



## **Child Safety Policy**

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## 1. Purpose

All organisations working with children must take steps to prevent abuse. The Child Safety Policy outlines appropriate guidelines adopted by Geelong Art Gallery Inc (“Geelong Gallery”) Board, management, staff, volunteers, guides and presenters towards children.

The Seven Victorian Child Safety Standards are mandatory for organisations in accordance with the Child Safe Standards passed by the Victorian Government under the *Child Wellbeing and Safety Act 2005*. The Commission continues to enforce compliance with the Victorian Standards.

Geelong Gallery’s Child Safety Policy outlines the organisation’s commitment and approach to creating and maintaining a child safe organisation where children and young people are safe and feel safe, and provides the policy framework for the organisation’s approach to the Victorian Government’s *Child Safe Standards*.

All children who come to Geelong Art Gallery Inc. (“Geelong Gallery”) have a right to feel safe and be safe. The welfare of the children in the Gallery’s care will always be a high priority and the Gallery will maintain zero tolerance of any form of child abuse. Geelong Gallery aims to create a child safe and child friendly environment.

Geelong Gallery’s Board, management, staff, volunteers, guides and presenters are strongly committed to child safety standards and this policy outlines the practices the Gallery will implement to keep all children safe from harm, including all forms of abuse.

## 2. Scope

This policy applies to all Board members, management, staff, contractors and volunteers of Geelong Art Gallery Inc (Geelong Gallery) whether or not they work in direct contact with children or young people.

## 3. Definitions of child abuse and safety

Child safety encompasses matters related to protecting all children from child abuse, managing the risk of child abuse, providing support to a child at risk of child abuse, and responding to incidents or allegations of child abuse.

Children are defined as anyone under 18 years old.

The following conduct must be reported:

- A sexual offence committed against, with or in the presence of, a child, whether or not a criminal proceeding in relation to the offence has been commenced or concluded
- Sexual misconduct, committed against, with or in the presence of, a child
- Physical violence committed against, with or in the presence of, a child,
- Any behaviour that causes significant emotional or psychological harm to a child,
- Significant neglect of a child

Responding to other concerns about the wellbeing of a child (i.e. concerns about harm to a child that does not meet the definition of child abuse).

The following conduct must be reported:

- Any management, staff, volunteers, guides and presenters in breach of the Code of Conduct and displaying prohibited behaviours;
- Inappropriate behaviour made towards a child by a member of the public;

- Persons supervising school students, kindergartens groups, day care centres, youth organisations etc. not taking appropriate care of a child under their supervision and putting that Child/student's wellbeing and safety at risk; and
- OH&S risks and environmental factors that can cause harm to a child.

## 4. Child Safety Standards

Although all children are vulnerable, some children face additional vulnerabilities. The Gallery provides three overarching principles that demonstrate the value of diversity and ensure zero tolerance towards discriminatory attitudes and practices.

To achieve this the Gallery:

1. Promotes the cultural safety, participation and empowerment of Indigenous and non-Indigenous children and their families;
2. Promotes the cultural safety, participation and empowerment of children from culturally and/or linguistically diverse backgrounds and their families; and
3. Welcomes children with a disability and their families and designs programs to promote their participation.

Geelong Gallery's Child Safety Policy addresses the seven Victorian Child Safety Standards in the following way.

### 4.1 Standard 1: Governance and leadership

The Board of the Geelong Gallery is committed to providing a culture of child safety.

The Director & CEO, Senior Management and line managers are responsible and accountable for the development and implementation of a culture of safety and for ensuring safe systems of work. All employees are responsible and accountable for compliance with approved child safe systems of work and contribution to the child safety culture.

In its planning, decision-making and operations, Geelong Gallery will:

- Take a preventative, proactive and participatory approach to child safety;
- Respect diversity in cultures while keeping child safety paramount;
- Provide written guidance on appropriate conduct and behaviour towards children to staff and volunteers;
- Promote Child Safety Standards throughout the organisation;
- Engage only the most suitable people to work with children and have high quality staff and volunteer supervision and professional development;
- Report suspected abuse, neglect or mistreatment promptly to the appropriate authorities;
- Ensure that no one is prohibited or discouraged from reporting an allegation of child abuse to a person external to the Gallery or from making records of any allegation;
- Share information appropriately and lawfully with other organisations where the safety and wellbeing of children is at risk; and
- Value the input of and invite feedback from Gallery visitors.

### 4.2 Standard 2: Clear commitment to child safety

The Gallery is committed to the safety and wellbeing of children and young people. The Gallery recognises the importance of, and has a responsibility for, ensuring the Gallery is a safe, supportive and enriching environment which respects and fosters the dignity and self-esteem of children and young people, and enables them to thrive in their learning and development.

