



CELTIC LINKS INC

Reg: A0128102S

ABN: 65 756 925 332

Child Safety and Wellbeing Policy

Version number:	1.0
Approved by:	Celtic Links Inc Management Committee
Date:	11 February 2026 (at Committee Meeting)
Effective Date:	11 February 2026
Next Review Date:	10 February 2027
Policy Owner:	Celtic Links Inc Management Committee

Background

As a child safe organisation that aligns with the Victorian Child Safe Standards, Celtic Links Inc will clearly outline our steps to always protect all children from physical, sexual, emotional and psychological abuse and neglect.

Statement of Commitment

Celtic Links Inc is a Child Safe, welcoming and inclusive organisation, with zero tolerance for child abuse and an ongoing commitment to children's best interests.

All children who participate in our activities have a right to feel heard and be safe.

We encourage children to express their views and we listen to their suggestions, especially on matters that directly affect them.

Physical or sexual abuse of a child, including grooming for sexual conduct with a child under the age of 16 years, is a crime.

Members of the committee of Celtic Links Inc, who reasonably believe they have witnessed such abuse must by legal obligation, report it to relevant authorities, which may include Police.

Policy Purpose

Educate all committee members and volunteers of the Celtic Links Inc community on their responsibilities when interacting with children and young people at our events and to familiarise them with our processes and response to any concerns, incidents or allegations of harm or abuse to children and young people.

Scope

This policy applies to everyone involved at Celtic Links Inc including (but not limited to) committee members, volunteers, performers and participants.

Celtic Links Inc is committed to regularly reviewing its policies and practises to protect the safety and wellbeing of all children and young people.

Definitions

Child and Young Person means a person under the age of 18 years.

Child Abuse includes all forms of physical, emotional, psychological, verbal and/or sexual abuse. Child abuse also includes sexual exploitation, neglect or negligent treatment, grooming, harassing behaviour, bullying or other exploitation of a child or young person and includes any actions that results in actual or potential harm to a child or young person. Child abuse can be a single incident or take place over time.

Child protection means any responsibility, measure or activity undertaken to safeguard children from harm.

Celtic Links Inc is the name of the community group outlined in the header of this Policy document.

Cultural Safety is creating a safe environment for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people, and people from diverse cultures and backgrounds, with no assault, challenge or denial of their identity and experience.

Family violence occurs when children and young people are forced to live with violence between adults in their home. Family violence includes violence between members of a family, or extended family, or those fulfilling the role of family in a child or young person's life. It can include witnessing violence or the consequences of violence. Exposure to family violence places children and young people at increased risk of injury and harm and has a significant impact on their wellbeing and development.

Grooming is a term used to describe what happens when a perpetrator builds a relationship with a child or young person with the intent to abuse or harm them. Perpetrators may also groom parents/carers by forming relationships of trust with parents/carers before harming a child or young person. Grooming can take place over a long period of time before abuse occurs or the abuse can happen relatively quickly. Grooming can take place in physical (face-to-face) environments or online.

Harm can be any action that may have a significant impact on a child or young person's physical, psychological or emotional wellbeing. Harm can be caused by physical, psychological or emotional abuse or neglect, sexual abuse or exploitation, family violence, a single act, omission or circumstance and a series or combination of acts, omissions or circumstances.

Sexual abuse or exploitation is any act which exposes a child or young person to or involves them in sexual acts beyond their understanding or contrary to accepted community standards. Sexual offence 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, grooming, voyeurism, exhibitionism, and exposing the child to or involving the child in pornography. It also includes engaging a child or young person to participate in sexual conversations online.

Concerns and complaints include any issue that an adult or peer considers may negatively impact on the safety or wellbeing of a child or young person.

Expected Behaviour at Celtic Links Inc Events

All participants at Celtic Links Inc events have responsibilities in relation to the safety and wellbeing of children and young people and it is expected that:

The committee, volunteers and performers will understand the definitions of child abuse and harm and act on anything that they hear or see and they understand the rights of children, as appropriate to their role and cause no harm to a child or young person.

Celtic Links Inc value equity and diversity at our events and treat all children and young people with respect regardless of their race, religion, age, disability, cultural background, gender, sexual orientation or family/social background;

All third-party participants like spectators and guests are expected to abide by Celtic Links Inc Child Safe Code of Conduct, and where they may engage with children or young people, sign an agreement requiring them to comply with it.

Celtic Links Inc will appoint a Member Protection Officer that will be the primary point of contact for all concerns and complaints related to child safety and wellbeing.

Diversity and Inclusion

Celtic Links Inc values diversity and equity for all children.

We welcome and support participation of all children, including children with disability, children from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds, those who are unable to live at home, LGBTQIA+ children and Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children and their families.

Celtic Links Inc is committed to creating culturally safe environments for all Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children, their families and community members are welcomed and included.

Recruitment and Screening

Celtic Links Inc will seek to implement screening practices that reduce the risk of harm or abuse to children and young people by;

Requiring a valid Working with Children Check for all committee members and volunteers.

Committee members, performers and volunteers must read this Policy and related documents and familiarise themselves with child safe practices.

Supporting Celtic Links Inc Committee members and volunteers

Celtic Links Inc is committed to supporting committee members and volunteers to understand how to create a child safe and child friendly environment at our club.

