

Child Safe Policy



Croydon & District Obedience Dog Club Inc. (**Croydon Dog Club**) is committed to child safety. This policy outlines how Croydon Dog Club supports and protects children who form part of its membership.

This document constitutes a child safe policy and statement of commitment to child safety in accordance with the Victorian Child Safe Standards.

OUR COMMITMENT TO CHILD SAFETY

Croydon Dog Club is committed to child safety.

We want children who participate in our organisation to be safe, happy and empowered.

We support and respect all children, as well as our adult members and volunteers, and are committed to the safety, participation and empowerment of all children.

We have zero tolerance for child abuse, and all allegations and safety concerns will be treated very seriously and consistently with our robust policies and procedures.

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

Croydon Dog Club is committed to preventing child abuse and identifying risks early, and removing and reducing these risks.

Croydon Dog Club implements recruitment practices for committee members and volunteers which mitigate the risk of child abuse.

Croydon Dog Club is committed to regularly training and educating our committee members and volunteers regarding child abuse risks and prevention.

We are committed to the cultural safety of Aboriginal children and children from culturally and/or linguistically diverse backgrounds, and to providing a safe environment for children with a disability.

We have policies and procedures in place that support our committee members and volunteers to achieve these commitments.

IF YOU BELIEVE A CHILD IS AT IMMEDIATE RISK, CALL 000.

1. OUR CHILDREN

- (a) This policy is intended to empower children who participate in our organisation.
- (b) Children are vital and active participants at Croydon Dog Club. We involve them when making decisions, especially about matters that directly affect them. We listen to their views and respect what they have to say.
- (c) We promote diversity and acceptance at Croydon Dog Club, and people from all walks of life and cultural backgrounds are welcome. In particular, we:
 - (i) promote the cultural safety, participation and empowerment of Aboriginal children;
 - (ii) promote the cultural safety, participation and empowerment of children from culturally and/or linguistically diverse backgrounds; and
 - (iii) ensure that children with a disability are safe and can participate equally.

2. OUR VOLUNTEERS AND MEMBERS

- (a) This policy guides our volunteers and members on how to behave with children at Croydon Dog Club.
- (b) All of our volunteers and members must agree to abide by our [membership terms and conditions](#), which specify our standards of conduct, including those relating to children. All volunteers and members, including children, are welcome to contribute to the continuous development of the membership terms and conditions.

3. TRAINING AND SUPERVISION

- (a) Training and education are important to ensure that everyone at Croydon Dog Club understands that child safety is everyone's responsibility.
- (b) Our organisational culture aims to ensure all committee members, volunteers and members feel confident and comfortable in discussing any allegations of child abuse or child safety concerns. We train our committee members and volunteers to identify, assess, and minimise risks of child abuse and to detect potential signs of child abuse.
- (c) We also support our committee members and volunteers through ongoing supervision to develop their skills to protect children from abuse and promote the cultural safety of Aboriginal children, the cultural safety of children from linguistically and/or diverse backgrounds, and the safety of children with a disability.
- (d) New committee members and volunteers are supervised regularly to ensure they understand Croydon Dog Club's commitment to child safety and that everyone has a role to play in protecting children from abuse. This includes checking that their behaviour towards children is safe and appropriate. Any inappropriate behaviour will be reported through appropriate channels, including the Department of Health and Human Services and Victoria Police, depending on the severity and urgency of the matter. Please refer to Croydon Dog Club's [membership terms and conditions](#) for more information about appropriate behaviour.

4. RECRUITMENT

- (a) We take all reasonable steps to recruit committee members and volunteers who behave appropriately and considerately around children. We implement selection criteria and recruitment checks which clearly demonstrate our commitment to child safety and an awareness of our social and legal responsibilities. Croydon Dog Club understands that when recruiting committee members and volunteers, we have ethical as well as legislative obligations.
- (b) We actively encourage expressions of interest from Aboriginal people, people from culturally and/or linguistically diverse backgrounds, and people with a disability.
- (c) All people who are engaged in child-related work and who are not exempt, including volunteers, are required to hold a Working with Children Check and to provide evidence of this check. For more information, please refer to the [Working with Children website](#).
- (a) We carry out Working with Children checks and police record checks to ensure that we are recruiting the right people. If during the recruitment process a person's records indicate a criminal history, then the person will be given the opportunity to provide further information and context.

