

Child safety Policy - Centre for Contemporary Photography

Our commitment to child safety

Centre for Contemporary Photography is committed to child safety.

We want children to be safe, happy and empowered. We support and respect all children, as well as our staff and volunteers.

We are committed to the cultural safety of Aboriginal children, the cultural safety of children from culturally and/or linguistically diverse backgrounds, and to providing a safe environment for children with a disability.

We are committed to the safety, participation and empowerment of all children.

We have zero tolerance of child abuse, and all allegations and safety concerns will be treated very seriously and consistently with our organisations policies and procedures.

We have legal and moral obligations to contact authorities when we are worried about a child's safety, which we follow rigorously.

Our organisation is committed to preventing child abuse, and removing and reducing these risks.

Our organisation is committed to training and educating our staff and volunteers on child abuse risks.

We have specific policies and procedures in place that support our staff and volunteers to achieve these commitments.

If you believe a child is at immediate risk of abuse phone 000.

Our children

This statement is intended to empower children who are a vital audience to our organisation. We listen to their views and respect what they have to say.

We promote diversity and tolerance in our organisation, and people from all walks of life and cultural backgrounds are welcome. In particular we:

- promote the cultural safety, participation and empowerment of Aboriginal children
- promote the cultural safety, participation and empowerment of children from culturally and/or linguistically diverse backgrounds
- ensure that children with a disability are safe and can participate equally.

Our staff and volunteers

This statement guides our staff and volunteers on how to behave with children in our organisation.

All of our staff and volunteers must agree to abide by our code of conduct, which specifies the standards of conduct required when working with children.

Training and supervision

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

Our organisational culture aims for all staff and volunteers to feel confident and comfortable in discussing any allegations of child abuse or child safety concerns. We train our staff to identify, assess, and minimise risks of child abuse and to detect potential signs of child abuse.

Recruitment

We take all reasonable steps to employ skilled people to work with children. Our organisation understands that when recruiting staff and volunteers we have ethical as well as legislative obligations.

We actively encourage applications from Aboriginal peoples, people from culturally and/or linguistically diverse backgrounds and people with a disability.

All people engaged in child-related work, including volunteers, are required to hold a Working with Children Check and to provide evidence of this Check.

Legislative responsibilities

Our organisation takes our 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 the police.¹
- **Failure to protect:** People of authority in our organisation will commit an offence if they know of a substantial risk of child sexual abuse and have the power or responsibility to reduce or remove the risk, but negligently fail to do so.²

Risk management

In Victoria, organisations are required to protect children when a risk is identified (see information about failure to protect above). In addition to general occupational health and safety risks, we proactively manage risks of abuse to our children.

We have risk management strategies in place to identify, assess, and take steps to minimise child abuse risks.

Allegations, concerns and complaints

Our organisation takes all allegations seriously. Our staff are trained to deal appropriately with allegations in accordance with our reporting procedures.

We work to ensure all children, families, staff and volunteers know what to do and who to tell if they observe abuse or are a victim, and if they notice inappropriate behaviour.

¹ A person will not commit this offence if they have a reasonable excuse for not disclosing the information, including a fear for their safety or where the information has already been disclosed.

Further information about the failure to disclose offence is available on the [Department of Justice and Regulation website](http://www.justice.vic.gov.au/home/safer+communities/protecting+children+and+families/failure+to+disclose+offence) <www.justice.vic.gov.au/home/safer+communities/protecting+children+and+families/failure+to+disclose+offence>.

² Further information about the failure to protect offence is available on the [Department of Justice and Regulation website](http://www.justice.vic.gov.au/home/safer+communities/protecting+children+and+families/failure+to+protect+offence) <www.justice.vic.gov.au/home/safer+communities/protecting+children+and+families/failure+to+protect+offence>.

We all have a responsibility to report an allegation of abuse if we have a reasonable belief that an incident took place (see information about failure to disclose above).

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

- a child states they or someone they know has been abused (noting that sometimes the child may in fact be referring to themselves)
- behaviour consistent with that of an abuse victim is observed³
- someone else has raised a suspicion of abuse but is unwilling to report it
- observing suspicious behaviour.

³ For example behaviour, please see [An Overview of the Victorian child safe standards:](http://www.dhs.vic.gov.au/__data/assets/word_doc/0005/955598/Child-safe-standards_overview.doc)
<www.dhs.vic.gov.au/__data/assets/word_doc/0005/955598/Child-safe-standards_overview.doc>