

Glenelg and Southern Grampians LLEN

Child Safe Policy

Victorian organisations that provide services to children and young people are required under the Child Safety and Wellbeing Act to ensure that they implement compulsory Child Safe Standards to protect children and young people from harm.

The enclosed policy and procedures demonstrate the methods by which the Glenelg and Southern Grampians LLEN implements the Child Safe Standards.

This Child Safe Policy was adopted by the Committee of Management at its meeting held on the 15th March, 2017.

This policy was written to demonstrate the strong commitment of the management, staff and volunteers to child safety and to provide an outline of the policies and practices the organisation has developed to keep everyone safe from harm, including abuse.

Commitment to Child Safety

All children and young people who come into contact with Glenelg and Southern Grampians LLEN have a right to feel and be safe. The welfare of the children and young people in contact with the organisation will always be our first priority and we have a zero tolerance to child abuse. We aim to create a child friendly environment where young people feel safe. This commitment to Child Safety is articulated on the GSGLLEN website.

This policy was developed in collaboration with all our staff, our committee of management. It applies to all staff, volunteers, committee members and partners involved in our organisation.

Children's rights to safety and participation

Glenelg and Southern Grampians LLEN staff and volunteers encourage children and young people to express their views. We listen to their suggestions especially on matters that directly affect them. We encourage children and young people who participate in activities organised by our organisation to have a say about things that are important to them.

We listen to and act on any concerns children or young people or their parents raise with us.

Valuing diversity

We value diversity and do not tolerate any discriminatory practises. To achieve this we:

- Promote the cultural safety, participation and empowerment of Aboriginal children and their families
- Promote the cultural safety, participation and empowerment of children from culturally and /or linguistically diverse backgrounds and their families
- Welcome children and young people with a disability and their families and act to promote their participation
- Seek staff from these diverse cultural backgrounds

Recruiting staff and volunteers

Glenelg and Southern Grampians applies the best practice standards in the recruitment and screening of staff and volunteers. We interview and conduct referee checks on all staff and volunteers and require police checks and Working with Children checks for all positions. Our commitment to Child Safety and our screening requirements are included in all advertisements.

Supporting staff and volunteers

Glenelg and Southern Grampians LLEN seeks to attract and retain the best staff and volunteers. We provide support and supervision so people feel valued, respected and fairly treated. We have developed a code of conduct to provide guidance to our staff and volunteers, all of who receive training on the requirements of the Code.

Reporting a child safety concern or complaint

Anne Murphy (Executive Officer) is the child safety person with the specific responsibility for responding to any complaints made by staff, volunteers, Committee members, parents or children and young people. Our complaints processes are outlined on the attached diagram.

Risk Management

We recognise the importance of a risk management approach to minimising the potential for child abuse or harm to occur and use this to inform our policy, procedures and activity planning. In addition to general occupational health and safety risks, we proactively manage risks of abuse to children.

Reviewing this policy

This policy will be reviewed every 2 years and we undertake to seek views, comments and suggestions from children and young people, parents, carers, staff, volunteers and committee members.

Relevant procedures

Code of Conduct, Recruitment Procedures, Child Safety Reporting Process and Risk Management process, Statement of Commitment to Child Safety ([website](#))

Glenelg and Southern Grampians LLEN

Code of Conduct

This code of conduct outlines appropriate standards of behaviour of adults towards children and young people.

The Code Of Conduct aims to protect children and young people and reduce any opportunities for abuse or harm to occur. It also helps staff and volunteers by providing them with guidance on how to best support children and young people and how to avoid or better manage difficult situations. All staff and volunteers are required to comply.

All Glenelg and Southern Grampians LLEN staff, Committee and volunteers are responsible for promoting the safety and wellbeing of children and young people by:

- Adhering to our Child Safe Policy and other policies
- Taking all responsible steps to protect children and young people from abuse
- Treating everyone with respect, including listening to and valuing their ideas and opinions
- Welcoming all children and young people and their families and carers and being inclusive
- Respecting cultural, religious and political differences and acting in a culturally sensitive way
- Modelling appropriate adult behaviour
- Listening to children and young people and responding to them appropriately
- Reporting and acting on any breaches of this Code of Conduct, complaints or concerns
- Complying with our guidelines on physical contact with children and young people
- Working with children and young people in an open and transparent way- other adults should always know about the work you are doing with children
- Respecting the privacy of children, young people and their families, and only disclosing information to people who have a need to know
- Report any breaches of this code to the Executive Officer
- Contact the police if a child or young person is at immediate risk of abuse (telephone 000)

