
CHILD PROTECTION

Effective 1 November 2019



POLICY DOCUMENT – CHILD PROTECTION

Introduction

1. Uniting Venues SA (UVSA) is committed to the protection of all staff and participants from physical and emotional harm. It is recognized that children especially need to be protected due to their potential vulnerability. This may be due to lack of life experience, trust/distrust of adults, physical size and strength, power imbalance between children and adults.
2. It is the goal of UVSA to provide children with a positive, enjoyable group living experience, with access to a wide range of interesting and challenging activities. The staff and management of UVSA regard it as their duty to ensure a child's emotional and physical safety at all times. All guests have the right to a safe and caring environment, which promotes learning, personal growth and positive self-esteem.
3. Where practicable, user groups will be reminded of their special responsibilities in a campsite setting. The whole camp experience is managed in accordance with the principles and practices of the NARTA accreditation program, and in line with the requirements of relevant authorities.
4. Through staff training programs, UVSA staff and volunteers are briefed to ensure that they understand their obligations to respect the rights and privacy of all guests, and to implement this policy of child protection.

Staff Selection and Training

5. All UVSA staff and volunteers undergo relevant screening (Working With Children Check and General Employment Probity) at the time of their appointment. Should this check reveal any convictions for child abuse behaviour, the person will not be employed or have their appointment terminated. Any other convictions will be considered according to the position being filled and their relevance to the current situation. All staff are provided with a copy of the policy and the commencement of their appointment.
6. Child protection issues are discussed at staff meetings as appropriate. Staff are encouraged to be an active part of reviewing the policies as well as developing and ensuring a safe environment for all guests.
7. Staff are reminded of this child protection policy at least annually. All staff attend Reporting Child Abuse and Neglect (safe environments – through their eyes) training.

How Staff are Expected to Relate to Guests

8. **Physical Contact.** UVSA has the following policy regarding touching:
 - a. Any touching must be with the child's permission, for example, ask, "May I help you off the log?"
 - b. Touching should be in the open and not secretive, with other people around and not especially focussed on one person.
 - c. Touching should only ever be to support or respond to a need of the child and NEVER to meet the needs of an adult.
 - d. Any touching must avoid body areas such as breasts, buttocks and the groin.
9. **Personal Privacy.** Children are entitled to privacy in personal matters and UVSA staff must respect this. If a UVSA staff member believes there is evidence of a problem or disclosure of abuse, it is the staff member's responsibility to report this - see 'responsibility' of staff' below.

10. **Sleeping, Showering and Toilet Privacy.** UVSA has the following policy regarding sleeping and showering:

- a. Boys and girls have separate sleeping, showering and toilet facilities.
- b. Adults with supervisory roles in these areas must respect the children's privacy, and knock or call out to let them know that they are entering the facility.
- c. Cleaning of areas such as toilets and showers is scheduled to be done at off-peak times when guests are less likely to be using the facilities.
- d. When cleaning is being carried out a sign to that effect is displayed at the entrance.

11. **Avoiding compromising situations.** UVSA staff must avoid placing themselves or guests in situations where they can be compromised.

- a. Avoid being alone with a guest; stay in view of others.
- b. Knock and ask permission to enter sleeping or private areas.
- c. Use staff toilet only.
- d. Treat all guests with the same level of friendliness and courtesy.
- e. Seek the guest's permission before touching or adjusting equipment they are wearing.
- f. Avoid situations that cause embarrassment or humiliation to guests.
- g. Avoid sexual talk or behave in a way that promotes promiscuity or the acceptance of sexually explicit material.
- h. Avoid use of social media to be-friend or friend request a guest.

12. **Administering First Aid.** If UVSA staff are required to render first aid or emergency treatment:

- a. They will involve another staff member of the same sex as any child requiring attention whenever possible. Otherwise they will endeavour to have another person present.
- b. Unless absolutely necessary, they will leave examination of private areas to health professionals.
- c. They will not force children to remove clothing for an examination
- d. They will record their actions in accordance with first aid recording procedures
- e. Refer to the Group Leader with issues of guests requiring medication.

13. **Favouritism and exclusiveness.** There is no place for 'favourites' at camp. In most instances, the showing of favouritism to a child or small group of children fosters the needs of the adult, not the child. It can create emotional dependence on the adult and isolate the child from peers. When a child needs a little extra attention, it must be given openly and carried out in such a way that no secretiveness or exclusivity is perceived by the child or others.

14. **Bullying and Harassment.** Bullying is an act of aggression causing embarrassment, pain or discomfort to another. It can take many forms - physical, verbal, gesture, victimisation, extortion, exclusion or offensive notes/graffiti etc. Forms of harassment, such as those of a sexual or racial nature, are also unwanted behaviour directed towards an individual. This sort of behaviour should not be ignored, and staff should take appropriate action. For example, reporting incidents to the Group Leader, removing occasions for bullying by conducting well organised activities, or simply by being vigilant. Bullying and harassment must always be treated seriously - it is important to be consistent and assertive in dealing with all forms of bullying.

Responsibility of Staff

15. Any incident, complaint or concern regarding child safety at UVSA must be taken seriously. The Manager will act to comply with State law and / or implement appropriate action.

Reporting Child Abuse

16. UVSA is committed to reporting any evidence or disclosure of child abuse to the Child Abuse Report Line 131 478.