

SOVEREIGN**HILL**MUSEUMS
ASSOCIATION

CHILD SAFETY AND WELLBEING POLICY

People and Culture					
Document Owner: Chief People Officer					
Current version implemented: January 2023					
Date of next review: November 2024					
Revision	Reviewed by	Title	Changes in document	Authorised by	Date
Original Issue	Tracey Lewis-Jones	Head of OHS	Original document	SHM Executive Team	15/03/2012
1	Tracey Lewis-Jones	Head of OHS	Updated with changes in Child Safe Guidelines & Child Wellbeing Regulations 2017	SHM Executive Team	31/01/2017
2	Tracey Lewis-Jones	Head of OHS	Minor grammar & spelling edits	SHM Executive Team	28/11/2017
3	Sofia Fiusco	Head of Learning	Updated to include requirements of the Victorian Child Safe Guidelines		23/08/2021
4	Tracey Lewis-Jones	Head of OHS	Separated policy & procedure & edits		03/09/2021
5	Kez Tacar	Chief People Officer	Major changes to content of policy		14/09/2021
6	Katrina Nitschke	Chief Museum Officer	Minor updates	SHM Executive Team	9/11/2022
7	Kez Tacar	Chief People Officer	Updates in line with new Victorian Child Safe Guidelines	SHM Board	November 2022

Sovereign Hill Museums Association (SHM)

Child Safety and Wellbeing Policy

1. Scope	3
2. Statement of Commitment	3
3. Forms of Abuse	4
8. Policy Statements	4
9. More information and resources	9
10. Review and updates	9
11. Related documents	10
12. Related Legislation and Frameworks	10
Annex A – Forms of Abuse	11
Annex B – Definitions	13
Annex C – Victorian Child Safe Standards	14
Annex D - Roles and Responsibilities	15

1. Scope

The purpose of the Child Safety and Wellbeing Policy is to ensure that all 'workers' (inclusive of employees, consultants, contractors or volunteers engaged by Sovereign Hill Museum Association (SHM)) along with the families, children and young people that engage with our services are aware of our commitment and obligation to creating a child safe organisation.

SHM acknowledges that abuse, neglect or harm to children and young people may come from:

- Parents/caregivers
- Guardians or supervisors
- Workers engaged by SHM
- Members of the public
- Other children or young people

This policy applies to the following people:

- all workers engaged by SHM
- organisations which SHM contracts and partners with

The Child Safety and Wellbeing Policy applies to a broad range of situations where interaction with children and young people may occur, including:

- education offering to schools
- camping programs
- day visitors
- school holiday programs
- events
- hotel facility
- engagement or employment of workers (employees or volunteers) that are under 18 years

2. Statement of Commitment

SHM is committed to being a child safe organisation where children and young people feel safe, respected, heard, valued and protected from harm. SHM has a zero tolerance of child abuse, neglect and all forms of harm to children and young people.

3. Forms of Abuse

The forms of abuse referenced in this policy include:

- Sexual abuse and misconduct
- Grooming
- Harmful sexual behaviour
- Physical abuse
- Emotional and psychological abuse (inclusive of cultural abuse)
- Exposure to family violence
- Neglect

Refer **Annex A** for full definitions of forms of abuse.

4. Definitions – Refer **Annex B** for definitions related to child safety and this policy.

5. Frameworks and Legislation

SHM policies and strategies align with the [United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child](#) and the Victoria Child Safe Standards (Refer **Annex C**), along with other relevant child safe related legislation. We understand and uphold our compliance requirements to such. Refer Section 12 for further references.

6. Roles and Responsibilities – Refer **Annex D** for the child safety roles and responsibilities.

7. Breaches

Any noncompliance or breaches to the SHM Child Safe Policy, Child Safe Code of Conduct or related policies will result in disciplinary action and will be treated as a breach of the terms of employment/engagement with SHM. This action may include termination of employment/engagement.

8. Policy Statements

Governance, leadership and culture

Reference: Victorian Child Safe Standards: 2, 10, 11

SHM believes that a child safe culture is led and modelled by our Board, Executive and senior leaders. Our governance arrangements facilitate the implementation of the Victorian Child Safe Standards, our Child Safety and Wellbeing Policy, **Child Safety and Wellbeing Code Conduct** and related policies and strategies. We ensure the roles, responsibilities and obligations of our workers are clearly defined, we are held accountable, and we are transparent with our actions

Policy and procedures

Our policies and procedures support us to be a child safe organisation and are reviewed on a regular basis. All workers at SHM must demonstrate practices and behaviors that support our Child Safety and Wellbeing Policy, Child Safety and Wellbeing Code of Conduct and supporting policies and procedures. All workers will be briefed on the above listed policies and management will ensure ongoing compliance to such.

