

DATTA Vic Child Safe Policy & Procedures (POL03)

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Drafted by:	Laura Murphy	Approved by Committee on:	12/02/2025
Responsible person:	Zowie Moselen	Scheduled review date on:	Feb 2028

POLICY

Introduction

The Design and Technology Teachers Association Victoria (DATTA Vic) is committed to promoting and protecting the interests and safety of children. We have zero tolerance for child abuse.

Everyone who works or volunteers with DATTA Vic is responsible for the care and protection of children and reporting information about child abuse.

Purpose

The purpose of this policy is:

1. To facilitate the prevention of child abuse occurring within DATTA Vic
2. To work towards an organisational culture of child safety.
3. To establish a culturally safe environment in which the diverse and unique identities and experiences of Aboriginal children and young people are respected and valued
4. To ensure that all parties are aware of their responsibilities for identifying possible occasions for child abuse and for establishing controls and procedures for preventing such abuse and/or detecting such abuse when it occurs.
5. To provide guidance to staff/volunteers/contractors as to action that should be taken where they suspect any abuse within or outside of the organisation.
6. To provide a clear statement to staff/volunteers/contractors forbidding any such abuse.
7. To provide assurance that any and all suspected abuse will be reported and fully investigated.

Scope

The scope of this policy covers:

- Executive Leadership
- Committee members
- Staff
- Volunteers
- Contractors
- Consultants

Policy Statement

DATTA Vic is committed to promoting and protecting the best interests of children involved in its programs. All children, regardless of their gender, race, religious beliefs, age, disability, sexual orientation, or family or social background, have equal rights to protection from abuse.

DATTA Vic has zero tolerance for child abuse. Everyone working or volunteering with DATTA Vic is responsible for the protection of the children within our care and reporting information about suspected child abuse.

DATTA Vic supports and respects all children, staff and volunteers. We are committed to the cultural safety of Aboriginal children, and those from culturally and/or linguistically diverse backgrounds. We will provide a safe environment for children living with a disability, and give attention to the needs of non-binary and gender diverse children. We will provide children and young people with access to information, support and complaints processes that are culturally safe and easy to understand.

This policy addresses both physical and online environments.

If any person believes a child is in immediate risk of abuse, telephone 000.

The policy should be read in conjunction with the Children Youth and Families Act 2005.

PROCEDURES

Responsibilities

The Committee of DATTA Vic has ultimate responsibility for the detection and prevention of child abuse and is responsible for ensuring that appropriate and effective internal control systems are in place. The Committee is also responsible for ensuring that appropriate policies and procedures and a Child Protection Code of Conduct are in place.

The EO of DATTA Vic is responsible for:

- Dealing with and investigating reports of child abuse;
- Ensuring that all staff, contractors, and volunteers are aware of relevant laws, organisational policies and procedures, and the organisation's Code of Conduct;
- Ensuring that all adults within the DATTA Vic community are aware of their obligation to report suspected sexual abuse of a child in accordance with these policies and procedures;
- Ensuring that all staff, contractors and volunteers are aware of their obligation to observe the Code of Conduct (particularly as it relates to child safety);
- Providing support and training for staff, contractors and volunteers in undertaking their child protection responsibilities, including how to identify the signs of harm to children
- Promote child safety at all times;
- Assess the risk of child abuse within their area of control and eradicate or minimise any risk to the extent possible;
- Educate employees about the prevention and detection of child abuse;
- Analyse complaints, concerns and safety incidents to identify causes and systemic failures to inform continuous improvement;
- Facilitate the reporting of any inappropriate behaviour or suspected abusive activities; and
- Ensuring child protection training is available to all members of staff

The EO should be familiar with the types of abuse that might occur within their area of responsibility and be alert for any indications of such conduct.

All staff/volunteers/contractors share the responsibility for the prevention and detection of child abuse, and must:

- Familiarise themselves with the relevant laws, the Code of Conduct, and DATTA Vic's policy and procedures in relation to child protection, and comply with all requirements;
- Report any reasonable belief that a child's safety is at risk to the relevant authorities (such as the police and/or the state-based child protection service) and fulfil their obligations as mandatory reporters;
- Report any suspicion that a child's safety may be at risk to their Manager(or, if their Manager is involved in the suspicion, to the Executive Committee; and
- Provide an environment that is supportive of all children's emotional and physical safety, including addressing risks from adult to child and child to child interactions

Definitions

Child means a person below the age of 18 years unless, under the law applicable to the child, majority is attained earlier.

Child protection means any responsibility, measure or activity undertaken to safeguard children from harm.

Child abuse means all forms of physical abuse, emotional ill-treatment, sexual abuse and exploitation, neglect or negligent treatment, commercial (e.g. for financial gain) or other exploitation of a child and includes any actions that results in actual or potential harm to a child.

