

AVOCADO PTY LTD  
ACN: 652 199 687



# **Kids Weekend Playcare Child Safety and Wellbeing Policy**

---

# Acknowledgements

---

Kids Weekend Playcare acknowledges the Bunurong/Boonwurrung Peoples, the Traditional Owners of the land on which we operate. We acknowledge and respect their contributions, experience and knowledge as First Nations people. We pay our respects to their Elders, past and present.

This Child Safety and Wellbeing Policy was approved by the Management Committee on 16 December 2023. It demonstrates the strong commitment of management, staff and volunteers to child safety and wellbeing, and how our organisation keeps children safe from harm, including child abuse.

## **Commitment to child safety**

All children who come to Kids Weekend Playcare have a right to feel and be safe. The welfare of the children in our care will always be our first priority and we have a zero-tolerance approach to child abuse and harm. We aim to create a child safe and child-friendly environment where children feel safe and have fun while enjoying learning the performing arts.

# Purpose & Definitions

This Policy outlines how Kids Weekend Playcare prioritises the safety and wellbeing of children and what steps we will take to do this.

## Scope

This policy applies to all staff, volunteers, Management Committee members, children and other individuals involved in our organisation. This policy applies to all activities – classes, tutoring and performances – conducted by Kids Weekend Playcare.

## Definitions

### Management Committee means:

The CEO & Directors of Kids Weekend Playcare and two Parents' Representatives.

### Child abuse means:

- A sexual offence committed against a child
- An offence committed against a child under section 49M(1) of the Crimes Act 1958 (Vic), such as grooming
- Physical violence against a child
- Causing serious emotional or psychological harm to a child
- Serious neglect of a child.

### Harm means:

- Damage to the health, safety or well-being of a child or young person, including child abuse by adults or the conduct of other children. It includes physical, emotional, sexual and psychological harm. Harm can arise from a single act or event and can also be cumulative, that is, arising because of a series of acts or events over a period of time.

### Child/Children means:

A person under 18.

### A Concern means:

Any potential issue that could impact negatively on the safety and wellbeing of children.

### A complaint means:

An expression of dissatisfaction to Kids Weekend Playcare related to one or more of the following:

- Our services or dealings with individuals
- Allegations of abuse or misconduct by a staff member, a volunteer or another individual associated with Kids Weekend Playcare
- Disclosures of abuse or harm made by a child or young person
- The conduct of a child or young person at Kids Weekend Playcare
- The inadequate handling of a prior concern
- General concerns about the safety of a group of children or activity.

# Role of the Management Committee

---

- The Management Committee has the role of making sure Kids Weekend Playcare prioritises children's safety and that action is taken when anyone raises concerns about children's safety.
- The Management Committee will champion and model a child safe culture at Kids Weekend Playcare. We encourage anyone involved with the organisation to report a child safety concern. The Management Committee will work to create a positive culture around reporting so that people feel comfortable to raise concerns.
- Everyone at Kids Weekend Playcare has a role in identifying and managing risks of child abuse and harm. The Management Committee will ensure that staff and volunteers are conducting risk assessments and managing risks in accordance with this policy. They will also ensure that appropriate child safety training for staff and volunteers is identified and completed.
- The Management Committee will conduct an annual review of how effectively Kids Weekend Playcare is delivering child safety and wellbeing. The input of people involved with Kids Weekend Playcare will be sought as part of this review.

# Children's Empowerment & Participation

---

- Kids Weekend Playcare is a child-centred organisation. We actively seek to include children's views and ideas in our organisational planning, delivery of services including rehearsals and performances, and management of facilities.
- We want children to develop new friends through Kids Weekend Playcare and encourage children to be supportive of each other. We do not tolerate bullying or abusive behaviour between children and take action if this occurs.
- We respect the rights of children and provide them with information about their rights including the right to be safe at Kids Weekend Playcare. We actively seek to understand what makes children feel safe in our organisation. We regularly communicate with children about what they can do if they feel unsafe.
- Kids Weekend Playcare values the voices of children and will act on safety concerns raised by children or their families. Kids Weekend Playcare supports children's participation in the following ways:
  - Regular discussions with children, including child-led conversations on what makes them feel safe and unsafe.
  - A suggestion box for children that is regularly emptied with suggestions assessed and acted on where appropriate. Children are provided with feedback on their suggestions.
  - Consultation with children about any proposed significant changes to the physical environment, policies, procedures, programs or staffing. Children's views are collected by staff, provided to management and considered in the decision-making process.
  - Information provided to children and families about Kids Weekend Playcare operations, staffing and programs are made suitable for different age groups and diversity of the children. Child safety information sessions will be offered in Dinka where needed.