Continuous improvement

SHM aims to continuously improve our child safe and child friendly environments and actively seeks feedback from stakeholders (children, young people, schools, families/carers, SHM workers) to do so. We acknowledge that there are always enhancements to be made; we ensure that we regularly review the organisation's performance, implement improvement plans and provide adequate resourcing to do so.

Suitable and supported people

Reference: Victorian Child Safe Standards: 6, 8

The recruitment, selection, training and ongoing support and supervision of workers aims to support SHM's commitment to promoting an organisational culture of child safety.

Recruitment, screening and selection

For positions that involve contact (director or indirect) with children and young people, selection policies and guidelines (including screening activities) will be based on selection criteria which clearly demonstrate an understanding of, and commitment to child safety, and assists in ensuring that the most appropriate workers are employed.

All workers at SHM undertake a pre-employment National Criminal Check, WWCC and reference checking. Depending on the level of contact workers hold with children or young people, workers may also hold a current Victorian Institute of Teaching Registration (VIT). Refer ***Recruitment, Screening and Selection Procedure*** and ***Volunteer Policy***.

Supervision and training

Workers will be adequately trained and supported to complete their roles in a child safe organisation, implement the Child Safe Standards and support the rights of children and young people. All SHM workers will receive child safety related induction information, along with ongoing supervision and education to improve their child safety skills. Training will be appropriately resourced and recorded.

Safe environments and risk management

Reference: Victorian Child Safe Standards: 1, 9

SHM recognises our responsibility to proactively identify and reduce or remove risks to children and young people. Risk management strategies are in place to identify, assess, and minimise child safety risks, and these risks are managed via a risk management plan and register. Appropriate SHM worker ratios will be always applied to activities and children, young people and students remain in the duty of care of an adult and/or school teacher. For visiting schools we provide free of charge entry in alignment with the DET ratios for camps and excursions and as required when identified by the school. Wherever possible, children and young people will be involved in risk identification and mitigation strategies. Refer ***Risk Management Policy*** and ***Risk Register*** for further information.

Physical spaces

Safe and child friendly environments will be provided by SHM, with risk strategies in place for any physical space children and young people may access. Safety assessments will be conducted on facilities/sites to ensure they are suitable and safe for SHM activities with children and young people to occur. SHM workers will be identifiable at activities and events.

Children will be adequately supervised at all times at SHM. Adequate supervision refers to constant, active and diligent supervision where the responsible adult is in a position to observe each child in their care, respond to their individual needs, and immediately intervene if necessary.

Online spaces

Workers of SHM will have an awareness of safe practice when communicating with children and young people via online and electronic systems. Online risks will be considered in risk management planning, along with opportunities for children and young people to report any concerns about electronic communication methods. Refer ***Child Safety and Wellbeing Code of Conduct*** and ***Social Media Policy***.

Online questions from students (for example via the Sovereign Hill Education Blog) will be responded to via the generic SHME email by the Head of Learning or the Learning Program Leader. Permission will be sought (verbal or written depending on the situation) from the child, young person and/or adult for the taking and use of photographs.

Engagement, participation and empowerment

Reference: Victorian Child Safe Standards: 1, 3, 4, 5

Children and young people

SHM consistently promotes the voices of children and young people and places a high priority on their participation and empowerment as community members. Our workers will ensure that children and young people are aware of their rights and are supported to exercise them. A child friendly version of this policy will be made available to children and young people. We will consult with children and young people wherever possible, and they will inform our decision making.

SHM's goal is to:

- provide all children and young people with a positive and enjoyable experience
- enable access to a wide range of interesting and challenging activities, within a safe, inclusive and supportive environment
- empower children and young people to be creative through practical, hands-on experiences and education programs that encourage their independence and decision making.

Families and communities

SHM know that families, carers and guardians along with the broader community (partner organisations, sponsors, fundraisers, members and event participants) are key stakeholders, and all play a role in maintaining safe environments for children and young people and supporting SHM to be a child safe organisation. We will work in partnership with families and the community and facilitate regular communication and meaningful participation.

