

Amendment	Comment	Date	Authority
AL-00	Initial Issue V1	11 Feb 13	Director of Camping
AL-01	Policy Rewrite V2 by Ministry Mgr	4 Apr 19	Board
AL-02	Revision to add legislation change	8 Feb 20	Board

PURPOSE

Baptist Camping Victoria (“BCV”) is committed to the protection of all staff and participants from physical and emotional harm. It is recognized that children and vulnerable people especially need to be protected due to their potential vulnerability. This may be due to lack of life experience, trust/distrust of adults, physical size and strength, power imbalance between children and adults.

It is the goal of this organisation to provide children and vulnerable people with a positive, enjoyable group living experience, with access to a wide range of interesting and challenging activities. The staff and management of BCV regard it as their duty to ensure children and vulnerable people have emotional and physical safety at all times. All campers have the right to a safe and caring environment, which promotes learning, personal growth and positive self-esteem.

This Policy:

- guides our work in establishing and maintaining child-safe & child-friendly environments ensuring an organisational culture of child safety;
- underpins our biblical mandate to: Love the Lord your God with your heart, soul, mind and strength ... and to love your neighbour as yourself (Matthew 22:37-40);
- facilitates prevention of child abuse within BCV;
- promotes and provides for the provision of services that foster the health and safety of children who access our centres and/or programs;
- ensures that all people associated with BCV fulfil their pastoral, organisational and duty of care obligations to children;
- provides assurance that suspected child abuse is fully investigated; and
- ensures compliance with legislation, and also with the intention of the legislation, that seeks to protect and nurture the holistic development of children.

SCOPE

This Policy applies to all those associated with BCV, including:

- all workers, including paid employees, volunteers and members of boards;
- as specified herein, guests or hirers of the centres and their facilities, including school, church, service providers or other groups;
- as specified herein, contractors, subcontractors, delivery persons or others engaged to provide services; and

- as specified herein, those who access BCV centres and/or programs (including children and their care-givers).

DEFINITIONS

Child means a person below the age of 18 years unless otherwise stated under the law applicable to the child.

Child protection means any responsibility, measure or activity undertaken to safeguard children from harm.

Child abuse means all forms of physical abuse, emotional ill-treatment, sexual abuse and exploitation, neglect or negligent treatment, commercial (e.g. for financial gain) or other exploitation of a child and includes any actions that results in actual or potential harm to a child.

Child sexual assault is any act which exposes a child to, or involves a child in, sexual processes beyond his or her understanding or contrary to accepted community standards. Sexually abusive behaviours can include the fondling of genitals, masturbation, oral sex, vaginal or anal penetration by a penis, finger or any other object, fondling of breasts, voyeurism, exhibitionism, and exposing the child to or involving the child in pornography. It includes child grooming, which refers to actions deliberately undertaken with the aim of befriending and establishing an emotional connection with a child to lower the child's inhibitions in preparation for sexual activity with the child.

Reasonable grounds for belief is a belief based on reasonable grounds (see below) that child abuse has occurred when all known considerations or facts relevant to the formation of a belief are taken into account and these are objectively assessed. Circumstances or considerations may include the source of the allegation and how it was communicated, the nature of and details of the allegation, and whether there are any other related matters known regarding the alleged perpetrator.

A reasonable belief is formed if a reasonable person believes that:

1. the child is in need of protection,
2. the child has suffered or is likely to suffer significant harm as a result of physical injury,
or
3. the parents are unable or unwilling to protect the child.

A 'reasonable belief' or a 'belief on reasonable grounds' is not the same as having proof, but is more than mere rumour or speculation.

A 'reasonable belief' is formed if a reasonable person in the same position would have formed the belief on the same grounds. For example, a 'reasonable belief' might be formed if:

1. a child states that they have been physically or sexually abused;

2. a child states that they know someone who has been physically or sexually abused (sometimes the child may be talking about themselves);
3. someone who knows a child states that the child has been physically or sexually abused;
4. professional observations of the child's behaviour or development leads a professional to form a belief that the child has been physically or sexually abused or is likely to be abused; and/or
5. signs of abuse lead to a belief that the child has been physically or sexually abused.

