



## The Fathering Project Safeguarding Policy

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### Introduction

The Fathering Project is committed to promoting and protecting the interests and safety of children, young adults, vulnerable people and people at risk. We have zero tolerance for any form of physical and /or sexual abuse.

Everyone working at The Fathering Project is responsible for the care and protection of children, young adults, vulnerable people and people at risk and reporting information about any form of physical and /or sexual abuse.

### Policy Statement

1. All people, regardless of their age, gender, race, religious beliefs, disability, sexual orientation, or family or social background, have equal rights to protection from abuse, neglect or exploitation.
2. The Fathering Project commits to promoting and protecting the welfare and human rights of people that interact with, or are affected by, our work - particularly those that may be at risk of abuse, neglect or exploitation.
3. The Fathering Project has no tolerance for abuse, neglect or exploitation.
4. All staff, volunteers, contractors and third parties of The Fathering Project share responsibility for protecting everyone from abuse, neglect or exploitation.
5. The Fathering Project has a process for managing incidents that must be followed when one arises.

### Purpose

The purpose of this policy is:

1. To protect people that interact with, or are affected by The Fathering Project
2. To facilitate the prevention of physical and /or sexual abuse occurring within The Fathering Project
3. To support a positive and effective culture towards Safeguarding.
4. Set out and develop the way The Fathering Project manages Safeguarding risks.
5. To ensure that all parties are aware of their responsibilities for identifying possible occasions for physical and /or sexual abuse and for establishing controls and procedures for preventing such abuse and/or detecting such abuse when it occurs.

- To provide guidance to staff, volunteers, contractors and third parties as to action that should be taken where they suspect any abuse within or outside of the organisation and provide assurance that all suspected abuse will be reported and fully investigated.

## Scope

This Policy applies to:

- All staff of The Fathering Project volunteers, board members and any other person associated or working under contract with The Fathering Project and
- All The Fathering Project visitors, partners and contractors.

Failure to comply with the policy and related procedures may result in disciplinary action.

## Safeguarding Definitions

Term	Definition
<b>Abuse</b>	<p>All forms of physical and mental abuse, exploitation, coercion or ill-treatment. This might include, for example:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• physical abuse;</li> <li>• emotional abuse;</li> <li>• threats of, or actual violence, verbal, emotional or social abuse;</li> <li>• sexual harassment, bullying or abuse;</li> <li>• sexual criminal offences;</li> <li>• cultural or identity abuse, such as racial, sexual or gender-based discrimination or hate crime;</li> <li>• coercion and exploitation;</li> <li>• abuse of power; and</li> <li>• neglect</li> </ul>
<b>Child or young person</b>	A person under the age of 18 years.
<b>Child Safe Organisation</b>	<p>An organisation that consciously and systematically:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• creates conditions that reduce the likelihood of harm to children.</li> <li>• creates conditions that increase the likelihood of identifying and reporting of harm.</li> <li>• responds appropriately to disclosures, allegations and suspicions of harm.</li> </ul>
<b>Person at Risk</b>	<p>Person aged 18 years and over who:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a) has care and support needs;</li> <li>b) is being abused or neglected, or are at risk of abuse or neglect; and</li> </ol>

	<p>c) is unable to protect themselves from abuse or neglect because of their care and support needs.</p>
<p><b>Reasonable grounds for belief</b></p>	<p><i>A situation</i> where a person has information that leads them believe that abuse, neglect or exploitation has taken place, is taking place, or may take place.</p> <p>A reasonable belief is formed if a reasonable person believes that:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• the person is in need of protection;</li> <li>• the person has suffered or is likely to suffer significant harm as a result of physical injury; or</li> <li>• the parents or guardians are unable or unwilling to protect the person.</li> </ul>
<p><b>Reportable Conduct</b></p>	<p><i>a sexual offence</i>, such as:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• sexual touching of a person without consent;</li> <li>• a child grooming offence; or</li> <li>• production, dissemination or possession of child abuse material.</li> </ul> <p><i>Sexual misconduct</i>, such as:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• descriptions of sexual acts without a legitimate reason to provide the descriptions;</li> <li>• sexual comments, conversations or communications; or</li> <li>• comments to a child, young person or vulnerable person that express a desire to act in a sexual manner towards that person or another person.</li> </ul> <p><i>Ill-treatment of a child, young person or vulnerable person</i>, such as:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• making excessive or degrading demands of a child, young person or vulnerable person;</li> <li>• a pattern of hostile or degrading comments or behaviour towards a child, young person or vulnerable person; or</li> <li>• using inappropriate forms of behaviour management towards a child, young person or vulnerable person.</li> </ul>
	<p><i>An assault against a child, young person or vulnerable person</i>, such as:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• hitting, striking, kicking, punching or dragging a child, young person or vulnerable person; or</li> <li>• threatening to physically harm a child, young person or vulnerable person.</li> </ul> <p><i>Behaviour that causes significant emotional or psychological harm to a child, young person or vulnerable person</i> such as:</p>

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• displaying behaviour patterns that are out of character;</li> <li>• regressive behaviour; or</li> <li>• anxiety or self-harm.</li> </ul>
<b>Safeguarding</b>	Protecting the welfare and human rights of people that are, in some way, connected with your organisation its work – particularly people that may be at risk of abuse, neglect or exploitation.
<b>Vulnerable person</b>	A child or an individual aged 18 years and above who is or may be unable to take care of themselves, or is unable to protect themselves against harm or exploitation by reason of age, illness, trauma or disability, or any other reason.
<b>Whistle-blower</b>	Anyone who makes or attempts to make a report of Reportable Conduct under this Policy, and is, or has previously been, an employee, volunteer, contractor, third party, child, young person or vulnerable person in the care of The Fathering Project or is a relative or dependent of such persons.

