

Reporting Child Abuse (Mandatory Reporting) Policy

Free2b Girls ensures that all members are aware of their reporting obligations and will act in the best interests of the child when reporting child abuse and safety concerns.

In the event of a child abuse or safety concern being identified within our organisation, members must adhere to the set procedures within this policy.

All Free2b Girls members must adhere to this policy.

For the purpose of this policy:

- Members are all staff, volunteers, participants and associated organisations involved with Free2b Girls programs and services

Procedure

Members must adhere to the following procedures when child abuse or safety concerns have been identified:

- If there is an immediate danger or threat, contact police 000
- The Advice and Referral Line can be called at any stage for advice
- Contact must be made with the Program Coordinator (PC) to discuss concerns
- If the PC is not available, Incident Support Team (IS Team) must be contacted
- It is essential to leave a message, text or email to ensure a response
- The PC and/or the IS Team will contact relevant parties, discuss the concern and decide if a report needs to be made.
- If a child safety report is required, the reporting person will be supported to contact the Strong Families and Safe Kids Advice and Referral Line.
- A Free2b Girls incident report form must be completed by the reporting person.
- PC will finalise all outstanding procedures, including informing insurance company if required.
- If a child abuse or safety concern allegation is made about a Free2b Girls member, the PC and/or IS team or a third party will investigate and determine if a report needs to be made. An incident report must be completed, regardless of outcome.
- Free2b Girls members are required to cooperate with any formal investigations undertaken by the police or authorised body. Support will be provided by Free2b Girls
- Any member under investigation will be temporarily suspended from involvement with Free2b Girls.
- Members found to be guilty of child abuse will be excluded from Free2b Girls and any employment/volunteer positions will be terminated and may face criminal charges
- Follow up support will be made available and confidentiality will be maintained

Advice and Referral Line - 1800 000 123

Police – 000

PC and IS Team contact details are available for members to access.

Child Abuse and Safety Concerns Definitions

Bullying: takes many forms which are often interrelated and include:

Verbal (name calling, put downs, threats) *Physical* (hitting, punching, kicking scratching, tripping, spitting) *Social* (ignoring, excluding, ostracising, alienation) *Psychological* (spreading rumours, stalking, 'dirty looks', hiding or damaging possessions)

Emotional or psychological abuse: can include - repeated rejection or threats to a child. Constant criticism, teasing, ignoring threatening, yelling, scapegoating, ridiculing, constant coldness. These behaviours result in cumulative harm to the child's physical, social or emotional wellbeing and development.

Family violence – can include witnessing violence or the consequences of violence. Family violence is defined as violence between members of family or extended family or those fulfilling the role of family in a child or young person's life. Exposure to family violence places children and young people at increased risk of physical injury and harm and has a significant impact on their wellbeing and development.

Grooming – describes what happens when a perpetrator builds a relationship with a child with a view to abusing them. There is no set pattern in relation to the grooming of children. The child may be given special attention and, what starts as an apparently normal display of affection, such as cuddling, can develop into sexual touching or masturbation and then into more serious sexual behaviour. Grooming can take place in any setting, where a relationship is formed, such as leisure, music, sports and religious activities or in internet chat rooms, in social media or by other technological channels.

Harm – Harm to a child is any detrimental effect of a significant nature on the child's physical, psychological or emotional wellbeing. Harm can be caused by: physical, psychological or emotional abuse or neglect, sexual abuse or exploitation. This can be a single act, omission or circumstance. A series or combination of acts, omission or circumstances.

Neglect – includes the failure to provide adequate food, clothing, shelter, adequate supervision, clean water, medical attention or supervision to the extent that the child's health and development is or is likely to be significantly harmed. Categories of neglect include physical neglect, medical neglect, abandonment, emotional neglect. The issue of neglect must be considered within the context of resources reasonably available

Physical abuse – physically abusive behaviour includes but is not limited to shoving, hitting, slapping, shaking, throwing, punching, biting, burning, excessive and physical harmful overtraining and kicking. It includes giving children harmful substances such as drugs, alcohol or poison. Certain types of punishment, while not causing injury can also be considered physical abuse if they place a child at risk of being hurt.

Sexual abuse – can include making sexual comments to a child, engaging children to participate in sexual conversations over the internet or on social media. Kissing, touching a child's genitals or breasts, oral sex or intercourse with a child. Encouraging a child to view pornographic magazines, websites and videos, is also sexual abuse. Engaging children to participate in sexual conversation over the internet is also considered sexual abuse.

Sexual exploitation - occurs when children are forced into sexual activities that are then recorded in some way and /or used to produce pornography. Such child sexual exploitation material can be in the form of actual photos or videos or published on the internet. Exploitation can also involve children who are forced into sex work.

Breaches Of This Policy

It is a serious offence for Free2b Girls members to breach this policy and/or the law. (Children, Young Persons and their Families Act 1997, Amended 2009)

Breaches of the policy by any members will be subject to disciplinary action and/or be treated as serious misconduct, potentially leading to the termination of their position in Free2b Girls.

Related Policies, Guidelines and Documents

Safeguarding Children Policy

Duty of Care Policy

Confidentiality Policy

Code of Conduct

Anti – Bullying Policy

Social Media Policy

Group Safety Guidelines

Social Media Guidelines

Incident Report Form

IS Team Contact Details



This policy will be reviewed annually. Developed August 2022, Next Review August 2023