



WOLLANGARRA PROTECTION POLICY STATEMENT

KEY POLICY FEATURES:

Wollangarra Protection Policy Statement, Wollangarra Code of Conduct, Protective Measures for Wollangarra Staff, Procedures for Addressing Protection Breaches, Rights and Responsibilities.

For the purposes of this policy, the word 'participant' refers to a participant or person up until the age of 18 years.

POLICY STATEMENT:

Wollangarra Inc. is committed to the health, safety and well-being of all its staff and participants and is dedicated to providing a safe environment for participating in all activities.

Abuse is defined as anything that individuals or organisations do, or fail to do, that directly or indirectly harms people or damages their prospects of a safe and healthy development. This includes physical abuse, emotional abuse, inappropriate training, inappropriate touching, sexual abuse and neglect. (National Association for the Prevention of Child Abuse and Neglect, 2000)

This Protection Policy Statement conveys a message to all Wollangarra volunteers and participants, and prospective staff and participants, responsible for all activities, particularly those involving participants under 18 years of age, about minimising risk exposure of these staff and participants. All Wollangarra staff and participants have a responsibility to provide safeguards dedicated to the well-being of other staff and participants.

The abuse of staff and participants, by other staff and participants or external source, is not acceptable.

Wollangarra encourages all incidents of such abuse, as described in this policy, to be reported immediately to the appropriate authorities.

WOLLANGARRA CODE OF CONDUCT

Wollangarra endorses the following Code of Conduct for Wollangarra staff and participants, particularly those responsible for activities involving participants under the age of 18.

All Wollangarra staff and participants, should meet the following requirements concerning conduct during any Wollangarra activity.

- Respect the rights, dignity and worth of others.
- Be fair, considerate and honest in all dealings with others.
- Be professional in, and accept responsibility for your actions.
- Make a commitment to providing quality service.
- Be aware of, and maintain an uncompromising adherence to, Wollangarra standards, rules, regulations and policies.
- Wollangarra expects all staff and participants, supporters, advisors and associates to Wollangarra to abide by a Code of Conduct which upholds the principles and values of the organisation and this Protection Policy Statement. Staff and participants should recognise that at all times they have a responsibility to a duty of care to all Wollangarra staff and participants.

Specifically:

- Understand the possible consequences if you breach Wollangarra's Protection Policy Statement or Code of Conduct.
- Immediately report any breaches of the Wollangarra Protection Policy Statement or Code of Conduct to the appropriate authority.
- Refrain from any form of abuse towards others.
- Refrain from any form of harassment towards others.
- Provide a safe environment for the conduct of the activity in accordance with relevant Wollangarra policy.
- Show concern and caution towards others that may be sick or injured.
- Be a positive role model.

A Wollangarra Director will:

- Agree to abide by the Code of Conduct

- Be responsible for the overall welfare and well-being of staff and participants.
- Maintain a 'duty of care' towards staff and participants and an accountability for the management of the staff team.
- Have a sound knowledge of Wollangarra policies, responsibilities and rules, and ensure that the conduct of the affairs of the organization is in accordance with these policies and guidelines.
- Foster a collaborative approach to the management of all staff.

A Wollangarra Staff Member will:

- Agree to abide by the Code of Conduct.
- Maintain a 'duty of care' towards others and an accountability for matters relating to all aspects of program facilitation.
- Have a sound working knowledge of Wollangarra policies, rules and regulations.
- Ensure that any physical contact with others is:
 - Appropriate to the situation
 - Necessary for the persons skill development
- Provide a safe environment..
- Be a positive role model for all participants at Wollangarra.

A Wollangarra Council Member will:

- Agree to abide by the Code of Conduct.
- Be fair, considerate and honest with others.
- Operate within the rules of Wollangarra.
- Be professional in their actions.
- Resolve conflicts fairly and promptly through established procedures.
- Maintain a safe environment for others.
- Be a positive role model for others.

PROTECTIVE MEASURES FOR WOLLANGARRA STAFF AND DIRECTORS

These are responsible positions in the organisation and each participant must adopt these risk minimization measures to protect themselves from misconceptions about their behaviour in performing their designated roles.

