

# Child Safety Policy Document

## Purpose

The Veta Youth Child Safety Policy Document:

- Outlines appropriate standards of behaviour, which Veta Youth expects from all staff and volunteers
- Affirms the values that guide our organisation
- Promotes and foster confidence within Veta Youth and the community
- Facilitates leaders to be accountable
- Guides our conduct and actions in Christian ministry and organisational leadership.

The Policy aims to establish clear boundaries of acceptable behaviour for staff and volunteers within Veta Youth, and to protect children from abuse and harm while participating in our programs. It also assists in understanding how to avoid or better manage risky behaviours and situations. The Child Safety Policy Document aims to reduce the possibility of unfounded allegations of abuse against staff and volunteers.

All staff, contractors, volunteers and any other member of the Veta community involved in child-related work are required to observe expectations for appropriate behaviour in the Code of Conduct included below. The Code of Conduct applies in all Veta Youth activities and situations, including retreats and in the use of digital technology and social media.

## Definitions

The Veta Youth Child Safety Policy Document is to be read in light of the following definitions:

- **Child** means a person below the age of 18 years unless, under the law applicable to the child, majority is attained earlier
- **Child protection** means any responsibility, measure or activity undertaken to safeguard children from harm
- **Child abuse includes—**
  - any act committed against a child involving a sexual offence or an offence under the relevant section of the law for the relevant jurisdiction (eg. Victoria: section 49B(2) of the Crimes Act 1958 (grooming)); and
  - the infliction, on a child, of physical violence or serious emotional or psychological harm; and
  - serious neglect of a child.
- **Child sexual assault** is any act which exposes a child to, or involves a child in, sexual processes beyond his or her understanding or contrary to moral law. It includes child grooming, which refers to actions deliberately undertaken with the aim of befriending and establishing an emotional connection with a child to lower the child's inhibitions in preparation for sexual activity with the child.
- **Veta programs and activities** means any physical or virtual place made available or authorised by Veta Youth's governing authority for use by a child or youth, including:



- a location of a school, church or retreat
- online school environments (including email and intranet systems)
- other locations provided by Veta Youth for a child's use, such as training and graduation facilities.

### **Statement of Commitment to Child Safety**

As participants in a Christian organisation, Veta Youth staff and volunteers are called to love God with all our heart, soul mind and strength, and to love our neighbour as ourselves. Integral to this calling is our commitment to be a safe place for all people, with special consideration for children and other vulnerable people. To this end, Veta Youth prioritises the safety of children in all programs and activities of the organisation by:

- Identifying risks early, and reducing or removing them
- Treating all safety concerns and allegations of abuse seriously, and reporting in line with our legal and moral obligations and our written policies<sup>\*1</sup>
- Honouring the intrinsic human dignity of all people as created in the image of God
- Upholding Christian standards of attitude and behaviour
- Following the example of Christ in welcoming and including children and vulnerable people.

### **Upholding the Code of Conduct**

All members of staff and volunteers are responsible for promoting the safety and wellbeing of all those participating in Veta Youth activities. All staff and volunteers are expected to report any concerns or breaches of the Code of Conduct to the responsible Veta Staff person responsible. Serious breaches or incidents involving the responsible staff member are to be reported to:

Rohan Waters - Veta Youth Executive  
Director  
Mobile - 0432 991 836  
Email - [rohan@veta.org.au](mailto:rohan@veta.org.au)

The Executive Director and staff of Veta Youth will support the implementation and monitoring of the Code of Conduct, and will plan, implement and monitor arrangements to provide a loving, safe and orderly environment.

Staff and volunteers who breach the Code of Conduct may be subject to Veta Youth's

---

<sup>1</sup> Victoria's 'Compulsory Child Safe Standards' requires that the statement of commitment to child safety state that '*the organisation has a zero-tolerance approach to child abuse, is committed to upholding children's best interests and keeping them safe, and that it actively works to listen to and empower children with an organisation*'.

Understanding that the intention of 'zero-tolerance' language is to ensure that no child abuse is ignored, allowed to continue or go unreported, we look to Christ who teaches us not to swear by anything on heaven or earth, "*but let your 'Yes' be 'Yes' and your 'No', 'No' (Mt 6:33-37)*", and contend that a 'zero tolerance' approach to child abuse is sufficiently affirmed in our commitment to '*Treating all safety concerns and allegations of abuse seriously...*'



disciplinary procedures. Any breach of the code involving external workers/volunteers may be asked to leave Veta Youth and its associated programs/events/ministries. Serious breaches may result in a report to authorities, such as the police and local statutory authorities.

#### **Reporting Procedure**

The Veta Youth procedure for reporting child abuse follows the Churches of Christ procedure of the state in which the report is to be made. The relevant procedure is available on the specific Churches of Christ state website, and is provided with this document.



# Specific Policies

## **Physical contact**

- Physical contact is a normal and healthy part of human interaction
- Physical contact may or may not be sought or appreciated by different people at different times
- Physical contact can be misconstrued by both the person experiencing the contact, and by others.

