

# **PRISON FELLOWSHIP AUSTRALIA**

## **POLICY ON CHILD SAFETY**

Endorsed by the Board of Prison Fellowship Australia on 14 February 2019

### **1. INTRODUCTION**

- 1.1 This policy is designed to inform Prison Fellowship Australia (“PFA”) and its staff and volunteers about the importance of providing a safe and friendly environment for the children with which it has contact, and about the relevant procedures that PFA has adopted.
- 1.2 The activities of PFA include some that provide support to the families of inmates and ex-inmates. Given its involvement in these activities and operations, PFA is committed to providing a child-safe and child-friendly environment. This policy will apply to all of PFA’s activities and operations, at all times.
- 1.3 PFA has adopted ChildSafe as the framework for this policy.
- 1.4 This policy and ChildSafe must be followed by every person involved in PFA’s activities and operations, whether as PFA staff or as a PFA volunteer.
- 1.5 For any party that is engaged by PFA to undertake, on its behalf, PFA activities or operations that involve contact with children (e.g. third parties assisting with PFA’s “Angel Tree” program, or those providing services associated with PFA’s “Camp For Kids” program), the following will apply:
  - (a) the person making that engagement, being either PFA staff or a PFA volunteer, will first satisfy himself / herself that that other party has implemented a child safety policy with requirements and procedures equivalent to those set forth in this policy;
  - (b) the person coordinating that activity or operation on the other party’s behalf is authorised under that party’s relevant child safety policy to conduct that activity or operation and has a valid Mandated Registration; and
  - (c) the person coordinating that activity or operation on that party’s behalf has provided written confirmation that each other person that will be involved in the relevant activity or operation will be required to:
    - (i) have a valid Mandated Registration; and
    - (ii) comply with that party’s child safety policy.
- 1.6 PFA will publish this policy on its website, for the information of its other stakeholders.

## 2. DEFINITIONS

**Abuse** means abuse inflicted upon, or directed towards, a child.

**Adult** means a person over the age of seventeen years.

**Child** means a person under the age of eighteen years and **children** has a corresponding meaning.

**ChildSafe** means the ChildSafe SP3 child safety management system.

**PFA staff** means a person employed by PFA in a paid position.

**PFA volunteer** means a person appointed by PFA as a volunteer.

**Mandated Registration** means a formal registration indicating that a person meets the relevant State or Territory's legal requirements to work with children (e.g. "Working With Vulnerable People" card, "Blue Card" or Department for Communities and Social Inclusion screening).

**State Council** means the company members of PFA within a particular State or Territory. State Councils are also referred to as State Advisory Councils.

## 3. RESPONSIBLE PARTIES

- 3.1 PFA's Board ("the Board", comprising the Directors) accepts ultimate responsibility for ensuring that PFA provides a safe and friendly environment for the children with which it has contact.
- 3.2 The Risk Management Officer is appointed by the Board to oversee the implementation of this policy and of ChildSafe within PFA. The Risk Management Officer is required to report to the Board on all matters relevant to this policy, no less frequently than at each quarterly meeting of the Board.
- 3.3 The Risk Management Officer will ensure that, within each State and Territory, each of PFA's activities and operations that involve children is subject to the supervision of a ChildSafe Coordinator, who may be PFA staff or a PFA volunteer. Each ChildSafe Coordinator is responsible for the implementation of ChildSafe in their relevant State or Territory. Each ChildSafe coordinator is required to report to the Risk Management Officer on all matters relevant to this policy within their State or Territory, no less frequently than once per month.
- 3.4 For each and every one of PFA's activities or operations that involves contact with children, a Team Leader will be appointed by the relevant ChildSafe Coordinator. The Team Leader may be PFA staff or a PFA volunteer. The Team Leader is responsible for ensuring that the relevant Team Members, whether PFA staff or PFA volunteers, are familiar with and understand their responsibilities under this policy and that they operate in accordance with this policy.

