



UPCC

Child Safe Policy

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28/07/2026

To be reviewed

28/07/2027

UPCC

Safeguarding Children and Young People — Child Safety and Wellbeing Policy

Version HTML rewrite aligned to Victoria's 11 Child Safe Standards (from 1 July 2022)

Approved for use 28 July 2026

Next review by 28 July 2027 (or sooner if legislation or practice changes)

Child Safety Officer Kathryn Stokes

Related document UPCC Code of Conduct (separate document)

Signature of Manager: _____ Date: _____

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1. Purpose and commitment

UPCC is committed to welcoming children and their carers and providing a child-safe environment, culture and programs for children and other vulnerable people who come to this venue.

We see such a commitment as flowing naturally from our vision and mission to operate according to biblical, Christian principles for living and for recognising the unique value and potential of every person, regardless of race, age, gender, ability or disability.

All children who come to UPCC have a right to feel and be safe. The welfare of children in our care will always be our first priority. We aim to create and maintain a safe and friendly environment where children are listened to, feel safe, have fun, accept challenges, learn and grow.

This policy:

- states our public commitment to child safety and wellbeing
- explains how we meet Victoria's Child Safe Standards as a Victorian campsite / conference venue that hosts children
- guides staff, volunteers, contractors and guest organisations in preventing, identifying and responding to child abuse and harm
- reflects the operational principles of our Code of Conduct (separate document)

This policy has the endorsement approach of Christian Venues Association (CVA), a national association of which UPCC is a member. CVA resources and supports more than 200 members, including professional development on industry standards, compliance and operational issues.

Child safety and wellbeing is embedded in UPCC leadership, governance and day-to-day practice. Management is responsible for promoting this culture, modelling safe behaviour, and ensuring concerns are taken seriously and acted on promptly.

2. Scope

This policy applies to:

- all UPCC paid staff, casuals and volunteers
- board / governance members and managers
- contractors, subcontractors and delivery personnel while on site
- visitors and individuals involved in any aspect of running UPCC
- guest organisations hiring the venue (schools, churches, community groups and others) and the adults supervising those groups, to the extent that venue rules, briefing and shared duty of care apply
- children and young people (under 18) using UPCC facilities or programs

At the date of this version, UPCC does not operate dedicated children's camps as its core program. Contact with children is typically when guest groups bring children or young people on site. This policy still applies whenever children are present. Training frequency and rostering of officers is calibrated to that operating model and will be reviewed if UPCC runs more children's camps in future.

3. Definitions

Child / young person — a person under 18 years of age.

Child abuse / harm — includes physical abuse and neglect; sexual abuse and grooming; emotional and psychological abuse; racial, cultural or religious abuse; and bullying. See Appendix 3.

Child Safety Officer (CSO) — the nominated UPCC contact for child safety complaints and concerns. The current Child Safety Officer is **Kathryn Stokes**.

Reasonable belief — a belief formed on reasonable grounds that a child has suffered, or is likely to suffer, significant harm. It does not require proof and is more than rumour or speculation. For example, a child disclosing abuse, a credible third-party report, or professional observations consistent with abuse may support a reasonable belief.

Guest organisation — the hiring school, church or group that brings children to UPCC and provides supervising adults (for example teachers or group leaders).

4. Victoria's 11 Child Safe Standards

Organisations in Victoria that provide services or facilities for children must comply with the Child Safe Standards under the *Child Wellbeing and Safety Act 2005* (Vic). Overnight camps and venues hosting children are within the types of organisations expected to implement the Standards. The current 11 Standards (in force from 1 July 2022) align with the National Principles for Child Safe Organisations.

