

Eaglehawk Dahlia & Arts Festival Inc.

Code of conduct

1. Overview

Victoria has compulsory minimum standards that will apply to organisations that provide services for children to help protect children from all forms of abuse. The Child Safe Standards (Child Safe Act 2016) form part of the Victorian Government's response to the Betrayal of Trust Inquiry of 2015.

The Child Safe Standards require organisations that provide services for children to have a code of conduct that establishes clear expectations for appropriate behaviour with children.

This code of conduct outlines the expected standards for appropriate behaviour with and in the company of children, including online conduct.

2. The code

(i) Code requirements

All members of the **Eaglehawk Dahlia & Arts Festival Inc. (ED&AF Inc.)** and all other volunteers involved in the **Eaglehawk Dahlia & Arts Festival Inc.** , who are all collectively called for the purposes of this code of conduct “ **ED&AF Inc. Members**”, are required to observe child safe principles and expectations for appropriate behaviour towards and in the company of children, as set out in this code.

All ED&AF Inc. Members are responsible for supporting the safety, participation, wellbeing and empowerment of children by:

- taking all reasonable steps to protect children from abuse.
- treating everyone with respect.
- listening and responding to the views and concerns of children, particularly if they are telling you that they or another child has been abused and/or are

worried about their safety or the safety of another.

- promoting the cultural safety, participation and empowerment of children with Aboriginal, culturally and/or linguistically diverse backgrounds (for example, by having a zero tolerance of discrimination), in addition to the safety of children with a disability
- ensuring as far as practicable that adults are not left alone with a child.
- reporting any allegations of child abuse to the ED&AF Inc. Committee and ensuring that any allegation is reported to the police.
- reporting any child safety concerns to the ED&AF Inc. Committee.
- if an allegation of child abuse is made, ensure as quickly as possible that the child is safe.
- encouraging children to “have a say” and participate in all relevant organisational activities where possible, especially on issues that are important to them.

(ii) Code prohibitions

All **ED&AF Inc.** members shall not

- develop a relationship with children that could be interpreted as favouritism.
- exhibit behaviour with children which may be construed as unnecessary physical contact.
- put children at risk of abuse.
- engage in open discussions of a mature or adult nature in the presence of children.
- use inappropriate language in the presence of children.
- express personal views on cultures, race or sexuality in the presence of children.
- discriminate against any child, including because of culture, race, ethnicity or disability.

- ignore or disregard any suspected or disclosed child abuse.

(iii) What to do when an allegation of child abuse is made.

Allegation Reporting Guidelines

Any adult to whom a child reports an allegation of sexual abuse or harassment must follow these reporting guidelines.

Receive the report

- Members must listen attentively; stay calm and acknowledge that it takes a lot of courage to report abuse or harassment. Members must be encouraging; not express shock, horror, or disbelief.
- Members must assure privacy but not confidentiality and explain that the member will have to tell someone about the abuse/harassment in order to make it stop and ensure that it doesn't happen to others.
- Members must obtain all facts, but not interrogate, by asking questions that establish facts: who, what, when, where, and how. Members must reassure the child that he or she did the right thing in reporting the incident. Members must avoid asking "why" questions, which may be interpreted as questioning the child's motives. The Member's responsibility is to present the story to the proper authorities.
- Members must be nonjudgmental and reassuring and avoid criticising anything that has happened or anyone alleged to be involved. It is especially important that Members not blame or criticise the child. Members must emphasise that the situation was not the child's fault and that it was brave and mature to report the alleged incident.
- Members must document the allegation in a written record of the conversation, including the date and time, as soon as possible after the member received the report. Members must try to use the child's words and record only what the child informed the Member.

Protecting the child

- Members must ensure the safety and well-being of the child by removing the child from the situation immediately and preventing all contact with the alleged abuser or harasser.

- Members must reassure the child that this is being done for the child's safety and is not a punishment. **Report the allegations to appropriate authorities; child protection or law enforcement**
- Members must immediately report all cases of sexual abuse or harassment; first to the appropriate law enforcement authorities for investigation and to the ED&AF Inc. President (Chief Warden) or a committee member for follow-through.
- In most situations, the first ED&AF Inc. contact is the ED&AF President (Chief Warden) who is responsible for seeking the advice of appropriate agencies and interacting with them. If the allegation involves the conduct of this person, then contact one of the other ED&AF Inc. committee members.
- All **ED&AF Inc.** members and volunteers must cooperate with police, ED&AF Inc. Committee and legal investigations.

Avoid gossip and blame

- Members must not talk to anyone about the report other than those required by this Code of Conduct . Members must take care to protect the rights of both the alleged victim and the accused during the investigation.

Do not challenge the alleged offender.

- Members must not contact the alleged offender. In cases of abuse, interrogation must be left entirely to law enforcement authorities. In cases of non-criminal harassment, the ED&AF Inc. committee is responsible for follow-through and will arrange contact with the alleged offender after the child has been moved to a safe environment.

Follow-through Procedures

- Either an ED&AF Inc. committee member or a law enforcement agency must ensure that the following steps are taken immediately after an abuse allegation is reported.

1. Confirm that the child has been removed from the situation immediately and has no contact with the alleged abuser or harasser.

2. If law enforcement agencies will not investigate, the D&AF Inc. committee should coordinate an independent review of the allegations.
3. Ensure that the child receives immediate support services.
4. Offer the child an independent counsellor to represent the child's interests. Ask social services or law enforcement to recommend someone who is not in any way involved with the ED&AF Inc. program.
5. Cooperate with the police or legal investigation.

Post allegation report considerations

When addressing an allegation of abuse or harassment, the most important concern is the safety of the child and ED&AF Inc. members must not speculate or offer personal opinions that could potentially hinder any police or criminal investigations; members must not become involved in investigations.

Working With Children Check (WWCC)

The *Working with Children Act 2005* (Vic.) requires that any person doing child-related work, must have a valid Working with Children Check (WWCC).

The **Eaglehawk Dahlia & Arts Festival Inc.** committee requires that all volunteers having contact with children (persons under 18 years of age) are required to apply for a WWCC and to carry a current WWCC with them when they work in a voluntary capacity at the 2018 Festival.