- 3.5 The individuals appointed to each of the following roles to which this Section 2 refers are identified by name at Item 1 of Schedule 1:
- (a) Risk Management Officer; and
  - (b) ChildSafe Coordinator.
- 3.6 The ChildSafe Coordinator in each State or Territory will maintain a register of Team Leaders and Team Members in that State or Territory, along with identification numbers and expiry dates for all relevant registrations, including Mandated Registrations, for each of them.

#### **4. SCREENING**

- 4.1 No person who has been charged with a violent offence or with a sexually-related offence (whether convicted or not):
- (a) can be involved in any of PFA's activities or operations that includes contact with children;
  - (b) can be permitted to participate in any of PFA's activities or operations that is located adjacent to any other PFA activity or operation that includes contact with children; or
  - (c) can be permitted or able to access personal information about PFA's child clients.
- 4.2 Each person occupying any one or more of the following roles must have a valid Mandated Registration:
- (a) Director;
  - (b) PFA staff;
  - (c) PFA volunteer participating in PFA activities or operations that involve contact with children; and
  - (d) member of State Council.
- 4.2 Before any person is appointed to any of the roles to which Section 4.1 refers, the person making that appointment must satisfy themselves of the suitability of the proposed appointee for the proposed role. In doing so, the person making that appointment must consult with no less than two referees, including any referees nominated as such by the proposed appointee.

## **5. TRAINING**

- 5.1 Each person occupying one or more of the following roles must receive relevant training, consistent with ChildSafe, no less frequently than once every three years:
- (a) Risk Management Officer;
  - (b) ChildSafe Coordinator;
  - (c) Team Leader; and
  - (d) Team Member.
- 5.2 The Risk Management Officer must maintain a register of all PFA staff and all PFA volunteers that have received training under this policy, including the role occupied by that person at that time, the type of training, the date of training and the relevant expiry date for that training.
- 5.3 The Risk Management Officer will make the relevant register available to any party conducting an audit pursuant to ChildSafe.

## **6. ACCOUNTABILITY**

- 6.1 Every person, whether PFA staff or a PFA volunteer, that is involved in PFA activities or operations that include contact with children is accountable to someone else within PFA:
- (a) the Risk Management Officer is accountable to the Board;
  - (b) each ChildSafe Coordinator is accountable to the Risk Management Officer;
  - (c) each Team Leader is accountable to the relevant ChildSafe Coordinator; and
  - (d) each Team Member is accountable to the relevant Team Leader.
- 6.2 No PFA activity or operation that involves contact with children may commence unless “permission to proceed” has been issued by the relevant ChildSafe Coordinator. In this context, “permission to proceed” has the meaning given to it under ChildSafe.

## **7. GENERAL RULES FOR CONDUCT**

- 7.1 The care and safety of children is to be treated as paramount by every person involved in PFA activities or operations.
- 7.2 Every person involved in PFA activities or operations that include contact with children must behave in accordance with the “code of practice”. In this context, “code of practice” has the meaning given to it under ChildSafe.
- 7.3 Any failure to comply with the code of practice under ChildSafe will be disciplined in accordance with the disciplinary procedure to which Schedule 1 refers.
- 7.4 PFA has strict protocols for contact with the media by PFA staff and PFA volunteers. These protocols are set out in PFA’s Media Communications Policy. No PFA staff or PFA volunteer may communicate with the media in any form, unless authorised to do so under PFA’s Media Communications Policy.

## **8. INCIDENT REPORTING**

- 8.1 Allegations of abuse of a child are very serious. Each such allegation must be handled with a high degree of care, in accordance with this Section 8 and, in the case of alleged sexual abuse, in accordance with PFA's policy "Dealing with allegations of inappropriate sexual conduct".
- 8.2 If a child discloses an incident of abuse, then that disclosure is to be believed and reported in accordance with the remainder of this Section 8.
- 8.3 Any incident of abuse and any alleged incident of abuse must be reported in accordance with the Incident Reporting Procedure to which Schedule 1 refers.
- 8.4 Any PFA staff and any PFA volunteer that is accused of abuse under this Section 8 will be required to stand down immediately from involvement in PFA activities or operations that include contact with children, until an investigation under Section 9 is concluded. If, and only if, an investigation under Section 9 concludes that there has been no abuse by that person and that there is no reason to suspect a future possibility of abuse by that person, then that person may be reinstated to involvement in those PFA activities or operations.

