

Feathertop Chalet Client Protection Policy

Summary

Feathertop Chalet is committed to providing a safe and secure environment for its Employees, Visitors, Volunteers, Program Participants and particularly to Children, and Vulnerable People.

Feathertop Chalet's Client Protection Policy aims to ensure that a caring and appropriate approach is maintained towards the welfare and wellbeing of all those who are under our care. This policy is designed to provide guidelines for Members, Volunteers and Employees in planning Feathertop Chalet programs.

Feathertop Chalet's Board are committed to implementing the Client Protection Policy and to training or briefing our Employees, Contractors and Volunteers in its content and application.

1. Introduction

a. Purpose

This Client Protection Policy applies to all Employees, Members, Volunteers, Contractors and Visitors within Feathertop Chalet or engaged by Feathertop Chalet. This Client Protection Policy was adopted for use by Feathertop Chalet on January 30, 2015.

b. Responsibility

Employees and supervisors must ensure that this policy is communicated and applied within their programs and activities.

Members, Volunteers and Employees must adhere to the requirements of this policy. The core expectation of any responsible organisation requires us to treat all people with fairness and dignity and to care for those who are less powerful and in need of nurture and protection.

All relevant organisations within Australia are bound by Federal and State legislation and principles established through common law. Feathertop Chalet are committed to adhering to all relevant legislation.

c. Definitions

Abuse can consist of one or more of but is not restricted to the following:

Elder Abuse, a single or repeated non-accidental act, occurring in any relationship where there is an expectation of trust, which causes harm or distress to an older person.

Physical Abuse, any non-accidental physical injury resulting from practices such as:

- Hitting, punching, kicking shaking, burning (irons, cigarettes), biting, pulling out hair, alcohol and/or other drug administration.

Sexual Abuse, any assault or abuse of a sexual nature, sexual molestation, indecent exposure, sexual harassment or intimidation. Emotional Abuse, the chronic attitude or behaviour of one person which is directed at another person, or, the creation of an emotional environment which erodes a person's self esteem and social confidence over time. Behaviours may include:

- Insulting, bullying, devaluing, ignoring, rejecting, corrupting, isolating, terrorising or other extreme acts in the vulnerable person's presence.

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Financial Abuse may include:

- Misappropriation of money, valuables or assets,
- Forging signatures on cheques
- Denial of access to personal assets
- Accessing a person's funds electronically and/or
- Forced or unauthorised changes to legal documents

Neglect, characterised by the failure to provide for basic needs. Any serious omission or commission which jeopardises or impairs a person's health or development.

Child, any person under the age of 18.

Duty of Care, is a common law concept that refers to the responsibility of the organisation and individual to provide children with an adequate level of protection against harm. It is the duty of the organisation and its individuals to protect children from all reasonably foreseeable risk of or real injury.

Grooming: The act of forming a special or power-based relationship with children with the intention of getting close to them in order to sexually abuse them.

Online Grooming: The act of sending an electronic message with indecent content to a recipient whom the sender believes to be less than 16 years of age, with the intention of procuring the recipient to engage in or submit to sexual activity with another person, including but not necessarily the sender.

Contractor, means any person or company which is engaged to provide services to Feathertop Chalet.

Employee, means any person employed by Feathertop Chalet.

Supervisor, means a supervisor for a specific Feathertop Chalet program or activity. Specific members/ roles of an Supervisory Team are at the discretion of the General Manager.

Leader, any person (paid or unpaid) over the age of 18 who is responsible for the control and safety of members/ volunteers placed in their care whilst holding a formal position in Feathertop Chalet. A leader could include but is not limited to:

- Camp Leaders
- Deputy Camp Leaders
- Activity Supervisor
- Programs Leader
- Supervisors

Volunteers, any Non-Member who attends Feathertop Chalet activities as a member of the camp's staff under direction of a Camp Leader.

Participant, any person who attends a Feathertop Chalet program as a participant or a grouper.

Visitor, any person invited to visit a Feathertop Chalet program as a visitor.

Vulnerable Personal, any person who is or may be in need of community care services by reason of intellectual or other disability, age or illness.

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2. Selection & Screening

Employees, Contractors, Members and Volunteers involved in activities or programs with children, aged and/or vulnerable people must be carefully selected and screened.

Prior to commencing employment services the following precautions will be taken:

- All prospective employees must complete an application form which requests details of relevant past experience, positions held, details of two referees and permission to contact them.
- Referees will be checked and spoken to, seeking to establish the applicant's suitability for the role or position and the conversation will be documented and retained on file.
- All short-listed candidates must undertake a formal interview which includes an analysis of past experience working with children, the elderly or vulnerable people.
- A police check and an employment level Working with Children check which complies with the legislative requirements of Victoria will be requested and received prior to the Employee commencing their proposed role. The checks must show that the individual is not precluded from working with children or vulnerable people.

