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| Document Title | Child Safe Policy |
| Date of Issue | November 2018 |
| Approval | Chief Executive Officer |
| Contact Officer | Chief Executive Officer |
| Legislative or Regulatory References | <i>Child Safety and Wellbeing Act (Vic) 2005</i> |
| Review Date | 2020 |
| Related GLC Documents These documents are available to staff on the Staff Share drive under Policies Procedures Forms | <i>Child Safety Reporting Process (2018)</i> <i>Code of Conduct (2018)</i> <i>Flow Chart for Reporting an Incident (2018)</i> <i>Flow Chart for Actioning an Incident (2018)</i> <i>Incident and Near Miss Reporting Form (2018)</i> <i>Incident and Near Miss Register (2018)</i> <i>Public Access Computers WiFi and Internet Use Policy (2018)</i> <i>Risk Management Policy (draft 2018)</i> <i>Volunteer Policy (2018)</i> |

Version control

| Version Review | Date | Author | Comment |
|----------------|---------------|----------------|----------------------------------|
| Original | November 2018 | Policy Officer | Approved by CEO for distribution |

1. Purpose

This policy is intended to ensure that all Board members, employees, direct contractors, volunteers and work placement and work experience students of the Goldfields Library Corporation (the **GLC**) understand that the organisation is committed to providing a child safe organisation, and their own responsibilities for the protection and empowerment of children.

The policy outlines our collective commitment to being a child safe organisation through the implementation of practices and processes for the recruitment of staff and volunteers, the delivery of services and the provision of facilities and resources.

2. Context

The 2013 Betrayal of Trust report was an outcome of the 2012/13 Victorian Inquiry into the Handling of Child Abuse by Religious and Other Non-Government Organisations.

The report provided 15 recommendations, including the introduction of seven Child Safe Standards (the **Standards**), to change the culture within organisations to one that placed child-safety as a key priority. The seven child safe standards are:

- Standard 1: Strategies to embed an organisational culture of child safety, including through effective leadership arrangements.
- Standard 2: A child safe policy or statement of commitment to child safety.
- Standard 3: A code of conduct that establishes clear expectations for appropriate behaviour with children.
- Standard 4: Screening, supervising, training and other human resource practises that reduce the risk of child abuse by new and existing personnel.
- Standard 5: Processes for responding to and reporting suspected child abuse.
- Standard 6: Strategies to identify and reduce or remove risks of child abuse.
- Standard 7: Strategies to promote the participation and empowerment of children.

The Federal Government's 2017 Royal Commission into Institutional Responses to Child Sexual Abuse will also have impacts on the way organisations and the community deal with family violence and child abuse.

The Reportable Conduct Scheme was introduced in 2017 and requires publicly funded organisations to take a zero-tolerance approach to child abuse through the reporting and investigating of allegations about staff and volunteers. The GLC is required to enter the scheme in January 2019.

3. Child Safe Statement

The GLC is committed to being a child safe and child friendly organisation and has a zero-tolerance approach to child abuse in all its forms. Children - people under the age of 18 - are an integral part of the communities we serve and we welcome their participation in, and enjoyment of our library services.

We understand the significant role libraries play in our communities and our place in providing a safe and welcoming environment where the voices, opinions and views of children are valued and encouraged.

We welcome all children and their families and do not tolerate discrimination in any form. We respect and celebrate the cultural and religious diversity of our communities and endeavour to provide services and spaces that promote the cultural safety, participation and empowerment of all children, including; Aboriginal children; children of culturally or linguistically diverse backgrounds; and children of all abilities.

We encourage families to participate together in all aspects of the services we provide and to utilise the library as a place to learn and enjoy together. We expect parents and carers to actively supervise their children in our libraries for their own safety. We also expect other library patrons to show respect to children in our libraries and to model appropriate adult behaviour.

We provide programs, resources and facilities that encourage participation and individual learning and our staff are highly skilled to assist families and children to access these services and find new avenues for learning, enjoyment and participation.

We manage risks within the organisation through our *Risk Management Policy* (draft 2018) and this includes identifying and managing any risks to children in our libraries. We will report, investigate and act on any issues of child safety, and report allegations or incidents of child abuse and neglect to the appropriate authorities.