# Families and Communities

---

- Kids Weekend Playcare recognises the important role of families and involves parents and carers when making significant decisions about their child. Parents, families and communities are welcome to provide feedback at any time through our contact email address and are encouraged to raise any concerns they have with us.
- At the annual general meeting each year, we elect the Chair and two parent representatives on the Management Committee and all community members are invited to share their thoughts on the direction of Kids Weekend Playcare for the next year.
- Kids Weekend Playcare provides information to families and community about our child safe policies and practices including through:
  - Publishing this Child Safety and Wellbeing Policy and Code of Conduct on our website
  - Including information about our child safety approach, our operations and Management Committee and management structure, in the Kids Weekend Playcare parent and parer information manual
  - including articles and information on child safety and wellbeing, and reminders about our policies and procedures, in our newsletter.

# Creating culturally safe environments for all Aboriginal children and their families

---

- Kids Weekend Playcare is committed to creating environments where Aboriginal culture is celebrated and Aboriginal children, families and community members are welcomed and included. Strategies to embed cultural safety for Aboriginal children include:
  - An Acknowledgement of Country at all performances
  - Consulting with families and members of the Aboriginal community to identify opportunities to promote Aboriginal culture and practices in the Kids Weekend Playcare studio and programs
  - Providing opportunities for children to share their cultural identity and express their culture, including through performance and during Kids Weekend Playcare community activities
  - Supporting children who wish to explore their culture, including consulting with their family and relevant Aboriginal organisations
  - Providing training for staff and volunteers on the strengths of Aboriginal culture and its importance to the wellbeing and safety of Aboriginal children
  - Celebrating NAIDOC Week and acknowledging significant events including National Sorry Day and National Reconciliation Week
  - Seeking feedback from Aboriginal children, families and communities on their experience at Kids Weekend Playcare, particularly how safe they feel expressing their identity including their culture.

# Valuing Diversity

---

- We value diversity and equity for all children. To achieve this, we:
  - Provide training for all Management Committee members, staff, and volunteers on understanding diversity and how to support inclusion and cultural safety
  - Welcome and support participation of all children, including children with disability, children from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds, those who are unable to live at home, LGBTIQ children and Aboriginal children and their families
  - Offer students and families through our enrolment forms the opportunity to provide information about themselves, including any specific needs to participate fully in our programs
  - Have zero tolerance of racism and other forms of discrimination and act when discrimination or exclusion is identified
  - Deliver programming that reflects the diversity of our students, their interests and cultures
  - Strive to reflect the diversity of our community through representation in our staff and Management Committee members – we are committed to having representatives of South Sudanese background on our Management Committee
  - Acknowledge and celebrate important cultural dates in our classes
  - Have a physical and online environment that actively celebrates diversity
  - Commit to ensuring our facilities and online activities promote inclusion of children of all abilities.



# Staff & Volunteers

---

- **Code of Conduct**

- Kids Weekend Playcare has a Child Safe Code of Conduct. Staff, volunteers and the Management Committee must always comply with the Code of Conduct. Breaches of the Code of Conduct may result in disciplinary action including termination of a person's involvement with the organisation.
- All third-party contractors must abide by the Child Safe Code of Conduct, and where they are engaging with children, they must sign an agreement to comply with the code before delivering services.

- **Recruiting staff and volunteers**

- Kids Weekend Playcare puts child safety and wellbeing at the centre of recruitment and screening processes for staff and volunteers as outlined in the recruitment and screening policy. We only recruit staff and volunteers who are appropriate to engage with children. Members of the Management Committee must also be screened.
- We require a Working with Children Check, Police Checks and referee checks for all staff and volunteers who have a role with children or have access to children's personal information. We require staff to have appropriate qualifications for their roles and check to make sure these qualifications are valid. Members of the Management Committee must hold a valid Working with Children Check and a national Police Check is required.

# Supporting Staff & Volunteers

---

Kids Weekend Playcare is committed to ensuring that all leaders, staff, and volunteers receive training to ensure they understand their responsibilities in relation to child safety and to support their engagement with children. Kids Weekend Playcare assists its leaders, staff and volunteers to incorporate child safety considerations into decisions and to promote a safe environment where children are empowered to speak up about issues that affect them.

All Kids Weekend Playcare Management Committee members, leaders, staff, and volunteers are required to complete annual child safety training. Training will be recorded in the Child Safety Training Action Plan.

Staff and volunteers will receive supervision to support their engagement with children and for compliance with our Code of Conduct and Child Safety and Wellbeing Policy.