Child sexual assault is any act which exposes a child to, or involves a child in, sexual processes beyond his or her understanding or contrary to accepted community standards. Sexually abusive behaviours can include the fondling of genitals, masturbation, oral sex, vaginal or anal penetration by a penis, finger or any other object, fondling of breasts, voyeurism, exhibitionism, and exposing the child to or involving the child in pornography. It includes child grooming, which refers to actions deliberately undertaken with the aim of befriending and establishing an emotional connection with a child to lower the child's inhibitions in preparation for sexual activity with the child.

Reasonable grounds for belief is a belief based on reasonable grounds (see below) that child abuse has occurred when all known considerations or facts relevant to the formation of a belief are taken into account and these are objectively assessed. Circumstances or considerations may include the source of the allegation and how it was communicated, the nature of and details of the allegation, and whether there are any other related matters known regarding the alleged perpetrator.

A reasonable belief is formed if a reasonable person believes that:

- (a) the child is in need of protection,
- (b) the child has suffered or is likely to suffer "significant harm as a result of physical injury," or
- (c) the parents are unable or unwilling to protect the child.

A 'reasonable belief' or a 'belief on reasonable grounds' is not the same as having proof, but is more than mere rumour or speculation.

A 'reasonable belief' is formed if a reasonable person in the same position would have formed the belief on the same grounds. For example, a 'reasonable belief' might be formed if:

- a) a child states that they have been physically or sexually abused;
- b) a child states that they know someone who has been physically or sexually abused (sometimes the child may be talking about themselves);
- c) someone who knows a child states that the child has been physically or sexually abused;
- d) professional observations of the child's behaviour or development leads a professional to form a belief that the child has been physically or sexually abused or is likely to be abused; and/or
- e) signs of abuse lead to a belief that the child has been physically or sexually abused.

Employment of New Personnel

DATTA Vic undertakes a comprehensive recruitment and screening process for all staff and volunteers that aims to:

- promote and protect the safety of all children under the care of the organisation;
- identify the safest and most suitable people who share DATTA Vic's values and commitment to protect children; and
- prevent a person from working or volunteering with DATTA Vic if they pose a risk to children; and
- New personnel who will be working directly with children must have a current VIT registration, a Working with Children check

DATTA Vic requires all workers/volunteers to pass through the organisation's recruitment and screening processes prior to commencing their engagement.

DATTA Vic may require applicants to provide a police check in accordance with the law and as appropriate, before they commence working.

DATTA Vic may require applicants to have a Working with Children Check in accordance with the law and as appropriate, before they commence working.

DATTA Vic will undertake thorough reference checks as per the approved internal procedure.

Once engaged, workers/volunteers must review and acknowledge their understanding of this Policy.

Once engaged, workers/volunteers will be made aware of the organisation's record keeping processes in relation to child safety and wellbeing, as well as information sharing and reporting obligations.

Once engaged, relevant workers/volunteers must be trained in how to spot signs of harm in children.

New employees, volunteers or contractors who will be working directly with children and young people are required to have a Working with Children Check or, in the case of teachers, a current VIT registration.

New employees, volunteers or contractors who will be working directly with children and young people are required to sign DATTA Vic's Child Safe Code of Conduct.

DATTA Vic will maintain appropriate Child Sexual Abuse insurance cover.

Engagement with individuals seeking work via our website

In order for DATTA Vic to share the details of individuals seeking to work in Victoria as a teacher, they must provide evidence of registration with their state or territory's Institute of Teaching, a current Working with Children check or an authorised police check from their country of origin.

See Appendix 1 - Child Safe Code of Conduct

Risk Management

DATTA Vic will ensure that child safety is a part of its overall risk management approach.

The DATTA Vic Executive will be responsible for identifying and managing risks. They will work with the Executive Education Officer to ensure procedures are established and carried out.

Reporting

Managers must report complaints of suspected abusive behaviour or misconduct to the Committee of Management and also to any external regulatory body such as the police.

Any staff member, volunteer or contractor who has grounds to suspect abusive activity must immediately notify the appropriate child protection service or the police. They should also advise their Manager about their concern.

In situations where the Manager is suspected of involvement in the activity, or if the person having the suspicion does not believe that the matter is being appropriately addressed or dealt with, the matter should be reported to the Executive Committee.

The process for children to make a complaint will be made clear on the DATTA Vic website. These complaints would go in the first instance to the President of DATTA Vic, and if required, to any external regulatory body such as the police.

DATTA Vic will abide by the terms of the [Victorian Child Wellbeing and Safety Act](#) of 2005 and follow the Child Safe Standards of 2022.

Investigating

If the appropriate child protection service or the police decide to investigate a report, all employees, contractors or volunteers must cooperate fully with the investigation.

