

HOBAN Recruitment Child Safety and Wellbeing Policy

Background

HOBAN Recruitment is a leading national recruitment agency which on-hires personnel into a variety of roles working with children including but not limited to child educators, school crossing supervisors, child support workers, out of school carers at local government organizations, schools, kindergartens, community groups etc.

Child Safety and Wellbeing Policy

HOBAN Recruitment acknowledges the Traditional Owners of the land on which we operate. We acknowledge and respect their contributions, experience and knowledge as First Nations people. We pay our respects to their Elders, past and present.

This Child Safety and Wellbeing Policy was approved by the CEO on 30 March 2024. It demonstrates the strong commitment of management and all staff to child safety and wellbeing, and how our organization keeps children safe from harm, including child abuse.

Commitment to child safety

Child safety and wellbeing is embedded in organisational leadership, governance and culture.

All children who come into contact with employees from HOBAN Recruitment have a right to feel and be safe. The welfare of the children will always be our first priority and we have a zero-tolerance approach to child abuse and harm. Our employees aim to create a child safe and child-friendly environment where children feel safe.

Purpose

This Policy outlines how HOBAN Recruitment prioritises the safety and wellbeing of children and what steps we will take to do this.

Scope

This policy applies to all staff, on-hire employees and other individuals involved in our organisation. This policy applies to all activities.

Definitions

Child abuse means:

- a sexual offence committed against a child
- an offence committed against a child under section 49M(1) of the Crimes Act 1958 (Vic), such as grooming
- physical violence against a child
- causing serious emotional or psychological harm to a child
- serious neglect of a child.

Harm is damage to the health, safety or wellbeing of a child or young person, including as a result of child abuse by adults or the conduct of other children. It includes physical, emotional, sexual and psychological harm. Harm can arise from a single act or event and can also be cumulative, that is, arising as a result of a series of acts or events over a period of time.

Child/Children means a person who is under the age of 18 years.

Concerns and complaints - A concern refers to any potential issue that could impact negatively on the safety and wellbeing of children.

A complaint is an expression of dissatisfaction to HOBAN Recruitment or one of our client organisations related to one or more of the following:

- services or dealings with individuals
- allegations of abuse or misconduct by a staff member, on-hire employee or another individual associated with HOBAN Recruitment
- disclosures of abuse or harm made by a child or young person
- the conduct of a child or young person
- the inadequate handling of a prior concern
- general concerns about the safety of a group of children or activity.

Creating culturally safe environments for all Aboriginal children and their families

Organisations establish a culturally safe environment in which the diverse and unique identities and experiences of Aboriginal children and young people are respected and valued (Standard 1)

We are committed to establish a culturally safe environment in which the diverse and unique identities and experiences of Aboriginal children and young people are respected and valued.

HOBAN Recruitment is committed to creating environments where Aboriginal culture is celebrated and Aboriginal children, families and community members are welcomed and included. Strategies to embed cultural safety for Aboriginal children include:

- an Acknowledgement of Country at all presentations
- consulting with families and members of the Aboriginal community to identify opportunities to promote Aboriginal culture and practices in HOBAN Recruitment
- providing opportunities for children to share their cultural identity and express their culture,
- supporting children who wish to explore their culture,
- providing training on the strengths of Aboriginal culture and its importance to the wellbeing and safety of Aboriginal children
- celebrating NAIDOC Week and acknowledging significant events including National Sorry Day and National Reconciliation Week

Role of the HOBAN Management Team

Child safety and wellbeing is embedded in organisational leadership, governance and culture (Standard 2).

The HOBAN Management Team has the role of making sure HOBAN prioritizes children's safety and that action is taken when anyone raises concerns about children's safety.

The Management Team will champion and model a child safe culture. We encourage anyone involved with the organisation to report a child safety concern. The Management Team will work to create a positive culture around reporting so that people feel comfortable to raise concerns.

Everyone at HOBAN Recruitment has a role in identifying and managing risks of child abuse and harm. The Management Team will make sure that staff and on-hire employees are taking action to manage risks in accordance with this policy. They will also ensure that appropriate child safety training for staff and on-hire employees is identified and completed.

The Management Team will conduct an annual review of this child safety policy.

Children's empowerment and participation

Children and young people are empowered about their rights, participate in decisions affecting them and are taken seriously (Standard 3).