## **9. INVESTIGATION**

- 9.1 For the purposes of this Section 9, "reviewers" means:
- (a) in the case of an incident involving the Risk Management Officer, the Chairman of the Board and one other Director;
  - (b) in the case of an incident involving a ChildSafe Coordinator, the Risk Management Officer and the relevant Director; and
  - (c) in any other case, the Risk Management Officer and the relevant ChildSafe Coordinator.
- 9.2 The reviewers will ensure that appropriate measures are implemented immediately to ensure the safety of children:
- (a) during the conduct of the review to which Section 9.3 refers;
  - (b) during the conduct of any investigation that might follow that review; and
  - (c) thereafter.
- 9.3 Each incident that is reported in accordance with Section 8.3 will be reviewed by the relevant reviewers.

- 9.4 The reviewers will determine either:
- (a) that no abuse has occurred and that no further action, other than pastoral care for the relevant parties, is required;
  - (b) that abuse has occurred and that no further investigation is required;
  - (c) that abuse has occurred and that further investigation is required; or
  - (d) that the reviewers are not able to conclude whether or not abuse has occurred, in which case further investigation is required.
- 9.5 Where it is determined that further investigation is required, the incident will be referred for investigation to a person suitably qualified to conduct an investigation into abuse (“the investigator”).
- 9.6 The investigator will be required to conduct the investigation in accordance with contemporary best practice and to report the outcomes of the investigation to the reviewers.
- 9.7 The report to which Section 9.6 refers is to be in writing and to include:
- (a) the investigator’s conclusions about the incident, including whether or not abuse has occurred;
  - (b) a summary of the information used by the investigator to reach those conclusions;
  - (c) responses, whether recommended or mandated, to be implemented by PFA; and
  - (d) any suggested improvements to this policy or to the related procedures set out in Schedule 1 or to any other of PFA’s policies.
- 9.8 Upon making a determination under Section 9.4(a) or, otherwise, upon receipt of a report under Section 9.7, the reviewers will determine and implement:
- (a) responses to the incident; and
  - (b) any amendments to this policy or to the related procedures set out in Schedule 1 or to any other of PFA’s policies.

## **10. RECORD KEEPING**

PFA will collect and maintain appropriate personal information about children with whom it has contact through PFA activities or operations. All such personal information will be collected and maintained in accordance with PFA’s Privacy and Personal Information Policy.

## **11. PROCEDURES AND OTHER DOCUMENTS**

11.1 Procedures for the practical implementation of this policy are set out in Schedule 1.

11.2 For the avoidance of doubt, Schedule 1 and the procedures set out within it form part of this policy.

11.3 Other documents relevant to this policy are listed in Schedule 1.

**12. REVIEW**

- 12.1 This policy is to be reviewed no less frequently than once every three years.
- 12.2 Any variation to this policy, other than to Schedule 1, must be endorsed by the Board.
- 12.3 Any variation to Schedule 1 must be endorsed by the Risk Management Officer and advised to the Board.at the Board's next occurring quarterly meeting.

## **SCHEDULE 1**

### **1. Risk Management Officer**

The Risk Management Officer under PFA’s Child Safety Policy (“this policy”) is the General Manager, Glen Fairweather.

### **2. ChildSafe Coordinators**

The ChildSafe Coordinators in each State under this policy are as follows.

New South Wales (including Australian Capital Territory)	Julia Kim
Queensland	Glenise Dagwell
South Australia (including Northern Territory)	Ian Townsend
Tasmania	Helen Ridley
Victoria	Richard Feeney
Western Australia	Sue Oliver

### **3. Related policies and documents**

#### **3.1 Related policies**

PFA Policy on Dealing with Allegations of Inappropriate Sexual Conduct

PFA Policy on Grievances

PFA Policy on Privacy and Personal Information

#### **3.2 Related documents**

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### **4. Protocols, procedures, documents and forms**

All protocols, procedures, documents and forms relevant to this policy that are not set out in this policy are to be as set out in the ChildSafe SP3 Safety Management System.