



Child Safety and Wellbeing Policy

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CHILD SAFETY & WELLBEING POLICY

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Commitment to Child Safety

All children who attend a Skunkworks Community event have an absolute right to feel safe and be safe. The welfare of the children in our care will always be our absolute first priority, and we maintain a strict zero-tolerance approach to child abuse, exploitation, and harm. We are dedicated to creating a child-safe and child-friendly environment where children feel empowered, valued, and safe while participating in and enjoying all Skunkworks Community activities.

Purpose and Scope

Purpose: This policy defines how Skunkworks Community operationalises, prioritises, and maintains the safety and wellbeing of children under our care. It outlines the mandatory protective procedures and risk management actions expected of all stakeholders.

Scope: This policy applies universally to all Skunkworks Community directors, employees, active members, volunteers, attendees, children, contractors, and any other individuals associated with our organisation. Its jurisdiction spans all operations, including but not limited to rehearsals, multi-day intensive camps, professional tutoring sessions, localised social events, and public performances.

Statutory Definitions

Committee / Board: Refers collectively to all active office bearers and Directors of the Skunkworks Community legal entity.

Child / Children: Any individual person who is under the legal age of 18 years.

Child Abuse: Includes sexual offences committed against a child; grooming offences under section 49M(1) of the Crimes Act 1958 (Vic); physical violence; the infliction of serious emotional or psychological harm; or instances of serious child neglect.

Harm: Any damage inflicted upon the health, safety, or wellbeing of a child or young person. This encompasses physical, emotional, sexual, and psychological harm, arising either from a single isolated act or cumulatively via repeated exposure over time.

Concerns and Complaints Framework

Skunkworks Community distinguishes between underlying concerns and formal complaints to ensure all signals of risk are addressed appropriately:

Underlying Concerns

A concern refers to any observed behavior, environmental condition, or potential operational issue that could impact negatively on the safety and wellbeing of participating children.

Formal Complaints

A complaint constitutes an explicit expression of dissatisfaction or alarm directed to Skunkworks Community regarding:

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- Our organisational services, operational procedures, or direct dealings with individuals.
- Specific allegations of abuse, harassment, or misconduct perpetrated by a director, staff member, volunteer, or affiliate.
- Direct disclosures of abuse, discomfort, or harm articulated by a child or young person.
- The observed conduct, bullying, or safety-breaching behavior of a child or young person on site.
- The perceived inadequate handling or delayed escalation of a prior child safety concern.
- General systemic issues relating to the physical or operational safety of an entire cohort or targeted camp activity.

Role of the Committee (Directors)

The governing Board of Directors holds primary accountability for embedding child safety into the organisational culture. The Committee's duties are structured as follows:

Culture: Model, champion, and enforce an active child-safe culture, ensuring stakeholders feel secure and supported when raising reporting signals.

Risk Oversight: Mandate and verify that all employees and volunteers execute rigorous risk assessments for camp layouts, rehearsal halls, and digital environments.

Training Compliance: Ensure that comprehensive, accredited child safety training plans are fully executed and tracked for all operational personnel.

Annual Quality Reviews: Conduct an exhaustive annual evaluation of organisational child safety delivery, actively embedding input from parents, members, and external safety auditors.

Inclusion, Empowerment, and Community Alignment

Children's Empowerment and Active Participation

We systematically capture children's views and ideas to guide program design, rehearsal scheduling, and facility adjustments. Bullying, exclusion, or abusive behavior between peers is strictly prohibited. We protect and promote empowerment via:

Facilitating structured, child-led conversations regarding perceived safety and baseline operational comfort levels.

Deploying an active electronic suggestion questionnaire, providing transparent loops and direct behavioral updates on suggestions made.

Consulting cohorts directly regarding significant physical layout alterations, policy revisions, or leadership transitions before implementation.

Family and Community Engagement

Parents and legal guardians are central to safety operations. We distribute clear disclosures via the official Skunkworks Community / Victorian State Youth Brass Band (VSYBB) Players Information Pack, paired with rolling push notifications, updates, and reminders on the VSYBB Team App and primary website.

Cultural Safety for Aboriginal Children

Skunkworks Community is deeply committed to building environments where Aboriginal culture is actively celebrated, respected, and normalised. Our explicit operational strategies include:

Mandating a formal Acknowledgement of Country across all public performances, corporate assemblies, and camp openings.

Consulting with traditional owners, elders, and relevant Aboriginal Organisations to incorporate inclusive musical and cultural practices.

Providing verified pathways for youth to safely express and share their distinct cultural identity without barrier.

Implementing direct feedback mechanisms for Aboriginal children and families to audit how culturally secure they feel within our programs.

Valuing Broad Diversity and Equity

We explicitly defend equity for all children, ensuring zero-tolerance protections against racism, ableism, homophobia, transphobia, or discriminatory exclusion. Our intake forms allow proactive disclosure of specific accessibility or identity support requirements. We actively display inclusion signals across both physical rehearsal spaces and corporate online channels to support children with disabilities, CALD youth, LGBTIQ individuals, and children in out-of-home care.

Operational Controls and Personnel Standards

Code of Conduct Compliance

All volunteers, active performing members, and Directors must strictly align with the Child Safe Code of Conduct. Breaches result in immediate disciplinary action, up to permanent organisational termination. Third-party contractors are strictly required to sign a written binding agreement to adhere to the Code of Conduct prior to rendering any services on site.

