



## CHILD SAFE POLICY

Incorporation No.	A00008959W	Version No.	1
ABN No.	35048091068	Approved by SMC on:	5 March 2022

### PURPOSE

This policy is part of the Victorian Endurance Riding Association's (VERA) commitment to child safety and provides an outline of the policies and practices that have been developed to keep everyone safe from any harm, including abuse.

All children who are a part of the VERA have a right to feel and be safe. The welfare of the children in our care will always be our first priority and VERA has a zero tolerance to child abuse in any form. The aim is to create a child safe and child friendly environment where children feel safe and have fun with the activities conducted by VERA always being carried out in the best interest of the children.

### POLICY

The new Child Safety Standard requires organisations to inform children and young people about their rights such as those in the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child including:

- the right to participate and be heard
- the right to be safe and not harmed by anyone
- the right to live and grow up healthy
- the right to express their views and have a say about decisions that affect them, and
- the right to information, such as information about the policies and procedures that affect them. These must be able to be understood by children

This policy applies to all individuals involved in our organisation including but not limited to:

- Officials
- Participants
- Parents/Guardians
- Spectators

Child abuse can take a broad range of forms including physical, sexual, emotional or psychological abuse and neglect. People to whom this policy applies need to be aware that child abuse can occur whenever there is actual or potential harm to a child, and these are circumstances that VERA is committed to reducing the risk of occurrence. This includes recognising indicators of harm (including that caused by other children and young people).

We value diversity and do not tolerate any discriminatory practices. To achieve this we promote cultural safety, participation and empowerment of children from culturally and/or linguistically diverse background and their families including those of Aboriginal or First Nations children and their families. We welcome and will give



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attention to the needs of children and young people who identify as lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender or intersex. We welcome children with a disability and their families and act to promote their participation.

VERA take the following steps to ensure best practice standards by requiring its state management committee members, Chief Stewards, and any volunteer that is deemed to be in a position of control of a child to have a Working with Children Check.

VERA, in conjunction with the Australian Endurance Riders Association, has within its structure the appointment of a Chief Steward for every event. These Chief Stewards act within their duties as a Child Safety Officer with the responsibility of responding to any complaints made by volunteers, parents or children. All complaints are taken seriously with a minimal action of documentation of the complaint and submission of these documents to the VERA State Management Committee to the serious measure of removing the child/children from a dangerous situation and providing a safe area until law enforcement can be contacted. This includes reporting to relevant authorities, regardless of legal obligation to do so.

## **RISK MANAGEMENT**

We recognise the importance of a risk management approach to minimising the potential for child abuse or harm to occur. To reduce the risk of child abuse occurring, adults to whom this policy applies should avoid direct, unsupervised contact with children. For example, this should be a consideration when:

- Transporting children back to the ride base when a float is required
- Having 2 people on every check point
- Direct instructions to children will only be done in the presence of their guardian

## **RESPONSIBILITIES**

All of the people to which this policy applies have a role and responsibility in relation to child protection. They must all:

- understand the indicators and risks of child abuse
- Appropriately act on any concerns raised by children, and
- Understand and follow all applicable laws in relation to the protection of children and reporting or management of child safety concerns

This policy will be reviewed every two years and we undertake to seek views, comments and suggestions from children, parents, carers and volunteers involved in Victorian Endurance Riding Association.