Risk Management Approach

Celtic Links Inc recognises the importance of identifying and managing risks to children and young people in physical and online environments and we will employ risk management strategies as listed in the appendix.

Reporting

If a person receives information that leads them to form a reasonable belief that a sexual offence has been committed, that person has a legal obligation to disclose that information to the Police as soon as it is practicable.

Individuals who fail to comply with this obligation under the Crimes Act 1958 (Vic) may be subject to a penalty of imprisonment.

A number of professions in the community (including but not limited to teachers, nurses and doctors) are also required by law to report to Child Protection where they have formed a belief, on reasonable grounds, that a child is in need of protection because they have suffered (or are likely to suffer) significant harm due to physical or sexual abuse.

This report must be made as soon as practicable, and on any occasion where they become aware of other allegations and have reasonable grounds for belief.

Record Keeping and Information Sharing

Celtic Links Inc is committed to making and retaining accurate records of reports of child safety related concerns and complaints.

Celtic Links Inc will maintain records and outcomes of investigations and resolutions of concerns and complaints. In maintaining records of reports about child safety, we will maintain confidentiality and privacy for children and families.

As part of our commitment to continuously improve our children and young people safety practices, we will review identified risks to child and young people through the incident management and record keeping process and will incorporate those risks into the risk management plan. (See Risk Management below).

From time to time, Celtic Links Inc may share relevant information to promote the safety and wellbeing of children and young people where appropriate and in their best interest. This may include sharing information with external authorities to comply with the law or to prioritise the safety of a child or young person.

Supporting Documentation

Risk Management and Strategies

Key Risks

- Physical or Sexual abuse
- Grooming (abuse of trust usually occurs where there is an ongoing relationship)
- Inappropriate child-to-child or adult-to-child contact
- Circulation of sexually explicit material

Strategies

- Be aware of Child Safety to deter inappropriate behaviour
- Promote Child-Safe Policy in activity briefings and on the Celtic Links Inc website, and social media.
- Listen if children report feeling uncomfortable
- Make sure children and adults know whom to go to, if they have concerns.
- If families bring children to activities, immediately advise the parent or carer that they must directly supervise their children at all times
- Avoid, where possible, being solely responsible for others' children
- Where possible, design activities so there are clear sightlines and obstruct any hidden places that could conceal inappropriate conduct
- No volunteers are to be alone with a child at any time
- Celtic Links Inc leadership team are aware of and are committed to the improvement and promotion of the Child-Safe Policy
- Promote Code of Conduct covering Child Safety to participants at events.
- Encourage Committee members to keep informed with Child Safe policy updates and maintain a Working With Children Check where applicable.

Code of Conduct

Celtic Links members and community will:

- will take all reasonable steps to protect children from abuse
- will model appropriate adult behaviour
- will listen to children and respond to them appropriately
- will welcome all children and their parents or carers, will respect diversity, and will be inclusive
- will report any complaints, concerns or disclosures regarding Child Safety to a Celtic Links Inc Office Bearer as noted below. The Office Bearer will then address such concerns and/or report them to local Council or authorities.
- will respect privacy of children and only disclose information to people who need to know
- are committed to the cultural safety of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children and children of other diverse backgrounds
- will not ignore or disregard any complaints, concerns, or disclosures regarding child safety
- will not develop 'special' relationships with specific children or show favouritism with gifts or inappropriate attention
- will not exchange personal contact details such as phone numbers, social networking sites or email addresses with children.

Cultural Safety Strategies

Acknowledgement of Country at all performances, workshops and events.

Consult with families and members of the local Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander community to identify opportunities to promote their culture and practices in the Celtic Links Inc events.

Provide opportunities for children to share their cultural identity and express their culture, including through performance and during Celtic Links Inc community activities.

Example, during dance teaching ask if children know any of their own cultural dances or steps.

Providing training for volunteers on the strengths of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander culture and its importance to the wellbeing and safety of their children .

Celebrating NAIDOC Week and acknowledging significant events including National Sorry Day and National Reconciliation Week

Example, Social media and in-person acknowledgement if significant events fall over community event days.

Seeking feedback from Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children, families and communities on their experience at Celtic Links Inc, particularly how safe they feel expressing their identity including their culture.

Example, Feedback form with specific questions, if they want to and feel comfortable, they can identify and give us feedback.

APPENDIX 1

Victorian Child Safe Standards

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.
2. Child safety and wellbeing is embedded in organisational leadership, governance and culture.
3. Children and young people are empowered about their rights, participate in decisions affecting them and are taken seriously.
4. Families and communities are informed and involved in promoting child safety and wellbeing.
5. Equity is upheld and diverse needs respected in policy and practice.
6. People working with children and young people are suitable and supported to reflect child safety and wellbeing values in practice.
7. Processes for complaints and concerns are child focused.
8. Staff and volunteers are equipped with the knowledge, skills and awareness to keep children and young people safe through ongoing education and training.
9. Physical and online environments promote safety and wellbeing while minimising the opportunity for children and young people to be harmed.
10. Implementation of the Child Safe Standards is regularly reviewed and improved.
11. Policies and procedures document how the organisation is safe for children and young people.

Ref: <https://ccyp.vic.gov.au/child-safe-standards/the-11-child-safe-standards/>