

Australian Band and Orchestra Directors' Association Victorian Branch: Child Safety and Wellbeing Policy

*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.

Name

Child Safety and Wellbeing Policy

Purpose

The ABODA Victoria Child Safety and Wellbeing Policy demonstrates our association'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 association's approach to implementing the [Child Wellbeing and Safety Act 2005](#) for non-profit organisations, and also pertains elements to [Ministerial Order 1359](#) which sets out how the Victorian Child Safe Standards apply in school environments.

It informs our 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 ABODA Victoria committee members, volunteers, contractors, members and event attendees whether or not they work in direct contact with children.
- applies in all physical and online environments with the involvement of ABODA Victoria used by children during or outside of school hours, including other locations provided for a child's use and those provided through third-party providers.
- should be read together with our other child safety and wellbeing policies, procedures, and codes – refer to the related policies section below.

Statement of commitment to child safety

ABODA Victoria is a child safe organisation which welcomes the participation of all children, young people and their families.

We are committed to providing environments where 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.

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

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

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

Attention is given to the child safety needs of Aboriginal children, those from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds, international children, children 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 children experiencing risk or vulnerability. Inappropriate or harmful behaviour targeting children based on these or other characteristics, such as racism or homophobia, are not tolerated at our events, and any instances identified will be addressed with appropriate consequences.

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

We are committed to regularly reviewing our child safe practices, and seeking input from our committee, volunteers, contractors and members to inform our ongoing strategies.

Roles and responsibilities

Leadership team

Our leadership team (comprising the President, Vice President, Treasurer, and Secretary) is responsible for ensuring that a strong child safe culture is created and maintained, and that policies and practices are effectively developed and implemented in accordance with the Child Wellbeing and Safety Act 2005 and Ministerial Order 1359.

The leadership team will:

- ensure effective child safety and wellbeing governance, policies, procedures, codes and practices are in place and followed
- model a child safe culture that facilitates the active participation of children, families and volunteers in promoting and improving child safety, cultural safety and wellbeing
- enable inclusive practices where the diverse needs of all children are considered
- reinforce high standards of respectful behaviour between children and adults, and between children
- promote regular open discussion on child safety issues within the ABODA Victoria community including at association meetings
- facilitate regular professional learning for committee and volunteers (where appropriate) to build deeper understandings of child safety, cultural safety, child wellbeing and prevention of, and responding to abuse
- create an environment where child safety complaints and concerns are readily raised, and no one is discouraged from reporting an allegation of child abuse to relevant authorities.

ABODA Victoria Committee and volunteers

All committee and volunteers will:

- read and have access to a copy of this child safe policy
- act in accordance with our Child Safety Code of Conduct [ABODA Victoria Child Safety Code of Conduct](#)
- identify and raise concerns about child safety issues in accordance with our Child Safety Responding and Reporting Obligations Policy and Procedures ensuring children's views are taken seriously and their voices are heard about decisions that affect their lives [ABODA Victoria: Child Safety Responding and Reporting Obligations Policy and Procedures](#)
- implement inclusive practices that respond to the diverse needs of children.
- approve updates to, and act in accordance with the Child Safety Code of Conduct to the extent that it applies to ABODA Victoria committee, volunteers, contractors and members

Specific staff child safety responsibilities

The ABODA Victoria president is the first point of contact for child safety concerns or queries and for coordinating responses to child safety incidents.

- The president is responsible for monitoring the association's compliance with the Child Safety and Wellbeing Policy. Anyone in our community should approach the president if they have any concerns about the association's compliance with the Child Safety and Wellbeing Policy.
- The secretary is responsible for informing our community about this policy, and making it publicly available
- Other specific roles and responsibilities are named in other child safety policies and procedures, including the Child Safety Code of Conduct, Child Safety Responding and Reporting Obligations Policy and Procedures, and Child Safety Risk Register.

Child Safety Code of Conduct

Our Child Safety Code of Conduct sets the boundaries and expectations for appropriate behaviours between adults and children. It also clarifies behaviours that are not acceptable in our physical and online environments.

We ensure that children also know what is acceptable and what is not acceptable so that they can be clear and confident about what to expect from adults of the organisation.

The Child Safety Code of Conduct also includes processes to report inappropriate behaviour. [ABODA Victoria Code of Conduct](#)

Managing risks to child safety and wellbeing

At our events we identify, assess and manage risks to child safety and wellbeing in our physical and online environments. These risks are managed through our child safety and wellbeing policies, procedures and practices and services we contract through third party providers for child use.

Our Child Safety Risk Register is used to record any identified risks related to child abuse alongside actions in place to manage those risks. Our leadership team will monitor and evaluate the effectiveness of the actions in the Child Safety Risk Register at least annually.

Establishing a culturally safe environment

At ABODA Victoria, we are committed to establishing an inclusive and culturally safe environment where the strengths of Aboriginal culture, values and practices are respected.

We think about how every child can have a positive experience in a safe environment. For Aboriginal children, we recognise the link between Aboriginal culture, identity and safety and actively create opportunities for Aboriginal children and the Aboriginal community to have a voice and presence in our activities.

Student empowerment

To support child safety and wellbeing at ABODA Victoria we work to create an inclusive and supportive environment that encourages children and families to contribute to our child safety approach and understand their rights and their responsibilities.

Respectful relationships between children are reinforced and we encourage strong friendships and peer support at our events to ensure a sense of belonging.

