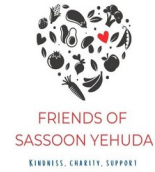




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All policies have been reviewed April 2026

Policy on Child Safety

**Note – this policy is currently being reviewed in line with the new child safety standards.

Scope

This policy applies to the committee, employees, contractors, volunteers and authorised persons engaged by the Association, as well as the attendees (members and non-members) of the Sassoon Yehuda Sephardi Synagogue. It sets out requirements that must be followed in providing a child safe and child friendly environment.

Publication and review

This Child Safe Policy is to be made available to members, attendees and the public via the website of the Sephardi Association of Victoria.

The document is to be reviewed annually, updated and endorsed by the incoming committee of the Association.

Purpose

This document outlines the Child Safety Policy of the Sephardi Association of Victoria Incorporated (the "Association"). Our policy reflects our commitment to child safety.

Principles informing this policy include:

- Promote the safety of children
- Prevent child abuse
- Ensure effective processes are in place to respond to and report allegations of child abuse, with processes that are child focused
 - Avoid scope for doubt and indecision which may lead to inaction and tolerance of poor behaviour
 - Enable staff and volunteers to feel empowered to act in the best interests of children when they have safety concerns, and are equipped with the knowledge, skills and awareness to keep children and young people safe

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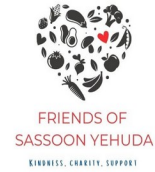
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through ongoing education and training

- Give parents and children confidence in the culture, environment and experience they can expect in our organisation, including physical and online environments that promote safety and wellbeing while minimising the opportunity for children and young people to be harmed
- Encourage children to 'have a say', especially on issues that are important to them or about decisions that affect their lives

Victorian organisations that provide services or facilities for children are required by law to implement Child Safe Standards to protect children from harm. Organisations that employ children to provide goods or services, whether paid or unpaid, must also implement the standards.

The seven Child Safe Standards are as follows:

1. Strategies to embed a culture of child safety through effective leadership arrangements.
2. A child safe policy or statement of commitment to child safety.
3. A code of conduct that establishes clear expectations for appropriate behaviour with children
4. Screening, supervision, training, and other human resources practices that reduce the risk of child abuse by new and existing staff
5. Processes for responding to and reporting suspected child abuse.
6. Strategies to identify and reduce or remove risks of child abuse.
7. Strategies to promote the participation and empowerment of children.

Key findings of the *Betrayal of Trust Report, Victoria 2012*, included that:

- children are more likely to be abused by someone they know and trust
- child abuse may occur in any institution where there are children, and a motivated perpetrator
- there is no profile of a typical sex offender

Definitions

Child

Refers to children and young people up to the age of 18.

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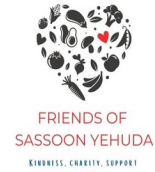
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Child safety

A child safety concern is any concern relating to the physical, emotional or cultural safety of concern a child with whom the Association has contact, either directly or indirectly. It includes, but is not limited to, allegations or suspicions of child abuse.

A child safety concern may include for example:

- exposure to a child of inappropriate content within the work environment;
- inappropriate or special relationships developing between an adult and a child (that may indicate grooming behaviour);
- inadequate staff-child supervision;
- feelings of discomfort about interactions between an adult and a child;
- concerns about a physical environment that poses a risk for children (including health and hygiene);
- concerns about a child being denied their right to culture and identity or other discriminating practice;
- any action or inaction that demonstrates non-adherence to the Association's child safe policy or code of conduct.

Child safety concerns, including suspected child abuse, may be identified through:

- a suspicion or belief that abuse or harm has occurred or is likely to occur;
- a disclosure made by a child, their parent, an external agency or any other person;
- observations of concerning changes in a child's behaviour or presentation;
- observations of concerning behaviour about a person's conduct towards or in the presence of a child.

Child abuse

Defined as:

- sexual abuse and grooming;
- physical abuse or violence;
- serious emotional and psychological abuse;
- serious neglect.

Children's Rights

Under the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child, children have rights to:

- be treated fairly;
- have a say about decisions affecting them;
- live and grow up healthy;
- have people who do what is best for them;

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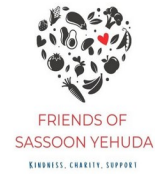
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- know who they are and where they come from;
- believe what they want to believe;
- privacy;
- find out information and express themselves;
- be safe no matter where they are;
- be cared for and have a home;

- education, play and cultural activities;
- help and protection if they need it.

Statement of commitment to child safety

We are committed to being a child safe and child friendly organisation, where children and young people with whom we have contact are safe, respected, and able to actively participate in decisions that affect their lives.

While we are not a school or creche, the Association runs religious services, programs, events and initiatives which include or are aimed at children and young people.

We value diversity and inclusion, and will not tolerate discriminatory practices. In recognition of the increased vulnerabilities of particular groups of children, we are committed to:

- the cultural safety of children from culturally and/or linguistically diverse backgrounds;
- the safety of children with a disability;
- the safety of children who identify as lesbian, gay, bisexual, trans and/or intersex;
- the safety of children in out of home care and youth justice.

We recognise our responsibilities in keeping children safe from abuse from those associated with our organisation and will ensure that the safety of children is always our first priority. We take a zero tolerance approach to child abuse.

The participation and empowerment of children is fundamental to our work. We will take a preventative, proactive and

participatory approach to child safety:

- recognise, respect and foster children's rights;
- foster an environment in which children are listened to, their views valued and their concerns acted upon;
- actively encourage children to have a say about things that are important to them;
- respect diversity in cultures and child rearing practices while keeping child safety paramount;

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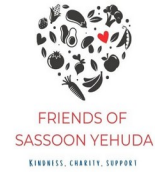
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- value the input of and communicate regularly with families and carers;
- proactively assess and manage the risk of abuse to children who come into contact with our organisation;
- work to identify risks to child safety early and to remove and reduce these risks;
- foster a culture of openness that supports all persons to safely disclose risks of harm to children;
- ensure children know who to talk with if they are worried or are feeling unsafe, and that they are comfortable and encouraged to raise such issues;
- listen to and act decisively on any child safety concerns or allegations of abuse that are made;
- report suspected abuse, neglect or mistreatment promptly to the appropriate authorities;
- share information appropriately and lawfully with other organisations where the safety and wellbeing of children is at risk;
- have specific policies, procedures and supports in place to enable us to meet these obligations.

Roles and responsibilities

Everyone is responsible for ensuring a culture of child safety and preventing child abuse.

Roles Responsibilities

President ● Be responsible for ensuring all staff, volunteers and attendees are aware of our child protection policy;

- Provide a central point of contact for questions, concerns, or issues;
- Adhere to this policy and code of conduct - lead by example

● The head of the organisation carries all of the legal obligations under the Reportable Conduct Scheme (Victorian Government) and is ultimately responsible for the organisation's compliance with the scheme, including notifying the Commission for Children and Young People of reportable allegations and investigating allegations

Office bearers ● Ensure all staff, volunteers and attendees are aware of and adhere to this (President, Vice-policy and code of conduct;

president, Treasurer, ● Ensure the Association's policy is current and up to date (annual review);

Secretary) ● Invite feedback around this policy and code of conduct from staff, volunteers, members and attendees including children and families;

- Pay specific attention to mitigating risk when engaging new employees or service providers (see further details below);
- Welcome raising of any concerns around child safety within our

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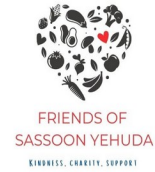
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organisation;

- Investigate fully, address and respond to any allegations of child abuse, assault or offence in an expedient manner

Committee (all) ● Adhere to this policy and code of conduct;

- Hold a current working with children check - recommended;
- Participate in an annual review of the Association's Child Safe Policy and support any further steps or any further training or up-skilling that arises from such review;

- Obey a 2 person rule at all times when in contact with children (other than their own) through our organisation

Ministers/Rabbis ● Adhere to this policy and code of conduct;

- Hold a current working with children check - required;
- Report any concerns of abuse;
- Obey a 2 person rule at all times when in contact with children (other than their own) through our organisation
- From 17/2/2020, religious ministers have mandatory reporting obligations under Victorian law: <https://providers.dhhs.vic.gov.au/mandatory-reporting-child-protection-victoria-people-religious-ministry-factsheet>

Staff ● Adhere to this policy and code of conduct;

Volunteers ● Report any concerns of abuse;

Contractors ● Obey a 2 person rule at all times when in contact with children (other than their own) through our organisation

Attendees of the Association and the ● If the role involves contact with children who will not be under direct Sassoon Yehuda supervision of their own parents or nominated responsible adult, then a Synagogue working with children check will be required

Human resource practices

The Association has robust human resources and recruitment practices to reduce the risk of child abuse by new and existing committee members, staff and volunteers. The managing committee has a specific responsibility when engaging

or appointing new employees, representatives, or service providers, to ensure that we have:

- for non-volunteers,
- inquired with two referees as to their suitability for the role or position;

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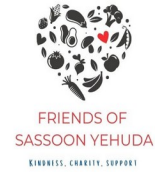
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- inquired with their previous posting or employment as to their suitability for the role or position;
- inquired of them whether they have ever been convicted or investigated for sexual abuse, assault or a sexual offence of any kind;
- asked them to sign an authority allowing us to conduct a search to determine whether they have a criminal record and have conducted this search;
- not placed unknown volunteers in a position of trust within their first six months of joining our organisation;
- engage people who are suitable to work with children and have high quality staff and volunteer supervision and professional development;
- expectations around appropriate conduct and behaviour towards and in the presence of children (including respectful relationships, physical contact, social media, photographing children).

Child safety, review of this policy and of working with children checks, is to be tabled as a standing agenda item annually at the commencement of each incoming committee of the Association, and at induction and at performance reviews for staff or volunteers.

Responding and Reporting

Children who disclose that they are feeling unsafe or being abused must be heard, must be taken seriously and must be treated with sensitivity and compassion. They and their families and carers should be connected with services that can support them to manage a difficult or traumatic experience.

We have legal and moral obligations to contact authorities when we are worried about a child's safety, which we will follow rigorously.

Suspected criminal child abuse must be reported to the Victoria Police and Child Protection (Department of Health and Human Services) as soon as possible.

Call triple zero (000) if a child is in immediate danger.

There are five types of 'reportable conduct':

- sexual offences committed against, with or in the presence of a child
- sexual misconduct committed against, with or in the presence of a child
- physical violence against, with or in the presence of a child
- any behaviour that causes significant emotional or psychological harm to a child

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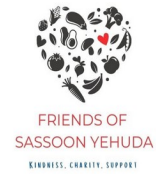
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- significant neglect of a child

Reporting under the Reportable Conduct Scheme, Commission for Children and Young People (Vic Gov):

- notify allegations within three business days after becoming aware of the allegation

<https://ccyp.vic.gov.au/reportable-conduct-scheme/notify-and-update/>

- give certain detailed information about the allegation within 30 days after becoming aware of the allegation
- after the investigation has concluded, give information including a copy of the findings of the investigation
- any person may notify the principal officer or an office bearer of a reportable allegation
- any person may notify a reportable allegation involving the head

Child Safety Reporting Process - Flowchart

Staff member

Who can report? Parent Child

or volunteer

Any child safety concerns, including:

What to report?

- disclosure of abuse or harm
- allegation, suspicion or observation
- breach of child safety policy or code of conduct
- environmental safety issues

Call 000 if a child is in immediate danger

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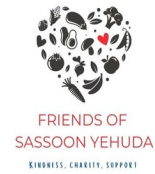
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Face-to-face verbal report, telephone call, email, letter or meeting

How?

An office bearer of the Association - President, Vice President, Treasurer, or Secretary

Who to? Principal officer has responsibility for reporting

The office bearers of the Association:

What happens

- listen to, investigate fully, address and respond to any allegations of child

next?

abuse in an expedient manner

- offer support to the child, the parents, and the person who reports

- initiate internal processes to ensure the safety of the child
- clarify whether any further steps are required in relation to a specific staff member, volunteer or attendee in the event of allegation of inappropriate behaviour or abuse. If appropriate, remove that person from their role or position
- decide, in accordance with legal requirements and duty of care, whether the matter should/must be reported to the Police and/or Child Protection and make report as soon as possible if required.

- Investigation, further steps, reporting as required and outcomes agreed

Outcome

- Communicate with relevant staff, volunteers, parents and child as appropriate
- Policies and procedures reviewed and updated where necessary

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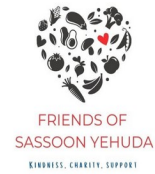
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Commission for Children and Young People.

