Incorporation No: A0031117T  ABN: 94 539 710 877

# Child[1] Safety and Wellbeing Responding and Reporting Procedure[2]

## SCOPE AND APPLICATION

This procedure covers responding to and reporting suspected child abuse[3] or child safety and wellbeing concerns in relation to FOSC Inc activities. All FOSC Inc members, contractors and collaborators (aka personnel) should follow this procedure.

## RESPONSIBILITIES

FOSC Inc personnel should be familiar with and follow the FOSC Inc Child Safety and Wellbeing Policy (located on our website) and the Child Safety and Wellbeing Responding and Reporting Procedure described herein.

## REPORTING REQUIREMENTS

If you believe, on 'reasonable grounds', that a child is being abused or you are concerned for a child's safety you are required to respond and report immediately. You may have observed the abuse, it may have been disclosed to you directly, you may have been made aware of it from someone else or you may have formed a reasonable belief that a child is being abused or at risk of being abused.

**Important Note: It is an offence for any adult not to report *sexual* abuse of children.**

https://www.justice.vic.gov.au/safer-communities/protecting-children-and-families/failure-to-disclose-offence

### What to do when a child discloses information to you

If a child discloses information to you:

- Listen to what they say and allow them to speak;
- Stay calm and do not display expressions of panic or shock;
- Be patient and non-judgemental;
- Tell the child that they are doing the right thing telling you and that it is not their fault;

Notes:

[1] A Child is a person who is under the age of 18 years.

[2] This policy is based on a template provided to FOSC Inc by Brimbank City Council.

[3] Types of abuse include sexual abuse, physical abuse, neglect, emotional abuse, grooming, family violence, sexual exploitation, cumulative harm and peer to peer.

**Cont/**

- Allow the child to talk in their own words and their own time and do not pressure them into telling you more than they want to;
- Do not make promises that you cannot keep such as promising you won't tell anyone;
- Do not discuss the incident with those that are not required to know.

## What should be reported?

Individuals must promptly report when they observe or suspect any form of abuse (outlined in the FOSC Inc Child Safety and Wellbeing Policy). Concerns can range from an uncomfortable feeling through to direct observation or a disclosure by a child. For example:

- Concerns about a physical environment (including health and hygiene concerns);
- Inappropriate relationships between FOSC Inc personnel and children;
- Breaches of Code of Conduct;
- Observation of concerning change in behaviour of a child or an adult;
- Disclosure by a child of abuse or harm (must be reported to Victoria Police or DFFH Child Protection).

## Who to report to and how to report child abuse

If a child is in immediate danger and at risk of abuse you must call 000 and report it to Victoria Police.

If the child is not at risk of immediate harm, you must report to the FOSC Inc President and Secretary who will support your report to the appropriate authorities as soon as possible (if necessary, to Victoria Police or DFFH Child Protection). If you were the person that observed the abuse or were made directly aware of it, you will have to write the report to Victoria Police or DFFH Child Protection, if so required.

If FOSC Inc personnel have been reported, the President or Secretary may take action which could include suspension or alternative duties of the reported person.

All personal information considered or recorded will respect the privacy of all personnel involved, unless there is a risk to someone's safety.

Note: Mandatory reporting legislation exists and those professions who are mandated to report must fulfil this legal requirement.

## CONTACTS

Victoria Police - Report Child Abuse
https://www.police.vic.gov.au/report-child-abuse

| Organisation | Contact Number |
|---|---|
| Victoria Police | 000 |
| DFFH Child Protection - West Division Intake<br>Monday - Friday (8:45am-5:00pm) | 1300 664 977 |
| DFFH Child Protection<br>After Hours Emergency Services<br>Monday - Friday 5:00pm-9:00am<br>(24 hours on weekends and public holidays) | 13 12 78 |