Issues or concerns about behaviour with children will be raised immediately and addressed in line with our Code of Conduct, complaint handling policy and disciplinary policy.

# Complaints & Reporting

---

All reports of child abuse and child safety concerns will be treated seriously, whether they are made by an adult or a child and whether they are about the conduct of an adult or a child. All complaints and child safety concerns will be responded to promptly and thoroughly.

Kids Weekend Playcare has a complaint handling policy that includes information for staff and volunteers about how a complaint or child safety concern will be responded to. An easy-to-understand complaints information sheet will be provided for children, families and the community to know about the complaint process and the support available to those making a complaint and those involved in the complaint process.

If a complaint includes an allegation or incident of child abuse or harm, then staff and volunteers at Kids Weekend Playcare must report it in accordance with the complaint handling policy. Kids Weekend Playcare staff and volunteers are required to prioritise children's safety in any response and to report all potentially criminal conduct to Victoria Police. Under the complaint handling and disciplinary policies, staff and volunteers may be subject to actions to support child safety including:

- Being stood down during an investigation or terminated following an investigation
- Having their duties altered so they do not engage with children at Kids Weekend Playcare
- Not allowing unsupervised contact with children at Kids Weekend Playcare
- Removing their access to the Kids Weekend Playcare IT system and facilities.

Complaints can be emailed to [info@weekendplaycare.com.au](mailto:info@weekendplaycare.com.au) or you can speak with a Child Safety Person.

**If there is concern for the immediate safety of a child, immediately call 000.**

# Records & Information

---

## Record keeping

Kids Weekend Playcare is committed to making and keeping full and accurate records about all child-related complaints or safety concerns.

All child safety complaints, concerns, incidents and near misses will be recorded in the incident reporting system.

Records which may assist with the investigation of a complaint or safety concern will be identified and kept as part of the record of an investigation. Records will be kept even if an investigation does not substantiate a complaint.

We will record and keep the outcome of any investigations, and the resolution of any complaints. This includes findings made, reasons for decisions and actions taken.

Records will be stored securely and kept by Kids Weekend Playcare for at least 45 years.

## Information sharing

Kids Weekend Playcare may share relevant information to promote the safety and wellbeing of children, where it is appropriate and in their best interests. Kids Weekend Playcare will keep information about complaints confidential, except where it is necessary to share information to respond properly to a complaint or to prioritise child safety. We may also need to share information about incidents or complaints with external authorities to comply with the law or to prioritise safety. More information is available in our complaint handling policy.

# Risk Management

---

We recognise the importance of identifying and managing risks of child harm and abuse in the physical and online environments operated by Kids Weekend Playcare.

We conduct regular risk assessments and have a risk management plan to address the risk of child abuse and harm at Kids Weekend Playcare. The risk management plan will be developed in consultation with our staff, volunteers, parent representatives and children. We will ensure that any risk controls put in place balance the need to manage harm with the benefits of participating at Kids Weekend Playcare. The Management Committee is responsible for approving the risk management plan.

Any contractors or other providers of services will always be supervised by a member of staff while working with us to ensure child safety. See also Code of Conduct above.

Non-compliance with this policy and the Code of Conduct

Kids Weekend Playcare will enforce this policy, the Code of Conduct and any other child safety and wellbeing policies (see list below). Potential breaches by anyone will be investigated and may result in restriction of duties, suspension or termination of employment or engagement or other corrective action. More information can be found in our disciplinary policy.

# Review

---

Kids Weekend Playcare will review all child safe practices and policies at least every two years. We also review relevant practices and policies in response to a child safety incident or 'near miss'. Findings from reviews will be reported to the people involved in our organisation and inform our approach to continuous improvement of our child safety practices. Reviews are overseen by the Management Committee and will be informed by consultation with children, families and staff.

## **Supporting documents – Kids Weekend Playcare child safety and wellbeing system**

The following policies and procedures work together to support child safety and wellbeing across all our operations:

- Child Safety and Wellbeing Policy
- Code of Conduct
- Complaint handling policy
- Recruitment and screening policy
- Disciplinary policy
- Risk management plan
- Child safe training plan.

## **Supporting legislation**

- Child Wellbeing and Safety Act 2005 (Vic) (including Child Safe Standards)
- Children, Youth and Families Act 2005 (Vic) (including reporting to Child Protection)
- Crimes Act 1958 (Vic) (including Failure to Protect and Failure to Disclose offences)
- Wrongs Act 1958 (Vic) (including Part XIII – Organisational liability for child abuse)