



Child Safety Policy

Table of Contents

PURPOSE	2
SCOPE	2
STATEMENT OF COMMITMENT TO CHILD SAFETY	2
DEFINITIONS	3
UPHOLDING THE CODE OF CONDUCT	4
REPORTING PROCEDURE	4
Specific Policies	5
PHYSICAL CONTACT	5
LEADER TO STUDENT RATIOS	5
PRIVACY	6
HEALTH AND FIRST AID	7
TRANSPORT	7
PREPARATION OF RISK ASSESSMENT	7
FOOD HANDLING	8
SCREENING AND APPOINTMENT OF STAFF AND LEADERS	8
GOVERNANCE	8
RESPONDING TO COMPLAINTS AND CONCERNS	9
RECORD KEEPING AND PRIVACY	9
REVIEW	9
FORMS	9
Code of Conduct	10

PURPOSE

The Veta Youth Child Safety Policy meets the requirements under the Commonwealth Child Safe Framework, and serves the purpose to:

- Outline standards of child safe practices required from all Veta Youth staff and volunteers to promote a culture of safety and wellbeing
- Affirm the Christian values that guide our organisation in Child Safe practices
- Promote and fosters confidence within Veta Youth and the community in working with children and young people entrusted in our care
- Facilitate leaders to be accountable for establishing safe environments and protecting child safety
- Guide conduct and actions for working with children and young people.

The Policy aims to establish the Child Safe responsibility for staff and volunteers within Veta Youth, and to protect children from abuse and harm while participating in our programs. It also assists in avoiding and managing behaviours and situations that may put children at risk.

SCOPE

This policy applies to all staff, contractors, volunteers and any other member of the Veta Youth community involved in child-related work. Everyone included in the scope of this policy is required to uphold the standards of the Veta Youth Code of Conduct.

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 provide safe spaces for all people, with special consideration for children and other vulnerable people. To this end, Veta Youth prioritises children's safety and wellbeing in all programs and activities of the organisation by:

- Prioritising safety and wellbeing including identifying risks early, and reducing or removing them
- Taking a zero-tolerance approach to child abuse by treating all safety concerns and allegations seriously and consistently in line with our Child Safe responsibilities
- 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.

DEFINITIONS

The Veta Youth Child Safety Policy is to be read using the following definitions:

- **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 (eg. Victoria: section 49B(2) of the Crimes Act 1958 (grooming)); and
 - the infliction, on a child, of physical violence or serious emotional 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. (add sources)
- **Staff** refers to anyone that is an employee, volunteer or contractor at Veta Youth
- **Leader in Charge** refers to the Staff member overseeing a program, activity or person
- **Child Safety Officer** refers to the designated staff member who is responsible for the oversight of Child Safety for a given Veta Youth program or activity
- **Lead Officer** refers to the designated staff member who is responsible for the implementation of Child Safety across Veta Youth
- **Veta Youth programs and activities** means retreats, graduations and other events where people are gathered overseen by Veta Youth
- **Physical places** are schools, churches and other venues where program and activities take place
- **Virtual spaces** are where programs and activities are held online
- **Digital interactions** are any interactions that take place online, including emails, social media and online learning systems
- **Socially connected** refers to a relationship where a Veta Youth staff member is found in social situations outside of Veta Youth programs and activities with a child or their family.

UPHOLDING THE VETA YOUTH CODE OF CONDUCT

The Veta Youth Code of Conduct outlines the values that all Veta Youth Staff are required to uphold and the responsibilities that they are required to fulfil in their interactions with children and each other.

- All staff are responsible for
 - providing a loving, safe and orderly environment
 - promoting the safety and wellbeing of children participating in Veta Youth activities
 - upholding the Code of Conduct.
- All staff must report any concerns or breaches of the Code of Conduct within 24 hours to the Veta Staff responsible for the activity or event that children are involved in.
- Serious breaches or incidents must be reported to the Executive Director or the Board Chair as soon as possible.

The Veta Youth Code of Conduct can be found at:

<https://veta.au/wp-content/uploads/2025/05/Veta-Youth-Code-of-Conduct.pdf>

Breaches or incidents involving the Veta Youth Executive Director are to be reported to the Chairperson of the Veta Youth Board.

Staff who breach the Code of Conduct may be subject to Veta Youth's disciplinary procedures. Any breach of the code involving volunteers or contractors 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, following the relevant state mandatory reporting procedures.

REPORTING PROCEDURE

The Veta Youth procedure for reporting child abuse can be found at:

<https://veta.au/wp-content/uploads/2025/05/Child-Safety-Reporting-Procedures.pdf>

The mandatory reporting requirements of the relevant jurisdiction must be followed in conjunction with the Veta Youth Reporting Procedure.

Child Safety Responsibilities

PHYSICAL CONTACT

Veta Youth believes physical contact is a normal and healthy part of human interaction which may or may not be sought or appreciated by different people at different times. To avoid physical contact being misconstrued by either the person experiencing the contact or by others, any physical contact with a child or young person must:

- Be initiated by the child and/or with their permission
- Be in response to the child's need
- Be In the presence of others
- Be respectful of the cultural/social and background of the child
- Be respectful of the child's physical boundaries and in no way sexual in nature
- Be inclusive of all children and therefore not show favouritism

Staff should support children who initiate and demonstrate the 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 Staff, within the guidelines given above.

