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Child Safety Behaviour Statement

CFA is a child-safe organisation that is committed to creating safe and supportive environments for children and young people participating in our programs and those we interact with in the community.

CFA employees, volunteers and FRV secondees must comply with all CFA child-safety policies and demonstrate a commitment to child safety consistent with CFA's zero tolerance approach to all forms of child abuse and harm by adhering to the following expectations in their work with and/or interactions with children and young people.

Providing a safe and respectful environment for children and young people

- Demonstrate respect, integrity and courtesy in your interactions with children, young people and their families/carers.
- Use language that is positive and supportive and in a tone of voice that is appropriate to the context e.g. avoid name calling, yelling, swearing or using threatening language toward a child or young person in person or online.
- Use fair, respectful and age-appropriate strategies to provide direction and guide the behaviour of children and young people.
- Remember that it is important to maintain a professional standard of conduct in the presence of children and young people. Inappropriate behaviours or language may have a detrimental impact on their social, emotional and physical wellbeing e.g. physical violence, racism.

Encourage participation and empowerment

- Encourage children and young people to actively participate in relevant activities and value their contribution to CFA.
- Provide opportunities for children and young people to “have a say” in relation to decisions that impact their safety and wellbeing.

Support diversity and inclusion

- Provide a welcoming and inclusive environment for all children and young people that is accepting of diversity and does not discriminate based on age, gender, race, culture, physical attribute, disability, or sexuality.
- Do not use discriminatory, racist, or sexist language in relation to a child or young person.

Provide supervision

- Provide appropriate and active supervision when conducting programs, activities and events with children and young people to ensure their safety and wellbeing.
- Avoid one to one unsupervised interaction by applying the “never alone” rule to ensure that you are in the line of sight of others. In an online environment ensure that your communications are monitored by other adults e.g. copy in parents or program leaders.

Respect privacy

- Respect the privacy of children and young people and their families by ensuring personal and sensitive information is managed and stored in accordance with CFA's Privacy Policy.
- Do not disclose personal or sensitive information about a child or young person, unless the child and their parent/carer have provided written consent or unless required by law or CFA policy.

Act within boundaries of your role

- Demonstrate appropriate role and interpersonal boundaries, by always working with children and young people in an open and transparent manner (i.e., avoiding favouritism, creating special relationships, creating dependence).
- Direct gift giving or requests for financial or material aid to your line manager.
- Do not exchange personal contact details with a child or young person such as personal phone number, social networking sites or email address, unless it is necessary for the purposes of CFA activities relevant to your role and only with parental permission.

Promote health and safety

- Provide a smoke-free environment (inclusive of cigarettes, e-cigarettes, pipes).
- Do not consume or be under the influence of alcohol or prohibited drugs while conducting activities or engaging in the care of children or young people.
- Do not supply alcohol, cigarettes or illegal drugs to children and young people.

Photography

- Do not take, store or use photographs or video of children and young people unless for the purposes of CFA activities relevant to your role and with parental permission.

Transportation

- Do not provide transportation without prior written approval of the parent/carer.

Respect physical contact boundaries

- Do not engage in intrusive or unnecessary physical contact with a child or young person. Where physical contact is essential for safety reasons (e.g. assisting onto a fire truck, first aid or firefighting instruction), permission should be sought from the child or young person before doing so. Always avoid contact with the mouth, groin, genitals, buttocks, and breasts.
- Do not engage in any forms of physical punishment nor engage in any form of treatment that could be considered degrading, cruel, frightening or humiliating.
- Never engage in violent behaviour toward a child or young person or in their presence.

Protect children and young people from all forms of child abuse or harm

- Take all reasonable steps to protect children and young people by being observant to behaviour, signs, or indicators of child abuse and/or harm.
- Do not ignore or disregard any concerns, complaints, allegations or disclosures of child abuse and/or harm – talk with your line manager or the Child Safety Team.
- Do not engage in initiation-based bullying or hazing behaviour directed at or in the presence of a child or young person.
- Report **all** complaints, disclosures or allegations of child abuse and/or harm to CFA's Child Safety Officer as soon as practicable or Victoria Police 000, if a child or young person is in immediate danger.

Prevent sexual abuse

- Never initiate or encourage inappropriate emotional, physical, or sexual relationships with children or young people.
- Do not engage in any form of sexual activity with or in the presence of a child or young person or online e.g., observing a child or young person in a state of undress, fondling, sexualised discussions, jokes of a sexual nature, exposure to nudity or pornography, sexting, solicit or exchange inappropriate images.
- Do not engage in grooming behaviour designed to engage a child or young person in sexual activity e.g., favouritism, excessive attention, gift giving, keeping secrets, connecting privately online, via phone or in person in an unsupervised manner.
- Do not ignore possible grooming behaviours by other adults towards children and young people when they appear to be overly familiar or inappropriate.

Non-compliance with the Child Safety Behaviour Statement may result in an internal investigation and/or disciplinary action. Where a breach is suspected to constitute criminal activity, the matter will be reported to Victoria Police.