RISK MINIMISATION MEASURES

Do not engage, or allow others to engage, in any of the following:

- Abusive initiation ceremonies
- Inappropriate undressing/dressing in front of participants
- Invading the privacy of participants while showering or toileting
- Photographing participants while undressing/dressing, showering or toileting
- Sleeping in closed quarters with participants without a second adult representative, parent etc.
- Aggressive, physically distressing or sexually provocative activities
- Sexually suggestive comments about or to a participant
- Inappropriate or intrusive touching of a participant
- Joking, ridiculing, rejecting, isolating, or taking the 'mickey' out of a participant.

While many of the above points may not be legally actionable, they are against the principles and value of Wollangarra and guarded against in the Code of Conduct.

Staff should:

- Maintain an open door policy when conducting any briefings, meetings or discussions with participants.
- Treat all staff and participants with respect and dignity.
- Be mindful of your language, tone of voice and body language.
- Address the problem not the person. Let staff and participants know that when they are difficult it is their behaviour that is 'not OK' and the participant 'is OK'.
- Foster teamwork and group cohesion between participants allowing for the ability to point out inappropriate attitudes and behaviour by participants of the team.
- Do not tolerate abusive or inappropriate behaviour - deal with it immediately.
- Encourage participants - don't pressure them. Be mindful of each participant's individual capacities for all activities and protect them from pressure to participate.

- Respect staff and participant's privacy. Expect them to respect yours.
- Do not become involved in excessive attention seeking behaviour, physically or sexually, by a participant.
- Be mindful of the very needy participant and redirect their attention to all activities.
- Maintain your status as a ROLE MODEL to participants and other adults. Be friendly, courteous and kind.
- Don't abuse your position. Always set a good example in dress, behaviour, language etc.
- Reparticipant - one staff participant's inappropriate behaviour reflects on all of Wollangarra's staff.
- UNDERSTAND WOLLANGARRA POLICIES on protection and grievances, and respect them.

This list of risk minimisation strategies is not exhaustive but is designed to be a guide for Wollangarra staff to uphold the values and principles Wollangarra Inc.

CHECKLIST FOR WOLLANGARRA STAFF WHERE ABUSE IS SUSPECTED

Use the following guidelines should you or any other staff participant suspect abuse:

1. You have suspicion on reasonable grounds:
 - When a participant tells you they have been abused.
 - When someone else tells you a participant has been abused.
 - A participant tells you they know someone who has been abused (often they are referring to themselves).
 - You observe a participant's behaviour and/or injuries etc, and your knowledge the participant, leads you to suspect abuse.
 - You observe a participant's abuse of another participant.
2. If you suspect a participant has been abused follow these procedures:
 - Ensure the participant is safe (if they are in your care).
 - Maintain the safety of other participant staff and participants in accordance with WOLLANGARRA Regulations and the Code of Conduct.
 - Obtain and document the following information to provide to the relevant authorities:

the participant's name, age and address; your reason for suspecting abuse (ie. observation, injury, information); your assessment of danger posed to the participant including information pertaining to the alleged perpetrator; what arrangements, if any, exist for the immediate protection of the participant; what involvement, if any, other agencies have in dealing with the suspected participant protection issues.

Make direct and confidential contact with the Child Protection Unit / Police. They will advise you on such issues as parental involvement, police involvement, medical treatment, Wollangarra's position, and the state authority's role. Remember, if in doubt, seek immediate advice. In the event that you suspect abuse by someone who is not a Wollangarra staff member or participant (eg. Family participant, visitor) the above advice should be followed.

PROCEDURE FOR ADDRESSING SUSPECTED INAPPROPRIATE BEHAVIOUR

1. Ensure all staff and participants are aware of the Wollangarra Protection Policy Statement, Wollangarra Regulations and Wollangarra Code of Conduct.
2. Any person suspected of breaching any of the Wollangarra Protection Policy Statement and Code of Conduct is to be reported to the Wollangarra Council. All known facts and suspicions are to be confided in a Council Member.
3. Anonymous claims of abuse or breaches of the above Code and policies are to be taken seriously and immediately reported to the WOLLANGARRA Council for investigation.
4. *If the issue involves suspected abuse then:*
 - a. The person to whom the suspected breach has been reported will advise the Child Protection Unit / Police immediately on being made suspicious and declare all available details.
 - b. Wollangarra will seek and follow the advice of the Child Protection Unit / Police on what action Wollangarra should take.

