

ATTACHMENT 4



Scout Association of Australia Victorian Branch

CHILD PROTECTION – REPORTING POLICY

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1.

The Scout Association of Australia Victorian Branch (Scouts Victoria) is committed to providing a safe environment for youth members participating in the Scout program. Scouts Victoria has a Duty of Care to its youth members, their parents or guardians and to visitors to provide, to the best of its ability, a safe environment that protects them from physical or emotional harm.

The fundamental principles of Scouting require that all Adults in Scouting live by the Scout Promise and Law and the Code of Conduct, where respect for others is paramount. Scouts Victoria expects adherence to the Code of Conduct from all adults engaged in or supporting Scouting.

Adults in Scouting are responsible to provide an environment where young people feel safe and are free from physical or verbal harassment or abuse. Scouts Victoria encourages all its members to recognise situations which may lead to abuse, to be able to assert the right to resist the abuser, and to report any abuse with confidence.

2. CHILD ABUSE

Child abuse is the term used for different types of maltreatment that threatens a child or young person's safety, wellbeing or development:

- Child abuse can be a single incident or a chronic pattern of behaviour over time, and may be intentional or unintentional, and may be physical, sexual or emotional
- Neglect refers to a failure to provide a child or young person with the basic needs for his or her physical, emotional, psychological and intellectual development and may be chronic or episodic in nature
- Child abuse and neglect may lead to long term harm to the physical or emotional wellbeing and development of a child or young person

3. REPORTING TO THE POLICE

Any person may and is encouraged to make a voluntary report on child abuse or neglect to Victoria Police whether such abuse or neglect is or is not in connection with a Scouting Activity.

4. PRINCIPALS OF INTERNAL REPORTING

There are 7 principles that form the basis of internally reporting a witnessed or suspected child abuse or neglect case:

- 1) The safety and security of our youth members and visitors is paramount
- 2) Scouts Victoria has zero tolerance for abuse of any form towards children and youth members
- 3) Child abuse of any type relating to a Scouting activity or an activity perceived to be a Scouting activity must be reported to the Executive Manager of Scouts Victoria
- 4) This Policy applies to all Adults in Scouting including Rovers Scouts
- 5) All reports will be treated confidentially
- 6) Training on child safety issues be regularly provided for all Adult members

- 7) All relevant Branch policies, practices and procedures will be reviewed and updated when necessary to reflect changes in relevant legislation and community standards and expectation

5. WHO IS REQUIRED TO REPORT

All Adult Members of Scouts Victoria including Rover Scouts and other adults assisting in the program are required to report incidents, or suspected incidents, of child abuse or neglect which they have witnessed or believe to have occurred on a Scouting activity or an activity perceived to be a Scouting Activity.

Youth members under the age of 18 have a right to, and are encouraged to report incidents to the Executive Manager, or suspected incidents, of child abuse or neglect which they have witnessed or believe to have occurred on a Scouting activity or an activity perceived to be a Scouting Activity.

Adult Members of Scouts Victoria who are Mandatory Reporters, as legislated under State Law are not only required to meet their obligations but must also report the incident as prescribed in this Policy to Scouts Victoria.

6. REPORTING AN INCIDENT

All reports are to be made directly to the Executive Manager of Scouts Victoria:

- Business hours – (03) 8543 9800
- After hours - (03) 8543 9802 – Voice mail Service
- Email - incidentreport@vicscouts.asn.au

7. HOW ARE REPORTS MADE

Reports can be made to the Executive Manager preferably by mail or email. Where the report is made verbally the Executive Manager shall make notes of the report and must also ask the complainant to provide a written report.

8. INFORMATION TO BE REPORTED

The report should include the following information where available:

- Date(s) and time(s) of the incident(s)
- Where did the incident(s) take place
- The name and if possible age of the affected youth member
- Name and if applicable the position in Scouting of the person making the report
- Name of the Leader in Charge or person responsible for the Activity
- The name of the person allegedly causing the abuse
- A detailed and accurate description of the incident or what was observed that gave rise to the suspicion of child abuse
- What was the activity
- Has the incident been reported to Victoria Police and if so to whom and where

9. REPORTING PROCEDURES

The following procedure will be used when reporting an incident of actual or suspected child abuse or serious physical abuse:

1. On receipt, all reports are to be signed and dated by the Executive Manager and kept in secure storage at the Scouts Victoria
2. The Executive Manager shall in the first place consult the Chief Commissioner or in their absence an Assistant Chief Commissioner to decide if the allegations warrant the immediate suspension of the person or persons involved
3. The Executive Manager shall, except when otherwise directed by the Police advise the member's parents or guardian of the report, indicating to them that the report will be forwarded to the Police

4. If the report warrants suspension the Chief Commissioner will suspend the person or persons concerned and communicate that decision to them in writing as well as informing the relevant Group, District and Region Leader
5. Any allegation of sexual abuse or allegation of serious physical abuse shall be referred by the Executive Manager to Victoria Police for further action
6. If a matter has already been referred to Victoria Police then the investigation of the matter shall be left in the hands of the Police
7. Any person or persons under investigation shall remain suspended until the Police investigation is completed and the Chief Commissioner is satisfied that the person or persons pose no risk to youth members or Scouts Victoria in general

10. INDUCTION AND EDUCATION

Scouts Victoria shall explain this Policy when recruiting and training volunteers and staff. All Members and Staff are required to agree to and abide by the Code of Conduct and all Scouting Policies. The adult training and induction program is to be updated as required

DOCUMENTATION

The following procedures in relation to the handling of relevant documentation are to apply:

- Records of incidents in relation to alleged child abuse are to be maintained in secure storage
- Records are to be kept indefinitely noting that allegations can surface or resurface many years after the initial incident

11. OTHER RELEVANT POLICIES

Other relevant policies include:

- 1) Scouts Australia - National Policy and Rules 2008 – Sections - P2.9; P3.4; P5.1; P5.2; P7.0
- 2) Scouts Australia - Code of Conduct
- 3) Scouts Victoria – Child Protection from Harm Policy
- 4) Scouts Victoria – Inappropriate Conduct and Behaviour Policy

References to Policies and procedures:

- 1) Scouts Victoria – Victorian Info Book - Incident Reporting
- 2) Scouts Victoria Website

12. Authority

This policy was approved by the Branch Executive Committee on

13. RESPONSIBILITIES

The Executive Manager is responsible to bring this policy to the Branch Executive Committee for review every 3 years.

14. APPROVALS

No	Document Process	Person Responsible	Date Approved	Signature
1	Draft Preparation			
2	Review			
3	Approval			

This Policy has complied with all necessary approvals and is accepted as the *Child Protection – Reporting Policy* for Scouts Victoria. Signed:

Chairman:

Executive Manager:

Date: