



Child Safety Policy

INTRODUCTION

Melbourne University and Alumni Bushwalkers Inc. (MUAB) is committed to promoting and protecting the interests and safety of children. We have zero tolerance of child abuse.

All members of MUAB are responsible for the care and protection of children and reporting information about child abuse.

All children participating in MUAB activities are to be accompanied by their parents/guardians. MUAB does not conduct specifically child-only activities.

PURPOSE

The purpose of this policy is:

1. To facilitate the prevention of child abuse occurring from activities conducted by MUAB.
2. To ensure that all parties are aware of their responsibilities for preventing, identifying and reporting possible occasions of child abuse
3. To provide guidance as to actions that should be taken where a member suspects any abuse within or outside of MUAB.
4. To provide a clear statement forbidding any such abuse.
5. To provide assurance that any and all suspected abuse will be reported and investigated.

DEFINITIONS

Child is a young person under 18 years old unless under the law majority is attained earlier.

Members in this context includes all MUAB members (office bearers, walk leaders and general members) and any contractors and associates of MUAB.

Child abuse includes any act against a child involving a sexual offence or inflicting physical violence, neglect or emotional or psychological harm on a child.

Child safety includes matters related to protecting a child from child abuse, or the risk of child abuse, and responding to incidents of child abuse.

Reasonable grounds for belief is a belief based on reasonable grounds. It does not require proof but is more than mere rumour or speculation.

POLICY

All children, regardless of their gender, race, religious beliefs, age, disability, sexual orientation, or family, cultural or social background, have equal rights to protection from abuse.

Child protection is a shared responsibility between MUAB office bearers (Committee members and Walk Leaders) and all members.

PROCEDURES

Members may not engage in any activity with a child that is likely to physically or emotionally harm the child.

Members may not photograph or video a child without the explicit consent of the child and the child's parent or guardian. Consent can be obtained at the commencement of an MUAB activity.

Members may not initiate unnecessary physical contact with a child or be alone with a child unnecessarily and for more than a short time.

MUAB office bearers and walk leaders are encouraged to have a Working with Children Check (WWCC).

For MUAB activities directed at families, the Walks Coordinator is responsible for ensuring that the Activity/Walks Leader and Assistant Leader each have a current Working with Children Check (WWCC).

Applying for the Working with Children check is free for volunteers and can be done online or at Australia Post. <https://wwcv.auspost.com.au/> A WWCC is valid for 5 years

If any person believes a child is in immediate risk of abuse, they must contact the Police on "000" without delay.

Any member who has a reasonable belief a child is being abused should contact the relevant authorities at Department of Human Services - Child Protection. Phone numbers for the latter are found at <https://services.dhhs.vic.gov.au/child-protection>

If a member makes a report about an incident which occurs at an MUAB event, then either the President, Vice President, Secretary or Walks Coordinator is to be informed of the report as soon as possible so that the matter can be discussed at Committee level and an appropriate course of action determined.

RELEVANT LEGISLATION

1. Children, Youth and Families Act 2005 (Vic.)
2. Working with Children Act 2005 (Vic.)
3. Crimes Act 1958 (Vic)