

## **CHILD SAFE STANDARDS - POLICY AND PROCEDURES**

### **URBAN CAMP MELBOURNE CO-OPERATIVE LTD (UC)**

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## 1. INTRODUCTION

### 1.1 Policy Statement

Urban Camp Melbourne Co-operative Ltd is committed to providing a safe and secure environment for all its Employees, members of the co-operative and particularly children.

The Policy & Procedures aims to reduce the risk of abuse occurring, and to ensure that a caring and appropriate response is taken should abuse occur.

### 1.2 Scope

The Policy & Procedures apply to:

- All employees authorised by or under the control of UC including those undertaken at UC premises or undertaken away from those premises.
- All Employees, contractors, members of the co-operative and children within UC or engaged by UC.

### 1.3 Authority

These are the Policy & Procedures of UC and were adopted for use by Urban Camp Melbourne Co-operative Ltd Incorporated in May 2016.

Urban Camp Melbourne Co-operative Ltd Incorporated is committed to implementing the Policy & Procedures and training our Employees & Contractors in its content and application.

### 1.4 Definitions

**Child:** Any person under the age of 18.

**Abuse:** Can consist of one or more of but is not restricted to the following:

*Physical Abuse:* Any non-accidental physical injury resulting from practices such as:

Hitting, punching, kicking (marks from belt buckles, fingers). Shaking (particularly babies). Burning (irons, cigarettes), biting, pulling out hair. Alcohol or other drug administration.

*Sexual Abuse:* Any sexual act or threat to perform such upon another person. It occurs when a person uses their power and authority to take advantage of another's trust to involve them in sexual activity. It does not necessarily involve genital contact but is any act which erodes the sexual boundary between two persons. It may appear consensual but the validity of consent is negated by the power differential.

*Emotional Abuse:* The chronic attitude or behaviour of one person which is directed at another person, or, the creation of an emotional environment which erodes a child's development, self-esteem and social confidence over time. Behaviours may include: Devaluing, ignoring, rejecting, corrupting, isolating, terrorising or chronic and extreme domestic violence in the child's presence.

*Neglect:* Characterised by the failure to provide for the child's basic needs. Any serious omission or commission which jeopardises or impairs a person's development.

**Organisation:** Urban Camp Melbourne Co-operative Ltd located at Brens Drive, Parkville

**Staff Member:** Any person (paid or unpaid) over the age of 18 who is responsible for the control and safety of members placed in their care whilst holding a formal position at UC.

A staff member could include but is not limited to:

Camp Staff, Contractors & Board Members.

**Members:** Any person, including children, who attends or participates in the UC activities, objectives or strategic plan.

## **2. POLICY REVIEW**

The Policy & Procedures will be reviewed annually at the appropriate Board meeting. The Board 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 Board for consideration one month before the review date.

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

## **3. OBLIGATIONS**

### ***3.1 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.

### ***3.2 Legal***

All relevant organisation's within Australia are bound by Federal and State Child Protection legislation and principles established through common law.

### ***3.3 Ethical***

Some actions may not be regarded as Abuse, but are unacceptable behaviour for UC 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
- Recording or filming without prior consent
- Acts of violence committed by a leader in the course of an activity.

The age of individuals is recognised as one of the determinants in deciding what acceptable and unacceptable behaviour is.

UC governing body will ensure that high standards of conduct are maintained at all times.

#### **4. SELECTION & SCREENING**

##### **4.1 Staff**

Staff must be carefully selected and screened.

Prior to staff commencing the following precautions will be taken:

- All Staff will complete an application form which requests details of relevant past experience, positions held, details of two referees and permission to contact them (see Appendix 2).
- Referees will be checked and spoken to, using an agreed set of questions which have been drafted by the Executive Officer. The questions will seek to establish the applicant's suitability for the role or position and the conversation will be documented and retained on file.
- Short listed Staff will be interviewed by the Executive Office prior to being accepted as a Staff member.
- A Police and/or Community Services and/or Working with Children check which complies with the legislative requirements of Victoria will be requested and received prior to the staff commencing their proposed role.
- Where UC has identified that an applicant has previously committed a violent or sexually related offence, they cannot under any circumstances, be considered for any position at the school.

