

# CHILD SAFETY CODE OF CONDUCT

The Code of Conduct has been developed for and by the Icthus CoM and identifies a set of principles and behaviours, which describe professional conduct, personal conduct and professional competence expected of members and volunteers by their colleagues, campers and the community. It provides a basis for maintaining an environment that is productive, positive, enjoyable, safe and free from harassment and discrimination.

The Code of Conduct applies to all members and volunteers of Camp Icthus. The purpose of the Code of Conduct is to;

- Promote and uphold the values Icthus sees as underpinning our service
- Provide a set of principles to guide members and volunteers in their everyday conduct and assist them to solve ethical dilemmas
- Affirm the various connected groups and wider community accountability of Icthus
- Promote confidence in Icthus' young people, families and community

The Code is not exhaustive and does not foresee every set of circumstances that may arise across an organisation and should be viewed as a guide to the principles that help inform what is appropriate conduct.

The Code gives guidance about what practices (actions) are supported and what practices are not accepted.

The Code values the social, relational, and interpersonal safety, well-being of people of all ages including not only face to face interactions, but all other manner of connection including technology and social media formats.

Icthus Code of Conduct condemns all forms of child abuse, exploitation of children and discrimination against children. We are committed to creating and maintaining an environment that promotes safety for people involved in our programs, including all children. All Icthus members, volunteers and contractors are responsible for promoting the safety, wellbeing and empowerment of children and young people.

All members understand their role in keeping children safe. Those who exercise care, supervision or authority over children have a duty of care to keep children safe. The principle of a duty of care is that members have an obligation to avoid acts or omissions (failures) that could be reasonably foreseen to injure or harm children engaging with the organisation. This harm includes child abuse.

## **1. Consequences of Breaching the Code of Conduct**

Members, volunteers or contractors who breach this Code of Conduct may be subject to disciplinary actions that could include exclusion from participating in camp,

enhanced supervision, appointment to an alternate role, suspension or termination from the organisation.

## **2. Code of Conduct Agreement**

All Icthus members, volunteers and contractors are responsible for promoting the safety and wellbeing of children and young people by agreeing to and adhering to the below standards of behaviour:

I WILL:

- adhere to all relevant Australian and Victorian legislation, Icthus' Child Safe Policy and other organisational policies;
- adhere to all Icthus policies and procedures;
- comply with Icthus' guidelines on physical contact with children;
- comply with all access and intervention orders protecting children;
- raise concerns if risks to child safety are identified in any of the activities, facilities, structures, procedures or staffing practices at Icthus;
- take all reasonable steps to protect children from abuse;
- report and act on any behavioural complaints, concerns or observed breaches regarding this Code of Conduct;
- report any concern, allegation, disclosure or observation of child abuse to the relevant person or authority as outlined in Icthus' reporting procedure and in line with mandatory reporting requirements, including the Reportable Conduct Scheme;
- respect the privacy of children and their families by keeping all information regarding Child Protection concerns confidential, only discussing information with the relevant people to follow reporting procedure;
- treat all children and young people with respect, regardless of race, colour, sex, gender identity, sexual orientation, language, religion, political or other opinion, national, ethnic or social origin, culture, property, disability or other status;
- listen to and value children and young people's ideas and opinions;
- welcome all children and their families and carers by being inclusive;
- listen to children and respond to them appropriately;
- conduct myself in a manner consistent with the values of the Icthus organisation;
- work with children in an open and transparent way – other adults should always know about the work being done with children; and
- observe professional boundaries with children at all times, including when seeing a child from Icthus outside Icthus events or camps.

- have a zero tolerance of racism and act on any incidents of racism

#### I WILL NOT:

- condone or participate in behaviour with children that is illegal, unsafe or abusive;
- seek to use children in any way to meet the needs of adults;
- ignore or disregard any concerns, suspicions or disclosures of child abuse;
- exaggerate or trivialise child abuse issues;
- use hurtful, discriminatory or offensive behaviour or language with children;
- engage in rough physical games;
- discriminate on the basis of age, sex, gender identity, race, culture or sexual orientation;
- initiate unnecessary physical contact with children or do things of a personal nature that children can do for themselves, such as toileting or changing clothes;
- develop 'special' relationships with specific children or show favouritism through the provision of gifts or inappropriate attention;
- exchange personal contact details such as phone numbers, social networking details or email addresses with children;
- have unauthorised contact with children and young people online, on social media or by phone;
- use any computer, mobile phone, or video or digital camera to exploit or harass children.

