



Child Safety and Wellbeing policy

Walk Melbourne Tours

CHILD SAFETY AND WELLBEING POLICY



Child Safety and Wellbeing policy

Contents

1 PURPOSE	3
2 SCOPE	3
3 POLICY STATEMENT	3
4 RESPONSIBILITIES	3
4.1 WMT Management	3
4.2 Staff and Contractors	4
5 CODE OF CONDUCT	4
6 DEFINITIONS	5
7 CHILD SAFETY AND WELLBEING PRACTICES	6
7.1 Children’s empowerment and participation	6
7.2 Culturally safe environments for Indigenous Australian children	6
7.3 Valuing diversity	6
7.4 Recruitment	7
7.5 Training and Supervision	7
7.6 Online Safety	7
7.7 Reporting Under the Reportable Conduct Scheme	7
7.8 Complaint Management	8
7.9 Risk Management	8
8 NON COMPLIANCE WITH THIS POLICY	8
9 OTHER RELATED DOCUMENTS	8
10 SUPPORTING LEGISLATION	8

Child Safety and Wellbeing policy

1 PURPOSE

Walk Melbourne Tours (WMT) is committed to being a child-safe organisation, with zero tolerance of child abuse and all forms of harm to children. We play a role in protecting children, especially if we have concerns for a child's wellbeing and safety. We aim to create an inclusive, culturally safe environment and a culture of child safety that reduces the opportunity for harm. This statement sets out WMT's expectations of child safe and wellbeing practices. It gives staff and contractors guidance on the practices required to create a childsafe environment and a clear process to follow when someone raises concerns about child safety or reports abuse.

2 SCOPE

WMT's Child Safety and Wellbeing Policy applies to all its employees and contractors and all people who conduct work for, or are connected to, WMT.

The Child Safety and Wellbeing Policy applies to situations where children are interacting with WMT with regards to tours they attend while at school.

It is important to note that personal conduct in breach of this policy may result in disciplinary action.

3 POLICY STATEMENT

WMT's Commitment to the Child Safe and Wellbeing Standards:

We are committed to ensuring children feel included, safe, empowered and are taken seriously if they raise concerns in relation to their safety and well-being.

We value and support diversity, inclusion and equality. Cultural safety is important for all children. A child's ability to express their culture and enjoy their cultural rights is encouraged and actively supported. In particular, we actively encourage the participation and empowerment of children with a disability, Aboriginal children, children from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds and LGBTIQ+ children.

Our commitment will be enacted through the implementation and monitoring of the relevant legislation, regulations and external polices on child safety and wellbeing, including:

- [United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child](#)
- [Child Wellbeing and Safety Amendment \(Child Safe Standards\) Act 2015](#).
- [Working with Children Check](#)
- [Mandatory Reporting](#)
- [Child Safe Standards \(VIC\)](#)

4 RESPONSIBILITES

4.1 WMT Management

- ensures that Child Safety and Wellbeing policies are adequate to meet the legislative requirements.
- instructs an annual review against the Statement.

Child Safety and Wellbeing policy

- ensures appropriate staff induction, training and development is in place to meet the standards.
- conducts risk assessments, implement risk management strategies and considers feedback from all stakeholders, including children.
- manages complaints and reporting requirements.
- complies with the code of conduct.

4.2 Staff and Contractors

- WMT is committed to ensuring staff and contractors understand that child safety and wellbeing is everyone's responsibility.
- Staff and contractors are provided with the necessary support to fulfil their obligations in relation to child safety and wellbeing.
- Staff and contractors are educated in child safety and wellbeing, including abuse risks and how to interact and behave with children.
- Staff and contractors comply with the code of conduct.