Equity and Diversity

SHM believes all children and young people have the right to live safely and will not tolerate any form of bullying or harassment. The wellbeing of all children and young people is an indicator of a safe and friendly environment. Refer *Diversity and Inclusion Policy*.

We acknowledge the needs of children and young people from diverse backgrounds, and promote:

- The safety of all children
- Cultural safety of children and young people that identify as Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander
- Cultural safety of children and young people from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds
- The safety of children and young people with a disability
- The safety of children and young people of all gender and sexual identity (those that identify as LGBTIQ+)

- We will provide children and young people with access to information, support and complaints processes in ways that are culturally safe, accessible and easy to understand.

Receiving, responding to, and reporting concerns

Reference: Victorian Child Safe Standards: 3, 7

SHM works to ensure all children and young people, families, workers understand their obligations and know who to tell if they observe abuse, are a victim, or if they notice inappropriate behavior. SHM takes all allegations of child abuse, harm and neglect seriously.

Complaint management

SHM will ensure clear and accessible complaint pathways are available for children, young people, their families, the broader community and workers. Pathways for raising a complaint include:

Email: complaints@sovereignhill.com.au

All complaints will be treated seriously and responded to accordingly, with the best interests of children and young people as the priority. SHM is committed to ensuring that such allegations are addressed in accordance with SHM processes for responding to and reporting suspected child abuse. SHM will use the outcomes of complaints to review their child safe policies, practice and culture.

Refer *Complaints Policy* and *Whistleblower Policy* for further information.

Responding to concerns, allegations and incidents

Workers of SHM are required to respond in sensitive and appropriate ways to concerns, allegations, disclosures and incidents of child abuse, harm and neglect and will be supported to do so. Children, young people and their families (where applicable) will be consulted wherever possible throughout the process to ensure their rights and participation in decision making is upheld.

SHM commits to undertaking prompt and effective investigations into allegations against SHM workers. Investigations will be conducted with the principles of procedural fairness, confidentiality and privacy and the outcomes of investigations and any improvement/changes to practice will be communicated to stakeholders as appropriate. Refer *Investigations Procedure* and *Disciplinary Policy*.

Reporting instances of child abuse, harm or neglect

SHM will ensure that all concerns, allegations and incidents are reported via internal and external pathways, as required both by law and ethically. SHM workers will co-operate with authorities and ensure all reporting obligations are met, including reporting requirements mandated by law. A reporting procedure, along with training to clarify reporting roles and responsibilities will be made available to representatives of SHM. Refer *Child Safety and Wellbeing Procedure* and *Incident Reporting Procedure*.

Privacy and confidentiality

All SHM workers involved in the handling of allegations of child abuse or neglect will be mindful of the sensitive nature of the issue and take all reasonable steps to maintain confidentiality and respect the privacy of all those involved. In order for SHM to perform its functions under the Child Safe Standards, it may be required to collect personal information about workers and disclose that information to a third party. Personal information which is collected and/or disclosed about an individual will be managed in accordance with the *Privacy and Data Protection Act 2014* and the *Child Wellbeing and Safety Act 2005*. Refer **Privacy Policy**.

Record keeping

SHM will ensure that accurate records of child safety related concerns are collected and stored in line with best practice standards. Records of investigations and incident reports relating to child safety will be stored by the People and Culture department. Refer **Record Keeping Policy**.

Historical allegations

As part of our work of being a child safe organisation and promoting the safety of children and young people, SHM may become aware of a disclosure of non-recent (historic) abuse from those who have attended SHM in the past. SHM commits to responding to such allegations in a sensitive and effective manner, noting that there may be a possibility that a person who abused a child or young person in the past may still be doing so, and criminal prosecutions may still take place even though the allegations are historical in nature. Refer **Child Safety and Wellbeing Procedure**.

9. More information and resources

This policy is to be read in conjunction with the **Child Safety and Wellbeing Procedure**, **Child Safety and Wellbeing Code of Conduct** and other related policies and procedures.

If you have a query about this policy or need more information, please contact the Head of OHS.

10. Review and updates

SHM commit to reviewing the Child Safety and Wellbeing Policy as required, and at a minimum, every three years. Review of the Policy will include consultation with key stakeholders, including children and young people. Changes to any child safety and wellbeing related policy, code of conduct or procedure will be communicated to all stakeholders.

