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Child Safety Policy & Code of Conduct

Celebrate Mooroolbark

In effect as of: June 2018

The *Celebrate Mooroolbark* Committee have prepared this Child Safety Policy as part of our commitment to the protection and support of children and youth. We welcome community participation in this endeavour, so please contact us to provide your feedback and suggestions.

Event Scope

Mooroolbark's premier festival attracts approximately 10,000 attendees annually. Held on the 3rd or 4th weekend in March, *Celebrate Mooroolbark* includes *Red Earth UnEarthed* on the Friday evening and a free-entry community festival 10am - 4pm Saturday.

Where: Red Earth Park and Mooroolbark Community Centre
125 Brice Avenue, Mooroolbark 3138

The event is a major attraction on the Yarra Ranges calendar and involves a large number of schools, community groups and businesses from Mooroolbark and surrounds.

Objectives

The objective of this Child Safe Policy is to ensure children are safe and protected in their involvement throughout all aspects of the *Celebrate Mooroolbark* festival.

Statement of Commitment

Celebrate Mooroolbark is committed to providing a child safe environment where children and young people are safe and feel safe, and their voices are heard about decisions that affect their lives. Particular attention will be paid to the cultural safety of Indigenous children and children from culturally and/or linguistically diverse backgrounds, as well as the safety of children with a disability.

Every person involved in *Celebrate Mooroolbark* has a responsibility to ensure that the wellbeing and safety of all children and young people is at the forefront of all they do and every decision they make.

Policy Directives

In its planning, decision-making and operations *Celebrate Mooroolbark* will:

1. Take a preventative, proactive and participatory approach to child safety;
2. Value and empower children to participate in decisions which affect their lives;
3. Foster a culture of openness that supports all persons to safely disclose risks of harm to children;
4. Respect diversity in cultures and child rearing practices while keeping child safety paramount;
5. Provide written guidance on appropriate conduct and behaviour towards children;
6. Engage only the most suitable people to work with children (particularly those involved in RedEarth Unearthed) and provide them high quality supervision and support;
7. Ensure children (particularly those involved in RedEarth Unearthed) have someone to talk to if they are worried or are feeling unsafe, and that they are comfortable and encouraged to raise such issues;
8. Report suspected abuse, neglect or mistreatment promptly to the appropriate authorities;
9. Share information appropriately and lawfully with other organisations where the safety and wellbeing of children is at risk; and
10. Value the input of families and carers.

Rights of Children

Celebrate Mooroolbark recognises that all children have a right to be safe from harm.

Relevant Legislation

This policy is prepared in accordance with the *Victorian Child Safe Standards*.

Information for Volunteers

Definition of a Child

For the purposes of this policy, *Celebrate Mooroolbark* considers a child to be any minor under the age of 18 years old.

Types of Child Abuse

Child abuse can be defined as one or more of the following:

- physical abuse
- sexual abuse
- emotional abuse
- exposure to family violence
- neglect
- grooming

Vulnerable Groups

Children who are most at risk of child abuse are often:

- infants and pre-school age children
- Indigenous children
- children with a disability
- children from a Culturally and Linguistically Diverse (CaLD) or migrant background

Indicators of Child Abuse

Celebrate Mooroolbark recognises that our volunteers are not in regular contact with children. Generally, contact with children is limited to the two-day span of the event and/or when a child is under the supervision of their parent or caregiver. We have listed the following indicators as a guide to volunteers, particularly if their contact with a child is extended beyond the usual period.

Indicators of child abuse may include, but are not limited to:

- physical abuse and exposure to family violence - injuries such as bruises, welts, burns, sprains, fractures in addition to behavioural indicators such as wariness of adults, excessive friendliness, inappropriate explanations, adverse reactions, behavioural extremes and fear of going home, child stating there is violence at home
- emotional abuse - very low self esteem, compliant, passive, withdrawn, tearful or apathetic behaviour, aggressive behaviour, anxiety, serious difficulties with peers,

delayed or distorted speech

- neglect - failure to thrive/malnutrition, poor hygiene, inappropriate clothing, consistent lack of supervision, unattended medical problems, health or dietary problems in addition to behavioural indicators such as constant fatigue, stealing food, child stating there is no caregiver or alcohol or drug abuse is apparent, aggressive or inappropriate behaviour, isolation from peer group
- sexual abuse - vaginal or anal bleeding, discharge or discomfort, pregnancy, STIs, complaints of headaches or abdominal pain in addition to behavioural indicators such as disclosure of sexual abuse (intentional or unintentional), sophisticated or unusual behaviour or knowledge, soiling and/or wetting, persistent habit disorders, inhibition to play, difficulties relating to peers/adults, self-destructive behaviour.

Grooming concerns predatory conduct undertaken to prepare a child for sexual activity. While we recognise that our volunteers are not in regular contact with children, we include the following for information purposes.

Indicators that an adult may be grooming include, but are not limited to:

- spending special time with a child i.e. in private settings, away from the organisation, online
- isolating the child or young person from family and peers
- giving gifts to the child
- showing favouritism
- allowing the child to step out of boundaries or rules
- touching the child
- testing and breaking professional boundaries

Impacts of abuse

Celebrate Mooroolbark understands that our volunteers are not in regular contact with children, however, we include the following for information purposes and to reinforce our commitment to recognise and prevent child abuse.

