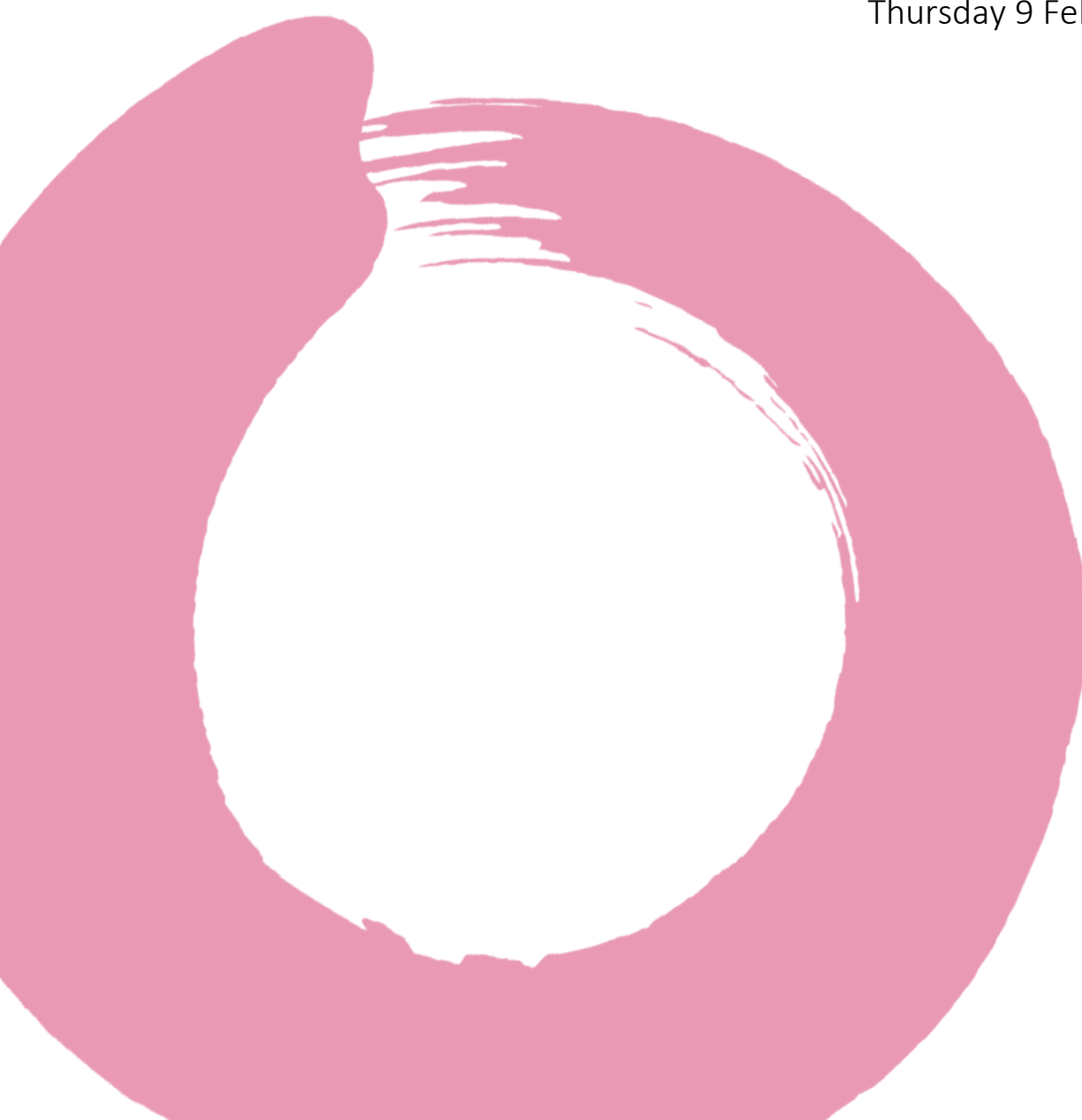


Child Protection Policy One Woman Project 2020-2025

Last updated by: Skye O'Halloran, National Co-Director
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1. Child Safety Policy

Introduction

The One Woman Project is committed to promoting and protecting the interests and safety of children. We have zero tolerance for child abuse.

Everyone working at the One Woman Project is responsible for the care and protection of children and reporting information about child abuse.