HOBAN Recruitment does not tolerate bullying or abusive behaviour between children and take action if this occurs.

We seek to understand what makes children feel safe. We will communicate with children about what they can do if they feel unsafe.

HOBAN Recruitment values the voices of children and will act on safety concerns raised by children or their families.

HOBAN Recruitment staff support children's participation in the following ways:

- Discussions with children, including child-led conversations on what makes them feel safe and unsafe.
- Consultation with children about any proposed significant changes to the physical environment, policies, procedures, programs or staffing. Children's views are collected by staff, provided to management and considered in the decision-making process.
- Information provided to children and families about staffing are made suitable for different age groups and diversity of the children.

Families and communities

Families and communities are informed and involved in promoting child safety and wellbeing (Standard 4).

HOBAN Recruitment recognises the important role of families and involves parents and carers when making significant decisions about their child. Parents, families and communities are welcome to provide feedback at any time through our contact email address and are encouraged to raise any concerns they have with us.

HOBAN Recruitment provides information to families and community about our child safe policies and practices including through:

- publishing this Child Safety and Wellbeing Policy and Code of Conduct on our website
- including articles and information on child safety and wellbeing, and reminders about our policies and procedures, in our newsletter.

Valuing diversity

Equity is upheld and diverse needs respected in policy and practice. (Standard 5)

We value diversity and equity for all children. To achieve this, we:

- provide training to all staff and on-hire employees on understanding diversity and how to support inclusion and cultural safety
- welcome and support participation of all children, including children with disability, children from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds, those who are unable to live at home, LGBTIQ children and Aboriginal children and their families
- have zero tolerance of racism and other forms of discrimination and take action when discrimination or exclusion is identified
- strive to reflect the diversity of our community through representation in our staff and Management Team members
- have a physical and online environment that actively celebrates diversity

Code of Conduct

Staff and volunteers are equipped with the knowledge, skills and awareness to keep children and young people safe through ongoing education and training (Standard 8).

HOBAN Recruitment has a Child Safe Code of Conduct. All staff and on-hire employees must comply with the Code of Conduct at all times. Breaches of the Code of Conduct may result in disciplinary action including termination of a person's involvement with the organisation.

All third-party contractors are also expected to abide by the Child Safe Code of Conduct, and where they are engaging with children will have to sign an agreement to comply with the code, prior to delivering any services.

HOBAN staff and on-hire employees are trained in this Child Safe Code of Conduct and must sign to confirm their understanding and agreement to abide by this Code.

Recruiting staff and volunteers

People working with children and young people are suitable and supported to reflect child safety and wellbeing values in practice (Standard 6)

HOBAN Recruitment puts child safety and wellbeing at the centre of recruitment and screening processes for staff and volunteers as outlined in the recruitment and screening policy. We only recruit staff and volunteers who are appropriate to engage with children. Members of the Management Committee must also be screened.

We require a Working with Children Check, Police Checks and referee checks for all staff and volunteers who have a role with children or have access to children's personal information. We require staff to have appropriate qualifications for their roles and check to make sure these qualifications are valid. Members of the Management Committee must hold a valid Working with Children Check and a national Police Check is required.

HOBAN staff and on-hire employees are trained in this Child Safety Policy, Child Safety procedures and must sign to confirm their understanding and agreement to abide by these policies and procedures.

Supporting staff and volunteers

Staff and volunteers are equipped with the knowledge, skills and awareness to keep children and young people safe through ongoing education and training (Standard 8).

HOBAN Recruitment is committed to ensuring that all leaders, staff and volunteers receive training to ensure they understand their responsibilities in relation to child safety and to support their engagement with children. HOBAN Recruitment assists its leaders, staff and volunteers to incorporate child safety considerations into decisions and to promote a safe environment where children are empowered to speak up about issues that affect them.

All HOBAN Recruitment Management Committee members, leaders, staff and volunteers are required to complete annual child safety training. Training will be recorded in the Child Safety Training Action Plan.

Staff and volunteers will receive supervision to support their engagement with children and for compliance with our Code of Conduct and Child Safety and Wellbeing Policy.

Issues or concerns about behaviour with children will be raised immediately and addressed in line with our Code of Conduct, complaint handling and disciplinary procedures.

Complaints and reporting

Processes for complaints and concerns are child-focused (Standard 7).