We inform children of their rights through providing them with a copy of our code of conduct and child safe policy. We ensure the children know who to talk to if they are worried or feeling unsafe and we encourage them to share concerns with a trusted adult at any time. Children and families can also contact aboda.vic@gmail.com with any concerns.

When ABODA Victoria is gathering information in relation to a complaint about alleged misconduct or abuse of a child, we will listen to the complainant's account and take them seriously, check our understanding of the complaint, support the child and keep them (and their parents and carers, as appropriate) informed about progress.

Community engagement

To support community engagement, at ABODA Victoria, we are committed to providing our members and community with accessible information about our association's child safe policies and practices and involving them in our approach to child safety and wellbeing.

We will create opportunities for members to have input into the development and review of our child safety policies and practices and encourage them to raise any concerns and ideas for improvement.

We do this by:

- contacting members via email encouraging them to read our policy and offer feedback
- all of our child safety policies and procedures will be available for anyone on our website. www.abodavic.org.au
- outlining our policies and procedures at all ABODA Victoria events
- provide a copy of our policy documents to all presenters and contractors

Diversity and equity

As a child safe organisation, we celebrate the rich diversity of our children, families and community and promote respectful environments that are free from discrimination. Our focus is on wellbeing and growth for all.

We recognise that every child has unique skills, strengths and experiences to draw on.

We pay particular attention to individuals and groups of children and young people in our community with additional and specific needs. This includes tailoring our child safety strategies and supports to the needs of:

- Indigenous Australian children and young people
- children from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds
- children and young people with disabilities
- children unable to live at home or impacted by family violence
- international children
- children and young people who identify as LGBTIQ+.

Suitable committee and volunteers

At ABODA Victoria, we apply child safe recruitment and supervision practices to ensure that all volunteers and contractors are suitable to work with children.

When engaging volunteers and contractors to perform child-related work, we:

- sight, verify and record the person's Working with Children clearance or equivalent background check such as a Victorian teaching registration

Committee induction

All newly appointed committee members will be expected to participate in our child safety and wellbeing induction program. The program will include a focus on:

- the Child Safety and Wellbeing Policy (this document)
- the Child Safety Code of Conduct
- the Child Safety Responding and Reporting Obligations Policy and Procedures and
- any other child safety and wellbeing information that ABODA Victoria considers appropriate to the nature of the role.

Ongoing supervision and management of committee

All committee members engaged in child-connected work will be supervised appropriately to ensure that their behaviour towards children is safe and appropriate.

Committee members will be monitored and assessed to ensure their continuing suitability for child-connected work. This will be done by observing them at meetings and events run by ABODA Victoria.

Inappropriate behaviour towards children and young people will be managed swiftly and in accordance with our Child Safe Policy and Code of Conduct. Child safety and wellbeing will be paramount.

Suitability of volunteers

All volunteers are required to comply with our Code of Conduct, which describes expectations in relation to child safety and wellbeing, volunteers will be appropriately supervised at our events.

Child safety knowledge, skills and awareness

In addition to the child safety and wellbeing induction, our committee will ensure they have the knowledge necessary to maintain a child safe environment.

Committee child safety and wellbeing training will be delivered at least annually and will include guidance on:

- our association's child safety and wellbeing policies, procedures, codes, and practices
- recognising indicators of child harm including harm caused by other children
- responding effectively to issues of child safety and wellbeing and supporting colleagues who disclose harm
- how to build culturally safe environments for children
- information sharing and recordkeeping obligations
- how to identify and mitigate child safety and wellbeing risks

Complaints and reporting processes

ABODA Victoria fosters a culture that encourages committee, volunteers, children, parents, ABODA members and community to raise concerns and complaints. This makes it more difficult for breaches of the code of conduct, misconduct or abuse to occur and remain hidden.

We have a clear pathway for raising complaints and concerns and responding. Any concerned party should contact aboda.vic@gmail.com. This will then be responded to accordingly with a follow up email or phone call from part of the ABODA Victoria leadership team.

If there is an incident, disclosure, allegation or suspicion of child abuse, all committee and volunteers must follow our Child Safety Responding and Reporting Obligations Policy and Procedures. [ABODA Victoria: Child Safety Responding and Reporting Obligations Policy and Procedures](#). Our policy and procedures address complaints and concerns of child abuse made by or in relation to a child committee, volunteers, contractors, service providers, visitors or any other person while connected to ABODA Victoria.

Complaints can be emailed to aboda.vic@gmail.com

Communications

ABODA Victoria is committed to communicating our child safety strategies to our community through:

- ensuring that key child safety and wellbeing policies are available on our website including the Child Safety and Wellbeing Policy (this document), Child Safety Code of Conduct, and the Child Safety Responding and Reporting Obligations (including Mandatory Reporting) Policy and Procedure
- ensuring that child safety is a regular agenda item at meetings that involve discussion about children

Privacy and information sharing

ABODA Victoria collects, uses, and discloses information about children and their families in accordance with Victorian privacy laws, and other relevant laws.

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 policies and procedures

This Child Safety Policy is to be read in conjunction with other related policies, procedures, and codes. These include our:

- [ABODA Victoria: Child Safety Responding and Reporting Obligations Policy and Procedures](#)
- [ABODA Victoria Child Safety Code of Conduct](#)

Policy status and review

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

Approval

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