5 CODE OF CONDUCT

In order to meet the requirements of the Child Safe Code of Conduct, all people to which the Code applies must:

- take reasonable steps to protect children from harm and risk of child abuse;
- treat all children with dignity, equality and respect;
- be sensitive to the needs of:
 - o Indigenous Australian children;
 - o children from culturally and/or linguistically diverse backgrounds; and
 - o children with a disability.
- model appropriate adult behaviour toward children at all times;
- listen to and value the ideas and opinions of children and respond to their needs appropriately;
- develop positive relationships with children, parents/guardians and other WMT staff and contractors based on mutual respect, trust and open communication;
- be professional in your interactions through use of language, presentation and manner;
- respect the privacy of children, parents/guardians and other WMT staff and contractors and only disclose information to those who have a need to know;
- be aware of risks with communication and behaviour between adults and children (including through digital technology and social media);
- promptly report any child safety concerns or suspicions of child abuse in accordance with the Child Safe Reporting and Response Procedures;
- work with children in an open transparent way; and

Child Safety and Wellbeing policy

- encourage children to have a say and participate in matters that are important to them.

All people to which the Child Safe Code of Conduct applies must not:

- discriminate against any child on the basis of age, gender (including transgender status), race, culture, religion, vulnerability (including disability) or sexuality;
- marginalise or exclude children;
- subject children to any form of physical punishment, social isolation, immobilisation or any other conduct likely to frighten or humiliate;
- engage in open discussions of a mature and adult nature in the presence of children;
- seek to use children in any way to meet the needs of adults;
- ignore or disregard any concerns, suspicions or disclosures of child abuse or harm;
- engage in behaviour intended to shame, humiliate, oppress, belittle or degrade children;
- engage in any activity with a child that is likely to physically or emotionally harm them including rough physical games;
- photograph or video a child without the informed consent of their parent or guardian or publish a photograph or video of a child without such consent and the consent of WMT management;
- engage with children while under the influence of alcohol or illicit drugs;
- distress a child for the purpose of eliciting a dramatic reaction;
- initiate unnecessary physical contact with, or show overly familiar affection towards children, or do things of a personal nature that children can do for themselves, such as toileting or changing clothes;
- develop 'special' relationships with specific children or show favouritism through the provision of gifts or extra attention;
- exchange personal contact details such as a phone number, social networking site or email addresses with children; and
- have unauthorised contact with children in person, online or by phone.

6 DEFINITIONS

Child abuse means:

- a sexual offence committed against a child
- an offence committed against a child under section 49M(1) of the Crimes Act 1958 (Vic), such as grooming
- physical violence against a child
- causing serious emotional or psychological harm to a child
- serious neglect of a child. Harm is damage to the health, safety or wellbeing of a child or young person, including as a result of child abuse by adults or the conduct of other children. It includes physical, emotional, sexual and psychological harm. Harm can arise from a single act or event and

Child Safety and Wellbeing policy

can also be cumulative, that is, arising as a result of a series of acts or events over a period of time. Child/Children means a person who is under the age of 18 years. Concerns and complaints refers to any potential issue that could impact negatively on the safety and wellbeing of children. A complaint is an expression of dissatisfaction to WMT related to one or more of the following:

- our services or dealings with individuals
- allegations of abuse or misconduct by a staff member or another individual associated with WMT
- disclosures of abuse or harm made by a child or young person
- the conduct of a child or young person at WMT
- the inadequate handling of a prior concern
- general concerns about the safety of a group of children or activity.

7 CHILD SAFETY AND WELLBEING PRACTICES

7.1 Children's empowerment and participation

WMT values the voices of children and supports children's participation in the following ways:

- Anecdotal feedback from children during activities is noted and considered during annual reviews, and sooner if required.
- Post activity feedback surveys capture feedback from children via teachers, parents and caregivers for continuous improvement.

This policy is publicly available for everyone, including children, to view on our website at www.walkmelbourne.com.au

7.2 Culturally safe environments for Indigenous Australian children

WMT is committed to creating environments where Indigenous Australian culture is celebrated and Indigenous Australian children, families and community members are welcomed and included. Strategies to embed cultural safety for Indigenous Australian children include:

- an Acknowledgement of Country at commencement of each tour
- consulting with members of the Indigenous Australian community to identify opportunities to promote Indigenous Australian culture and practices in WMT programs
- providing cultural competency training for staff and contractors.

