

Child Safety Policy

Islamic Council of Victoria (ICV) is committed to protecting the safety of all people within its programs, services and events.

All people, regardless of age, gender, race, culture, disability and family or social background have equal rights to this protection.

All people (including children) have the right to be respected and valued as well as feel emotionally, physically and spiritually safe at all times.

Our policy has been developed to uphold this commitment to safeguarding and to adhere to National and State legislation.

Our Child Safe Policy

This Policy applies to all staff, including senior leadership, manager, coordinators, paid staff, volunteers, students or anyone working on behalf of the ICV.

The purpose of this Policy:

To protect children and young people and vulnerable adults who receive ICV Services or attend ICV events;

To provide staff and volunteers with the overarching principles that guides our approach to child protection;

ICV believes that a child or young person should never experience abuse of any kind. We have a responsibility to promote the welfare of all children and young people and to keep them safe. We are committed to practice in a way that protects them.

Our Policy aims to:

- Minimise the risk of abuse, misconduct and the misuse of positional power.
- Ensure that all cases of suspected abuse and misconduct are handled thoroughly.
- Ensure that leaders and programs are safe.
- Ensure that all people are respected and valued.

Statement of Commitment to child safety

Our commitment to children

We are committed to ensuring children feel safe, empowered and are taken seriously if they raise concerns in relation to their safety and well-being.

- We value and support diversity, inclusion and equality. The ICV is committed to the cultural safety of children from a culturally and/or linguistically diverse background, and to providing a safe environment for children with a disability.

Our commitment to staff and volunteers

We are committed to ensuring staff, volunteers and contractors, depending on the nature of their role understand that child safety is everyone's responsibility.

We will ensure staff and volunteers are provided with the necessary support to fulfil their obligations in relation to child safety.

We will ensure staff and volunteers are educated in child safety including abuse risks and how to interact and behave with children.

All employees of the ICV, including work staff, volunteers, and independent contractors whilst located at an ICV workplaces must abide by our Code of Conduct which specifies the standard of conduct required when working with children.

We have specific policies, procedures and training in place that support our leadership

Expectations in relation to behaviour are outlined in the ICV's Code of Conduct.

Recruitment

We will ensure all staff and volunteers who work with children have a current Working With Children Check (WWCC) and that there is an appropriate screening process for staff and volunteers that work with children including interview guides, advertisements and selection criteria which clearly demonstrate our commitment to child safety.

Our commitment to ensuring a Child Safe Organisation

Training and Supervision

We will ensure all new and existing employees understand the importance of protecting children from harm. This will be supported through induction, training and professional development.

We will ensure staff understand the process for reporting any child safety issues and are supported by Council's appointed Child Safety Officer.

Reporting

All allegations and concerns in relation to children's safety will be taken seriously and will be investigated fairly and appropriately.

The ICV supports and encourages our employees to proactively report any behaviour deemed to be endangering the safety of children.

The ICV has a designated Child Safety Officer, who is available to support staff with any child safety concerns and to safely disclose risks of harm to children.

Reportable incidents and complaints are notified to the relevant authority (Child First, Child Protection or police).

The ICV supports and respect all children, as well as our staff and our volunteers.

The ICV is committed to the safety, participation and empowerment of all children.

Scope

This Statement of Commitment applies to all staff including any person directly employed by the ICV or employed through an agency or on a contract basis, and volunteers and work experience students, irrespective of their specific involvement in child related duties.

Review

This statement will be reviewed every two years, and following any changes to legislation or policy

Legal framework

This Policy reflects legislation and guidance that seeks to protect children, namely:

National Legislation

- National Framework for Protecting Australia's Children "Protecting Children is Everyone's Business" 2009 – 2020 (Commonwealth of Australia)

State Legislation

- Children, Youth and Families Act 2005 (Vic.)

Working With Children Checks

- Working With Children Act 2005 (Vic.)

We recognise that:

- the welfare of the child is paramount, and is everyone's responsibility as outlined in the *National Framework for Protecting Australia's Children*
- all children, regardless of age, disability, gender, racial heritage, religious belief, sexual orientation or identity, have a right to equal protection from all types of harm or abuse
- some children are additionally vulnerable because of the impact of previous experiences, their level of dependency, communication needs or other issues
- working in partnership with children, young people, their parents, carers and other organisations/agencies is essential in promoting young people's welfare.