Purpose

The purpose of this policy is:

1. To facilitate the prevention of child abuse occurring within the One Woman Project.
2. To work towards an organisational culture of child safety.
3. To prevent child abuse within the One Woman Project.
4. To ensure that all parties are aware of their responsibilities for identifying possible occasions for child abuse and for establishing controls and procedures for preventing such abuse and/or detecting such abuse when it occurs.
5. To provide guidance to staff/volunteers/contractors as to action that should be taken where they suspect any abuse within or outside of the organisation.
6. To provide a clear statement to staff/volunteers/contractors forbidding any such abuse.
7. To provide assurance that all cases of suspected abuse will be reported and fully investigated.

Policy

The One Woman Project is committed to promoting and protecting the best interests of children involved in its programs.

All children, regardless of their gender, race, religious beliefs, age, disability, sexual orientation, or family or social background, have equal rights to protection from abuse.

The One Woman Project has zero tolerance for child abuse. Everyone working, volunteering and engaging with the One Woman Project is responsible for the care and protection of the children within our care and reporting information about suspected child abuse.

Child protection is a shared responsibility between the One Woman Project, all volunteers, workers, contractors, associates, and members of the One Woman Project community.

The One Woman Project will consider the opinions of children and use their opinions to develop child protection policies.

The One Woman Project supports and respects all children, staff and volunteers. The One Woman Project is committed to the cultural safety of Aboriginal children, and those from culturally and/or linguistically diverse backgrounds, and to providing a safe environment for children living with a disability.

If any person believes a child is in immediate risk of abuse, telephone 000.

Procedures

Responsibilities

The Board of the One Woman Project has ultimate responsibility for the detection and prevention of child abuse and is responsible for ensuring that appropriate and effective internal control systems are in place. The Board is also responsible for ensuring that appropriate policies and procedures and a Child Protection Code of Conduct are in place.

The National Co-Directors of the One Woman Project is responsible for:

- Dealing with and investigating reports of child abuse;
- Ensuring that all staff, contractors, and volunteers are aware of relevant laws, organisational policies and procedures, and the organisation's Code of Conduct;
- Ensuring that all adults within the One Woman Project community are aware of their obligation to report suspected sexual abuse of a child in accordance with these policies and procedures;
- Ensuring that all staff, contractors and volunteers are aware of their obligation to observe the Code of Conduct (particularly as it relates to child safety);
- Providing support for staff, contractors and volunteers in undertaking their child protection responsibilities.

All National Directors of portfolios, and State Coordinators (henceforth referred to as management) must ensure that they:

- Promote child safety at all times;
- Assess the risk of child abuse within their area of control and eradicate or minimise any risk to the extent possible;
- Educate volunteers about the prevention and detection of child abuse; and
- Facilitate the reporting of any inappropriate behaviour or suspected abusive activities.

Management should be familiar with the types of abuse that might occur within their area of responsibility and be alert for any indications of such conduct.

All staff/volunteers/contractors share the responsibility for the prevention and detection of child abuse, and must:

- Familiarise themselves with the relevant laws, the Code of Conduct, and the One Woman Project's policy and procedures in relation to child protection, and comply with all requirements;

- Report any reasonable belief that a child’s safety is at risk to the relevant authorities (such as the police and/or the state-based child protection service) and fulfil their obligations as mandatory reporters;
- Report any suspicion that a child’s safety may be at risk to their supervisor (or, if their supervisor is involved in the suspicion, to a responsible person in the organisation); and
- Provide an environment that is supportive of all children’s emotional and physical safety.

Definitions

Child means a person below the age of 18 years unless otherwise stated under the law applicable to the child.

Child protection means any responsibility, measure or activity undertaken to safeguard children from harm.

Child abuse means all forms of physical abuse, emotional ill-treatment, sexual abuse and exploitation, neglect or negligent treatment, commercial (e.g. for financial gain) or other exploitation of a child and includes any actions that results in actual or potential harm to a child.

Child sexual assault is any act which exposes a child to, or involves a child in, sexual processes beyond his or her understanding or contrary to accepted community standards. Sexually abusive behaviours can include the fondling of genitals, masturbation, oral sex, vaginal or anal penetration by a penis, finger or any other object, fondling of breasts, voyeurism, exhibitionism, and exposing the child to or involving the child in pornography. It includes child grooming, which refers to actions deliberately undertaken with the aim of befriending and establishing an emotional connection with a child to lower the child’s inhibitions in preparation for sexual activity with the child.