Impacts of abuse upon the child may include:

- psychological & health outcomes
- attachment & interpersonal relationships
- learning & developmental problems
- behavioural problems
- self-harm & suicide
- alcohol & drug issues
- criminal activity
- violence & aggression
- homelessness
- death

Code of Conduct

Child Safety Officer

Celebrate Mooroolbark will appoint two Child Safety Officers on an annual basis. The Child

Safety Officer/s will provide guidance on child safety to their fellow volunteers and follow appropriate procedures when required to make a report to the authorities regarding alleged child abuse.

The Child Safety Officer/s may also make themselves available to talk to children if the child is worried or feeling unsafe.

Working with Childrens Check

Anyone who works with children must either be a police officer, teacher, parent/close relative, child themselves or holding a WWCC¹.

All committee members are required to submit a copy of a valid Working with Children's Check (nominating *Celebrate Mooroolbark*) to the Child Safety Officer upon recruitment and/or when requested. This may also extend to other volunteers, when deemed appropriate.

Photography

Celebrate Mooroolbark recommends its volunteers obtain consent from a child's parent or caregiver before photographing a child during the course of the festival planning and/or event.

Lost Children Policy

When a lost child presents at the information booth during the course of the *Celebrate Mooroolbark* event, a Child Safety Officer and/or Chair of the committee must be called upon to accompany the child.

A copy of the parent's or caregiver's identification must be sighted upon collection of the child. Should this request be refused, *Celebrate Mooroolbark* reserves the right to contact the appropriate authorities before releasing the child to the parent or caregiver.

Recruitment of Volunteers

Advertisements for new volunteers may include Child Safe information and requirements.

New volunteers will be provided a copy of the Child Safety Policy upon recruitment. Any questions can be directed to the Child Safety Officer/s.

Child Safety Policy on website

This Child Safety Policy will be available to be viewed on the *Celebrate Mooroolbark* festival website. Feedback from children, parents, caregivers and other community members is welcomed and encouraged.

Reporting Procedure

Under the *Children, Youth and Families Act 2005*, a person can make a report to Child Protection Services if they have:

¹ <http://www.workingwithchildren.vic.gov.au/home/about+the+check/who+needs+a+check/exemptions/>

- a significant concern for a child’s wellbeing
- belief that the child is in need of protection
- significant concern before the birth of a child about his/her wellbeing after his/her birth

Any person who believes, on reasonable grounds, that a child is in need of protection is required to report.

- you do not need to have proof, just reasonable grounds for your belief
- you do not need permission from parents or caregivers to make a notification
- you do not need to inform parents that a notification is being made
- if you make a notification in **good faith**, you cannot be held legally liable - regardless of the outcome of the notification
- you can make an anonymous report to child protection
- if you do provide your identity, it will remain confidential unless you need to give evidence in court

Celebrate Mooroolbark recommends that volunteers report incidences of child abuse or suspected child abuse to the Child Safety Officer/s and/or current Chair of the committee, who will in turn, notify one or more Incident Reporting Authority as listed below.

Children may also talk to the Child Safety Officer/s if they are worried or are feeling unsafe.

However, if the matter is of an urgent nature, the police must be notified immediately.

Authorities and Support Services

Information and Support Services

Commission for Children and Young People	https://ccyp.vic.gov.au/ 1300 78 29 78
Child FIRST	1300 369 146
Child Wise – Advocacy, Training and Resources	9998 9906 https://www.childwise.org.au/
Child Wise. National Child Abuse Prevention Helpline	1800 991 099 Mon – Fri 9am-5pm
Centre for Excellence in Child and Family Welfare	9614 1577 https://www.cfecfw.asn.au/child-safe-organisations/

Incident Reporting Authorities

Police	000
Department of Health and Human Services Child Protection	1300 360 391 8.45am -5.00pm 131 278 After hrs. incl. weekend/ public hols
Lilydale Police Station	9739 2300

Counseling Support Services

Kids Helpline	1800 551 800
Cybersmart Online Help	1800 880 176 www.cybersmart.gov.au
Parentline	13 22 89
Eastern Centre Against Sexual Assault (ECASA)	9870 7330 1800 806 292 (24 hrs)
Australian Childhood Foundation	1800 176 453 9874 3922
Children's Protection Society	9450 0900
Berry Street	5822 8100

State Government / Peak Body Resources

Department of Health and Human Services https://providers.dhhs.vic.gov.au/creating-child-safe-organisations
Department of Education and Training http://www.education.vic.gov.au/school/teachers/health/childprotection/Pages/safeenviro.aspx
Australian Sports Commission – Child Safe Sports Toolkit https://www.ausport.gov.au/supporting/integrity_in_sport/child_safe_sport/child_safe_sport_framework_toolkit
Association of Neighborhood Houses and Learning Centre's https://www.nhvic.org.au/resources/victorian-child-safe-standards
Youth Affairs Council Victoria https://www.yacvic.org.au/about-us/child-safe-standards/

If you would like to make a suggestion or provide feedback regarding the above policy, please contact admin@celebratemooroolbark.com