



CHILD PROTECTION POLICY

OUR COMMITMENT TO CHILD PROTECTION

The ACT Jewish Community is committed to ensuring child safety throughout our organisation, by protecting the safety and wellbeing of all children and young people accessing our services, events and activities. There is an obligation for the Board of the ACT Jewish Community to provide educational programs for children and adults and to ensure the safety of all children who participate in all communal programs, services and activities. In accordance with its commitment to child protection, The ACT Jewish Community has developed this Child Protection Policy.

In addition, the Board of the ACT Jewish Community needs to raise awareness of the prevalence of child abuse and promote the safety and protection of children throughout the community. While society as a whole shares responsibility for promoting the wellbeing and safety of children, as a community organisation we have a particular obligation in the provision of services to children as well as to their parents. This commitment is endorsed and implemented by the Board of the ACT Jewish Community, which is committed to giving the highest priority to the promotion and protection of a child's safety, health, development, education and wellbeing.

As a Jewish Community the development and implementation of child protection policies and procedures, is essential. Jewish values emphasise the importance of our youth, and Jewish laws recognise the vulnerability of children and prohibit physical, emotional, verbal and sexual abuse and/or neglect and/or maltreatment of children of any and all kinds from any source. Recent changes to the law and changes to convention in the community around us mean that we all have changed responsibilities. Our task is now to inform, train and educate our community about those responsibilities.

All children have the right under the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child to be protected from all forms of physical or mental violence, injury or abuse, neglect or negligent treatment, maltreatment or exploitation, including sexual abuse, while in the care of parent(s), legal guardian(s) or any other person who has the care of the child.

This Policy provides clear guidelines prohibiting any form of abuse against children and young people and has adopted a procedure for the screening, recruitment and induction of individuals who are engaged in child-related work to undergo checks in accordance with relevant child-protection legislation. It aims to train relevant personnel to recognise signs of child abuse and to respond to allegations and complaints of child abuse appropriately and in accordance with legislative requirements.



The ACT Jewish Community is a member of the JCA family of organisations

PROGRAM IMPLEMENTATION

The Jewish Care Committee recognises the need for the education of all persons associated with the ACT Jewish Community to have access to training in Child Protection procedures. Further, all Board members, all staff employed by the ACT Community and all youth leaders need to undergo mandatory training in Child Protection.

The training will be provided by special counsellors or others accredited to provide training in this area. Training sessions will be implemented in stages, with the Jewish Care Committee making recommendations to the Board. Board members, office staff and Cheder teachers need to be trained as soon as possible. Youth leaders, parents and other community members will also be able to attend training sessions as appropriate.

All external madrichim and other visitors who will work with children of the ACTJC should follow this policy as much as possible but are not required to undergo ACTJC mandatory training, however, they will be sent a copy of this policy when they accept their invitation. All visitors are expected to understand what is required of them in working with children.

The training manual will provide the basic material for training sessions. This document will be made available to all community members. This instructional campaign aims to be wide-ranging educationally, to raise the level of awareness of the community about child protection and to provide essential information for all members of the ACT Jewish Community, employees, parents and youth leaders of all school-aged children on the prevention of child sexual abuse.

WHAT IS CHILD ABUSE?

Child abuse involves conduct that puts children and young people at risk of harm (usually by adults, sometimes by other children) and often by those they know and trust. Child abuse may include:

Physical abuse: non-accidental injury (or a pattern of injuries) to a child or young person by their parent, care-giver or another person. Behaviours include but are not limited to hitting, shaking or other physical harm.

Sexual abuse: any act in which a person with power or authority over a child (female or male, adult or older child) uses a child for sexual gratification. Sexual abuse includes a range of contact and non-contact behaviour.

Non-contact acts of sexual abuse include: making sexual comments (verbal, letter, telephone or via electronic communication); voyeurism; exposure to pornography; nudity -an adult exposing parts of their body or a child's body; and photography of a child in a sexual pose.

Contact acts of sexual abuse include: fondling a child's genitals or breasts, or forcing the child to fondle another person's genitals; masturbation; intimate kissing; sexual penetration; oral sex; and exploiting a child through prostitution.

