

# Child-safe Child-friendly Policy

We want children and young people who participate in our programs to have a safe and happy experience. We support and respect our children, young people, staff and volunteers.

<b>Introduction</b>	Our policy guides staff and volunteers on how to behave with children in our organisation. The policy focuses on how we can promote children's participation in our organisation and make it safer for them.
<b>Support children's participation</b>	Voice of the Martyrs supports the active participation of children in our organisation. We listen to children's views, respect what they say and consider their feedback when we make decisions, especially about matters that will directly affect them.
<b>Support staff and volunteers</b>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"><li>1. We promote respect, fairness and consideration for all staff and volunteers.</li><li>2. All staff and volunteers have a more senior staff member assigned to support and supervise their work.</li><li>3. All staff and volunteers will have access to a copy of the Child-safe, Child-friendly Policy, Code of Conduct and Dealing with Complaints process.</li></ol>
<b>Recruitment</b>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"><li>1. Voice of the Martyrs will maintain a rigorous and consistent recruitment, screening and selection process.</li><li>2. Applicants being considered for employment in child-related roles will be interviewed and their references checked. New staff for such roles will complete the Prohibited Employment Declaration and Working With Children Check.</li></ol>
<b>Procedures to be Followed in the Case of Suspected Child Abuse</b>	<p>The following procedures are to be followed where employee, volunteer or board member observes a suspected case of child abuse. The staff member, volunteer or board member is to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>· Respond seriously to what children have reported and what has been observed;</li><li>· Act to ensure the immediate safety of the child if it is thought there is any risk of the child being abused again;</li><li>· Act on the concerns and be prepared to make a report;</li><li>· Record all concerns and observations factually, giving dates and times. Written records are confidential and should be passed on to the Child Safety Contact Person;</li><li>· Not act alone but report the matter to the Child Safety Contact Person; and</li><li>· Ensure that the matter is not discussed with anyone other than the Child Safety Contact Person or the Executive Director, or if the misconduct concerns the Child Safety Contact Person or the Executive Director, to the Board Chairman.</li></ul> <p><b>Response Plan</b></p> <p>Where an allegation of abuse occurs or factors suggesting the occurrence of abuse are identified, the person to whom the allegation is made or who identifies the factors will contact the Child Safety Contact Person.</p> <p>The response plan to the allegation will include:</p> <p><b>Allegation:</b> Any allegation or report of child abuse must be reported to the Child Safety Contact Person, or if the misconduct concerns the Child Safety Contact Person to the Executive Director.</p> <p><b>Notification:</b> On receipt of such an allegation or report, the Child Safety Contact Person shall without delay notify the Executive Director that the allegation or report has been received.</p> <p><b>Investigation:</b> An allegation or report that an employee, volunteer or board member has engaged in child abuse, must be promptly investigated and otherwise dealt with by the Executive Director and Child Safety Contact Person.</p> <p><b>Provision of support for victims:</b> If the Child Safety Contact Person and Executive Director determines that a child has been abused, the Child Safety Contact Person or Executive Director must make reasonable efforts to:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"><li>a. provide or arrange support for any child who has suffered as a result of child abuse including the immediate safety and medical concerns of the child; and</li><li>b. provide support services for the child and family.</li></ol> <p><b>Duty to consider all relevant facts:</b> The Child Safety Contact Person and Executive Director must take into account all relevant, known facts in relation to an allegation or</p>

report in determining whether an employee, volunteer or board member has engaged in child abuse, and, if so, how the matter should be dealt with.

**Duty to co-operate with investigation:** All employees, volunteers and board members must co-operate fully with the Child Safety Contact Person and Executive Director in relation to an allegation or report, and must not conceal information or knowingly give false or misleading information.

**Disclosure pursuant to legal duty:** The Child Safety Contact Person and Executive Director must comply with any relevant legal duty to disclose information concerning an allegation or report to the police, a government authority, or any other relevant person.

**Restriction on disclosure of information:** Subject to the provisions of this clause, and to what is reasonably necessary in the circumstances, the Child Safety Contact Person, Executive Director and any other person, must not disclose any information relating to an allegation or report to a person not personally involved in the matter. In particular, the identity of persons personally involved in the matter must not be disclosed.

**Standing down of member or employee:** The Child Safety Contact Person and Executive Director may require an employee, volunteer or board member who is the subject of an allegation or report, to stand down from normal duties, or to serve in some other appropriate location or capacity, until the investigation into the allegation or report is completed.