#### **5. TRAINING**

All Staff will be issued with a copy of this policy and training in;

The content and application of UC Member Protection Policy & Procedures, Reporting procedures and the associated legal requirements

In addition, those responsible for recruiting Staff will undertake further education on Child/Member Protection.

#### **6. 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;

- Staff should endeavour wherever possible never to be alone with a child.
- Wherever practicable, all personal counselling is to be carried out within sight of another Staff member.
- When transporting Children, Staff should endeavour wherever possible never be alone with a child in a car. Where this is not practical, Leaders will take Children directly to and from arranged venues and will not spontaneously detour or make additional arrangements.
- Staff will respect a Member's feelings and privacy when engaging in physical contact (e.g. sport) of any kind.

- Adults and Children are expected to respect each other's privacy during activities that require undressing, dressing or changing clothes (e.g. ablutions areas and dormitories).
- Staff will set an example by protecting their own privacy in similar situations.
- No staff will be alone in a room with a Child while either is changing.
- All aspects of the Camp life will be open to observation by staff, teachers and group leaders.
- Staff have the right to ask people who do not have a valid reason to be present at Child-related activities to leave.
- Police may be contacted if such persons refuse to comply with any reasonable request to leave.

## **7. DISCIPLINING CHILDREN**

It is the responsibility of the Teachers/Leaders of the school/groups to deal with behaviour deemed inappropriate. If a Child is an obstruction to the care of other Children or may cause harm to other Children, the Child will be handled in accordance with that school/groups behaviour management policy and referred on to their superior. At no time will a Staff member administer any form of physical, emotional or mental abuse.

## **8. REPORTING PROCEDURES**

An independent person will be appointed by UC Management with the specific duty of dealing with any allegations that arise.

Documented reporting and escalation procedures will be established by the UC Management for handling allegations of abuse.

If there are reasonable grounds to suspect a Child has been or is suffering abuse, the Police and the Organisation's Insurer will be contacted immediately.

The phone number for the Police – Melbourne North is: 03 8379 0800

The phone number for AB Phillips Insurance Insurer: 03 8586 9327

Reasonable grounds can be assumed when:

1. A Child discloses that he or she has been abused, and/or
2. Someone close to a Child (e.g. sibling, relative, close friend) discloses on behalf of that Child.

The Police will also be notified if a Child discloses an incident of abuse that has occurred somewhere other than UC premises, (e.g. home).

If a disclosure of abuse is made, the person who receives the disclosure will maintain appropriate pastoral 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 to disclose details of the alleged assault or attempting to investigate the allegation.
- Assuring the Child 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 UC insurer.
- Not making contact with the alleged perpetrator. If the Leader is already providing counsel to the alleged perpetrator, it may be 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 should be retained and handed to the police for forensic examination.
- Maintaining confidentiality.

Any disclosures by a Child, 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.

UC reserves the right to carry out disciplinary procedures in accordance with the constitution of the Organisation.

Where an allegation is made the accused Leader will be removed from all children's activities and programs pending the outcome of all investigations.

## **10. ALCOHOL & DRUGS**

The consumption of alcohol or illegal drugs on UC grounds or during an activity is not to be allowed or condoned by any Leader.

Any Child found to be under the influence of alcohol or illegal drugs is to be counselled and the parents/guardians contacted so the Child can be returned home immediately.

Any Child required to take prescription medication will provide a letter from their parents/guardians to the teacher/leader of their group.

## **APPENDIX 1 – Legal Obligations**

Below is a précis of legislative requirements with respect to Child Abuse that currently apply. Every attempt has been made to ensure this information is accurate however a review should be undertaken regularly to ensure the information remains correct and current.

### **CRIMINAL RECORD CHECK**

All staff need to fulfil the requirements and process for obtaining a Working with Children Check and the appropriate registration certificate placed on the HR file.

