



Mahamevnawa Buddhist Meditation Centre (MBMC) Child Safe Policy

Introduction

This document details MBMC's policy framework and guidelines to ensure Child Safety in accordance with Child Safety Standards (CSSs) as stipulated by Commission for Children and Young People (CCYP), Victoria, Australia. All people (including children) have the right to be respected and valued as well as feel.

Other Relevant Legislation

- National Framework for Protecting Australia's Children entitled 'Protecting Children is Everyone's Business 2009 – 2020' (Commonwealth of Australia)
- Children, Youth and Families Act 2005 (Victoria)
- Working With Children Act 2005 (Victoria)

Coverage

This Policy applies to all Reverend Monks, officers, lay teachers, members of the congregation, volunteers, and anyone working on behalf of MBMC. It should be utilized in conjunction with the following MBMC documents:

- Code of Conduct on Child Safety
- Children's Code of Conduct
- Statement of Commitment to Child Safety
- Reporting Guidelines – Child Safety
- Photo/Video Policy
- Application Form for Child Safe Committee Membership
- Checklist on Recruitment, Supervision and Training
- Incident/Accident Report Form
- Reporting Concerns Form
- Risk of Significant Harm Form
- Parents' duty of care

Commitment to Child Safety

MBMC is committed to ensuring an environment that is physically, emotionally and spiritually safe for all children, young people and vulnerable adults.

Broadly, all stakeholders of MBMC regardless of age, gender, race, culture, disability, sexual orientation/identity and family or social background have equal rights to this protection. They have the right to be respected and valued as well as feel emotionally, physically and spiritually safe at all MBMC activities and programs.

Ensuring Our Commitment to Child Safety

MBMC is dedicated to taking the following steps to ensure its commitment to Child Safety:

(a) Safe recruitment of leaders

We will screen all prospective leaders in our programs (Reverend Monks, officers and lay teachers) before they are appointed by utilizing MBMC's Recruitment procedure, Supervision and Training and if required, with police checks.

(b) Adequate training of leaders

We require that all our leaders (Reverend Monks, officers and lay teachers) attend Child Safe Standards training available online via www.childsafestandards.org.au

(c) Have a clear Code of Conduct

We will apply MBMC's Code of Conduct on Child Safety for all leaders (Reverend Monks, officers and lay teachers), volunteers and anyone representing and working for MBMC. This Code of Conduct clearly stipulates boundaries of behaviour and expectations of interactions with children.

(d) We commit to ongoing training (on line), supervision and compliance as necessitated by ongoing changes to the relevant legislation.

(e) Responding to allegations of risk of harm, abuse and serious misconduct

All leaders (Reverend Monks, officers and lay teachers) and volunteers have a duty to report disclosures or suspicions of child abuse using MBMC's Child Safety reporting guidelines. We will listen to and believe children who raise concerns. We will ensure that procedures are clear and appropriate in responding to allegations of abuse. Where an allegation of misconduct is made against a person in the organization in relation to a child, we will prioritize support to the child.

(f) Responding to other disclosures of abuse

We will encourage all leaders (Reverend Monks, officers and lay teachers) and volunteers to disclose and report any signs of abuse and harm including self-harm and suicide ideation. We will encourage seeking counselling support by all involved (including the leaders/volunteers) following incidents of disclosure of abuse or self-harm.

(g) Provide an open and safe environment

We will create a child-friendly environment, allowing people to raise their concerns in an appropriate manner. Where possible and practical, we will obtain appropriate information including children's health and family situation to ensure that we are aware of their physical and emotional needs.

(h) Understand and value diversity

We will be sensitive to those with disabilities, from culturally and linguistic diverse backgrounds and those from the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities. As well as upholding respect to all cultures, we will welcome the participation of all people in our programs which are conducted according to the pure Theravada Buddhist Doctrines.

Definitions

Abuse: includes but not limited to: physical abuse, emotional abuse, family violence, sexual abuse, grooming and neglect

Child: a person who is under the age of 18 years as per The Commission for Children and Young People Act 2012, (Victoria)

Child Safe environment: an environment which discharges duty of care by taking steps to keep all those attending MBMC's programs are safe and free from physical abuse, emotional abuse, violence, sexual abuse, grooming and neglect.

Disclosure: a disclosure occurs when someone informs a person in authority/leadership (or a trusted adult) within MBMC that they have been subject to abuse or knows of abuse. A disclosure may or may not be an allegation or a notifiable circumstance, but it is the responsibility of the person in authority to investigate and take any appropriate action.

Vulnerable Adult: A person who may be considered to be susceptible to abuse or exploitation based on factors such as their health status (mental or physical), age, grief, previous experience of abuse, social isolation or financial hardship.

Officers: Directors, Members of Board of Management and Child Safe Committee Members of MBMC; Directors of Thawathinsa Yaathra Organization

We are committed to reviewing our Child Safe Policy and practice annually.

This Policy was last reviewed on 7 April 2021.

Signed <by the authority of the Board of Directors>:

Secretary
Official Stamp of MBMC