

<b>Responsible Officer:</b>	<b>Senior Manager, Family &amp; Community Support Services</b>
<b>Date of Commencement:</b>	<b>May 2023</b>
<b>Date of Current Review:</b>	<b>May 2023</b>
<b>Date of Next Review:</b>	<b>June 2024 (reviewed annual as per Child Safety principles)</b>
<b>Version:</b>	<b>V1.0</b>
<b>Approved By:</b>	<b>Board</b>

## Policy Statement

Hobart City Mission (HCM) is committed to the safety and wellbeing of children and young people. This policy details HCM's commitment to create a culture, adopt strategies and take action to promote child wellbeing and prevent harm to children and young people. The Child Safety and Wellbeing Policy provides an overview of HCM's approach to implementation of the National Principles for Child-Safe Organisations and the Tasmanian Child and Youth Safe standards and the Reportable Conduct Scheme. It also guides HCM's approach to child safety and wellbeing across all of its operations.

## Scope

This policy:

- applies to all HCM workers, which includes employees, volunteers, students on placement, contractors, consultants, board members and visitors
- applies across all physical environments and activities conducted by HCM
- should be read together with other HCM policies, procedures and codes.

## Definitions

**Child** - Any person under 18 years of age as defined by Children, Young Persons and their Families Act 1997 (TAS).

**Young Person** - A person who is 12 years old or older but under 18 years of age.

**Child abuse** - All forms of physical and/or emotional ill-treatment, sexual abuse, neglect or negligent treatment or commercial or other exploitation, resulting in actual or potential harm to the child's health, survival, development or dignity in the context of a relationship of responsibility, trust or power.

**HCM Worker** - A worker refers to an HCM employee, volunteer student on placement, contractor, consultant and board members

## Responsibilities

**Hobart City Mission Board** - The board is responsible for ensuring that a strong child safe culture is created and maintained, and that policies and practices are effectively developed and implemented to support this.

**Chief Executive Officer (CEO)** - The CEO will ensure that HCM workers within the organisation are aware of relevant laws, organisational policies and procedure and promote a culture of reporting. The CEO will take appropriate steps following an investigation and make improvements/take action, where necessary.

**Senior Managers and Leaders** - Should promote a child safe culture at all times and ensure:

- compliance with mandatory training, and the implementation of child safe principles at a service/program level
- child safety risks are reviewed
- support the reporting of inappropriate behaviour or suspected abuse.

**Staff and Volunteers** - comply with this policy, mandatory reporting and reportable conduct policies/processes and the Code of Conduct.

**Child Safety Officer** - be the first point of contact for all child safe matters.

- Bob Walker, Senior Manager – Family, Housing & Community Services
  - [bwalker@hobartcitymission.org.au](mailto:bwalker@hobartcitymission.org.au) or 0428 224 769
- Denise Brazendale, Family & Community Services Program Manager
  - [dbrazendale@hobartcitymission.org.au](mailto:dbrazendale@hobartcitymission.org.au) or 0434 829 703

## How to raise a concern or make a complaint

HMC will receive a concern or a complaint in relation to the safety of a child or young person in any form – verbally or in writing. The person wishing to raise a concern/make a complaint may speak with a Child Safety Officer (see above) or provide information in writing via the following methods

- Child Safe complaint form;
- An email to [info@hobartcitymission.org.au](mailto:info@hobartcitymission.org.au);
- Via the Grievance Resolution Policy, the Mandatory Reporting Policy or the Whistle Blower Policy

Once an issue has been raised the Child Safety Officers will:

- Acknowledge receipt of the complaint/concern;

- Investigate the complaint/concern, seeking assistance where appropriate;
- Provide support and assistance to people affected by a complaint, including children, families and HCM workers;
- Undertake steps as a mandatory reporter, as required;
- Report outcomes of the investigation to the CEO and make recommendations on actions/improvements required

## **Implementation of the National Principles for Child Safe Organisations**

### **1) A commitment to child safety and wellbeing**

The HCM board of management will champion and model a child safe culture. They will ensure that:

- there are publicly available documents that articulate the organisation's commitment to a child safety and wellbeing;
- appropriate policies, procedures and practices and a Code of Conduct are in place;
- staff conduct risk assessments and are taking actions to mitigate any risk, and
- appropriate child safety training for staff and volunteers is identified and completed.

### **2) Taking child participation seriously**

HCM considers that the promotion of children's rights to provide the core basis for child safe behaviours with the organisation and safeguarding children from harm. To achieve this, it

- provides children and young people with education and resources that inform them of their rights;
- provides age-appropriate platforms to elicit the views of children and young people;
- provides age appropriate sexual abuse prevention programs, and
- provides a psychologically informed environment for children to feel safe, empowered and taken seriously if they raise concerns.

