



Buddhist Sri Lankan Association of Victoria

329-335 Greens Road, Keysborough, Victoria 3173. AUSTRALIA.

Telephone: +61 3 9769 0872 Email: info@dhammasarana.org.au

BSAV Child Safety and Wellbeing Policy

Buddhist Sri Lankan Association of Victoria (BSAV)

1. Purpose: This policy demonstrates BSAV's commitment to the safety and wellbeing of all children and young people who participate in our programs, services, and activities. It aligns with Victorian Child Safe Standards to provide a secure, inclusive, and nurturing environment.

The BSAV acknowledges that it has a legal and moral duty to protect its students from foreseeable harm. This includes the provision of safeguards against mistreatment and the prompt reporting and effective management of actual, suspected or alleged child abuse.

2. Scope: This policy applies to all BSAV members, staff, volunteers, contractors, and anyone involved in BSAV's activities. It extends to all settings, including on-site activities, off-site events, and digital interactions.

BSAV is committed to providing a child safe environment where children and young people are and feel safe, and where their voices are heard with respect to decisions that affect their education and lives. Particular attention will be paid to the experiences of children with a cultural diversity, disability or vulnerability.

Every person involved with the BSAV has a responsibility to understand the important and specific role he/she individually and collectively plays to ensure that the wellbeing and safety of all students, children and young people is at the forefront of all they do and every decision they make.

3. Statement of Commitment to Child Safety: BSAV is committed to:

- Creating and maintaining a safe, respectful, and inclusive environment for all children and young people.
- Recognizing and valuing the diverse cultural backgrounds of our community, with a focus on cultural safety for all children, including Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children, children from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds, and children with disabilities.
- Taking a zero-tolerance approach to child abuse.
- Empowering children by respecting their voices and involving them in decisions affecting their safety and wellbeing.



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4. Child Safety Principles: BSAV's approach to child safety is guided by the following principles:

- The rights and best interests of the child are paramount.
- Child safety and wellbeing are embedded in leadership, governance, and culture.
- Clear expectations for appropriate behaviour with children are outlined in our Code of Conduct.
- Risks to child safety are identified, assessed, and managed proactively.
- Families and community members are involved in promoting child safety.
- The views of the child must be considered, and a child's privacy must be respected.
- The safety of children is dependent upon the existence of an appropriate child safe culture including an environment where any form of harassment, bullying or abuse will not be tolerated.
- Child safety and wellbeing awareness is promoted and openly discussed within our Committee, Dhamma school and Language school.
- Through effective and accessible communication, families are encouraged to participate in decisions related to child safety and wellbeing which affect their child. The BSAV child safety policy, code of conduct and Reportable conduct scheme seeks family and community input and is available on our website.
- Children are empowered by informing them of their rights and responsibilities and are encouraged to speak up about any matters of importance to them, including if something goes wrong and about matters affecting their welfare and/or safety.
- Procedures are in place to lawfully screen all monks, staff, volunteers and contractors who have direct contact with children.
- BSAV's safety culture is underpinned by an understanding that child safety and protection is everyone's responsibility.
- Child protection training is mandatory for all monks, committee members, teachers and volunteers who have direct contact with children.
- Any form of abuse or neglect towards children and young people will not be tolerated and immediate action will be taken to report any suspected harmful or abusive behaviour.
- Procedures for responding to alleged or suspected incidents of child abuse are simple and accessible for all members, staff, volunteers and visitors. See complaints handling flow chart.
- Children have the right to a culturally safe environment in which their diverse and unique identities are respected and valued.
- The BSAV will pay particular attention to children who have any kind of disability or vulnerability, who are from culturally or linguistically diverse backgrounds. Parents are encouraged to make staff aware of special needs if appropriate.
- The Child Safety, Protection and Wellbeing Program should be regularly reviewed and improved upon



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5. Responsibilities:

- **Leadership:** The BSAV leadership team will model child-safe practices and ensure compliance with this policy.
- **Staff and Volunteers:** All individuals must adhere to this policy, complete required child safety training, and hold valid Working with Children Checks (WWCC).
- **Children and Families:** BSAV will engage children and families in open communication, welcoming their feedback and participation.

