



# Somers Yacht Club

## Child Safety Policy

### **Purpose**

Somers Yacht Club Child Safety Policy demonstrates our Club's commitment to creating and maintaining a child safe and child-friendly organisation, where children and young people are safe and feel safe.

This policy provides an overview of our Club's approach to implementing Ministerial Order 1359 (PDF, 363KB) which sets out how the Victorian Child Safe Standards apply in community organisation environments.

It informs our Club community of everyone's obligations to act safely and appropriately towards children and guides our processes and practices for the safety and wellbeing of students across all areas of our work.

### **Scope**

This policy:

- applies to all members, volunteers, staff and contractors whether or not they work in direct contact with children
- applies in all physical and online environments used by children during or outside of Club events
- should be read together with our other child safety and wellbeing policies, procedures, and codes

### **Statement of Commitment to Child Safety**

Somers Yacht Club is a child safe organisation which welcomes all children, young people and their families.

We are committed to providing environments where our children are safe and feel safe, where their participation is valued, their views respected, and their voices are heard about decisions that affect their lives. Our child safe policies, strategies and practices are inclusive of the needs of all children and students.

We have no tolerance for child abuse and take proactive steps to identify and manage any risks of harm to students in our Club environments.

We promote positive relationships between students and adults and between students and their peers. These relationships are based on trust and respect.

We take proactive steps to identify and manage any risk of harm to students in our school environment. When child safety concerns are raised or identified, we treat these seriously and respond promptly and thoroughly.

Particular attention is given to the child safety needs of Aboriginal students, those from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds, international students, students with disabilities, those unable to live at home, children and young people who identify as lesbian, gay, bisexual, trans and gender diverse, intersex and queer (LGBTIQ+) and other students experiencing risk or vulnerability. Inappropriate or harmful behaviour targeting students based on these or other characteristics, such as racism or homophobia, are not tolerated at our Club, and any instances identified will be addressed with appropriate consequences.

Child safety is a shared responsibility. Every person involved in our Club has an important role in promoting child safety and wellbeing and promptly raising any issues or concerns about a child's safety.

Through our Sailing School, our Junior Sailing program including Start Sailing 1 and 2 Courses, Better Sailing, Start Racing, Catamaran Coaching, Youth Development Squads, SWISH, and sailing regattas held at Somers and all other social activities where children take part, we actively work to promote and implement Child Safe practices. We are consistent in ensuring that we have on file copies of all Instructors, Coaches, committee members and volunteers Working with Children Checks and other qualification documentation as part of our induction process before they begin working at our Club.

Our organisation is committed to regularly training and educating our staff and volunteers on child abuse risks. We are committed to regularly reviewing our child safe practices, and seeking input from our children, members, families, staff, and volunteers to inform our ongoing strategies.

We have specific policies, procedures and training in place that support our leadership team, staff and volunteers to achieve these commitments.

**If you believe a child is at immediate risk of abuse phone 000.**

## **Policy**

### **Strategies to embed a child safe culture:**

This policy guides our Committee members, Volunteers, instructors, coaches and all members on how to behave with children in our organisation.

All Committee members, Volunteers, Instructors and Coaches must agree to abide by our Code of Conduct which specifies the standards of conduct required when working with children. All Committee members, Volunteers, Instructors and Coaches as well as children and their families, are given the opportunity to contribute to the development of the Code of Conduct.

### **Training and Supervision:**

Training and education is important to ensure that everyone in our organisation understands that child safety is everyone's responsibility. Instructors and Coaches will all complete Australian Sailing Instructor and/or Coach courses and also must have Level 2 First Aid, Working With Children Checks and Power Boat Handling qualifications with Safety Boat Operator Additional for Coaches. They must also revalidate and/or update their qualifications as required by Australian Sailing.

Our organisational culture aims for all Instructors, Coaches and Volunteers (in addition to parents/carers and children) to feel confident and comfortable in discussing any allegations of child

abuse or child safety concerns. We train our Instructors, Coaches and Volunteers to identify, assess, and minimise risks of child abuse and to detect potential signs of child abuse.

We also support our Instructors, Coaches 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.

New Instructors, Coaches and Volunteers will be supervised regularly to ensure they understand our organisation's commitment to child safety and that everyone has a role to play in protecting children from abuse, as well as checking that their behaviour towards children is safe and appropriate (please refer to this organisation's code of conduct to understand appropriate behaviour further). 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.

### **Recruitment:**

We take all reasonable steps to engage skilled people to work with children. We develop selection criteria and advertisements which clearly demonstrate our commitment to child safety and an awareness of our social and legislative responsibilities. Our organisation understands that when engaging instructors and volunteers we have ethical as well as legislative obligations.

We actively encourage applications from Aboriginal peoples, people from culturally and/or linguistically diverse backgrounds and people with a disability.