POLICY STATEMENTS

As a child-safe and child-friendly organisation:

- we acknowledge that all children have a right to feel and be safe, and to experience life-giving, harm-free interactions at our centres and in our programs.
- we acknowledge the need for sensitivity and consideration of those children of Aboriginal, culturally &/or linguistically diverse backgrounds, as well as any child with a disability.
- we acknowledge the primary role of parents and care-givers as well as the role of children in child protection and will actively engage with children and care-givers, inviting open communication and feedback as part of our procedures and interactions.
- we acknowledge the shared responsibility of the whole community for child safety and welfare, including caregivers, guest organisations and our workers (e.g. camp leaders), and as such we will actively promote the role of parents and care givers and the wider community in the shared responsibility of child safety.
- we commit to the welfare of all children through the implementation and ongoing improvement of our Child Safe Venue Framework which includes:
 - safe and friendly environments where children are listened to, feel safe, have fun, accept challenges, learn and grow;
 - safe and adequate recruitment, training, supervision, support and resourcing of our workers; and
 - child-friendly, appropriate and expedient responses to all incidents, accidents and/or child protection concerns.

It is a serious breach of this Policy for any person associated with BCV to contravene any related procedure, or any regulation in law, in relation to the safety and protection of children.

RESPONSIBILITIES

General responsibilities of all those associated with BCV are to:

- be respectful of the boundaries of children, respecting the rights of the child to a safe and friendly centre and/or program;
- foster and encourage the participation and safety of children;
- take all reasonable care for their own health and safety;
- take responsible care that their actions do not adversely affect the health and safety of children;
- comply with all reasonable instructions from centre managers / supervisors / leaders;
- comply with relevant employment, usage, and guest conditions as communicated, including the code of conduct relevant to role/position;
- report all child protection concerns, allegations or incidents immediately to the Child Safety Officer and/or Camp Manager (any formal report must be forwarded to authorities within 48 hours);
- report all incidents or hazards to the Camp Manager or (relevant staff member) as soon as practicable.

Child Safety Officer

BCV has Child Safety Officers at each of the BCV Centres who will have specific responsibility to respond to any complaints made by staff, volunteers, parents or children. If a person does not feel comfortable making a report to a Child Safety Officer they may report their concern to the Director of Camping or the Chair of the Board.

Photos of the Child Safety Office are displayed in the Centres.

Specific Responsibilities

In addition to the general responsibilities under this policy the following office holders and those associated with BCV have the following specific responsibilities:

Board	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ultimate responsibility for protection and prevention of child abuse. • To ensure procedures are in place and responsibilities assigned to provide for the health and safety of all persons covered by the scope of this policy • Endorse the Child Safe Venue Framework • Assign responsibilities for the management of the Framework • Monitor and review the implementation of the Framework
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Director of Camping	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Is the head of the organisation and carries all of the legal obligations under the Reportable Conduct Scheme and is ultimately responsible for BCV's compliance with the scheme. • Ensure disclosures of harm are reported to all relevant regulatory bodies • Fulfil relevant legislative 'head of organisation roles' in child protection related investigations • Regular reporting to the Board in relation to implementation of the Framework • Overall responsibility for implementation of the Framework
Camp Manager	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Promote Child safety at all times and build a culture of Child Safety • Implement Child Safe Venue Policy & Procedures • Liaise or be a part of the Child Safety Team • Monitor workers who they oversee to ensure workers are acting safely and according to policy and procedure • Provide reasonable instruction to workers regarding the provision of child-safe and child-friendly environments • Report to Child Safety Officer any suspicions of, allegations, incident or potential breaches of the relevant code of conduct • Write and implement WHS policies, including privacy policy and evacuation procedures • Keep WHS on the agenda at meetings of the Management Group and Governance Board • receive notifications of hazards / incidents such as serious events and dangerous incidents from workers and visitors • notify incidents such as serious events and dangerous incidents within a prescribed period to the appropriate office holder/s e.g. board • address health and safety concerns within reasonable time frame • undertake a site safety environment audit of the venue annually