### Safeguarding Roles and Responsibilities

<b>Role</b>	<b>Responsibility</b>
<b>Board</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Protecting all people that interact with or are affected by The Fathering Project.</li> <li>• Responsible for the detection and prevention of abuse to child, young person or vulnerable persons.</li> <li>• Responsible for ensuring appropriate Safeguarding governance, policies and procedures are in place.</li> <li>• Responsible for ensuring that appropriate and effective internal control systems are in place.</li> <li>• Ensuring that The Fathering Project observes all relevant laws and regulations relating to Safeguarding.</li> </ul>
<b>Chief Executive Officer</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Dealing with and investigating reports of abuse.</li> <li>• Ensuring that all staff, volunteers and contractors are aware of relevant laws, organisational policies and procedures, and the organisation's Code of Conduct.</li> <li>• Ensuring that all The Fathering Project staff, volunteers and contractors are aware of their obligation to report suspected abuse of a child, young person or vulnerable person in accordance with these policies and procedures.</li> <li>• Ensure The Fathering Project has effective and appropriate ways to manage Safeguarding and legal compliance.</li> <li>• Ensure that reports to external parties are made where required.</li> </ul>

<b>Executives and Managers</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Promote a culture of safety for children, young persons and vulnerable people.</li> <li>• Implement this policy in their area of responsibility.</li> <li>• Assess the risk of abuse to children, young persons and vulnerable people within their area and ensure controls are in place to prevent, detect and respond to incidents.</li> <li>• Facilitate the reporting of any suspected abuse, neglect or exploitation.</li> <li>• Ensure that there is appropriate Safeguarding training in place for staff.</li> </ul>
<b>Staff volunteers and contractors</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Provide an environment that is supportive of all children, young persons and vulnerable people emotional and physical safety.</li> <li>• Familiarise themselves with the, The Fathering Project’s policy, procedures, Code of Conduct and relevant laws in relation to Safeguarding protection.</li> <li>• Report any reasonable belief or incident that a child, young person or vulnerable person safety or welfare is at risk to responsible persons in the organisation. or authorities (such as the police and/or the child protection service).</li> <li>• Fulfil their obligations as mandatory reporters.</li> </ul>

## Employment of New Employees

### Safe Recruitment and Selection:

The Fathering Project is committed to safe employment and recruitment practices, that reduce the risk of harm to children, young adults and vulnerable people from people unsuitable to work with them or have contact with them.

The Fathering Project requires all employees, volunteers and contractors to go through the organisation’s recruitment screening processes prior to commencing their engagement with The Fathering Project.

The Fathering Project will require applicants to provide the following before commencing with the organisation and at regular intervals during employment:

- A police check;
- Working with Childrens Check; and
- Proof of any Safeguarding training undertaken.

The Fathering Project will undertake thorough reference checking prior to commencement including at least two (2) previous managers with to determine the applicants Safeguarding experience.

### Training and Awareness:

The Fathering Project will ensure an appropriate level of Safeguarding training is available to its employees, volunteers, contractors and any relevant persons linked to the organisation who requires it.

All staff, volunteer's contractors and third parties must undertake mandatory Safeguarding training as part of their induction.

For all employees who are working or volunteering with children, young persons or vulnerable persons, this requires as a minimum to have awareness that enables them to:

- Understand what Safeguarding is and their role in Safeguarding children, young person or vulnerable persons.
- Recognise a child, young person or vulnerable person potentially in need of Safeguarding and take action.
- The process of when and how to report:
  - an incident.
  - potential incident. or
  - if a child, young person or vulnerable person safety or welfare is at risk.

## **Managing Safeguarding risk**

The Fathering Project will ensure that safety of children, young person or vulnerable person is a part of its overall risk management approach.

The Fathering Project Risk and Compliance Committee is committed to identifying and managing risks at The Fathering Project Risk and compliance committee members will receive regular training in relation to Safeguarding.

The Fathering Project will manage the risk of Safeguarding by:

- Having an action plan that sets out how it will manage Safeguarding;
- Having up-to-date and documented risk assessments;
- Maintaining a register of The Fathering Project legal obligations for Safeguarding and workplace health and safety in all jurisdictions in which it operates;
- Implementing policies, procedures and systems that introduce controls to reduce the likelihood and consequence of incidents;
- Maintaining two reporting processes: the confidential reporting process, and the overt reporting process;
- Having an incident response plan;
- Undertaking audits of staff, volunteers, contractors and third parties to ensure adherence to The Fathering Project's Safeguarding Policy and Code of Conduct; and
- Monitoring and reviewing the effectiveness of its Safeguarding program.