We recognise our responsibility in keeping children safe from abuse from those associated with our organisation. We have rigorous processes for recruitment to ensure staff are well suited to their roles and all staff are required to abide by our Code of Conduct, including conduct related to working with children. Under the *Child Wellbeing and Safety Act (2005)* we will thoroughly investigate and report any allegations of child abuse and neglect by staff, direct contactors and volunteers to the Commission for Children and Young People as required through the Reportable Conduct Scheme.

4. Leading by example

The GLC is committed to child safety in our libraries, and the promotion of child safety in our communities. Our Child Safe Statement is a public declaration of this commitment and is the basis for all our conversations and public messages. We will advocate for child safety with our member Councils, partners and providers to ensure the embedding of child safety in all organisations is prioritised in our communities.

The GLC has a risk management framework that includes identifying and managing risks at an organisational, branch and project level and we have incorporated child safety into this framework. The *Risk Management Policy* (draft 2018) gives clear guidance on processes for identifying and eliminating or managing these risks and takes a whole of organisation responsibility for this.

Our libraries are welcoming places that provide opportunities for learning, entertainment and recreation for families and children. Our staff are highly skilled and trained in their areas of expertise. We expect parents and carers to actively supervise children under the age of 16 while in our libraries for their own safety and wellbeing. We recognise that it is not appropriate for children to be left alone in a library and under the *Children, Youth and Families Act 2005* (Vic) it is an offence for a person responsible for a child to leave the child unattended for any longer than is reasonable, without making appropriate arrangements for the child's supervision and care.

As a library service, we are well positioned to promote the participation and empowerment of children in our communities. By engaging with children, encouraging them to speak up and be heard, and nurturing their own sense of self we can ensure children develop the skills and confidence they need in their formative years and into adulthood. When children feel respected and valued, they are more likely to speak up about issues of safety and wellbeing. As an organisation we achieve this by talking to children about what they want from their library service, how they wish to participate, and set boundaries for themselves and others. This aligns with child safe standard seven to promote the participation and empowerment of children.

We also recognise that some children are more at risk than others, and their voices may not be heard. We aim to find new ways of inviting all children; including those from diverse backgrounds, Aboriginal children, and children with a disability to feel welcome, comfortable and safe in our libraries. We will work with schools, parents, carers and community organisations and especially the children themselves.

5. Recruitment and staff

The GLC has rigorous recruitment processes that are open and transparent. All positions are advertised, have specific role descriptions and we undertake a thorough interview and reference check process. All staff, direct contractors and volunteers are required to have a Working with Children Check.

Our Code of Conduct for staff and volunteers clearly articulates expectations around behaviours, including when working with children.

The GLC supports staff in their professional development and provides opportunities for staff to pursue areas of professional interest and skill development. This includes formal and informal training related to working with, and providing services for children.

We advocate for safe environments for children in our community, with our member councils and with our partners.

6. Responding to and reporting child abuse

The Victorian Reportable Conduct Scheme is administered by the Commission for Children and Young People and aims to improve organisations' responses to allegations of child abuse by their staff and volunteers. The GLC will be required to comply with the scheme from 1 January 2019 and the CEO is formally responsible for reporting allegations.

All adults have a moral responsibility to protect children and act in their best interests. Adults have a legal obligation to report sexual offences against a child, acts of child abuse or family violence, or where a child is at immediate risk to police.

The Reportable Conduct Scheme does not replace any of these moral and legal responsibilities. It aims to better prevent and protect children from abuse by ensuring allegations of abuse are appropriately investigated and reported to relevant organisations, professional bodies and government departments.

See the *Child Safety Reporting Process* (2018) for further guidance. (Attachment one)

7. Further information

The Commission for Children and Young People (CCYP) is the overseeing body for the Child Safe Standards, for more information see <https://www.ccyp.vic.gov.au>.

For advice on a wide range of topics, including services for families; keeping children safe; reporting child abuse or neglect; and child protection information, see <https://ccyp.vic.gov.au/child-safety/resources/links/>.

If you or someone you know has suffered abuse in the past and may need support, you can find a list of national and state services at: <https://www.childabuseroyalcommission.gov.au/contact> under 'Finding help and support'.