Recruitment, Screening, and Mandatory Vetting

Child safety screening is deeply embedded within our recruitment systems. A current, verified Working with Children Check (WWCC) or formal Victorian Institute of Teaching (VIT) registration is mandatory for all volunteers, musical tutors, directors, and staff members who engage with youth or maintain administrative access to children's personal datasets.

Training, Supervision, and Professional Support

All engaged personnel must participate in mandatory annual child safety training modules. All successfully executed training records are formally logged within the centralised Child Safety Training Action Plan. Ongoing supervisor tracking ensures personnel conform tightly to protective behavioral rules.

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Incident Management, Reporting, and Escalation

Complaints Handling and Mandatory Reporting Paths

Every disclosure or observed indicator of child abuse will be treated with absolute urgency. Staff and volunteers must execute immediate protocols stipulated in the complaint handling framework. All suspected criminal conduct or disclosures of physical/sexual abuse must be reported directly to Victoria Police. For cases involving immediate, acute danger to a child's life or safety, personnel are instructed to call Emergency Services (000) without delay.

Protective Directives and Sanctions

Pending the active lifecycle of a safety investigation, the Board of Directors is authorised to deploy immediate protective measures, including:

Standing down the accused personnel or terminating engagement immediately upon substantiated findings.

Altering operational duties to eliminate any face-to-face or indirect contact with children.

Enforcing strict bans on any unsupervised, solo contact with youth cohorts.

Revoking all operational access keys to the Skunkworks Community digital file storage, cloud accounts, and outward social media assets.

Designated Child Safety Person Contacts

The primary point of contact for child safety reporting and advice is our appointed Child Safety Person: Phillipa Edwards. To ensure transparency, photographs and explicit contact profiles of the Child Safety Person are permanently displayed at all physical rehearsal venues and pinned within the members-only Facebook group page. Disclosures can also be securely filed via email at contacttheskunk@gmail.com, or communicated directly to any active organisational Director.

Information Governance and Risk Management

Secure Record Keeping Rules

Skunkworks Community enforces precise record-keeping policies for all child-related allegations, incidents, and identified 'near misses'. Files are input into our centralised incident reporting system. Records must capture exact investigation findings, explicit reasons for administrative decisions, and exact corrective actions executed. To preserve legal accountability, all files must be stored securely and retained for a mandatory minimum period of 5 years, irrespective of whether the initial complaint was substantiated.

Authorised Information Sharing

Information is managed under strict confidentiality rules, except where external disclosure is required to prioritise a child's safety or fulfill statutory mandates with child protection or law enforcement bodies. Shared records must align completely with legal frameworks to serve the child's optimal welfare.

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Proactive Risk Assessments

The Board maintains ultimate responsibility for reviewing and approving our comprehensive corporate risk management plan. Risk assessments must analyze both physical footprints and digital operations. Third-party contractors or facility service providers must be supervised by a vetted member at all times to ensure youth safety boundaries are preserved.

Compliance and Maintenance Frameworks

Legislative Alignment Matrix

This policy functions under direct jurisdiction of the following Victorian legal statutes:

- Child Wellbeing and Safety Act 2005 (Vic) – incorporating the Victorian Child Safe Standards.
- Children, Youth and Families Act 2005 (Vic) – governing direct reporting paths to Child Protection authorities.
- Crimes Act 1958 (Vic) – defining severe Failure to Protect and Failure to Disclose criminal offences.
- Wrongs Act 1958 (Vic) – establishing corporate and organisational liability parameters regarding child abuse.

Review Cycle and Continuous Improvement

This policy, its ancillary safety sub-modules, and active field practices undergo an exhaustive formal review at least every two years. Immediate out-of-cycle reviews are triggered following any specific child safety incident or near-miss. Review insights are analyzed by the Directors and integrated into our continuous improvement logs.

WWCC & VIT Central Registry Rules

A centralised compliance database tracking all active WWCC and VIT parameters is updated continuously. Musical directors and volunteers must provide verified check renewals prior to expiration dates. No individual is permitted to execute child-related work if their registration has expired.

Cross-Functional Ancillary Policy Suite

This policy forms a core piece of our risk framework and must be cross-referenced with the following corporate modules:

- Organisational Child Safe Code of Conduct
- Centralised Complaint Handling Policy
- Recruitment and Screening Policy
- Grievance Procedure – embedded in the Skunkworks Community Constitution
- Corporate Risk Management Plan
- Child Safe Training Action Plan

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Policy Governance, Maintenance, and Review

The Director (Governance and Strategy) maintains ultimate administrative accountability for policy implementation and tracking. Following initial Board endorsement, subsequent adjustments or legislative alignment modifications are delegated to the SW Directors for fast-track approval. This regulatory text will undergo a mandatory comprehensive governance review on an annual basis to ensure maximum protection.

Document Version Control & Revision Archive

The table below documents the administrative progression, modification pathways, and approval milestones of this document:

Version	Date	Author	Summary of Change / Expansion	Approved By
V1.0	20/07/2025	Dusty Vallance	Foundational drafting and initial creation of Child Safety Policy.	SW Board
V1.1	24/04/2026	Dusty Vallance	Insertion of corporate cover page structures and updated header formatting.	SW Directors
V1.2	22/06/2026	Gemini	Comprehensive expansion into fully standardised working policy guidelines manual.	Pending Review