<https://ccyp.vic.gov.au/reportable-conduct-scheme/for-organisations/> (accessed 6/2020)

Child Safe Standards <https://ccyp.vic.gov.au/child-safety/being-a-child-safe-organisation/the-child-safe-standards/> (accessed 15/06/2020)

Video presentation: https://youtu.be/YJBD_LSU5nQ (accessed 15/6/2020)

Victorian government, Department of Health and Human Services 2019 resources:

<https://providers.dhhs.vic.gov.au/resources-child-safe-standards>

National Principles for Child Safe Organisations (Australian Human Rights Commission, 2018).

[https://childsafe.humanrights.gov.au/sites/default/files/2019-](https://childsafe.humanrights.gov.au/sites/default/files/2019-02/National_Principles_for_Child_Safe_Organisations2019.pdf)

[02/National_Principles_for_Child_Safe_Organisations2019.pdf](https://childsafe.humanrights.gov.au/sites/default/files/2019-02/National_Principles_for_Child_Safe_Organisations2019.pdf) (accessed 15/6/2020)

Frequently asked questions

My organisation provides services to children but their parents/carers are always present. Do the Child Safe Standards apply to my organisation?

Yes. The presence of parents/carers when you provide services or activities to children does not remove the requirement

for your organisation to meet the Child Safe Standards. This is because the presence of parents/carers does not eliminate

the risk of child abuse occurring in organisational contexts, although it may reduce the risk.

My organisation provides services mainly to adults and only a small part involves children's services and activities.

Do the Child Safe Standards apply to my organisation?

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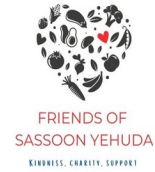
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Yes. Organisations that provide services specifically for children are required to meet the Child Safe Standards, even if those services are only a small part of their overall services offering. This is because the risk of child abuse is present whenever children engage with the services or activities provided by an organisation.

My organisation is small and made up mainly of volunteers. How can we meet the Child Safe Standards?
For small organisations with limited access to resources, implementing the Child Safe Standards may appear challenging.

The standards are not intended to be onerous; they are designed to keep children safe from child abuse. They are also flexible, allowing you to tailor them to your organisation.

Building a culture of child safety in your organisation will not happen overnight – this is the case for all organisations, regardless of their size. Keeping children safe from abuse requires long-term, genuine dedication, along with a commitment to continuous learning and improvement.

Should the Code of Conduct apply to contractors engaged by my organisation?

Yes. The Code of Conduct should also apply to all adults engaged as employees or volunteers, and should apply to their behaviour towards and in the presence of children. It should take into account all of the activities and services you provide for children.

In my organisation, we require staff and volunteers to pass a Working with Children Check. Does this mean we meet the Child Safe Standards?

No. While the Working with Children Check is a useful tool for keeping children safe from child abuse, it is just a starting point. Screening and other human resources practices that reduce the risk of child abuse are just one part of the Child Safe Standards.

Does requiring my staff to undergo a police check mean I have met the Child Safe Standards?

No. While a police check may provide useful and relevant information, it is just a starting point. Screening and other human resources practices that reduce the risk of child abuse are just one part of the Child Safe Standards.

What does my organisation do if it suspects a child is at risk of harm within their family?

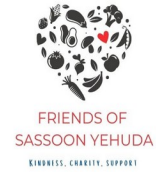
If your concern is that abuse is occurring within the family, you can make a report to Child Protection. They will be able to provide the child and their family with professional support services.





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When should I contact police?

All suspected child abuse must be reported to Victoria Police as soon as possible to enable them to assess the matter and

take appropriate action. A police investigation must take priority over any internal procedure. If a matter is reported to police, you must liaise with them about how to proceed internally to make sure you do not compromise their investigation.

If a staff member or volunteer engages in behaviour that is deemed inappropriate towards or in the presence of children,

your organisation must take it seriously, investigate it, respond appropriately and keep accurate records of how you handled it.

How do I report a concern regarding compliance with Child Safe Standards?

To report a concern about this organisation's compliance with the Child Safe Standards:

- email childsafestandards@ccyp.vic.gov.au
- call (03) 8601 5281

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