

# Croydon Citizens' Bands Inc

## Child Safety and Wellbeing Policy

All children have the right to feel safe and be safe, but safety does not just happen. Victoria's [Child Safe Standards](#) exist to prevent harm and abuse from happening in organisations.

The Croydon Citizens' Bands are committed to promoting and protecting the interests, safety, and wellbeing of children. We have zero tolerance for child abuse and discrimination.

### Purpose

The Croydon Citizens' Bands commits to upholding the Child Safe Standards and ensuring child safety. The purpose of this policy is to:

- prevent discrimination, harm or child abuse occurring within the Croydon Citizens' Bands
- work towards an organisational culture of child safety and wellbeing
- ensure that everyone is aware of their responsibilities to care for children in our organisation and prevent or report instances of poor behaviour, harm or abuse
- provide guidance about how to report any harm or abuse within or outside of the organisation
- provide assurance that all suspected abuse will be reported and appropriately investigated
- implement procedures that encourage and support all members to feel safe and included.

This policy applies to all members, volunteers, children and other individuals involved with the Croydon Citizens' Bands. All members of the Croydon Citizens' Bands are responsible for the care and protection of children, and reporting information about child abuse.

### We value our community heritage and diversity

The Croydon Citizens' Bands respectfully acknowledges the traditional owners of the lands on which we rehearse and perform, the Wurundjeri peoples of the Kulin Nation. Through our rehearsals and performances we honour the continuation of one of the oldest music practices in the world.

We acknowledge that members of the Croydon Citizens' Bands and the people of Maroondah have diverse cultural, religious, and language backgrounds. We welcome all people to our organisation and recognise that cultural safety is of critical importance to the safety and wellbeing of children.

We welcome everyone into our bands and ensembles and welcome input from all of our members and volunteers to make our organisation more inclusive, accessible, and safe.

### Children should always feel safe in our organisation

We acknowledge that the children who participate in our organisation have the right to:

- participate and be heard
- be safe and not harmed by anyone
- live and grow up healthy
- express their views and have a say about decisions that affect them, and
- receive information, such as information about the policies and procedures that affect them.

We will uphold these rights for our child members and be open to feedback on how we can improve.

### Code of Conduct

The Croydon Citizens' Bands are committed to creating a safe and respectful environment for everyone who participates in our organisation. This means that everyone has the right to feel safe and be safe when participating in our activities.

We expect members, volunteers and others associated with our organisation to behave appropriately and:

- treat everyone with courtesy and respect
- be considerate of others and their ability to participate and contribute to our activities
- listen to the views of others in a respectful way
- listen to the Musical Director in rehearsals and follow their instructions
- be on time to rehearsals and events and submit an apology in advance if they can't attend

- report anything that makes members feel uncomfortable to a band manager or another member of the band committee.

Adult members are expected to uphold the safety and wellbeing of young people who participate in our activities. Particular attention will be paid to the cultural safety of children from Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander backgrounds, and the safety needs of children from culturally and/or linguistically diverse backgrounds, the LGBTIQ+ community or those living with a disability.

Members will not:

- treat another member or volunteer in a disrespectful way
- physically or verbally hurt or abuse another person
- tease, bully or harass another person within the band community
- exclude people from our activities
- use inappropriate language or discuss matters of an adult nature in the presence of children
- discriminate against any child or any other member, including because of age, sex, culture, race, religion, disability, sexuality or gender identity
- communicate or exchange personal or online contact details with child members of the band without the knowledge of a parent/guardian
- transport children (other than their own) to band events without parent/guardian consent.

### Role of band committee(s) in child safety

Our band committee(s) are responsible for ensuring that child safety and wellbeing is embedded in our organisational leadership, governance and culture. The committees will:

- take all reasonable steps to protect children and young people from discrimination, harm and abuse
- ensure children and young people and their families, are engaged and active participants in decision-making processes, particularly those that have an impact on their safety and wellbeing.
- listen and respond to the views and concerns of children and their families, particularly if they are telling you that they are worried about their safety or are being harmed
- assess child safety risks and take action to reduce these risks
- ensure as far as practicable that adults are not left alone with a child
- undertake training as required to build a child safe organisation.

### Recruiting members, volunteers and musical directors

Anyone in our community can join the Croydon Citizens' Bands. All members and volunteers must be willing to follow this Policy and our Code of Conduct. We will publish this Policy and Code of Conduct on our website to ensure that current and prospective members understand our expectations.

To ensure the safety of all children and young people who participate in our organisation and ensure that members are appropriate to be involved in an organisation alongside children, we require that adult members hold a valid volunteer working with children check. Volunteer working with children checks are free and can be obtained from [Working with Children Check - Service Victoria](#).

Members will be asked for their working with children check details when they complete our membership form. If a prospective member does not hold a working with children check they must apply for a working with children check before they can join the Croydon Citizens' Bands.

Asking members to have a working with children check helps us to protect children from harm by ensuring that everyone who joins the Croydon Citizens' Bands is subject to a basic child safety screening process. Members don't require a working with children check if they hold registration with the Victorian Institute of Teaching or are a sworn member of Victoria Police.

Musical Directors must have a working with children check and the committee must be satisfied that they are suitable to work with children as part of the recruitment process. Our commitment to child safety and diversity and screening requirements will be included in all advertisements for musical director positions.