Physical contact should therefore:

- Be in response to the participant's need
- Be initiated by the child and/or with their permission
- Be in the presence of others, open and not secretive
- Be respectful of the cultural/social and background of the individual
- Be in no way sexualised
- Not show favouritism.

Children should not be shunned if they initiate and demonstrate their need for comfort, bearing in mind the context and the individual child. It is up to the child to determine the degree of contact they have with you, within the guidelines given above.

Under no circumstances is physical or corporal punishment to be administered.

The only form of physical restraint appropriate is to protect children from harm. This includes reasonable restraint to stop a fight, to stop bullying or to avoid an accident.

## **Ratios**

Unless overridden by local legislation, ratios for Veta Youth Activities follow the guidelines of Education Victoria, see:

<https://www.education.vic.gov.au/school/principals/spag/safety/Pages/staffing.aspx>

Activity	Minimum Leaders	Leader-Student Ratio	Additional Requirments
Overnight retreat in residential premises under canvas	2	1:10	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- All overnight stays with mixed sex groups must have at least one leader of each sex</li> <li>- These ratios are minimum only. Planning should take into account the nature of the students, activities, and environment, the experience of the leaders and any other relevant factors</li> </ul>
Overnight retreat in residential premises under canvas	2	1:15	
Overseas Tours	2	1:10	
Day Excursions	2	1:20	
Adventure Activities	2	As per activity guidelines	

## **Privacy**

- Leaders may, for reasons associated with the delivery of Veta activities, have access to the personal information of participants (contact details, personal information etc.)
- It is our responsibility to protect the right to privacy of all participants and their families
- All leaders must abide by the Veta Youth Privacy Policy (separate document).

## **Personal Information**

- Any personal information about students, is not to be shared without permission of the Veta staff member in charge, and in line with the Veta Youth Privacy Policy.

## **Photos and Videos**

- Leaders and other adult participants in Veta activities may only post a photo or video recording of students (other than their own), with the express prior consent from the student's parents.

## **Contact Outside the Program**

- Contact with a child or their family who is not socially related, outside of Veta Programs, must be reasonably associated with the leader's position description within Veta Youth
- Personal details, (eg address, phone, email, social media) are not to be exchanged with a child or their family who is not socially related, without first gaining clearance from the Veta Youth staff contact
- Any external contact must be welcomed by the child, and only with parental permission
- Records should be maintained of any such contact.

## **Health and First Aid**

- An appropriately trained First Aid Officer is to be appointed and at attendance at each Veta Youth activity.
- The Veta contact person is to ensure that the First Aid Officer is to ensure that the First Aid Officer has access to suitable first aid equipment
- If a participant becomes sick or injured, the Veta contact person is to be informed immediately
- An incident report is to be completed for every First Aid incident, and submitted to [admin@veta.org.au](mailto:admin@veta.org.au).

## **Medical and Dietary Information**

- All participants and leaders on Veta retreats are required to complete a medical information form
- A list of relevant information is supplied, in a readily accessible form, to the Veta Contact person and relevant leaders
- Appropriate care is to be taken to ensure that student needs are catered for
- Extremely allergenic participants may be required to supply their own food
- Anaphylactic participants are to be identified by the Veta Contact and relevant leaders
- The First Aid Officer is responsible for the administration of all non-prescription medication, and may support students by helping them to manage their own medications.



### **Transport**

- A 'Permission to Travel in Private Vehicle' form must be completed by any student who travels in the private vehicle of a Veta Leader while on a Veta activity
- At least two adults should be in the vehicle with any children
- Private vehicles must be fully registered, roadworthy and insured.

### **Preparation of Risk Assessment**

- A risk assessment form (as provided by Veta Youth) is to be completed and submitted to [admin@veta.org.au](mailto:admin@veta.org.au) prior to the delivery of any Veta event involving children (at least 10 days for overnight retreats)
- Approval is required prior to the delivery of the event.

### **Food Handling**

Any food handling must comply with the requirements of food safety and local legislation

### **Screening and Appointment of Staff and Leaders**

Prior to commencement in their role, all workers and leaders must:

- Agree to the Vet Youth Code of Conduct
- Submit the relevant child-safe documentation for the state they are working in (eg. WWCC, Blue card)
- Complete the appropriate level of training in Child Safety for their role and, according to the legislation of the state they are working in
- Be provided with a clear description of their role
- Be approved for their role by the authorised Veta Contact Person.

### **Staff Appointments**

Reference checks will be completed prior to appointment of any staff.

### **Governance**

The board and senior leadership are committed to promoting child safety, and are aware that they would be committing a criminal offence if they knew of a substantial risk of child sexual abuse and had the power or responsibility to reduce or remove the risk, but negligently failed to do so.

We require the Chair of our governing body, the Executive Director, the Safety Contact Person, and all State Coordinators to attend a NCCA Safe Church Awareness Workshop before commencing in their role and to attend a refresher workshop every 3 years.

