



CHILD PROTECTION POLICY

Policy number	2019/1	Version	001
Drafted by	Natalie Klafuric	Approved by board on	10/02/2018
Responsible person	Natalie Klafuric	Scheduled review date	30/06/2019

INTRODUCTION

Zvonimir is committed to promoting and protecting the interests and safety of children. We have zero tolerance for child abuse.

Everyone working at Zvonimir is responsible for the care and protection of children and reporting information about child abuse.

Everyone who participates in Zvonimir is entitled to do so in an enjoyable and safe environment. Zvonimir have a moral and legal obligation to ensure that, when given responsibility for young people, teachers and volunteers provide them with the highest possible standard of care.

Zvonimir is committed to devising and implementing policies so that everyone in Zvonimir accepts their responsibilities to safeguard children from harm and abuse. This means to follow procedures to protect children and report any concerns about their welfare to appropriate authorities.

The aim of this policy is to promote good practice, providing children and young people with appropriate safety/ protection whilst in the care of Zvonimir and to allow staff and volunteers to make informed and confident responses to specific child protection issues.

A Child/young person is defined as a person under the age of 18 (Childrens Act 1989)

Policies can be established or altered only by the Board: **Procedures** may be altered by the CEO.

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PURPOSE

The purpose of this policy is

1. To facilitate the prevention of child abuse occurring within Zvonimir.
2. To work towards an organisational culture of child safety.
3. To prevent child abuse within Zvonimir].
4. To ensure that all parties are aware of their responsibilities for identifying possible occasions for child abuse and for establishing controls and procedures for preventing such abuse and/or detecting such abuse when it occurs.
5. To provide guidance to staff/volunteers/contractors as to action that should be taken where they suspect any abuse within or outside of the organisation.
6. To provide a clear statement to staff/volunteers/contractors forbidding any such abuse.
7. To provide assurance that any and all suspected abuse will be reported and fully investigated.

POLICY STATEMENT

Zvonimir is committed to promoting and protecting at all times the best interests of children involved in its programs.

All children, regardless of their gender, race, religious beliefs, age, disability, sexual orientation, or family or social background, have equal rights to protection from abuse.

Zvonimir has zero tolerance for child abuse. Everyone working at Zvonimir is responsible for the care and protection of the children within our care and reporting information about suspected child abuse.

Zvonimir is committed to the following ;

- The welfare of the child is paramount
- Taking all responsible steps to protect the children from harm, discrimination, and degrading treatment and to respect their rights, wishes and feelings
- All suspicious and allegations of poor practice or abuse will be taken seriously and responded swiftly and appropriately
- Working in partnerships with parents and children is essential for the protection of children

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- All Zvonimir volunteers who work with children will be recruited with regard to their suitability for that responsibility, and will be provided with guidance and/ or training in good practice and child protection procedures

Child protection is a shared responsibility between the Zvonimir, all workers, contractors, associates, and members of the Zvonimir community.

Zvonimir will consider the opinions of children and use their opinions to develop child protection policies.

Zvonimir supports and respects all children, staff and volunteers. Zvonimir is committed to the cultural safety of Aboriginal children, and those from culturally and/or linguistically diverse backgrounds, and to providing a safe environment for children living with a disability.

If any person believes a child is in immediate risk of abuse, telephone 000.

AUTHORISATION

Signature of President
10th February 2018
Zvonimir

Signature of Vice President
10th February 2018
Zvonimir

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PROMITING GOOD PRACTICE

Zvonimir is committed to providing children the best possible experience and opportunities where everyone must operate within an accepted ethical framework.

This section will help you identify what is meant by good and poor practice with Zvonimir.

GOOD PRACTICE

All personnel should adhere to the following principles and action;

- Always work in an open environment (eg. avoid private / unobserved situations)
- Make the experience of Zvonimir fun and enjoyable : promote fairness, confront and deal with bullying
- Treat young people with respect and dignity
- Always put the welfare of a young person first
- Involve parents / carers wherever possible eg. Where young people need to be supervised in changerooms , ensure parents take responsibility of their own child. If groups have to be supervised in change rooms always ensure parents, teachers etc work in pairs.
- Request written parent consent if we required to transport your people in our cars
- Ensure at away events adults should not enter a young persons room or invite young people in their room
- Be an excellent role model
- Be enthusiastic and constructive feedback rather than negative criticism
- Keep a written record of injury and treatment given

POOR PRACTICE

The following are regarded as poor practice and should be avoided

- Unnecessarily spending excessive amount of time alone with young persons away from others
- Taking young people alone in a car on journeys however short
- Engaging rough, physical or sexually provocative games
- Allow or engage in inappropriate touching of any form
- Making sexually suggestive comments to a young person, even in fun
- Reducing a young person to tears as a form of control

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- Allow allegations made by a young person to go unchallenged, unrecorded or not acted upon

DEFINING CHILD ABUSE

Child abuse is any form of physical, emotional or sexual mistreatment or lack of care that leads to injury or harm. It commonly occurs within a relationship of trust or responsibility and is an abuse of power or a breach of trust. Abuse can happen at any age.

There are four main types of abuse: **Physical abuse, sexual abuse, emotional abuse and neglect**. The abuser may be a family member, someone the young person encounters in residential care or in the community, including sports and leisure activities. Any individual may abuse or neglect a young person directly, or may be responsible for abuse because they fail to prevent another person harming the young person.

Abuse in all of its forms can affect a young person at any age. The effects can be so damaging that if not treated may follow the individual into adulthood.

Young people with disabilities may be increased risk of abuse through various factors such as stereotyping, prejudice, discrimination, isolation and a powerlessness to protect themselves or adequately communicating their abuse that occurred.

Bullying may come from another young person or an adult. Bullying is defined as deliberate hurtful behavior, usually repeated over a period of time, where it is difficult for those bullied to defend themselves. There are three main types of bullying.

It may be **physical** (eg. Hitting, kicking, slapping), **verbal** (eg. Racist or homophobic remarks, name calling, graffiti, threats, abusive text messages), **emotional** (eg. Tormenting, ridiculing, humiliating, ignoring, isolating from the group), or **sexual** (eg. unwanted physical contact or abusive comments).

Neglect in Zvonimir could occur when a TEACHER does not keep the young person safe, or exposing them to undue cold/heat or unnecessary risk of injury.

INDICATORS OF ABUSE

It is not always easy to recognize a situation where abuse may occur or has taken place. These indicators may help you identify if a child maybe child abused

- Unexplained, suspicious injuries such as bruising, cuts or burns, particularly in areas not prone to injury
- An injury for which an explanation seems inconsistent
- The young person describes what appears to be an abusive act of involvement

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- Another young person or adult expresses concern about the welfare of another young person

Signs of bullying include:

- Behavioral changes such as reduced concentration and becoming withdrawn, clingy, depressed, tearful, emotionally up and down, reluctance to go to training or performances.
- Physical signs such as bruising, scratching

It must be recognized that the above list is not exhaustive, but also that the presence of one or more of the indications is not proof that abuse is taking place. It is **NOT** the responsibility of those working in Zvonimir to decide that child abuse is occurring. It **IS** their responsibility to act on any concern.

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CHILD PROTECTION PROCEDURES

Document Number	2018/1	Version	2
Date of Issue	10/02/2018	Contact:	Natalie Klafuric

RESPONSIBILITIES

The **Board** of Zvonimir has ultimate responsibility for the detection and prevention of child abuse and is responsible for ensuring that appropriate and effective internal control systems are in place. The Board is also responsible for ensuring that appropriate policies and procedures and a Child Protection Code of Conduct are in place.

