

The CATHOLIC WALKING CLUB OF VICTORIA INC

SAFE GUARDING* POLICY

INTRODUCTION

The Catholic Walking Club of Victoria Inc (CWCV) is committed to promoting and protecting the interests and safety of children (under the age of 18 years) *. We have zero tolerance of child abuse*.

All children participating in CWCV activities are to be accompanied by their parents/ guardians*.

CWCV does not conduct child-only activities.

All CWCV members* (including temporary members/ visitors) have a social and moral responsibility for reporting information about child abuse.

PURPOSE

The purpose of this policy is

1. To facilitate the prevention of child abuse occurring within activities conducted by CWCV.
2. To ensure that all parties are aware of their responsibilities for identifying and reporting possible occasions for child abuse.
3. To provide guidance as to action that should be taken where a member suspects any abuse within or outside of the organisation.
4. To provide a clear statement forbidding any such abuse.
5. To provide assurance that any and all suspected abuse will be reported.

POLICY

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.

Child protection is a shared responsibility of all adults and this applies to all those who participate in activities conducted by CWCV.

PROCEDURES:

Members may not photograph or video a child* or young person* without the explicit consent of the parent / guardian of the child or young person. Such consent is to be obtained at the commencement of a CWCV activity.

If any person believes a child is in immediate risk of abuse, he/she must telephone the Police on 000.

Any member who believes a child has been or is being abused has a social responsibility to contact the relevant authorities within the Department of Human services – Child Protection to report their concerns. Phone numbers for the latter are on:

[Child protection - DHHS Services](https://services.dhhs.vic.gov.au/child-protection)<https://services.dhhs.vic.gov.au/child-protection>

If a member makes a report about an incident which occurs at a CWCV event, then either the President, Vice-President, Secretary or Walks Secretary is to be informed of the report as soon as possible so that the matter can be discussed at committee level and an appropriate course of action determined.

***DEFINITIONS**

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

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/young person and includes any actions that results in actual or potential harm to a child/young person.

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.

Member/ temporary member/ visitor refers to all those who participate on CWCV activities either as members of CWCV, temporary members or as visitors to events organised by CWCV.

Parent/ guardian of a child refers to persons who have this relationship with a child/ young person and/ or an individual who is nominated by the parent/ guardian for the purposes of accompanying the child/ young person while the latter participates in a CWCV event.

Reasonable grounds for belief is a belief based on sufficient facts to raise suspicion in a reasonable person that child abuse has occurred

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

Safe-guarding is an internationally accepted term for child protection.

February 2024