

CHILD SAFE POLICY

Version	4.0
Approved by Board on	11 September 2024
Scheduled review date	September 2026 or as required

INTRODUCTION

The Mathematical Association of Victoria is committed to promoting and protecting the interests, safety and wellbeing of children. We have zero tolerance for child abuse. MAV is committed to providing a child safe environment where children and young people are safe and feel safe, and their voices are heard, and they have agency about decisions that affect their lives.

Everyone working at The Mathematical Association of Victoria is responsible for the care and protection of children and reporting information about child abuse.

MAV recognises its responsibility and is committed to child safety, protecting children/young people from harm or maltreatment, being a child safe organisation, and promoting the safety, participation and empowerment of children and younger people with a disability; from culturally and/or linguistically diverse backgrounds; and Aboriginal children and/or communities.

This policy was written to demonstrate the strong commitment of the Board, staff and volunteers to child safety, and to provide an outline of the policies and practices we have developed to keep everyone safe from any harm, including abuse.

PURPOSE

The purpose of this policy is:

1. To clearly demonstrate the organisations' commitment to the safety and wellbeing of children and young people.
2. To facilitate the prevention of child abuse occurring within The Mathematical Association of Victoria across all activities the organisation is involved in.
3. To guide the development and maintenance of best practice child safety systems and processes for MAV for in-person and online environments.
4. Inform all leaders, staff and volunteers, contractors and other stakeholders of their obligations to act ethically towards children and their roles and responsibilities in ensuring child safety and wellbeing.
5. To ensure that all parties are aware of their responsibilities for identifying possible occasions for child abuse and for establishing controls and procedures for preventing such abuse and/or detecting such abuse when it occurs.
6. To provide guidance to staff/volunteers/contractors as to action that should be taken where they suspect any abuse within or outside of the organisation.
7. To provide assurance that any and all suspected abuse will be reported and investigated.

SCOPE:

Child protection is a shared responsibility between The Mathematical Association of Victoria, all:

- employees, workers, contractors, licensees or leases, service providers, volunteers (including committee and Board members), customers and visitors, and partner organisations or people acting on behalf of MAV;
- and members of the Mathematical Association of Victoria community where there is connection to MAV or when attending MAV events or premises.

For the purposes of this policy a child/young person is any person under the age of 18. Younger person, young person and children are other terms used to refer to anyone under the age of 18.

POLICY

PRINCIPLES

1. MAV recognises its responsibility and is committed to child safety, protecting children/young people from harm and being a child safe organisation. MAV is committed to ensuring that child safety and wellbeing is embedded in organisational leadership, governance and culture and welcomes children/young people as part of our community and commits to their participation and empowerment.
2. MAV does not tolerate any form of child abuse, maltreatment or neglect. We recognise that all children/young people have a right to be kept safe from harm.
3. MAV commits to equipping the MAV community with the skills and knowledge to provide young people with safe environments, both physical and online, to understand the responsibilities and boundaries of their roles and respond to any child safety concerns.
4. MAV commits to engaging with and openly communicating with families and communities when applicable in relation to organisational approaches, and wherever possible, involving families in the promotion child safety and wellbeing.
5. All reports will be treated seriously, whether they are made by an adult or a child.
6. MAV approaches complaints handling and reporting responsibilities through a child-focused lens, prioritising the rights of children/young people. The following principles govern this approach:
 - a. A child making a disclosure is always to be believed
 - b. The best interests of children are paramount.
 - c. Complaints handling and reporting systems are accessible and recognise the diverse needs of children and their families
 - d. Complaints are dealt with thoroughly and promptly
 - e. Complaints relating to children/young people will be managed within the limits of confidentiality, with information shared on a strict needs-to-know basis.
7. MAV is committed to taking proactive preventative measures in the recruitment, screening, and training of staff to enhance child safety, to include links to MAV's Statement of Commitment to Child Safety in position descriptions, advertisements, and contracts.
8. Child abuse, child harm, risk of harm and/or neglect may occur in the context of an MAV activity or occur external to MAV, for example, at home or in a recreational environment. MAV expects all staff to be alert to child abuse, risk of harm and neglect in all contexts and report concerns in accordance with this document and the relevant procedures.
9. MAV is committed to the universal requirement for all staff, volunteers and other parties as required, for either a valid Working With Children Check (WWC), or current Victorian Institute of Teaching (VIT) registration or if required a Police Check for staff recruitment.