Glenelg and Southern Grampians LLEN staff, Committee and volunteers must NOT:

- Seek to use children or young people in any way to meet the needs of adults
- Ignore or disregard any concerns, suspicions or disclosures of child abuse
- Use prejudice, oppressive behaviour or language with children or young people
- Engage in rough physical games
- Discriminate on the basis of age, gender, race, culture, vulnerability or sexuality
- Initiate unnecessary physical contact with children or do things of a personal nature that children or young people can do for themselves such as toileting or changing clothes
- Develop 'special relationships' with specific children or show favouritism through the provision of gifts or inappropriate attention
- Exchange personal contact details such a phone numbers, social networking site or email addresses with children

- Have unauthorised contact with children and young person online or by phone
- Photograph or video a child or young person without their parents'/carers' consent
- Use inappropriate language in the presence of children or young people
- Disregard any action or report that breaches GSGLLEN's child safe policies and procedures

I have read this Code on Conduct and agree to abide by it at all times.

Name: _____

Signature: _____

Date: _____

Name of Manager: _____

Signature: _____

Date: _____

Witness: _____

Date: _____

Gleneelg and Southern Grampians LLEN

Recruitment Checklist

Duty Statement/ Job Description

A duty statement or job description is to be developed for every ongoing and casual position at the GSGLLEN. These documents clarify the role, responsibilities and expectations of the position and outlines reporting lines.

Given the nature of the organisation, GSGLLEN staff have limited opportunity to work in direct and unsupervised contact with children and young people. However, they do organise and develop programs for school aged children. In most instances, schools provide supervising staff for their students.

However, given that we work so closely with school students, **all staff** employed at the GSGLLEN are required to have a Working with Children check and a police check.

The following information is to be included in all duty statements/ job descriptions:

Employment Conditions

GSGLLEN is an Equal Opportunity Employer.

GSGLLEN promotes the safety, wellbeing and inclusion of all children and young people, including those with a disability, those who are Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander, or those from a refugee or migrant background. We take child protection very seriously. All employees are subject to screening and assessment against child safety standards, including rigorous background, identity and reference checks. The successful applicant will require a current Working with Children Check and Police Check (costs reimbursed) and must agree to adhere to our child safe policy and code of conduct.

Key selection criteria

Selection criteria are to be determined for each role. These identify the key skills, attributes, experience and qualifications that are required to undertake the duties and tasks outlined in the duty statement.

Advertising

A statement that the GSGLLEN is a child safe organisation with a child safe policy needs to be provided in every job advertisement.

Interview

In addition to questions related to the job role, additional questions must be included in the interview in relation to:

- The applicant's motivation to work with children and young people.
- The applicant's approach to aboriginal cultural safety and inclusive practices for all children, young people and their families
- Ensure a gender balance on the panel where possible

Reference checks

At least two reference checks must be undertaken by telephone or in person, with a reference to be provided from the applicants current or most recent employer

The referee must have personally observed the applicants work with children or young people.

In addition to questions designed to assess an applicant's skills to complete the specified position, the following questions are to be asked:

- Would you employ the applicant again?
- Do you have any concerns about the applicant working directly with children or young people?
- Are you comfortable knowing the applicant could sometimes be alone with children and young people?
- Can you give an example of a time when you observed the applicant managing children or young people's behaviour?

Identity checks

Evidence of identity must be provided to the organisation. This may either be an original birth certificate, driver's license or passport. A certificate of qualifications must also be sighted.

A copy of the evidence of identity must be kept in the personnel files.

Police and Working with Children check

An offer of employment from GSGLLEN is **subject to a satisfactory completion of a police check and a working with children check**. This needs to be detailed on the position description and contract. Should an applicant not have a current Working with Children check, they are required to apply prior to commencing work. The cost of the application will be provided by the GSGLLEN.

Any applicant with a criminal history of violence, abuse of children, serious drug or fraud charges must be excluded.

A copy of the Working with Children check should be sighted and a photocopy taken and put in the personnel file. The validity of the working with children check should be checked by checking on the working with children website (www.workingwithchildren.vic.gov.au) using the "Check status" function.

A register of all staff with a Working with Children check is to be held in the Reckon system which records expiry dates, card numbers and card type (Volunteer or Employee).

Monitor and review

As part of the annual performance appraisal process, check that the Working with Children checks of staff and volunteers are still valid.

Relevant policies

This checklist to be used in addition in conjunction with the GSGLLEN Recruitment Policy.