6. Risk Management: BSAV will:

- Conduct risk assessments for all activities involving children to identify potential safety concerns.
- Implement and regularly review child safety procedures to mitigate identified risks.
- Maintain clear protocols for online and physical environments to promote safety.

7. Recruitment and Screening: BSAV ensures that all staff, volunteers, and contractors

- Undergo rigorous recruitment processes, including reference checks.
- Possess a valid WWCC.
- Agree to abide by the BSAV Code of Conduct and this policy.

8. Code of Conduct The BSAV Code of Conduct establishes clear expectations for interacting with children. Key points include:

- Acting professionally and respectfully at all times.
- Avoiding inappropriate physical or verbal interactions.
- Reporting any concerns about child safety immediately.

9. Responding to concerns and reporting abuse: BSAV will

- Follow the **Reportable conduct scheme** focused on worker and volunteer conduct.
- Take all allegations of child abuse seriously and investigate and respond promptly.
- Ensure **mandatory reporting** requirements are fulfilled under Victorian law.
- Report allegations which may involve criminal conduct to the police.
- Notify CCYP of allegations within 3 business days after becoming aware of it.
- Give CCYP certain detailed information about the allegation within 30 days.
- After the investigation has concluded, give CCYP certain information including a copy of the findings of the investigation.



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- Ensure that BSAV has systems in place to:
 - prevent reportable conduct from being committed.
 - enable any person to notify the head of a reportable allegation.
 - enable any person to notify the CCYP of a reportable allegation.
 - investigate and respond to a reportable allegation against a member, worker or volunteer from that organization.
- Provide support to children and families affected by safety concerns.
- Maintain confidentiality and document all reports accurately.

10. Training and Education: BSAV will

- Provide ongoing training for staff, volunteers, and members on child safety and wellbeing.
- Promote awareness of child safety responsibilities across the organization.

11. Continuous Improvement: BSAV is committed to:

- Regularly reviewing and updating this policy and associated procedures.
- Seeking feedback from children, families, and stakeholders to enhance practices.
- Conduct audits of child safety measures to ensure compliance and effectiveness.

12. Complaints and Feedback:

- BSAV provides a clear, accessible process for lodging complaints or feedback related to child safety.
- Complaints are treated confidentially and respectfully and ensures the safety and privacy of all parties involved.

13. Record-Keeping:

- Maintain accurate and secure records of child safety incidents and training.
- Document all policy reviews and updates.

14. Policy Review: This policy will be reviewed every two years or as required by legislative or organizational changes. Feedback from stakeholders will be incorporated to strengthen our commitment to child safety.



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15. Contact Information: For any concerns or inquiries regarding child safety, please contact:

- **Child Safety Officer:** Mr Harsha Weerakkodi
- **Relevant Authorities:** Victorian Child Protection Services (13 12 78), Police (000).

Acknowledgment We acknowledge the traditional custodians of the land on which we operate and pay respect to their Elders past, present, and emerging. We are committed to ensuring the cultural safety and inclusion of all Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children and families.

Endorsed by: BSAV Committee

Date of Approval: 22nd January 2025

Next Review Date: 21st January 2026

BSAV application of Child Safe Standards

Standard 1: 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.

The BSAV Dhamma School and Sinhala Language School primarily consist of children from a Sri Lankan/Australian Buddhist background. However, the organization actively welcomes diversity and encourages inclusion. The BSAV is committed to a culturally safe environment in which the diverse and unique identities and experiences of Aboriginal children and young people are respected and valued. Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children would be welcomed with Compassion, kindness, and inclusivity that are key values imparted to students.

Structures, Policies, and Procedures:

- Curriculum initiatives that teach and celebrate Aboriginal culture and history.
- Reconciliation week is formally recognised
- Acknowledging the traditional owners and custodians of the land at key events.
- Assemblies promoting inclusion and addressing the consequences of racism.