10. MAV will respect and protect the cultural safety of children/young people who are Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander and will provide a safe environment for children and younger people with a disability; from culturally and/or linguistically diverse backgrounds; those who are unable to live at home; and lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender and intersex children and young people.
11. MAV is committed to protecting the privacy of children/young people in accordance with the [Privacy Policy](#).
12. MAV will empower children/young people, employees, volunteers and third parties to speak up and escalate any matters where they feel concerned about the safety of a child/young person in in-person and online environments.
13. MAV is committed to providing a best practice response if a risk, concern, or report arises regarding the safety or wellbeing of a child/young person. All allegations and safety concerns about children will be taken seriously and with sensitivity in line with our Child Safe Reporting procedures.
14. MAV is committed to reviewing any systemic issues which may be contributing to or hindering MAV from being safe for children/young people.
15. MAV will monitor and review risks that may occur in physical and online environments regularly, including after incidents, near misses or complaints.

Responsibilities

1. The **Board** of The Mathematical Association of Victoria has ultimate responsibility for the detection and prevention of child abuse and is responsible for ensuring that appropriate and effective internal control systems are in place. The Board is also responsible for ensuring that appropriate policies and procedures and a Child Protection Code of Conduct are in place.
2. All members of the MAV community are responsible for prioritising the assessment and mitigation of risks to child safety in their day-to-day roles and in the planning and delivery of special events and activities.
3. All MAV staff, volunteers or other stakeholders must immediately report any concerns or reports of child abuse or maltreatment or non-compliance with this policy or the Code of Conduct in accordance with our procedures. Failure to comply with this obligation may constitute a criminal offence and result in serious penalties.
4. The **CEO** of The Mathematical Association of Victoria is responsible for:
 - a. Dealing with and investigating reports of child abuse;
 - b. Maintaining a central registry of instances of reportable conduct matters.
 - c. Ensuring that all staff, contractors, and volunteers are aware of relevant laws, organisational policies and procedures, and the organisation's Code of Conduct;
 - d. Ensuring that all adults within The Mathematical Association of Victoria community are aware of their obligation to report suspected sexual abuse of a child in accordance with these policies and procedures;
 - e. Ensuring that all staff, contractors and volunteers are aware of their obligation to observe the Code of Conduct (particularly as it relates to child safety);
 - f. Providing support for staff, contractors and volunteers in undertaking their child protection responsibilities.
 - g. Ensuring a valid WWC or VIT registration is maintained by staff, volunteers including committee and Board members.
 - h. Ensuring appropriate and thorough recruitment and screening processes, and staff and volunteer induction, training and support.

5. The Executive Committee with the CEO is responsible for:
 - a. regularly reviewing risks as part of its role in managing the risk register. This includes improving child safety practices and preparing reports on the findings of relevant reviews to staff and volunteers, community and families, and children and young people.
6. All **managers and staff** must ensure that they:
 - a. Promote child safety at all times;
 - b. Assess the risk of child abuse within their area of control and eradicate / minimise any risk to the extent possible;
 - c. Educate employees about the prevention and detection of child abuse; and
 - d. Facilitate the reporting of any inappropriate behaviour or suspected abusive activities.
 - e. Ensure a valid WWC or VIT registration is maintained by contractors, consultants or other parties they engage if applicable.
7. All **staff/volunteers/contractors** share in the responsibility for the prevention and detection of child abuse, and must:
 - a. Familiarize themselves with the types of abuse that might occur within their area of responsibility and be alert for any indications of such conduct.
 - b. Familiarise themselves with the relevant laws, the Code of Conduct, and The Mathematical Association of Victoria 's policy and procedures in relation to child protection, and comply with all requirements;
 - c. Prepare and undertake a risk assessment, and implementing appropriate risk mitigation strategies for programs they are responsible for that involve children.
 - d. Report any reasonable belief that a child's safety is at risk to the relevant authorities (such as the police and / or the state-based child protection service) and fulfil their obligations as mandatory reporters;
 - e. Report any suspicion that a child's safety may be at risk to their supervisor (or, if their supervisor is involved in the suspicion, to a responsible person in the organisation); and
 - f. Provide an environment that is supportive of all children's emotional and physical safety.

