

# CHILD SAFETY & WELL BEING POLICY

This Child Safety Policy was approved by the CoM November 4 2020 and endorsed by members at the general meeting on November 22 2020. It is to be reviewed annually. This policy was written to demonstrate the strong commitment of the CoM, members, leaders and volunteers to child safety, and to provide an outline of the policies and practices we have developed to keep everyone safe from any harm, including abuse.

## **1. Commitment to child safety**

All children who come to Icthus have a right to feel and be safe. The welfare of the children in our care will always be our first priority and we have a zero-tolerance approach to child abuse. We aim to create a child safe and child friendly environment where children feel safe and have fun.

This policy applies to all members, volunteers, children and individuals involved in our organisation.

Icthus is committed to the principles of cultural safety and inclusion of children from diverse backgrounds and to the safety and inclusion of children with disability, and we recognise that these principles support the safety of all children.

## **2. Children's rights to safety and participation**

Icthus is a child-centred organisation.

Icthus actively seeks to understand what makes children feel safe in our organisation. We regularly communicate with children about what they can do if they feel unsafe.

Icthus values the voices of children and will act on concerns raised by children or their families in regard to their safety. Icthus includes the voices of children in the following ways:

- regular discussions with children that facilitate child-led conversation on what makes them feel safe.
- communication materials on programs are child-friendly and suitable to the relevant age groups and diversity of the children at Icthus, including materials translated into languages the children speak, where needed.

## **3. Valuing diversity**

We value diversity and do not tolerate any discriminatory practices. To achieve this, we:

- support the cultural safety, participation and empowerment of Aboriginal children and their families
- support the cultural safety, participation and empowerment of children from culturally and/ or linguistically diverse backgrounds and their families, all children will be supported to express their culture and enjoy their cultural rights

- welcome children with disability and their families and act to promote their participation within the physical, intellectual and emotional abilities required for involvement in Summer Camp.
- seek to recruit appropriate members and volunteers from culturally and/or linguistically diverse backgrounds
- welcome same-sex attracted, intersex and gender diverse children and families
- have a physical environment that actively celebrates diverse cultures and recognises cultural difference
- Summer Camp Coordinator and Skippers will engage in contact with campers and/or families prior to Summer Camp where possible and focus on gaining information through open questions like 'Is there anything you think we need to be aware of regarding your child?' to gain knowledge of the needs of children and young people in particular reference to those with disability, children and young people from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds, those who are unable to live at home, and lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender and intersex children and young people and Aboriginal children.
- have a zero tolerance of racism and expect that all volunteers will act on incidents of racism

#### **4. Awareness of Child Relationships**

Camp Icthus understands the importance of fostering healthy relationships between campers and that these relationships are integral to mental wellbeing. A healthy teen relationship is one in which each person is respected, and there is honesty and trust between partners. Teen partners should be able to communicate with each other and feel safe and happy in the relationship. All leaders will remain alert and vigilant for any signs of inappropriate conduct between campers, remain situationally aware and be willing to act when indicated. Sexual relationships are not permitted.

Camp Icthus has a zero tolerance for sexual harassment between campers. Harassment can take many forms, including:

- Physical contact, like grabbing, pinching, inappropriate touching, or unwanted kissing
- Sexual name calling
- Making sexual jokes or gestures

#### **5. Recruiting members/Leaders**

Icthus applies the best practice standards in the recruitment and screening of members. Recruitment procedures shall comply with the Icthus Recruitment and Selection Policy. The Icthus Recruitment and Selection Policy must ensure that child safety requirements are addressed in the recruitment process through strategies including:

*Deciding to recruit*

- Assess the level of contact and responsibility the role will have in regard to children.
- Working with Children Checks are required for all members and Committee members are required to have National Police Checks.
- Assess the qualifications and prerequisites required to ensure members are appropriately skilled for the role.
- Assess the training, guidance and supervision required for the position and the current resources available to meet these requirements

## **6. Advertising**

- All positions are advertised with the Icthus Statement of Commitment to Child Safety.
- Positions will clearly state the responsibilities with regard to children.
- Prerequisite criteria will be listed for positions, for example: Working with Children Check, training and qualifications.

### *Selection of Summer Camp leaders*

- Interview/application questions will address experience and previous engagement with children and will gauge the applicant's attitudes and values toward children.
- Before commencing in their role, successful applicants must sign the Icthus Child Safe Code of Conduct and attend an induction session on the Icthus child safe and child abuse reporting policies and procedures.

