



Child Protection Policy

Approved by The Board of Directors 24 August 2021

Policy Statement

The Fathering Project is committed to providing a safe and secure environment for all its Employees, Members, Visitors, Volunteers and to Children, and Vulnerable People.

The Fathering Project Child Protection Policy aims to reduce the risk of Abuse occurring, and to ensure that a caring and appropriate response is taken should Abuse occur.

Scope

This Child Protection Policy applies to:

- All service organisations or subsidiary bodies authorised by or under the control of The Fathering Project,
- All Employees, Members, Volunteers, Contractors and Visitors within The Fathering Project or engaged by The Fathering Project.

Authority

This Child Protection Policy was adopted for use by The Fathering Project on 24 August 2021.

The Fathering Project's governing body are committed to implementing the Child Protection Policy and to training our Employees, Members, Contractors and Volunteers in its content and application.

Definitions

Abuse, can consist of one or more of but is not restricted to the following:

- A single or repeated act, occurring in any relationship where there is an expectation of trust, which causes harm or distress to another person.

Physical Abuse, any non-accidental physical injury resulting from practices such as:

- Hitting, punching, kicking (marks from belt buckles, fingers), shaking, burning (irons, cigarettes), biting, pulling out hair, alcohol and/or other drug administration.

Sexual Abuse, any assault or abuse of a sexual nature, sexual molestation, indecent exposure, sexual harassment or intimidation.

Emotional Abuse, the chronic attitude or behavior of one person which is directed at another person, or, the creation of an emotional environment which erodes a person's self-esteem and social confidence over time. Behaviors may include:

- Insulting, bullying, devaluing, ignoring, rejecting, corrupting, isolating, terrorising or other extreme acts in the child or vulnerable person's presence.

Neglect, characterised by the failure to provide for basic needs.

Any serious omission or commission which jeopardises or impairs a Child's health or development.

Child, any person under the age of 18.

Leader, any person (paid or unpaid) over the age of 18 who is responsible for the control and safety of children placed in their care whilst holding a formal position in The Fathering Project.

A leader could include but is not limited to:

- Activity Coordinators
- Small group Leaders
- Music, drama or other Leaders
- Counselors
- Teachers
- Volunteers
- Club Leaders
- Sports Coaches and Organisers.

Member, any person, including children, who attends or participates in The Fathering Project's activities, objectives or strategic plan.

Organisation, The Fathering Project, located at 6 Broadway Nedlands WA 6009.

Volunteer, any unpaid person over the age of 16 who is invited to assist in the care of Children and Vulnerable people.

Vulnerable Person, any person who is or may be in need of community care services by reason of mental or other disability, age or illness.

Policy Review

This Child Protection Policy will be reviewed annually, and the Organisation's governing body will inform all interested parties when the date of review will occur, and any changes recommended by the interested parties should be submitted in writing to the governing body for consideration one month before the review date.

Any proposed changes will be submitted to the relevant meeting for approval before being implemented.

Responsibility

The core expectations of any responsible Organisation require us to treat all people with fairness and dignity and to care for those who are less powerful and in need of nurture and protection.

Legal

All relevant organisations within Australia are bound by Federal and State legislation and principles established through common law. The Fathering

Project is committed to adhering to all relevant legislation.

Ethical

Some actions may not be regarded as Abuse, but are unacceptable behaviour for The Fathering Project. These include:

- Inappropriate conversation of a sexual nature
- Coarse language, especially that of a sexual nature
- Suggestive gestures or remarks
- Jokes of a sexual nature
- Inappropriate touching
- Inappropriate literature (e.g. PG, M, MA, R or X rated material used with Elderly or Vulnerable Persons)
- Recording or filming with or without prior consent
- Acts of violence committed by a Worker, Leader or Volunteer during an activity
- The Fathering Project's board and management will ensure that high standards of conduct are always maintained.

Selection and Screening

Employees, Agency Staff, Contractors and Volunteers

Employees, Agency Staff, Contractors and Volunteers involved in activities or programs with children, and/or vulnerable people must be carefully selected and screened. Prior to commencing employment or volunteer services, the following precautions will be taken:

- Establish the applicant's suitability for the role or position and the conversation will be documented and retained on file.
- All short-listed candidates who will be involved with children must undertake a formal interview which includes an analysis of experience working with children, or vulnerable people.
- A Police and/or Community Services (WWCC/Blue Card) check which complies with the legislative requirements of each state will be requested and received prior to an Employee - commencing their proposed role. The check must show that the individual is not precluded from working in childcare.

Where the Organisation has identified that an applicant has previously committed a violent or sexually related offence, they cannot, under any circumstances, be considered for employment or engagement with The Fathering Project.

Training

All new Employees, including Agency Staff, Contractors (where these are connected with or involved in activities with children or vulnerable persons) and Volunteers will be issued with a copy of this policy and receive formal training in;

- The content and application of The Fathering Project's Child Protection Policy,
- Reporting procedures and the associated legal requirements.

Refresher training courses based on current "best practice" and changes to legislation will be provided on an annual basis when "best practice" or changes in legislation has occurred.

A Safe Environment

Incidents of Abuse are unlikely to take place in front of another person and the presence of a witness can assist in clarifying questionable allegations. For these reasons, working in pairs is the preferred method.

All Employees or Volunteers working with children require a Working with Children Check and must receive it before being involved in any activities involving children under the age of 18.

All Employees and Volunteers owe a duty of care to all the participants involved in the activities and not promote activities which have the potential to harm children.

All activities involving children involving The Fathering Project require a Parent, or legal guardian, to be present with their child or children.