### **Ichthus Guidelines for contact with Children**

#### **Personal Contact:**

Camp Ichthus acknowledges that there are times when it is clearly appropriate (and desirable) for physical contact between adults and children. This can occur especially during activities where equipment needs to be fitted (e.g. helmets, life jackets and hiking packs) or assistance provided (e.g. entering canoes and sailing boats). It can also occur in a hug of congratulations or a friendly pat on the back. Camp Ichthus Leaders must use the following principles for touching children while respecting their privacy and safe feeling:

Any touching must be with the child's permission, for example, ask, "May I adjust your lifejacket?"

Touching should be in the open and not secretive, with other people around and not especially focused on one person. Touching should only ever be to support or respond to a need of the child and NEVER to meet the needs of an adult. Any touching must avoid body areas such as breasts, buttocks and the groin.

Personal Privacy and Mandatory Reporting: Children are entitled to privacy in personal matters and Icthus leaders must respect this. If an Icthus leader believes there is evidence of a problem or disclosure of abuse, it is the leader's responsibility to report this via the Icthus Child Safety Reporting procedure.

### **Sleeping, Showering and toilet privacy:**

Boys and girls have separate sleeping, showering and toilet facilities and must stay in these designated areas. Adults with supervisory roles in these areas must respect the children's privacy and knock or call out to let them know that they are entering the facility.

Cleaning of areas such as toilets and showers is scheduled to be done at off-peak times when campers are less likely to be using the facilities, such as when campers are on an overnighiter.

Avoiding Compromising Situations: Camp Icthus Leaders must avoid placing themselves or campers in situations where they can be compromised. Avoid being alone with a camper; stay in view of others.

Knock and ask permission to enter sleeping or private areas, except where Child Safety is compromised, the Children's Code of Conduct is breached, there is concern for the wellbeing of the child or on waking children in the morning.

Seek the camper's permission before touching or adjusting equipment they are wearing.

Avoid situations that cause embarrassment or humiliation to campers.

Avoid sexual talk or behave in a way that promotes promiscuity or the acceptance of sexually explicit material.

### **Administering First aid/medication:**

If Camp Icthus Leaders are required to render first aid or emergency treatment:

Three people should be present wherever possible– can include another child. Unless absolutely necessary, they will leave examination of private areas to health professionals. They will not force children to remove clothing for an examination. They will record their actions in accordance with first aid recording procedures. Medication must be administered according to directions on packaging. Dependent on the first

aid required this may need to involve another leader of the same sex as the child requiring attention whenever possible.

### **Favouritism and Exclusiveness:**

There is no place for 'favourites' at camp. In most instances, the showing of favouritism to a child or small group of children fosters the needs of the adult, not the child. It can create emotional dependence on the adult and isolate the child from peers. When a child needs a little extra attention, it must be given openly and carried out in such a way that no secretiveness or exclusivity is perceived by the child or others.

### **Harassment, Bullying and Discrimination:**

Bullying is an act causing embarrassment, pain or discomfort to another. It can take many forms – physical, verbal, gesture, victimization, extortion, exclusion or offensive notes/graffiti etc. Any form of harassment, bullying or discrimination such as those of a sexual or racial nature, are unwanted behaviour and should not be ignored.

### **Relationships with Young People**

- Treat all young people with respect and dignity at all times
- Be a positive role model
- Encourage young people to express themselves and their opinions in positive and constructive ways
- Contribute to an environment that creates a sense of belonging for all
- Speak to young people in an encouraging and positive manner
- Listen actively to young people
- Give each young person positive guidance and encourage appropriate behaviour
- Have regard to cultural values, age, physical and intellectual development, and abilities of each young person
- Respect the confidential nature of information gained about each young person while participating in activities
- Encourage and assist young people to undertake experiences that develop self-reliance and positive self-esteem.
- Provide opportunities for young people to interact and develop respectful and positive relationships with each other and with other staff/volunteers
- Avoid being alone with a young person, even if privacy required – do it at a distance but in view of others
- Do not use derogatory or sarcastic language – even if meant as a joke

- When working with young people always ask “is this child safe?”
- Take all reasonable steps to protect young people from any form of abuse
- Follow reporting procedures for all reported / observed or concerns of abuse of young people
- Actively take all necessary steps to avoid any personal actions or behaviours that might be deemed negligent, inappropriate or unlawful.
- Take appropriate steps to ensure the health and well-being of those in their charge.
- Model “Sunsmart” or other weather-appropriate behaviours and encourage young people to follow.
- Revise activity plans in extreme weather conditions.
- Do not leave young people unsupervised at any time, even when young people are not in direct sight they should be checked or observed regularly
- Act on complaints or concerns raised by young people