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- Educating leadership, parents, and volunteers on cultural safety, child protection, and abuse prevention.
- Zero tolerance for racism and active strategies to prevent it.

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

Structures, Policies, and Procedures:

- Public commitment to child safety through the BSAV website, including the Code of Conduct and Child Safety Policy.
- Regular committee discussions on child safety matters.
- Mandatory child safety training for committee members, teachers, and volunteers in direct contact with children.
- Annual review of the Risk Management Plan to ensure robust child safety procedures.
- Sharing the Code of Conduct and Child Safety Policy with parents at registration and inviting them to share concerns with the Child Safety Officer.
- Promoting health and wellbeing by providing meals to all children attending classes.

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

Structures, Policies, and Procedures:

BSAV has an information session for students to build:

- a clear understanding of appropriate and acceptable behaviours (including online code of conduct).
- resilience and confidence.
- ethical behaviours
- leadership qualities and capabilities
- healthy relationships
- the importance of friendships and support to ensure students feel safe.
- to encourage all students to remain happy, healthy, safe, engaged, and supported to achieve their full potential.

There should be no direct and indirect bullying, harassment, discrimination, paying appropriate attention to the needs of the following groups: - Children and young people



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with a disability, children and young people from culturally, linguistically or gender diverse backgrounds.

Information session for children will include the code of conduct, complaint handling procedure and asking the children's opinion regarding improving child safety at the BSAV.

Promote child empowerment by educating children and young people about their rights, personal boundaries and the importance of reporting any discomfort or safety concerns.

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

Structures, Policies, and Procedures:

- Annual child safety information sessions for teachers and parents.
- Distribution of child safety information, including the Code of Conduct, during registration.
- Annual parent surveys to gather feedback on child safety and wellbeing.
- Open channels for parents and students to contact the BSAV President or Child Safety Officer.

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

Structures, Policies, and Procedures:

- Staff induction programs, staff briefings to understand children's diverse circumstances, and provide support to those who are vulnerable.
- The BSAV students are of Sri Lankan Buddhist background however we encourage and promote diversity and inclusion in our teaching environment.
- According to Buddhist principles the values of compassion, respect, inclusion, kindness and generosity are taught.
- Students are also taught about the harm that can come from bullying, harassment or abuse in any form and the use of drugs and alcohol is discouraged. The benefit of maintaining mental and physical health is also discussed at assembly.
- Students are provided with access to information, support and complaints processes in ways that are culturally safe, accessible and easy to understand (Example- notices, place stickers and information leaflets in student accessible locations).
- Parents are asked to inform the school principal if they believe their child requires additional support of any kind. This information will be treated confidentially.
- Provide textbooks in both languages (English and Sinhalese) for ease of understanding.



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

Structures, Policies, and Procedures:

- Recruitment process includes interviews, reference checks, assessment of qualifications and experience and suitability to work with children (WWCC).
- All teachers and volunteers have WWCC, have read and signed the risk management plan and BSAV code of conduct.
- Have read the child safety and wellbeing policy.
- New staff are supervised during teaching and actively encouraged to adopt a child centred culture where the best interest of the children guide all decisions and actions.

Standard 7: Processes for complaints and concerns are child focused.

Structures, Policies, and Procedures:

- Regular education for children about the complaints process.
- Easy access to coordinator or Child Safety Officer or Principal.
- Child accessible complaints flow charts present for easy understanding.
- Encourage children to speak without fear and teachers/volunteers to provide an environment where children are able to speak confidently.
- Feedback, suggestions and improvements to complaints handling process are encouraged through consultation with parents, communities and children.
- Confidentiality and privacy to be maintained and all assistance provided to address and resolve a complaint with the help of the family.

