



## CHILD SAFETY & WELLBEING CODE OF CONDUCT

Absolute Outdoors (AO) believes all children who participate in activities with us have a right to feel and be safe. AO is committed to promoting and protecting the equity, interests, rights, safety and wellbeing of all children. We have a zero tolerance for any form of abuse, harm, or neglect of children. We are committed to creating an environment where children's voices are heard, respected, and acted upon. We actively promote the cultural safety of Aboriginal children, children from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds, and children with disabilities.

This includes maintaining a culture where the prevention and reporting of abuse is supported and encouraged. All staff, volunteers, contractors, and other people engaged by AO are responsible for promoting the safety, wellbeing, and empowerment of children.

This Code of Conduct sets expectations for how adults in our company should behave around children. This is important to help prevent children from being harmed. Child abuse takes many forms and can include physical, sexual, and psychological abuse, ill-treatment, and neglect. Our Child Safety & Wellbeing Policy provides more information about these different types of abuse.

This Code of Conduct identifies positive child-safe behaviours that we expect all adults to support at all times. It also identifies behaviours that we consider unacceptable. Engaging in unacceptable behaviour is a breach of this Code of Conduct and may result in managerial or disciplinary action.

Some examples of concerning behaviours are also provided below. These are behaviours that on their own may not constitute a breach of the Code of Conduct but together may indicate a pattern of behaviour that poses a risk to the safety of children.

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### **I will:**

- Treat all children and young people with respect.
- Listen to and value children and young people's ideas and opinions.
- Welcome all children and their families and carers by being inclusive.
- Actively promote diversity and cultural safety and inclusion.
- Listen to children and respond to them appropriately.
- Welcome parents and carers to participate in decisions about their child's involvement in AO activities and programs and any other matters about their safety.
- Report any conflicts of interest (e.g. an outside relationship with a child).

- Adhere to all relevant Australian and Victorian legislation and AO child-safe policies and procedures.
  - Work within a team to ensure that the needs of the child (and their family) remain the paramount focus.
  - Participate in all compulsory training.
  - Apply effective risk management strategies (including activity risk assessments) and raise concerns with management or directors if risks to child safety and wellbeing are identified, including cultural, environmental, and operational risks.
  - Report and act on any concerns or observed breaches of this Code of Conduct.
  - Take all reasonable steps to protect children from abuse.
  - Respect the privacy of children and their families by keeping all information about child protection concerns confidential.
  - Inform parents and carers (or supervisors/teachers on school or club activities and programs) if there are situations that need to be safely managed but are outside the boundaries of this Code of Conduct.
  - Take a child seriously if they disclose harm or abuse.
  - Ensure breaches of this Code are reported immediately.
  - Uphold the rights of the child and always prioritise their needs.
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## **I will not:**

- Condone or participate in illegal, unsafe, or abusive behaviour towards children, including physical, sexual, or psychological abuse, ill-treatment, neglect, or grooming.
  - Ignore or disregard any concerns, suspicions, or disclosures of child abuse.
  - Exaggerate or trivialise child abuse issues.
  - Use hurtful, discriminatory, or offensive behaviour or language with children.
  - Fail to report information to police if I know a child has been abused.
  - Engage in unwarranted and inappropriate touching involving a child.
  - Persistently criticise and/or denigrate a child.
  - Deliberately prevent a child from forming friendships.
  - Verbally assault a child or create a climate of fear.
  - Offer children and young people alcohol, cigarettes, or other drugs.
  - Show children pornographic images.
  - Encourage a child to communicate with me in a private setting.
  - Share details of sexual experiences with a child.
  - Use sexual language or gestures in the presence of children.
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## **I understand the following types of behaviour may be of concern:**

- Being alone with a child when there is no professional reason for doing so.
- Showing favour to one child over others.
- Babysitting, mentoring, and/or tutoring a child that I do not know personally through an established relationship outside of work hours (without managerial approval for this kind of secondary employment).
- Giving gifts to children that where there is no professional reason to do so or existing personal relationship with the child that has already been disclosed to management.

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All staff, volunteers, contractors, and other people engaged by AO are encouraged to speak up if they have concerns about the safety of children. Complaints about a breach of this Code of Conduct must be reported to either of the directors immediately:

- Adrian Manikas – Managing Director – 0402 664 050

Some breaches of this Code of Conduct may need to be reported to Victoria Police. The Child Safe Policy gives more information on our reporting obligations to external authorities. This policy can be found on the AO Google Drive.

Any staff, volunteer, contractor, or other people engaged by AO who breach our Code of Conduct may also be subject to disciplinary action. This can include increased supervision, appointment to an alternative role, suspension, or termination from the company.

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**Please note:**

In Victoria, it is a criminal offence for any adult (not just professionals working with children) to fail to disclose child sexual abuse. Any adult who forms a reasonable belief that a sexual offence has been committed by an adult against a child under 16 years of age must report that information to police unless they have a reasonable excuse. A reasonable excuse may include fear for safety or where the information has already been reported.

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**SIGNATURE:**

I have read this Code of Conduct and agree to abide by it and its terms.

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Signature: \_\_\_\_\_

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

*Administrative note: A copy of this Code of Conduct should be kept in the signer's personnel file (updated any time the Code of Conduct changes).*