### **MANDATORY REPORTING**

The following people are legally required to report reasonable suspicions of abuse:

- Medical practitioners, dentists, psychologists and nurses
- Teachers, school principals, kindergarten teachers, and child care worker
- Law enforcement officers and probation officers

- Child welfare officers
- Persons concerned in the management of a child care service
- People employed by, or volunteering in, government agencies or organizations funded by the Crown that provide health, welfare, education, residential services or care wholly or partly for children

**REPORTS SHOULD BE MADE TO:**

Department of Health and Human Services

**SOURCES**

Department of Health & Human Services – [www.dhs.vic.gov](http://www.dhs.vic.gov)

**APPENDIX 2 – Staff information and declaration form (for HR file)**

**Position Applied For:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Personal Details**

Full Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Residential Address: \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

Home Ph.: \_\_\_\_\_

Mob Ph.: \_\_\_\_\_

Work Ph.: \_\_\_\_\_

Email Address: \_\_\_\_\_

Please list all **organisations or institutions** that you have attended regularly in the last 3 years:

**Date (Approx.)** \_\_\_\_\_

**Organisation** \_\_\_\_\_

**Date (Approx.)** \_\_\_\_\_

**Organisation** \_\_\_\_\_

**Date (Approx.)** \_\_\_\_\_

**Organisation** \_\_\_\_\_

**Date (Approx.)** \_\_\_\_\_

Please list any **qualifications** you have that relate to working with Children:

**Date** \_\_\_\_\_ **Qualification** \_\_\_\_\_

**Institution** \_\_\_\_\_

**Date** \_\_\_\_\_ **Qualification** \_\_\_\_\_

**Institution** \_\_\_\_\_

Please provide any **experience** you have had that relates to working with Children:

**Date** \_\_\_\_\_ **Organisation** \_\_\_\_\_

**Position** \_\_\_\_\_

**Date** \_\_\_\_\_ **Organisation** \_\_\_\_\_

**Position** \_\_\_\_\_

**References.** Please provide details of two people we can contact, who can comment on your suitability for this position:

**First Referee**

Full Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Residential Address: \_\_\_\_\_

Home Ph.: \_\_\_\_\_ Mob Ph.: \_\_\_\_\_ Work Ph.: \_\_\_\_\_

Email Address: \_\_\_\_\_

Position & Organisation: \_\_\_\_\_

**Second Referee**

Full Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Residential Address: \_\_\_\_\_

Home Ph.: \_\_\_\_\_ Mob Ph.: \_\_\_\_\_ Work Ph.: \_\_\_\_\_

Email Address: \_\_\_\_\_

Position & Organisation: \_\_\_\_\_



## Declarations

Have you:

1. Read and understood the UC Child Safe Standards Procedures, Policy & Code of Conduct? **Yes / No**
2. Ever been in serious breach of any Child Safe Standards Procedures, Policy & Code of Conduct?

**Yes / No**

3. Had someone express concerns about your behaviour towards a child? **Yes / No**
4. Ever been convicted of a criminal offence or been the subject of an investigation relating to the abuse of a child or inappropriate sexual behaviour. **Yes / No**

I confirm that the information provided on this application form is true and correct.

I consent to a National Police Record check and the release to UC of any matters deemed to be relevant which are recorded against my name.

\_\_\_\_\_

Applicants Signature & Date

## APPENDIX 3

### WORKING WITH CHILDREN INTERVIEW QUESTIONS

***The questions asked in this interview may make you feel uncomfortable but they are a necessary part of our child safety policy and must be answered. The answers you provide will be kept confidential where possible but may be divulged to other Leaders within the Organisation.***

1. Why have you applied for this position and why do you feel you are suitable for the role?
2. Please describe any positive experiences you have had with children or young people.
3. Please describe any negative experiences you have had with children or young People.
4. Have you ever been in a situation where you have disciplined a child or young person? If so, how did you handle this situation?
5. Have you ever been investigated for violent or sexually related offences? If so, what were the circumstances?
6. Is there any other information relating to your suitability for this position that we should be aware of?