

Child Safety Policy

Version 1.0

Ratified by the State Trustees of Victoria on 5 February 2023.

Definitions

CICV refers to the Christian Israelite Church of Victoria.

Officers refers to judges and judgesses of church bodies within Victoria, and the male and female state trustees of Victoria. It also applies to interstate judges, judgesses, and trustees who may temporarily perform a role within the CICV.

Other leaders refers to those who lead a church program, service, or activity, such as preachers, door keepers, Sunday School teachers, choir directors, and any such leaders as have contact with children within the CICV.

Members refers to any person who is a registered member of the CICV.

Purpose

The purpose of this policy is to demonstrate CICV's commitment to promoting and protecting the safety of children. It outlines the fundamental expectations as to the treatment of children who come into contact with CICV's officers and members, or who attend CICV's facilities and activities.

CICV has no tolerance for child abuse or maltreatment of children. We are committed to ensuring children and young people are empowered to participate in decisions that affect their lives and that they are given every support to be safe from harm.

We are committed to the cultural, spiritual, emotional, sexual, and physical safety of all children from all backgrounds and communities. We understand our legal and moral obligations to treat any child safety concerns seriously, including reporting any allegations and wellbeing concerns to authorities. We are furthermore committed to regularly reviewing our implementation of the Victorian Child Safe Standards.

Scope

This policy applies to all people associated with the CICV, including officers, other leaders, and members.

Policy Statement

Children's Rights

We are committed to:

- Understanding what is required for children to feel safe in our church and regularly communicating with children about what they can do if they feel unsafe;
- Promoting a culturally safe environment where children are empowered to speak up about issues that affect them;
- Responding to children who report that they are feeling unsafe and ensuring they are provided with appropriate support; and addressing the situation that caused them to be unsafe in line with our legal and moral obligations as set out by the Victoria State Government.

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Officers and Program Facilitators

We are committed to:

- Ensuring that all officers and other leaders are appropriately screened and have active Working with Children Checks;
- Ensuring that all officers and other leaders have read and signed the *CICV Code of Conduct for Leaders* and that they re-affirm their commitment to this annually;
- Ensuring that all officers and other leaders have the relevant qualification(s), experience, and/or skills appropriate to their particular role;
- Ensuring that all officers and other leaders receive ongoing training about their responsibilities in relation to child safety;
- Assisting all officers and other leaders to incorporate child safety considerations in their decision-making and processes.

Reporting Allegations and Incidents of Child Abuse

We are committed to:

- Assuring CICV's people, including its children and young people, that all reports of child abuse will be treated seriously;
- Having robust procedures implemented that guides CICV's people on how to report allegations or incidents of child abuse and thereby ensure mandatory reporting requirements are met. This includes reporting to:
 - *Victoria Police*, where a child is at imminent risk of significant harm and requiring immediate intervention;
 - *Victoria's Department of Families, Fairness, and Housing (DFFH) – Child Protection*, where a belief is formed on reasonable grounds that a child is in need of protection;
 - *The Orange Door*, where a belief is formed on reasonable grounds that a child is not in need of protection, but the family requires support to address child wellbeing concerns and prevent an escalation of risk to child safety.

Record Keeping

We are committed to:

- Recording all reports of child abuse in line with the *CICV Privacy Policy*;
- Ensuring that officers monitor all reports of child abuse and complaints about child safety, and that any processes around such complaints are child-focused.

Risk Management

We recognise the importance of managing risks to minimise the potential for child abuse or harm to occur, including within activity planning. Therefore, we are committed to:

- Assessing risks of child abuse at all existing and new activities and facilities;
- Reducing all identified risks of child abuse by designing and implementing appropriate preventative measures;
- Ensuring people within the CICV are aware of their responsibility for identifying risk of child abuse and their requirement to work with officers to reduce those risks;
- Ensuring families and children are aware of how to report identified risks of child abuse within the church; i.e., to the officer over them and to relevant authorities;
- Identifying, recording, managing, and reviewing risks to child safety.

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Non-Compliance

CICV will enforce this policy and the *CICV Code of Conduct for Leaders*. Following any issues of non-compliance, including issues where those named within the scope of this policy have compromised a child's safety, the CICV will instigate a review that may result in restriction of duties, and/or suspension or termination of a person's role and/or membership within the church.

Further to the above, where the issue of non-compliance is to a criminal degree, a report will be made to both police and DFFH in line with the mandatory reporting requirements of the State of Victoria and our spiritual requirement to obey and resolve such matters by the laws of the land (as per 1 Peter 2:13 and *The Guide for the General Assemblies*).

More Information

This policy is informed by the following, which also provide further information around child safety expectations:

- [Victorian Child Safe Standards](#)
- [Royal Commission into Institutional Responses to Child Sexual Abuse \(Dec 2013\)](#)
- [Charter of Human Rights and Responsibilities Act \(2006\)](#)
- [National Principles for Child Safe Organisations](#)