Reasonable grounds for belief is a belief based on reasonable grounds (see below) that child abuse has occurred when all known considerations or facts relevant to the formation of a belief are taken into account and these are objectively assessed.

Circumstances or considerations may include the source of the allegation and how it was communicated, the nature of and details of the allegation, and whether there are any other related matters known regarding the alleged perpetrator.

A reasonable belief is formed if a reasonable person believes that:

- a) the child is in need of protection,
- b) the child has suffered or is likely to suffer “significant harm as a result of physical injury,” or
- c) the parents are unable or unwilling to protect the child.

A ‘reasonable belief’ or a ‘belief on reasonable grounds’ is not the same as having proof, but is more than mere rumour or speculation.

A ‘reasonable belief’ is formed if a reasonable person in the same position would have formed the belief on the same grounds. For example, a ‘reasonable belief’ might be formed if:

- a) a child states that they have been physically or sexually abused;

- b) a child states that they know someone who has been physically or sexually abused (sometimes the child may be talking about themselves);
- c) someone who knows a child states that the child has been physically or sexually abused;
- d) professional observations of the child's behaviour or development leads a professional to form a belief that the child has been physically or sexually abused or is likely to be abused; and/or
- e) signs of abuse lead to a belief that the child has been physically or sexually abused.

Employment of New Volunteers

The One Woman Project undertakes a comprehensive recruitment and screening process for all workers and volunteers that aims to:

- promote and protect the safety of all children under the care of the organisation;
- identify the safest and most suitable people who share the One Woman Project's values and commitment to protect children; and
- prevent a person from working/volunteering at the One Woman Project if they pose a risk to children.

The One Woman Project requires all workers/volunteers to pass through the organisation's recruitment and screening processes prior to commencing their engagement with the One Woman Project.

The One Woman Project may require applicants to provide a police check in accordance with the law and as appropriate, before they commence working at the One Woman Project and during their time with the One Woman Project at regular intervals.

The One Woman Project will undertake thorough Working with Children background checks as per the approved internal procedure.

Once engaged, workers/volunteers must review and acknowledge their understanding of this Policy.

Risk Management

The One Woman Project will ensure that child safety is a part of its overall risk management approach. The One Woman Project requires all management to be committed to identifying and managing risks at the One Woman Project.

Reporting

Any staff member, volunteer or contractor who has grounds to suspect abusive activity must immediately notify the appropriate child protection service or the police. They should also advise their supervisor about their concern.

In situations where the supervisor is suspected of involvement in the activity, or if the person having the suspicion does not believe that the matter is being appropriately addressed or dealt with, the matter should be reported to the next highest level of supervision.

Supervisors must report complaints of suspected abusive behaviour or misconduct to the National Director and the Board of Directors, and also to any external regulatory body such as the police.

Mandatory Reporting Obligations (Queensland, Victoria, Commonwealth)

| Location | Legislation | Mandated Reporters | When must a report be made? | Who is a child? | Relevance to OWP |
|------------|--|--|---|-----------------------------|---|
| Queensland | <i>Child Protection Act 1999 (QLD)</i> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Teachers (specifically, approved teachers under the Education [Queensland College of Teachers] Act 2005, employed at a school) Doctors Registered nurses Police officers with child protection responsibilities A person performing a child advocate function under the Public Guardian Act 2014 Child Safety employees Licensed care services employees | <p>A mandated reporter must make a report if:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> they form a reasonable suspicion that a child has suffered, is suffering or is at an unacceptable risk of suffering significant harm caused by physical or sexual abuse; and the child may not have a parent able and willing to protect the child from the harm. <p>NB: exceptions may apply.</p> | A person under 18 years old | Not applicable |
| | <i>Education (General Provisions) Act 2006 (Qld)</i> | Staff members at a school | <p>A mandated reporter must make a report if they reasonably suspect, in the course of their employment at the school, that:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a student under 18 years old attending the school has been or is likely to be sexually abused by another person; a pre-preparatory age child registered in a | | Should a child or individual under 18 years of age disclose an experience of violence, sexual violence, child abuse or similar to an OWP volunteer whilst on school |