The Gallery is committed to upholding the Victorian Child Safe Standards in accordance with the *Child Wellbeing and Safety Amendment (Child Safety Standards) Act 2015 (Vic)* to the best of its abilities and resources. In its commitment to the Child Safe Standards, the Geelong Gallery:

- Has zero tolerance of child abuse;
- Will identify risks to child safety as early as possible and remove and/or reduce these risks;
- Upholds itself as an organisation committed to the participation and empowerment of all children;
- Has robust human resources and recruitment practices for all staff and volunteers;
- Is committed to regularly training and educating staff in roles that interact with children and families, and has policies, procedures and training in place to support its leadership team, staff and volunteers to achieve this commitment;
- Complies with, and ensures that its personnel comply with requirements for a *Working with Children Check*; and
- Will treat all safety concerns brought to the Geelong Gallery's attention seriously and consistently with the Geelong Gallery's policies and procedures.

### 4.3 Standard 3: Code of conduct

The Gallery's *Child Safe Code of Conduct* and *Child Safety Responding Reporting Guide* and *Child Incident Report Form*, are readily available on the Gallery's common drive and in hard copy for all staff and volunteers to read at any time. The *Code of Conduct* aims to outline the principles of these standards to protect children, assess risk and reduce any opportunities for abuse or harm to occur. It provides management, staff, volunteers, guides and presenters with guidance on how best to support children and how to avoid or better manage difficult situations.

All Board members, management, staff, volunteers, guides and presenters are required to comply with this *Code of Conduct*. It is important that all staff are aware of their obligations under the Gallery's *Code of Conduct*, whereby allegations of staff or staff misconduct involving children and young people can be made against a staff member even if the conduct occurred outside of their work.

Refer to Geelong Gallery's *Human resource policy and procedures manual* for Management of Misconduct (Section 10) and discipline action for breach of policy subject to appropriate investigation and action. For employees, this may include termination of employment.

### 4.4 Standard 4: Human resource practices

Geelong Gallery maintains strong human resource practices that reduces the risk of child abuse by new or existing staff or volunteers.

All Board members, staff, volunteers and contractors working with children are screened to identify and avoid recruiting people who are not suitable to work with children.

All Board members, staff, volunteers and contractors working with children are required to have a *Working with Children Check*, *National Police Check*, referee checks and identity checks and must be able to produce their *Working with Children Check* upon request.

Training and education is important to ensure that everyone in the Gallery's organisation understands that child safety is everyone's responsibility. We promote a culture that aims for all staff and volunteers to feel confident and comfortable in coming forward with any allegations or suspicions of child abuse or child safety concerns.

Training and information is made available to staff and volunteers to identify, assess, and minimise risks of child abuse and to detect potential signs of child abuse.

### 4.5 Standard 5: Responding and reporting

Everyone employed or volunteering at Geelong Gallery has a responsibility to understand the important and significant role they play individually and collectively to ensure that the wellbeing and safety of all children is at the forefront of all they do and every decision they make.

The Gallery has clear expectations for all staff and volunteers in making a report about a child or young person who may be in need of protection. All staff and volunteers must follow the Gallery's *Code of Conduct* and responding and reporting obligations and procedures.

If a staff member or a volunteer has a **reasonable belief** that an incident has occurred then they must report the incident in the first instance to the Gallery's Child Safety Officers. If the incident is a criminal offence, the incident must also be reported to the Police on 000.

The Gallery's on-duty Visitor Service Manager or Weekend Manager and the Learning and Audience Engagement Manager acts as the Frontline Child Safety Officers and are the first point of contact to provide advice and support to children, parents/legal guardians and Geelong Gallery staff and volunteers regarding the safety and wellbeing of children. This includes being the first point of contact for dealing with and reporting complaints of non-compliance with this Policy and *Child Safe Code of Conduct*.

A *Child Safety Incident Report* will need to be filled out immediately and sent to Geelong Gallery Director & CEO via email and followed up verbally.

The Victorian Government amended the *Child Wellbeing and Safety Act 2005* to introduce the *Reportable Conduct Scheme* which applied to Geelong Gallery from 1 January 2019. The Reportable Conduct Scheme is to oversee allegations of child abuse and misconduct and includes the following obligations and processes:

1. Within three business days of becoming aware of an allegation, Geelong Gallery Director & CEO must notify the Commission for Children and Young People of that a reportable allegation has been made against one of their workers or volunteers.
2. Within 30 calendar days Geelong Gallery Director & CEO must provide certain detailed information about the allegations and their proposed response to the Commission for Children and Young People.
3. It is a criminal offence for a head of an organisation to fail to comply with the three-day and 30-day notification obligations without a reasonable excuse.
4. In order for the Gallery to perform its functions under the *Child Safe Standards*, it may be required to collect personal information about an employee, consultant/contractor or volunteer and disclose that information to a third party.
5. All concerns about the safety and wellbeing of a child, or the conduct of a staff member, Contractor, volunteer or member of the public must be acted upon as soon as possible.

### **Child Safety Officers:**

Geelong Gallery Director & CEO  
[jason@geelonggallery.org.au](mailto:jason@geelonggallery.org.au)

Learning and Audience Engagement Manager  
[elishia@geelonggallery.org.au](mailto:elishia@geelonggallery.org.au)

Visitor Service Manager  
[ally@geelonggallery.org.au](mailto:ally@geelonggallery.org.au)

Duty and weekend Managers

### **Reasonable Belief:**

When an adult is concerned about the safety and wellbeing of a child or young person, they must assess that concern to determine if a report should be made to the relevant agency. This process of considering all relevant information and observations is known as forming a 'reasonable belief'. A 'reasonable belief' or a 'belief on reasonable grounds' is not the same as having proof but is more

than mere rumour or speculation. A 'reasonable belief' is formed if a reasonable person in the same position would have formed the belief on the same grounds.