Prior to participating as a member/ volunteer on Feathertop Chalet official Camps and Programs the following precautions will be taken:

- All volunteers/ members must complete an application form for a camp program or activity
- All volunteers/ members over the age of 18 at Feathertop Chalet are required to have a current Working with Children (WWC) Check, distributed by the Department of Justice, which enables a volunteer/ member to work with young people under the age of 18. The check must show that the individual is not precluded from working with children.
- Feathertop Chalet must be a nominated organisation on the submitted check for the volunteer to participate on Feathertop Chalet programs with young people under the age of 18.
- A record of a member/ volunteer WWC Check must be stored on file at the Feathertop Chalet office.
- Victorian Teachers or Police Officers are excluded from this requirement but must submit proof to Feathertop Chalet of their relevant Victorian Teacher or Police Officer Registration Number.

Where the Organisation has identified that an Employee/ Member / Volunteer has previously committed a violent or sexually related offence, they cannot, under any circumstances, be considered for Employment, Membership or to Volunteer with Feathertop Chalet.

A register of any identified persons who have previously committed a violent or sexually related offence will be securely maintained at the Feathertop Chalet Office.

3. Training

All new Employees and Volunteers will be issued with a copy of this policy. New Employees will receive annual briefings or training in:

- The content and application of this Client Protection Policy,
- Client Protection risk assessment, selection and screening,
- Reporting procedures and the associated legal requirements.

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4. A Safe Environment

Incidents of Abuse are unlikely to take place in front of another person and the presence of a witness can assist in clarifying questionable allegations. For these reasons all staff and volunteers, wherever possible, when working with vulnerable people, must work in pairs at all times.

Wherever possible, Employees, Volunteers and Members will not visit vulnerable persons or children in their lodges or accommodation areas unless a friend or relative is present or another Employee, Volunteer or accompanies them. When transporting people under their care, Employees and Volunteers will take them directly to and from arranged venues and will not spontaneously detour or make additional arrangements. A minimum of two Employees or Volunteers (including the driver) over the age of 18 must be in the vehicle when transporting people in their care.

All personal counselling is to be carried out within sight of another Employee or Volunteer.

Adults and Children are expected to respect each other's privacy during times that require undressing, dressing or changing clothes. Volunteers and Employees will set an example by protecting their own privacy in similar situations. No Volunteer or Employee will be alone in a room with a Child or an Elderly or Vulnerable Person while any/ either is changing clothes.

Employees and Volunteers have the right to ask people who do not have a valid reason to be present at such activities to leave. Police may be contacted if such persons refuse to comply with any reasonable request to leave.

Visitors must be accompanied by a Volunteer or Employee at all times when visiting a Feathertop Chalet program or activity.

Contractors must be accompanied by a Volunteer or Employee at all times when working at the same time as a Feathertop Chalet program or activity is taking place.

In situations where Employees or Members are required to communicate with participants via social media, guidelines included in the Feathertop Chalet Social Media Policy must be adhered to.

5. Reporting Procedures

Feathertop Chalet actively encourages the reporting of all abuse including sexual abuse.

Feathertop Chalet is committed to building an environment where either a victim or Employee/ Volunteer feels able to report such abuse.

Employees and/or Volunteers must report reasonable suspicions of abuse to Feathertop Chalet management or Board member.

Reasonable Suspicion means a fair, well-founded and practical reason to believe an incident involving Abuse has occurred based on either verbal communication, hearsay, rumour or observation of behaviour.

An independent person will be appointed by Feathertop Chalet with the specific duty of dealing with any allegations of harm or Abuse that may arise.

The details of those reporting Abuse will be kept private and confidential.

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Escalating procedures has been established by Feathertop Chalet for handling allegations of Abuse.

The escalating procedures will be as follows:

- The automatic suspension from all work or other duties within Feathertop Chalet of any person while under investigation by Feathertop Chalet, or by the police, for committing Abuse. If a Feathertop Chalet Employee, he/she will be provided with support while investigations take place.
- The automatic termination of their employment, or involvement with Feathertop Chalet, if found guilty of committing Abuse, either by internal investigation or by a court.

If there is reasonable suspicion that a member has been or is suffering Abuse, the Police and Feathertop Chalet's Insurer will be contacted immediately.

The phone number for the Police is: 000

The phone number for Feathertop Chalet is: 03 5759 2688

The police will also be notified if a Volunteer/ Participant discloses an incident of Abuse that has occurred somewhere other than Feathertop Chalet's premises (e.g. an outing).