The governing body participates in an awareness-raising workshop regarding safety issues at least annually, and conducts an annual self-assessment to identify how we can improve the way we apply Child Safe Standards in our organisation.

The governing body makes an annual declaration to CCVT confirming that we comply with the Child Safe Standards or if not, specifying any areas for improvement and what action will be taken, by when, to ensure compliance at a minimum and ideally best practice. CCVT oversees these declarations.



### **Responding to Complaints and Concerns**

Any inappropriate behaviour will be reported through appropriate channels in accordance with the Churches of Christ Child Safety Reporting Procedure of the relevant state.

### **Record Keeping and Privacy**

All Child Safety documents (working with children checks, allegations, safety concerns etc.) are kept in the online Childsafe data management system.

### **Review**

- Child Safe Policies and procedures are reviewed annually
- This is recorded in the Veta Youth Board of Directors Compliance Checklist.

### **Forms**

PGS/Leader/Volunteer Application/Information forms, which include the collection of medical information, can be found online at <https://veta.org.au/enrol3/> , Risk Assessment forms as required from admin@veta.org.au.



# Code of Conduct

**As a staff member or volunteer of Veta Youth, and in all physical and electronic interactions, I MUST**

## **1. Abide by Veta Youth policies and procedures**

***I Will:***

- Conduct myself in a manner that is consistent with the values, policies and procedures of Veta Youth.
- Comply with all relevant Australian and local legislation
- Act with integrity in all areas, including record keeping, information sharing and financial matters.

## **2. Respond immediately to any concerns, reports or allegations of breaches of child-safety**

***I Will:***

- Listen and respond to the views and concerns of children, particularly if in relation to any issues of safety or abuse
- Report any concerns or suspicions regarding abuse in accordance with Veta Youth's reporting procedures and local legislation
- Maintain confidentiality in the reporting process, in accordance with Veta Youth processes and local legislation
- Immediately disclose to the Executive Director all charges, convictions, and allegations made against me (either directly or via my primary Veta staff contact).

***I Will Not:***

- Ignore or disregard any suspected or disclosed child abuse
- Make inappropriate promises to children and young people, particularly in relation to confidentiality
- Release or discuss any personal confidential information about suspected or proven child abuse or protection cases other than with the Executive Director, approved agencies, and appropriate lawful authorities
- Knowingly make false, misleading or deceptive statements.

## **3. Honour the intrinsic dignity of every person as created in the image of God**

***I Will:***

- Treat all people with respect regardless of any difference, advantage, or disadvantage that may exist between myself and the other person (Gal 3:28)
- Include people in the decisions that directly affect them.

***I Will Not:***

- Humiliate, intimidate, harass or abuse another person in any way (eg. physical, sexual, spiritual, emotional)





- Condone or participate in illegal activities, including using any prohibited substance
- Treat people unjustly
- Use offensive, abusive or sexually provocative language
- Do things of a personal nature that a child or vulnerable adult can do for him/herself, such as assistance with toileting or changing clothes.



## 4. Uphold Christian standards of attitude and behaviour

### *I Will:*

- Uphold, in word and action, a Christian vision for human sexuality (eg. 1 Cor 6:12-7:40; Gen 2:18-25; Song of Songs; Mt 19: 1-12)
- Be a positive role model and example of Christian conduct in daily activities (eg. Mt 5-7; Rm 12; Gal 5:22-23)
- Ensure my language is appropriate and edifying (Eph 5:4).

### *I Will Not:*

- Seek an unfair and personal advantage or financial gain from my position
- Take property belonging to others, including intellectual property (copyright).

## 5. Protect and promote the safety of Children

### *I will:*

- Strive to create a safe environment for all people, avoiding unnecessarily risky behaviours and situations
- Be accountable and transparent in my words and conduct
- Wherever possible, ensure that another adult is present when I am working in the proximity of children
- Ensure any contact with children or vulnerable adults is appropriate and within the parameters of the program/event/activity
- If an allegation of child abuse is made, ensure as quickly as possible that the child or children are safe.

### *I Will Not:*

- Engage in any form of sexual contact or relationship with a child, or any other person under my care or supervision
- Have contact with a child or their family who is not socially related, outside of the pastoral duties reasonably associated with my position description with Veta Youth
- Exchange personal details, (eg address, phone, email, social media) with a child or their family who is not socially related, without first gaining clearance from my Veta Youth staff contact.

---

### **Consent:**

When submitting to our online PGS, Leader, Volunteer Form, you are agreeing to the following statements:

- I understand the Veta Youth Code of Conduct and agree to uphold the standards of behaviour described within.
- I understand and acknowledge that Veta Youth will implement disciplinary measures, up to and including reporting to relevant authorities, if I am found to be in breach of the Code of Conduct.
- I understand and acknowledge my responsibility to report any breach of the Code of Conduct immediately to the Veta Youth Executive Director.