## Reporting a child safety concern or complaint

Any member or volunteer who has a child safety concern or complaint or who witnesses a child safety incident must report that concern, complaint or incident to a band manager or the President of the Croydon Citizens' Bands.

<b>Who can make a report?</b>	Anyone - a member of the band (child or adult); a musical director; a parent or guardian of a member; a volunteer, helper or guest of the band	
<b>What can be reported?</b>	Any child safety concern including: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• disclosure of abuse or harm by a child or young person</li> <li>• allegation/observation of abuse or harm against a child or young person</li> <li>• breach of the Code of Conduct</li> <li>• general safety or environmental concern.</li> </ul>	<b>Call 000 if a child is in immediate danger</b>
<b>How to report?</b>	Face-to-face verbal report, letter, email, telephone call, at a meeting or any other way that is considered appropriate	
<b>Who to report to?</b>	Band manager, President, Musical Director or any other member of the committee.	
<b>What happens next?</b>	The band manager or President will: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• offer support to the child, parents, the person who made the report and the person who is alleged to have caused harm</li> <li>• initiate processes to ensure the safety of all children involved</li> <li>• clarify the nature of the complaint</li> <li>• determine whether the incident must be reported to police, child protection or the Commission for Children and Young People and make a report as soon as possible</li> <li>• Commence disciplinary processes against the member in line with the rules of the Croydon Citizens' Bands</li> <li>• keep and secure accurate records of the incident and response.</li> </ul>	
<b>Outcome</b>	Once the outcome is known: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• relevant staff, volunteers, parents and children will be notified of the outcome, having regard to the privacy of those involved</li> <li>• disciplinary action will be taken as required</li> <li>• policies and procedures will be reviewed and updated as necessary.</li> </ul>	

Adult members and volunteers must make a report to Victoria Police if they form a reasonable belief that a sexual offence has been committed against a child in Victoria by another person aged over 18. Failure to disclose this information is a criminal offence.

## Review and improvement

Child safety and wellbeing matters will be reviewed by the Main Committee annually and on an as-needed basis to ensure the ongoing protection of children who participate in our organisation. All child safety and wellbeing concerns arising will be addressed as a matter of urgency. A summary of these matters will be noted at Committee meetings, as required.

This policy will be reviewed by the Main Committee and presented to the Annual General Meeting of the Croydon Citizens' Bands every two years to assess whether our child safety and wellbeing policies or procedures require modification to better protect the children involved in our organisation.

Through the Annual General Meeting the Croydon Citizens' Bands will seek views, comments and suggestions from child members, their parents and adult members within the our organisation.

Last review date	Feb 2024
Next review date	Feb 2026

# Croydon Citizens' Bands Inc

APPENDIX: What to do if an allegation of child abuse is made

**If you believe a child is at immediate risk of abuse phone 000.**

If a child discloses an incident of abuse to you:

- Try and separate them from the other children discreetly and listen to them carefully.
- Let the child use their own words to explain what has occurred. Do not interrupt them or make assumptions about what you think happened.
- Reassure the child that you take what they are saying seriously, and that it is not their fault and that they are doing the right thing.
- Explain to them that this information may need to be shared with others, such as with their parent/carer, specific people within the Band (President, band manager, Main Committee), or the police.
- Take detailed notes at the time of the report or as soon as possible after receiving it. Confirm your notes with the person who raised the concern to ensure you have written everything down accurately.
- Do not make promises at this stage, except that you will do your best to keep the child safe.
- Do not leave the child in a distressed state. If they seem at ease in your company, stay with them.
- As soon as possible after the disclosure, record the information using the child's words and report the disclosure to band manager or President.
- Ensure the disclosure is recorded accurately, and that the record is stored securely.

If a parent/carer says their child has been abused within our organisation or raises a concern:

- Ask about the wellbeing of the child.
- Explain that the Croydon Citizens' Bands has processes to ensure all abuse allegations are taken seriously.
- Allow the parent/carer to talk through the incident in their own words. Do not interrupt them while they are relaying their account of events, do not paraphrase or make assumptions about what you think may have happened.
- Advise the parent/carer that you will take notes during the discussion to capture all details. Confirm your notes with the person who raised the concern to ensure you have written everything down accurately.
- Explain to them the information will need to be repeated to authorities or others, such as the band manager or President, the Police, or Child Protection Agencies.
- Explain that all persons 18 years or older are mandated to make a report to Victoria Police if they form a reasonable belief that a sexual offence has been committed against a child in Victoria by another person aged 18 or older.
- Do not make promises at this early stage, except that you will do your best to keep the child safe.
- Ask them what action they would like to take and advise them of what the immediate next steps will be.
- Ensure the incident report is recorded accurately and the record is stored securely.

Be aware that some people from culturally and/or linguistically diverse backgrounds may face barriers in reporting allegations of abuse. For example, people from some cultures may experience anxiety when talking with police, and communicating in English may be a barrier for some. You need to be sensitive to these issues and meet people's needs where possible, such as having an interpreter present (who could be a friend or family member).

If an allegation of abuse involves a child from Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander background, you will need to ensure a culturally appropriate response. A way to help ensure this could include engaging with parents of Aboriginal children, local Aboriginal communities or an Aboriginal community controlled organisations to review policies and procedures.

Some children living with a disability may experience barriers disclosing an incident. For example, children with hearing or cognitive impairments may need support to help them explain the incident, including through sign language interpreters