<p>Coordinators (Heads of Department)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Implement Child Safe Venue Policy & Procedures • Monitor workers who they oversee to ensure workers are acting safely and according to policy and procedure • Provide reasonable instruction to workers regarding the provision of child-safe and child-friendly environments.
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Report to Child Safety Officer any suspicions of, allegations, incident or potential breaches of the relevant code of conduct • Identify and report all risks and hazards to relevant officer holder for treatment
<p>Child Safety Officer/Team</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Implement Child Safe Venue Policy & Procedures as directed by the Board • Receive reports of incidents &/or concerns of risk of harm in relation to children or workers • Maintain secure records in relation to the Policy • Regular reporting to BCV Management Team &/or Board • Ensure all reports are made to the relevant authorities (if required)
<p>Staff (paid and volunteer)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Implement Child Safe Venue Policy & Procedures • Report to Child Safety Officer any suspicions, allegations, incident or potential breaches of the relevant code of conduct • Identify and report all risks and hazards to relevant officer holder for treatment
<p>Parents & care- givers of children</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Provide all information as necessary to ensure the safety of their child/ren • Provide feedback to the centre if and when they have concerns about the safety of children including their own child/ren
<p>Campers/Clients</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Participate in safe and respectful ways • Have a say (e.g. talk to any of their leaders when feeling unsafe) • Report any unsafe behaviour of others including other children and leaders • Abide by all centre rules (code of conduct for the program/camp/event)

Note:

1. Dependent upon the size of the centre, one person may fulfil a number of functions.
2. Through staff training programs, BCV staff and volunteers are briefed to ensure that they understand their obligations to respect the rights and privacy of all campers, and to implement this policy of child protection.

PROCEDURE

The Child Safe Venue Procedures are the practical outworking of our Child Safe Venue Policy, providing specific and practical directions to office holders in relation to the implementation of our Child Safe Venue Policy.

Index of Procedures

- 2.1 Child Safe Venue Framework implementation
- 2.2 Participation & Inclusion of Children and their Caregivers
- 2.3 Recruitment of Staff and Volunteers
- 2.4 Risk Management
- 2.5 Responding to Child Protection Concerns
- 2.6 Privacy
- 2.7 Non-compliance

Appendix 1 Flow Chart: Child Safety Reporting Process

Appendix 2 Child Safety Code of Conduct

2.1 CHILD SAFE VENUE FRAMEWORK IMPLEMENTATION

The Child Safe Venue Framework Implementation Procedure relates to the appointment of persons to Framework positions, and mechanisms for program approval, communication, reporting, review and improvement of the Framework.

Appointment of Child Safe Venue Personnel

The Director of Camping will ultimately approve all appointments, or if absent, then the Business Manager together with the Board executive. For senior staff roles, the Board may be represented on the selection panel or act as advisory to the selection panel. The Manager of the employing Centre will, after the conclusion of the selection process, recommend staff to be employed.

Communication of the Child Safe Venue Framework

BCV's Management Team and Camp will communicate targeted, relevant and specific information about the Child Safe Framework to all persons associated with BCV.

Reporting to Management Group and Board

The Board will have a set agenda item for reporting on child safety at all board meetings.

The BCV Management Team and the Camp Managers will have set agenda item for reporting on child safety at each meeting.