Emotional abuse and psychological harm occurs when a parent, caregiver or other person in authority or with power damages the confidence or self-esteem of a child or young person, resulting in serious emotional disturbance or psychological trauma. Often this is a pattern of emotional or psychological abuse, rather than a single incident. Such abuse might include: threats, humiliation, taunting, sarcasm, yelling, negative criticism, name calling, ignoring or placing unrealistic expectations on a child to the extent that it results in significant damage to

the child's physical, intellectual or emotional wellbeing and development. Emotional abuse also includes witnessing family violence. 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.

Neglect occurs when a parent or caregiver fails to provide a child with basic necessities of life. Such neglect includes the failure to provide food, water, shelter or clothing or to protect a child from danger or foreseeable risk of harm or injury. It is also the failure to provide supervision or medical attention to the extent that the child's health and development is, or is likely to be significantly harmed.

APPROPRIATE CONDUCT AND BEHAVIOUR

The purpose of this section is to provide clear guidance to all community members in regard to the treatment of children and young people within the ACT Jewish Community. It is designed to ensure the highest possible level of safety to children and young people, protecting them from abuse and neglect. Children and young people expect and deserve to be safe when participating in our community related activities. Acting in accordance with this Child Protection Policy not only protects children and young people but also supports personnel by providing standards of care that are transparent and practical.

Failure to act in accordance with this Child Protection Policy and other policies and procedures outlined in this document will be dealt with in a manner dependent upon the seriousness of the conduct in question. An independent review panel of five community members who are not Board members will be constituted to investigate the conduct in question and submit a proposal to the Board outlining a recommendation for any possible disciplinary or other action as to be decided by the Board.

SEXUAL MISCONDUCT

The law is always the minimum standard for behaviour within the ACT Jewish Community. Any sexual act (contact or non-contact) with a child or young person under the age of 16 by an adult is a criminal offence, and will be dealt with and reported in the same manner as any other criminal offence. Any sexual behaviour or contact between a member of the ACT Jewish Community and a child is prohibited.

The ACT Jewish Community will attempt to discourage the formation of intimate relationships where the age of consent has been reached where there is a power imbalance, explaining the ethical basis for such actions. Sexual conduct, involving a person placed in a position of authority, whether consensual or not may be exploitative because there is usually a disparity between adults and children in terms of authority, maturity, status, influence and dependence even if a young person is over the relevant age of consent in their jurisdiction.

PHOTOGRAPHY OF CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE

The ACT Jewish Community acknowledges that images of children can be used inappropriately or illegally. Children and young people are sometimes exploited photographically by child sexual abusers who display children in sexual poses or engaging in sexual acts with each other or with an adult. In other cases perpetrators of sexual abuse track down children and young people via a digital image trail.

The following rules apply to the photography/videoing of children and young people.

- Always obtain permission from a child's parent/guardian before taking an image of a child that is not their own and ensure that the parent knows the way the image will be used. This will depend on the context of the particular photograph and venue.
- Only use appropriate images of a child and ensure that the child is suitably clothed.
- Every attempt should be made to discourage the use of camera phones, video cameras or cameras inside changing areas, showers and toilets.
- Where an image of a child is used, do not display identifying personal information such as residential address, email address or telephone numbers.
- Where photographers/videographers are seeking permission or accreditation to act as photographers at any of the ACT Jewish Community events or activities which involve the participation of children, every attempt should be made by asking photographers as to whether they have undertaken the relevant Police checks. If the photographers are from the ACT they should have the Working with Vulnerable People accreditation.
- If the person within The ACT Jewish Community who is requesting the relevant Police check or Working with Vulnerable People accreditation is not satisfied of the applicant's suitability at any time, permission or authorisation may be denied or withdrawn.
- Every attempt should be made to ensure that the photographer/videographer has a copy of The ACT Jewish Community guidelines for photography/videography and abides by them. Please note: these guidelines form part of the rules of individual events for which the person is engaged.
- Every attempt should be made to ensure that any image or video is taken in the presence of other personnel.
- Images (digital or hard copy) which reveal private body parts are to be destroyed or deleted by a representative of the Board of the ACT Jewish Community.

USE, POSSESSION AND SUPPLY OF ALCOHOL OR DRUGS

The ACT Jewish Community has a Drug and Alcohol Policy which adheres to sound and reasonable Jewish community guidelines regarding the responsible consumption of alcohol. In the case of use, possession and supply of alcohol or drugs, both legal and illegal, the law is always the minimum and any illegal acts will be referred to the police after going through a complaints procedure as outlined in the Appropriate Conduct and Behaviour section of this policy.