Responding and Reporting

1. MAV fosters an organisational culture, supported by clear policy, procedure and training, where all members of our community are confident and knowledgeable to provide an appropriate first response and to raise child safety concerns.
2. The types of complaints or concerning behaviours that require reporting to the Safer Community team may include:
 - a. A child/young person stating that they or someone they know has been abused.
 - b. Suspicions or beliefs that a child has suffered or is at risk of harm or maltreatment from an adult or a peer (includes unwanted or harmful sexualised behaviour between children).
 - c. Inappropriate relationships developing between children and adults in the MAV community.
 - d. A staff, or volunteers or other stakeholders own feeling of discomfort about a relationship between a child and an adult in the MAV community.
 - e. Any other suspected or actual breach of this [Child Safe Policy](#), [Child Safe Code of Conduct](#), legislation or related policy, procedure or practice related to the safety and wellbeing of children/young people.
3. Where historical abuse allegations are made which pertain to MAV, the organisation will co-operate fully with police or other statutory body investigations. RMIT will also review its current policies and procedures in light of the findings of historical abuse investigations, to determine if there is learning that may strengthen protective approaches.

RELATED ORGANISATIONAL POLICIES AND PROCEDURES

This policy should be read in conjunction with the Child safe Statement of Commitment, Child Safe Code of Conduct and Child Safe Reporting Procedure. Other relevant policies and procedures are linked throughout this document.

RELEVANT LEGISLATION AND STANDARDS

This policy [supports](#) MAV's compliance obligations regarding:

- a. [National Principles for Child Safe Organisations](#)
- b. [Victorian Child Safe Standards \(2022\)](#)
- c. [Victorian Charter of Human Rights and Responsibilities](#)
- d. [Reportable Conduct Scheme](#)
- h. [Working with Children Act 2005 \(Vic\)](#)

DEFINITIONS

Adult: A person 18 years of age and older

Child: A child/young person under the age of 18 years

Child abuse: An act or acts which endangers a child's health, wellbeing and/or development. It can be a single event or a series of events. It includes:

- cumulative harm
- emotional or physical abuse
- exposure to family violence
- neglect or negligent treatment
- grooming
- commercial (e.g. for financial gain)
- sexual abuse and sexual exploitation (sexual harm)
- multi-dimensional har
- and includes any actions that results in actual or potential harm to a child.

Child sexual assault/abuse is any act which exposes a child to, or involves a child in, sexual processes beyond his or her understanding or contrary to accepted community standards. Sexually abusive behaviours can include the fondling of genitals, masturbation, oral sex, vaginal or anal penetration by a penis, finger or any other object, fondling of breasts, voyeurism, exhibitionism, and exposing the child to or involving the child in pornography. It includes child grooming, which refers to actions deliberately undertaken with the aim of befriending and establishing an emotional connection with a child to lower the child's inhibitions in preparation for sexual activity with the child.

Historical abuse: Historical sexual abuse is a term used to describe child and/or adult sexual abuse that has happened in the past. This could mean months, years or decades ago.

Authorisation

The Mathematical Association of Victoria



President: Kerry Sandford

CHILD PROTECTION PROCEDURES

EMPLOYMENT OF NEW PERSONNEL

The Mathematical Association of Victoria undertakes a comprehensive recruitment and screening process for all workers and volunteers which aims to:

- Promote and protect the safety of all children under the care of the organisation;
- Identify the safest and most suitable people who share The Mathematical Association of Victoria's values and commitment to protect children; and
- Prevent a person from working at The Mathematical Association of Victoria if they pose a risk to children – or if have any prior convictions relating to violent or sexually related offences.

The Mathematical Association of Victoria requires all workers/volunteers to pass through the organisation's recruitment and screening processes prior to commencing their engagement.

For Education Consultants who work in schools and with students either employed as staff or as contractors or volunteers on behalf of the Mathematical Association of Victoria a must be registered with the Victorian Institute of Teaching.

The Mathematical Association of Victoria may require applicants to provide a police check in accordance with the law and as appropriate, before they commence working at The Mathematical Association of Victoria and during their time with The Mathematical Association of Victoria at regular intervals.

The Mathematical Association of Victoria will undertake thorough reference and other checks as per the internal procedure, this will include aspects as required by MAV's insurer in regards to its sexual harassment (Betrayal of Trust) insurance policy as follows:

- inquiring with two referees as to the candidates suitability for the role or position;
- Inquiring with the candidates previous posting or employment as to the candidates suitability for the role or position;
- Inquiring of the candidate whether they have ever been convicted or investigated for sexual abuse, assault or a sexual offence of any kind;
- Asking the candidate to sign an authority allowing MAV to conduct a search to determine whether they have a criminal record legislation

Once engaged, workers/volunteers must review and acknowledge their understanding of this Policy.

