



CLIMBERS ASSOCIATION OF WESTERN AUSTRALIA

Child Protection Policy

Dated 22 February 2023

1. Objectives and Context

The objectives of this policy are to:

- create a Child Safe environment for all Youth Members.
- protect all Youth Members in the care of CAWA.
- ensure that allegations of Child Abuse or suspected Child Abuse are dealt with in a timely, consistent, confidential and sympathetic manner by CAWA.
- provide a clear framework for the recruitment, training and management of Adults concerning Child Protection.
- prevent Adults placing themselves at risk, and, to educate Youth Members about their right to safety and ways they can help protect themselves.

This Policy provides overarching Child Protection direction for CAWA and represents the minimum standard required.

In this Policy:

“Adult” means any person who is 18 years of age or older, who is a Member of CAWA or other person who, from time to time, assists CAWA in some way.

“Child” or **“Children”** means Youth Member(s), and any other person who is under 18 years of age.

“Child Abuse” means an act or omission that endangers a Child’s physical or emotional health, well-being or development and can occur as a single incident or multiple incidents over time. See section 4 for Child Abuse types, indicators and behaviours.

“Child Safe” means an environment that has an open and aware culture, which understands what Child Abuse and risks look like, is bound by a well-known Child Protection policy and framework, gives a voice to Children, manages risks associated with Child Abuse, and where everyone is encouraged to report all allegations, disclosures or concerns.

“Youth Member” means any Member of CAWA who is under 18 years of age (as per Rule 4.6(a)).

2. Statement of Policy

CAWA has a duty of care to Youth Members to provide a safe environment and protection from harm, including Child Abuse. All Adults are required to fulfil this responsibility on behalf of CAWA at all times.

CAWA is committed to an environment of ZERO TOLERANCE toward bullying, neglect and emotional, physical, psychological or sexual abuse of any kind. Abuse takes many forms and can be perpetrated in many ways, as such CAWA requires all Adults and Youth Members to be aware of Child Abuse as outlined in this Policy and comply with the requirements of this Policy at all times. When an incident does occur, CAWA's priority is to ensure the immediate safety and welfare of the Youth Member.

All Adults must report any conduct directly seen or suspected that does not comply with this Policy. Without fail, Adults must immediately report any disclosure, allegation or suspicion of abuse of Children in accordance with this Policy.

Children are also to be encouraged to report any conduct that does not comply with this Policy and are to be regularly reminded/informed of their rights to feel safe and what action they can take if they do not feel safe.

Responding to allegations of Child Abuse must be undertaken with the utmost sensitivity and confidentiality. The welfare of Children is of paramount importance. Accordingly, CAWA is to terminate the Membership of (or the contract/ employment of) any Adult where an allegation or suspicion of abuse has been proven through a court of law. CAWA may also terminate the Membership of any Adult even if a Child Protection matter is not concluded or ultimately resolved with certainty. Additionally, CAWA is to automatically suspend the membership of an alleged abuser until the matter is resolved by the appropriate authority. CAWA is not to proceed with an application for Membership if there is any doubt concerning suitability.

THE MOST IMPORTANT CONSIDERATION IS ALWAYS THE IMMEDIATE SAFETY AND WELFARE OF THE CHILD.

3. Scope

This Policy applies to all Adult and Youth Members of CAWA, staff, other employees and consultants/contractors, in addition to any Adults who may assist CAWA from time to time.

Regardless of 'Membership status' in CAWA, this policy applies to any person who may have contact with Youth Members (or has access to their records).

4. Child Abuse types, indicators and behaviours

4.1. Types of Child Abuse

The following types of Child Abuse are not exhaustive and do not limit the types of abusive behaviour covered by this Policy.

- (a) Physical abuse: occurs when a person intentionally injures or threatens to injure a Child. The abuse includes but is not limited to slapping, punching, shaking, kicking, throwing, burning, biting, poisoning, shoving, pushing, holding or grabbing. An injury may take the form of bruises, cuts, burns or fractures. However, physical abuse may leave no physical injury. This abuse can also be the result of 'hazing' (the practice of rituals and other activities involving harassment, abuse or humiliation used as a way of initiating a person into a group). Additionally, physical abuse can be a single incident or a number of different incidents that take place over time. The 'level of harm' is not necessarily relevant to determining that physical abuse has occurred, rather, that harm has or has not occurred. For harm to be 'significant' the detrimental effect on a child's wellbeing must be substantial or serious and be demonstrated through the child's presentation, functioning or behaviour.
- (b) Emotional abuse: occurs when a Child is repeatedly rejected or frightened by threats. The abuse can involve name calling, being put down or continual coldness from a person to the extent that the behaviour of the Child is disturbed or their emotional development is at serious risk of impairment (this can include the effects of bullying). It also includes exclusion or bullying through social media.
- (c) Sexual abuse: occurs when a Child is used by a person (either an Adult, or another Child) for his or her own sexual stimulation or gratification. This can be contact or non-contact acts, including grooming by perpetrators, inappropriate touching, penetrative abuse, and exposure to pornography, accessing pornography, the retention of pornography or involving a child in the making or sending of child pornography.
- (d) Grooming: occurs when an Adult manipulates a Child to provide opportunities to abuse and reduce the likelihood of being reported or discovered. Children are particularly accessible through 'social media'. Indicators of 'grooming' include but are not limited to:
 - Developing special relationships with, favouring or giving gifts to a Child.
 - Inappropriate interactions with Children either in person or via forms of media and electronic devices.
 - Asking a Child to keep secret any aspect of their relationship.
 - Testing of or ignoring professional boundaries or rules.
 - The coercive use of social media, texting and on-line forums to groom, or directly abuse.