For more information on the GLC being a Child Safe Organisation please contact:

Goldfields Library Corporation
259 Hargreaves St, Bendigo, Victoria
PO Box 887, Bendigo, Victoria, 3552
ncgrl@ncgrl.vic.gov.au

ATTACHMENT ONE: CHILD SAFE REPORTING PROCESS (2018)



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| Document Title | Child Safety Reporting Process |
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| Related GLC Documents These documents are available to staff on the Staff Share drive under Policies Procedures Forms | <i>Child Safe Policy (2018)</i> <i>Risk Management Plan (draft 2018)</i> <i>Working with Children Checks Fact Sheet (2018)</i> |

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1. Purpose

The Child Safe Reporting Process provides advice and guidance to all Board members, staff, volunteers and contractors of the Goldfields Library Corporation (**GLC**) in relation to our commitment as a child safe organisation. This document should be read in conjunction with the organisation's *Child Safe Policy* (2018).

The *Child Safe Policy* outlines our collective commitment to be a child safe organisation through the implementation of practices and processes for the recruitment of staff and volunteers, the delivery of services and the provision of facilities and resources.

2. Scope

The processes outlined in this document relate to improving child safety in our libraries and responding to allegations and incidents of child abuse in all its forms. There are two specific areas that this document addresses:

1. Child Safety in the Library. Safety risks to children may include physical safety issues in the library, incidents involving patrons and children and concerns about the welfare of children in the library.
2. Reportable Conduct Scheme. Incidents of child abuse by staff, volunteers, contractors and office-bearers are required to be investigated and reported to the Commission for Children and Young People (the **Commission**).

3. Child Safety in the Library

The GLC *Child Safe Policy* (2018) outlines our commitment to providing safe and welcoming spaces, services, and activities for children and their families. Parents and carers are expected to actively supervise children in their care in our libraries and agencies, and as an accredited eSmart Library we advocate for safe and positive experiences online for children and adults.

Our incident reporting process includes reporting incidents and near-misses involving children. This can include; physical safety issues that put children at risk; online incidents such as bullying or grooming; and incidents and allegations involving child abuse in all its forms. The process for reporting and actioning incidents is outlined in section 5.

- **If staff or members of the public have concerns about the immediate safety of a child or young person, contact 000.**
- **If staff have general concerns about the safety or wellbeing of a child or young person, contact the Child Protection Crisis Line on 13 12 78.**
- **All incidents or concerns must be reported using the Incident/Near Miss/OHS Reporting Form on the staff share drive.**

All adults have a moral responsibility to protect children and act in their best interests. Adults have a legal obligation to report to police sexual offences against a child, acts of child abuse or family violence, or where a child is at immediate risk.

4. Reportable Conduct Scheme

The Victorian Reportable Conduct Scheme is administered by the Commission and aims to improve the response by organisations to allegations of child abuse by their staff and volunteers. The GLC is required to comply with the scheme from 1 January 2019 and the CEO is formally responsible for reporting allegations to the Commission.

The Reportable Conduct Scheme has been designed to ensure that the Commission will be aware of every allegation of certain types of misconduct involving children in relevant organisations. It aims to better prevent and protect children from abuse by ensuring allegations of abuse are appropriately investigated and reported to relevant organisations, professional bodies and government departments.

A reportable allegation can be made about certain workers or volunteers over 18 years of age who are or were:

- an employee of an organisation covered by the scheme
- a minister of religion, religious leader or officer of a religious body
- a foster or kinship carer
- a volunteer, contractor, office holder, officer or other position directly engaged by an organisation covered by the scheme to provide services.

