

Child Safety Policy

Purpose

The Veta Youth Child Safety Policy:

- Outlines appropriate standards of behaviour, which Veta Youth expects from all staff and volunteers
- Affirms the values that guide our organisation
- Promotes and fosters confidence within Veta Youth and the community
- Facilitates leaders to be accountable
- Guides our conduct and actions in Christian ministry and organisational leadership.

The Policy aims to establish clear boundaries of acceptable behaviour for staff and volunteers within Veta Youth, and to protect children from abuse and harm while participating in our programs. It also assists in understanding how to avoid or better manage risky behaviours and situations. The Child Safety Policy aims to reduce the possibility of unfounded allegations of abuse against staff and volunteers.

All staff, contractors, volunteers and any other member of the Veta community involved in child-related work are required to observe expectations for appropriate behaviour in the Code of Conduct included below. The Code of Conduct applies in all Veta Youth activities and situations, including Retreats and in the use of digital technology and social media.

Definitions

The Veta Youth Child Safety Policy is to be read in light of the following definitions:

- **Board** means the Governing body of Veta Youth Ltd
- **Child** means a person below the age of 18 years unless, under the law applicable to the child, majority is attained earlier
- **Child protection** means any responsibility, measure or activity undertaken to safeguard children from harm
- **Child abuse includes—**
 - any act committed against a child involving a sexual offence or an offence under the relevant section of the law for the relevant jurisdiction (e.g. Victoria: section 49B (2) of the Crimes Act 1958 (grooming)); and
 - the infliction, on a child, of physical violence or serious emotional, spiritual or psychological harm; and
 - serious neglect of 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 moral law. 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.
- **Veta programs and activities** means any physical or virtual place made available or authorised by Veta Youth's governing authority for use by a child or youth, including:



- a location of a school, church or retreat
- online school environments (including email and intranet systems)
- other locations provided by Veta Youth for a child's use, such as training and graduation facilities.

Statement of Commitment to Child Safety

As participants in a Christian organisation, Veta Youth staff and volunteers are called to love God with all our heart, soul mind and strength, and to love our neighbour as ourselves. Integral to this calling is our commitment to be a safe place for all people, with special consideration for children and other vulnerable people. To this end, Veta Youth prioritises the safety of children in all programs and activities of the organisation by:

- Identifying risks early, and reducing or removing them
- Treating all safety concerns and allegations of abuse seriously, and reporting in line with our legal and moral obligations and our written policies*¹
- Honouring the intrinsic human dignity of all people as created in the image of God
- Upholding Christian standards of attitude and behaviour
- Following the example of Christ in welcoming and including children and vulnerable people.

Upholding the Code of Conduct

- All members of staff and volunteers are responsible for
 - providing a loving, safe and orderly environment
 - promoting the safety and wellbeing of all those participating in Veta Youth activities
 - the implementation and monitoring of the Code of Conduct.
- All staff and volunteers must report any concerns or breaches of the Code of Conduct to the Veta Staff person responsible
- Serious breaches or incidents involving the responsible staff member are to be reported to:

<p>Rohan Waters - Veta Youth Executive Director Mobile - 0432 991 836 Email - rohan@veta.org.au</p>
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- Breaches or incidents involving the Veta Youth Executive Director are to be

¹ Victoria's 'Compulsory Child Safe Standards' requires that the statement of commitment to child safety state that *'the organisation has a zero-tolerance approach to child abuse, is committed to upholding children's best interests and keeping them safe, and that it actively works to listen to and empower children with an organisation'*.

Understanding that the intention of 'zero-tolerance' language is to ensure that no child abuse is ignored, allowed to continue or go unreported, we look to Christ who teaches us not to swear by anything on heaven or earth, *"but let your 'Yes' be 'Yes' and your 'No', 'No'"*(Mt 6:33-37), and contend that a 'zero tolerance' approach to child abuse is sufficiently affirmed in our commitment to *'Treating all safety concerns and allegations of abuse seriously...'*



reported to the Chairperson of the Veta Youth Board by contacting admin@veta.org.au.

