

<b>Policy</b>	<b>OP05</b>	<b>Safeguarding Children and Young People</b>	<b>Date Approved</b> 16 March 2021
			<b>Review Date</b> By 31 March 2022

**Victoria Police Legacy (VPL) is a not for profit charitable organisation established to provide ongoing support to:**

- **the families of deceased serving sworn members of Victoria Police and police veterans, and**
- **sworn serving members and police veterans who have lost a spouse or partner.**

**Support is also provided to a member, their partners and families and police legatees experiencing grief or hardship caused by imminent or actual death or permanent (or prolonged) disability.**

**For VPL purposes, a police veteran is a person who was a sworn member of Victoria Police for a minimum period of 20 years.**

*This policy is part of VPL's commitment to being a child safe organisation.*

### **1. Purpose**

This policy and associated procedures details Victoria Policy Legacy's commitment to safeguarding children and young people. We take seriously our commitment to providing a support environment that is caring, nurturing and safe.

### **2. Scope**

The Safeguarding Children and Young People Policy applies to all Board members, employees, volunteers, ambassadors, VPL Legatees, Friends of Police Legacy, dependents, guests, external customers and suppliers

This policy is approved by the Board who have governance oversight of its implementation and periodic review. The CEO is responsible for implementation of this policy.

### **3. Definitions**

A detailed table of definitions is provided at Appendix B.

### **4. Policy Statement**

The VPL Board is committed to safeguarding children and young people from abuse and neglect.

It is the responsibility of all at VPL from Board members to employees, ambassadors and volunteers to:

- protect children and young people from all forms of abuse, bullying and exploitation by our people
- be alert to incidents of child abuse and neglect occurring outside the scope of our operations and services that may have an impact on the children and young people to whom we provide a service; and
- create and maintain a child safe culture that is understood, endorsed and put into action by all the individuals who work for, volunteer or access our programs and services.

The VPL Board expect all within our organisation, regardless of their role or level of responsibility, to act to safeguard children from such harm by:

- adopting the practices and behaviour we have set as our standard when carrying out their roles, and
- reporting any abuse or neglect of which they become aware to our management and/or to external authorities responsible for child protection or to police, regardless of whether that abuse is being perpetrated by personnel within our organisation, or by those outside our organisation including those from the child's family, extended family, their family's extended network or strangers.

VPL is committed to promoting equity and respecting diversity by:

- actively anticipating children's diverse circumstances and responding effectively to those with additional vulnerabilities
- giving all children access to information, support and complaints processes, and
- paying particular attention to the needs of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children, children with a disability and children from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds.

A detailed statement of the Board's commitment to Safeguarding Children and Young People is attached at Appendix A.

## **5. Related documents and references**

- Legislation
  - Children, Youth and Families Act 2005
  - Child Wellbeing and Safety Act 2005
  - Commission for Children and Young People Act 2012
  - The Charter of Human Rights and Responsibilities Act 2006
  - Reportable Conduct Scheme 2017
  - Working with Children Act 2005
  - Crimes Act 1958
- OP05-01 - Safeguarding Children and Young People – Roles and Responsibilities SOP
- OP05-02 - Practice and Behaviour for Safeguarding Children and Young People SOP
- OP06 – Safeguarding Children – Responding to Reports and Allegations Policy
- OP06-01 - Safeguarding Children -Incident Management SOP
- HR04 – Volunteer Policy
- BR04 – Code of Conduct

## **Appendix A - Detailed Statement of Commitment**

### **Introduction**

Victoria Police Legacy is committed to ensuring the safety and wellbeing of all children and young people who access our activities, programs, services or facilities. Our policies and procedures seek to address risks to child safety and to establish a safeguarding culture and practices. Our safeguarding policies and procedures are: accessible in forms that are easy to understand; have been informed by stakeholder consultation; and are communicated to children, young people and their families, our personnel, our partners and external providers and the general public. We regularly review our policies, gain endorsement of changes and advise our personnel and children, young people and their families of changes.

### **We are committed to safeguarding children and young people**

Through our Safeguarding Children and Young People Policy we document our clear commitment to safeguarding children and young people from abuse and neglect. We communicate our commitment to all of our personnel and give them access to a copy of our policy.

