

Apprenticeships
Are Us



**CHILD SAFETY
STATEMENT**

**SAFETY
FIRST**



OUR COMMITMENT TO CHILD SAFETY

OUR ORGANISATION IS COMMITTED TO CHILD SAFETY

- We want children to be safe, happy and empowered. We support and respect all children, as well as our staff and volunteers.
- We are committed to the safety, participation and empowerment of all children.
- We have zero tolerance of child abuse, and all allegations and safety concerns will be treated very seriously and consistently with our robust policies and procedures.
- We have legal and moral obligations to contact authorities when we are worried about a child's safety, which we follow rigorously. This statement is aligned with the *National Standards for Group Training Organisations (Standard 2.2)*, which requires GTOs to implement robust strategies to protect the safety and well-being of children and young people in the workplace. Apprenticeships Are Us Ltd complies with these standards by ensuring all host employers and training sites meet the required child safety regulations.
- Our organisation is committed to preventing child abuse and identifying risks early and removing and reducing these risks.
- Our organisation has robust human resources and recruitment practices for all staff and volunteers.
- Our organisation is committed to regularly training and educating our staff and volunteers on child abuse risks.
- We support and respect all children, as well as our staff and volunteers. We are committed to the cultural safety of Aboriginal children, the cultural safety of children from culturally and/or linguistically diverse backgrounds, and to providing a safe environment for children with a disability.
- We have specific policies, procedures and training in place that support our leadership team, staff and volunteers to achieve these commitments.

Apprenticeships Are Us Ltd provides whistleblower protections under the *Treasury Laws Amendment (Enhancing Whistleblower Protections) Act 2024*. This ensures that any staff member, volunteer, or third-party who raises concerns about child safety is protected from retaliation, and that all reports are managed confidentially and securely.

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

OUR CHILDREN

This policy is intended to empower children who are vital and active participants in our organisation. We involve them when making decisions, especially about matters that directly affect them. We listen to their views and respect what they have to say.

We promote diversity and tolerance in our organisation, and people from all walks of life and cultural

backgrounds are welcome. In particular, we:

- promote the cultural safety, participation, and empowerment of Aboriginal children. We also ensure that our child safety practices are culturally competent and inclusive. Staff and volunteers receive training in engaging with children from diverse backgrounds, including Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children and children from refugee and migrant families. This training is aligned with the *Racial Discrimination Act 1975* and the *Multicultural NSW Act 2000*.
- promote the cultural safety, participation, and empowerment of children from culturally and/or linguistically diverse backgrounds.
- ensure that children with a disability are safe and can participate equally.

OUR STAFF AND VOLUNTEERS

This policy guides our staff and volunteers on how to behave with children in our organisation.

All of our staff and volunteers must agree to abide by our code of conduct which specifies the standards of conduct required when working with children. All staff and volunteers, as well as children and their families, are given the opportunity to contribute to the development of the code of conduct.

TRAINING AND SUPERVISION

Training and education are important to ensure that everyone in our organisation understands that child safety is everyone's responsibility.

Our organisational culture aims for all staff and volunteers (in addition to parents/carers and children) to feel confident and comfortable in discussing any allegations of child abuse or child safety concerns. We train our staff and volunteers to identify, assess, and minimise risks of child abuse and to detect potential signs of child abuse.

We also support our staff and volunteers through ongoing supervision to develop their skills to protect children from abuse; and promote the cultural safety of Aboriginal children, the cultural safety of children from linguistically and/or diverse backgrounds, and the safety of children with a disability.

New employees and volunteers will be supervised regularly to ensure they understand our organisation's commitment to child safety and that everyone has a role to play in protecting children from abuse, as well as checking that their behaviour towards children is safe and appropriate (please refer to this organisation's code of conduct to understand appropriate behaviour further). Any inappropriate behaviour will be reported through appropriate channels, including the Department of Health and Human Services and Victoria Police, depending on the severity and urgency of the matter.

RECRUITMENT

We take all reasonable steps to employ skilled people to work with children. We develop selection criteria and

advertisements which clearly demonstrate our commitment to child safety and an awareness of our social and legislative responsibilities. Our organisation understands that when recruiting staff and volunteers we have ethical as well as legislative obligations.

We actively encourage applications from Aboriginal peoples, people from culturally and/or linguistically diverse backgrounds and people with a disability.

All people engaged in child-related work, including volunteers, are required to hold a Working with Children Check and to provide evidence of this Check. Please see the [Working with Children Check](#) website for further information.

We carry out reference checks and police record checks to ensure that we are recruiting the right people. Police record checks are used only for the purposes of recruitment and are discarded after the recruitment process is complete. We do retain our own records (but not the actual criminal record) if an applicant's criminal history affected our decision-making process.