- (e) **Neglect**: occurs when there is a failure to provide the Child with the basic necessities of life, such as food, clothing, shelter, supervision, medical attention or care to the extent that the health, safety, or development of the Child is significantly impaired or placed at risk.
- (f) **Exposure to domestic violence**: occurs when Children witness or experience the chronic domination, coercion, intimidation and victimisation of one person by another by physical, sexual or emotional means within a domestic relationship.

4.2. Indicators of Child Abuse

The following indicators of Child Abuse are not exhaustive and do not limit the indicators of abusive behaviour covered by this Policy:

- (a) Any expression of concern by a Child regarding their personal safety, or remarks or testimony from a Child that a responsible Adult could interpret as a threat to the Child's safety. This should lead to direct and immediate attention.
- (b) Any report by a Member who has formed a reasonable suspicion that Child Abuse has, is or is likely to occur.
- (c) Suspicious physical injuries, bruising, cuts, fractures, burns or marks.
- (d) Lack of food, clothing, place to sleep, which is impacting the Child's ongoing health or wellbeing and the parents/guardians are unwilling or unable to provide for the Child.
- (e) Regular and/or severe negative self-talk, unusually aggressive, overly compliant and fearful, overly anxious, regressive behaviour.
- (f) Persistent or significantly inappropriate discussion or writing about sexual activities, particularly sexual interest or information that is age inappropriate.
- (g) Ongoing and unexplained health or wellbeing concerns such as stomach aches, headaches, crying and/or heightened sensitivity.
- (h) Disclosure of suicidal thoughts or plans made by a Child.
- (i) Observations or disclosures relating to the grooming behaviour of any Adult in contact with Children, including any combination of special gifts, secrets, time alone together, special names, online contact.
- (j) Concerns about the actions or behaviour of any Adult.

4.3. Characteristic Behaviours of Child Abusers

The list below sets out behaviour and characteristics that often apply to a person who is engaging in, or who intends to engage in, Child Abuse. Child Abuse can be intra-familial (perpetrated by a family member) or extra-familial (perpetrated by another known person).

Note that perpetrators can be of any social group or behavioural type (eg. extrovert, introvert, married, single, old, young, rich or poor). While the majority of abusers (95%) are male, females also perpetrate abuse against Children.

Note also that one or two of these behavioural characteristics on their own do not necessarily indicate that a person is an abuser or a potential abuser. Behaviour that involves several characteristics together or ongoing behaviour might provide reason for concern. Such a person should be observed closely, but discreetly, for a brief period before reporting the concern, if the concern remains.

Behavioural Indicators		
<p>Extra familial abuse (perpetrated by a non-family member)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Displays low self-esteem, poor self-image or poor impulse control due to possible abuse as a Child ● Displays withdrawn or placid demeanour ● Pays special attention to sad, vulnerable, isolated or lonely Children or those in single parent families ● Over emphasis upon morality ● Acts in a legalistic and inflexible manner ● Displays inappropriate affection to Children eg. front on hugging, touching or flirting ● Has favourite Children to whom gifts are given ● Strong denial or show of disgust of offence or any intention to offend ● Avoids screening processes, or attempts to do so ● Dislikes submission to authority, prefers to work alone, and is negative (or dismissive) when sexual abuse topics are raised 	<p><u>Continued:</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Spends considerable time with a Child or Children, outside of normal interactions ● Flatters Children to boost their egos ● Overly friendly/familiar with Children ● Describes Children in inappropriate ways for example, angelic or pure ● May remove himself/herself midway through an activity to have time with Children who may be in the toilet or other secluded area ● Gives articles of his/her clothing to a Child as gifts, eg. a cap, a jacket, footy-shirt etc ● Convincing in protests of innocence displaying a defence mechanism ● May be very outspoken and outraged about Child sex offenders ● Carries photos of Children other than his/her own, often indicating that these Children love him/her ● Attempts to engineer opportunities to be alone with a Child, eg. babysitting, car rides, Child minding ● Offers to take or takes Child home, shopping or on an outing ● Offers to collect Child from school or activities. Engages with single parents to access the Children
<p>Intra familial abuse (perpetrated by a family member)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Shows improper behaviour ● Showers with Children ● Expects an open-door policy in the bathroom ● Attempts to sit Children on lap, even when Child resists ● Exhibits inappropriate hugging and/or kissing 	<p><u>Continued:</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Attempts to shut down spouse/Child communications ● Children don't want to be home alone with the person ● Is jealous of Child's friends, boyfriend/girlfriend ● Child is treated like a spouse in conversation or decisions