GSGLEN Procedure

Responding to and reporting suspected child abuse

What concerns should be reported

Concerns about the safety and wellbeing of children and young people can range from an uncomfortable feeling to a direct observation or disclosure by a child. GSGLEN staff are encouraged to speak to someone and be proactive rather than waiting until it is too late. Staff and volunteers need to be aware of their duty of care to children and young people and of their legal obligations.

Examples of child safety concerns include:

- Concerns about a physical environment that may post a risk to children and young people (including health and hygiene issues)
- Inappropriate or special relationships developing between staff, volunteers and children and young people
- Inadequate staff-child supervision ratios
- Breaches of the Code of Conduct (especially if persistent)
- Feelings of discomfort about interactions between a staff member or volunteer and a child
- Suspicions or beliefs that children or young people are at risk of harm
- Observations of concerning changes in behaviour
- Children or young people's disclosure of abuse or harm which **MUST** be reported to Child Protection or the police

When should concerns be reported to the police?

Physical or sexual abuse of children and young people is a crime and **MUST** be reported to the police.

If a child is in imminent or immediate danger, call 000 immediately.

When should concerns be reported to child protection?

Anyone may make a report to Child Protection if they believe, on reasonable grounds, that a child or young person is in need of protection.

To make a report of child abuse, contact the regional Child Protection office as soon as possible.

Barwon South Western Division

Telephone: 1800 075 599

For after -hours notifications: 13 1278.

Mandatory Reporting

Everyone has a moral and social obligation to report concerns about child abuse. Some professionals are **legally required** to make a report to Child Protection. These include doctors, nurses, teachers, school principals, police, youth and social workers are mandatory reporters under the Children Youth and Families Act 2005.

As long as a report is made in good faith, the report is not unprofessional conduct or a breach of professional ethics the reporter cannot be held legally liable.

Failure to disclose

Any adult who forms a reasonable belief that a sexual offence has been committed by an adult against a child under 16 years has an obligation to report that information to police. Failure to disclose is a criminal offence.

A reasonable belief is formed if a reasonable person in the same position would have formed the belief on the same grounds.

Failure to protect

The failure to protect offense commenced on 1st July 2015 and applies to people in authority within the organisation who knew of a risk of child sexual abuse by someone in the organisation and had the authority to reduce or remove the risk , BUT DID NOT ACT to protect the child.

Child Safety Records

Any child safety complaints , disclosures or breaches of the Code of Conduct should be recorded and stored according to security and privacy requirements. A record of action taken, investigations and reports made to statutory bodies.

A flow chart outlining the process for reporting child safety is enclosed below.

Nominated Child Safety Person

Staff and volunteers should report any child safety concerns to the Executive Officer of the GSGLLEN.

GSGLEN CHILD SAFETY REPORTING PROCESS

Who can report?	Parent	Child or Young Person	Staff Member, Committee Member or Volunteer
What to report	Any child safety concerns including: *Disclosure of abuse or harm *Allegation, suspicion or observation *Breach of Code of Conduct *Environmental safety issues		
Call 000 if a child is in immediate danger			
How?	Face to face, verbal report, letter, email, telephone call, meeting		
Who to?	GSGLEN Executive Officer Anne Murphy		
What happens next?	The Executive Officer will: *offer support to the child or young person, parents, the person who reports and the accused staff member or volunteer * initiate internal processes to ensure the safety of the child, clarify the nature of the complaint and commence disciplinary processes (if required) *decide, in accordance with legal requirements and duty of care, whether the matter should/ must be reported to the police or child protection and make a report as soon as possible if required. * report to the GSGLEN executive committee.		
Outcome	Investigation; outcome decided; relevant staff, volunteers, parents and child notified of outcome of investigation; policies, procedures are updated where necessary		

GSGLLEN

Child Safety Risk Management Process

The following process is to be reviewed every two years to ensure the currency of the GSGLLEN Child Safe Risk Management Plan. Discussions will be held at the monthly staff meeting and following Executive Meeting to adopt the suggested changes to the plan.

Context:

- Determine level of interaction with children and young people. What LLEN activities involve this interaction? There are different risks for different activities.
- What governance and supervision structures are in place to prevent harm or abuse?
- Who are the children and young people accessing the organisation. In particular, who are those children who are particularly vulnerable including those who have experienced trauma, abuse or neglect, Aboriginal children or children and young people with a disability.

Risk Management Plan

- To be developed by the staff of the GSGLLEN and presented to the Executive Committee for adoption.