11. Related documents

Child Safety and Wellbeing Code of Conduct	OHS Training Schedule
Child Safety and Wellbeing Responding & Reporting Procedure	Diversity and Inclusion Policy
Recruitment, Screening and Selection Policy	Social Media Policy
Volunteer Policy	Complaints Policy
Disciplinary Policy	Whistle Blower Policy
Investigations Procedure	Privacy Policy
Risk Management Policy	Incident Reporting Procedure
Risk Register	Record Keeping Policy
People and Culture Strategy	

12. Related Legislation and Frameworks

[United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child](#)

Organisational Liability - [Wrongs Amendment \(Organisational Child Abuse\) Act 2017](#)

Child Safe Standards - [Child Wellbeing and Safety Act 2005](#)

Duty of Care, Voluntary and Mandatory Reporting - [Children, Youth & Families Act 2005](#)

Failure to Protect – [Crimes Act 1958](#)

Failure to Disclose - [Crimes Amendment \(Protection of Children\) Act 2014](#)

Reportable Conduct Scheme - [Children Legislation Amendment \(Reportable Conduct\) Act 2017](#)

Grooming - [Crimes Amendment \(Grooming\) Act 2014](#)

Age of consent - [Crimes Act 1958](#)

Working with Children Checks - [Worker Screening Act 2020](#)

Information sharing - [Children Legislation Amendment \(Information Sharing\) Act 2018](#)

Annex A – Forms of Abuse

Sexual abuse

Child sexual abuse is when a person uses power or authority over a child to involve them in sexual activity. It includes a broad range of behaviours involving a sexual element that are committed against, with or in the presence of a child. Sexual offences may involve contact, like touching or penetration. They also include acts that do not involve physical contact like ‘flashing’, possessing child abuse material or grooming.

Sexual misconduct

Sexual misconduct includes a variety of sexualised behaviours against, with or in the presence of a child. These behaviours may not meet the threshold for a sexual offence but can still pose a significant risk to children. Behaviours could include inappropriate conversations of a sexual nature, comments that express a desire to act in a sexual manner, or in some cases, behaviour that crosses a professional boundary, such as having or seeking to establish an inappropriate or overly personal or intimate relationship with a child.

Grooming

Grooming behaviour can involve the use of a variety of manipulative and controlling techniques used to build trust or normalise sexually harmful behaviour. Grooming is often described as the ‘preparation’ phase of child sexual abuse, undertaken by the perpetrator to gain the trust of a child, and to establish secrecy and silence. Perpetrators may groom to gain access to a child, initiate and maintain sexual abuse of that child, and to conceal the sexual abuse from others who may identify it.

Harmful Sexual Behaviour

Harmful sexual behaviour (HSB) is developmentally inappropriate sexual behaviour which is displayed by children and young people and which may be harmful or abusive. It can be displayed towards younger children, peers, older children or adults. It is harmful to the children and young people who display it, as well as those it is directed towards.

Physical abuse

Physical violence can occur when a person intentionally or recklessly uses physical force against, with or in the presence of a child without their consent, which causes, or could cause, the child harm. Physical violence can include hitting, punching, kicking, pushing or throwing something that strikes a child. It also includes the use of words or gestures that cause a child to believe that they are about to suffer physical violence.

Emotional or psychological abuse

Emotional and psychological abuse may arise in circumstances that involve persistent verbal abuse, coercive or manipulative behaviour, hostility towards a child, humiliation, belittling or scapegoating, conveying to a child that they are worthless, unloved, inadequate or rejected, or causing a child to frequently feel frightened or in danger.

Cultural Abuse

Cultural abuse can cause emotional and psychological harm. Cultural abuse occurs when the culture of a people is ignored, denigrated or intentionally attacked. It can be overt or covert, for example, a lack of cultural sensitivity or absence of positive images about another culture. Cultural abuse is especially harmful for children 'because it strikes their sense of identity, self-esteem and connectedness to family and community'.¹

Exposure to Family Violence

Exposure to violent, threatening or other behaviour by a person that coerces or controls a member of the person's family (the family member), or causes the family member to be fearful. A child is exposed to violence if that child sees or hears family violence or otherwise experiences the effects of family violence.