TRANSPORTING CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE

Transporting children and young people to or from approved activities has to have the explicit agreement of the parent/guardian and the appropriate form must be completed expressing approval for the transport and activity. This action is designed to protect the child. It is the policy of the ACTJC for parents/guardians to give a signed permission form for their children, e.g., those attending Cheder, to be able receive immediate medical attention if needed. This is done because a parent may not be able to be contacted in an emergency situation. If an emergency situation arises, the circumstances need to be communicated to the parent/guardian as soon as possible.

IMPORTANT: There is a zero tolerance policy in relation to the consumption of drugs and alcohol when transporting children or young people.

ELECTRONIC COMMUNICATION WITH CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE

The ACT Jewish Community acknowledges the emergence of new technology and communication media and wishes to enable such new media to be used to benefit the ACT Jewish Community and its participants. However, The ACT Jewish Community also needs to be very mindful of possible inappropriate uses of these media.

All emails and instant messages from the ACT Jewish Community representatives to children or young people must be for legitimate purposes related to the ACT Jewish Community. Messages at all times should be professional, not secretive and must not convey any sexually suggestive language. Secretive communication between an ACT Jewish Community Representative and a child or young person is strongly discouraged.

CHANGE ROOMS

The right to children's privacy must be balanced with their need for safety and protection. Therefore the ACT Jewish Community representatives need to use their discretion based on the age, developmental stage and needs of the child or young person. There may be some circumstances where a child due to age or ability needs assistance with changing, and in those circumstances the following general principles must be adhered to:

- The ACT Jewish Community representatives and parents should not be in one - on - one situations with a child or young person (who is not their own child) when they are in a change room except with the express permission of the parent.
- The ACT Jewish Community representatives and parents should not dress or undress in a change room when children (other than their own child) are present.
- In a public change room, an ACT Jewish Community representative should supervise to ensure that children are safe from abuse from other members of the public.
- Male ACT Jewish Community representatives must not enter female change rooms and female ACT Jewish Community representatives must not enter male change rooms.
- Such representatives should ensure that no photography of the children or young people in states of undress occurs in the change room. Any images taken must be deleted.
- Should a young transgender person join the ACTJC their special circumstances will be discussed at that time.

SLEEPING ARRANGEMENTS WHEN TRAVELLING

From time to time personnel are required to accompany children and young people interstate or overseas. Practices while travelling must be consistent with the ACT Jewish Community Child Protection Policy at all times. When putting in place sleeping arrangements, it is the responsibility of The ACT Jewish Community to ensure that:

- Children have sleeping arrangements that do not compromise their safety. An example of this would be to ensure that each child has their own bed and is not required to share a bed with another child or young person or adult.
- Children are not left in the care of unauthorised persons. For example children shall not be left unattended in accommodation venues.
- Children and young people are provided with privacy when bathing and dressing.
- Children and young people share hotel rooms or bedrooms with children of the same gender.
- Young people who are transgender are consulted on their choice of sleeping arrangements.
- Children and young people are provided with the contact details of the responsible ACT Jewish Community representative at all times.

- Children and young people have the right and a pre-arranged method to contact their parent/guardian during their stay.
- If children or young people express or report any fear for their safety or allegation of abuse or discomfort in relation to their future safety in any host family or other accommodation, immediate steps are taken to remove them from the location and procedures according to the policy are followed.

PHYSICAL CONTACT WITH CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE

The ACT Jewish Community *does not seek to ban* all physical contact between children and young people and ACT Jewish Community representatives. Some physical contact may be required in the interests of assisting the child or young person. However at all times the physical contact must be appropriate based on the needs of the young person or child and not the adult. Under no circumstances should any ACT Jewish Community Representative have contact with a child or young person participating in ACT Jewish Community activities that:

- Includes touching genitals, breasts, or buttocks (this excludes the delivery of medical or health services by appropriately medically trained personnel when required for the delivery of first aid).
- Would appear to a reasonable person to have a sexual connotation or purpose.
- Is intended to cause pain or distress to the child or young person (for example physical punishment).
- Is overly physical, for example, roughhousing, tickling or wrestling, however, it is recognised that what is appropriate at home within a family setting with a parent or sibling may not be appropriate in a community setting.
- Is unnecessary for the age, stage or physical needs of child, for example assisting with toileting or showering when not required.
- Is initiated against the wishes of the child or young person, with the exception of such contact being necessary to prevent injury to the child, young person or another person. In this case physical restraint must be the last resort, and the level of force must be appropriate to the specific circumstances and aimed solely at restraining the child or young person to prevent them from causing harm to themselves or others.

