

CHILD SAFE POLICY

At CHIPS, we are committed to providing a safe environment for all children and protecting them from any form of harm, including abuse. This policy has been written to demonstrate the strong commitment of the management, staff and volunteers to child safety and to provide an outline of the policies and practices we have developed to keep everyone safe. A child is defined as anyone less than 18 years old.

COMMITMENT TO CHILD SAFETY

- All children who participate in CHIPS programs and serve as CHIPS volunteers have a right to feel and be safe. The welfare of the children in our care will always be our first priority.
- We aim to create a child safe, child friendly, positive, encouraging and supportive environment where children feel safe, have fun, become empowered and experience joy, healing and restoration.
- We have a zero tolerance to child abuse in any form including physical, sexual, emotional, psychological, grooming, neglect and exposure to violence, and any form of discrimination including racial, cultural, religious and disability.
- We are committed to following safety procedures aimed at preventing harm, particularly regarding activity planning, the use of facilities and equipment, medical and health needs, and general care.
- This policy applies to all staff, volunteers, children and individuals involved in CHIPS.

CHILDREN'S RIGHTS TO SAFETY AND PARTICIPATION

- CHIPS staff and volunteers actively encourage all children participating in our programs to express their views about their safety, needs, personal growth, and anything that is important to them.
- We respect children's right to choose how they participate, where possible within boundaries to ensure the safety of everyone present.
- We listen to children's opinions and suggestions, especially on matters which directly affect them.
- We teach children about what they can do if they feel unsafe.

- We listen to and act on any concerns children, or their parents, raise with us, and invite them to do this at any time, as well as through post-event feedback surveys.

INCLUSION AND VALUING DIVERSITY

CHIPS values diversity and does not tolerate any discriminatory practices. CHIPS programs are based on Christian values and are run in a culturally and religiously sensitive manner. To achieve this we:

- do not proselytise, evangelise or attempt to impose our beliefs,
- give schools information about the content of the programs they choose to participate in, and inform parents about the Life Gets Better Camp program and its content prior to a child attending camp,
- promote the cultural safety, participation and empowerment of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children and their families,
- use Dreaming stories in our presentations to children and educate them about indigenous culture through activities such as 'Bush Tucker Walks',
- promote the cultural safety, participation and empowerment of children from culturally and/or linguistically diverse backgrounds and their families,
- welcome children with a disability and their families and act to promote their participation,
- seek appropriate staff and volunteers from diverse cultural backgrounds.

RECRUITING STAFF AND VOLUNTEERS

CHIPS applies thorough and rigorous standards in the recruitment and screening of all staff and volunteers.

- We conduct interviews and referee checks.
- All staff and volunteers 18 years old and over are required to have a current Working With Children Check (WWCC), teacher's registration, or police officer credential in accordance with the WWCC legislation.
- We also require volunteers aged 16 and 17 to obtain a WWCC.

- For volunteers under 16 years old, we will conduct referee checks and provide adult supervision for them.
- Our commitment to child safety and our screening requirements are included in all advertisements and explained at interviews.

SUPPORTING STAFF AND VOLUNTEERS

- CHIPS seeks to attract and retain caring staff and volunteers who we train and equip to safely support and encourage the children attending our programs.
- We provide support and supervision so people feel valued, respected, and fairly treated.
- We invite staff and volunteers to give feedback about our programs and child safety at any time, as well as through post-event feedback surveys.
- We have developed Codes of Conduct to provide guidance to our staff and volunteers, all of whom receive training in the requirements of their Code and are required to indicate their commitment by signing it. Please refer to our Code of Conduct - General for staff and volunteers at www.chips.org.au

REPORTING A CHILD SAFETY CONCERN OR COMPLAINT

- Cathy Wieckmann is CHIPS' Child Safety Officer with the specific responsibility of responding to any concerns or complaints about child safety made by staff, volunteers, schools, parents or children.
- Please follow the steps to report a concern or complaint as outlined in our Reporting Child Safety Concerns and Complaints Policy at www.chips.org.au

RISK MANAGEMENT

- CHIPS recognises the importance of a risk management approach to minimising the potential for child abuse or harm to occur and use this to inform our policy, procedures and activity planning.
- In addition to general occupational health and safety risks, we proactively manage risks of abuse to the children in our programs.
- We develop a risk management plan for every event and address all issues raised to ensure a safe environment for all children attending.

REVIEWING THIS POLICY

This Child Safe Policy was approved by the CHIPS Board on 17th November 2016. It is due to be reviewed in November 2018, and every two years. We undertake to seek views, comments and suggestions from children, parents, carers, staff and volunteers.