UPCC commits to achieving the outcomes of each Standard:

Standard	Outcome	How UPCC addresses it
1	Culturally safe environment for Aboriginal children and young people	Section 6 — cultural safety; respect for identity; zero tolerance of racism
2	Child safety embedded in leadership, governance and culture	Sections 1, 9–11, 16; Code of Conduct; CSO appointment
3	Children empowered about rights, participation and being taken seriously	Sections 7–8; feedback survey (Appendix 2)
4	Families and communities informed and involved	Sections 5 and 8; guest briefings; accessible policy
5	Equity upheld and diverse needs respected	Section 6
6	People working with children are suitable and supported	Section 9 — WWCC, recruitment, supervision
7	Complaints and concerns are child-focused	Sections 12–14; Appendices 4–5

Standard	Outcome	How UPCC addresses it
8	Staff equipped through education and training	Section 10
9	Physical and online environments promote safety	Section 11; activity RMPs; photo / online guidance
10	Implementation regularly reviewed and improved	Section 16
11	Policies and procedures document how the organisation is safe for children	This policy, Code of Conduct, related procedures and forms

Guidance materials are published by the Commission for Children and Young People (ccyp.vic.gov.au). Regulation of the Standards has moved to Victoria's Social Services Regulator; UPCC will follow current regulator guidance as it is updated.

5. Shared responsibility with guest groups

When a guest organisation brings children to UPCC, safety and welfare are shared between:

- UPCC (safe venue, staff conduct, activity delivery where UPCC leads activities, induction and emergency procedures)
- the guest organisation and supervising adults (duty of care for their group, overnight supervision, pastoral care, behaviour management, and any mandatory reporting duties that apply to teachers or other professionals)

UPCC will:

- identify and introduce the Child Safety Officer at the initial briefing of a new client group
- explain how to raise a concern using the Complaint Form or Incident Report
- cooperate promptly with guest leaders, police and child protection authorities
- stand down UPCC staff from direct contact with the group where an allegation against that staff member is being assessed

Guest organisations remain responsible for their own child safety policies, WWCC for their staff, and overnight supervision ratios. UPCC expects guest adults to model safe, respectful behaviour and to report concerns immediately.

6. Cultural safety and equity

We recognise the particular need for sensitivity for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children and those from culturally or linguistically diverse backgrounds. We take into consideration the needs of children with disability and seek to include them and make them feel safe and welcome.

UPCC will:

- welcome Aboriginal children and support them to express culture and enjoy their rights
- not tolerate racism, discrimination, vilification or contempt toward a child because of race, culture, religion, disability, sex, gender identity or other identity
- adapt communication, access and support so diverse children can understand safety information and make a complaint
- pay particular attention to children who may be more vulnerable, including children with disability, children unable to live at home, and lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender and intersex children and young people

Denying or denigrating a child's identity is not keeping them safe. Cultural identity shapes belonging, emotion, learning and health.

7. Children's rights and participation

UPCC staff encourage children to express their views and suggestions through feedback surveys (Appendix 2) and by listening when they speak about matters that affect their safety or wellbeing. We value diversity and do not tolerate discrimination in our words or practices or in those of others.

Part of our work with children is to teach and inform them of what they can do if they feel unsafe, threatened or upset by the behaviour of adults or other children. We will listen to and act on any concerns children or their carers raise with us.

We are committed to protecting children from harm. Harm, as used in this policy, includes physical; sexual; emotional/psychological; racial/cultural or religious abuse; and bullying (Appendix 3).

All forms of abuse injure children — sometimes visibly, but often in ways that damage identity, cause anxiety or fear, and reduce a child's capacity to participate in community and opportunity.

8. Families and community

Families and carers have a primary role in children's safety. UPCC will:

- make this policy available via the client portal / downloads and on request
- explain child safety arrangements at guest briefings
- invite feedback from children, parents/carers and guest leaders about accommodation, meals, program and staff conduct
- use that feedback to adjust practices, programs and training

9. Suitable people — recruitment, screening and support

People working with children at UPCC must be suitable and supported to keep children safe.

UPCC will:

- require a current Victorian Working with Children Clearance (or equivalent legal clearance) for staff and volunteers whose role involves child-related work as defined by the *Worker Screening Act 2020* (Vic) / Working with Children scheme
- use recruitment practices that assess suitability for child-safe practice (application, interview, reference checks as appropriate to the role)
- provide a Code of Conduct that defines unacceptable conduct, boundaries and expectations
- supervise staff so they feel valued, respected and fairly treated, and so unsafe practice is challenged early
- not allow a person to continue unsupervised contact with children where a serious allegation is under investigation

Comparable Victorian camp organisations (for example Christian Youth Camps and Baptist Camping Victoria) emphasise WWCC, training, clear codes of conduct and prompt response to concerns. UPCC follows the same core expectations adapted to a venue-hire context.