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

Structures, Policies, and Procedures:

- Regularly educate our staff and volunteers about child safety protocols emphasising the importance of vigilance, proactive reporting and responding to potential risks promptly.
- BSAV committee to communicate to staff and volunteers that child safety training is mandatory for those with direct contact with children.
- Regular training on:



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- Identify signs of abuse and harm
 - Respond promptly to make child safe and notify relevant authorities.
 - Support children or person disclosing child harm
 - Create culturally safe environment within BSAV
 - Clear understanding on procedure guidelines
 - Induction and develop Child Safety and Wellbeing Policy masters where staff and volunteers can go to and clarify unclear areas
- Encourage parental involvement in our safety measures.
- Monks, Teachers and Volunteers with direct contact with children will be requested to read and sign the documents:
 1. Risk management plan
 2. Code of conduct
 3. BSAV Child safety and wellbeing policy
- Yearly information sessions regarding above promoting an environment of respect, care and support for all children and fostering child wellbeing.
- Ongoing monitoring and supervision to ensure all individuals maintain appropriate behaviour and attitudes towards children.

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

Structures, Policies, and Procedures:

- Parents to be the means of communication outside school.
- Prohibition of direct electronic communication with children.
- Children to accompany authorised personnel whenever they leave the classroom.
- As per the Risk Management Plan:
 - The physical environment is safe and secure for children and regular assessment are conducted to ensure compliance with the child safety standards.
 - Any online teaching will be monitored by the Sunday school coordinators and the principal as well as supervised by parents as per the BSAV risk management plan.
 - Social media access is limited to two committee members.
 - Access to students electronically is through their parents except under special circumstances approved by the principal or coordinator.



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Standard 10: Implementation of the Child Safe Standards is cyclical reviewed and improved.

Structures, Policies, and Procedures:

- The Risk management plan, Code of conduct and Child safety and wellbeing policy, complaints handling policy and reporting procedure will be regularly reviewed and updated as required.
- Reporting and reviewing of child safety matters and incidents and accidents at Committee meetings, staff gatherings, Parent and volunteer meetings.
- Review the application of the processes after each compliant to ensure governance and coverage.
- Investigation of complaints and documentation of contact with staff and parents in relation to complaints and follow up until the actions are completed.
- Reporting of staff, student and parent satisfaction to the committee via assemblies and committee meeting appointments.

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

Structures, Policies, and Procedures:

- Policies available on the BSAV portal
- Policies are circulated to monks, staff, volunteers and parents.
- Policies are reviewed and updated as required by committee, teachers and subcommittee members.
- Policies and procedures are easy to understand and can be accessed easily.
- Ensure BSAV policies and procedure adhere to all the Child Safe Standards and address the risks to the safety of children that are specific to BSAV.

BSAV Staff:

All BSAV members, teachers, volunteers, parents and contractors are informed of the BSAV's child safety and wellbeing policies and procedures. (easily accessible)

All members, teachers, volunteers who have direct contact with children must have a current Working with Children Check. In addition, they must sign an agreement indicating that they have read, understood, and will abide by the BSAV Child Protection, Safety and Wellbeing Policy and the BSAV's Code of Conduct. They should also complete annual training on child safety and protection



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BSAV child safety officer and dhamma school Principal and school coordinator:

- Are persons that students, parents and staff can turn to with child abuse or child safety concerns.
- having a good working knowledge of the BSAV's Child Safety and wellbeing policy and code of conduct
- ensuring that there are clear procedures for anyone to report child protection concerns and assisting and advising on the process.
- prioritising any complaints, grievances or concerns relating to child safety or allegations of a breach of the child safety code of conduct or this policy, ensuring that the matter is addressed promptly, in partnership with the child and their family.
- the management of complaints pertaining to child safety are child focused and centred around the protection, immediate and ongoing safety and support of the child, and includes reporting the allegation, suspicion, or disclosure of child abuse to the relevant authority
- protect the child connected to the complaint until the complaint is resolved.
- make, secure, and retain records of the complaint and the response in managing the matter.
- ensuring that the BSAV's Child Safe Policy is clearly communicated to all students, parents/carers, staff, and volunteers.
- ensuring that the BSAV's Child Safety and wellbeing Policy are being implemented effectively and reviewed regularly.
- should be a senior person who is approachable, non-judgemental, calm, resilient and has a high degree of integrity and respect for confidentiality.