Staff and volunteers who breach the Code of Conduct may be subject to Veta Youth's disciplinary procedures. Any breach of the code involving external workers/volunteers may be asked to leave Veta Youth and its associated programs/events/ministries. Serious breaches may result in a report to authorities, such as the police and local statutory authorities.

Reporting Procedure

The Veta Youth procedure for reporting child abuse follows the Churches of Christ procedure of the state in which the report is to be made. The relevant procedure is available on the specific Churches of Christ or government state website.

New South Wales

<https://www.facs.nsw.gov.au/families/Protecting-kids/mandatory-reporters/how-to>

Queensland

https://www.cofc.com.au/Media/CR-Reporting_process_ministering_persons.pdf

South Australia and Northern Territory

<https://www.churchesofchrist-sa.org.au/d/350Qev7ZSc6j7L2CaKGoBRdMz>

Tasmania

<https://www.churchesofchrist.org.au/getmedia/d97c6ddb-7710-4d3c-ac6c-83e4a5547b69/Child-Safety-Policy-Tasmania-Fillable.pdf>

Victoria

<https://www.churchesofchrist.org.au/getmedia/912b5979-8a61-4868-8687-c2cd9d897c84/Child-Safety-Reporting-Procedure-Victoria.pdf>

Western Australia

https://www.cocwa.com.au/wp-content/uploads/2018/06/COCWA_child_safety_policy_2018-1.pdf



Specific Policies

Physical contact

- Physical contact is a normal and healthy part of human interaction
- Physical contact may or may not be sought or appreciated by different people at different times
- Physical contact can be misconstrued by both the person experiencing the contact, and by others.

Physical contact should therefore:

- Be in response to the participant's need
- Be initiated by the child and/or with their permission
- Be In the presence of others, open and not secretive
- Be respectful of the cultural background and social situation of the individual
- Be in no way sexualised
- Not show favouritism.

Children should not be shunned if they initiate and demonstrate their need for comfort, bearing in mind the context and the individual child. It is up to the child to determine the degree of contact they have with you, within the guidelines given above.

Under no circumstances is physical or corporal punishment to be administered.

The only form of physical restraint appropriate is to protect children from harm. This includes reasonable restraint to stop a fight, to stop bullying or to avoid an accident.

Leader to Student Ratios

Unless overridden by local legislation, ratios for Veta Youth Activities follow the guidelines of Education Victoria, see:

<https://www.education.vic.gov.au/school/principals/spag/safety/Pages/staffing.aspx>

Activity	Minimum Leaders	Leader-Student Ratio	Additional Requirements
Overnight retreat in residential premises or under canvas	2	1:10	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - All overnight stays with mixed sex groups must have at least one leader of each sex present - These ratios are minimum only. Planning should take into account the nature of the students, activities, and environment, the experience of the leaders and any other relevant factors
Overseas Tours	2	1:10	
Day Excursions	2	1:20	
Adventure Activities	2	As per activity guidelines	



Privacy

- Leaders may, for reasons associated with the delivery of Veta activities, have access to the personal information of participants (contact details, personal information etc.)
- It is our responsibility to protect the right to privacy of all participants and their families
- All leaders must abide by the Veta Youth Privacy Policy (separate document).

Personal Information

- Any personal information about students, is not to be shared without permission of the Veta staff member in charge, and in line with the Veta Youth Privacy Policy.

Photos and Videos

- Leaders and other adult participants in Veta activities may only post a photo or video recording of students, with the express prior consent of the student's parent, guardian or caregiver.

Contact Outside the Program

- Contact with a child or their family who is not socially connected, outside of Veta Programs, must be reasonably associated with the leader's position description within Veta Youth
- Personal details, (e.g. address, phone, email, social media) are not to be exchanged with a child or their family who is not socially related, without first gaining clearance from the Veta Youth staff person
- Any external contact must be welcomed by the child, and only with parental permission
- Records should be maintained of any such contact.

