



# Code of Conduct for Working with Children & Young People

## Statement of Context and Purpose

This Code of Conduct for Working with Children is an unequivocal commitment to fostering the dignity, self-esteem and integrity of children and young people and providing them with a safe, supportive and enriching environment to develop physically, intellectually, emotionally and socially.

The Blue Light Victoria (BLV) Code of Conduct for Working with Children sets out the expected behaviour of adults with children and young people involved in all programs, events and activities. All staff, volunteers, contractors, Board members and any other adult involved in child-connected work at BLV must follow the Code of Conduct for Working with Children.

## Application

The Code of Conduct for Working with Children applies to all employees of BLV and its branches, as well as Board members, volunteers, contractors, parents and other people who are associated with, or come in contact with, BLV programs, activities and events. The Code applies to all physical and online environments used to conduct BLV and branch programs, event and activities. This policy should be read in conjunction with the Child Safety and Disclosure policy.

## Acceptable Behaviours

At BLV, all staff, volunteers, contractors, Board members and any other member of the community involved in child-connected work are responsible for supporting and promoting the safety of children.

All BLV staff, volunteers and contractors must always follow these standards of behaviour:

I WILL:

- Act in accordance with BLV child safety and wellbeing policies and procedures at all times.
- Behave respectfully, courteously, and ethically towards children, young people and their families and towards other staff.
- Listen and respond to the views and concerns of children and young people, particularly if they communicate (verbally or non-verbally) that they do not feel safe or well.
- Promote the human rights, safety and wellbeing of all children/young people in BLV.
- Demonstrate appropriate personal and professional boundaries.
- Consider and respect the diverse backgrounds and needs of children/young people.
- Create an environment that promotes and enables children and young people's participation and is welcoming, culturally safe and inclusive for all children/young people and their families.
- Involve children/young people in making decisions about activities, policies and processes that concern them wherever possible.



- Contribute, where appropriate, to BLV's policies, discussions, learning and reviews about child safety and wellbeing.
- Identify and mitigate risks to children's safety and wellbeing as required by BLV's risk assessment and management policy or process.
- Avoid all private, one on one (behind closed doors) contact unless it is regarding a disclosure, which must be noted on reporting documents.
- Respond to any concerns or complaints of harm or abuse promptly and in line with BLV's policy and procedure for receiving and responding to complaints.
- Report all suspected or disclosed child harm or abuse as required by the Children, Youth and Families Act 2005 and by BLV's policy and procedure on internal and external reporting.
- Comply with BLV's protocols on communicating with children.
- Comply with the Victorian Child Safe Standards and BLV policies and procedures on record keeping and information sharing.

#### I WILL NOT:

- Engage in any unlawful activity with or in relation to a child.
- Engage in any activity that is likely to physically, sexually or emotionally harm a child.
- Unlawfully discriminate against any child or their family members.
- Be alone with a child unnecessarily.
- Arrange personal contact, including online contact, with children I am working with for a purpose unrelated to BLV's activities.
- Engage in any private communication, online or otherwise with a child unless another adult within BLV or a partnering school/organisation is in the online space or physically present.
- Disclose personal or sensitive information about a child, including images of a child, unless the child and their parent or legal guardian consent or unless I am required to do so by BLV's policy and procedure on reporting.
- Use inappropriate language in the presence of children, or show or provide children with access to inappropriate images or material.
- Work with children while under the influence of alcohol or prohibited drugs.
- Ignore or disregard any suspected or disclosed child harm or abuse.



If I suspect that this Code of Conduct has been breached by another person in the organisation:

I WILL:

- Call 000 if the child/young person is in immediate danger.
- Act to prioritise the best interests of children.
- Take actions promptly to ensure that children are safe.
- Promptly report any concerns to my manager, branch police member, BLV Child Safety Officer, the Chief Executive Officer or another manager or leader in BLV.
- Follow BLV's policies and procedures for receiving and responding to complaints and concerns.
- Comply with relevant legislative requirements on reporting and with BLV's policy and procedure on internal and external reporting.

## Breaches of this Code

Where a member of staff is suspected of breaching the Code of Conduct, they may be subject to disciplinary procedures in accordance with their employment agreement or the relevant industrial award.

All breaches and/or suspected breaches of this Code by volunteers, contractors and any other members of the community must be reported to the Child Safety Officer.

Complaints about a breach of this Code of Conduct must be reported to our Child Safety Officer, Karen Burns. They can be conducted on: 0421 992 532, or via email: karen.burns@bluelight.org.au.

## EMPLOYEE/VOLUNTEER DECLARATION

I agree to abide by this Code of Conduct whilst I am an employee and/or volunteer for Blue Light Victoria and/or a branch of Blue Light.

I understand that breaches of this Code of Conduct may lead to disciplinary action or termination of my employment/ability to volunteer with Blue Light Victoria.

**If a child or young person is at immediate risk of abuse, I will contact the Police on 000.**

Signature: \_\_\_\_\_

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Date: \_\_\_\_\_



## Policy Administration

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|---|--|
| Committee Owner                                       | Governance, Risk and Finance (GRAF)  |
| Effective Date  | April 2023   |
| Review Frequency                                      | Biennial   |
| Approval Body   | Blue Light Victoria Board  |
| Regulator (if applicable)                             |  |
| Compliance Mechanism                                  | <i>Child Wellbeing and Safety Act 2005 (Vic) (including Child Safe Standards)</i><br><i>Children, Youth and Families Act 2005 (Vic) (including reporting to Child Protection)</i><br><i>Crimes Act 1958 (Vic) (including Failure to Protect and Failure to Disclose offences)</i><br><i>Equal Opportunity Act 2010</i><br><i>Victorian Working with Children Act 2005 and Amendment 2014</i><br><i>Victorian Child Safe Standards</i><br><i>National Principles for Child Safe Organisations</i> |
| Related Policies, supporting procedures or guidelines | 008_BLV Child Safety and Disclosure  |

| Version | Revision Date | Reason              |
|---------|---------------|---------------------|
| 3.1     | April 2023    | New policy creation |

