

Safeguarding Children Policy

Free2b Girls is committed to the safety and wellbeing of children and young people. Free2b Girls upholds the rights of children and young people as set out in the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child.

Free2b Girls are committed to delivering child centred programs and services in line with the National Principles for Child Safe Organisations.

Free2b Girls will act to ensure the protection of children and young people from abuse, violation and harm.

Free2b Girls will respond to and document any concerns related to child abuse and safety within our organisation.

All Free2b Girls members must adhere to this policy.

For the purpose of this policy:

- Members are all staff, volunteers, participants and associated organisations involved with Free2b Girls programs and services

Free2b Girls Aims for Safeguarding Children:

- to ensure that members are able to access complaints processes and proceed with reporting child abuse and safety concerns.
- to support children and young people to participate in decision making with regards to their safety
- to provide children and young people with access to information about their choices and their rights within our programs and services
- to protect children and young people from all forms of abuse, bullying and exploitation by Free2b Girls members
- to report any abuse, neglect, grooming, bullying, exploitation and any other safety concern regardless of whether the abuse is occurring within Free2b Girls, from the child's family, extended family and their extended network.
- to embody professional practices and behaviours that safeguard children

Procedure

The following procedures ensure that this Safeguarding Children Policy is embedded within the Free2b Girls Organisations.

Recruitment Processes

Free2b Girls ensures that all persons employed, volunteering or working with host or other associated organisations are required to demonstrate and meet the following criteria.

- relevant qualifications and/or experience
- participation in a formal interview with Program Coordinator
- provision of two referees
- completion of induction
- current WWVP
- National Police Check is required
- Participation in training and professional development is compulsory

Training and Professional Development

Free2b Girls provides training, mentoring and professional development for members to:

- identify child abuse and safety concerns
- understand their reporting obligations
- develop the confidence to report
- respond effectively to disclosures
- identify risks and implement risk minimisation strategies
- utilise complaints processes and support pathways
- communicate responsively and effectively
- respect confidentiality
- implement policies and procedures
- access relevant resources and information
- actively participate in creating child safe environments

Reporting Abuse

Free2b Girls has the following reporting procedures in place to ensure child abuse or safety concerns are addressed:

- If there is an immediate danger or threat, contact police 000
- The Advice and Referral Line can be called at any stage for advice
- Contact must be made with the Program Coordinator (PC) to discuss concerns
- If the PC is not available, Incident Support Team (IS Team) must be contacted
- It is essential to leave a message, text or email to ensure a response
- The PC and/or the IS Team will contact relevant parties, discuss the concern and decide if a report needs to be made.
- If a child safety report is required, the reporting person will be supported to contact the Strong Families and Safe Kids Advice and Referral Line.
- A Free2b Girls incident report form must be completed by the reporting person.

- PC will finalise all outstanding procedures, including informing insurance company if required.
- If a child abuse or safety concern allegation is made about a Free2b Girls member, the PC and/or IS team or a third party will investigate and determine if a report needs to be made. An incident report must be completed, regardless of outcome.
- Free2b Girls members are required to cooperate with any formal investigations undertaken by the police or authorised body. Support will be provided by Free2b Girls
- Any member under investigation will be temporarily suspended from involvement with Free2b Girls.
- Members found to be guilty of child abuse will be excluded from Free2b Girls and any employment/volunteer positions will be terminated
- Follow up support will be made available and confidentiality will be maintained

Child Abuse and Safety Concerns Definitions

Bullying: takes many forms which are often interrelated and include:

Verbal (name calling, put downs, threats) *Physical* (hitting, punching, kicking scratching, tripping, spitting) *Social* (ignoring, excluding, ostracising, alienation) *Psychological* (spreading rumours, stalking, ‘dirty looks’, hiding or damaging possessions)

Emotional or psychological abuse: can include - repeated rejection or threats to a child. Constant criticism, teasing, ignoring threatening, yelling, scapegoating, ridiculing, constant coldness. These behaviours result in cumulative harm to the child’s physical, social or emotional wellbeing and development.

Family violence – can include witnessing violence or the consequences of violence. Family violence is defined as violence between members of family or extended family or those fulfilling the role of family in a child or young person’s life. Exposure to family violence places children and young people at increased risk of physical injury and harm and has a significant impact on their wellbeing and development.

Grooming – describes what happens when a perpetrator builds a relationship with a child with a view to abusing them. There is no set pattern in relation to the grooming of children. The child may be given special attention and, what starts as an apparently normal display of affection, such as cuddling, can develop into sexual touching or masturbation and then into more serious sexual behaviour. Grooming can take place in any setting, where a relationship is formed, such as leisure, music, sports and religious activities or in internet chat rooms, in social media or by other technological channels.

Harm – harm to a child is any detrimental effect of a significant nature on the child’s physical, psychological or emotional wellbeing. Harm can be caused by: physical, psychological or emotional abuse or neglect, sexual abuse or exploitation. This can be a single act, omission or circumstance. A series or combination of acts, omission or circumstances.

Neglect – includes the failure to provide adequate food, clothing, shelter, adequate supervision, clean water, medical attention or supervision to the extent that the child’s health and development is or is likely to be significantly harmed. Categories of neglect include

physical neglect, medical neglect, abandonment, emotional neglect. The issue of neglect must be considered within the context of resources reasonably available

Physical abuse – physically abusive behaviour includes but is not limited to shoving, hitting, slapping, shaking, throwing, punching, biting, burning, excessive and physical harmful overtraining and kicking. It includes giving children harmful substances such as drugs, alcohol or poison. Certain types of punishment, while not causing injury can also be considered physical abuse if they place a child at risk of being hurt.

Sexual abuse – can include making sexual comments to a child, engaging children to participate in sexual conversations over the internet or on social media. Kissing, touching a child's genitals or breasts, oral sex or intercourse with a child. Encouraging a child to view pornographic magazines, websites and videos, is also sexual abuse. Engaging children to participate in sexual conversation over the internet is also considered sexual abuse.

Sexual exploitation - occurs when children are forced into sexual activities that are then recorded in some way and /or used to produce pornography. Such child sexual exploitation material can be in the form of actual photos or videos or published on the internet. Exploitation can also involve children who are forced into sex work.

Related Policies and Guidelines

Reporting Child Abuse (Mandatory Reporting) Policy

Confidentiality Policy

Duty of Care Policy

Code of Conduct

Anti – Bullying Policy

Social Media Policy

Group Safety Guidelines

Social Media Guidelines

Incident Report Form

IS Team Contact list



This policy will be reviewed annually. Developed August 2022 next review August 2023.