2.2 PARTICIPATION & INCLUSION OF CHILDREN AND THEIR CAREGIVERS

Children's Participation & Inclusion

- a. All staff (paid and volunteer) will actively listen to children when they speak about matters that directly affect their sense of safety or wellbeing and *will act on* any concerns children or their carers raise with them.
- b. Staff will ensure that children will have opportunity to reflect on their experience at the venue and to make comments regarding the accommodation, meals and program elements and other aspects of wellbeing, including staff conduct. Such feedback will inform and guide adjustments to practices, programs and training
- c. Staff will schedule time in the program to talk to children about their safety, usually at the beginning of the program or event, and as is practicable will encourage the children to participate and contribute to safety discussions.
- d. The BCV Management Team and Camp Managers will provide information, including age appropriate signage, in relation to safety, acknowledging the need for sensitivity and consideration of those children of Aboriginal & Torres Strait heritage, and culturally &/or linguistically diverse backgrounds as well as any child with a disability.
- e. The BCV Management Team and Camp Managers will take steps to respect and promote the cultural identity of children of Aboriginal & Torres Strait heritage, and culturally &/or linguistically diverse backgrounds through engagement with the children and their care-givers in relation to taboos and symbols and activities that are important to the children's cultural heritage, as is practicable given the nature of the program.

Engaging with Caregivers & Community

The BCV Management and Camp Managers will:

- a. Promote open communication with parents and care-givers, and other community stakeholders, encouraging feedback on the program that their child has attended through 'Camp Evaluation Surveys'.
- b. When reviewing the Child Safe Venue Policy and Procedures, seek input from targeted group of parents and care-givers.

2.3 RECRUITMENT OF STAFF AND VOLUNTEERS

BCV seeks to attract and retain the best staff and volunteers.

The Board will carry out, or delegate to the appropriate office holders, recruitment and screening due diligence checks according to good practice standards for all staff and

volunteers. All recruitment and screening documentation will be accessed by a suitably experienced member of the organisation with the authority of the Board.

*Please refer to **Policy 9 - 'Recruitment of Staff and Volunteers'** for further information which compliments this Child Safety Venue policy.*

2.4 RISK MANAGEMENT

Risk assessment and child safety management practices are embedded in our procedures prior to each program, event or activity. They are set out in our risk management policy 8. We use these practices to inform our planning and operating of all our programs, events or activities.

The Camp Manager and relevant Coordinators are responsible for the identification, assessment, management of all site and program risks, and the reporting and addressing of incidents according to our Accreditation and Redbook procedures.

Spiritually and Emotionally Safe Environments

All BCV ministry camps, retreats, and events have our religious beliefs as the foundational element to them all. Our programs are designed to be fun, engaging, and age-appropriate, being respectful and sensitive, recognising that the children and young people who attend come from all backgrounds and experiences. Worship and chapel times, along with values sessions and devotions are shared with each of the campers and ranchers. The Bible, prayer, and personal sharing of testimonies are all integral parts of what define each camp, retreat or event.

2.5 RESPONDING TO CHILD PROTECTION CONCERNS (refer to Appendix 1)

Who should Report?

Parents, children, members of staff and volunteers.

What should be Reported?

Any child safety concerns, including grooming, must be reported:

- when a child discloses that they are being abused or harmed, or are at risk of being harmed
- when another person discloses that a child is being abused or harmed, or is at risk of being harmed when the staff member (paid or volunteer) has a **reasonable concern** that a child is at risk of harm (based on the indicators of children who may be at risk of harm).

Initial response upon child disclosure – “Do’s and Don’ts” – for Staff

Do:

- Listen ... do not add anything to what the child says (you will need to write this down, exactly)
- Reassure ... the child that they have done the right thing in speaking to you

- Inform ... the child that you need to tell people who will try to help you
- Ensure ... that the child is not in immediate danger
- Keep it brief
- a preliminary investigation will be started to see that the child is safe and what action is to be taken.