### **Our personnel know the behaviour we expect**

We seek to ensure that each person involved in our delivery of services to children and young people understands their role and the behaviour we expect in relation to safeguarding children and young people from abuse and neglect. We utilise clear position descriptions which clearly state relevant safeguarding requirements. We have a code of conduct, which is approved and endorsed by the Board that outlines our expectations for behaviour towards children and young people. Our personnel are given a copy of and have access to the code of conduct. Our personnel indicate, in writing, that they have read and are committed to the code of conduct.

### **We minimise the likelihood of recruiting a person who is unsuitable**

We have appropriate measures in place to minimise the likelihood that we will recruit a person who is unsuitable to work / volunteer with children or young people. We have recruitment procedures that ensure:

- our safeguarding commitment is communicated to potential applicants for positions
- face-to-face interviews are held which includes safeguarding-related questions
- two professional reference checks are undertaken
- screening checks are undertaken, including identity, criminal record, working with children checks and qualification checks.

### **Induction and training is part of our commitment**

We provide all new personnel with information during their induction about our commitment to Safeguarding including our Safeguarding Children and Young People Policy, code of conduct and child abuse reporting policy. We have a process for ensuring all of our personnel complete Safeguarding Children training. We support ongoing education and training for our personnel to ensure safeguarding information is provided in an ongoing way.

## **We encourage the involvement of children, young people and their families**

We involve and communicate with children and young people, and their families in developing a safe, inclusive and supportive environment. We provide information to children and their carers (such as brochures, posters, handbooks, guidelines) about:

- our commitment to safeguarding children and their rights
- the behaviour we expect of our personnel and of themselves
- our policy about responding to child abuse.

We have processes for encouraging two-way communication with children and families. We seek their feedback and have a process for responding. We respect diversity and inclusion and seek to facilitate effective communication and involvement.

## **Our personnel understand their responsibility for reporting child abuse**

Our policy for responding to child abuse is approved and endorsed by the Board and applies to all our personnel. The policy states that:

- personnel must immediately report abuse or neglect and any concerns with policies, practices or the behaviour of personnel.
- personnel must meet any legislated mandatory reporting requirements
- personnel must follow a specified process when reporting abuse or neglect including who will receive reports
- failure to report is serious misconduct.

Our personnel are given a copy of and have access to the policy and understand the implications of the policy for their role. We document any allegation, disclosure or concern regarding child abuse and monitor responses to all allegations, disclosures or concerns.

## **We maintain and improve our policies and practices**

We are committed to maintaining and improving our policies, procedures and practices to safeguard children and young people from neglect and abuse. We have assigned responsibility for maintaining and improving our policies and procedures to the Operations Manager who fulfils the requirements of a 'Safeguarding Children Program Coordinator'.

We monitor our personnel and external providers to ensure appropriate practice and behaviour, and policies are followed. We communicate with our personnel to ensure that they understand our policies and that the policies are effective in the work place. We require our personnel to disclose convictions or charges affecting their suitability to work with children and young people and we review police record and Working With Children checks periodically.

We have formally reviewed our service delivery to identify and document potential risks to children or young people. We undertake formal reviews, at least annually, to identify and document potential risks to children or young people associated with our service delivery. We have a procedure to undertake annual reviews, as part of our ongoing compliance with safeguarding requirements.