**Appeal Provisions:** Where an employee, volunteer or board member who is the subject of an allegation is dissatisfied with the determination of the committee, the individual may present his or her position to the Board for consideration.

**Notification of determination:** The Child Safety Contact Person must promptly notify the Executive Director, the Board Chairman, and every person personally involved in the matter, of its determination concerning an allegation or report.

## Discipline

The Child Safety Contact Person and Executive Director may require an employee, volunteer or board member who is the subject of an allegation or report, to stand down from normal duties, or to serve in some other appropriate location or capacity, until the investigation into the allegation or report is completed.

An employee, volunteer or board member who has engaged in child abuse must be disciplined in a manner that is appropriate in all the circumstances. This may include a reminder of the terms of this Policy, censure, or dismissal from employment or membership. The Executive Director must personally notify an employee's, volunteer's or board member's church Senior Pastor of a determination that the person has engaged in child abuse, and of the manner in which they have been disciplined.

## Communication

1. We will hold information sessions for staff and volunteers when any changes are made to our Policy or Code of Conduct.
2. Our policy will be discussed during induction sessions for all new staff and volunteers.

## Review

This Policy will be reviewed in January 2014 to ensure it is in keeping with the changes made to the Working With Children Check. The Policy and guidelines will thereafter be reviewed every two years and incorporate comments and suggestions from children and young people, parents, staff and volunteers.

## Code of Conduct

Voice of the Martyrs provides an open, welcoming and safe environment for everyone participating in our programs. We provide high quality programs, activities and events for children that are safe and welcoming for them. We seek advice and guidance from children, parents and colleagues so these standards are maintained.

**Everyone participating in Voice of the Martyrs' programs, including staff, volunteers, students, children, parents and visitors, must keep to the following codes of behaviour.**

### DO

- Treat everyone with respect and honesty (this includes staff, volunteers, students, children, young people and parents).
- Remember to be a positive role model to children in all your conduct with them.
- Maintain only appropriate physical contact:
  - First aid
  - Personal care
  - Instruction (dance, drama, sport etc)
  - Preventing harm (to themselves or others)
- Follow Voice of the Martyrs' policy and guidelines for the safety of children as outlined in our Child-safe Child-friendly Policy.
- Always have another adult present or in sight when with children, particularly when conducting one to one activities, coaching, instruction etc.
- Gain parental or guardian consent before taking or publishing photographs of children and young people.
- Record and act on serious complaints of abuse.

### DO NOT

- Develop any 'special' relationships with children that could be seen as favouritism such as the offering of gifts or special treatment.
- Do things of a personal nature that a child can do for themselves, such as going to the toilet or changing clothes.
- Touch children inappropriately
  - No contact to any intimate place, ie breasts, buttocks, genitals
- Leave children alone with a sole adult other than their parent or guardian.
- Leave an event before all the children and young people in attendance have gone.

# Complaint Procedure

We want children and young people who participate in our programs to have a safe and happy experience. We support and respect our children, young people, staff and volunteers.