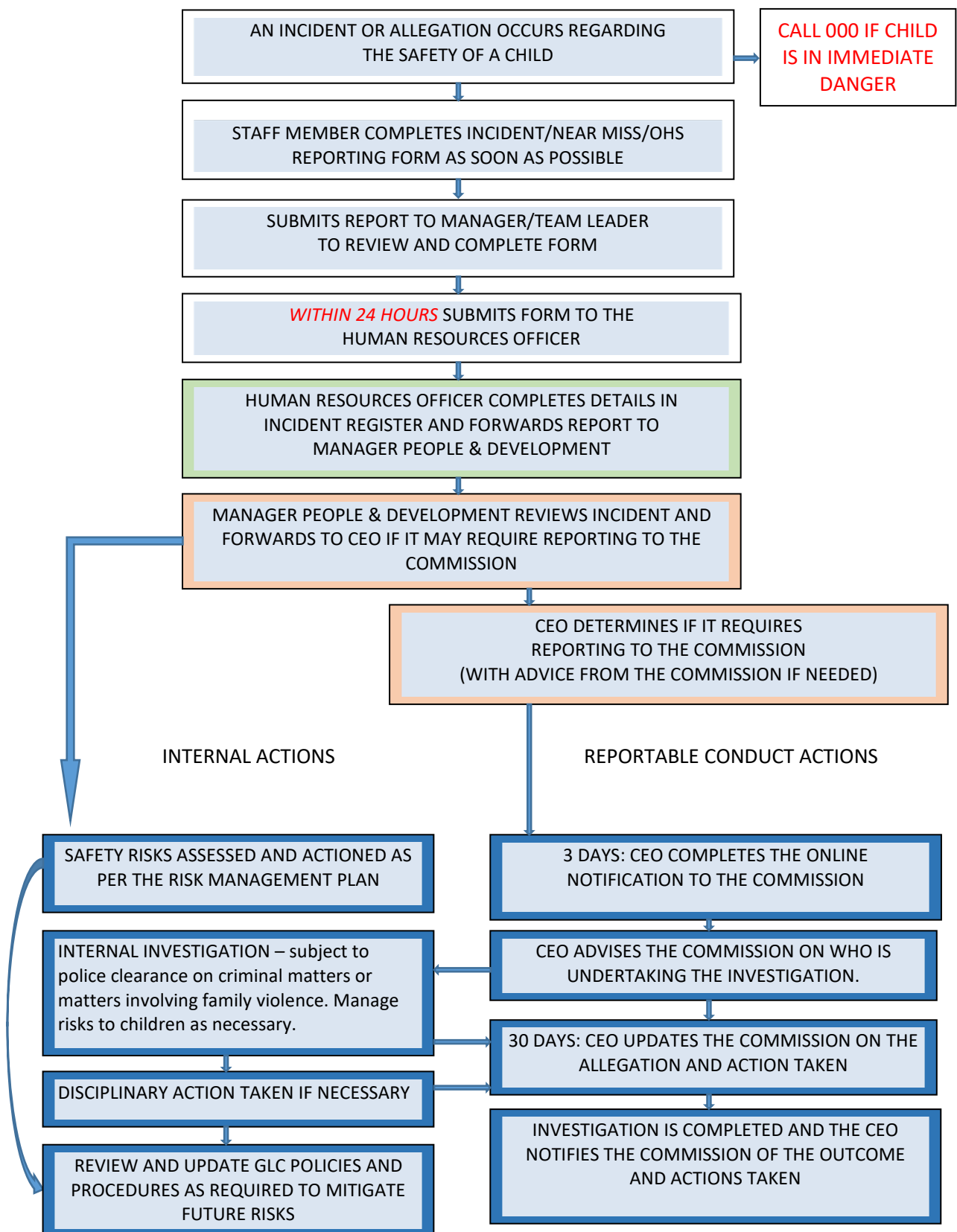
There are five types of 'reportable conduct' listed in the *Child Wellbeing and Safety Act (2005)*:

- sexual offences (against, with or in the presence of, a child)
- sexual misconduct (against, with or in the presence of, a child)
- physical violence (against, with or in the presence of, a child)
- behaviour that causes significant emotional or psychological harm
- significant neglect.

Staff are required to complete an Incident/Near Miss/OHS Reporting Form (available on the staff share drive) for any incidents, allegations or concerns regarding child safety and submit it to their Manager immediately. The process for responding to incidents and allegations is outlined in section 5.

It is the responsibility of the CEO to determine whether the incident or allegation meets the criteria for reporting to the Commission. The Commission provides support and advice to organisations considering reporting an incident or allegation under the Reportable Conduct Scheme.

5. Reporting Process Flowchart



6. Further information

The Commission for Children and Young People is the overseeing body for the Child Safe Standards, for more information see <https://www.cyp.vic.gov.au> . Section 4 of this document provides information sourced from the Commission's website.

For advice on a wide range of topics, including services for families; keeping children safe; reporting child abuse or neglect; and child protection information, see <https://cyp.vic.gov.au/child-safety/resources/links/> .

If you or someone you know has suffered abuse in the past and may need support, you can find a list of national and state services at: <https://www.childabuseroyalcommission.gov.au/contact> under 'Finding help and support'.

For more information on the GLC being a Child Safe Organisation please contact:

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