5. Procedural Requirements

5.1. Working with Children Card

- (a) All Adult Members who are nominated by CAWA to climb with, guide or be responsible for Youth Members on CAWA trips, workshops or other events must apply for a Working with Children (**WWC**) Check and hold a current WWC Card under the *Working with Children (Criminal Record Checking) Act 2004*.
- (b) CAWA will pay for the application for WWC Check if successful.

5.2. TWO DEEP leadership

'TWO DEEP' leadership means that when Adults are supervising and conducting climbing activities involving Youth Members, at least two Adults must be present, except in unexpected, unusual and unforeseen circumstances such as an emergency.

While the ratio of Adults to Youth Members will vary from activity to activity, a minimum of two Adults is always required, and is to be the first consideration when planning any climbing activity. The failure to achieve this standard should not preclude the climbing from occurring but, every effort must be made to achieve the standard before commencement.

Note that in light of the 'burden of proof' for legal proceedings involving Child Abuse, this mandated TWO DEEP policy may be the primary, and could be the only, method of proving that Child Abuse could not have occurred. Accordingly, TWO DEEP is a vital precaution against any misconceived conduct on behalf of Adults, and for protecting the legal position of CAWA.

5.3. Additional procedures

- (a) Overnight activities: For every camp or overnight activity, each person must sleep in a separate bed. Adults are not to sleep in a room or camp with a Youth Member alone.
- (b) Changing and bathing (washing) arrangements: Provision is to be made for private changing facilities and separate showers for male and female Youth Members and Adults involved in overnight activities. Only Adults of the same gender as the Youth Member can supervise bathing. In these circumstances, the guiding principle is that the Youth Member feels safe and has a sense of privacy. Adults are to avoid placing themselves in a situation where Youth Members feel uncomfortable or compromised or where Adult actions could be misinterpreted.
- (c) Travel: On certain occasions (for example transporting a Youth Member from location to location) it is likely that only one Adult will be supervising. In these circumstances, prior informed consent (this may be verbal) is to be obtained from the parent(s)/guardian(s) of the Youth Member concerned. In this situation, care should be taken that the Adult is not alone with only one Youth Member (that is, the Youth Member is in the company of another Youth Member). Additionally:

- (i) Under no circumstance should any Adult accept a third party into travel arrangements without the prior informed written consent of parents (unless the third party is another Member). A Youth Member must feel safe and comfortable with the arrangements. Adults are to avoid placing themselves in a situation where Youth Members feel uncomfortable or compromised or where an Adult's actions could be misinterpreted.
 - (ii) Other than for the Youth Member of a parent/guardian or in a clear emergency, Adults must not travel alone with one Youth Member without the prior approval of the parent/guardian.
- (d) Contact by external parties: It is the responsibility of all Adults to ensure, as best as practicable, that while engaged in climbing activities, Youth Members are protected from unauthorised contact by external parties.
- (e) Social media and electronic communication: Child Abuse and grooming, can and does occur on-line. It is important that Adults do not place themselves in situations where their actions and communications could be misinterpreted. Adults should always include another Adult (or indeed a parent of the Youth Member) when communicating with Youth Members on-line. This includes all forms of social media and emails.
- (f) Further to the TWO DEEP requirement above, 'private' messaging between an Adult and a Youth Member (unless family) must be avoided. This provides not only a higher level of protection for Youth Members, importantly, it serves to protect an Adult from misinterpretation. 'Privately messaging' a Youth Member is considered the equivalent of going into a room alone with that Youth Member. It is contrary to the requirement of never placing oneself in a position where your words or actions could be misinterpreted.

In addition, Adults must not befriend Youth Members on social media, nor respond to requests to befriend (except family). Adults should not interact privately with Youth Members in any form of social media. Where social media is used to organise climbing trips and events a publicly 'open group' or event/activity network involving more than one Adult and more than one Youth Member is to be used. However, this does not mean that an Adult cannot be a friend of a Youth Member, nor does it mean that an Adult cannot provide mentoring and support to individual Youth Members, in a climbing context.