<p><b>Statement</b></p>	<p>Everyone in our organisation should be confident that complaints will be dealt with honestly and fairly.          Everyone in our organisation should be confident in reporting inappropriate behaviour around children.          Everyone in our organisation should report any concerns about safety or welfare of a child or young person immediately.</p>
<p><b>What to report</b></p>	<p>All complaints should be reported. This includes:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Disclosure of abuse.</li> <li>2. Inappropriate behaviour around children.</li> <li>3. Suspicion of or actual abuse or harm to a child.</li> </ol>
<p><b>Who to report to</b></p>	<p>All complaints must be reported to the Child Safety Contact Person, Melissa Hill, on 02 4759 3700.          A child or young person, or any staff member or volunteer can make a complaint, or raise a concern, directly to the Child Safety Contact Person.</p>
<p><b>What action the Child Safety Contact Person should take</b></p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Listen to the person making the complaint and make a record of the complaint using the Complaint Record Form.</li> <li>2. Make a report to the NSW Department of Community Services in the case of an allegation of child abuse. Inform everyone involved in the complaint of the requirement to make this report.</li> <li>3. If the complaint involves inappropriate behaviour and a breach of the Code of Conduct, the Executive Director will need to take action in accordance with the internal discipline procedure.</li> </ol>
<p><b>Receiving complaints – the Child Safety Contact Person</b></p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. <b>Listen</b> carefully to any complaints.</li> <li>2. <b>Be fair.</b> You need to show support to the person raising the concern or complaint but you must avoid taking sides. Listen and record the complaint for action through the complaints process.</li> <li>3. <b>Support children.</b> Children will be frightened in this situation. Make sure you listen carefully to the child, treat them with respect, take them seriously and provide them with support and comfort. Be alert to their way of communicating as they may not use formal 'complaint' language.</li> <li>4. <b>Keep confidentiality.</b> Confidentiality is essential to a fair and effective reporting process. Let the person know the complaint will be handled according to our complaint procedures. Only the relevant people and authorities involved in the complaint procedures should know about the complaint or receive any information. You cannot promise to keep complaints/disclosures secret, but you can promise that those who need to take action will be informed. To a child, you can explain that sometimes a secret cannot be kept if it means someone like them will be hurt.</li> <li>5. <b>Questions.</b> Where serious allegations have been made, avoid asking too many questions. Listen to the complainant's story and take notes. Leave investigating the complaint to the professionals. There have been times where cases have been weakened due to inappropriate questioning.</li> <li>6. <b>Explain the process.</b> Explain what will happen next and let the complainant know exactly who will be told about the matter, eg your senior manager, the relevant government authority if appropriate and parents.</li> <li>7. <b>Investigate.</b> Matters that don't require reporting to the authorities need to be investigated by VOM. Ask both parties what happened and then determine what action should be taken, eg changes to staffing arrangements, explanations, apologies and improved systems.</li> <li>8. <b>Keep children connected.</b> Ask the child what we can do to keep them safe and feeling welcome.</li> </ol>

**Reporting obligations** A complaint or disclosure of child abuse must be reported to the NSW Department of Community Services.  
Any person who has reasonable grounds to believe that a child or young person is at risk of significant harm may report to DoCS.  
Phone **132 111** to report child abuse or neglect (24 hour service).  
The DoCS website has clear tips about reporting.  
Go to [www.community.nsw.gov.au](http://www.community.nsw.gov.au) for more information.

### **NSW Commission for Children and Young People**

Employers must provide details to the NSW Commission for Children and Young People of any worker or volunteer who has been the subject of completed employment proceedings involving:

- reportable conduct; or
- acts of violence committed by them in the presence of a child.

**Reportable conduct is:**

- any sexual offence or sexual misconduct, committed against, with or in the presence of a child (including a child pornography offence); or
- any assault, ill treatment or neglect of a child; or
- any behaviour that causes psychological harm to a child;

*whether or not, in any case, with the consent of the child.*

*(Section 33, Commission for Children and Young People Act 1998)*

You do not need to report conduct that is reasonable for the discipline, management or care of children or if it was found the conduct did not occur.

For more information go to [www.kids.nsw.gov.au/check](http://www.kids.nsw.gov.au/check)

### **Discipline**

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An employee, volunteer or board member who has engaged in child abuse must be disciplined in a manner that is appropriate in all the circumstances. This may include a reminder of the terms of this Policy, censure, or dismissal from employment or membership.

The Executive Director must personally notify an employee's, volunteer's or board member's church Senior Pastor of a determination that the person has engaged in child abuse, and of the manner in which they have been disciplined.

### **Closure of complaint**

If the Child Safety Contact Person and Executive Director determines that a child has been abused, the Child Safety Contact Person or Executive Director must make reasonable efforts to:

- a. provide or arrange support for any child who has suffered as a result of child abuse including the immediate safety and medical concerns of the child; and

- b. provide support services for the child and family.

# Risk Management

Activity	Risks	Ranking High/Medium/Low risk level	How to reduce risk Changes to reduce, modify or avoid risk	Priority 1=highest, to attend to first
<b>Youth Event</b>	Children not collected as planned	High	Parents/guardians and youth group leaders notified of collection requirements	1
	Children leave event unattended	High	Ushers or other staff or volunteers remain in entry and exit areas to supervise	1
	Child sustains injury	Low	Ensure during setup that OH&S procedures are followed.	2
			First aid kit available.	2
			Youth group leaders to bring emergency contact information.	2
Volunteer inappropriately discloses personal information	Medium	Volunteer code of conduct. Volunteer training	1 1	