



CHILD SAFETY STANDARDS

for Buddhist Vihara Victoria Inc.

~Our commitment to protect all children from harm~

Being a child safe organisation, we are committed to ensuring the safety and wellbeing of all children and young people and will endeavour to provide a safe and supportive environment for all.

BUDDHIST VIHARA VICTORIA INCORPORATED

125 Homestead Road Berwick VIC 3806 AUSTRALIA

Tel: 03 9702 6275

Fax: 03 9702 6274

Website: <http://www.vihara.org.au> Email: buddhist@vihara.org.au

ABN 35 437 197 725

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Introduction

This is a guide to meet the legislative requirements for minimum child safe standards for all Victorian organisations that provide services to children.

From 1st January 2017, all organisations that provide services to children are required to meet the seven Standards, incorporating three overarching principles:

- the cultural safety of Aboriginal children
- the cultural safety of children from culturally and/or linguistically diverse backgrounds
- the safety of children with a disability

The seven standards are:

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

2: A child safe policy or statement of commitment to child safety Standard

3: A code of conduct that establishes clear expectations for appropriate behaviour with children

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

5: Processes for responding to and reporting suspected child abuse

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

7: Strategies to promote the participation and empowerment of children

This guide to the “Child Safe Standards for BVV” was created by Pushpa Mallawarachchi & Chintha Kossinna on behalf of the Buddhist Vihara Victoria (BVV) in March 2018 and was submitted for approval to the management committee.

References:

- A guide for creating a child safe organisation version 2 Dec 2015
- Victorian child safe standards faith communities tool kit

Date of approval: 24th March 2018

BVV CHILD PROTECTION POLICY

INTRODUCTION

BUDDHIST VIHARA VICTORIA (BVV) INC. IS A BUDDHIST ORGANIZATION, FOLLOWING LORD BUDDHA'S DOCTRINE. BVV IS A CENTER FOR BUDDHIST EDUCATION, RESEARCH, INFORMATION & CULTURE. BVV IS A CENTRAL POINT FOR ALL WHO WISH TO LEARN MORE ABOUT TEACHINGS OF THE LORD BUDDHA. OUR PROGRAMS INCLUDE DAILY OFFERINGS, VARIOUS CULTURAL AND RELIGIOUS PROGRAMS FOR YOUNG CHILDREN AND ADULTS, SUNDAY LANGUAGE SCHOOL FOR CHILDREN AND FUND-RAISING EVENTS WITHIN AND OUTSIDE OF THE PREMISES.

OUR COMMITMENT TO CHILD SAFETY

BVV is committed to promoting and protecting the interests and safety of children and young people. As a Buddhist temple cultivating the eminently valuable teachings of Lord Buddha we practice spreading loving kindness to oneself and others. Extending care to all beings is a constant theme we discuss in all Buddha teachings with our community.

Everyone residing/working/volunteering/visiting BVV is responsible for the care and protection of the children within our care and reporting information about suspected child abuse.

PURPOSE

The purpose of this policy is

1. To facilitate the prevention of child abuse occurring within BVV.
2. To work towards an organisational culture of child safety.
3. To prevent child abuse within BVV.
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 residents/staff/volunteers/visitors 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 residents/staff/volunteers/visitors forbidding any such abuse.
7. To provide assurance that all suspected abuse will be reported and fully investigated.

POLICY:

Buddhist Vihara Victoria Inc. (BVV) is committed to promoting and protecting the best interests of children involved in its programs at all times.

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

BVV has zero tolerance for child abuse. Everyone residing/ working/volunteering/visiting at BVV 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 BVV, all residents, employees, workers, associates, and members of the BVV community.

BVV will consider the opinions of children and use their opinions to develop child protection policies.

BVV supports and respects all children, staff and volunteers. BVV is committed to the cultural safety of all 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 should telephone 000.

AUTHORISATION

Signature:

President: Kosala Jayasinghe

Date of approval: 24th March 2018

Buddhist Vihara Victoria Inc.
125 Homestead Road
Berwick, VIC 3806

BVV CHILD PROTECTION PROCEDURES

RESPONSIBILITIES

The President and the Committee of Management of BVV 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 Committee is also responsible for ensuring that appropriate policies, procedures and a Child Protection Code of Conduct are in place.

The President of the Committee is responsible for:

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

All residents/ members / volunteers must ensure that they:

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

All residents/members /volunteers 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 residents/members /volunteers share in the responsibility for the prevention and detection of child abuse, and must:

- Familiarise themselves with the relevant laws, the Code of Conduct, and BVV'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, under the law applicable to the child, majority is attained earlier.

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 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",
- (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) 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.

RECRUITMENT OR SCREENING PROCESS FOR NEW MEMBERS/ VOLUNTEERS / WORKERS

BVV undertakes a comprehensive recruitment and screening process for all members, workers and volunteers which 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 BVV's values and commitment to protect children; and
- Prevent a person from working at BVV if they pose a risk to children.

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

BVV requires any person who requests membership of the BVV Association to meet the criteria stated in the BVV Constitution.