OPTIONS FOR ACTION IN EACH STATE

The tools for implementing participant protection vary according to state legislation and guidelines set by government agencies and protection authorities. An example of a participant protection vehicle is police screening of Wollangarra staff as part of recruitment for all roles.

The following guidelines may be used as a measure by Wollangarra for addressing participant protection issues:

- Report the matter to the relevant state department of welfare services, children’s services or child protection.
- Report the matter to the police and preferably, the child protection units, as appropriate in your state.
- If abuse is suspected / proven Wollangarra may enforce a termination of employment.

ACTION ON ABUSE REPORTED DIRECTLY TO WOLLANGARRA

In the event that suspected abuse of an Wollangarra participant is reported in the first instance to Wollangarra then the following action is to occur:

Wollangarra will report the matter immediately and confidentially to the Child Protection Unit / Police for investigation.

WOLLANGARRA - RIGHTS AND RESPONSIBILITIES MATRIX

Wollangarra has the right to:	Wollangarra is responsible for:
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● expect all staff and participants to comply with its Code of Conduct; ● expect all participant staff and participants to maintain standards of reasonable behaviour; ● take appropriate action if staff and participants breach the Code of Conduct or a Wollangarra Policy. ● expect all staff and participants to undertake appropriate training when advised to; ● expect that staff will not abuse staff and participants physically, emotionally or sexually; ● take appropriate action in the event of accusations; ● acquire police checks relating to convictions in relevant areas. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● providing a safe environment for staff and participants; ● providing ongoing training and information for Wollangarra staff; ● wide promotion of this policy and procedures; ● facilitating open discussion on participant protection issues; ● insisting states provide support to staff and participants who report accusations of abuse; ● providing appropriate referrals for staff and participants reporting accusations of abuse; ● treating suspected abuse information confidentially; ● taking appropriate action if staff and participants breach standards of reasonable behaviour or Wollangarra policies and Regulations.

WOLLANGARRA STAFF

Wollangarra staff have the right to:	Wollangarra staff are responsible for:
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● access to ongoing training and information on all aspects of leading/managing all activities for participants, particularly participant protection; ● support in the reporting of suspected abuse; ● access to professional support services; ● fair and equitable treatment by Wollangarra according to Wollangarra Regulations and Policies; ● be protected from abuse by participants, other adult staff and participants and parents. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● fostering team work to ensure the safety of participants in their care; ● using appropriate team management behaviour; ● responding to staff and participants’ statements concerns about alleged abuse; ● ensuring the rights and responsibilities of staff and participants are enforced; ● reporting suspected abuse to the appropriate Wollangarra authority; ● not abusing staff and participants physically, emotionally or sexually; ● maintaining confidentiality about sensitive information as designated by the appropriate Wollangarra authority.

PARTICIPANTS

Participant’s have the right:	Participant’s are responsible for:
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● to be safe; ● to be listened to; ● to be respected; ● to privacy; <p>PARTICIPANTS IN ADDITION have the right:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● to take calculated risks in a protective environment; ● to an inclusive environment; ● to be referred to professional help if needed; ● to be protected from abuse by other staff and participants or outside sources. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● showing respect to other participants and Wollangarra staff; ● keeping themselves safe; ● accurately reporting inappropriate behaviour or risky situations for participants; ● behaving in an appropriate manner at all times.

BULLYING AND HARASSMENT

Bullying is an act of aggression causing embarrassment, pain or discomfort to another. It can take many forms – physical, verbal, gesture, victimisation, extortion, exclusion or offensive notes/graffiti etc. Forms of harassment, such as those of a sexual or racial nature, are also unwanted behaviour directed towards an individual. This sort of behaviour will not be ignored and staff are instructed to take appropriate action. This means reporting any such incidents to the directors, removing occasions for bullying by conducting well organised activities and simply by being vigilant. Bullying and harassment must always be treated seriously – it is important to be consistent and assertive in dealing with all forms of bullying.