If a disclosure of Abuse is made, the person who receives the disclosure will maintain appropriate pastoral care to the one making the disclosure. This will include:

- Treating each allegation seriously and not attempting to deny the allegation or minimise its impact on the alleged victim. The matter should not be swept under the carpet.
- Not pushing the claimant to disclose details of the alleged assault or attempting to investigate the allegation.
- Assuring the person that they are understood: that their disclosure is being taken seriously; that what has happened is not their fault, and that they are correct in disclosing the incident.
- Reporting the alleged Abuse to the police and Feathertop Chalet's insurer.
- Not making contact with the alleged perpetrator. If an Employee or Volunteer/ Member is already providing counsel to the alleged perpetrator, it may be advisable for another person to assume this responsibility for the duration of the investigation.
- If the alleged assault has taken place recently, clothing worn by the alleged victim should be, if reasonably practical, retained and handed to the police for forensic examination.
- Maintaining confidentiality.

Any disclosures by a person of Abuse, reports of suspected abuse and all the details of the subsequent investigation will be documented promptly and the documents will be held in a secure location where a breach of privacy cannot occur.

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Appendix 1 - Working With Children - The Application Process

Checks generally take 6 – 12 weeks from lodgement to successful notification and are received by mail by the volunteer and the nominated organisation. They are then valid for the next 5 years.

Working with Children Checks can only be lodged by volunteers themselves as it is a personal application.

Privacy laws prevent Feathertop Chalet from lodging an application for you or requesting information about your individual check.

New applications

Working with Children Check Application Forms can only be obtained from Australia Post outlets. There is no fee for Volunteer WWC checks as they are covered by the Government.

(a) Under Section D: Details of Child-Related Work

- Mark 1st code as: 10
- Mark 2nd code as: 72
- Place crosses in the Volunteer boxes beside each code

(b) Under Section E: Details of Organisation/s

- Tick the box 'I WILL be doing child-related work for the following organisations:'
- Enter Feathertop Chalet's details as your nominated organisation

Name of primary Organisation: Feathertop Chalet

Postal Address: 22 Bon Accord Track

Suburb: Harrietville

State: VIC

Postcode: 3741

Employer/Volunteer organisation contact phone number: 03 5759 2688

(c) A passport sized photo and a minimum of 100 points of identification will be needed to submit your application at the Australia Post outlet.

(d) If you are from interstate, you must follow the separate Working with Children Check guidelines as there are some additional steps required to receive your WWC. This information can be found at:

<http://www.workingwithchildren.vic.gov.au/home/resources/interstate+checks/interstate+checks>

(e) People from overseas wishing to work with Feathertop Chalet cannot submit a working with children application from outside Australia. The Department of Justice states that all applications must be submitted whilst within Australia so therefore any volunteer would need to organise to submit their application within Australia in time, taking into account the 6 – 12 week lodgement period, to apply for a program.

Unfortunately there is no way around this. However, if someone does not reside in Australia and is coming

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to camp from overseas, we will work with them to determine a relevant similar background check from their home country on a case-by-case basis.

(f) If your application is successful, 6 – 12 weeks following your submission, you will receive a notification and Working with Children Check Card in the mail. The Department of Justice, if you have correctly nominated Feathertop Chalet, will mail the office directly to notify Feathertop Chalet of your new WWC details and confirm you are able to work with young people. Once this notification has been received Feathertop Chalet will be free to allow you to volunteer on programs.

(g) You will then need to provide your WWC check card number and expiry date on any Feathertop Chalet program application form you apply for.

Turning 18 years old within 60 days of camp:

The Department of Justice will not allow an individual to submit paperwork for a Working with Children's Check until the day the individual turns 18 years old. This does not leave enough time for someone with a birthday within 60 days of camp to obtain a WWC and notification to be sent to Feathertop Chalet.

In the instance that an individual will be turning 18 years old within 60 days of camp we will accept an original receipt, to be kept on file, in lieu of a full notification letter. This will allow the individual to attend camp.

(a) Changing/updating details

You must notify the Department of Justice each time you change your name, address, phone number. This is done very simply by going online to:

<http://www.workingwithchildren.vic.gov.au/home/cardholders/update+your+details/>

Or calling the very helpful information line on: 1300 652 879

(b) Renewal

60 days before the expiry of your card, the Department of Justice will send you an easy to complete Renewal form, which streamlines the renewal process. This needs to be completed and submitted to an Australia Post Outlet.

If you do not maintain your address details within the five years you won't receive your renewal and will miss the deadline. If this happens, you will have to submit an entire application again.

Avoid this by updating your details online or via the calling the information line.