Neglect

Neglect is a failure to meet the basic needs of a child (such as their wellbeing and safety). Neglect can arise as a result of a single event or a combination of different events. Some neglectful behaviours that can occur in organisations include:

- supervisory neglect (failure to appropriately exercise adequate supervision or control of a child)
- physical neglect (failure to meet a child's physical needs including the provision of adequate and appropriate food, clothing, shelter or physical hygiene)
- educational neglect (failure to ensure that a child's formal educational needs are being met)
- emotional neglect (failure to provide adequate nurturing, encouragement and support to a child).

References:

Victorian Commission for Children and Young People (CCYP)– A guide for creating a Child Safe Organisation

National Society for the Protection of Cruelty to Children (NSPCC)

SNAICC - Keeping our kids safe: cultural safety and the National Principles for Child Safe Organisations

Family Law Act 1975 (Cth) – Definition of Exposure to Family Violence

Annex B – Definitions

Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander – A person who is of Aboriginal or Torres Strait descent, identifies as Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander and is accepted as Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander by an Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander community.

Child – Any person under the age of 18 years old (typically 0-12 years).

Child Safe – An environment where children and young people’s safety and wellbeing is at the centre of thought, values and actions and where there is an emphasis on genuine engagement with and valuing of children and young people. An organisation must create conditions that reduce the likelihood of harm to children and young people, increase the likelihood of identifying any harm and responds to any concerns, disclosures, allegations or suspicions of harm.

Child Friendly - Behaviour, conduct, practice, process, attitude, environment or treatment that is humane, considerate and in the best interest of child.

Child Protection (DFFH)– Statutory authority responsible for child protection, and all measures taken to minimise the risk of child abuse.

Code of Conduct – A document which specifies behaviours expected of all representatives (workers) of the organisation when engaging with children or young people.

Consultant - A person who provides expert advice professionally.

Contractor – A person or organisation that undertakes a contract to provide labor, a service or job.

Cultural safety – The positive recognition and celebration of cultures. It is more than just the absence of racism or discrimination, and more than cultural awareness and cultural sensitivity. It is an environment which is socially and emotionally safe, as well as physically safe for children. It is about shared respect, shared meaning, shared knowledge and experience, of learning, living and working together with dignity and truly listening.

Culturally and/or linguistically diverse background (CaLD) – Identification with particular cultural or linguistic affiliations by virtue of place of birth, ancestry or ethnic origin, religion, preferred language or language spoken at home or because of parents’ identification on a similar basis.

Disability – Any physical, sensory, neurological disability, acquired brain injury or intellectual disability or developmental delay that affects a child’s ability to undertake everyday activities.

Disclosure – A child or young person telling someone (through words, drawings or actions) that he or she feels unsafe or has been harmed.

Governors - A member of a group that directs or controls an institution or organisation.

Harm - Damage to the health, safety or wellbeing of a child/young person, as a result of abuse by adults or the conduct of other children/young people. It includes physical, emotional, sexual and psychological harm.

Leaders – Leader refers to any employee or volunteer who holds management responsibilities.

Mandated Reporter – Any adult who holds a legal requirement to report child abuse based on their occupation.