Advertising:

- All positions are advertised with the MAV's Statement of Commitment to Child Safety.
- Positions will clearly state the responsibilities with regard to children.
- Prerequisite criteria will be listed for positions, for example: National Police Check, Working with Children Check, training and qualifications.
- Advertised positions will state that referee checks will be performed for shortlisted candidates.

WORKING WITH CHILDREN ONLINE AND PHYSICAL ENVIRONMENTS

- Staff and volunteers are required to identify and mitigate risks in online and physical environments without compromising a child's right to privacy, access to information, social connections and learning opportunities.
- The online environment is used in accordance with the organisation's Code of Conduct and Child Safety and Wellbeing Policy and practices.
- Risk management plans are developed for all events that involve children, and these consider risks posed by the organisational setting, activities and the physical environment.
- Depending on the nature of their activities, third parties may or may not be subject to the Standards. When MAV contract facilities and services from third parties such as universities or other organisations, we staff must undertake a risk assessment and have procurement policies that ensure the safety of children and young people.
- MAV requires the 2 person rule be followed, where another adult is always present when you are working with children where feasible.
- MAV will not place a new employee in a position of trust in the first 6 months of their employment.

Some factors to consider about each activity are:

- the physical and online environments of the setting and the facilities
- how often and for how long the activity occurs
- whether there is physical contact between the child and adult
- whether interactions can result in an emotional dependence on adults
- the adequacy of supervision
- whether the activity requires overnight accommodation without parents or carers.

Online environments

Online services for children continue to grow. The COVID-19 pandemic has seen many organisations shift parts of their service or activities to remote or online environments through video conferences, online forums, social media or over the phone. Children may also bring their own technology (like smartphones) to organisations.

Online technologies are constantly changing. Children are often ahead of parents, carers and staff in adapting to these changes.

The [eSafety Commissioner](#) has information about popular and emerging online technologies and ways to manage online risks. Staff using online environments with children are encouraged to educate themselves so they can properly prevent and reduce risks to children.

Risks to the safety and wellbeing of children in online environments from both adults and children include:

- opportunities for unwanted or unsupervised contact with children
- opportunities for grooming
- cyberbullying and abuse such as 'trolling'
- risks of exposure to inappropriate, illicit or explicit content or imagery
- access to content that is not age-appropriate

- sharing personal information that can be used later to cause harm to a child, including requesting or sending images
- possible breaches of privacy, including sharing or acquiring without permission or stealing personal or sensitive information or personal images
- people not connected to the organisation viewing online activities, or accessing a child's computer to obtain information about children (for example, names or email addresses)
- scams targeting children.

Responding to and managing online risks

- Risk management plans must be produced for all online events that involve children.
- When MAV is holding online events, depending on the level of risk posed, MAV will take actions to prevent or reduce risks of child abuse or harm, and may include:
 - Reviewing the online platform privacy setting to ensure they are appropriate – such as the use of waiting rooms, online chat rooms.
 - When using virtual 'break out rooms', each room must be appropriately supervised.
 - If appropriate, communicate online safety plans to parents and teachers
 - Establishing a moderator role to oversee interactions for safety.
 - Communicate clear expectations for behaviour in online settings to children.
 - Educate children about how to manage privacy settings, block unwanted communications and report online abuse.
 - Inform children about the appropriateness of sharing personal information and images.
 - Consider how MAV safeguards the security of information and documentation about children shared online
 - Consider whether it is appropriate to record an online session, and if so provide appropriate warnings, and have the video edited to remove children's names and images where possible.
 - In learning management systems, have online safety information clearly displayed and available for children to access.
- Staff, volunteers, parents, carers and children at online events are to be provided with information about safety and risks, such as expected behaviours, and possible issues if relevant such as online grooming, cyber bullying and sexting
- This includes providing information about to report negative experiences or concerns.

Physical Environments

- Risk management plans are produced for all physical events that involve children.
- When MAV is holding events in third party venues, depending on the level of risk posed by third-party contractors or providers, MAV will take actions to prevent or reduce risks of child abuse or harm. Actions will be aligned to needs and the venue selected, and may include:
 - check with any third parties you engage about how they incorporate child safety considerations and expectations in their policies and practices
 - require third-party contractors to comply with the MAV's policies and procedures
 - provide a copy of MAV's Code of Conduct and Child Safety and Wellbeing Policy and ask third parties to read and agree to work within these requirements. You may include this requirement in any contracts.

