

Fact Sheet – Child Safe Behaviours for Members & Volunteers

The St Vincent de Paul Society is a lay Catholic organisation that values and respects the dignity of all persons, especially the most vulnerable in our community. Safeguarding children and young people so that they thrive in their families and communities, is a fundamental aspect of our work in providing a hand up to those facing adversity.

Safeguarding Children means protecting children and young people from abuse and maltreatment. Broadly, at Vinnies, it refers to a range of policies and procedures designed to keep children and young people safe.

This Fact Sheet provides information about acceptable and unacceptable behaviours in dealing with children and young people. It will assist with the protection of children and provide clarity to all personnel who work with children, by clarifying acceptable and unacceptable behaviour.

Some simple principles should guide an adult's behaviour when undertaking child-related work, such as:

- The adult/child or young person relationship should be professional at all times.
- An adult's response to a child or young person's behaviour or circumstance should be commensurate with the child's age, vulnerability and the adult's responsibility for the care, safety, and wellbeing of the child.
- An adult should not be alone with a child or young person.
- An adult should not initiate or seek physical contact or contact with children or young people outside of organisational context.

This information should be read in context with the St Vincent de Paul Society NSW Safeguarding Children and Young People Policy, and the Code of Conduct.

Acceptable Behaviours:

All personnel are responsible for supporting the safety of children and young people by:

- always setting clear boundaries about acceptable behaviour.
- set clear boundaries for other personnel
- being a positive role model
- explaining boundaries and rules to children and young people in an age-appropriate context
- always treat children and young people with care, respect, compassion and value their ideas and opinions
- always following Safeguarding Children and Young People Policy
- reporting concerns about children or young people by the end of each shift
- reporting concerns about others interactions with children or young people
- promoting and monitoring the safeguarding of children and young people and participating in a culture where all staff are expected to speak up and ask questions about the safety of others

- guide children’s behaviour in ways that support them to develop understandings and skills that assist them to manage their emotions and control their behaviour by themselves
- follow all workplace policies, procedures and signs in relation to the safety and protection of children and young people, including Government Department’s Law and Regulations
- complete annual Safeguarding Children refresher training

Unacceptable Behaviours:

Members and volunteers must not:

- be alone with a child or young person
- do things for a child or young person that are of a personal nature that they can do for themselves, such as going to the toilet or changing clothes
- photograph or video a child or young person without their consent and that of their guardian
- take photographs or videos on a personal device, always use Society property
- place photos of children in any of our programs or services on any social media platform
- have unnecessary physical contact – this includes, kissing, cuddling, lap-sitting & tickling
- isolate a child or young person as a punishment
- develop ‘special’ relationships with specific children or show favouritism through the provision of gifts or inappropriate attention.
- exchange personal details or information
- contact a child or young person outside of organisational context
- have any contact with a child or young person we support through social media
- physically discipline anyone
- deny a child or young person food or water or access to toilets
- administer any medication to any child or young person without the written consent of the parent or guardian
- use inappropriate language in the presence of children
- express personal views on cultures, race or sexuality in the presence of children
- discriminate against any child, including because of age, gender, race, culture, vulnerability, sexuality, ethnicity or disability
- use tobacco products or possess or be under the influence of alcohol or illegal drugs at any time while working with children
- engage in rough physical games
- take a child to their own home, your home, or meet with them outside the program activity

The Society recognises that every member, volunteer and employee has an important role in safeguarding children and young people.

Reporting Concerns:	childprotection@vinnies.org.au 1800 4 SUPPORT – 1800 478 776
Useful Links:	Safeguarding Children and Young People Policy
Fact Sheet:	Understanding Child Abuse
Fact Sheet:	Responding to Disclosures