Should children be divided from their Parent or legal guardian at an event involving The Fathering Project and a Fathering Project Employee or Volunteer is required to supervise or care for a child or vulnerable person, there will always be two or more employees and/or volunteers present. Where this is not possible, it should be done in a room which can be observed easily by others. In circumstances where one-on-one care is provided, there must be measures in place to identify if abuse is occurring such as regular rotation of staff and client feedback.

Inexperienced employees/volunteers will always work with a more experienced employee or volunteer when caring for children or vulnerable person(s).

Under no circumstances will an employee or volunteer transport children or vulnerable person(s) and will always avoid being alone in a car, bus or other vehicle with the child or vulnerable person.

Employees and volunteers will always avoid one-on-one care with children or vulnerable person(s) wherever possible, ensuring there is another employee or volunteer present.

Workers will respect a child or vulnerable person(s) feelings and privacy when engaging in contact of any kind.

Adults and Children are expected to respect each other's privacy during times that require undressing, dressing or changing clothes. Employees and volunteers will set an example by protecting their own privacy in similar situations. No employee or volunteer will be alone in a room with a Child or Vulnerable person while any/either is changing.

Initiations and secret ceremonies are prohibited. All aspects of every program related to children and vulnerable people will be open to observation by family, friends, or legal guardians.

Employees and volunteers have the right to ask people who do not have a valid reason to be present at such activities to leave. Police may be contacted if such persons refuse to comply with any reasonable request to leave.

Disciplining Children

Is not the responsibility of The Fathering Project or its Employees, Volunteers or Leaders to discipline a Child. If a Child does not abide by the rules set down by the Organisation or becomes an obstruction to the care of other Children or Members,

and may cause harm, the Child will be removed and referred back to their parent or legal guardian.

At no time will a Leader administer any form of physical, emotional, financial or mental discipline.

Reporting Procedures

The Fathering Project actively encourages the reporting of all abuse including Sexual Abuse.

The Fathering Project is committed to building an environment where either a victim or employee/volunteer feels able to report such abuse.

Employees and/or there is reasonable suspicion that a child or vulnerable person(s) has been or is suffering abuse, Employees or Volunteers must report reasonable suspicions of abuse to the senior management of The Fathering Project.

Reasonable Suspicion means fair and practical reason to believe an incident involving abuse has occurred based on either verbal communication, hearsay, rumor or observation of behaviour.

An independent person will be appointed by The Fathering Project with the specific duty of dealing with any allegations of harm or abuse that may arise.

The details of those reporting abuse will be kept private and confidential.

A documented reporting process with escalating procedures has been established by The Fathering Project for handling allegations of abuse.

The escalating procedures will be as follows:

- The automatic suspension from all work or other duties within The Fathering Project of any person while under investigation by The Fathering Project, or by the police, for the allegation of abuse;
- The automatic termination of their employment, or involvement with The Fathering Project if found guilty of committing abuse, either by internal investigation or by a court

If there is reasonable suspicion that a Child or vulnerable person has been or is suffering abuse, the Police and the Organisation's Insurer will be contacted immediately.

The phone number for the **Police is Emergency: 000, Non-Emergency: 131 444, Crime Stoppers: 1800 333 000**

The phone number for **The Fathering Project is 1300 328 437** (NB this is a message bank).

The Police will also be notified if a Child or vulnerable person discloses an incident of Abuse that has occurred somewhere other than The Fathering Project's premises, (e.g., an outing).

If a disclosure of abuse is made, the person who receives the disclosure will maintain appropriate care to the one making the disclosure.

This will include:

- Treating each allegation seriously and not attempting to deny the allegation or minimise its impact on the alleged victim. The matter should not be 'swept under the carpet'.
- Not pushing the Child or vulnerable person to disclose details of the alleged assault or attempting to investigate the allegation.

- Assuring the Child or vulnerable person that they are understood that their disclosure is being taken seriously; that what has happened is not their fault, and that they are correct in disclosing the incident.
- Reporting the abuse to the Police and The Fathering Project's management so they can inform The Fathering Project's insurer.
- Not making contact with the alleged perpetrator. If the Employee or Volunteer is already in contact with the alleged perpetrator, it is advisable for another person to assume this responsibility for the duration of any investigation.
- If the alleged assault has taken place recently, clothing worn by the Child or vulnerable person should be, if reasonably practical, retained and handed to the Police for forensic examination.
- Maintaining confidentiality.

Any disclosures by a Child or vulnerable person, reports of suspected abuse and all details of the subsequent investigation will be documented promptly and the documents will be held in a secure location where a breach of privacy cannot occur.

Further information to assist with Child Protection

Below is a summary of child protection services relevant to your State or Territory.

Queensland

Call a [Regional Intake Service](#) (Monday to Friday, 9am to 5pm) or Child Safety After Hours Service Centre on 1800 177 135 if outside business hours.

New South Wales

Call the Child Protection Helpline on 132 111 (24 hours/7 days).

Australian Capital Territory

Call Child Protection: 1300 556 729 or email childprotection@act.gov.au

Victoria

Call Child Protection After Hours Service: 13 12 78.

Tasmania

To make an urgent notification about abuse or neglect to Child Protection Services, call 1300 737 639 at any time.

South Australia

Call Department for Education and Child Development Ph: (08) 8124 4185 or Child Abuse Report Line - Ph: 13 14 78 or After hours crisis care - Ph: 13 16 11.

Western Australia

Call Department for Child Protection and Family Support: (08) 9222 2555 or Country Free call: 1800 622 258

After hours: (08) 9223 1111 or Country Free call: 1800 199 008.

If you are a mandatory reporter - Ph: 1800 708 704.

Northern Territory

Call Department of Children and Families: (08) 8999 2737.