- establish any points of contact between the third party and children and put specific risk management strategies in place, like using sign in/sign out registers or supervising the third party onsite
- monitoring compliance by the third-party contractors or venues with the Child Safe Standards and/or the organisation's policies and procedures
- working with the third-party contractors or venue to identify, prevent and reduce risks of child abuse and harm
- be clear in any procurement contracts what MAV will do if a third party fails to meet the requirements for child safety. Where MAV is unable to adequately manage risks of child abuse and harm posed by third-party contractors or venues, MAV will terminate the contract or take other appropriate action to protect children.
- Staff, volunteers, parents, carers and children at events are to be provided with information about safety and risks in physical environment.
- This includes providing information about to report negative experiences or concerns.

RISK MANAGEMENT

The Mathematical Association of Victoria will ensure that child safety is a part of its overall risk management approach.

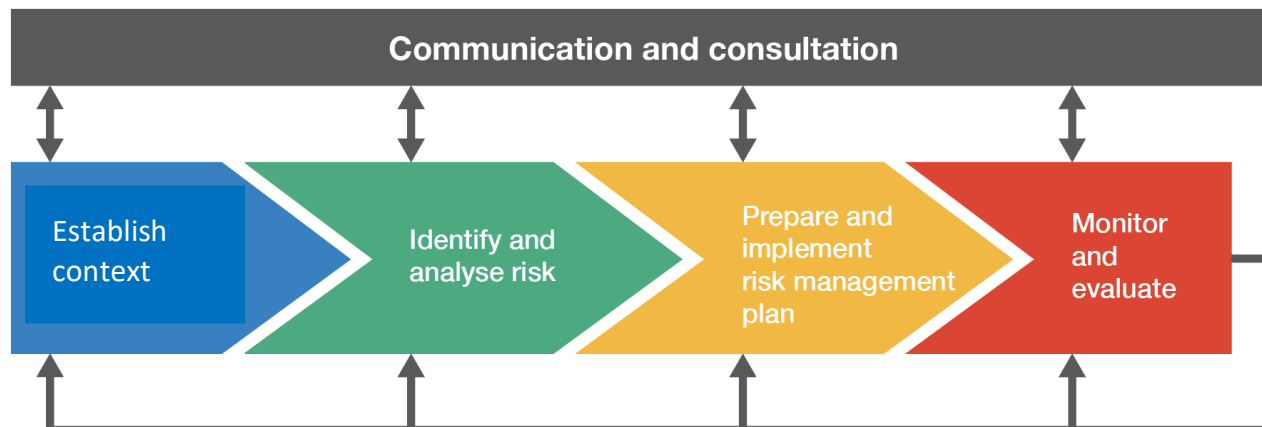
The Mathematical Association of Victoria will have an Executive Committee who are committed to identifying and managing risks at The Mathematical Association of Victoria. Executive Committee members will receive annual training, or more regularly as required, in relation to child safety.

The following elements must be part of risk management approach in regards to child safety:

- All existing and new activities and facilities must be assessed for risks of child abuse including: –environmental risks (e.g. areas that might obscure a line of sight) – vulnerability risks (such as activities that may foster personal relationships between staff/volunteers and children who have an increased risk of being exploited, such as children who are highly vulnerable and dependent on the staff/volunteer for their needs).
- All identified risks of child abuse are actively reduced by designing and implementing appropriate preventative measures. Measures must include (as required by MAV's insurer):
 - Implementing the "Two person" rule where feasible.
 - Not placing unknown volunteers into positions of trust within the first 6 months of joining the organisation.
- Risk management plans are documented for all existing and new activities and facilities that include working with children.
- Staff, volunteers and contractors are made aware of their responsibility for identifying risks of child abuse and their obligation to work with management on reducing those risks.
- Families and children are made aware of how to report on identified risks of child abuse.
- Risk management plans are living documents that are updated as required, referred to regularly and reviewed periodically.

Developing a risk Assessment for an event or activity:

The following provides the steps for a risk management process that is focused on risks of child abuse and harm.



STEP 1: Communication and consultation

To ensure effective risk management that identifies all risks, organisations should seek input and perspectives from a wide range of people. For MAV this may include children, parents and carers, schools and teachers with whom we work, venue managers or contracted activity providers.

Consultation is required as it can provide insights into risks and safety related issues. It is important to communicate the risk management plans you develop with these same people so that they know what they need to do to manage risks.

Step 2: Establish context:

It is important to consider all the ways children engage with MAV and program providers when planning an event or program. Collecting information about the context of the event, including the venue, approach to the activity, and the systems and technologies that will be used with children allows you to establish a baseline for identifying potential sources of risks.

