



# Wodonga Citizens Band Inc

## Child Protection Policy

### Statement of Commitment

Wodonga Citizens' Band Inc:

- has zero tolerance for child abuse
- will actively work to listen to and empower children
- will implement systems to protect children from abuse, and will take all allegations and concerns very seriously and responds to them consistently in line with the band's policies and procedures
- is committed to promoting cultural safety for Aboriginal children, cultural safety for children from culturally and/or linguistically diverse backgrounds, and
- to providing a safe environment for children with a disability

Every child or young person, defined as any person under the age of 18, who plays or participates with the Wodonga Citizens' Band Inc. should be able to take part in an enjoyable and safe environment and be protected from abuse. This is the responsibility of every adult involved in the Band.

The Wodonga Citizens' Band Inc. recognises its responsibilities to safeguard the welfare of all children and young people by protecting them from physical, sexual or emotional harm and from neglect and bullying. The Wodonga Citizens' Band Inc is determined to meet its obligation to ensure that in providing opportunities for children and young people, we do so to the highest possible standard of care.

The Wodonga Citizens' Band Inc. will consider, having taken advice, whether anyone who has previous criminal conviction or caution for offences relating to the abuse of children or young people, violence or any sexual offences should be excluded from working with or associating with children and young people. This position is reinforced by state legislation and guidance.

### Child Safe Policies

Wodonga Citizens' Band Inc. will:

- require all Members to hold a current Working with Children check. Members who work in an exempt occupation (eg. Police Officers, School Teachers) will not require a current Working with Children check.
- appoint one male and one female member as Child Safety Officers for the band.
- require all adult members to sign the band's Adult Member's Code of Conduct.
- provide all members with access to a copy of the band's Child Protection Policy.
- display the band's commitment to child safety in the band room.
- publically recognise the band's commitment to Child Safety by placing the band's Child protection policy and code of Conduct documents on the band's website.
- encourage parents of children/young persons to attend rehearsals and band events with their children/young persons.

## Legal and Procedural Framework.

**Jurisdiction:** Victoria

Victoria has introduced compulsory minimum standards that will apply to organisations that provide services for children to help protect children from all forms of abuse. In Victoria, under the Children Youth and Families Act 2005 a child or young person is a person under eighteen years of age.

The child safe standards apply to all organisations from 1 July 2022 that provide services for children. The child safe standards are compulsory in scope, but not prescriptive. They allow for a diverse range of organisations in scope with some flexibility in how they implement the child safe standards to meet requirements.

**Responsible Authority:** Child Protection and Family Services – Department of Health and Human Services.

## Procedures.

The following action should be taken by anyone who has concerns about the welfare of a child or young person in:

1. Wodonga Citizens' Band Inc physical setting;
2. Through our online presence via our website and Facebook pages (public page 'Wodonga Brass' and private group page 'Wodonga Brass in Isolation');
3. In any other form of communication or correspondence with a child/young person;
4. The home or other setting.

## Concerns about poor practice and possible abuse within the Wodonga Citizens' Band Inc settings

Child abuse can and does occur outside the family setting. Although it is a sensitive and difficult issue, child abuse does occur within many other settings, e.g. social environments. Recent inquiries indicate that abuse, which takes place within a public setting, is rarely a one-off event. It is crucial that those involved with the Wodonga Citizens' Band Inc are aware of this possibility and that all allegations are treated seriously and appropriate actions are taken.

Allegations may also relate to poor practice where an adult's or peer's behaviour is inappropriate and may be causing concern to a child or young person. Poor practice includes any behaviour, which infringes an individual's rights and/or is a failure to fulfil the highest possible standards of care. Poor practice is unacceptable and will be treated seriously and appropriate actions taken.

## What to do if you are made aware of a Child Safety Concern

The following action should be taken if a child or young person informs you directly that he/she is concerned about someone's behaviour towards them or if you become aware, through your own observations or through a third party, of possible inappropriate behaviour or abuse occurring within the Wodonga Citizens' Band Inc. or other settings.

If this happens, you should:

- React calmly so as not to frighten the child or young person.
- Tell the child or young person he/she is not to blame and that he/she was right to tell.
- Take what the child or young person has says seriously.
- Ensure the safety of the child or young person – if the child or young person needs medical treatment, take the child or young person to hospital or call an ambulance, inform doctors of concerns and ensure that they are aware that this is or may be a Child Protection issue.
- Avoid leading the child or young person and keep any questions to the absolute minimum necessary to ensure a clear understanding of what has been said.
- Re-assure the child or young person but do not make promises of confidentiality or outcome, which might not be feasible in the light of subsequent developments.

- Parents and carers should be contacted only after advice from the Department of Human Services if the concerns relate to them.