Consultation

- Once adopted by the Executive Committee the Risk Management Plan will be forwarded to the GSGLLEN Board for comment and formal ratification.
- Partners will be notified that the GSGLLEN has a Risk Management Plan, to which they can contribute. This information will be put on promotional material for activities with children/ youth involvement supported by the GSGLLEN. These include; P2E, Youth Empowerment Camp and Koorie Career and Aspiration Days.

Identify Risks

- Risks may range from occupational health and safety concerns to child abuse and accidents. Online risks will also need to be determined.

Analyse Risks

- The likelihood and consequence for children, young people and GSGLLEN staff, volunteers and COM if harm did occur.

Develop Intervention

- What can the organisation do to reduce the likelihood of risk?
- What do we need to do if this risk did occur?

- Consider changing the environment, putting preventive measures in place and making it more likely that abuse will be discovered can reduce the potential for abuse to occur.

Monitor and Review

- A clear monitoring structure needs to be in place to record any risks that did eventuate, how effective the risk management plan was and how it can be improved.
- A set time frame is required for reviewing this plan to incorporate these learnings

Designate and manage

- Risk management is the responsibility of the Executive Committee, with the delegation of implementation of policies the responsibility of the Executive Officer.

GSGLLEN

Strategies to Promote the participation and empowerment of children and young people

Becoming a child safe organisation means developing strategies to communicate and engage with children and young people who are involved with the GSGLLEN. It is important to ask children and young people when they feel safe and unsafe.

Children and Young people's views can be sought by;

- Consulting directly with children about what makes the organisation or activity safe for them
- Providing information about the standards of care they are entitled to, particularly about their rights
- Informing students how to raise concerns, make complaints or let someone know that they feel unsafe
- Checking with parents (where appropriate) and children and young people that they are aware of the relevant child safe policies and procedures and that the child safety culture is visible.

GSGLLEN wants to promote the concern of both physical and psychological safety within the organisation and its activities. Children and young people need to feel valued, respected and cared for. They know that they can speak out if they feel unsafe or unhappy, and that something will be done to address their concerns. This builds their self-esteem, confidence and empowers them to speak up when necessary.

In GSGLLEN activities, identified through the risk management plan as potential risks, the following processes are to be undertaken.

- Ensure that the physical environment is safe, warm and friendly towards children and young people.
- At the commencement of activities, a briefing session to be held with young people which:
 - Clarifies when they feel physically and psychologically, safe and unsafe
 - Briefly outline the rights of every young person to feel safe under the Convention of Rights of the child, and to clarify their responsibilities
 - Request their feedback and suggestions to improve safety for everyone
 - Determine a short Code of Conduct outlining acceptable and non-acceptable behaviour for the activity for both young people and adults involved
 - What to do if they have a safety concern.
 - The evaluation survey at the completion of the activity is to include a question on participants perceived level of safety. Answers to be reviewed at the completion of activity and interventions developed where required.

GSGLEN Statement of Commitment to Child Safety

The following statement is to be inserted on the GSGLEN Website.

GSGLEN will not tolerate any abuse of children and young people.

In Victoria, Child Safe Standards aim to protect children and young people from abuse in organisations, including physical violence, sexual offenses, serious emotional or psychological abuse and/ or neglect.

As part of these standards, we commit to:

- Preventing the abuse of children and young people participating in our programs, by identifying risks early and removing and reducing these risks
- Taking all allegations and concerns about abuse very seriously and responding to them consistently, in line with our policies and procedures
- Complying with all legal requirements, including reporting suspicions of abuse to police or child protection

We actively work to hear and empower all children and young people involved in our programs, through consultation and participation processes.

We celebrate diversity across our organisation, in particular, we promote the equal participation and cultural, emotional and physical safety of children and young people who are often marginalised. This includes children and young people who are Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islanders, from refugee or migrant backgrounds, who are same sex attracted or gender diverse, and / or have a disability.

All staff, committee and volunteers of GSGLEN are responsible for the care and protection of children and young people who are participate in our programs and for reporting information about abuse.

Give us your feedback: GSGLEN's Child Safe Code of Conduct

The Child Safe Standards require organisations that provide services to children and young people under 18 years to have a code of conduct which establishes clear expectations for appropriate behaviour with children.

GSGLEN is currently updating our code and would love your feedback.

Please click below to read our draft Code Of Conduct and email any comments to admin@gsgllen.org.au with Child Safe Code of Conduct in the subject line.

Policy: GSGLLEN Child Safe Policy and Procedure

Status: NEW

Recommended by the Executive Committee at its' meeting held on _____ and adopted by the GSGLLEN Committee of Management on the 15th March, 2017.

Review Date: Every two years

Next Review: (Date) _____

Signed: Chairperson _____

Date: _____