### **3) Involving families and communities**

Our families and the broader community play an important role in promoting children's rights, safety and wellbeing; and helping them raise concerns. To support this, HCM:

- provides a transparent and responsive complaints process;
- provides families and the community with accessible information about our Child Safe policies and practices via our website and social media; and organisational operations and governance, and

- provides families and the community with opportunities to provide feedback to inform our policies and practices – through informal discussions, meetings, surveys, community events.

#### **4) Respecting diversity and equity**

HCM values the rich diversity of the children, young people and families utilising our organisation and seeks to promote respectful environments that are free from discrimination. To achieve this, we:

- ensure all HCM workers adhere to our client diversity and respectful workplace policies;
- review and implement policies and practices as recommended by our Diversity, Equity and Inclusion committee;
- provide HCM workers with training to respond effectively to children and young people with diverse needs, and
- collaborate with other community organisations to support our work with children and young people with specific needs.

#### **5) Ensuring that staff are suitable and supported**

HCM undertakes rigorous recruitment and screening processes to identify workers that share the values of our organisation and a commitment to protect children. To achieve this,

- position descriptions and selection criteria clearly demonstrate our commitment to child safety and wellbeing;
- interview questions align with the Tasmanian Child and Young Person Wellbeing framework (and the Child Safe principles) and considers an applicant's suitability with working alongside children and families;
- our People & Culture team undertake reference, Working With Vulnerable People and police checks and screening and ensure these records are accurate and current;
- induction training for all new Family & Community Support Services (FaCSS) workers includes the Child Safe modules; and existing HCM workers will complete these modules as baseline training, and
- Ongoing training and support is provided to staff and volunteers to assist them to comply with their responsibilities.

## 6) **Child focused complaint systems**

HCM will take all allegations of child abuse and child safety concerns seriously and will provide a safe environment that will support children to express their concerns, distress or disclose harm. To achieve this, HCM will

- ensure that all FaCSS workers are aware of how to respond to disclosures of harm or abuse by children and young people, aware of the compliant handling process and adhere to mandatory reporting and reportable conduct procedures, and
- Provide assessable and age appropriate information that conveys this process.

## 7) **Staff knowledge, skills and awareness**

HCM considers ongoing training and education as an essential component to enable staff and volunteers to build their knowledge, skills and evidence based practice tools. Building on the child safety and wellbeing training provided at induction, HCM will ensure that all FaCSS workers are provided with regular education and training to:

- develop their capacity to comply to child safety and wellbeing policies, procedures and practices;
- recognise a range of indicators of child harm, respond effectively to disclosure of harm and support colleagues who disclose harm, and
- build a culturally safe environment for all children and young people

## 8) **Safe physical environments**

HCM recognises the importance of identifying and managing risk within our organisation in relation to child safety and wellbeing and ensuring the overall safety for our clients, families, volunteers, HCM workers and broader community. This process involves the:

- inclusions of Child Safe elements in the HCM risk Consequence matrix for all FaCSS programs, and

reporting to the board and the development of appropriate risk management strategies and plans to mitigate the risks identified.

## 9) **Review of child safe policies and practices**

HCM recognises that the implementation of the National Principles is a continuous improvement approach and will implement review processes alongside current organisational practices. To achieve this, it will:

- develop action plans to facilitate the implementation of identified policy, procedure and practice changes;
- undertake regular analysis and review of complaints, concerns and safety incidents;
- report on the findings of these reviews;
- develop or adapt policies/procedures/practices to address these findings, and
- evaluate the efficacy of these processes.

## 10) **Documenting policies and procedures**

HCM acknowledges the importance of a clearly documented child safety and wellbeing policy that is communicated in an appropriate manner to all stakeholders. To achieve this, HCM:

- provides a comprehensive child safety and wellbeing policy that addresses all of the National Principles;
- documents all Child Safe policies and procedures in child friendly, easy to read and accessible formats (written, website and downloadable), and
- displays child safe materials and its Charter of Commitment.

## **Relevant legislation and standards**

### **Tasmania**

- Children, Young Persons and Their Families Act 1997
- Child Care Act 2001
- Child Protection (International Measures) Act 2003
- Commissioner for Children and Young People Act 2016
- Registration to Work with Vulnerable People Act 2013
- Child and Youth Safe Organisations Act 2002 <pending>

### **Related organisational policies and procedures**

- HCM Mandatory Reporting policy & procedure
- HCM Code of Conduct
- HCM Client Diversity policy
- HCM Privacy and Confidentiality policy

- HCM Respectful Workplace policy
- Grievance Resolution Policy
- Whistle Blower Policy
- HCM Working with Vulnerable People Registration and Police Check Policy