## **Incident Management**

### ***Managing Safeguarding Incidents***

All staff, volunteers, contractors and third parties who have grounds to suspect abusive activity must report:

- Any suspicion that an incident has taken place.
- May be taking place.
- Could take place.

They may do this through:

- a. Any director or board member.
- b. The Chief Executive Officer.
- c. Any Manager or Supervisor.
- d. The organisations incident management system.

If a person believes that another person is at risk of immediate harm or the victim of a criminal offence, they must call the relevant authorities including police.

### ***Responding to Suspected Incidents***

All suspected, perceived, potential or actual incidents must also be reported and recorded in the organisations incident management system and will be managed through an incident response plan.

### **External Reporting**

Any staff, volunteer's contractors or third parties who have grounds to suspect abusive activity must immediately notify The Fathering Project management and where necessary appropriate authorities including the police.

Reporting within the organisation may directed through:

- a. Any director or board member.
- b. The Chief Executive Officer.
- c. Any Manager or Supervisor.
- d. The organisations incident management system.

### **Investigating**

All incidents or suspected incidents will be investigated following the The Fathering Project Incident Management procedure.

If appropriate authorities or the police decide to investigate a reported incident, all employees, volunteers and contractors must co-operate fully.

If it is decided that it will not conflict with any proceeding of the authorities, the Chief Executive Officer will conduct an internal investigation, all staff, volunteers and contractors must co-operate fully.

The The Fathering Project will make every effort to keep any such investigation confidential.

### **Disciplinary Action**

While an investigation is conducted and the The Fathering Project reserves the right to:

- Report the matter to relevant authorities including the police.

- Stand the staff, volunteer or contractor down (with pay, where applicable).

At the conclusion of any investigation and a breach of the organisation's policies or Code of Conduct is identified the The Fathering Project reserves the right to:

- Take disciplinary action against those it believes are responsible, which may include dismissal.
- Dismiss or cease involvement with The Fathering Project.
- Take legal action.

## **Privacy and Information Sharing**

The Fathering Project expects all employees, volunteers and contractors to maintain confidentiality. All personal information identified or recorded will respect the privacy of the individuals involved unless there is a risk to someone's safety. The Fathering Project has policies and procedures to ensure any personal information is protected.

However, information should be shared with relevant authorities (including Police) if a child, young person or vulnerable person is deemed to be at risk of harm, in immediate danger, or a crime has been committed.

## **Whistle-Blower Protection**

It is important that people within The Fathering Project have the confidence to come forward to speak or act if they have any concerns or incidents of behaviour that contradicts any behaviour outlined in the Code of Conduct.

The The Fathering Project Whistleblower Policy describes the protections available to whistle-blowers, what matters are reportable, how employees, volunteers and contractors can report concerns without fear of harm, and how The Fathering Project will support and protect them.

## **Related Policies, Procedures and Documents**

This policy must be read in conjunction with:

- The relevant laws of the Commonwealth or state or territory.
- The Safeguarding Code of Conduct.
- The Whistleblower Policy.
- The Privacy Policy
- The Organisations Employment Practices policy, Including induction and training procedures.
- Grievance and Disciplinary Procedures.
- Risk Management Policy.
- *Add other relevant policies.*



## RESOURCES

### Child Safe Organisations

<https://chilsafe.humanrights.gov.au/tools-resources/links-resources>

<https://chilsafe.humanrights.gov.au/tools-resources/practical-tools>

### Australian Charities and Not-For Profits Commission

<https://www.acnc.gov.au/for-charities/manage-your-charity/governance-hub/governance-toolkit/governance-toolkit-safeguarding>

### Our Community

<https://www.ourcommunity.com.au/search/?q=child+protection>

## STATE AND TERRITORY RESOURCES

The following links provide information about child safe requirements, initiatives and resources for each state and territory.

### **Australian Capital Territory**

- [ACT Children and Young People Commissioner](#)
- [ACT Working with Vulnerable People Checks](#)
- [ACT Reportable Conduct Scheme](#)

### **New South Wales**

- [NSW Office of the Children's Guardian](#)
- [NSW Office of the Advocate for Children and Young People](#)
- [NSW Reportable Conduct Scheme](#)

### **Northern Territory**

- [Office of the Children's Commissioner Northern Territory](#)
- [NT Working with Children Clearance](#)

### **Queensland**

- [Queensland Family and Child Commission](#)
- [Office of the Public Guardian](#)
- [Queensland Working with Children Check](#)

### **South Australia**

- [South Australia Office of the Guardian for Children and Young People](#)
- [South Australia Working with Children Check](#)

### **Tasmania**

- [Commissioner for Children and Young People Tasmania](#)
- [Tasmania Working with Vulnerable People Registration](#)

## **Victoria**

- [Victoria Commission for Children and Young People](#)
- [Victoria Reportable Conduct Scheme](#)
- [Victoria Working with Children Check](#)

## **Western Australia**

- [Commissioner for Children and Young People Western Australia](#)
- [Western Australia Working with Children Check](#)