Appendix B – Table of Definitions

Term	Definition
<b>Bullying</b>	<p>Bullying involves the inappropriate use of power by one or more persons over another less powerful person or group and is generally an act that is repeated over time. Bullying has been described by researchers as taking many forms which are often interrelated and include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <i>Verbal</i> (name calling, put downs, threats);</li> <li>• <i>Physical</i> (hitting, punching, kicking, scratching, tripping, spitting);</li> <li>• <i>Social</i> (ignoring, excluding, ostracising, alienating); and/or</li> <li>• <i>Psychological</i> (spreading rumours, stalking, dirty looks, hiding or damaging possessions).</li> </ul>
<b>Child or young person</b>	A person under the age of eighteen years.
<b>Practice and Behaviour for Safeguarding Children and Young People Procedure</b>	The <i>Practice and Behaviour for Safeguarding Children and Young People Procedure</i> (SOP- OP05-01) aims to identify and prevent behaviour that may be harmful to Members, children and young people in VPL. The procedure outlines what is, and what is not acceptable behaviour or practice when working with or engaging with children and young people.
<b>Direct role in providing activities, programs and services to children and young people</b>	A direct role is considered one that has contact with children and young people that is not incidental, but normally part of providing a service, program or activity for children and young people. This direct delivery may require regular physical contact and forms of ongoing communication. For example, coaching.
<b>Emotional or psychological abuse</b>	Emotional or psychological abuse occurs when a child does not receive the love, affection or attention they need for healthy emotional, psychological and social development. Such abuse may involve repeated rejection or threats to a child. Constant criticism, teasing, ignoring, threatening, yelling, scapegoating, ridicule and rejection or continual coldness are all examples of emotional abuse. These behaviors continue to an extent that results in significant damage to the child’s physical, intellectual or emotional wellbeing and development.
<b>Family Violence</b>	Family violence occurs when children are forced to live with violence in their home. It is harmful to children. It can include witnessing violence or the consequences of violence. Family violence is defined as violence between members of a family or extended family or those fulfilling the role of family in a child or young person’s life. Exposure to family violence places children and young people at increased risk of physical injury and harm and has a significant impact on their wellbeing and development.

Term	Definition
<b>Grooming</b>	<p>Grooming is a term used to describe what happens when a perpetrator of abuse builds a relationship with a child with a view to abusing them at some stage. There is no set pattern in relation to the grooming of children. For some perpetrators, there will be a lengthy period of time before the abuse begins. The child may be given special attention and, what starts as an apparently normal display of affection, such as cuddling, can develop into sexual touching or masturbation and then into more serious sexual behaviour. Other perpetrators may draw a child in and abuse them relatively quickly. Some abusers do not groom children but abuse them without forming a relationship at all. Grooming can take place in any setting where a relationship is formed, such as leisure, music, sports and religious activities, or in internet chatrooms, in social media or by other technological channels.</p>
<b>Harm</b>	<p>Harm to a child, is any detrimental effect of a significant nature on the child's physical, psychological or emotional wellbeing. It is immaterial how the harm is caused. Harm can be caused by:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• physical, psychological or emotional abuse or neglect;</li> <li>• sexual abuse or exploitation;</li> <li>• a single act, omission or circumstance; and</li> <li>• a series or combination of acts, omissions or circumstances.</li> </ul>
<b>Neglect</b>	<p>Neglect is the persistent failure or deliberate denial to provide the child with the basic necessities of life. Such neglect includes the failure to provide adequate food, clothing, shelter, adequate supervision, clean water, medical attention or supervision to the extent that the child's health and development is, or is likely to be, significantly harmed. Categories of neglect include physical neglect, medical neglect, abandonment or desertion, emotional neglect and educational neglect. The issue of neglect must be considered within the context of resources reasonably available.</p>
<b>Personnel</b>	<p>All Board members, ambassadors, employees and volunteers who work for the VPL whether in a paid or unpaid capacity.</p>
<b>Physical abuse</b>	<p>Physical abuse occurs when a person subjects a child to non-accidental physically aggressive acts. The abuser may inflict an injury intentionally or inadvertently as a result of physical punishment or the aggressive treatment of a child. Physically abusive behavior includes (but is not limited to) shoving, hitting, slapping, shaking, throwing, punching, biting, burning, excessive and physically harmful over training, and kicking. It also includes giving children harmful substances such as drugs, alcohol or poison. Certain types of punishment, whilst not causing injury can also be considered physical abuse if they place a child at risk of being hurt.</p>
<b>Sexual abuse</b>	<p>Sexual abuse occurs when an adult or a person of authority involves a child in any sexual activity. Perpetrators of sexual abuse take advantage of their</p>

Term	Definition
	<p>power, authority or position over the child or young person for their own benefit. It can include making sexual comments to a child, engaging children to participate in sexual conversations over the internet or on social media, kissing, touching a child's genitals or breasts, oral sex or intercourse with a child. Encouraging a child to view pornographic magazines, websites and videos is also sexual abuse. Engaging children to participate in sexual conversations over the internet is also considered sexual abuse.</p>
<b>Sexual exploitation</b>	<p>Sexual exploitation occurs when children are forced into sexual activities that are then recorded in some way and/or used to produce pornography. Such pornography can be in the form of actual photos or videos or published on the internet. Exploitation can also involve children who are forced into prostitution.</p>