



SAFEGUARDING POLICY

Purpose

This policy demonstrates WAYV's commitment to the safety and wellbeing of children and young people in our programs, establishing principles to protect them from harm, including abuse.

1. Commitment to Child Safety

WAYV is dedicated to ensuring a safe, happy, and empowering environment for children and young adults. We uphold a zero-tolerance approach to child abuse, treating all allegations seriously.

2. Types of Concerns

Concerns may arise in various ways, and they may not always require the same course of action. These concerns can be categorized as follows:

- **Day-to-Day Concerns:** These are typical issues arising from a child's or young adult's daily activities at a course or event, such as homesickness or performance anxiety. Staff members will address these concerns immediately as part of their professional engagement with the individual.
- **Safeguarding Concerns:** These concerns indicate a child's or adult's vulnerability that may require further assessment and possible action, such as signs of withdrawal or not eating.
- **Child Protection Concerns:** These arise when staff or volunteers suspect or have evidence that a child has been harmed or is likely to be harmed, or when a child makes a disclosure.

Circumstances when concerns about a child/adult may arise:

- A child or adult may disclose something that has upset them or that has happened to another child or adult.
- Someone else might report that a child or adult has disclosed harm or that they strongly believe a child or adult is being harmed.
- A child or adult may exhibit signs of injury without a satisfactory explanation.
- The behaviour or attitude of a staff member or another adult towards a child or adult may cause concern or discomfort.
- Staff may witness concerning behaviour involving a child, young adult or an adult.

3. Preventing Child Abuse

WAYV is committed to preventing child abuse by:

- Identifying risks early and taking action to mitigate them.
- Providing regular training and education on child abuse and safety risks to all personnel.

4. Cultural Safety and Inclusion

We recognise the importance of cultural safety for those from diverse backgrounds. WAYV strives to create an inclusive environment that respects and values all children, including those with disabilities and accessibility needs.

5. Responding to Concerns

5.1 Responsibilities of Staff

All WAYV staff and volunteers must report any concerns about children or young adults. They must be vigilant; they must recognise anything that may be concerning, respond to it, and document it.

5.2 Responding to Disclosures

If a child or young adult discloses abuse they have suffered or that another has suffered, you should:

- *Stay Calm:* Listen attentively and without interruption.
- *Explain the Process:* Let them know that the information will likely need to be shared with others who need to know. Do not promise confidentiality.
- *Allow Them to Pace:* Encourage them to express themselves at their own speed.
- *Clarify, Don't Lead:* Ask clarifying questions without suggesting answers.
- *Reassure:* Affirm that they have done the right thing by telling you.
- *Document Everything:* Record the conversation using the child's or adult's exact words as soon as possible, including the date, time, and any names mentioned (See **Appendix 1**)
- *Report:* Submit your written record to a WAYV Director who will take appropriate action.
- *Maintain Confidentiality:* Do not discuss the matter with others, except as necessary for reporting.

5.3 Follow-Up Reporting

Document any subsequent incidents or events involving the child or young adult (See **Appendix 2**)

6. Code of Safe Conduct

WAYV expects all staff and volunteers to adhere to safe conduct in their interactions with children and young adults. In particular:

- Treat all individuals as unique and deserving of respect.
- Ensure that activities with children or young adults involve more than one adult on the premises wherever possible.
- Be cautious with physical contact, and only engage when necessary (e.g., in emergencies). Avoid unnecessary contact.
- Wear identification badges and appropriate attire as provided by WAYV.

Staff must not:

- Show favouritism or develop close personal relationships with participants.
- Make inappropriate remarks, even in jest.
- Engage in social relationships outside of rehearsals and performances.
- Communicate with choristers through personal email, phone, or social media.
- Engage in any form of sexual activity or grooming behaviour.

7. Reporting Procedures

WAYV has an Incident Report procedure (see **Appendix 1**) to address allegations of abuse, including notifying authorities like the police and child protection agencies.

8. Privacy

All personal information collected will respect the privacy of individuals involved, unless there is a risk to someone's safety. WAYV has safeguards in place to protect personal information, and individuals will be informed about how their information is recorded, used, and accessed. See the **Privacy Policy** for further information.

9. Legislative Responsibilities

WAYV is committed to complying with legal obligations, including:

- All staff and volunteers must obtain a **Working With Children Check** to ensure they have no relevant criminal history.
- All staff and volunteers at WAYV must report suspected child abuse under the **Children and Community Services Act 2004**. Anyone who is concerned that a child is suffering any form of abuse or neglect should report their concerns to Department of Communities through the **Central Intake Team** on **1800 273 889**, even if they are not a mandatory reporter under the Act.

Contact Us

For questions about this policy, please contact us at info@wayoungvoices.com.au

Appendix 1 - Incident Report

All incident reports must be stored securely to maintain confidentiality.

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

1. Incident Details

Name(s) of Child(ren)/Young Person(s) Involved: _____

Parent or guardian's name(s): _____

Does the child identify as Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander? _____

Is the child from a culturally or linguistically diverse background? _____

Does the child have a disability¹? _____

Please describe what has prompted the concerns (include dates, times etc. of any specific incidents).

Are you reporting your own concerns or passing on someone else's concerns?

Are there any physical or behavioural signs? What are they?

¹ A disability can be any physical, sensory, neurological disability, acquired brain injury, intellectual disability, or developmental delay that affects a child's ability to undertake everyday activities.

Have you spoken to the child? What did the child say?

Have you spoken to the parent/carer(s)? What did they say?

Has anybody been alleged to be the abuser? Please give details.

Have you talked to anyone else about your concerns? Please give details.

Have you taken any immediate actions?

Are any follow-up actions needed, including additional reporting or support measures?

Submitted By: _____

Date of Submission: _____

Signature: _____

Appendix 2 - Follow-Up Report

All incident reports must be stored securely to maintain confidentiality.

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

Have you taken any follow-up actions?

Have any written referrals been made? If so, what and to whom?

Are there any further actions to be taken? Who will be responsible for these actions?
