

Child Safe Policy

Purpose

All children (18 years and under) involved with Gloucester Arts and Cultural Council Inc (GACCI) have a right to feel safe, protected and included.

This policy is part of our organisation's ongoing commitment to protecting the children in our care from harm and abuse. It:

- outlines the child safe practices our organisation has put in place to minimise the risks to child safety
- sets out what is required from staff, including volunteers and others who interact with our organisation, so they know what is expected from them to keep children safe.

Our commitment to child safety

At GACCI we commit to the safety and wellbeing of every child in our care. Please read our Statement of Commitment to Child Safety, which is available on our website www.gloucester-arts.com.au and is displayed at 25 Denison St, Gloucester, NSW 2422

Our organisation ensures services and activities are inclusive of all children, including children with diverse needs.

Scope and audience for this policy

The policy describes what is required from all staff and volunteers in the organisation when taking part in any activities, services and events that involve children.

Responsibilities for children's safety

Everyone in our organisation is expected to carry out the requirements specific to their role to keep children safe. This includes:

- upholding our organisation's commitment to child safety
- reading, signing and upholding the behaviours set out in our Child Safe Code of Conduct
- meeting requirements across all other child safe policies and procedures, including child safe recruitment practices and risk management
- taking part in our regular reviews of our child safe documents
- reporting all breaches of our policies or any allegations of child harm or abuse, and meeting all external reporting obligations
- completing all child safe training.

Please contact a member of the GACCI committee with any of your child-safety related questions or concerns.

Active participation of children, families and communities .

- All our child-related policies and procedures are easily accessible on our website and offline for everyone who accesses our services and events, including children, parents, carers and community members.
- Children, parents and carers from diverse backgrounds and circumstances are encouraged to provide feedback on our child-related policies and procedures, including our Child Safe Code of Conduct that describes acceptable and non-acceptable behaviours and our Child Safe Risk Management Plan.
- We provide opportunities for children to provide feedback to our management, board or committee on what makes them feel safe, supported and included.

Definitions of harm and abuse

General definitions

Psychological abuse (also known as emotional abuse)

This includes bullying, threatening and abusive language, intimidation, shaming and name calling, ignoring and isolating a child, and exposure to domestic and family violence.

Physical abuse

This includes physical punishment, such as pushing, shoving, punching, slapping and kicking, resulting in injury, burns, choking or bruising.

Sexual abuse

This includes the sexual touching of a child, grooming, and production, distribution or possession of child abuse material.

Grooming

This is a process where a person manipulates a child or group of children and sometimes those looking after them, including parents, carers, teachers and leaders. They do this to establish a position of 'trust' so they can then later sexually abuse the child.

Misconduct

This is inappropriate behaviour that may not be as severe as abuse, but could indicate that abuse is occurring and would often be in breach of an organisation's Child Safe Code of Conduct. This could include showing a child something inappropriate on a phone, having inappropriate conversations with a child or an adult sitting with a child on their lap.

Lack of appropriate care

This includes not providing adequate and proper supervision, nourishment, clothing, shelter, education or medical care.

What the policy covers

Transporting children

Best practice is to always have two adults travelling with children. If this is not possible, a suitable arrangement must be made between the organisation and the parents of the children. If a child is alone with an adult in a car they must sit on the back seat. Every child should be accounted for at the end of a journey.

Social media use and online communication

Staff and volunteers must never communicate privately with children online or on social media. Any necessary online communication should include the child's parent or carer in the correspondence.

Photography and the use of images

Photos and videos of children can only be taken with the permission of parents or carers. Parents and carers must also approve any images used on our social media channels. It is unacceptable for staff or volunteers to take photos or videos of children, other than their own, on personal devices, or to share images without permission.

Physical contact

Physical contact with children should be kept to a minimum. Everyone involved in the organisation is expected to have healthy physical boundaries with children.

Gifts and benefits

Staff and volunteers must never give gifts to children, or bestow benefits of any kind to a child, unless they have direct permission from the child's parents or carers.

Secondary employment

Staff members must declare any secondary employment and make sure there are no conflicts of interest associated with the employment.

Staff and volunteers are not allowed to babysit children in our care unless they know the family or carer outside the organisation. If this is the case, they must let the organisation know that this arrangement is in place so it can be documented.

Out of hours contact with children

Staff and volunteers must let us know about any out-of-hours contact they have with children in our care. It is unacceptable for staff or volunteers to participate in the lives of children outside the organisation without a valid reason. Professional boundaries with the children in our care must be maintained at all times.

Illness and injury management

Injuries must be reported to the first aid officer on duty and first aid administered in a safe space within lines of sight of other adults.

Reporting requirements for different types of concerns or incidents

Child Safe Reporting Policy

Our Child Safe Reporting Policy sets out requirements and procedures for complaints, allegations, disclosures and reports, and external reporting obligations. It can be accessed at www.gloucester-arts.com.au

Other related child safe documents

GACCI has a range of other key documents that relate to child safety. These can be accessed at www.gloucester-arts.com.au, and include:

Statement of Commitment to Child Safety

Our public commitment to prioritising child safety across our organisation.

Child Safe Code of Conduct

Guides the day-to-day behaviours of adults interacting with children at the organisation.

Child Safe Recruitment, Induction and Training Policy

Sets out what is involved in the recruitment process and the procedures to be followed before a person is considered for a role at the organisation. This includes the verification of their Working with Children Check. It also outlines what is involved in the induction process for new recruits and any further training requirements.

Child Safe Risk Management Plan

Describes the specific risks at the service that could affect children's safety and identifies the protective strategies used to lower each risk.

Publication, communication and engagement

Our Child Safe Policy and other child safe documents can be found on our website at www.gloucester-arts.com.au. Anyone involved in our community can request a copy via email at any time. We send out regular email reminders to our community about our child safe documents and invite feedback whenever one of our organisation's child safe documents is up for review.

Related legislation, regulations and standards

GACCI has to understand and comply with a number of NSW child protection laws and schemes. These include:

- NSW Child Safe Scheme
- *Children's Guardian Act 2019*
- *Child Protection (Working with Children) Act 2012*
- Child Protection (Working with Children) Regulation 2013
- *Children and Young Persons (Care and Protection) Act 1998*

Next review date

Annually at the AGM, or earlier if there are any critical incidents

This sample template was developed by the NSW Office of the Children's Guardian.

For more free child safe resources, visit ocg.nsw.gov.au/our-resources.