

CHILD SAFEGUARDING POLICY AND CODE OF CONDUCT

Every child has the right to survival, protection, development, participation and empowerment. As a child safe organisation we'll do whatever it takes to keep children safe, on track and connected to community and culture.

PURPOSE AND SCOPE

The purpose of this policy is to:

- Ensure all children participating in our programs and visiting our locations are appropriately supported, protected and informed.
- Ensure children, families and communities understand the protective practices put in place by CERES' representatives to keep children safe from deliberate or inadvertent harm.
- Ensure everyone, particularly staff and volunteers recognises and embraces their critical role in keeping children safe and fostering a culture of openness and participation for all children.
- Ensure diverse cultural and other perspectives are respected and recognising that such differences do not diminish a child's right to be safe or the organisation's responsibility to protect the child from harm. This applies to all children regardless of age, culture, gender or disability.

This policy applies to all CERES representatives across all work sites and in all activities we undertake.

POLICY STATEMENT

- Representatives **must** understand and acknowledge this policy and adhere to child safeguarding training curricula relevant to their role.
- Leaders **must** drive an honest, safe, two-way communication process between themselves and children, representatives, parents and communities – welcoming scrutiny, making time to listen to them and encouraging the expression of different views.
- Program staff **must** ensure all children, families and carers are informed about program activities, the rights and responsibilities of the people involved and have access to a support and feedback mechanism.
- Program managers **must** ensure the voice of the child is systematically embedded in program design, implementation, monitoring and evaluation. Specific consideration must be given to the needs of the vulnerable groups including Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander and Pacific children, children with a disability and children from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds.
- Program managers **must** ensure that every program and activity has a risk assessment that identifies and mitigates risks to child safety, including physical, emotional and online spaces.
- People managers **must** ensure that appropriate checks and monitoring are used to identify suitable representatives and deter unsuitable candidates and provide adequate professional supervision and development for all staff and volunteers.
- Representatives **must** report any actual or suspected harm to a child and ensure every decision is made within the best interests of the child.

Breaches in the policy can lead to disciplinary action including possible dismissal and criminal proceedings. Failure to meet compulsory training requirements leads to reassessment of duties until compulsory activities are complete.

CODE OF CONDUCT FOR WORKING WITH CHILDREN

All people involved in the care of children on behalf of CERES will:

1. Establish and maintain a child-safe environment in the course of their work.
2. Treat children with respect and value their ideas and opinions.
3. Act as positive role models in their conduct with children.
4. Be professional in their actions.

No person shall:

1. Shame, humiliate, oppress, belittle or degrade children.
2. Unlawfully discriminate against any child.
3. Engage in any activity with a child that is likely to harm them physically or emotionally.
4. Initiate unnecessary physical contact with a child or do things of a personal nature for them that they can do for themselves.
5. Be alone with a child or young person unnecessarily and for more than a very short time.
6. Develop a 'special' relationship with a specific child or young person for their own needs.
7. Show favouritism through the provision of gifts or inappropriate attention.
8. Arrange contact, including online contact, with children outside of CERES programs and activities.
9. Photograph or video a child or young person without the consent of the child and his/her parents or guardians.
10. Work with children or young people while under the influence of alcohol or illegal drugs.
11. Engage in open discussions of a mature or adult nature in the presence of children.
12. Use inappropriate language in the presence of children.

Relevant References, other Policies, Procedures, Legislation and Regulations

- CERES Child Safety and Wellbeing Comprehensive Policy and Procedures, July,2022.
- CERES Statement of Commitment to Child Safe Standards, July 2022.
- CERES Code of Conduct; Recruitment and Employment Policy; Volunteer Management Policy; Privacy Statement, Information Security Policy, Social Media Standards and Image Policy; Performance Management Policy (includes gross misconduct); Employee Grievance and Appeals Policy; Workplace Health, Safety and Wellbeing Policy 2018, under review 2022.
- CERES Risk Management Schedule and Plan 2022.
- Child Wellbeing and Safety Act 2005 (Vic) including Child Safe Standards (11) 2022
- Children, Youth and Families Act 2005 (Vic) including model reportable conduct scheme.
- Crimes Act 1958 (Vic) including Failure to Protect and Failure to Disclose Offences.
- Wrongs Act 1958 (Vic) including Part XIII – organisational liability for child abuse.
- Occupational Health and Safety (OHS) Act 2004 (Vic).

Definitions

Child – anyone under the age of 18 years.

Representatives – CERES permanent, fixed-term and casual staff, trustees and board members, volunteers, interns, work experience/placement students, individual contractors and consultants.

Donors, journalists, celebrities, politicians and other people who visit CERES sites in order to make contact with children must be made aware that this policy applies to them while visiting. (During this time they are referred to as *representatives*).

Leaders – Board, CEO, Senior Management team, Business Unit and Team Leaders.

REVIEW DETAILS

Approval and Review	Details
Executive and People and Culture	Approved 2018
Executive and People and Culture	Reviewed 2022
Next Review Date	2024