



Aboriginal Housing Victoria

Child Safety obligations

Aboriginal Housing Victoria has a commitment to promoting and protecting the interests and safety of children.

In January 2016, new standards were introduced under the **Child Wellbeing and Safety Amendment (Child Safe Standards) Act 2015** to ensure that:

- child safety is promoted;
- child abuse is prevented; and
- allegations are properly investigated.

AHV's Child Safe Policy and Code of Conduct ensures that:

All employees and volunteers, who come into contact with children in the course of their work for, or on behalf of AHV, will:

- Establish and maintain a child-safe environment in the course of their work;
- Treat children and young people with respect and value their ideas and opinions;
- Act as positive role model in their conduct with children and young people;
- Promote the cultural safety, participation and empowerment of Aboriginal children;
- Only enter and remain in AHV rented properties when the tenant or the tenant's adult representative is present;
- Ensure that if they are required to perform their duties in the presence of a child, that at least one other adult is also present. There is no reason for employees or volunteers to be alone with children in order to perform their duties, as AHV does not deliver specific services to children.
- Comply with specific organisational policies relating to physical contact with children. There should be no need for AHV employees to engage in any form of physical contact with children in order for them to perform their duties;
- Respect the privacy of children, their families and carers and only disclose information in accordance with AHV's *Privacy and Confidentiality Policy*;
- Comply with the requirements of AHV's *Child Safe* policy at all times;
- Report to the police any reasonable belief that a sexual offence has been committed by an adult against a child under 16, consistent with an adult's legal duty under the *Crimes Act 1958*;
- Report any reasonable belief of suspected child abuse to their line manager and ensure any such allegation is reported to the police (for sexual abuse of a child under 16) or the Victorian Aboriginal Child Care Agency or other appropriate organisation (for other forms of child abuse);
- Report the matter immediately to the police by calling 000, if the abuse is considered to pose an immediate threat to the child.
- Report any child safety concerns to their line manager or CEO.



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AHV's Child Safe Policy and Code of Conduct ensures that:

AHV employees and volunteers will not, in the course of their work:

- Shame, humiliate, oppress, belittle or degrade children or young people;
- Unlawfully discriminate against any child;
- Engage in any activity with a child or young person that is likely to cause them physical or emotional harm;
- Develop any 'special' relationships with children that could be seen as favouritism;
- Demonstrate favouritism through the provision of gifts or inappropriate attention to children;
- Initiate contact, including physical and/or on-line contact, with children or young people outside of AHV's services and activities;
- Photograph or video a child or young person without the consent of the child and her/his parents or guardians;
- Work with young children or young people under the influence of alcohol or illegal drugs;
- Engage in open discussions of a mature or adult nature, or use inappropriate language in the presence of children;
- Express personal views on cultures, race or sexuality in the presence of children.

AHV's Child Safe Policy has been developed to ensure:

- compliance with the Victorian Government's new Child Safe standards for funded agencies delivering services to children; and
- to ensure that systems and processes are in place to support Board directors, staff and volunteers to understand and meet their obligations with regard to the Child Safe standards and reporting requirements under the *Crimes Act*.

AHV's Commitment to Privacy and Confidentiality:

- AHV will respect the privacy of children, their families and carers and only disclose information in accordance with AHV's *Privacy and Confidentiality Policy*;

Aboriginal Housing Victoria

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