WE COMMIT TO**a. Safe recruitment of leaders & Staff.**

We will screen all prospective leaders & staff in our programs, before they are appointed.

(i.e. relevant Working with Children's Check/police check).

b. Adequate training of leaders & staff.

We require that all leaders & staff attend a Child Safe training workshop before commencing in their role and attend a refresher workshop every 3 years. We require all leaders and staff to attend additional specific training as required.

c. Have a clear Code of Conduct.

We will adopt and implement a Code of Conduct for all leaders, staff and volunteers, including boundaries of behaviour and expectations of interactions with children.

All leaders & staff will agree to follow our Code of Conduct.

d. Continued supervision of leaders & staff.

We commit to ongoing training, supervision and support for leaders & staff.

e. Responding to allegations of risk of harm (abuse) and serious misconduct.

All leaders & staff will report disclosures or suspicions of child abuse, according to our procedure. We will listen to and believe children who raise concerns.

We will ensure that procedures are clear and appropriate in responding to allegations of abuse.

Where an allegation of misconduct is made against a person in the organisation in relation to a child, we will prioritise support to the child.

We will seek appropriate support for the person implicated to protect the safety of the child as the paramount consideration.

f. Responding to other disclosures of abuse.

We will understand the processes of responding to disclosures of abuse and harm including self-harm and suicide ideation.

We will ensure that appropriate training takes place to recognise and respond to indicators of abuse and neglect and receive support for all involved in the disclosure (including the leaders/volunteers).

We understand that responding to abuse is not limited to children, but also includes adults within our programs who may be vulnerable at any given time where abuse could be present and that everyone understands the most appropriate steps to take in supporting our vulnerable people within our community.

g. Provide an open safe environment.

We will afford participants a say in the programs and the activities in which they participate by fostering and valuing their ideas and encouraging participation. We will be accountable and transparent.

We will create a child-friendly environment, allowing people to raise their concerns in an appropriate manner.

We will obtain appropriate information relating to the program participants, including children's health and family situation, to ensure that we are able to care for their physical and emotional needs.

h. Understand and value diversity.

We will be mindful in our approach for all programs to be inclusive for all people. This includes adapting programs for anyone with a disability to receive access to various programs, as well as provide adequate training for leaders.

We will be sensitive to those from 'culturally and Linguistic Diverse' (CALD) backgrounds and those within the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities with our programs, information, support and services. As well as upholding respect to all cultures and encourage the participation of all people and recognise their unique contribution to our community.

DEFINITIONS

Abuse: Abuse and neglect includes but is not limited to:

- Physical Abuse
- Emotional Abuse
- Family Violence
- Sexual Abuse
- Grooming
- Neglect

Child: a person who is under the age of 18 years (eg: The Commission for Children and Young People Act 2012, Victoria).

Disclosure: a disclosure occurs when someone informs a person in authority/leadership (or a trusted adult) within the Faith Community that they have been subject to abuse or knows

of abuse. A disclosure may or may not be an allegation or a notifiable circumstance, but it is the responsibility of the person in authority to investigate and take any appropriate action.

Child Safe Environment: discharges duty of care by taking steps to keep all those in our care safe, including e.g. spiritual, physical, sexual, emotional abuse (including bullying) or neglect.

Child Safe Leader: has been through a recruitment process, understands responsibilities, is supervised and is an accountable team player.

Child Safe Program: all risks have been assessed and events thought through and planned.

Vulnerable Person: a person who may be considered to be susceptible to abuse or exploitation based on factors such as their health status (physical or mental), age, grief, previous experience of abuse, social isolation or financial hardship. In this sense vulnerability can be temporary or permanent.

Child Safety Officer: The appointed Council officer who staff and volunteers can seek guidance and support when there are concerns regarding a child's safety and who will initiate internal processes in relation to where matters need to be reported.

Cultural Safety: Where children experience their cultural identity, values and way of being, which may differ from other cultures; and their interactions with the wider community are respected, not challenged or harmed.

Working with Children Check (WWCC): Assists in protecting children from sexual or physical harm by ensuring that people who work with, or care for, them are subject to a screening process. The Check screens a person's criminal records and any reports about professional conduct. (Department of Justice and Regulation)

We are committed to reviewing our Policy and good practice annually.

This Policy was last reviewed on: 13th March, 2018

Signed: Mohamed Mohideen
ICV President