



Safe in St John

This is a document for St John youth members. It summarises St John Victoria's Child Safety policy and explains how we will keep people under 18 years of age safe in St John Youth.

What is our commitment to you?

St John believes that everyone has the right to feel safe, to be treated with dignity and respect, and to be free from emotional and physical danger, abuse and neglect.

We place the highest priority on our duty of care to ensure that the youth members we are responsible for are protected against people and events which may cause them harm. We promote a culture where our people feel confident to raise issues of concern without fear.

For the purposes of child safety a child is any person under the age of 18 years.

What is abuse?

Child abuse occurs when someone causes emotional, sexual, or physical harm to a child, or when a child's basic needs are neglected. There are different forms of abuse, including:

Physical abuse

When a person uses physical force against a child which causes, or could cause, the child harm. It includes hitting, kicking, pushing or throwing something.

Emotional abuse

Harm caused to a child when their self-esteem and identity is damaged over time. It can involve insults, teasing, bullying, withholding affection or excessive discipline.

Neglect

The failure to provide for a child's basic needs, such as healthcare, supervision, nutrition or clothing, or failing to meet physical, emotion or safety needs.

Sexual abuse

Occurs when sexual acts are performed on a child, or in their presence, It includes physical acts

like kissing and touching, but it can also include comments of a sexual nature, or making a child look at sexual images.

Grooming

Actions taken by adults over time to prepare a child to be sexually abused. It often involves building a relationship with the child, or the child's carer and trying to gain their trust. It may involve showing favouritism, giving gifts, encouraging the child to step out of usual boundaries or isolating the child.

Exposure to family violence

Witnessing family violence or its consequences. Family violence may include controlling behaviours such as threats, emotional abuse, physical assault or sexual abuse, or actions that cause any member of the person's family to fear for their personal safety or wellbeing.

What happens if you feel unsafe, or an adult behaves in an unsafe manner?

If you feel unsafe, uncomfortable or distressed, or someone else tells you that they are unsafe, or if you see an adult behaving in a way that makes you feel unsafe you can:

- contact the St John Child Safety Officer by dialling **1300 853 515**. You can call them any time of the day, 7 days a week; or
- tell your parent or a trusted adult.

If someone is in immediate danger of being abused, or hurt, you should call triple zero (000) immediately to inform the Police. You should then let the Child Safety Officer or a St John leader know.



How must adults act around children in St John?

As well as acting in accordance with the laws that prohibit child abuse, all adult volunteers and employees of St John must follow the rules below, in which a child is defined as anyone under 18 years.

This is not an exhaustive list of behaviours – the principles must be applied in all situations.



1. Adults will role model positive behaviour and communication:

- use language around children which is positive and affirming and not in any way discriminatory, racist, sexist, derogatory, intimidating, homophobic or sexual in nature or content. Be mindful of the presence of youth members at events and in all conversations avoid swearing and content that is not appropriate for children;
- do not use bullying behaviour to manage children or maintain discipline;
- do not show favouritism to an individual child. Adults should discourage a child from showing excessive attention or favouritism towards them; and
- don't consume alcohol at a St John activity (including social events), where children are present. Smoke only in designated areas, and not in the view of youth members.



2. Adults will not place a child in a situation of risk:

- avoid one-to-one situations with a child in an enclosed space; including vehicles;
- avoid touching a child during practical first aid training. Where contact is unavoidable, ensure that another adult is present, the child's permission is gained; and the breast, buttocks and groin area are not touched;
- do not 'friend' or contact St John youth members using personal social media accounts;
- only use social media, telephone and email to communicate with a child on issues directly related to St John, where this is required as part of that adult's role;
- where a child is distressed, seek ways to provide comfort and support without an unnecessary degree of physical contact;
- ensure an adult is at training and events before children arrive; and in attendance until all children have been collected;
- during activities such as camps ensure that an appropriate number of supervising adults are onsite and only enter children's quarters accompanied by another adult; and
- don't transport a child to an activity or home without prior parental permission.



3. Adults must report any concerns about a child's safety:

- report people who break these rules or act outside of relevant policies and procedures; and
- do not dismiss or trivialise concerns raised by children.

How can you act to stay safe?

You have a responsibility to follow the rules of the activity or event that you are participating in.

You should let an adult leader or your parent know if you are unhappy with the way you are being treated or if you don't feel safe, or you can contact the Child Safety Officer.

Youth members are encouraged to contribute suggestions and feedback on how to make our activities safer.



Where can you find more information?

St John Victoria's Child Safety Policy and Child Safety Procedure outline in further detail the definition of child abuse, responsibilities of all St John personnel in relation to the safety of children, and the process for reporting issues.