Don't:

- Do not promise the child that the abuse will stop
- Do not tell anyone who does not need to know

Dealing with abuse allegations against a staff member or volunteer

The procedure for dealing with abuse allegations are as follows:

- Getting the written allegation in writing; children should be interviewed unless there is a good reason not to
- Investigate whether the abuse is likely to have occurred (noting: belief in what the child has said)
- If a staff member or volunteer is implicated in the allegation
 - look at standing down, no involvement with young people (desk job) until a review has been completed
 - obtain a written response from the staff member
 - interview any witness and gain written responses
- Suspending or terminating an employment or volunteer arrangement
- Reporting to authorities in accordance with legal requirements
- Communicating with the person making the complaint, including:
 - forming a view about whether the abuse happened
 - whether and how to apologise
 - who should be communicating with the victim
 - dealing with civil litigation
- Managing reputation
- Identifying implications for the board

Definition

- ***Reasonable Concern***

Concern that a child or group of children is at risk of any form of physical and/or emotional ill-treatment, sexual abuse, neglect or negligent treatment, or commercial or other exploitation which is likely to result in harm to health, survival, development or dignity of the child or group of children.

- **Grooming**

The offence of grooming concerns predatory conduct undertaken to prepare a child for sexual activity at a later date. The offence applies whenever an adult communicates, by technology, words or conduct with a child under the age of 16 years or with a person who has care, supervision or authority for the child with the intention of facilitating the child's involvement in sexual conduct, either with the groomer or another adult.

Grooming does not necessarily involve any sexual activity or even discussion of sexual activity – for example it may only involve establishing a relationship with the child, parent or carer for the purpose of facilitating sexual activity at a later time.

The sexual conduct must constitute an indictable sexual offence. This includes offences such as sexual penetration of a child, indecent assault and indecent act in the presence of a child. It does not include summary offences, such as up-skirting and indecent behaviour in public.

Who can commit offence?

The offence can be committed by a person aged 18 and over. It does not apply to communication between people who are both under 18 years old.

Age of Children protected

The offence applies to communication with children under 16 years, but not communication with 16 and 17 year old children. This distinction between children aged below 16 and those above 16 or 17 reflects the general age of consent i.e. 16 years is recognised by the criminal law in relation to sexual offences.

Who to report to?

All child protection concerns must be reported to:

- The Child Safety Officer along with a completed "Risk of Significant Harm" form (located in the Critical Incident Folder in the office).
- Director of Camping
- The BUV (Baptist Union of Victoria) professional standards person

Depending on the issue, the person with the concern may also need to report to:

- The Commission for Children and Young People - Reportable Conduct Scheme
- Free call 1300 782 978 (for advice or report)
- The appropriate authorities set out in this procedure (police, government agency such as an ombudsman) and/or completing workplace investigation (where the allegation is against a worker)
- Refer to appendix 1

2.6 PRIVACY

All personal information considered or recorded will respect the privacy of individuals involved unless there is a risk to someone's safety. BCV will have safeguards and practices in place to ensure any personal information is protected.

2.7 Non-compliance with this policy and Code of Conduct

BCV will enforce this policy and the Code of Conduct. Following any non-compliance, we will instigate a review that may result in restriction of duties, suspension, or termination of employment or other corrective action.

RELATED DOCUMENTS AND REFERENCES

- the *Commission for Children and Young People Act 2012*,
- the *Child Wellbeing and Safety Act 2005* and the *Children, Youth and Families Act 2005*.
- CVA Childsafe Venue Framework
- Commission for Children and Young People – A Guide for Creating a Child Safe Organisation ccyp.vic.gov.au/child-safety/being-a-child-safe-organisation
- Listening to children <https://www.youtube.com/embed/RuVv7QtVGDo> from the Centre for Investigative Interviewing <https://www.investigativecentre.com/>
- BCV Contractors agreement
- BCV Code of conduct Staff/Volunteers Policy 6
- BCV Risk management statement Policy 8
- BCV Recruitment and appointment of staff and volunteers Policy 9
- BCV Privacy Policy 21

REVIEW

The child protection policy and procedures will be reviewed at least every 2 years, or as often as necessary in order to remain compliant with new legislation.

Child Safe Standards require BCV to complete a review by implementing an Action Plan Tool every 12 months. This is documented in Commission for Children and Young People Guide (page 64).