If during the recruitment process a person's records indicate a criminal history, then the person will be given the opportunity to provide further information and context.

FAIR PROCEDURES FOR PERSONNEL

The safety and wellbeing of children is our primary concern. We are also fair and just to personnel. The decisions we make when recruiting, assessing incidents, and undertaking disciplinary action will always be thorough, transparent, and based on evidence.

We record all allegations of abuse and safety concerns using our incident reporting form, including investigation updates. All records are securely stored.

If an allegation of abuse or a safety concern is raised, we provide updates to children and families on progress and any actions we as an organisation take.

PRIVACY

All personal information considered or recorded will respect the privacy of the individuals involved, whether they be staff, volunteers, parents or children, unless there is a risk to someone's safety. We have safeguards and practices in place to ensure any personal information is protected. Everyone is entitled to know how this information is recorded, what will be done with it, and who will have access to it.

In addition to respecting the privacy of individuals, we comply with the *Privacy Act 1988* and the *Australian Privacy Principles (APPs)*. All personal information related to children, families, and staff is stored securely, and access is limited to authorised personnel to ensure the highest level of data protection and confidentiality.

LEGISLATIVE RESPONSIBILITIES

Our organisation takes our legal responsibilities seriously, including:

- **Failure to disclose:** Reporting child sexual abuse is a community-wide responsibility. All adults in Victoria who have a reasonable belief that an adult has committed a sexual offence against a child under 16 have an obligation to report that information to the police¹.
- **Failure to protect**²: People of authority in our organisation will commit an offence if they know of a substantial risk of child sexual abuse and have the power or responsibility to reduce or remove the risk, but negligently fail to do so.
- Any personnel who are **mandatory reporters** must comply with their duties³.
- This statement is also compliant with the *Children's Guardian Act 2019 (NSW)* and the *Child Wellbeing and Safety Act 2005 (Vic)*, which outline the legal obligations for reporting and managing child protection concerns. Apprenticeships Are Us Ltd ensures that mandatory reporting protocols are followed, and that all staff and volunteers are trained to recognize the signs of child abuse and neglect.

RISK MANAGEMENT

In Victoria, organisations are required to protect children when a risk is identified (see information about failure to protect above). In addition to general occupational health and safety risks, we proactively manage risks of abuse to our children.

We have risk management strategies in place to identify, assess, and take steps to minimise child abuse risks, which include risks posed by physical environments (for example, any doors that can lock), and online environments (for example, no staff or volunteer is to have contact with a child in organisations on social media).

In compliance with the *Cybersecurity Standards Act 2023*, Apprenticeships Are Us Ltd has implemented strict cybersecurity protocols to protect children in online environments. This includes secure communication channels, regular audits of digital platforms, and protocols to ensure staff do not engage in inappropriate online contact with children.

REGULAR REVIEW

This policy will be reviewed every two years and following significant incidents if they occur. We will ensure that families and children have the opportunity to contribute. Where possible we do our best to work with local Aboriginal communities, culturally and/or linguistically diverse communities and people with a disability.

¹ A person will not commit this offence if they have a reasonable excuse for not disclosing the information, including a fear for their safety or where the information has already been disclosed.

² Further information about the failure to protect offence is available on the [Department of Justice and Regulation website](#).

³ Mandatory reporters (doctors, nurses, midwives, teachers (including early childhood teachers), principals and police) must report to child protection if they believe on reasonable grounds that a child is in need of protection from physical injury or sexual abuse. See the Department of Health and Human Services website for information about [how to make a report to child protection](#).

ALLEGATIONS, CONCERNS AND COMPLAINTS

Our organisation takes all allegations seriously and has practices in place to investigate thoroughly and quickly. Our staff and volunteers are trained to deal appropriately with allegations.

We work to ensure all children, families, staff and volunteers know what to do and who to tell if they observe abuse or are a victim, and if they notice inappropriate behaviour.

We all have a responsibility to report an allegation of abuse if we have a reasonable belief that an incident took place (see information about failure to disclose above).

If an adult has a **reasonable belief** that an incident has occurred, then they must report the incident. Factors contributing to reasonable belief may be:

- a child states they or someone they know has been abused (noting that sometimes the child may in fact be referring to themselves).
- behaviour consistent with that of an abuse victim is observed.
- someone else has raised a suspicion of abuse but is unwilling to report it.
- observing suspicious behaviour.

AUTHORISATION

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Apprenticeships Are Us Limited

DOCUMENT CONTROL

Version	Authorised by	Authorisation Date	Sections	Amendment
1.1			All	N/A
1.2	M. Wentworth	01/02/2018		Change of CEO
1.3	M. Wentworth	29/10/2024	All	Cover page, information update