

# Australian Band and Orchestra Directors' Association Victorian Branch: Child Safety Responding and Reporting Obligations Policy and Procedure

\*Throughout this document the Australian Band and Orchestra Directors' Association Victorian Branch will be referred to as ABODA Victoria.



## Help for non-English speakers

If you need help to understand this policy, please contact ABODA Victoria at [aboda.vic@gmail.com](mailto:aboda.vic@gmail.com)

## Purpose

The purpose of this procedure is to set out the principles that ABODA Victoria has adopted for the management of complaints or concerns received in relation to allegations of child abuse and harm.

This procedure describes the complaint handling process mentioned in the Child Safety and Wellbeing Policy and should be read in conjunction with that document.

## Scope

This procedure applies to all ABODA committee members, contractors, volunteers, members, children and their families.

## Complaints Management

ABODA Victoria is committed to promoting and protecting the interests, safety, and wellbeing of children, and creating a culture that encourages feedback and complaints.

### Who can make a complaint?

A parent/carer/guardian, child, ABODA committee member, volunteer, participant, contractor, ABODA member or a member of the public. Complaints or concerns can also be raised by families, volunteers, or other children on behalf of an alleged victim.

### What can complaints be about?

Any complaints or concerns involving children, including:

- ABODA Victoria's services or dealings with children;
- Allegations of abuse or harm by a committee member, a volunteer or another individual associated with the organisation;
- Disclosures of abuse or harm made by a child;
- Conduct of a child;

- The inadequate handling of a prior concern;
- General concerns about the safety of a group of children or activity;
- Breaches of ABODA Victoria's Child Safe Code of Conduct.

### How to make a complaint?

- In person to an ABODA Victoria Committee member
- Email – [aboda.vic@gmail.com](mailto:aboda.vic@gmail.com)

### How ABODA Victoria responds to a complaint or concern?

ABODA Victoria takes a trauma informed approach to handling complaints, so that children, families, committee volunteers, and anyone involved participates in the complaints and investigation process without causing further trauma.

#### Step 1: Receiving a complaint

If the complaint was initiated by a child/young person, they will be asked:

- What would make them feel safe;
- How involved the child wants to be in the complaints process;
- The extent to which they want their parent/carer/guardian to be part of decisions.
- The disclosure will be dealt with sensitivity by the ABODA Victoria committee;

#### Step 2: Recording the complaint

- **ABODA Victoria's committee or volunteer who receives the disclosure must report to ABODA Victoria's President immediately**
- The complaint is recorded in writing and saved in the ABODA Victoria Complaints Register so that there is a full account of how the issue arose.

#### Step 3: Initial Response and Risk Assessment

Depending on the nature and seriousness of the complaint or safety concern, ABODA Victoria will take the following immediate actions:

- Administering first aid and/or calling 000 for an ambulance and following any instructions from emergency service officers/paramedics (where required);
- Calling 000 for urgent Victoria Police assistance for concerns that are life threatening or posing an immediate risk to the health and safety of anyone;
- Informing the child's parents and carers about the complaint or safety concern, unless the disclosure is related to abuse within the family;
- Considering if evidence needs to be immediately secured (for example, CCTV footage, emails, downloads) to preserve any future investigation;

To manage further risks that could be posed by the subject of allegation, ABODA Victoria will take immediate action(s) such as:

- Restricting/not permitting the subject of allegation to have contact with children at ABODA related events;
- Altering their duties

#### Step 4: Reporting

ABODA Victoria's leadership team shall report the incident to the following external authorities if applicable:

- **Victoria Police:** If there is an alleged or suspected criminal conduct that involves any of the following:
  - Imminent or immediate danger;
  - Physical or sexual abuse;
  - Family violence, whether or not a child has been physically or sexually abused.
- **Child Protection / Commission for Children and Young People(CCYP):**  
 ABODA Victoria is not obligated to report to Child Protection (as per [Mandatory reporting obligation](#)) or CCYP (as per [Reportable Conduct Scheme](#)). However, if reasonable belief is formed that a child has suffered or is likely to suffer significant harm as a result of abuse or neglect and their parent has not or is unlikely to protect them from harm of that type, then ABODA Victoria will contact [Department of Families, Fairness and Housing \(DFFH\) Child protection](#).

**Child Protection Emergency After Hours Service Number - 13 12 78.**

#### Step 5: Providing ongoing support

ABODA Victoria shall offer support to children and/or their families by providing them with contact details to recognised support services which may include those listed below, after discussing this with the children and/or their families:

- Family services through [The Orange Door](#);
- Organisations specialising in supporting victims of abuse and complex trauma such as [Blue Knot](#) and [Centres Against Sexual Assault](#);
- [Victims of Crime Helpline](#);
- Telephone and online support services like [Lifeline Australia](#), [Kids Help Line](#), [headspace](#) and [Beyond Blue](#).

When a complaint is raised against a committee member or a volunteer, an investigation shall be undertaken.

#### Step 6: Investigation

If ABODA Victoria has made a report to Victoria Police or Child Protection, no investigation shall be undertaken without consulting these authorities, due to the risk of negatively impacting future police action or putting the child at risk. However, ABODA Victoria shall cooperate with Police, or Child Protection, in providing support and assistance to identify and contact witnesses and gather or retain evidence.

Consultation/Interviews may be conducted by ABODA Victoria (in addition to interviews from police and/or child protection) with the intent to hear from the child directly and to help make them feel safe. During the investigation:

- Care will be taken to provide the child with information suitable to their age or level of comprehension;
- Reasonable adjustments such as access to interpreters will be provided to children and their parents/carers to help them fully participate in the complaints process

- All parties will be treated fairly and provided opportunities to express their views and given a timely update of the investigation.

#### **Step 7: Outcomes and sharing of information.**

- Outcome of the investigation, including decisions reached in relation to the investigation and resolution, and the action taken, will be communicated to all relevant parties, considering privacy and confidentiality requirements;
- If the complainant or the subject of the complaint is not happy with the outcome or handling of the complaint:
- Proceed for External review: Children and/or families can contact [CCYP](#) for reviewing complaints and overseeing the handling of allegations of reportable conduct.

## **Review of child safety practices**

At ABODA Victoria, we have established processes for the review and ongoing improvement of our child safe policies, procedures, and practices.

We will:

- review and improve our policy every 2 years or after any significant child safety incident
- analyse any complaints, concerns, and safety incidents to improve policy and practice

## **Related System Documents**

Access to any of the references below shall be via the ABODA Victoria website [www.abodavic.org.au](http://www.abodavic.org.au) or by contacting [aboda.vic@gmail.com](mailto:aboda.vic@gmail.com)

- Child Safety and Wellbeing Policy
- Child Safe Code of Conduct

## **Policy status and review**

The President is responsible for reviewing and updating the Child Safety Responding and Reporting Obligations Policy and Procedure at least every two years. The review will include input from committee members and the ABODA Victoria community.

<b>Created date</b>	<b>29/7/2023</b>
<b>Consultation</b>	ABODA Victoria committee members
<b>Endorsed by</b>	Amanda Morrison, President ABODA Victoria
<b>Endorsed on</b>	27/8/2023
<b>Next review date</b>	27/8/2024