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| | | | <p>pre-preparatory learning program at the school or a distance education pre-preparatory learning program at the school; or</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • a person with a disability who is being provided with special education at the school and is not enrolled in the preparatory year at the school. <p>NB: exceptions may apply.</p> | | <p>grounds, the OWP volunteer is required to pass that disclosure on to a mandatory reporter (ie; teacher and/or staff member) at that school, and ensure follow up occurs.</p> |
| Victoria | <i>Crimes Act 1958 (Vic)</i> | Any person 18 years or older | <p>A mandated reporter must make a report to the police if they form a reasonable belief that a sexual offence has been committed in Victoria against a child by another person of or over the age of 18 years.</p> <p>NB: exceptions may apply.</p> | A person under 16 years old | <p>Should a child or individual under 18 years of age disclose an experience of violence, sexual violence, child abuse or similar to an OWP volunteer, the OWP volunteer is required to report that disclosure and</p> |

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| | | | | | ensure follow up occurs. |
| | <i>Children, Youth and Families Act 2005 (Vic)</i> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Registered medical practitioners, midwives and registered nurses Teachers registered or granted permission to teach under the Education, Training and Reform Act 2006 Principals Police | <p>A mandated reporter must make a report if:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> They form a belief on reasonable grounds that a child is in need of protection from physical injury or sexual abuse; The parents cannot or will not protect the child; and The belief is formed in the course of practising his/her position of employment. <p>NB: exceptions may apply.</p> | A person under 17 years old | Should a child or individual under 18 years of age disclose an experience of violence, sexual violence, child abuse or similar to an OWP volunteer whilst on school grounds, the OWP volunteer is required to pass that disclosure on to a mandatory reporter (ie; teacher and/or staff member) at that school, and ensure follow up occurs. |
| | <i>Child Wellbeing and Safety Act 2005 (Vic)</i> | <p>The head of an entity that is affected by the Reportable Conduct Scheme.</p> <p>The applicable entities are brought into the scheme in three phases</p> | A mandated reporter must make a report to the Commission for Children and Young People if they become aware of a reportable allegation against an | A person under 18 years old | Not applicable |

| | | | | | |
|--------------|----------------------------------|--|--|-----------------------------|----------------|
| | | <p>(July 1, 2017; January 1, 2018; January 1, 2019).</p> <p>The full list of entities (and the applicable phase) can be found here: https://ccyp.vic.gov.au/reportable-conduct-scheme/for-organisations/</p> | employee, volunteer or contractor of the entity. | | |
| Commonwealth | <i>Family Law Act 1975 (Cth)</i> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Registrar or a Deputy Registrar of a Registry of the Family Court of Australia; • the Registrar or a Deputy Registrar of the Family Court of Western Australia; • a Registrar of the Federal Circuit Court of Australia; • a family consultant; • a family counsellor; • a family dispute resolution practitioner; • an arbitrator; or • a lawyer independently representing a child's interests. | <p>A mandated reporter must make a report to the prescribed welfare authority if, in the course of performing their duties, functions or powers, they have reasonable grounds for suspecting that:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • a child has been abused; or • a child is at risk of being abused | A person under 18 years old | Not applicable |

Voluntary Reporting Obligations (Queensland, Victoria)

| Location | Legislation | Mandated Reporters | When must a report be made? | Who is a child? | Relevance to OWP |
|------------|--|--------------------|---|-----------------------------|--|
| Queensland | <i>Child Protection Act 1999 (QLD)</i> | Any person | A voluntary reporter may make a report if: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • the person reasonably suspects a child may be in need of protection; or • an unborn child may be in need of protection after he or she is born. | A person under 18 years old | Should a child or individual under 18 years of age disclose an experience of violence, sexual violence, child abuse or similar to an OWP volunteer, the OWP volunteer is required to report that disclosure and ensure follow up occurs. |

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| Victoria | <i>Children, Youth and Families Act 2005 (VIC)</i> | Any person | <p>A voluntary reporter may make a report to a protective intervener (i.e. the police or the Department of Health and Human Services) if:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> the person believes on reasonable grounds that a child is in need of protection. | A person under 17 years old | Should a child or individual under 18 years of age disclose an experience of violence, sexual violence, child abuse or similar to an OWP volunteer, the OWP volunteer is required to report that disclosure and ensure follow up occurs. |
| | <i>Child Wellbeing and Safety Act (Vic)</i> | Any person | <p>A voluntary reporter may make a report to the Department of Communities, Child Protection and Family Support if:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> the person has concerns about the wellbeing of a child. | A person under 18 years old | Should a child or individual under 18 years of age disclose an experience of violence, sexual violence, child abuse or similar to an OWP volunteer, the OWP volunteer is required to report that disclosure and ensure follow up occurs. |

Investigating

If the appropriate child protection service or the police decide to investigate a report, all employees, contractors or volunteers must co-operate fully with the investigation.