10. Training and awareness

We provide support and supervision so people understand child safety expectations.

1. Staff are provided with a copy of our Code of Conduct booklet that defines unacceptable conduct, boundaries and expectations for behaviour.
2. At least every two years, “Refresh, Renew, Update” sessions are run online or in person for all program staff, to ensure awareness of child safety and familiarity with ChildSafe practices and expectations.
3. Staff and management attend workshop or online training provided by CVA, Australian Camps Association (ACA) or other specialist organisations at least once every two years.

A two-year cycle is used rather than annual training because UPCC does not currently run dedicated children’s camps — contact is mainly when guest groups bring children. This frequency will be reviewed if more children’s camps are run at UPCC in future.

Training covers recognising signs of harm, responding to disclosures, reporting pathways, and maintaining safe physical and online environments.

11. Risk management — physical and online environments

Risk assessment and management practices are embedded in procedures prior to each camp, program or activity. We use these practices to inform planning and operation of the camping

experience at UPCC.

Risk management applies to work health and general safety and specifically to minimising risks of abuse to children in our care, including:

- activity delivery and equipment (supported by activity Risk Management Plans)
- site layout, bathrooms, bedrooms and unsupervised spaces
- supervision arrangements when UPCC staff lead or support programs
- online and digital environments (photos, social media, messaging) — images of children are only used with appropriate consent from the guest organisation / carers, and staff must not have private online contact with children for personal purposes
- contractors and third parties on site while children are present

Where UPCC engages third-party providers, we take reasonable steps so child safety expectations are clear.

12. Reporting a child safety concern

Each camp that involves children or minors will have allocated officers with specific responsibilities (for example Program Director or First Aid Officer). A Child Safety Officer is appointed for responding to complaints made by staff, children or young people (campers) or their supervising adults.

Child Safety Officer: Kathryn Stokes

The CSO will be identified and their role explained as part of the initial briefing of a new client group. Guests and staff are expected to use either the Complaint Form (Appendix 4) or the Incident Report (Appendix 5) to note concerns arising from observations or experience.

Everyone has a moral responsibility to report known or possible child abuse. Victorian criminal law also creates offences relating to failure to disclose sexual offences against children, failure to protect children from sexual offending, and grooming. Certain professionals (including teachers, principals, nurses and police) are mandatory reporters under the *Children, Youth and Families Act 2005* (Vic). You do not need your employer's permission to make a protection report.

If a child is in immediate danger, call **000**.

13. On-site complaints and response process

There is a formal process for making and recording complaints of child abuse or neglect on site and for seeking resolution. The following steps must be followed:

1. A Complaint Form (Appendix 4) will be filled out. A copy of this form **must** be kept by the Child Safety Officer, even if the complainant wishes to keep the original. This is an essential record of the event.
2. The Child Safety Officer will meet with the child or the complainant, hear the story, take notes and seek clarification, ensuring the child feels listened to, understood and protected. Some complaints may be able to be dealt with at this time.
3. If, in the view of the CSO, the allegation is serious and/or emotions are running high, report the incident to the police. This takes the matter immediately outside the venue's investigation. Police will determine if there is a case and how to proceed. The Complaint Form will provide data for police to assess.
4. The accused staff member should be stood down from duties involving direct contact with the client group until the matter is resolved.
5. The accused person should fill out an Incident Report (Appendix 5) so their account is heard and recorded. Another adult may witness the Incident Report if they personally observed the incident or alleged behaviour.
6. **Debriefing.** The staff member alleged to have misbehaved must be debriefed and appropriate decisions made about whether they remain on the property or continue work with the client group. Debriefing should also occur for the wider team. Allegations of inappropriate behaviour toward a

child are upsetting; staff need support, clarification and a chance to express feelings.

7. **Liaison with the client group.** Re-establishing trust with supervising adults (for example teachers) is essential and should be dealt with as soon as practicable. They need assurance that the process has been followed and that steps have been taken to keep children safe.

The Child Safety Officer should be a manager or senior administration person — not solely an activity leader — preferably with experience and skills in listening to children. If a person does not feel comfortable reporting to the CSO, they may report to the Manager or another senior person, who must then ensure the process in this policy is followed.

