

SHCV CHILD SAFE STANDARD POLICY

February 2018

CHILD SAFE STANDARDS

Working with children can be rewarding; however, it brings with it additional responsibilities.

Under the *Child Wellbeing and Safety Act 2005*, Victoria introduced compulsory minimum standards for organisations that provide services for children to help ensure the safety of children. As from 1 January 2017, Phase 2 of 'in scope' organisations included those that provide *cultural, sport or recreation services for children, charities and not-for-profit organisations providing services to children, and coaching or tuition services for children*. As these services are provided to children by the Show Horse Council of Victoria Inc. (SHCV), the SHCV has developed a Child Safe Standard Policy and Code of Conduct.

Child Safe Standards cover child sexual abuse, physical abuse, serious emotional and psychological abuse and serious neglect.

The SHCV is committed to building an environment where children feel respected, valued and encouraged to reach their full potential by embedding a culture of child safety throughout the organisation.

OUR COMMITMENT TO CHILD SAFETY

This policy is intended to empower children who are vital and active participants in our organisation.

The SHCV will involve them when making decisions, especially about matters that directly affect them. The SHCV will listen to their views and respect what they have to say.

The SHCV promotes diversity and tolerance in our organisation, and people from all walks of life and cultural backgrounds are welcome

The SHCV is committed to promoting children's wellbeing and protecting children from abuse.

The SHCV wants children to be safe, happy and empowered. We support and respect all children, as well as our fellow members and volunteers

The SHCV has a zero tolerance of child abuse, and all allegations and safety concerns will be treated very seriously and consistently with our policies and procedures.

The SHCV has a legal and moral obligation to contact authorities when it is worried about a child's safety, which we will follow rigorously

The SHCV is committed to preventing child abuse and identifying risks early, and removing and reducing these risks

The SHCV is committed to regularly training and educating its volunteers, instructors, judges, and executive members on child abuse risks

The SHCV is committed to cultural safety for Aboriginal children, cultural safety for children from culturally and/or linguistically diverse backgrounds, and providing a safe environment for children with a disability.

EXECUTIVE, MEMBERS AND VOLUNTEERS

This policy guides SHCV members, instructors, volunteers and its Executive on how to behave with children in our organisation.

SHCV volunteers, instructors, judges and executive members must agree to abide by the SHCV Child Safe Code of Conduct which specifies the standard of conduct required when working with children.

All volunteers, instructors, judges and SHCV Executive, as well as children and their families, are invited to contribute to the development of the SHCV Child Safe Policy and Code of Conduct

TRAINING AND SUPERVISION

Training and education is important to ensure that everyone in our organisation understands that child safety is everyone's responsibility.

Each SHCV Executive member is required to hold a valid and current Victorian Working with Children Check.

All volunteers and instructors engaged by the SHCV are required to hold a valid and current Victorian Working with Children Check.

All persons on the SHCV List of Judges is required to hold a valid and current Victorian Working with Children Check.

FAIR PROCEDURES

The safety and wellbeing of children is our primary concern. The decisions the SHCV makes when engaging volunteers, assessing incidents, and reporting matters to the SHCA Disciplinary and Disputes Committee and/or government agencies will always be thorough, transparent and based on evidence.

The SHCV will record all allegations of abuse and safety concern using our incident reporting form, including investigation updates. All matters recorded will be securely stored.

If an allegation of abuse or a safety concern is raised, the nominated SHCV or SHCA Representative will provide updates to children and families on progress and of any action the organisation takes.

PRIVACY

Unless there is a risk to safety, all information considered or recorded will respect the privacy of individuals involved, whether they be Executive, members or volunteers, parents or children. We have safeguards and practices in place to ensure any personal information is protected. Everyone is entitled to know how this information is recorded, what will be done with it, and who will access it.

LEGISLATIVE RESPONSIBILITIES

The SHCV takes its legal responsibilities seriously, including:

- **Failure to Disclose:** reporting child sexual abuse is a community-wide responsibility. All adults in Victoria who have a reasonable belief that an adult has committed a sexual offence against a child under 16 have an obligation to report that information to police.
- **Failure to Protect:** people of authority in our organisation will commit an offence if they know of a substantial risk of child abuse and have the power or responsibility to reduce or remove the risk, or negligently fail to do so

RISK MANAGEMENT

In Victoria, organisations are required to protect children when risk is identified. In addition to general occupational health and safety risks, the SHCV proactively manages risk of abuse to our children.

REVIEWS

A review will be undertaken every two years and following any significant issues should they occur.

ALLEGATIONS, CONCERNS AND COMPLAINTS

The SHCV takes all allegations seriously and has an escalation process in place to investigate any such allegation thoroughly and quickly. The SHCV understands how to deal with allegations appropriately.

The SHCV will work to ensure that all children, families and volunteers know what to do and who to tell if they observe abuse or a victim, and if they notice inappropriate behaviour.

The SHCV has a responsibility to report an allegation of abuse if it has a reasonable belief that an incident took place.

If an adult has a reasonable belief that an incident has occurred then they must report the incident. Factors contributing to a reasonable belief are:

- A child states they or someone they know has been abused
- Behaviour is consistent with that of an abuse victim observed
- Someone else has raised a suspicion of abuse but is unwilling to report it
- Observing suspicious behaviour.