Health and First Aid

- An appropriately trained First Aid Officer is to be appointed and at attendance at each Veta Youth activity
- The Veta Youth staff person is to ensure that the First Aid Officer is to ensure that the First Aid Officer has access to suitable first aid equipment
- If a participant becomes sick or injured, the Veta staff member in charge is to be informed immediately
- An incident report is to be completed for every First Aid incident, and submitted to admin@veta.org.au.

Medical and Dietary Information

- All participants and leaders on Veta Retreats are required to complete a medical information form
- Where students have pre-existing conditions 'Medical Treatment' or 'Medical Action Plans' will be provided (e.g. Asthma Action Plan)
- A list of relevant information is supplied, in a readily accessible form, to the Veta staff member in charge and relevant leaders
- Appropriate care is to be taken to ensure that student needs are catered for
- Extremely allergenic participants may be required to supply their own food
- Anaphylactic participants are to be identified by the Veta Youth staff person and relevant leaders. Anaphylactic students are responsible for providing their own



medication (this may include anti-inflammatories, epi-pen)

- The First Aid Officer is responsible for the administration of all non-prescription medication, and may support students by helping them to manage their own medications.

Transport

- A 'Permission to Travel in Private Vehicle' form must be completed by any student who travels in the private vehicle of a Veta Leader while on a Veta activity (Permission to Travel in Private Vehicle form is available from admin@veta.org.au)
- At least two adults in the vehicle with any children is preferable. Where two adults are not available, three people, including at least one adult, must be in the vehicle
- Private vehicles must be fully registered, roadworthy and insured.

Preparation of Risk Assessment

- A Risk Assessment Plan (as provided by Veta Youth) is to be completed and submitted to admin@veta.org.au prior to the delivery of any Veta event involving children (at least 10 days for overnight retreats)
- Approval is required prior to the delivery of the event.

Food Handling

Any food handling must comply with the requirements of food safety and local legislation

Screening and Appointment of Staff and Leaders

Prior to commencement in their role, all workers and leaders must:

- Agree to the Vet Youth Code of Conduct
- Submit the relevant Child-Safety documentation for the state they are working in (e.g. WWCC, Blue card)
- Complete the appropriate level of training in Child Safety for their role, according to the legislation of the state they are working in
- Be provided with a clear description of their role
- Be approved for their role by the authorised Veta Staff Person.

Staff Appointments

Reference checks will be completed prior to appointment of any staff.

Governance

The Board and Executive Director are committed to promoting child safety, and are aware that they would be committing a criminal offence if they knew of a substantial risk of child sexual abuse and had the power or responsibility to reduce or remove the risk, but negligently failed to do so.

We require the Chair of the Board, the Executive Director, the Safety Contact Person, and all State Coordinators to attend relevant child safe training before commencing in their role and to attend a refresher workshop every 3 years.

The Board participates in an awareness-raising workshop regarding safety issues at least annually, and conducts an annual self-assessment to identify how we can improve the way



we apply Child Safe Standards in our organisation.

The governing body makes an annual declaration to Churches of Christ in Victoria and Tasmania (CCVT) confirming that we comply with the Child Safe Standards or if not, specifying any areas for improvement and what action will be taken, and by when, to ensure compliance at a minimum and ideally best practice. CCVT oversees these declarations.

Responding to Complaints and Concerns

Any inappropriate behaviour will be reported through appropriate channels in accordance with the Churches of Christ Child Safety Reporting Procedure of the relevant state. See links above.

Record Keeping and Privacy

All Child Safety documents (working with children type checks, allegations, safety concerns etc.) are kept in the online Childsafe data management system.

Review

- Child Safe Policies and procedures are reviewed annually
- This is recorded in the Veta Youth Board of Directors Compliance Checklist.

Forms

PGS/Leader/Volunteer Application/Information forms, which include the collection of medical information, can be found online at <https://veta.org.au/enrol3/> , Risk Assessment forms as required from admin@veta.org.au.