is CDC's designated Child Safety Person, with the General Manager, People, Culture & Operations as the alternate contact person. Training will be provided to newly recruited personnel, as well as existing employees, on the requirements of this Policy and Child Safety Code of Conduct.

This policy applies to all CDC employees and includes contractors and volunteers where relevant.

Definitions

child/ children means a person who is under the age of 18 years.

child abuse means:

- a sexual offence committed against a child
- an offence committed against a child under section 49M(1) of the Crimes Act 1958 (Vic), such as grooming
- physical violence against a child
- causing serious emotional or psychological harm to a child
- serious neglect of a child.

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The role of management

CDC Management ('Management') will ensure that children's safety is prioritized and that action is taken when anyone raises concerns about children's safety. We encourage anyone involved with CDC to report a child safety concern. Management will work to create a positive culture around reporting so that people feel comfortable to raise concerns.

Everyone involved in CDC has a role in identifying and managing risks of child abuse and harm. Management will support staff to take action to manage risks, in accordance with this policy. We will also ensure that appropriate child safety training for staff is identified and completed.

Children's empowerment and participation

We do not tolerate bullying or abusive or racist behaviour between or towards children and take action if this occurs.

We seek to understand what makes children feel safe on our services by valuing children's' opinions. We will act on safety concerns raised by children or their families either directly or via the school. Children are encouraged to tell their teacher, their principal or their driver about any complaints or safety concerns they have in relation to their bus service.

Families and communities

Parents and others are invited to provide feedback to us at any time via the school, or to CDC directly as follows:

Child Safety Person
28 Prosperity Street, Truganina Vic 3029
Telephone: (03) 9977 9900
Email: info@cdcvictoria.com.au

Creating culturally safe environments for Aboriginal children and their families

We are committed to creating an environment where Aboriginal children and families are welcomed and included. Strategies to embed cultural safety for Aboriginal children include providing training for staff on the strengths of Aboriginal culture and its importance to the wellbeing and safety of Aboriginal children.

We encourage feedback from Aboriginal children and families on their experience of our service via the notice that we provide to parents/guardians, particularly how safe they feel expressing their identity including their culture.

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Valuing diversity

We value diversity and equity for all children. To achieve this we:

- promote the cultural safety of Aboriginal children and their families;
- promote the cultural safety, participation and empowerment of children from culturally and/or linguistically diverse backgrounds and their families;
- welcome children with a disability and their families; and
- employ staff from diverse cultural backgrounds and ensure that they are aware of their obligation not to discriminate unlawfully.

Code of Conduct

CDC has a Child Safety Code of Conduct. Its requirements will be communicated to all management and staff, and they must comply with it. Breaches of the Code of Conduct may result in disciplinary action including termination of employment.

All third-party contractors are also expected to abide by the Child Safety Code of Conduct which will be provided to them before any work on site (when children may be present) is conducted.

Employee recruitment

Child safety and wellbeing is central to recruitment, including in any advertisements, and screening processes for staff as outlined in the CDC Policy on Recruitment, Screening & Training for Child Safety.

Employee support

All management and staff receive training on induction, and as needed to ensure they understand their responsibilities in relation to child safety, including information and record keeping obligations, and to support their engagement with children. Training will be recorded in the business's employee records system.

Concerns, complaints and reporting

Our Manager, Process Improvement has been appointed as a Child Safety Person with the specific responsibility for responding to any complaints made by employees, parents or children. We adhere to the CDC's Child Safety Standards Complaint Handling Policy and Procedure (Complaint Handling Policy). Complaints or concerns about child safety can be made to:

Child Safety Person
28 Prosperity Street, Truganina Vic 3029
Telephone: (03) 9977 9900
Email: info@cdcvictoria.com.au

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Record keeping

CDC will make and keep full and accurate records about all child-related complaints or safety concerns which will be recorded in our MIS incident reporting system.

Records which may assist with the investigation of a complaint or safety concern will be identified and kept as part of the record of an investigation.

We will record and keep the outcome of any investigations, and the resolution of any complaints. This includes findings made, reasons for decisions and actions taken.

Records will be stored securely and kept for a minimum of 6 years.

Information sharing

CDC may share relevant information to promote the safety and wellbeing of children, where it is lawful, appropriate and in their best interests. We will keep information about complaints confidential, except where it is necessary to share information to respond properly to a complaint or to prioritize child safety. We may also need to share information about incidents or complaints with external authorities to comply with the law or to prioritize safety. More information is available in our Complaint Handling Policy.

Risk management

We conduct regular risk assessments and have a risk register (risk management plan) to address the risk of child abuse and harm. The risk management plan has been developed in consultation with our staff. We will ensure that any risk controls put in place balance the need to manage harm with the requirements of contracted student transport.

Risks involving child safety have been incorporated into CDC's Risk Register which is reviewed at least annually and on an ad hoc basis in response to any changes.

Risk areas for school bus and charter which are most relevant are:-

- The employment of bus drivers who transport children. CDC addresses this by ensuring all drivers and supervisors hold Working with Children Cards which are reviewed for currency every six months.
- The need for a process to report any concerns. CDC addresses this by requiring and training all operational staff to report any concerns in accordance with the Code of Conduct.

Non-compliance with this policy and the Code of Conduct

We will enforce this policy, the Code of Conduct and related child safety and wellbeing policies (see policies and procedures listed below). Alleged breaches by anyone will be investigated and may result in restriction of duties, suspension or termination of employment or engagement or other corrective action.

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Review

We will review all child safe policies and practices as part of the annual internal audit required under our MIS, and if risks or circumstances change, these will be reflected in updated documentation.

Supporting documents – child safety and wellbeing system

The following policies and procedures work together to support child safety and wellbeing across our operations:

- Child Safety and Wellbeing Policy
- Child Safety Code of Conduct
- Child Safety Standards Complaint Handling Policy and Procedure Policy on Recruitment, Screening & Training for Child Safety
- Inappropriate Behaviours Policy & Management of Inappropriate Behaviours Procedure
- Risk management Policy
- Compliance Review checklist
- DET School Bus Program, Policy and Procedures
- DET Students with Disabilities Transport Program, Policy and Procedures

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