

CHILD SAFE STANDARD POLICY

1.0 RATIONALE AND STATEMENT OF COMMITMENT

Golden Square Pool is committed to the safety and wellbeing of all children and young people. Golden Square Pool has zero tolerance for child abuse and is committed to providing a child safe environment where children and young people are safe and feel safe, and their voices are heard about decisions that affect their lives.

Particular attention will be paid to the cultural safety of Aboriginal children and children from culturally and/or linguistically diverse backgrounds, as well as the safety of children with a disability. Every person involved in Golden Square Pool has a responsibility to understand the important and specific role he/she plays individually and collectively to ensure that the wellbeing and safety of all children and young people is at the forefront of all they do and every decision they make.

This policy demonstrates the strong commitment of the management, staff and volunteers of Golden Square Pool to child safety and provides an outline of the policies and practices developed to keep everyone safe from any harm, including abuse.

Statement of Commitment for public display:

Golden Square Pool supports and respects all children, as well as our staff and volunteers. We are committed to the safety and well-being of children and young people and, as such, are committed to creating and maintaining a child safe organisation and providing an environment where children and young people feel safe and are safe. We are committed to the cultural safety of Aboriginal children, the cultural safety of children from culturally and/or linguistically diverse backgrounds, and to providing a safe environment for children with a disability. Every person involved with Golden Square Pool has a responsibility to individually and collectively ensure that the wellbeing and safety of all children and young people is at the forefront of what we do and decisions we make.

2.0 SCOPE

This policy applies to all individuals involved in our organisation (paid and volunteer) including, but not limited to:

- Committee of Management
- Volunteers
- Patrons

- Staff

All the people to which this policy applies have a role and responsibility in relation to child protection. They must all:

- understand the indicators and risks of child abuse;
- appropriately act on any concerns raised by children; and
- understand and follow all applicable laws in relation to the protection of children and reporting or management of child safety concerns
- ensure that children associated with the organisation are informed about their rights, including to safety information and participation.

3.0 DEFINITIONS

Child

Is a young person up to the age of 18 years.

Child Abuse

Child abuse can take a broad range of forms including physical abuse, sexual abuse, emotional or psychological abuse and neglect. People to whom this policy applies need to be aware that child abuse can occur whenever there is actual or potential harm to a child, and these are circumstances that this organisation is committed to reducing the risk of occurrence.

Duty of Care

The obligation by Golden Square Pool Inc, its staff and volunteers to take reasonable steps to protect children from the risks of injury that are reasonably foreseeable.

Failure to Protect

As defined by the Crimes Act 1958 (Vic), a person with power and authority who fails to protect a child from criminal sexual abuse, they know of the risk of abuse and are able to reduce or remove the risk but fail to do so.

4.0 POLICY

4.1 Children's Rights to Safety and Participation

The Golden Square Pool encourages children to express their views about their safety. We listen to their suggestions, especially on matters that directly affect them. We actively encourage all children who use our services to 'have a say' about things that are important to them.

We teach children about what they can do if they feel unsafe. We listen to and act on any concerns children, or their parents, raise with us.

During Induction we explain to our Junior Volunteers that they have the right to feel safe and what they should do if they have any concerns– including the people in our organisation they can speak to.

4.2 Valuing Diversity

We value diversity and do not tolerate any discriminatory practices. To achieve this we:

- promote the cultural safety, participation and empowerment of Aboriginal children and their families;
- promote the cultural safety, participation and empowerment of children from culturally and/or linguistically diverse backgrounds and their families;
- welcome and promote the safety of children and young people who identify as LGBTQI+;
- welcome children with a disability and their families and act to promote their participation

4.3 Recruiting staff and volunteers

Golden Square Pool takes the following steps to ensure best practice standards in the recruitment and screening of staff and volunteers:

- Interview and conduct referee checks on all staff and volunteers
- Require police checks and Working with Children Checks for relevant positions.

4.4 Supporting staff and volunteers

Golden Square Pool seeks to attract and retain the best staff and volunteers. We provide support and supervision, so people feel valued, respected and fairly treated. We have developed a Code of Conduct to provide guidance to our staff and volunteers, all of whom receive training on the requirements of the Code.

We encourage to our staff and volunteers to undertaking training and education where available.

4.5 Reporting a child safety concern or complaint

Golden Square Pool has appointed *Margaret Hand* as Child Safety Officer with the specific responsibility for responding to any complaints made by staff, volunteers, parents or children.

4.5.1 Reporting Process

- Formal - a complainant may fill out an online complaint form which is directed to the Child Safety Officer if the Child Safety box is checked.
- Informal - the complainant may choose to have an in-confidence discussion with the Child Safety Officer.
- Whether formal or informal, the Child Safety Officer will log the report
- The report will remain confidential with the information only being available to the Child Safety Officer, Manager and President
- The report will be followed up in line with the Grievance Policy and Child Safety Standards (2022)

4.6 Responding to incidents

- Procedures for raising concerns and complaints are clear and can be understood by children. These are outlined in the organisation's complaints policy.
- Children know who to talk to if they are worried, and are encouraged to report unsafe behaviours
- People within the organisation are aware of their duty of care and legal responsibilities, and know what to do to respond appropriately
- Concerns and complaints are acted upon appropriately

If a child is in immediate danger, call 000

Any child safety concerns where there is disclosure of abuse or harm, allegation, suspicion or observation of harm – contact the police.

Any incidents should be reported to Child Safety Officer *Margaret Hand* who will prepare a report for the COM.

4.7 Risk Management

We recognise the importance of a risk management approach to minimising the potential for child abuse or harm to occur and use this to inform our policy, procedures and activity planning. In addition to general occupational health and safety risks, we proactively manage risks of abuse to our children. To reduce the risk of child abuse occurring, adults to whom this policy applies should avoid direct, unsupervised contact with children. For example, this should be a consideration when:

- using change room facilities;
- engaging in social events at the pool;
- applying first aid in the first aid room (where reasonably practical);
- physical contact when working with or managing children.

4.8 Golden Square Pool's principles for child safety

In its planning, decision-making and operations Golden Square Pool will

1. Take a preventative, proactive and participatory approach to child safety;
2. Value and empower children to participate in decisions which affect their lives;
3. Foster a culture of openness that supports all persons to safely disclose risks of harm to children
4. Respect diversity in cultures and child rearing practices while keeping child safety paramount;
5. Ensure that those staff and volunteers who are engaged by this organisation are suitable people to work with children;
6. Ensure children know who to talk with if they are worried or are feeling unsafe, and that they are comfortable and encouraged to raise such issues;
7. Report suspected abuse, neglect or mistreatment promptly to the appropriate authorities;
8. Share information appropriately and lawfully with other organisations where the safety and wellbeing of children is at risk.

5.0 LEGISLATION

- Crimes Act 1958 (Vic)
- Family Law Act 1975
- Children Youth and Families Act 2005
- Child Wellbeing and Safety Act 2005

6.0 REVIEWING THIS POLICY

This policy will be reviewed every two years and we undertake to seek views, comments and suggestions from children, parents, staff and volunteers involved in Golden Square Pool.

1 Adapted from Our Community (2016) Child Protection Toolkit: What every not-for-profit organisation

2 This document was developed utilising and adapting content from The Commission for Children and Young People (2016), Child Safe Policy

3 Updated from Victoria's new Child Safe Standards information sheet July 2022