

Policy	OP06	Safeguarding Children - Responding to Reports and Allegations	Date Approved 16 March 2021
			Review Date 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

VPL is committed to protecting the children and young people to whom it supports. This policy describes the responsibilities of our personnel and the commitment of our organisation to respond to child abuse reports and allegations.

2. Scope

All personnel (Board members, ambassadors, employees, volunteers, VPL Legatees, Friends of Police Legacy, guests, external customers and suppliers) within VPL are required to meet the requirements of this policy and associated procedures.

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

Bullying	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: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Verbal (name calling, put downs, threats); • Physical (hitting, punching, kicking, scratching, tripping, spitting); • Social (ignoring, excluding, ostracising, alienating); and/or • Psychological (spreading rumours, stalking, dirty looks, hiding or damaging possessions).
Child or young person	a person under the age of eighteen years
Emotional or psychological abuse	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

	<p>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 behaviours continue to an extent that results in significant damage to the child's physical, intellectual or emotional wellbeing and development.</p>
Family Violence	<p>family violence occurs when children are forced to live with violence between adults 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.</p>
Grooming	<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>
Harm	<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"> • physical, psychological or emotional abuse or neglect; • sexual abuse or exploitation; • a single act, omission or circumstance; and • a series or combination of acts, omissions or circumstances.
Neglect	<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>

VPL Personnel	all Board members, ambassadors, employees and volunteers who work for the VPL whether in a paid or unpaid capacity.
Physical abuse	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 behaviour 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.
Sexual abuse	sexual abuse occurs when an adult or a person of authority (e.g. older) involves a child in any sexual activity. Perpetrators of sexual abuse take advantage of their 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.
Sexual exploitation	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.

4. Policy Statement

General Principles

VPL take seriously their responsibility to deliver support services in an environment that is caring, nurturing and safe. The Board is committed to ensuring the safety of all children and young people to whom we provide services or who participate in our support programs.

The Board's commitment is detailed in Policy OP05 – Safeguarding Children and Young People.

VPL personnel are required to identify, report, and respond to any concerns about, or incidents of, child abuse or neglect towards children or young people to whom we provide services. Our personnel are required to respond to abuse or neglect perpetrated by personnel within our organisation or by other persons. In responding, VPL personnel should consider the specific needs of the child or young person, including for example whether the child or young person is Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander, has a disability, or has a culturally or linguistically diverse background.

Our commitment to take action

VPL personnel are required to report any instance of serious abuse or neglect (cases in which a child or young person has suffered, or is likely to suffer, significant harm from abuse or neglect) immediately, or if that is not possible, no later than before ending that person's shift or session of work with our organisation. The report is to be made to the CEO or if the CEO is not available the Operations Manager. The CEO or Operations Manager is responsible to ensure further notification to Victoria Police or other agencies occurs.

If a child or young person is at imminent risk of harm or in immediate danger, VPL personnel are required to report the situation directly to Victoria Police via '000'.

Confidentiality and privacy

VPL will maintain the confidentiality and privacy of all concerned (including the alleged perpetrator), except if doing so would compromise the welfare of the child or young person and/or investigation of the allegation.

Consequences of breaching policy

VPL regards the failure of its personnel to comply with this policy and associated procedures as a serious matter that, depending on the circumstances, may result in disciplinary action or be grounds for dismissal.

VPL personnel should not:

- discuss any concerns or allegations with unauthorised personnel – within or outside of VPL – such prohibition not being designed to limit, in any way, their rights and responsibilities to report their concerns or allegations, but rather as part of VPL's commitment to ensuring privacy, confidentiality and natural justice
- make deliberately false, misleading or vexatious allegations.

VPL personnel should raise any concerns they might have in relation to:

- VPL policies and procedures designed to safeguard children and young people
- actions of other personnel that contravene our policies, or that may otherwise have the potential to harm a child or young person.

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 - Safeguarding Children and Young People Policy
- OP05- 01 - Safeguarding Children and Young People – Roles and Responsibilities SOP
- OP05-02 - Practice and Behaviour for Safeguarding Children and Young People SOP
- OP06-01 – Safeguarding Children – Incident Management SOP
- OP06-01-01 - Incident Report Form
- OP06-01-02 – Managers Response Flow Chart

- OP06-01-03 – Responding to Allegations Flow Chart