Step 3: Risk identification and analysis

you must identify the risks of child abuse and harm that may occur through the planned activity. This involves focusing on risks to children rather than risks to the organisation. You are to ask the question, what could go wrong with the organisation or any specific activity that may result in harm or abuse to children?

Consider all the ways that children could be harmed or abused including: grooming, sexual abuse, physical violence, serious neglect, bullying, abuse by adults and children, and abuse by volunteers and paid staff.

Situational risks: Are there opportunities for adults to be alone with children, unseen by others, or to form relationships with children that could involve physical contact or emotional closeness, that could result in a shift from acceptable to unprofessional and abusive behaviours?

Some factors to consider about each activity are:

- the physical and online environments of the setting and the facilities, such rooms where activities may take place and the location of toilets.
- Whether toilets will be shared by supervising adults, or other people in a venue and children.
- how often and for how long the activity occurs
- whether there is physical contact between the child and adult
- whether interactions can result in an emotional dependence on adults
- the adequacy of supervision
- whether the activity requires overnight accommodation without parents or carers

Vulnerability risks: What are the circumstances or characteristics of the children attending an event? Several factors that affect a child's vulnerability to child abuse. These factors can increase a child's exposure to the risk of being abused, the impact of abuse if it occurs, or increase their reluctance to report abuse. The better you know the children you engage with, and their diverse circumstances and experiences, the better you can identify vulnerability risks.

Children who are more likely to be exposed to circumstances that increase their vulnerability include those:

- from Aboriginal backgrounds
- with disability
- from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds
- newly arrived in Australia
- who identify as LGBTIQ or are non-binary or gender diverse or are questioning their sexuality or gender
- with a history of trauma, abuse or neglect
- unable to live at home including those who are homeless or living in foster, residential or kinship care
- with a history of drug or alcohol dependence
- with poor mental or physical health.

Propensity risk: What is the profile of adults who engage with children at the activity?

To understand risk MAV must operate on the assumption that everybody who works with children can pose some level of risk to them. This can be hard because it means assuming there could be perpetrators of child abuse and harm in your organisation. There is no one psychological profile for a person who harms or abuses children.

To help manage this risk MAV ensures that all staff and contractors that deliver student activities have a current working with children check or Victorian Institute of teaching registration. Staff must ensure this is in place and current prior to any adults attending an activity.

In developing risk assessment MAV must consider other adults who may attend the event including:

- Parents
- staff of the venue engaged to deliver the activity
- any other parties who may be present during an activity such as a photographer, videographer, journalists, caterers, etc

Institutional risk: How do the characteristics of the organisation, such as its structures, attitudes and practices, affect the risk of children abuse and harm?

Institutional risk refers to the characteristics of an organisation, rather than its activities. By characteristics, we mean your organisation's attitudes and culture, policies and practices, and skills and resources. These can directly increase or decrease the risk that child abuse and harm will occur, be prevented, detected and/or stopped. They also affect the organisation's response to disclosing or reporting abuse, and its willingness or ability to act protectively once abuse is disclosed.

When assessing institutional risk, we need to understand the internal structures that may disempower children and stop them from speaking up or taking action within an organisation.

When assessing and defining risks consider the attitudes and culture of your organisation. Do those attending or running an event:

- understand all forms of child abuse and harm
- listen to and empower children
- educate children around what constitutes appropriate and acceptable behaviour towards them by adults
- prioritise the safety of children over the reputation of the organisation
- see the prevention of child abuse and harm as a shared responsibility
- avoid using power over children or their position of authority to make children feel unsafe, or uncomfortable in anyway
- not tolerate racism and other forms of prejudice and address it when it occurs?

Step 4: Risk Management

The aim of risk management is to take action to prevent or reduce the risk that children will be abused or harmed. While it is confronting to imagine children being abused or harmed in your organisation, it is important not to ignore or downplay the risks, and to ensure prevention strategies are put in place.

Risk management plan should thoroughly document all identified risks to child safety and well-being and record the way the organisation will manage each one.

If the risk management plan is developed for a series of events it should be updated regularly as MAV improves its understanding about whether planned actions were effective and reflect any changes to the organisation and its activities.

Developing the risk management plan MAV should:

- list each identified risk, and list the actions that will be taken to mitigate or remove the risk.
- Use the risk management plan to guide MAV staff, volunteers, parents and caeers and venue providers on what they need to do to help keep children safe.