This specific policy is posted on the Web page

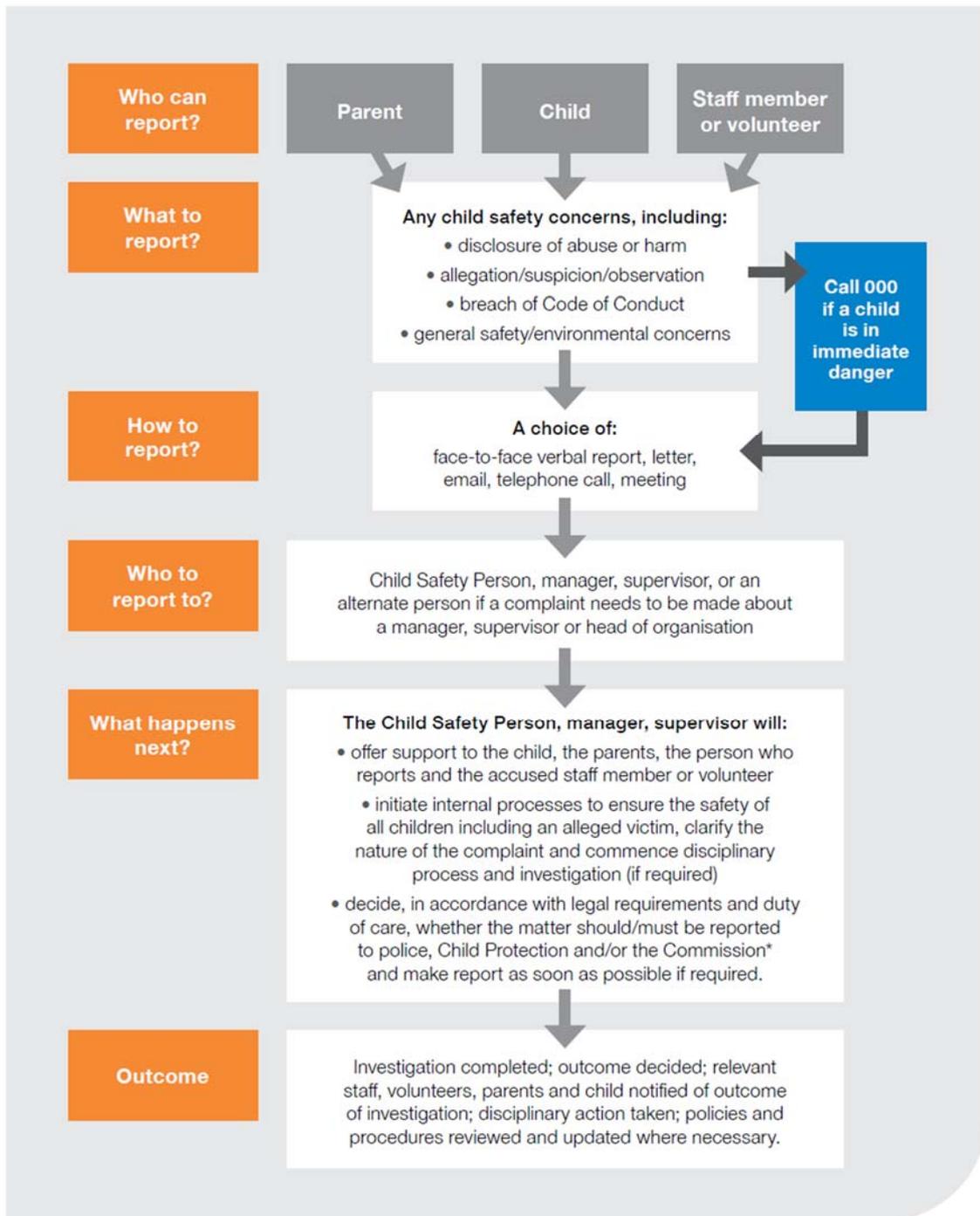
Please Note: The original of this document is on the BCV server to ensure staff always have access to the latest version. Copying, printing or otherwise storing the whole or any part of this document to keep it independently as a separate copy for reference could result in you using out-dated information.