#### **4.6 Standard 6: Risk management and mitigation**

Geelong Gallery regularly reviews, evaluates and improves child safe practices. The wellbeing of children and young people is paramount and is addressed in the organisations risk management processes and provided to third parties, as required, in the *Geelong Gallery risk assessment—schools and groups* document, *Subject Consent Form - Publications photography, video, audio consent form*, *Parent/ Legal Guardian Consent Form and Emergency contact* and *Geelong Gallery OH& S Policy*. The Gallery recognises there are potential risks to children and young people and will take a risk management approach by undertaking preventative measures.

It is the responsibility of those who bring visiting schools and groups to Geelong Gallery to have the utmost concern for the health and safety of all those under their custodial care. School personnel should first address the process of risk assessment and analysis in areas appropriate to visiting the Gallery.

Geelong Gallery will identify and mitigate the risks of child abuse in the Gallery by taking into account the nature, the activities expected to be conducted in the Gallery and the characteristics and needs of all children expected to be present in that environment.

Geelong Gallery monitors and evaluates the effectiveness of the actions it takes to reduce or remove risks to child safety, more information can be found in the school's risk assessment register.

Complaints, concerns and safety incidents must be reported to the appropriate staff member to be analysed to identify causes and systemic failures so as to inform continuous improvement.

#### **4.7 Standard 7: Empowering children.**

The Geelong Gallery will ensure all programs for children encourage participation and designed to be:

- Ethical;
- Age appropriate and child friendly;
- Culturally respectful;
- Inclusive of a diverse range of children, demonstrating respect for children of all ages, abilities, social and cultural backgrounds;
- Positive and fun;
- Voluntary and with informed consent; and
- Clear, honest and realistic about the boundaries of a discussion and what can change.

The Gallery is also committed to communicating our *Child Safety Standards* and commitment to our visitors by:

- Clearly displaying our statement of commitment to Child Safe Standards on the Gallery's website; and
- Providing a copy of the statement of commitment to Child Safe Standards to all participants participating in child-focused programs.

### **5. Content warnings and adult themes**

Parent or guardian discretion must be exercised to ensure that children attending Geelong Gallery or participating in other activities at Geelong Gallery are not exposed to content which may be unsuitable for them having regard to the child's age, culture, religion, maturity, emotional or psychological development and sensitivity.

Geelong Gallery will provide guidance by:

- Communicating suitable age for exhibitions, workshops, activities and events on their website and other marketing collateral;
- Geelong Gallery will place content warning signage in the foyer and near artworks that contain nudity and artworks deemed inappropriate for children;
- Geelong Gallery's Conditions of Entry (visible in the Geelong Gallery website) require children under the age of 15 to be under the supervision of a responsible adult (18 years and over) at all times;
- For children over the age of 15 years old, parental discretion should be exercised regarding whether they can attend Geelong Gallery, including workshops and events, without supervision.

## 6. Using images of children

Geelong Gallery aims to protect the safety and privacy of children whilst in the Gallery by:

- Only publishing images that do not contain identifying information about children (e.g. school uniform, name) unless otherwise agreed;
- Obtaining informed consent prior to taking or publishing images, from a parent/legal guardian;
- Informing parents/legal guardians if Geelong Gallery wants to film or take photos of children for evaluation purposes or to improve visitors experiences;
- Making sure professional photographers are aware that any images taken will remain the property of Geelong Gallery and cannot be used or sold for other purposes; and
- Making sure photographers are not left unsupervised with children and do not have individual access to children.

## 7. Work experience

Geelong Gallery occasionally provides opportunities for students (under 18 years old) to be engaged in work experience. The minimum requirements for their engagement at Geelong Gallery are as follows:

- Geelong Gallery Human Resources Liaison and the Visitor Service Manager must manage the application process between the school, organisation or student;
- Geelong Gallery Human Resources Liaison and the Visitor Service Manager must manage the approval process and complete the Work Experience Form detailing the arrangements of the work experience;
- Appropriate training, induction, occupational health and safety requirements and the duties to be performed must be provided for the student; and
- Adequate levels of supervision must be provided for the student at all times.

## 8. School holiday program and children workshops

Geelong Gallery occasionally provides opportunities for children to participate in workshops and activities without the supervision of an adult guardian or parent. The minimum requirements for a child to be left in the care of Geelong Gallery are as follows:

- A *Parent/ Legal Guardian Consent Form and Emergency contact* form needs to be filled out and signed by a parent or the child's guardian prior to being left in the care of the Gallery agreeing to the terms and conditions of Geelong Gallery; and
- Adequate levels of supervision must be provided for the child at all times.

## 9. Policy review

This policy will be reviewed every two years and the Geelong Gallery undertakes to seek views, comments and suggestions from children, parents/carers, staff, volunteers, guides and presenters.