BVV may require committee of management and / or others who are involved to provide a police check in accordance with the law and as appropriate before they commence working at BVV and during their time with BVV at regular intervals.

BVV will undertake thorough reference checks as per the approved internal procedure.

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

RISK MANAGEMENT

BVV will ensure that child safety is a part of its overall risk management approach.

BVV will have a risk and compliance sub-committee committed to identifying and managing risks at BVV. Risk and compliance sub-committee members will receive regular training in relation to child safety.

REPORTING

Any member or volunteer who has grounds to suspect abusive activity must immediately notify the President and the President will notify the appropriate child protection service or the police. They should also advise the Chief Incumbent of the temple about their concern.

In situations where the member involved does not believe that the matter is being appropriately addressed or dealt with, the matter should be reported to the next highest level, which is the Chief incumbent of the temple.

Member suspected of the abuse must report complaints of suspected abusive behaviour or misconduct to the President and he or she will report to any external regulatory body such as the police if the matter has not been resolved.

INVESTIGATING

If the appropriate child protection service or the police decide to conduct an investigation of this report, all employees, residents or volunteers must co-operate fully with the investigation.

Whether or not the authorities decide to conduct an investigation, the President 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 President together with the Chief Incumbent of BVV may decide to conduct such an investigation. All members and volunteers must co-operate fully with the investigation.

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

The President will make every effort to keep any such investigation confidential; however, from time to time other members of Committee or resident Monks 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 President 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 BVV 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 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. BVV 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 year at the AGM, 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.

BVV CHILD SAFETY CODE OF CONDUCT

PURPOSE

Following this code will help to protect children and young people from abuse and inappropriate behaviours from adults. It will also help staff, members and volunteers to maintain the standard of behaviour expected of them. Having a code of conduct that everyone adheres to also protects the organisation because the opportunities for harm are actively reduced.

Management Committee, staff, volunteers and contractors at BVV are required to abide by this Code.

Under the President of the Management Committee, the committee will:

1. Be responsible for the overall welfare and wellbeing of staff, members and volunteers;
2. Be accountable for managing and maintaining a duty of care towards staff, members and volunteers; and
3. Nominate a Child Protection Officer 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 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 BVV and

14. Contact the police if a child is at immediate risk of abuse (telephone 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.

WHAT HAPPENS IF YOU BREACH 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 or membership with the organisation. Any member previously expelled shall not be eligible to apply as a member.

The Child Safety Reporting Process

Who can Report? Parent, Child, Staff member or volunteer

What to Report? Any child safety concerns, including:

Disclosure of abuse or harm

Allegation, suspicion or observation

Breach of Code of Conduct

Environmental safety issues

CALL 000 IF A CHILD IS IN IMMEDIATE DANGER

How to Report? Direct face-to-face reporting, In writing by letter or email buddhist@vihara.org.au, Telephone call 03 9702 6275, meeting

Who to Report? President of the Management Committee, Child protection Officer or The Chief Monk of the Temple

What happens next? The President, a Representative or the chief monk will:

- Offer support to the child, the parents, the person who reports and the accused staff member or volunteer
- Initiate internal processes to ensure the safety of the child, clarify the nature of the complaint and commence disciplinary process (if required)
- decide, in accordance with legal requirements and duty of care, whether the matter should be reported to the police or Child Protection and make report as soon as possible if required

Outcome: Investigation: outcome decided; relevant staff, volunteers, parents and child notified of outcome of investigation; policies, procedures updated where necessary

~ President & the Management Committee (*Dayaka Sabhava*)~

Children's Code of Conduct

We all have the right to feel safe and be safe always

This Code of Conduct applies to all children attending
BVV

1. We will play SAFELY, be GENTLE and RESPECT others
2. We will SHARE and PLAY together
3. We will be POLITE at all times
4. We will be FRIENDLY to all participants
5. We will use KIND language
6. We will RESPECT all people
7. We will always FOLLOW the 5 precepts
8. We will always ASK an adult if we need help

May we all be happy and content!

INCIDENT/ACCIDENT REPORT FORM

Buddhist Vihara Victoria Inc.

The Details

Date:	Written By:
Date of Incident:	Person(s) Involved:
Personnel Informed: <input type="checkbox"/> President <input type="checkbox"/> Chief Incumbent <input type="checkbox"/> Language School Principal <input type="checkbox"/> Child Safe Standards Representative <input type="checkbox"/> Teacher <input type="checkbox"/> Other: Specify	
Type of Incident: <input type="checkbox"/> injury <input type="checkbox"/> behaviour <input type="checkbox"/> disclosure of abuse <input type="checkbox"/> property damage <input type="checkbox"/> environment/safety <input type="checkbox"/> other (specify):.....	
Details of Incident:	

Action Taken:

Outcomes

Follow up/Analysis

Follow up comments: The type of incident is:

- first report subsequent report

Have appropriate steps been taken?

- Yes No

If No (to either of the above), what needs to be done?

Print Name: _____

Signed: _____

Reported to (Personnel informed)

Print Name: _____

Signed: _____