## **7. Supporting Summer Camp Leaders**

Icthus is committed to ensuring that all Summer Camp leaders receive training to ensure they understand their responsibilities in relation to child safety. Icthus assists its leaders to incorporate child safety considerations into decision-making and to promote a culturally safe environment where children are empowered to speak up about issues that affect them.

Mandatory training requirements for Icthus Summer Camp leaders and chaperones are as follows:

Induction: Child Safe Code of Conduct and Child Safe Policy;

- Identifying indicators of child abuse;
- How to respond to disclosures of child abuse including Child Safety Reporting, Complaint, Code of Conduct breach and incident reporting procedures. As these training courses are essential to support Icthus' zero tolerance of child abuse approach, leaders, and volunteers are required to undertake all of these components before being allowed to work in a child-related role;

Other training provided to Icthus members includes (but is not limited to):

- risk management practices in relation to child safety;
- creating cultural safety for Aboriginal and culturally and/or linguistically diverse children;

- investigating child abuse concerns and allegations;
- skills and role modelling.

## **8. Child Safety Person**

Icthus has a Child Safety Person on each camp who will have specific responsibility for responding to any complaints made by leaders, volunteers, parents or children. If a person does not feel comfortable making a report to a Child Safety Person, they may report their concern to the Chair of the CoM.

Child Safety Persons are introduced to the children to ensure they understand who the appointed officers are, and how and when they may contact them.

The Child Safety Person reports to the Chair of the Committee who oversees the implementation of child safety in conjunction with committee. The Child Safety Person together with the Chair will manage child safety reports from beginning to end.

## **9. Reporting procedures**

The Icthus Child Safety Reporting procedure details how to respond to an allegation or incident of child abuse. Icthus also has a Complaint and Incidents reporting system that should be read in conjunction with the Child Safety procedure.

## **10. Record keeping and Report monitoring**

Icthus has a Records Management Policy and is committed to best practice record keeping.

In accordance with the Records Management Policy, all reports of child abuse shall be recorded within the processes of the Child Safety reporting procedure.

In maintaining records on reports of child abuse, Icthus will maintain confidentiality and privacy for children and families in accordance with legislation.

Records will be retained in line with the recommendations from the Office of Public Records.

Reports of child abuse and complaints about child safety will be monitored by the CoM to ensure that they are appropriately managed.

Risks to child safety that are identified in complaints and reports of abuse will be reviewed and incorporated into the relevant risk management plan.

## **11. Risk management**

We recognise the importance of a risk management approach to minimising the potential for child abuse or harm to occur and use this to inform our policies, procedures and activity planning.

The Risk Management Policy and Framework must include the assessment and mitigation of risks of child abuse at Icthus.

The following elements must be included in the risk management policy and framework:

- All existing and new activities and facilities must be assessed for risks of child abuse including:
  - environmental risks (e.g. areas that might obscure a line of sight)
  - vulnerability risks (such as activities that may foster personal relationships between members, volunteers and children who have an increased risk of being exploited, such as children who are highly vulnerable and dependent on the staff/volunteer for their needs).
- All identified risks of child abuse are actively reduced by designing and implementing appropriate preventative measures.
- The Ichthus Risk Management Plan is documented for all existing and new activities and facilities.
- Ichthus members are made aware of their responsibility for identifying risks of child abuse and their obligation to work with skippers and the CoM on reducing those risks.
- Families and children are made aware of how to report on identified risks of child abuse.
- The Ichthus Risk Management Plan is a living document that is updated as required, referred to regularly and reviewed periodically in CoM Meetings.

## **12. Reviewing this policy**

This policy will be reviewed annually and we undertake to seek the views, comments and suggestions from children, parents, carers, members and volunteers as a part of this process.

### **Ichthus will investigate any possible case of non-compliance with this policy or the Code of Conduct**

Following any non-compliance we will instigate a review that may result in restriction of duties, suspension or termination of membership or other corrective action.

### **Child Safe Essential Strategies Checklist**

- Acknowledgement of Country at start of Summer Camps, meetings, emails, website and advertising –
- Acknowledgement/reference to traditional owners through social media
- Summer Camps Coordinator and Chaperones must complete Child Safe Training
- Campers and families are asked to complete survey following Summer Camps