



# Child Safe Standards: An understanding of what they are

Everyone who is part of Mansfield & District Potters has responsibilities towards  
Child Safety

# Child Safe Standards

In April 2012, the Victorian Government initiated an enquiry into the handling of child abuse allegations within religious and non-government organisations. One of the recommendations from the final report of the enquiry was:

- To create child safe organisation – implementing mandatory Child Safe Standards and a reportable conduct scheme

## **Points to note**

- Child, under the Standards refers to any young person under the age of 18.
- As a not-for-profit organisation, Mansfield & District Potters will be accountable to these Standards as of January 1<sup>st</sup>, 2017. The Standards cover all staff and volunteers of Mansfield & District Potters.

# Mansfield & District Potters Response

Mansfield & District Potters meets all current standards and legislative requirements. There is a strong commitment to ensuring that our service delivery and support provided remains compliant and that our volunteers are aware of any changes that may affect them.

Through the strengthening of current policies, guidelines, protocols and procedures and through volunteers adhering to these, Mansfield & District Potters is ensuring that our valuable volunteers are not placed at unnecessary risk.

# Standard 1

**Strategies to embed an organisational culture into child safety, including through effective leadership arrangements:**

- There is a high expectation that everyone in Mansfield & District Potters is committed to child safety.
- Mansfield & District Potters is committed to the updating of policies, guidelines, protocols and procedures to reflect the commitment and the meet the Child Safe Standards.
- Leadership from the Committee and all volunteers are required to take a pro-active approach to reducing future risk.

# Standard 2

## Child Safe Statement:

### Mansfield Musical & Dramatic Society:

- has zero tolerance for child abuse
- actively works to listen to and empower children
- has systems to protect children from abuse, and will take all allegations and concerns very seriously and responds to them consistently in line with the organisation's policies and procedures
- is committed to promoting cultural safety for Aboriginal children, cultural safety for children from culturally and/or linguistically diverse backgrounds, and to providing a safe environment for children with a disability
- **Mansfield & District Potters Child Safe Contract must be signed by everyone**

# Standard 3

**A Code of Conduct that establishes clear expectations for appropriate behaviour with children:**

- A code of conduct lists behaviours that are acceptable and those that are unacceptable. It spells out professional boundaries, ethical behaviour as well as acceptable and unacceptable relationships
- Unprofessional conduct is where the professional expectations and boundaries of a mentor to mentee, a person of authority to a young person is crossed. By partaking in unprofessional conduct, you are placing yourself at risk.

# Standard 4

**Screening, supervision, training and other human resource practices that reduce the risk of child abuse by new and existing personnel:**

- Mansfield & District Potters policies, guidelines, protocols and procedures help to identify the most suitable individuals to work with children in either paid or voluntary capacity.
- Selecting suitable and appropriate volunteers/contractors is vital. Good recruitment practices help to reduce the risk of harm by deterring the ‘wrong’ people from applying.

# Standard 5

## **Processes for responding to and reporting suspected child abuse:**

- If a young person discloses any form of abuse, always believe and validate their disclosure no matter how you feel about it.
- This means listening to the child, taking them seriously, responding and acting on the disclosure by implementing Mansfield & District Potters procedures.
- If the risk to the young person is imminent, then contact the Police on 000 immediately.



# Standard 6

## Strategies to identify and reduce or remove the risks of child abuse:

- All organisations have a duty of care to protect children and young people.
- Despite the implementation of best practice approaches, risks always exist for children and young people who access organisations.
- As volunteers, by adhering to Mansfield & District Potters risk management approach, you are acting in a preventative manner and reducing the likelihood of risks becoming realised.

# Standard 7

## **Strategies to promote the participation and empowerment of children:**

It must be acknowledged that a significant power imbalance exists between children and adults. Specific efforts must be taken to ensure the voices of children are heard.

Helping children to recognise abuse in an age appropriate way, can help them avoid situations that may put them at risk.

# Practical Tips

If a child or young person makes a disclosure to you within your role at Mansfield & District Potters, there is support support available to you to ensure that the appropriate steps are taken.

Please seek clarification or guidance around any item that has been discussed through this presentation that you are unsure about.

Mansfield & District Potters is committed to child safety. We have zero tolerance for child abuse. If you have any concerns or suspicions about any form of child abuse.

Call the Police 000 or contact our secretary: [secretary@madpotters.org.au](mailto:secretary@madpotters.org.au) to arrange a confidential conversation about next steps.



# Final Thought

“The Australian Human Rights Commission argued that one of the greatest risk factors for the harm or abuse of children is the lack of awareness about it among an institution’s staff and volunteers.”

~ Royal Commission into Institutional Responses to Child Sexual Abuse, Interim Report 2015.