



Child Safety Policy

Bicycle Network has developed the following Child Safety Policy in line with the Victorian Child Safe Standards.

The policy is an overview of the measures we have in place across our organisation to promote the wellbeing and safety of children.

The policy is available to any member of the public and is also provided to all team members through our induction process.

1. We're a Child Safe organisation

Bicycle Network's team is committed to promoting the wellbeing of children and protecting them from all forms of child abuse. This commitment is demonstrated through the implementation of our *Child Safety Policy*, which is designed to keep children safe when they interact with our organisation.

We have zero tolerance for child abuse and are committed to delivering programs and events that are in children's best interests and don't place them at risk of harm.

Bicycle Network regards its child safety responsibilities with the utmost importance and as such, we are committed to providing the necessary resources to ensure compliance with all relevant child protection laws and regulations and maintain a child safe culture.

2. Our values and principles

As an organisation we are committed, honest, inclusive and progressive. These values are behind our commitment to child safety, where we:

- Support and respect all children, and aim to create an environment where children are safe, happy and empowered.
- Are committed to the safety, participation and empowerment of all children.
- Have zero tolerance of child abuse
- Take any allegations of abuse, or safety concerns, seriously and will immediately report them to the relevant authorities
- Promote an organisational culture of child safety through our recruitment, training and development processes for all team members and aim to create an environment where any children or team members feel safe to disclose concerns or risks of harm to children.



3. The kids

Children are vital and active participants in our organisation, and we value their contribution.

We understand their views are important and respect what they have to say. We also promote diversity and tolerance in our organisation, and welcome people from all walks of life.

In particular, we:

- promote the cultural safety, participation and empowerment of Aboriginal children
- 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 have equal opportunities to participate.

4. Our team

All of Bicycle Network agree to abide by our code of conduct which specifies the standards of conduct required when working with children.

We also recognise the importance of training and education to ensure that all team members in our organisation understands that child safety is everyone's responsibility.

We aim for all team members (in addition to parents/carers and children) to feel confident and comfortable in discussing any allegations of child abuse or child safety concerns. We also have team members across the organisation who are trained to identify, assess, and minimise risks of child abuse and to detect potential signs of child abuse.

However, all team members are empowered to report any inappropriate behaviour will be reported through appropriate channels, including the Department of Health and Human Services and Victoria Police.

Bicycle Network also supports our team through ongoing supervision to develop their skills to protect children from abuse; and promote the cultural safety of Aboriginal children, children from linguistically and/or diverse backgrounds, and the wellbeing of children with a disability.

New team members are also briefed to ensure they understand our organisation's commitment to child safety and their role in supporting that commitment.



5. Recruitment

We're committed to putting the right people in the right roles, and this includes, where relevant, recruiting team members who are skilled in working with children. We also carry out reference checks to ensure that we are recruiting the right people

All team members directly engaged in child-related work, including volunteers, are required to hold, and provide evidence of a Working with Children Check.

6. Fair procedures for personnel

The safety and wellbeing of children is our primary concern, but we are also fair and just to our team.

The decisions we make when recruiting, assessing incidents, and undertaking disciplinary action will always be thorough, transparent, evidence-based and in line with our organisational values.

If an allegation of abuse or a safety concern is raised, we provide updates to children and guardians on progress and any actions taken. We record all allegations of abuse and safety concerns, including any investigation updates, and ensure all records are securely stored.

All personal information considered or recorded will respect the privacy of the individuals involved (in line with Bicycle Network's privacy policy), whether they be team members, 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.

7. 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 police.¹
- **Failure to protect:** 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.²
- Any personnel who are **mandatory reporters** must comply with their duties.³

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. Further information about the failure to disclose offence is available on the Department of Justice and Regulation website: www.justice.vic.gov.au/home/safer+communities/protecting+children+and+families/failure+to+disclose+offence.

² Further information about the failure to protect offence is available on the Department of Justice and Regulation website

<www.justice.vic.gov.au/home/safer+communities/protecting+children+and+families/failure+to+protect+offence>.

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.



8. Risk management

All areas of Bicycle Network proactively undertake regular risk management reviews, which mitigate general occupational health and safety concerns as well as manage risks of abuse to children.

Our strategies identify, assess, and take steps to minimise child abuse risks, which include risks posed by physical environments (e.g. amenities on events) and online environments.

9. Regular review

This policy will be reviewed every six months 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.

10. Incident Management

Our organisation takes all allegations, concerns or complaints seriously and has practices in place to investigate thoroughly and quickly. We have team members who are trained to deal appropriately with allegations.

We work to ensure all children, families, team members 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.