



CHILD SAFETY COMPLAINT HANDLING AND REPORTING POLICY



If you need help to understand this policy, please contact the Including You Office on (03) 8407 0940 or via email: admin@includingyou.com.au

PURPOSE

The purpose of this policy is to outline the procedures Including You (Organisation) has in place to respond to complaint or concerns relating to child abuse and to ensure all staff and members of our organisation understand and follow the various legal obligations that apply to report of child abuse to relevant authorities.

SCOPE

This policy applies to complaint and concerns relating to child abuse made by or in relation to a child, staff member or participant connected to the organisation.

DEFINITIONS

Child Abuse

Child abuse includes:

- Physical violence inflicted on a child
- Sexual offences committed against a child
- Grooming of a child by an adult
- Family violence committed against or in the presence of a child
- Serious emotional or psychological harm to a child
- Serious neglect of a child

The definition of child abuse is broad and can include incidents and concerns committed by other children, as well as behaviour committed by an adult.

Grooming

Grooming is a criminal offence under the *Crimes Act 1958 (Vic)* and is a form of child abuse and sexual misconduct. This offence targets predatory conduct undertaken by an adult to prepare a child, under the age of 16, to engage in sexual activity at a later time. Grooming can include communication (including electronic communications) and/or attempting to befriend or establish a relationship or emotional connection with the child or their parent or carer.



POLICY

Including You understands the important role our organisation plays in protecting children from abuse. We have a range of policies and measures in place to prevent child abuse from occurring.

Information for Participants

- All participants should feel safe to speak to any staff member to raise any concerns about their safety and any other concerns that they have
- If a participant does not know who to approach, they can start with their Support Worker
- Pamphlets provided at intake also provides advise

Identifying Child Abuse

To ensure we can respond in the best interests of our participants when complaints and concerns relating to child abuse are raised, all staff must:

- Understand how to identify signs of child abuse and behavioural indicators of perpetrators : [Identify Child Abuse](#)
- Understand their various legal Obligations in relation to reporting child abuse to the relevant authorities
- Follow the below procedure for responding to complaints or concerns relating to child abuse, which ensure our organisation acts in the best interest of our participants and complies with both our legal policy obligations

At Including You we recognise the diversity of the children, young people and families within our organisation and consider their individual needs and backgrounds when considering and responding to child safe incidents and concerns.

Procedures for responding to an incident, disclosure, allegation or suspicion of child abuse

In responding to a child safety incident, disclosure, allegation or suspicion, Including You will:

- Respond to an emergency (If necessary) by ensuring their safety which may include but is not limited to, administering first aid, calling) for urgent medical assistance, contacting the Director, who will ensure that organisation follow's the procedures in this policy
- The Director will then make the decision on reporting to the authorities, which may include but are not limited to, Victoria Police, Commission for Children and Young People, Child Protection, Department of Families, Fairness and Housing (DFFH), Child First and Orange Door



- The Director will then contact parents/families/carers after consulting with the relevant authorities on the information that can be disclosed. They may advise one of the following:
 - Not to Contact
 - To Contact
 - How to communicate
- Provide support to the child, parents, families and carers

Staff responsibilities

- If you are uncertain if an incident, disclosure, allegation or suspicion give rise to a concern about child abuse you must always err on the side of caution and report the concern to the Director as soon as possible
- If the Director is unavailable the HR Manager or Rostering Coordinator will take on this role
- All members of the community aged 18 and over have a legal obligation to report any suspected child abuse
- All staff play an important role in supporting participant safety and wellbeing and have a duty of care to take reasonable steps to prevent reasonably foreseeable harm to our participants. Fulfilling the responsibilities of the above procedure does not displace or discharge any other obligation that may arise if a person reasonably believes that a child is at risk. This means that if, after following the actions outlined in this procedure a staff member reasonably believes that a child remains at risk of abuse, they must take the following steps:
 - If they are concerned that Including You has not taken reasonable steps to prevent to reduce the risk, raise these concerns with the Director first and escalate to the relevant authorities if necessary
 - Report the matter to the relevant authorities where you are unable to confirm that the information has been by the organisation

Record Keeping

Including You Leadership Team will ensure that:

- Detailed note of the incident, disclosure, allegation or suspicion are taken using our **Child Safe Incident and Complaints Form**
- Detailed notes are taken of any immediate or ongoing action taken by the organisation to respond to the incident, disclosure, allegation or suspicion
- All note and other records relating to the incident, disclosure, allegation or suspicion, Including You's immediate and ongoing actions are stored securely in a lock filing cabinet



This Policy will be made available in the following ways:

- Including You Website – Child Safe Page
- Including You Staff Induction
- Hard copies available upon request

REVIEW CYCLE

Policy last reviewed	October 2022
Consultation	Including Leadership Team
Approved by	Belinda Toohey (Director)
Next schedule review date	October 2024 or following a relevant child safety incident