- (g) Photographs and recording: Adults should refrain from taking photographs and recordings of Youth Members unless they are intended for use by CAWA. Adults and Youth Members should not use photographic or recording devices of any kind in sleeping, changing or bathing (washing) areas.
- (h) Media access: Where possible planned media access to Youth Members must be authorised by the parent(s)/guardian(s) in advance of any event. Where this is not possible (because the media is unplanned) every effort is to be made to contact parents/guardians to seek permission by the fastest means possible. If permission cannot be obtained, media access is not to be given.

- (i) Youth to youth behaviour: Child Abuse can occur through youth interaction ranging from harassment and bullying to sexual contact. Social media can also be a vehicle for such abuse. CAWA requires that all Adults and parents be vigilant for this abuse.
- (j) Social Media: Youth Members are to be regularly reminded of the importance of respectful communications when using social media. Importantly, Youth Members are to be reminded about the dangers of befriending strangers and sharing details about themselves on-line.
- (k) Youth Member Child Protection education: The Child Protection practices contained in this section are to be regularly communicated to all Youth Members (as appropriate for age) together with a clear message that it is their right to feel safe at all times, and that if they do not, they are encouraged to share that feeling with an Adult immediately.

6. Sexual activity

There are numerous situations involving sexual relations with Youth Members and each must be dealt with differently as follows:

- (a) Any form of sexual activity between a Youth Member and an Adult is not permitted (whether or not the Youth Member has reached the age of consent (16 years of age)) and must immediately be reported to the President of CAWA, the Department of Communities and the WA Police. The individuals concerned should be advised of the breach of law (where this is alleged) and the Adult in charge of the activity or event must remove the Adult from the event or activity.
- (b) Sexual activity involving consenting Youth Members who have reached the legal age of consent (16) is not unlawful and therefore is not reportable. However, such activity is not condoned during climbing activities or events. The Youth Members concerned should be counselled to desist from such behaviour and, at the discretion of the Adult in charge of the activity or event, may be removed from the climbing event or activity and returned to their home (or other nominated place of residence), the cost of which will be met by the parent(s)/guardian(s).
- (c) Any form of sexual activity between Youth Members in which one or both have not reached the legal age of consent (16) is a criminal offence and must be reported to the President of CAWA, the Department of Communities and the WA Police. The Youth Members concerned are to be counselled to desist from such behaviour and, at the discretion of the Adult in charge of the activity or event, may be removed from the event or activity and returned to their home (or other nominated place of residence), the cost of which will be met by the parent(s)/guardian(s).

7. Disclosure and reporting Child Abuse

7.1. Disclosure of Child Abuse

- (a) Children are to be encouraged to bring any matter regarding their (or a peer's) safety to an Adult directly.
- (b) If a Child tells you they have been abused, respond positively and quickly:
 - (i) Believe them.
 - (ii) Thank them for telling you.
 - (iii) Let the Child know that:
 - It's not their fault.
 - Telling you is the right thing to do.
 - You will need to tell the authorities to stop the abuse.
 - (iv) Let them use their own words. You may need to ask open questions (what? when? who? etc) to work out if they need immediate protection. Avoid asking questions that may lead or influence their response or that provide more details than you need.
 - (v) Do not make promises to the child that you may not be able to keep.
 - (vi) Only discuss the Child's situation with people dealing with the matter.
 - (vii) Report the Child Abuse in accordance with section

7.2. Reporting Child Abuse

- (a) Child Abuse, and a reasonable suspicion of Child Abuse, must be reported despite the wishes of the Child concerned or any other person.
- (b) An investigation must not precede the making of a report. The most important consideration is the immediate safety and welfare of the Child.
- (c) When Child Abuse has occurred, is occurring or is likely to occur, or a reasonable suspicion has been formed that Child Abuse has occurred, is occurring, or is likely to occur, a report must immediately be made to:
 - (i) the President or another member of CAWA's Committee. Once a report has been made the Committee will convene as soon as possible to determine the next steps. However, if necessary, the President may act immediately;
 - (ii) the Department of Communities, or Crisis Helpline if outside business hours; and
 - Department of Communities:
Central Intake Team on 1800 273 889 or email
cpduty@communities.wa.gov.au
 - Crisis Helpline (24 Hour telephone service):
(08) 9223 1111 or free call 1800 199 008
 - (iii) the WA Police, if there is an immediate concern about the Child's safety or criminal acts have occurred.

WA Police:

131 444, or 000 (emergencies only)

- (d) A report must be made, even if there is no known or identifiable victim or suspected victim, such as where there is a concern about someone based on the behavioural characteristics outlined in this Policy or where there is a suspicion that a person's behaviour is inappropriate.
- (e) The receiver of a report of Child Abuse must not confront the person(s) named in the report, but should take necessary, common-sense action if the Child is in immediate danger.