ACCEPTABLE BOUNDARIES

All ACT Jewish Community Representatives must limit all contact with children and young people to what is reasonably expected to be ACT Jewish Community business. Appropriate boundaries include the following:

- Meeting or contacting children or young people outside of official ACT Jewish Community business is not permitted without prior express approval of the parent/guardian.
- Meeting alone with a child or young person whom they teach or supervise is not permitted except in special circumstances. If meeting with a child or young person for teaching in a one on one situation, the prior express approval of the parent/guardian must be obtained in writing.
- External teachers, youth leaders or support personnel may not be invited to participate in ACT Jewish Community activities at any level without prior endorsement from the Rabbi or the Board of the ACT Jewish Community.
- No favouritism or special treatment is to be shown to one young person or child in a manner that makes other children feel left out or uncomfortable in a situation.

The ACT Jewish Community acknowledges that its members may provide separate personalised services (paid or voluntary) to the child's family e.g. babysitting or tutoring.

Parents/guardians should make their own separate inquiries about such members, and take responsibility for engaging them to provide private services.

The giving of gifts by an ACT Jewish Community representative to an individual young person or child who they teach or supervise is discouraged. The only exception to this rule relates to the next clause; that is, that gifts may be given upon attendance at a social function or special occasion. In this forum the gift is part of social etiquette and does not signify special treatment and cannot be misinterpreted or used for the purposes for grooming a child for sexual abuse. Gifts given as part of social etiquette, such as buying cool drinks on a hot day for children away from home, do not fall into this category.

The ACT Jewish Community Representatives must not attend a private social function of the child or young person except in exceptional circumstances such as significant milestone, for example an 18th birthday party or Bar or Bat Mitzvah party, or if an adult member of the child's family is a close friend of the Representative. However in these circumstances the following conditions must be followed:

- the invitation must be sanctioned by the parent/guardian; and
- other adults must be present at the function .

USE OF LANGUAGE

Language and tone of voice used when speaking with children and young people or in the presence of young people should provide clear direction, boost their confidence, encourage and affirm them. The language should always be respectful and appropriate to the occasion.

Language and tone of voice should not be harmful to children. Avoid language that is:

- Discriminatory, sexist or racist or homophobic.
- Derogatory, belittling, negative
- Intended to threaten, frighten or intimidate.
- Profane (swearing).
- Only appropriate for adults under special circumstances, e.g., jokes or references which are sexual in nature.

While there may be different standards of language used by people in their own homes it is essential that all language used with children participating in community activities meet acceptable community standards.

GUIDELINES FOR PARENTS

We call on all parents and other community members associated with the ACT Jewish Community to:

- Observe the guidelines for Child Protection as expressed in this policy.
- When necessary, politely and respectfully remind others of their obligations under these guidelines.
- If witnessing another person behaving in a manner inconsistent with the this policy of Child Protection, report the matter to a Board member of the ACT Jewish Community so that appropriate action can be taken.

To create a safe environment, we have developed the following as overarching guidelines for parents:

- Always behave in a respectful manner at all times.
- Advise the ACT Jewish Community of any special needs your child may have or develop e.g. asthma, allergies, ADHD, self-harming behaviour.

- Advise the ACT Jewish Community if you have any concerns at all that the Child Protection Policy may have been breached.
- Follow the Child Protection Policy and guidelines as determined by the ACT Jewish Community.

OUTCOMES

If a community member has reasonable grounds to suspect, or has knowledge that a child is being harmed, or who is at risk of harm, it should not be ignored. The Board of the ACTJC strongly encourages members to take it upon themselves to act in a responsible and appropriate manner with regards to reporting any incident.

As a Jewish community we will do our utmost to assist community members who make disclosures of abuse to find the care, help and support they need, and avoid the imposition of any stigma, ridicule or discrimination by reason of having reported the abuse or having been a victim of such abuse.

Authorisation

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 ACT Jewish Community Inc

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