All people engaged in child-related work, including volunteers, are required to hold a Working with Children Check and to provide evidence of this Check. Please see the [Working with Children Check](http://www.workingwithchildren.vic.gov.au) website <[www.workingwithchildren.vic.gov.au](http://www.workingwithchildren.vic.gov.au)> for further information.

### **Listening to, communicating with and empowering children:**

Somers Yacht Club has developed a safe, inclusive and supportive environment that involves and communicates with children, young people and their families. We encourage child and family involvement and engagement that informs safe operations and builds the capability of children and families to understand their rights and their responsibilities. Our Club is committed to supporting and encouraging children to use their voice to raise and share their concerns with a trusted adult at any time of need.

### **Fair Procedures for Personnel:**

The safety and wellbeing of children is our primary concern. We are also fair and just to personnel. The decisions we make when recruiting, assessing incidents, and undertaking disciplinary action will always be thorough, transparent, and based on evidence. As a Club we have adopted the Australian Sailing Member Protection Policy which outlines procedures for dealing with any matters that may arise.

We record all allegations of abuse and safety concerns using our incident reporting forms, including investigation updates. 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 any actions we as an organisation take.

### **Privacy:**

All personal information considered or recorded will respect the privacy of the individuals involved, whether they be instructors, volunteers, parents or children, unless there is a risk to someone's safety. We have safeguards and practices in place to ensure any personal information is protected. Everyone is entitled to know how this information is recorded, what will be done with it, and who will have access to it.

### **Legislative Responsibilities:**

Our organisation takes our legal responsibilities seriously, including:

- **Failure to disclose:** Reporting child sexual abuse is a community-wide responsibility. 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 the police.<sup>1</sup>
- **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.<sup>2</sup>
- Any personnel who are **mandatory reporters** must comply with their duties.<sup>3</sup>

### **Risk Management:**

In Victoria, organisations are required to protect children when a risk is identified (see information about failure to protect above). In addition to general Workplace Health and Safety risks, we proactively manage risks of abuse to our children.

We have a detailed Risk Management Plan that includes strategies in place to identify, assess, and take steps to minimise child abuse risks, which include risks posed by physical environments, interaction between people at the Club and through online environments.

### **Regular Review:**

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

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<sup>1</sup> A person will not commit this offence if they have a reasonable excuse for not disclosing the information, including a fear for their safety or where the information has already been disclosed.

Further information about the failure to disclose offence is available on the [Department of Justice and Regulation website](http://www.justice.vic.gov.au/home/safer+communities/protecting+children+and+families/failure+to+disclose+offence) <[www.justice.vic.gov.au/home/safer+communities/protecting+children+and+families/failure+to+disclose+offence](http://www.justice.vic.gov.au/home/safer+communities/protecting+children+and+families/failure+to+disclose+offence)>.

<sup>2</sup> Further information about the failure to protect offence is available on the [Department of Justice and Regulation website](http://www.justice.vic.gov.au/home/safer+communities/protecting+children+and+families/failure+to+protect+offence) <[www.justice.vic.gov.au/home/safer+communities/protecting+children+and+families/failure+to+protect+offence](http://www.justice.vic.gov.au/home/safer+communities/protecting+children+and+families/failure+to+protect+offence)>.

<sup>3</sup> Mandatory reporters (doctors, nurses, midwives, teachers (including early childhood teachers), principals and police) must report to child protection if they believe on reasonable grounds that a child is in need of protection from physical injury or sexual abuse.

See the Department of Health and Human Services website for information about [how to make a report to child protection](https://services.dfh.vic.gov.au/reporting-child-abuse) <<https://services.dfh.vic.gov.au/reporting-child-abuse>>

## Allegations, Concerns and Complaints:

Our organisation takes all allegations seriously and has practices in place to investigate thoroughly and quickly. Our staff and volunteers are trained to deal appropriately with allegations.

We work to ensure all children, families, staff and volunteers know what to do and who to tell if they observe abuse or are a victim, and if they notice inappropriate behaviour.

We all have a responsibility to report an allegation of abuse if we have a reasonable belief that an incident took place (see information about failure to disclose above).

If an adult has a **reasonable belief** that an incident has occurred, then they must report the incident. Factors contributing to reasonable belief may be:

- a child states they or someone they know has been abused (noting that sometimes the child may in fact be referring to themselves)
- behavior consistent with that of an abuse victim is observed<sup>4</sup>
- someone else has raised a suspicion of abuse but is unwilling to report it
- observing suspicious behaviour.

Note:

Where the term 'Aboriginal' is used it refers to both Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples.

## Policy Review Record:

Version:	Drafted by:	Date:	Approved by:	Date:	Reason:
1.0	Emma Morris	5/8/20	General Committee		Initial Child Safe policy Draft.
2.0	Emma Morris Melinda Gamlen	9/11/22			Annual review and update with new regulations.

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<sup>4</sup> For example behaviour, please see [An Overview of the Victorian child safe standards](https://providers.dffh.vic.gov.au/child-safe-standards): <<https://providers.dffh.vic.gov.au/child-safe-standards>> >