

St Vincent de Paul Society Canberra/Goulburn

Child Protection Policy

In its work, the Society commits to protect children from all forms of physical and mental violence, injury or abuse, neglect, maltreatment or exploitation, including sexual abuse, grooming or exposure to domestic violence. The Society is committed to child-safe environments and practices under the guiding principle of always acting in the best interests and protecting the child.

The policy ensures the Society is compliant with Federal, State and Territory legislation when engaged in work that is a regulated activity or that interacts with or impacts on children either directly or indirectly, by providing a framework for children to be better protected and for Society people to know their responsibilities.

Scope

This policy applies to all people (paid or unpaid) who are engaged, or propose to engage, in a child-related or regulated activity on behalf of the Society in the Canberra/Goulburn Archdiocese.

Policy

Compliance with legislative requirements

The Society will meet legislated requirements in the jurisdictions it operates in, and in the services and activities it offers, as a minimum standard for all child-related services or activities.

Chief Executive Officer responsibilities

The Chief Executive Officer is responsible for ensuring all people are aware of this policy, it is covered in Society inductions, it is included in the Code of Conduct and referenced in position descriptions, where appropriate. People working in or providing high level risk activities or services will be required to attend child protection training.

Child protection clearances

All current and new Society people must hold a valid and current Working with Children (NSW) or Working with Vulnerable Persons check (ACT) prior to commencing working in any

child-related area or activity. This is a mandatory element of recruitment, selection and appointment of all people.

A person who presents a negative notice, cannot commence until they are able to present a valid registration. Where a person has a conditional or role-based registration, an individual risk management strategy will be compiled. People who do not comply with the risk management strategy may be subject to termination of employment or engagement as this is considered serious misconduct.

Risk Assessment

A risk assessment and treatment plan will be conducted for all child-related activities and will be reviewed annually or in light of changed circumstances. The risk management levels applied to Society work include, but are not limited to:

Low Level Risk	Medium Level Risk	High Level Risk
Activities with guardians present	Events with youth aged from 15-18 years	Activities where guardians are not supervising
Activities take place in full view of other people (public area)		Overnight camps
		Activities with children from vulnerable environments

Change of Circumstances

If a person is charged with or convicted of a relevant criminal offence or has a relevant change of circumstance, or is advised their registration is to be reassessed, they must immediately notify the Society in writing. In such cases, the person will be withdrawn from all child-related or regulated activities or suspended from work on no pay until the situation is resolved. If a check is rendered invalid, the Society may terminate employment or engagement if this is an inherent requirement of the role.

Responsibility for payment for clearances

The Society will pay for checks for current employees. Volunteer registration is free of charge. Photographs and other evidentiary requirements are a personal cost. It is each person's responsibility to renew and fund registration within the required timelines and provide copies to the Society for registration and verification, prior to the expiry date of the original check.

Complaints relating to Child Protection Policy decisions

Any complaints relating to child protection matters involving Society employees, members or volunteers will be investigated in accordance with the protocols detailed in the National Council Policy “The Healing Path”.

The Society has no roles with mandatory reporting, however all people have an obligation to escalate complaints, concerns or disclosure to the Chief Executive Officer in the first instance. An assistance program is available for confidential counselling and support of Society people.

Privacy

The collection, recording, storage and verification of checks and all associated child-based records, complaints or correspondence are electronically stored in accordance with privacy legislation and the Society’s Privacy Policy.

How to contact us

Individuals can obtain further information in relation to this child protection policy, or provide any comments, by contacting us:

Email: info@svdp-cg.org.au

Phone: (02) 6282 2722

Fax: (02) 6281 4743

Post: PO Box 51, Deakin West ACT 2600

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