All reports of child abuse and child safety concerns will be treated seriously, whether they are made by an adult or a child and whether they are about the conduct of an adult or a child. All complaints and child safety concerns will be responded to promptly and thoroughly.

HOBAN Recruitment has a complaint handling policy that includes information about how a complaint will be responded to. Our complaints handling process will be provided for children, families and the community to know about the complaint process and the supports available to those making a complaint and those involved in the complaint process.

If a complaint includes an allegation or incident of child abuse or harm, then staff and on-hire employees at HOBAN Recruitment must report it in accordance with the complaint handling policy. HOBAN Recruitment staff are required to prioritize children's safety in any response and to report all potentially criminal conduct to Victoria Police. Under the complaint handling and disciplinary policies, staff and on-hire employees may be subject to actions to support child safety including:

- being stood down during an investigation or terminated following an investigation
- having their duties altered so they do not engage with children
- not allowing unsupervised contact with children
- removing their access to the HOBAN Recruitment IT system and facilities.

Complaints can be emailed to complaints@hoban.com.au or you can speak with your consultant.

If there is concern for the immediate safety of a child, immediately call 000.

Child Safety Person

HOBAN Recruitment has qualified persons with responsibility for responding to any child safety related complaints or concerns.

These personnel are appointed officers. If a person does not feel comfortable making a report to these appointed officers, they may report their concern to the Management Team.

Record keeping

HOBAN Recruitment is committed to making and keeping full and accurate records about all child-related complaints or safety concerns.

All child safety complaints, concerns, incidents and near misses will be recorded in the incident reporting system.

Records which may assist with the investigation of a complaint or safety concern will be identified and kept as part of the record of an investigation. Records will be kept even if an investigation does not substantiate a complaint.

We will record and keep the outcome of any investigations, and the resolution of any complaints. This includes findings made, reasons for decisions and actions taken. Records will be stored securely and kept by HOBAN Recruitment for at least 45 years.

Information sharing

HOBAN Recruitment may share relevant information to promote the safety and wellbeing of children, where it is appropriate and in their best interests. HOBAN Recruitment will keep information about complaints confidential, except where it is necessary to share information to respond properly to a complaint or to prioritize child safety. We may also need to share information about incidents or complaints with our clients,

and/or external authorities to comply with the law or to prioritize safety. More information is available in our complaint handling procedures.

Risk Management

Physical and online environments promote safety and wellbeing while minimising the opportunity for children and young people to be harmed (Standard 9).

We recognise the importance of identifying and managing risks of child harm and abuse in physical and online environments.

We conduct regular audits and risk assessments and have a risk management plan and we work with those of our clients to address the risk of child abuse and harm.. The CEO is responsible for approving the risk management plan.

Non-compliance with this policy and the Code of Conduct

HOBAN Recruitment will enforce this policy, the Code of Conduct and any other child safety and wellbeing policies. Potential breaches by anyone will be investigated and may result in restriction of duties, suspension or termination of employment or assignment or other corrective action.

Review

Implementation of the Child Safe Standards is regularly reviewed and improved (Standard 10).

HOBAN Recruitment will review all child safe practices and policies at least every two years. We also review relevant practices and policies in response to a child safety incident or 'near miss'. Findings from reviews will be reported to the relevant people involved in our organization and also if appropriate to our clients and also inform our approach to continuous improvement of our child safety practices.

Reviews are overseen by the Management Team.

Supporting documents – HOBAN Recruitment child safety and wellbeing system

Policies and procedures document how the organisation is safe for children and young people (Standard 11).

- The following policies and procedures work together to support child safety and wellbeing across all of our operations:
- Child Safety and Wellbeing Policy
- Code of Conduct
- complaint handling procedure
- recruitment and screening procedures
- disciplinary procedures
- risk management plan
- child safe training procedures.

Supporting legislation

- *Child Wellbeing and Safety Act 2005 (Vic)* (including Child Safe Standards)
- *Children, Youth and Families Act 2005 (Vic)* (including reporting to Child Protection)
- *Crimes Act 1958 (Vic)* (including Failure to Protect and Failure to Disclose offences)
- *Wrongs Act 1958 (Vic)* (including Part XIII – Organisational liability for child abuse)
- https://ccyp.vic.gov.au/resources/child-safe-standards/#CSS_ShortGuide