Only to protect children from harm, temporary and reasonable restraint may be required (eg prevent harm or to prevent children from harming one another). This includes reasonable and temporary 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	Leaders (minimum)	Leader-to-Student Ratio
Overnight retreat in residential premises under canvas	2	1:10
Overseas Tours	2	1:10
Day Excursions	2	1:20
Adventure Activities	2	As per activity guidelines

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.

PRIVACY

- Leaders may require access to children's personal information (contact details, personal information etc.) to facilitate Veta Youth programs and activities
- It is the Staffs responsibility to protect the right to privacy of all children and their families
- All leaders must also comply with the Veta Youth Privacy Policy.

Personal Information

- Any personal information about children must not be shared, including with other staff, without permission of the Veta Youth Staff member in charge, and in line with the Veta Youth Privacy Policy.

Photos and Videos

- Leaders and other adult participants in Veta Youth activities should not take photos except with Veta Youth cameras. Photos or video recordings of children are to be posted exclusively on the Veta Youth social accounts, and only with the express prior consent of the child's parent, guardian or caregiver.

Contact Outside the Program

The interactions between staff and children that are socially connected outside of Veta Youth cannot be covered within the scope of the Veta Youth Child Safety Policy. Staff with existing social connections to children should be mindful of their responsibilities and communicate openly with Veta Youth about any concerns or conflicts of interest.

Where pre-existing social connections or connections made outside Veta Youth programs and activities do not exist, the following applies:

- Contact with a child or their family who is not socially connected, outside of Veta Youth 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 connected, 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 with children and their families who the staff is not socially connected to. Staff are required to record this and store this securely on the Veta Youth database.

HEALTH AND FIRST AID

- The responsible Veta Youth Staff will ensure an appropriately trained First Aid Officer is to be appointed and at attendance at each Veta Youth activity, ensuring there is access to suitable first aid equipment
- Staff must:
 - Inform the Leader in Charge immediately if a child becomes sick or injured
 - The Leader in Charge is to complete an incident report in conjunction with the Staff making the report

Medical and Dietary Information

- All children and leaders involved in Veta Youth programs and activities must complete a medical information form
- Where children 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 Youth Leader in Charge and relevant leaders
- Appropriate care is to be taken to ensure that the children's needs are catered for
- Extremely allergenic children may be required to supply their own food
- Anaphylactic children are to be identified by the Veta Youth staff person and relevant leaders. Anaphylactic children 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 children by helping them to manage their own medications
- Only the appointed First Aid Officer may administer non-prescription medication, and this can only be done with parent permission.

TRANSPORT

- Veta Youth Staff may provide private transport to children provided:
 - Private vehicles are fully registered, roadworthy and insured
 - At least 3 people are in the vehicle, and where possible include 2 adults
 - Comply with all road rules and safety
 - A Permission to Travel form has been completed for each child.

PREPARATION OF RISK ASSESSMENT

To reduce risk and ensure safety, the Leader in Charge for each Veta Youth program or activity must create a risk assessment plan and gain approval from the Lead Officer within the required timeframes.

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 uphold the Veta Youth Code of Conduct
- Provide Child-Safety documentation for the state they are working in (e.g. Working With Children's Check, 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
- Complete Veta Youth's Child Safety induction
- Be provided with a clear description of their role by the Leader in Charge
- Be approved for their role by the Leader in Charge.

Staff Appointments

Reference checks will be completed prior to appointment of any staff. There will be ongoing assessment and supervision of staff through the Staff Development Plan process, ensuring staff continue to uphold the Child Safety Policy and Code of Conduct in their appointment.

GOVERNANCE

The Board and Executive Director are committed to promoting child safety and their legal and moral responsibility to prevent substantial risk of child abuse, including sexual abuse.

The Chair of the Board, the Executive Director, Child Safety Officers and all employees involved in activity with children must attend relevant child safe training before commencing in their roles and will attend a refresher workshop annually.

The Board will retain child safety as a standing item at each board meeting, where any risk, concerns or incidents will be raised and conduct an annual assessment to identify how Veta Youth can improve child safety and wellbeing.

The governing body makes an annual declaration to Churches of Christ in Victoria and Tasmania (CCVT) confirming that Veta Youth complies with the Child Safe Standards. Where non-compliance or areas for improvement are identified, the Leader in Charge will specify what action will be taken to ensure compliance at a minimum and ideally best practice. CCVT oversees these declarations.

RESPONDING TO COMPLAINTS AND CONCERNS

Any complaints and concerns will be reported in accordance with the Veta Youth Child Safety Reporting Procedure.

RECORD KEEPING AND PRIVACY

All Child Safety documents (working with children type checks, allegations, safety concerns etc.) must be kept securely in the Veta Youth 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

Staff complete the following application forms:

- Employees and Board Members, the 'Veta Staff, Board Member and Volunteer Form' which can be found online at <https://veta.au/veta-staff-boardmember-volunteer-form/>
- All other Staff, the 'Peer Group Supervisor, Leader and Volunteer Form' which can be found online at <https://veta.org.au/enrol3/>.

These forms include the collection of medical information.

Risk Assessment forms are available as required from admin@veta.org.au.

