



STAFFING POLICY Code of Conduct

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Endorsed by: BoG

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NQR - Quality Area 4

STATEMENT OF COMMITMENT TO CHILD SAFETY

Hampton Park Community House (**HPCH**) is committed to providing a child safe environment where children and young people are safe and feel safe. HPCH supports the rights of the child and is committed to delivering a child safe environment at all times (see Child Safe Environment Policy).

HPCH has zero tolerance for all forms of child abuse and harm. All allegations will be treated seriously. HPCH supports, values and respects all children and young people, and is committed to their safety, participation and empowerment.

HPCH is committed to providing a culturally safe environment for Aboriginal children and young people where their unique identities and experiences are respected and valued.

The safety, welfare and best interests of children are paramount. HPCH takes its obligations to children and young people seriously and are committed to ensuring compliance with all applicable laws and obligations to provide a child-safe culture where risks to children are reduced or removed.

1. Purpose

The purpose of this Code of Conduct is to establish expected standard of behaviour for Nominated Supervisors, staff, contractors, volunteers, students on placement, parents, guardians and visitors:

- 1.1 protect children and young people from child abuse or harm;
- 1.2 reduce or remove the risks of children and young people experiencing child abuse or harm;
- 1.3 set standards for all HPCH staff about how they should behave towards and in the presence of children and young people;



- 1.4 comply with all relevant legislation including the applicable state and national principles for child safety;
- 1.5 promote a child safe environment and culture where children are safe and feel safe; and
- 1.6 ensure HPCH models high standards of staff behaviour and conduct.

2. Policy Statement

HPCH is committed to:

- 2.1 respecting the rights of the child and valuing diversity;
- 2.2 acknowledging the vulnerability of Aboriginal children, children from culturally and linguistically diverse background and children with a disability;
- 2.3 maintaining a duty of care towards all children at the service;
- 2.4 providing a safe and secure environment that is open, welcoming and values everyone's contribution
- 2.5 continually learning how to be inclusive and respectful of cultural needs; and
- 2.6 encouraging of participation from families and children in the program and activities at the service.

3. Scope

This Code of Conduct applies to all HPCH staff (including Persons with Management or Control, Nominated Supervisors, Person in Day to Day Charge), contractors (such as bus drivers), students on placement and volunteers (**Staff**).

This Code of Conduct applies to all HPCH Environments and all interactions with children and young people including:

- (a) physical contact;
- (b) face to face contact;
- (c) contact by post or other written communication;

3.2

- (a) contact by telephone or other oral communication; and
- (b) contact by email or other electronic communication including online seminars and social media.

4. Definitions

- 4.1 **“Child”, “children” or “young person”** means a child or young person who is under 18 years of age, unless otherwise defined by law or noted.
- 4.2 **“Child abuse or harm”** means conduct towards, against, with or in the presence of a child, or threatening to engage in such conduct, which includes:
- (a) physical violence;
 - (b) conduct of a sexual nature, including a sexual offence against a child and grooming behaviour;
 - (c) serious emotional or psychological harm; or
 - (d) serious neglect of a child.
- 4.3 **“Child Safety”** means matters related to HPCH’s duty of care to children in its care, protecting all children from harm, managing the risk of child abuse or harm, taking steps to prevent the occurrence or reduce the occurrence of child abuse or harm, providing support to a child at risk of child abuse, and responding to incidents or allegations of child abuse.
- 4.4 **“HPCH Environment”** means all physical and virtual environments and places made available or authorised by HPCH for use by a child, including but not limited to:
- (a) the offices of the HPCH;
 - (b) online HPCH include social media, website, including email, portals, intranet systems, telecommunication, social media and other online communications); and
 - (c) other locations provided by the HPCH for a child's use (including, without limitation, locations used for camps, excursions, “rest days”, competitions, and other events).
- 4.5 **“Staff”** means HPCH employees, directors, contractors, students on placement and volunteers.
- 4.6 **“WWCC”** means a Working with Children Check issued pursuant to the *Worker Screening Act 2020* (Vic).

5. ACCEPTABLE BEHAVIOURS

Child safety and wellbeing is the responsibility of all HPCH staff. Appropriate behaviour is essential for ensuring that children and young people are protected from child abuse and harm.