You should also continue to follow the Wodonga Citizens' Band Inc. procedures outlined below

- Make a full record of what has been said, heard and/or seen as soon as possible.
- Report the concerns to the person in charge or designated person immediately, unless the concern is about the person in charge (see below).
- The person in charge/designated person should be clearly identified in every Wodonga Citizens' Band Inc setting. If the person in charge is not available, or the concern relates to them then report your concerns directly to the Department of Human Services or the Police. These agencies will advise you whether a formal referral to the Department of Human Services is necessary and what further action you may need to take. If you are advised to make a formal referral make it clear to Department of Human Services or the Police that this may be a Child Protection referral.
- Confidentiality should be maintained on a strictly 'need to know' basis and relevant documents stored in a secure location.
- Please remember that it can be more difficult for some children to disclose abuse than others. Children from ethnic minorities may have regularly experienced racism, which may lead them to believe 'white people', including those in authority roles, do not really care about their wellbeing. They may feel they have good reason to question whether your response will be any different.

Children and young people with disabilities and vulnerable adults may have to overcome additional barriers before they can disclose abuse. There may be communication difficulties and they will almost certainly have had to overcome prejudices from others.

The Wodonga Citizens' Band Inc. will support anyone who, in good faith, reports his or her concern that a colleague is, or may be, abusing a child/young person.

## **Recording of information, suspicions or concerns**

Information passed on to Department of Human Services department or the Police must be as helpful as possible and it may be used in any subsequent legal action, hence the necessity for making a detailed record. The report should, if possible, contain the following information:

- The child's or young person's name and address.
- The nature of the allegation.
- A description of any visible bruising or other injuries.
- The child or young person's account, in their own words if possible, of what has happened and how any bruising or other injuries occurred.
- Any observations that may have been made by you or to you.
- Any times, locations dates or other relevant information.
- A clear distinction between what is fact, opinion or hearsay.
- Your knowledge of and the relationship to the child or young person.

Whenever possible, referrals to Department of Human Services Departments should be confirmed in writing within 24 hours.

Keep a record of the name and designation of the Department of Human Services member of staff or Police Officer to whom concerns were passed and record the time and date of the call, in case any follow-up is needed.

Non action is not an option in Child Protection.

## What is Child Abuse?

Child abuse is an act by parents or caregivers which endangers a child or young person's physical or emotional health or development. Child abuse can be a single incident, but usually takes place over time. There are five main forms of abuse:

### 1. Physical abuse

Physical abuse occurs when a child suffers or is likely to suffer significant harm from an injury inflicted by a child's parent or caregiver. The injury may be inflicted intentionally or may be the inadvertent consequence of physical punishment or physically aggressive treatment of a child. The injury may take the form of bruises, cuts, burns or fractures.

### 2. Sexual abuse

Sexual abuse occurs when a person uses power or authority over a child to involve the child in sexual activity and the child's parent or caregiver has not protected the child. Physical force is sometimes involved.

### 3. Emotional abuse

Emotional Abuse occurs when a child's parent or caregiver repeatedly rejects the child or uses threats to frighten the child. This may involve name calling, put downs or continual coldness from the parent or caregiver, to the extent that it significantly damages the child's physical, social, intellectual or emotional development.

### 4. Neglect

Neglect is the failure to provide the child with the basic necessities of life such as food, clothing, shelter, medical attention or supervision, to the extent that the child's health and development is, or is likely to be, significantly harmed.

### 5. Bullying

Bullying is not always easy to define, can take many forms and is usually repeated over a period of time. The three main types are: physical, verbal and emotional. They will all include:

- deliberate hostility and aggression towards a victim
- a victim who is weaker and less powerful than the bully or bullies
- an outcome which is always painful and distressing for the victim

## Guidelines for trips away and overnight stays organised by the band

Whether using private vehicles or coaches, there will be a requirement to inform parents/guardians of the following information:-

- Outward and return journey times, including any foreseeable stops or breaks in journey.
- The full address of the destination including any landline or fax numbers.
- In the event of any changes to the program or in an emergency, the parents/guardians are to be contacted and informed of reasons for this. The person organizing the activity and committee oversee this process.
- The details of the travel company or driver should be made known to parents along with a mobile telephone number of at least one occupant of the vehicle.

### Use of private vehicles:-

If carrying non-family members less than 18 years old, the driver must have prior consent from parents/guardians and comply with the Working With Children legislation.

The full description and registration number of the vehicle is to be made clear to a representative of the Committee.

## Parents/Guardians:-

Where possible Parents or Guardians will accompany their children on band trips. If they cannot, then they must:

- provide full contact details and an additional point of contact in an emergency. These details are held by a band member who is travelling with the child.
- should provide full details of special dietary needs, ailments or allergies or illnesses, including GP details and any emergency numbers. Medication requirements, including access to these supplies. Authority to prescribe medication in normal use or in the case of an emergency. A copy of this information is to be provided to the responsible band member on the trip or overnight stay.

When staying in overnight accommodation certain measures are required:-

- Children if sharing must be of same sex.
- No child to share with an adult unless family relationship.
- 'Appropriate Adults' (i.e. those that have undergone Working With Children checks) should be available as a point of contact for any child when away from home. Their contact details to be given to all parties.

## Regular review

This policy will be reviewed as required by state or federal legislation or government advice, otherwise every two years and following significant incidents if they occur. We will ensure that families and children have the opportunity to contribute. Where possible we will do our best to work with local Aboriginal communities, culturally and/or linguistically diverse communities and people with a disability.