Whether or not the authorities decide to conduct an investigation, the EO will consult with the authorities to determine whether an internal investigation is appropriate. If it is decided that such an investigation will not conflict with any proceeding of the authorities, the EO may decide to conduct such an investigation. All employees, contractors and volunteers must cooperate fully with the investigation.

Any such investigation will be conducted according to the rules of natural justice.

The EO will make every effort to keep any such investigation confidential; however, from time to time other members of staff may need to be consulted in conjunction with the investigation.

After an initial review and a determination that the suspected abuse warrants additional investigation, the EO shall coordinate the investigation with the appropriate investigators and/or law enforcement officials. Internal or external legal representatives will be involved in the process, as deemed appropriate.

Responding

If it is alleged that a member of staff, contractor or a volunteer may have committed an offence or have breached the organisation's policies or its Code of Conduct the person concerned may be stood down (with pay, where applicable) while an investigation is conducted.

If the investigation concludes that on the balance of probabilities an offence (or a breach of the organisation's policies or Code of Conduct) has occurred then disciplinary action may follow, up to and including dismissal or cessation of involvement with the organisation. The findings of the investigation will also be reported to any external body as required.

Privacy

All personal information considered or recorded will respect the privacy of the individuals involved unless there is a risk to someone's safety. DATTA Vic will have safeguards and practices in place to ensure any personal information is protected.

Everyone is entitled to know how the personal information is recorded, what will be done with it, and who will be able to access it.

Reviewing

Every three years, and following every reportable incident, a review shall be conducted to assess whether the organisation's child protection policies or procedures require modification to better protect the children under the organisation's care.

Authorisation



Zowie Moselen

13/02/2025

Signature of President

Name of President

Date



Laura Murphy

13/02/2025

Signature of Executive Education Officer

Name of Executive Education Officer

Date

13th February, 2025

Date of approval by the Committee

Written by Laura Murphy, DATTA Vic EEO, February 2025

Appendix 1

Child Safety Code of Conduct for Staff, Volunteers and Committee Members



All employees and contractors must sign the Child Safety Code of Conduct

All Staff, Volunteers and Committee Members of DATTA Vic are required to observe child safe principles and expectations for appropriate behaviour towards and in the company of children, as noted below.

All staff, volunteers and contractors who work directly with children are required to have a Working with Children Check or a Victorian Institute of Teaching registration.

All staff and regular contractors who work directly with children will be required to sign this code of conduct when they start working with DATTA Vic, and each time the Child Protection Policy is reviewed. All contractors who are engaged in one-off projects where they will work directly with children must sign this code of conduct prior to the start of the contract.

All personnel of DATTA Vic are responsible for supporting the safety, participation, wellbeing and empowerment of children, by:

- adhering to DATTA Vic's Child Protection Policy at all times
- taking all reasonable steps to protect children from abuse
- treating everyone with respect
- listening and responding to the views and concerns of children
- promoting the cultural safety, participation and empowerment of Indigenous & Torres Strait Island children (for example, by never questioning a child's self-identification)
- promoting the cultural safety, participation and empowerment of children with culturally and/or linguistically diverse backgrounds (for example, by having a zero tolerance of discrimination)
- promoting the safety, participation and empowerment of children with a disability
- ensuring, as far as practicable, that adults are not left alone with a child
- reporting any allegations of child abuse to the Executive Officer
- reporting any child safety concerns to the Executive Officer
- ensuring, as quickly as possible, that the child is safe if an
- allegation of child abuse has been made

Staff and volunteers must not:

- develop any 'special' relationships with children that could be seen as favouritism (for example, the offering of gifts or special treatment for specific students)
- exhibit behaviours with children which may be construed as unnecessarily physical
- put children at risk of abuse (for example, poor supervision practices)
- do things of a personal nature that a child would usually do for themselves, such as personal care or changing clothes
- engage in open discussions of a mature or adult nature in the presence of children
- use inappropriate language in the presence of children
- express personal views on cultures, race or sexuality in the presence of children
- discriminate against any child because of culture, race, ethnicity or disability
- have any online contact with a child of a personal nature
- ignore or disregard any suspected or disclosed child abuse.

By observing these standards you acknowledge your responsibility to immediately report any breach of this code to DATTA Vic's Executive Officer Laura Murphy, or someone on the DATTA Vic Executive Committee.

If you believe a child is at immediate risk of abuse, phone 000.

Further information can be found on: www.vrqa.vic.gov.au/childsafes

I have read and agree to adhere to the DATTA Vic Child Safety Code of Conduct

Name (BLOCK LETTERS):

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Signature:

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Date:

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This form should be signed, dated and returned to DATTA Vic Executive Education Officer at pl@datta.vic.edu.au