5. FAIR PROCEDURES FOR VOLUNTEERS

- (a) The safety and wellbeing of children is our primary concern. We are also fair and reasonable to all volunteers. The decisions we make when recruiting, assessing incidents, and undertaking disciplinary action will always be thorough, transparent, and based on evidence.
- (b) We record all allegations of abuse and safety concerns using our incident reporting form. All records are securely stored. If an allegation of abuse or a safety concern is raised, we provide updates to children and families on progress and actions we as an organisation take.

6. PRIVACY

- (a) All personal information collected, handled, used or disclosed by Croydon Dog Club is managed in accordance with our [privacy policy](#).
- (b) We respect the privacy of all individuals, whether they are volunteers or members (including children), unless there is a risk to someone's safety.
- (c) Everyone is entitled to know how child safety information is recorded, what will be done with it, and who will have access to it. This is intended to protect reporters and to ensure that all members of Croydon Dog Club are comfortable to disclose any allegations or concerns in relation to child safety without repercussions.

7. LEGISLATIVE RESPONSIBILITIES

Croydon Dog Club takes its legal responsibilities seriously, including:

- (a) **Failure to disclose:** All adults in Victoria who have a reasonable belief that an adult has committed a sexual offence against a child under 16 have an obligation to report that information to Victoria Police.

- (b) **Mandatory reporting:** Any committee members or volunteers who are mandatory reporters (doctors, nurses, midwives, teacher, principals and police officers) must comply with their duties.
- (c) **Failure to protect:** People of authority in our organisation will commit an offence if they know of a substantial risk of child sexual abuse and have the power or responsibility to reduce or remove the risk, but negligently fail to do so.
- (d) **Reportable conduct:** The President of Croydon Dog Club must be made aware of any allegations of physical and sexual abuse, sexual misconduct, significant emotional or psychological harm or significant neglect by a volunteer towards a child. We are also legally required to notify the Commission for Children and Young People of the allegation.
- (e) **Duty of care:** If a child is abused by an individual associated with our organisation, our organisation is presumed to have breached its duty of care unless it can prove that it took 'reasonable precautions' to prevent the abuse in question. For more information, please refer to the [new organisational duty of care to prevent child abuse page](#) on the Department of Justice and Regulation's website.

8. RISK MANAGEMENT

- (a) In Victoria, organisations are required to protect children when a risk is identified. In addition to general occupational health and safety risks, we proactively manage risks of abuse to our children.
- (b) We have risk management strategies in place to identify, assess, and take steps to minimise child abuse risks which include risks posed by physical environments and online environments.

9. ALLEGATIONS, CONCERNS AND COMPLAINTS

- (a) Croydon Dog Club takes all allegations seriously and has practices in place to investigate thoroughly and quickly. Our committee members and volunteers are trained to deal with allegations appropriately.
- (b) We work to ensure all committee members, volunteers, and members (including children) know what to do and who to tell if they observe abuse or are a victim, and if they notice inappropriate behaviour.
- (c) We all have a responsibility to report an allegation of abuse if we have a reasonable belief that an incident took place. If an adult has a reasonable belief that an incident has occurred, then they must report the incident. Factors contributing to reasonable belief may include:
 - (i) a child states they or someone they know has been abused (noting that sometimes the child may in fact be referring to themselves);
 - (ii) behaviour consistent with that of an abuse victim is observed;
 - (iii) someone else has raised a suspicion of abuse but is unwilling to report it; or
 - (iv) observing suspicious behaviour.

10. REGULAR REVIEW

This policy will be reviewed every two years (and following significant incidents, if they occur). We will ensure that our members (including children) have the opportunity to contribute to any amendments to this policy. Where possible we will do our best to work with local Aboriginal communities, culturally and/or linguistically diverse communities and people with a disability when conducting our review.