14. External reporting — Police, Child Protection and Orange Door

Clarify your perceptions (talk with the child if appropriate, and/or colleagues) and decide the best reporting pathway. You can report to:

UPCC Child Safety Officer

Use a Complaint Form. Attach notes and keep a copy. The CSO may take the concern to the person-in-charge of the guest group or act unilaterally, including calling police.

Victoria Police

Police are the most appropriate first responders if the report concerns behaviour taking place at the campsite, or if a child is in immediate danger. Fill out a Complaint Form, attach notes, and call **000**.

Child Protection (Department of Families, Fairness and Housing)

Child Protection is the statutory service for children at risk of significant harm. Reports are made by phone (not via website or email).

- **After hours / weekends / public holidays (emergency):** 13 12 78
- **Business hours (approx. 8:45 am - 5:00 pm weekdays)** — contact the intake service for the local government area where the child normally lives:
 - North Division: 1300 598 521
 - South Division: 1300 555 526
 - East Division: 1300 360 452
 - West Division: 1300 360 462

Upper Plenty is in Mitchell Shire; for children who live locally, North Division intake is typically the starting point. If unsure, use the Child Protection contacts directory on the DFFH website.

The Orange Door

The Orange Door has replaced Child FIRST as the access point for families needing help with the care and wellbeing of children (including family violence support) where the child is **not** assessed as being at immediate risk of significant harm requiring Child Protection. Refer via the local Orange Door service (orangedoor.vic.gov.au). If you form a reasonable belief that a child needs protection from significant harm, report to Child Protection (and police if urgent), not only to The Orange Door.

Record observations

Make notes of what you observe or hear that causes concern. If you are reasonably sure a child is in danger and needs protection, make a report.

15. Records and privacy

Child safety complaints, incidents and investigation records must be stored securely with restricted access. Consistent with Royal Commission recommendations adopted by comparable Victorian camping organisations, UPCC will retain child abuse complaint and related records for **at least 45 years**.

Information is shared only as required for the safety of children, legal reporting duties, and fair process — with police, Child Protection, regulators and, where appropriate, the guest organisation.

16. Review and continuous improvement

This policy is reviewed at least every two years, or sooner if:

- legislation or Child Safe Standards guidance changes
- a serious incident or complaint identifies a gap
- UPCC's operating model changes (for example running dedicated children's camps)

Reviews consider feedback from children, families, guest leaders and staff, and may use a Child Safe Standards self-audit tool (such as those promoted through CVA / denominational camping networks).

Appendix 1 — Legislation

Relevant legislation and instruments include (non-exhaustive):

Victorian

- Child Wellbeing and Safety Act 2005 (including Child Safe Standards)
- Children, Youth and Families Act 2005
- Worker Screening Act 2020 / Working with Children scheme
- Commission for Children and Young People Act 2012
- Charter of Human Rights and Responsibilities Act 2006
- Equal Opportunity Act 2010
- Racial and Religious Tolerance Act 2001
- Occupational Health and Safety Act 2004
- Crimes Act 1958 amendments establishing grooming, failure to disclose, failure to protect and related child sexual offence provisions
- Reportable Conduct Scheme requirements where applicable to the organisation

Commonwealth

- Disability Discrimination Act 1992
- Racial Discrimination Act 1975
- Sex Discrimination Act 1984
- Australian Human Rights Commission Act 1986
- Fair Work Act 2009
- Workplace Gender Equality Act 2012

International

- United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (1989)

Appendix 2 — Camper feedback survey

This survey is your chance to have a say about UPCC and your time here. Think about each statement and mark on the line between “Not at all!” and “Absolutely!”.

Camper name: _____

1. When we arrived I felt welcomed and looked after.

Not at all _____ Mostly _____ Absolutely!

2. The bedrooms were clean and the beds were comfortable.

Not at all _____ Mostly _____ Absolutely!

3. The bathrooms were clean, big enough and easy to use.

Not at all _____ Mostly _____ Absolutely!

4. There were great spaces for eating and activities.

Not at all _____ Mostly _____ Absolutely!

5. The activities were fun, challenging and well-organised.

Not at all _____ Mostly _____ Absolutely!