MAV has a risk assessment and management template that can be used to complete a child safe risk assessment and management plan.

Step 5: Monitoring and Review

Risk management is not a 'set and forget' exercise. Risk management plans should be reviewed regularly to check they have been implemented, and to monitor their effectiveness. Review of risk management plans should be done annually, but sometimes you might need to do this more frequently so they stay up-to-date with changes in the organisation.

You should review plans whenever changes are made in your organisation that could affect the risk of child abuse or harm. Reasons to update risk management plans include:

- introducing a new event or activity or changing an existing one
- starting to use a new online platform or system
- the developer making changes to the online platforms you are using
- changes to the characteristics of the children, staff or volunteers engaged in your organisation.

You should look for changes or decisions that will impact children either directly or indirectly.

If you develop new ways to prevent or reduce risks to children, you should update your plan so staff and volunteers know about these new ways.

If a safety incident occurs, your organisation should review its risk management plans to establish if what happened was due to gaps in the plan or because actions you planned did not work to keep children safe. If so, new or different actions should be planned and implemented to reduce the risk of further safety incidents

REPORTING

Any staff member, volunteer or contractor who has grounds to suspect abusive activity must immediately:

- a. notify the appropriate child protection services or the police.
- b. notify their supervisor and the CEO about their concern.

If at an event where teachers are responsible for student welfare, you should report any incident to the supervising teacher. MAV will cooperate with any school or institution that may attend an MAV event or program where an incident occurs.

If you believe a child / young person is in immediate danger or a life threatening situation, call 000 and ask for the Police.

In situations where the supervisor is suspected of involvement in the activity, or if the person having the suspicion does not believe that the matter is being appropriately addressed or dealt with, the matter should be reported to the next highest level of supervision.

Supervisors must report complaints of suspected abusive behaviour or misconduct to the CEO and also to any external regulatory body such as the police.

Note that:

- It is not your job to investigate the disclosure. This will be handled by the relevant authorities depending on your location, such as Local Police, and Child Protection Services.
- Incidents or reports do not have to be witnessed by the reporter. Respect the fact that they may only tell you some details.
- Incidents do not have to be an immediate emergency to be reported.
- Incidents/cases do not have to come via formal complaint processes to be responded to.
- Once aware of an incident, disclosure, suspicion/ reasonable belief of abuse, harm (or threat of) or misconduct involving a child or young person, you must report it.
- If you have **reasonable grounds for belief** that a child / young person has, or is at risk of being abused. You do not need proof and a concern, or a suspicion is enough to make a report.

Reasonable grounds for belief: is a belief based on reasonable grounds that child abuse has occurred when all known considerations or facts relevant to the formation of a belief are taken into account and these are objectively assessed. Circumstances or considerations may include the source of the allegation and how it was communicated, the nature of and details of the allegation, and whether there are any other related matters known regarding the alleged perpetrator.

A reasonable belief is formed if a reasonable person believes that:

- (a) The child is in need of protection,
- (b) The child has suffered or is likely to suffer “significant harm as a result of physical injury”,
- (c) The parents are unable or unwilling to protect the child.

A ‘reasonable belief’ or a ‘belief on reasonable grounds’ is not the same as having proof, but is more than mere rumour or speculation.

A ‘reasonable belief’ is formed if a reasonable person in the same position would have formed the belief on the same grounds. For example, a ‘reasonable belief’ might be formed if:

- (a) A child states that they have been physically or sexually abused;
- (b) A child states that they know someone who has been physically or sexually abused (sometimes the child may be talking about themselves);
- (c) Someone who knows a child states that the child has been physically or sexually abused;
- (d) Professional observations of the child’s behaviour or development leads a professional to form a belief that the child has been physically or sexually abused or is likely to be abused; and/or
- (e) Signs of abuse lead to a belief that the child has been physically or sexually abused.

Record keeping and incident monitoring

- All reports of child abuse shall be recorded within an incident reporting system.
- MAV, in maintaining records on reports of child abuse, will maintain confidentiality and privacy for children and families in accordance with legislation.
- Records will be retained in line with the recommendations from the Office of Public Records.
- Reports of child abuse and complaints about child safety will be monitored by the Executive Committee to ensure that they are appropriately managed.
- Risks to child safety that are identified in complaints and reports of abuse will be reviewed and incorporated into the relevant risk management plan.