The **President** of Zvonimir is responsible for:

- Dealing with and assisting reports of child abuse;
- Ensuring that all staff, contractors, and volunteers are aware of relevant laws, organisational policies and procedures, and the organisation's Code of Conduct;
- Ensuring that all adults within the Zvonimir community are aware of their responsibility to report suspected sexual abuse of a child in accordance with these policies and procedures;
- Ensuring that all staff, contractors and volunteers are aware of their obligation to observe the Code of Conduct (particularly as it relates to child safety);
- Providing support for staff, contractors and volunteers in undertaking their child protection responsibilities.

All **committee members and teachers** must ensure that they:

- Promote child safety at all times;
- Assess the risk of child abuse within their area of control and eradicate / minimise any risk to the extent possible;
- Educate employees about the prevention and detection of child abuse; and
- Facilitate the reporting of any inappropriate behaviour or suspected abusive activities.

Committee members and teachers should be familiar with the types of abuse that might occur within their area of responsibility and be alert for any indications of such conduct.

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All **staff/volunteers/contractors** share in the responsibility for the prevention and detection of child abuse, and :

- **Must** Familiarise themselves with the relevant laws, the Code of Conduct, and Zvonimir's policy and procedures in relation to child protection, and comply with all requirements;
- Report any reasonable belief that a child's safety is at risk to the relevant authorities (such as the police and / or the state-based child protection service) and fulfil their obligations regardless of whether they are mandatory reporters;
- Can report any suspicion that a child's safety may be at risk to a committee member or teacher (or, if that person is involved in the suspicion, to a responsible person in the organisation); and
- Provide an environment that is supportive of all children's emotional and physical safety.

DEFINITIONS

Child means a person below the age of 18 years unless, under the law applicable to the child, majority is attained earlier.

Child protection means any responsibility, measure or activity undertaken to safeguard children from harm.

Child abuse means all forms of physical abuse, emotional ill-treatment, sexual abuse and exploitation, neglect or negligent treatment, commercial (e.g. for financial gain) or other exploitation of a child and includes any actions that results in actual or potential harm to a child.

Child sexual assault is any act which exposes a child to, or involves a child in, sexual processes beyond his or her understanding or contrary to accepted community standards. Sexually abusive behaviours can include the fondling of genitals, masturbation, oral sex, vaginal or anal penetration by a penis, finger or any other object, fondling of breasts, voyeurism, exhibitionism, and exposing the child to or involving the child in pornography. It includes child grooming, which refers to actions deliberately undertaken with the aim of befriending and establishing an emotional connection with a child to lower the child's inhibitions in preparation for sexual activity with the child.

Reasonable grounds for belief is a belief based on reasonable grounds that child abuse has occurred when all known considerations or facts relevant to the formation of a belief are taken into account and these are objectively assessed. Circumstances or considerations may include the source of the allegation and how it was communicated, the nature of and details of the allegation, and whether there are any other related matters known regarding the alleged perpetrator.

A reasonable belief is formed if a reasonable person believes that:

- (a) The child is in need of protection,
- (b) The child has suffered or is likely to suffer "significant harm as a result of physical injury",

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- (c) The parents are unable or unwilling to protect the child.

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. For example, a 'reasonable belief' might be formed if:

- a) A child states that they have been physically or sexually abused;
- b) A child states that they know someone who has been physically or sexually abused (sometimes the child may be talking about themselves);
- c) Someone who knows a child states that the child has been physically or sexually abused;
- d) Professional observations of the child's behaviour or development leads a professional to form a belief that the child has been physically or sexually abused or is likely to be abused; and/or
- e) Signs of abuse lead to a belief that the child has been physically or sexually abused.

COMMITTEE MEMEBERS, VOLENTERS AND TEACHERS

- Involve parents/cares wherever possible, e.g. where young people need to be supervised in changing rooms, encourage parents to take responsibility for their own child. If groups have to be supervised in changing rooms always ensure parents, teachers etc work in pairs

Zvonimir undertakes a comprehensive recruitment and screening process for all volunteers which aims to:

- Promote and protect the safety of all children under the care of the organisation;
- Identify the safest and most suitable people who share Zvonimir's values and commitment to protect children; and
- Prevent a person from working at Zvonimir if they pose a risk to children.