6. I felt safe and relaxed while I was at this camp.

Not at all _____ Mostly _____ Absolutely!

7. Even though some activities were challenging, I faced my fears and enjoyed doing them.

Not at all _____ Mostly _____ Absolutely!

8. The camp activity leaders were friendly and respectful of my friends and me.

Not at all _____ Mostly _____ Absolutely!

9. The meals were tasty, healthy and I had plenty to eat.

Not at all _____ Mostly _____ Absolutely!

10. I would recommend this camp as a great place for kids.

Not at all _____ Mostly _____ Absolutely!

Appendix 3 — Definitions of harm or abuse

1. Physical abuse and neglect

Includes intentionally causing, or threatening to cause, physical injury to a child. It includes inadvertently causing injury as a consequence of physical punishment or physically aggressive treatment of a child. The injury may take the form of bruises, cuts, burns or fractures. It may also include not meeting necessary developmental needs, such as adequate food, drinks or rest, or being exposed to extreme weather without protection.

2. Sexual abuse and grooming

Sexual harm occurs when a person (adult, adolescent or another child) uses power or authority over a child, or inducements, to involve the child in sexual activity. It involves a wide range of contact or non-contact acts, including grooming behaviours, inappropriate touching, holding or fondling a child, exposing a child to pornography, and engaging in a sexual act with a child. (Under Victorian law, sexual offending against children includes specific age and relationship rules; seek advice from police or Child Protection if unsure.)

3. Emotional and psychological

Occurs when a person engages in inappropriate behaviours such as rejecting, ignoring, threatening or verbally abusing a child, or allows others to do so. Because such abuse does not leave physical signs, it is often hidden and underestimated in lifelong impact.

4. Racial, cultural or religious

Racial abuse is any harmful conduct that discriminates against, or demonstrates contempt, ridicule, hatred or negativity toward a child because of race, ethnic origin, skin colour or other evidence of “difference”. It may be overt (vilification or discrimination) or covert (lack of cultural sensitivity). Religious or cultural abuse is similar but directed toward expressions of faith, practice, dress or cultural identity. Harm targets the child’s identity.

“If a child’s identity is denied or denigrated, then they are not being kept safe.” — Muriel Bamblett, Robin Clark Memorial Lecture, 2005

5. Bullying

Occurs when there is an inappropriate use of power by an individual or group, with intent to harm or injure physically, emotionally or psychologically. Bullying is usually deliberate and repeated.

Appendix 4 — Complaint form

Private and confidential

Use for formal complaints regarding discrimination, harassment (including sexual harassment), vilification, victimisation, bullying, or child safety concerns about yourself or another person, as observed by yourself. Please read the Code of Conduct before using this form.

Time: ____ : ____ am/pm **Date:** ____ / ____ / ____

Your name: _____

Role at UPCC / guest group: _____

Is the complaint about offending behaviour:

- directed toward you? Yes / No
- about another person? Yes / No

Who was the victim of the behaviour?

Staff member: _____ Camper: _____ Other: _____

Please briefly but accurately describe the alleged behaviour (facts only, without interpretation or opinion).

Who was the offending person?

What did he/she say or do?

What was your response?

Where did the event/behaviour take place?

Were there other witnesses? Names:

Was this a one-off or repeated offence?

What would you like to see as an outcome?

Statement of intent: I make this complaint in all sincerity, recognising that such a complaint may have a serious or long-term impact on all those involved. I will act in good faith in the process and accept the ruling of the investigator where I believe it is fair and transparent.

Signed: _____ **Date:** ____ / ____ / ____

Witness name: _____ **Signature:** _____ **Date:** ____ / ____ / ____

Appendix 5 — Incident report

Use this form to record details of any incident involving the writer, especially where there was an accident, near miss, emotional reaction, or allegation involving another person.

Name: _____ **Phone:** _____

Date of incident: ____ / ____ / ____ **Time:** ____ am/pm

Location on site: _____

Others involved: _____

Witnesses: 1. _____ 2. _____ 3. _____

Describe what happened, your actions and/or words, and the actions and/or words of others involved. Do not give opinions about others' motives or intentions.

I (name: _____) declare that what I have written is true and accurate in the details I have provided.

Signed: _____ **Date:** ____ / ____ / ____