Department of Health and Human Services

During business hours – contact the appropriate local government area:

Northern and western suburbs	1300 664 977
Eastern suburbs	1300 360 391
Southern suburbs	1300 655 795
South-western rural and regional	1800 075 599
Western rural and regional	1800 000 551
North-western rural and regional	1800 675 598
North-eastern rural and regional	1800 650 227
Eastern and south-eastern rural and regional	1800 020 202

After hours and to report concerns about the immediate safety of a child:

Child Protection Crisis Line (24 hours) 13 12 78

Victoria Police – Sexual Offences and Child Abuse Investigation Team (SOCIT)

Contact the appropriate local office:

North-West Metropolitan	(03) 8690 4056
Southern Metropolitan	(03) 9556 6128
Western Victoria	(03) 5448 1420
Eastern Victoria	(03) 5820 5878

Indicators of abuse and harm:

Abuse and harm may come in many forms, MAV stakeholders should be familiar with these as per the information provided by the Victorian Department of Education and Training:

<https://www.education.vic.gov.au/childhood/professionals/health/childprotection/Pages/identifying.aspx>

INVESTIGATING

External Investigations:

If the appropriate child protection service or the police decide to conduct an investigation of this report, all employees, contractors or volunteers must co-operate fully with the investigation.

Contacting parents /carers and schools:

MAV will consult with the Department of Families, Fairness & Housing, Child Protection or Police (with cases reported to them) to determine what information is appropriate to be shared with parents /carers or schools.

They may advise either:

- a. Not to contact the parents/carers/Schools (e.g., in circumstances where the parents/carers/School staff are alleged to have engaged in the abuse, or the child is a mature minor and does not wish their parent/carer to be contacted).
- b. To contact the parents/carers/Schools and provide agreed information (this must be done as soon as possible, preferably on the same day the concern arises).

Internal Investigations:

Whether or not the authorities decide to conduct an investigation, the CEO will consult with the authorities to determine whether an internal investigation is appropriate. If it is decided that such an investigation will not conflict with any proceeding of the authorities, the CEO may decide to conduct such an investigation and in doing so will use an external independent party to undertake the investigation. All employees, contractors and volunteers must co-operate fully with the investigation.

Any such investigation will be conducted according to the rules of natural justice.

The CEO will make every effort to keep any such investigation confidential; however, from time to time other members of staff may need to be consulted in conjunction with the investigation.

After an initial review and a determination that the suspected abuse warrants additional investigation, the CEO shall coordinate the investigation with the appropriate investigators and / or law enforcement officials. Internal or external legal representatives will be involved in the process, as deemed appropriate.

RESPONDING

If a report is made against an MAV staff, student, volunteer, or contractor, MAV must reduce or remove any risk of abuse or harm to all children /young people associated with MAV.

If it is alleged that a member of staff, contractor or a volunteer may have committed an offence or have breached the organisation's policies or its Code of Conduct the person concerned may be stood down (with pay, where applicable) without judgement while an investigation is conducted.

If the investigation concludes that on the balance of probabilities an offence (or a breach of the organisation's policies or Code of Conduct) has occurred then disciplinary action may follow, up to and including dismissal or cessation of involvement with the organisation. The findings of the investigation will also be reported to any external body as required.

MAV will provide ongoing support for children / young people within the MAV community

impacted by abuse or harm if appropriate. Support provided will vary dependent upon the case, it may be direct intervention, advice, provided through a school or education provider, or referral to external services.

PRIVACY

All personal information considered or recorded will respect the privacy of the individuals involved unless there is a risk to someone's safety. The Mathematical Association of Victoria will have safeguards and practices in place to ensure any personal information is protected.

Everyone is entitled to know how the personal information is recorded, what will be done with it, and who will be able to access it.

- Information regarding a concern, disclosure or report regarding child safety should be kept confidential and shared on a strictly 'needs to know' basis.
- Should you have any doubts about whether certain information should be shared with a colleague, please discuss with the CEO.
- MAV will support you to share appropriate information with Police, Child Protective Services, or
- other authorities for the purpose of making a report or cooperation with an investigation relating to child safety.
- Reporting suspected child abuse to Department of Families, Fairness And Housing, Child Protection or Police does not constitute a breach of Victorian or Commonwealth privacy laws as these disclosures are specifically permitted under legislation, including the Children Youth and Families Act 2005 (Vic) and the Privacy and Data Protection Act 2014 (Vic).

REVIEWING

Every two years, and following every reportable incident, a review shall be conducted to assess whether the organisation's child protection policies or procedures require modification to better protect the children under the organisation's care.

AUTHORISATION



Signature of CEO: Jennifer Bowden