SHM – Sovereign Hill Museum Association

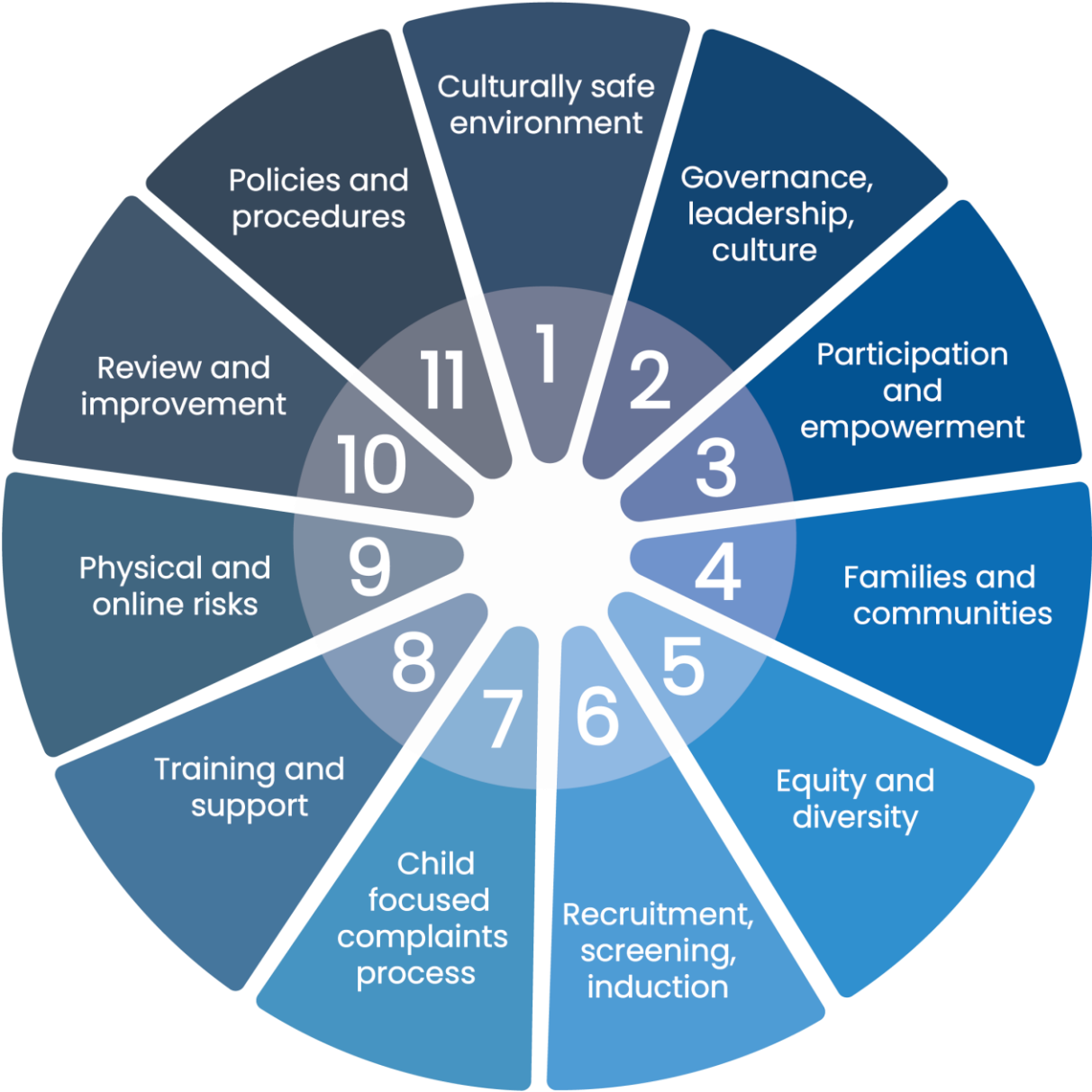
Visitor – A person who a member of the public, visiting a SHM site.

Volunteer – An unpaid member of SHM supporting program delivery or operations.

Workers – Employees, consultants, contractors or volunteers.

Young Person – Any person under the age of 18 years (typically 13-18yrs).

Annex C – Victorian Child Safe Standards



Annex D - Roles and Responsibilities

SHM Board:

- Child Safety and Wellbeing strategy and policy owners.
- Oversight of organisation-wide child safe practices.
- Ensure appropriate resourcing is allocated to implementing child safe practice.
- Advocate for child safe practices both within SHM and with partner organisations.
- Monitoring of organisational compliance to legislative requirements and key frameworks.
- Ensuring processes are appropriately followed when a concerns of child abuse or harm arise.

SHM Management:

- Ensure SHM Child Safety and Wellbeing strategy and policies are implemented across the organisation.
- Manage strategic health and safety risks including the management of child safety risks.
- Prioritise child safe policies, procedures and practices at an operational level.
- Ensure all workers are suitable, skilled and aware of their roles and responsibilities.
- Advocate for child safe practice with partner organisations.
- Ensure organisational compliance to legislative requirements and key frameworks.
- Role model an open and aware child safe and child friendly culture.

SHM Workers:

- Adhere to the Child Safety and Wellbeing Policy, Child Safety and Wellbeing Code of Conduct and related policies.
- Promote child safe practice across the organisation.
- Identify, mitigate and manage risks to children and young people.
- Ensure knowledge regarding child safety is current, and undertake training as required.
- Ensure children and young people are engaged and are consulted about things that impact or affect them at SHM.
- Recognise, appropriately respond to, and report concerns of child abuse or harm.