



CHILD SAFETY PROCESS & INCIDENT FORM

1. PURPOSE

This BHJFC Responding and Reporting Allegations of Child Abuse and Harm Procedure (**Responding and Reporting Procedure**) sets out the steps that all BHJFC members and volunteers should follow when a child or young person discloses any allegations of abuse or harm.

The Procedure should be read in conjunction with the BHJFC Child Safety and Wellbeing Policy.

2. IMMEDIATE RESPONSE

If you believe a child or young person is at imminent risk of harm or in immediate danger, report the matter directly to the Police - CALL '000' (within Australia).

3. WHAT IS TO BE REPORTED

The following types of behaviours, including observed or suspected abuse, in relation to any child or young person involved in BHJFC programs must be reported as soon as possible:

- child abuse, harm, neglect or any other form of inappropriate behaviour such as grooming or bullying to a child or young person (emotional or psychological, physical or sexual, racial or religious); and
- any breaches of the BHJFC Child Safety and Wellbeing Policy or Code of Conduct.

4. MINIMUM REQUIREMENTS WHEN RESPONDING TO DISCLOSURES OF CHILD ABUSE OR HARM

When a disclosure of (suspected) child abuse or harm is made, the following points should be considered:

LISTEN	REASSURE	RESPECT
DO		DO NOT
✓ Actively listen to the child or young person		Ask leading questions
✓ Reassure the child or young person that they have done the correct thing by reporting		Make your own judgement or assessment
✓ Respect the child or young person may only reveal some details		Press for detail, a minimal account will suffice
✓ Let the child or young person use their own words in their own time - be patient		Make promises you cannot keep
✓ Ask open ended questions		Make your own enquiries/investigations in relation to the allegations made
✓ Explain to the child or young person that other people may need to be told		Share information with others <i>*Excl. Police, Child Protection, HJFC Child Safety Officer</i>

5. HOW TO MAKE A REPORT & OBLIGATIONS

Child safety and wellbeing is everybody's responsibility at BHJFC and any allegations of child abuse and other inappropriate behaviour in relation to a child or young person should be reported as soon as possible.



Reporting Person's Obligations

- If the child or young person is in imminent risk of harm or immediate danger, the reporting person is required to report the situation directly to the police - CALL '000'.
- If it is suspected that a child or young person may be abused, harmed or neglected, advise the BHIJFC Child Safety Officer or contact Child Protection directly for further advice.
- Regardless of whether the matter is reported to the police, it is important that the reporting person contacts the BHIJFC Child Safety Officer as soon as possible.
- If the allegation relates to a person whom this policy applies, report the matter to the BHIJFC Child Safety Officer.
- When practical, the reporting person must make a written report to the BHIJFC Child Safety Officer. An incident reporting form can be found at Appendix 1.
- Any BHIJFC member or volunteer retains the right to report directly to relevant authorities, such as police or child protection, any concerns they may have in relation to the safety and welfare of a child or young person, regardless of whether or not they have also reported the matter internally.

6. WHAT HAPPENS TO A REPORT

The BHIJFC Child Safety Officer will:

- receive the report and the incident form;
- contact the reporting person;
- conduct an assessment of the disclosed information;
- ensure adequate support services are provided to all relevant persons;
- if allegations relate to a member of BHIJFC, that person may be redeployed to a position where there is no unsupervised contact with children or suspended until any investigations have been concluded.
- notify the Police or Child Protection if criminality has been identified, pursuant to mandatory reporting compliance.

Mandatory Reporting Provisions

If you are a mandatory reporter* (see section 9) under the *Children, Youth and Families Act 2005 (Vic)*, report matters where you have a reasonable belief* that a child or young person has suffered, or is likely to suffer, significant harm from physical or sexual abuse and their parent/guardian has not protected, or is unlikely to protect the child from harm of that type to the Department of Family, Fairness & Housing (DFFH).

In Victoria, there are also other laws such as Failure to Disclose an Offence* which all adults need to be aware of should they have a reasonable belief that a child may be a victim or is likely to be a victim of abuse or harm.



7. CONFIDENTIALITY & PRIVACY

BHFJC maintains the confidentiality and privacy of all concerned (including the alleged perpetrator), except if doing so would compromise the welfare of the child or young person and/or investigation of the allegation.

The BHFJC President and Child Safety Officer will be responsible for the authorisation of the disclosure and sharing of any information relating to any incident reported as outlined in this procedure. The BHFJC President is the only person authorised to close a case and will ensure all relevant persons have been informed of the outcome.

8. MONITORING

All reports recorded and incident data will be reviewed by BHFJC annually as part of the Club's commitment to continuous improvement in child safety practices.

9. DEFINITIONS AND CONTACT NUMBERS

* **Reasonable belief** – a reasonable person in the same position would have formed the same belief on the same grounds.

* **Mandatory Reporters** under *the Children, Youth and Families Act 2005 (Vic)* are:

- registered medical practitioners
- nurses
- midwives
- registered teachers and early childhood teachers
- school principals
- school counsellors
- police officers
- out of home care workers (excluding voluntary foster and kinship carers)
- early childhood workers
- youth justice workers
- registered psychologists
- people in religious ministry.

Sexual Abuse of persons under 16 years – whilst “kids” or “Children and Young People” are in all other circumstances defined as under 18 years of age in Victoria, this age is different because the legal age of consent to sexual behaviour in Victoria is 16 years of age.



“Child sexual assault” in Victoria is therefore a crime against children under the age of 16 years of age and must be reported to POLICE, even if it is not a situation of “immediate danger” or a “life threatening situation”.

Failure to Disclose Offence - In Victoria, ALL adults who have a reasonable belief that child sexual abuse of a child under 16 years, by an adult, has occurred or is likely to occur MUST report that belief to police.

How do I make a report? In Victoria, reports to child protection must be made by phone.

To make a report, you should contact the child protection intake service covering the local government area (LGA) where the child normally resides.

Telephone numbers to make a report to DFFH during business hours (8.45am -5.00pm), Monday to Friday, are listed below.

North Division intake: 1300 664 977

South Division intake: 1300 655 795

East Division intake: 1300 360 391

West Division intake - metropolitan: 1300 664 977

West Division intake - rural and regional: 1800 075 599

To report concerns about the immediate safety of a child outside of normal business hours, you should contact the **After-Hours Child Protection Emergency Service on 13 12 78**.

APPENDIX 1

[Click here to access our CONFIDENTIAL INCIDENT FORM](#)