5.1 All HPCH staff will:

- (a) uphold HPCH's Statement of Commitment to child safety at all times;
- (b) act in accordance with HPCH's child safety and wellbeing policies and procedures, and the Early Childhood Australia Code of Ethics at all times;
- (c) promote the safety, welfare and wellbeing of children and young people;
- (d) behave respectfully, courteously and ethically towards children and their families and toward other staff;
- (e) listen and respond to the views and concerns of children and their families, particularly if they communicate (verbally or non-verbally) that they do not feel safe or well;
- (f) promote the human rights, safety and wellbeing of all children;
- (g) demonstrate appropriate personal and professional boundaries;
- (h) consider and respect the diverse backgrounds and needs of children, including Aboriginal children and young people.
- (i) create an environment that promotes and enables children's participation and is welcoming, culturally safe and inclusive for all children and their families.
- (j) participate and engage in all induction and training obligations required by HPCH and identify personal deficits in knowledge regarding child safety and communicate these deficits to the CSO or manager;
- (k) contribute, where appropriate to HPCH's policies, discussions, learning and reviews about child safety and wellbeing;
- (l) identify and mitigate risks to children's safety and wellbeing as required by HPCH's risk assessment and management policy or process;
- (m) Respond to any concerns or complaints of child abuse or harm promptly and in line with the HPCH's policy and procedure for receiving and responding to complaints;

- (n) report all suspected or disclosed child abuse or harm as required by any relevant legislation and by HPCH's policy and procedures for internal and external reporting;
- (o) comply with HPCH's policies on interacting with children;
- (p) comply with legislation and HPCH's policies and procedures in relation to record keeping and information sharing;
- (q) notify the Children's Services Domain Manager of HPCH immediately if a complaint or allegation regarding child safety has been made against them, including outside the normal course of their employment; and
- (r) ensure the Department of Justice and Victorian Institute of Teachers is notified of any adverse or negative notices.

5.2 All HPCH staff will not:

- (a) engage in any unlawful activity towards, against, with or in the presence of a child, or threaten to engage in such conduct;
- (b) engage in any form of child abuse or harm towards, against, with or in the presence of a child, or threaten to engage in such conduct;
- (c) discriminate against any child or their family members or engage in conduct towards or in the presence of a child or young person that suggests contempt, ridicule or intolerance, including in association with their race, culture, gender, sexuality, disability or religion;
- (d) engage in oppressive or threatening behaviour toward a child or young person.
- (e) be alone with a child;
- (f) arrange personal contact (including online contact by social media, email, instant messaging), or exchange personal contact details for the purposes of engaging in personal contact, with a child or young person for a purpose unrelated to HPCH's direct activities or services;
- (g) disclose personal or sensitive information about a child, including images of a child, unless the child and their parent or legal guardian provides consent or unless required to do so by the HPCH's policy and procedure on reporting;

- (h) use inappropriate language in the presence of children, or show or provide children with access to inappropriate images or material;
- (i) work with children under the influence of alcohol or prohibited drugs, or prescription drugs which have an adverse effect on the person's duty of care to a child or young person;
- (j) post or publish any information about a child or young person online, including personal information such as their name, age, email address, telephone number, photographs or videos; or
- (k) ignore or disregard any suspected or disclosed child abuse or harm, including child abuse or harm.

5.3 If any HPCH staff believe this Code of Conduct has been breached by another person they will:

- (a) prioritise the best interests of children and young people;
- (b) take actions promptly to ensure that children and young people are safe;
- (c) promptly report any concerns according to reporting procedures; and
- (d) comply with all required legislative requirements on reporting.

6. Breach of Code of Conduct

Breaches of the Code of Conduct may result in disciplinary action including termination of employment. Allegations of misconduct involving children will be managed in accordance with any relevant Reportable Conduct Scheme and may be the subject of a referral to Police or other government authority.

7. Key Legislation and resources and related policies

7.1 Legislation

- (a) *Education and Care Services National Law Act 2010;*
- (b) *Education and Care Services National Regulations 2011;*
- (c) *Worker Screening Act 2020 (Vic);*
- (d) *Children Wellbeing and Safety Act 2005 (Vic)*



(e) *Children Youth and Families Act 2005 (Vic)*; and

(f) *Crimes Act 1958 (Vic)*.

7.2 Resources

(a) *Early Childhood Australia Code of Ethics*

(b) *Victorian Institute of Teaching Profession Code of Conduct*

(c) *Victorian Institute of Teaching Profession Code of Ethics*

(d) *Child Safe Standards*

7.3 Related policies

(a) *Child Safe Environment Policy*

(b) *Complaints and Grievances Policy*

(c) *Safe Transportation of Children Policy*

(d) *Occupational Health and Safety Policy*

(e) *Privacy and Confidentiality Policy*

(f) *Relaxation and Sleep Policy*

(g) *Staffing Policy*

(h) *Staffing Policy - Managing and Reporting Incidents*

(i) *Staffing Policy - Participation of Volunteers and Students*

(j) *Mandatory reporting Policy*

8. Monitoring, Evaluation and Review

This Code of Conduct will be reviewed on an as needs basis, or every two years.

9. Availability of the Code of Conduct

This Code of Conduct is available to educators and staff members in hard copy from your Domain Manager and online and are displayed and made available to families by email or in hard copy at the service.

Authorisation:

Signature of Chair of BOG :

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "R. [unclear]", is written over a horizontal line.

Date of Approval by BOG:

Hampton Park Care Group Inc

16-02-2022