Appendix 1 and Appendix 2 follow

Appendix 1

Flowchart: Child safety reporting process

This chart outlines the process for reports to be made by parents, children, staff members and volunteers alike.



* Applies only to organisations covered by the Reportable Conduct Scheme. Refer to the Commission's website for details.

Appendix 2

Child Safe Code of Conduct

This Code of Conduct will help everyone involved at Baptist Camping Victoria (“BCV”) identify required standards of behaviour as they carry out their role as a Board Member, employee, worker or volunteer. This Code is principally designed to safeguard children, young people and vulnerable adults involved in any activity run by BCV.

1. All employees, workers and volunteers involved in the care of children, young people and adults on behalf of BCV will:

- (a) Operate within the policies, procedures and codes of BCV, in particular the Child Safe Venue Policy (#2).
- (b) Maintain a duty of care towards others involved in these programs and activities, taking all responsible steps to protect children from abuse.
- (c) Establish and maintain a child-safe environment in the course of their work, taking all reasonable steps to protect children from abuse.
- (d) Comply with specific organisational guidelines on physical and other contact with children, young people and vulnerable adults.
- (e) Be fair, considerate and honest with others.
- (f) Treat children, young people and vulnerable adults with respect and value their ideas and opinions.
- (g) Listen and respond to the views and concerns of children, particularly if they are telling you that they or another child has been abused and/or are worried about their safety or the safety of another.
- (h) Act as positive role models in their conduct with children, young people and vulnerable adults.
- (i) Promote cultural safety, participation and empowerment of Aboriginal children, young people and those who identify different cultural backgrounds (for example, by never questioning an Aboriginal child’s self-identification).
- (j) Promote the safety, participation and empowerment of children with a disability (for example, during personal care activities).
- (k) Respect the privacy of children, young people and vulnerable adults and their families and carers and only disclose information to people who have a need to know.
- (l) Report incidents/complaints to the BCV Child Safety Officer or to the Director of Camping or to the Chair of the Board.

2. No person shall:

- (a) Shame, humiliate, oppress, belittle or degrade children, young people or vulnerable adults.
- (b) Unlawfully discriminate against any child, young person or vulnerable adult.

- (c) Engage in any activity with a child, young person or vulnerable adult that is likely to physically or emotionally harm them.
- (d) Initiate unnecessary physical contact with a child, young person or vulnerable adult, or do things of a personal nature for them that they can do for themselves.
- (e) Be alone with a child, young person or vulnerable adult unnecessarily and for more than a very short time.
- (f) Develop a 'special' relationship with a specific child, young person or vulnerable adult for their own needs.
- (g) Show favouritism through the provision of gifts or inappropriate attention.
- (h) Arrange contact, including online contact or via social media, with a child, young person or vulnerable adult without the acknowledgement and permission from the child's, young person's or vulnerable adult's parent/s or guardian.
- (i) Photograph or video a child, young person or vulnerable adult without the consent of the child and his/her parents or guardians or a BCV leader.
- (j) Work with children, young people or vulnerable adults while under the influence of alcohol or illegal drugs.
- (k) Engage in open discussions of a mature or adult nature in the presence of children, young people or vulnerable adults.
- (l) Use inappropriate language in the presence of children, young people or vulnerable adults.
- (m) Do anything in contravention of BCV's policies or procedures or this Code of Conduct.

Acknowledgment by Staff member:

I have read and understand Child Safe Venue Policy 2 and I will abide by this Child Safe Code of Conduct. I will ensure an incident report is completed and given to the Child Safe Officer on the day of an incident occurring.

Name: _____ Signed: _____ Date: _____

Employer: _____ Signed: _____ Date: _____

Note: additional formal Child Safety training is provided by BCV to Staff who must complete the course and sign an acknowledgement to be held by the Business Manager.