Zvonimir requires all workers/volunteers to pass through the organisation's recruitment and screening processes prior to commencing their engagement with Zvonimir.

Zvonimir may require applicants to provide a police check in accordance with the law and as appropriate, before they commence working at Zvonimir and during their time with [Name Zvonimir at regular intervals.

Zvonimir will undertake thorough reference checks as per the approved internal procedure.

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Once engaged, workers/volunteers must review and acknowledge their understanding of this Policy.

RISK MANAGEMENT

Zvonimir will ensure that child safety is a part of its overall risk management approach.

Zvonimir committee and teachers are committed to identifying and managing risks at Zvonimir. Risk and Compliance committee members will receive training in relation to child safety.

REPORTING

Any staff member and volunteer who has grounds to suspect abusive activity must immediately notify the appropriate child protection service or the police. They should also advise their supervisor about their concern.

In situations where the a teacher or committee member is suspected of involvement in the activity, or if the person having the suspicion does not believe that the matter is being appropriately addressed or dealt with, the matter should be reported to the next responsible person.

Committee members and teachers must report complaints of suspected abusive behaviour or misconduct to the President and also to any external regulatory body such as the police.

Voluntary Reporting

VIC	<i>Children, Youth and Families Act 2005 (VIC)</i>	Any person	A voluntary reporter may make a report if the person has a significant concern for the wellbeing of a child.	A person under 17 years old
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Mandated Reporters

VIC	<i>Children, Youth and Families Act 2005 (Vic)</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Registered medical practitioners, midwives and registered nurses Teachers registered or granted permission to teach under the Education, Training and Reform Act 2006 Principals Police 	<p>A mandated reporter must make a report if:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> They form a belief on reasonable grounds that a child is in need of protection from physical injury or sexual abuse; The parents cannot or will not protect the child; and The belief is formed in the course of practising his/her position of employment. <p>NB: exceptions may apply.</p>	A person under 17 years old
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INVESTIGATING

If the appropriate child protection service or the police decide to conduct an investigation of this report, all committee members, contractors or volunteers must co-operate fully with the investigation.

Any such investigation will be conducted according to the rules of natural justice.

The reporter will make every effort to keep any such investigation confidential; however, from time to time other members of staff may need to be consulted in conjunction with the investigation.

RESPONDING

If it is alleged that a member of staff, contractor or a volunteer may have committed an offence or have breached the organisation's policies or its Code of Conduct the person concerned may be stood down while an investigation is conducted.

If the investigation concludes that on the balance of probabilities an offence (or a breach of the organisation's policies or Code of Conduct) has occurred then disciplinary action may follow, up to and including dismissal or cessation of involvement with the organisation. The findings of the investigation will also be reported to any external body as required.

PRIVACY

All personal information considered or recorded will respect the privacy of the individuals involved unless there is a risk to someone's safety. Zvonimir will have safeguards and practices in place to ensure any personal information is protected.

Everyone is entitled to know how the personal information is recorded, what will be done with it, and who will be able to access it.

REVIEWING

Every two years, and following every reportable incident, a review shall be conducted to assess whether the organisation's child protection policies or procedures require modification to better protect the children under the organisation's care.

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RELATED DOCUMENTS

- [Confidentiality Policy](#)
- Behavior code of conduct
- This policy must be read in conjunction with:
 - The law of the Commonwealth or of the relevant state or territory;
 - The organisation's Code of Conduct;
 - Termination of Employment Policy and Misconduct Procedures.

AUTHORISATION

SIGNATURE OF PRESIDENT

NATALIE KLAFURIC
10TH FEBRUARY 2018

SIGNATURE OF VICE PRESIDENT

IVANA VUKOVIC
10TH FEBRUARY 2018

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