7.3 Valuing diversity

We value diversity and equity for all children. To achieve this, we:

- welcome and support participation of all children, including children with disabilities, children from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds, LGBTIQ children and Indigenous Australian children and their families
- have zero tolerance of racism and other forms of discrimination and take action when discrimination or exclusion is identified
- deliver programming that reflects the diversity of our community

Child Safety and Wellbeing policy

- commit to ensuring our facilities promote inclusion of children of all cultures and abilities.

7.4 Recruitment

All WMT staff and contractors who work directly with children have a current Working with Children check (WWCC). Working with Children Check (WWCC) assists in protecting children from sexual or physical harm by ensuring that people who work with, or care for them are subject to a screening process. The Check screens a person's criminal records and any reports about professional conduct.

7.5 Training and Supervision

All new and existing employees and contractors understand the importance of protecting children from harm. Reading and becoming familiar with this policy, including the Code of Conduct, is included in the induction process. Staff and contractors understand the process for reporting any child safety issues and are supported by WMT management to do so.

7.6 Online Safety

We take all precautions to secure the safety and privacy of children online. WMT ensures:

- We do not identify any child in promotional material online
- We use virtual technology in a way that ensures the anonymity of child participants
- All targeted school sessions are delivered by tour guides who have a WWCC
- A teacher or parent is required to attend with their class/children and hold the duty of care
- We do not record any sessions to maintain child privacy

7.7 Reporting Under the Reportable Conduct Scheme

WMT will report any alleged child abuse by staff or contractors directly to the Commission for Children and Young People. Reportable conduct may occur at work, or after hours and offsite for it to be deemed reportable. All staff and contractors are required to report a colleague's possible reportable conduct. Where a staff member or contractor suspects or observe an incidence of child abuse or harm, or any behaviour deemed to be endangering the safety of children in the workplace, they are required to report directly to WMT management.

- Advise the duty of care person
- Report the possible abuse to the Department of Health and Human Services
- Complete a Child Safe Incident Report Form
- Contact Police

Where a child is feeling unsafe, they are encouraged to raise such issues by:

- Notifying their parent, career or teacher who has their duty of care, or
- Notify a WMT staff member

All allegations and concerns in relation to children's safety will be taken seriously and will be investigated fairly and appropriately. Under Mandatory Reporting laws, WMT Education staff have additional requirements to report a reasonable belief of child physical or sexual abuse directly to Child Protection authorities. Information is shared appropriately and lawfully with other organisations where the safety and wellbeing of children is at risk.



Child Safety and Wellbeing policy

7.8 Complaint Management

WMT will ensure clear and accessible complaint pathways are available for children, young people, their families, the broader community and workers. Pathways for raising a complaint include:

Email: questions@walkmelbourne.com.au

All complaints will be treated seriously and responded to accordingly, with the best interests of children and young people as the priority.

WMT will use the outcomes of complaints to review their child safe policies, practice and culture.

7.9 Risk Management

We recognise the importance of identifying and managing risks of child harm and abuse in the physical and online environments operated by WMT. We have a risk management plan to address the risk of child abuse and harm. We will ensure that any risk controls put in place balance the need to manage harm with the benefits of participation.

8 NON COMPLIANCE WITH THIS POLICY

WMT will enforce this policy. Potential breaches by anyone will be investigated and may result in restriction of duties, suspension or termination of employment or engagement or other corrective action.

9 OTHER RELATED DOCUMENTS

- WMT Risk Management Plan
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10 SUPPORTING LEGISLATION

- Child Wellbeing and Safety Act 2005 (Vic) (including Child Safe Standards)
- Children, Youth and Families Act 2005 (Vic) (including reporting to Child Protection)
- Crimes Act 1958 (Vic) (including Failure to Protect and Failure to Disclose offences)
- Wrongs Act 1958 (Vic) (including Part XIII – Organisational liability for child abuse).