Complaints Reporting procedure:

BSAV has a complaint handling flow chart that outlines this process.

All persons with direct contact with children are trained in their legal obligation to report child abuse (sexual, physical, emotional or psychological), and their responsibility in keeping children and young people safe.

All students will be informed in an age-appropriate way of the BSAV's Child Safety policies and how students will be supported and assisted if they disclose child abuse.



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All suspected or known cases of abuse will be reported to Child Protection at the Department of Families, Fairness and Housing (DFFH) Victoria or the Police by the president of the BSAV.

The president will report the allegations to the CCYP (according to Victoria's reportable conduct scheme), investigate the allegation, ensure appropriate action is taken in response and records the outcome securely. Informs the CCYP of the outcome of the investigation.

Child Safety and Risk Management Plan:

BSAV has adopted a risk management approach to the development of a Child Safety, Protection and Wellbeing Program by identifying key risk indicators and assessing child safety risks based on a range of factors. (RMP)

BSAV has implemented several risk management policies and procedures to:

1. provide a safe learning environment for its students.
2. identify risks of child abuse and mitigate those risks.
3. assist staff to detect child abuse.
4. care for a student who may be a victim of abuse.
5. report suspected or known child abuse to appropriate authorities.

BSAV Code of Conduct:

BSAV has a Child Safety and Wellbeing Code of Conduct which outlines expectations of professional conduct, and standards to which all members, staff, volunteers, parents and visitors of the Community must adhere.

The principle guiding all adult behaviours is that the safety of all students is paramount.



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BSAV's Reportable Conduct Scheme:

Child Safe Standards

Focuses on organizations and preventative systems. Minimum requirements that organizations must meet. Enables reportable conduct to be identified and reported.

A system to promote child safety, prevent child abuse and respond properly to allegations of child abuse.

Reportable Conduct Scheme

A system to independently oversee responses to allegations of child abuse.

Focuses on employee conduct specific actions that must be taken by the head of the organization. Ensures reportable allegations are properly investigated and responded to.

- BSAV has implemented the above policies to prevent, respond to and report allegations of child abuse and harm.
- The Child Safe Standards and the Reportable Conduct Scheme create distinct sets of responsibilities for organisations but have been designed to complement one another. Together, the Child Safe Standards and the Reportable Conduct Scheme strengthen the capacity of organisations to prevent and respond properly to allegations of child abuse.

What is reportable conduct?

There are five types of reportable conduct:

1. sexual offences
2. sexual misconduct
3. physical violence
4. behaviour that causes significant emotional or psychological harm to a child
5. significant neglect of a child.

Sexual offences, sexual misconduct, and physical violence are covered by the Scheme if they are committed with, against or in the presence of a child (age under 18)



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What is a reportable Allegation?

A reportable allegation is an allegation based on information that has led any person to form a reasonable belief that a worker, volunteer or visitor has committed:

- reportable conduct, or
- misconduct that may involve reportable conduct.

A reasonable belief is more than suspicion. There must be some objective basis for the belief. It does not require proof but must be more than rumour or speculation.

What is the Reportable Conduct Scheme?

- The Reportable Conduct Scheme is focused on worker, volunteer or visitor conduct and how organisations investigate and respond to allegations of child abuse.
- Report allegations which may involve criminal conduct to the police.
- Notify CCYP of allegations within 3 business days after becoming aware of the allegation.
- Give CCYP certain detailed information about the allegation within 30 days after becoming aware of the allegation.
- After the investigation has concluded, give the CCYP certain information including a copy of the findings of the investigation.
- Ensure that the organization has systems in place to:
 - prevent reportable conduct from being committed.
 - enable any person to notify the head of the organization of a reportable allegation.
 - enable any person to notify the CCYP of a reportable allegation.
 - investigate and respond to a reportable allegation against a worker, volunteer or visitor from the organization.