Whether or not the authorities decide to conduct an investigation, the National Co-Directors will consult with the authorities to determine whether an internal investigation is appropriate. If it is decided that such an investigation will not conflict with any proceeding of the authorities, the National Co-Directors may decide to conduct such an investigation. All employees, contractors and volunteers must co-operate fully with the investigation.

Any such investigation will be conducted according to the rules of natural justice.

The National Co-Directors will make every effort to keep any such investigation confidential; however, from time to time other members of staff/volunteers may need to be consulted in conjunction with the investigation.

After an initial review and a determination that the suspected abuse warrants additional investigation, the National Co-Directors shall coordinate the investigation with the appropriate investigators and/or law enforcement officials. Internal or external legal representatives will be involved in the process, as deemed appropriate.

Responding

If it is alleged that a member of staff, contractor or a volunteer may have committed an offence or have breached the organisation's policies or its Code of Conduct the person concerned may be stood down (with pay, where applicable) while an investigation is conducted.

If the investigation concludes that on the balance of probabilities an offence (or a breach of the organisation's policies or Code of Conduct) has occurred then disciplinary action may follow, up to and including dismissal or cessation of involvement with the organisation. The findings of the investigation will also be reported to any external body as required.

Privacy

All personal information considered or recorded will respect the privacy of the individuals involved unless there is a risk to someone's safety. The One Woman Project will have safeguards and practices in place to ensure any personal information is protected.

Everyone is entitled to know how the personal information is recorded, what will be done with it, and who will be able to access it.

Reviewing

Every five years, and following every reportable incident, a review shall be conducted to assess whether the organisation's child protection policies or procedures require modification to better protect the children under the organisation's care.

Related Documents

This policy must be read in conjunction with:

- the law of the Commonwealth or of the relevant state or territory;
- the organisation's code of conduct;

2. Code of Conduct

Management, staff, volunteers and contractors at the One Woman Project are required to abide by this Code of Conduct.

Under the National Co-Directors, management will:

1. Be responsible for the overall welfare and wellbeing of staff and volunteers;
2. Be accountable for managing and maintaining a duty of care towards staff and volunteers; and
3. Nominate a Child Protection Officer (the National Co-Directors) to provide information and support to all staff, volunteers, children, young people and their carers regarding child protection matters.

All people involved in the care of children on behalf of the One Woman Project will:

1. Work towards the achievement of the aims and purposes of the organisation;
2. Be responsible for relevant administration of programs and activities in their area;
3. Maintain a duty of care towards others involved in these programs and activities;
4. Establish and maintain a child-safe environment in the course of their work;
5. Be fair, considerate and honest with others;
6. Treat children and young people with respect and value their ideas and opinions;
7. Act as positive role models in their conduct with children and young people.
8. Be professional in their actions;
9. Maintain strict impartiality;
10. Comply with specific organisational guidelines on physical contact with children;
11. Respect the privacy of children, their families and teachers/carers, and only disclose information to people who have a need to know;
12. Maintain a child-safe environment for children and young people;
13. Operate within the policies and guidelines of the One Woman Project; and
14. Contact the police if a child is at immediate risk of abuse, phone 000.

No person shall:

1. Shame, humiliate, oppress, belittle or degrade children or young people;
2. Unlawfully discriminate against any child;
3. Engage in any activity with a child or young person that is likely to physically or emotionally harm them;
4. Initiate unnecessary physical contact with a child or young person, or do things of a personal nature for them that they can do for themselves;
5. Be alone with a child or young person unnecessarily and for more than a very short time;

6. Develop a 'special' relationship with a specific child or young person for their own needs;
7. Show favouritism through the provision of gifts or inappropriate attention;
8. Arrange contact, including online contact, with children or young people outside of the organisation's programs and activities;
9. Photograph or video a child or young person without the consent of the child and his/her parents or guardians;
10. Work with children or young people while under the influence of alcohol or illegal drugs;
11. Engage in open discussions of a mature or adult nature in the presence of children;
12. Use inappropriate language in the presence of children; or
13. Do anything in contravention of the organisation's policies, procedures or this Code of Conduct.

If you breach this Code of Conduct you will face disciplinary action, including and up to termination of employment or cessation of engagement with the organisation.