

Code of Conduct - working with children

1. Application

- (a) This policy applies to all Aliya Youth Space and Aliya Girls Space board members, staff and volunteers who have contact with children.
- (b) This policy applies to all activities, programs, events and excursions which involve, result in or relate to contact with children.

2. Introduction

Aliya is committed to having a youth space that is safe for all children where child abuse and harm are not tolerated. Child safety is a priority for Aliya and the prevention and reporting of abuse is supported and encouraged.

All staff and volunteers responsible for promoting the safety, wellbeing and empowerment of children. Aliya recognises that discrimination can harm children and we treat all children with dignity and respect.

3. Objectives

This Code of Conduct sets expectations for how staff and volunteers should behave around children. This helps children participate safely in our organisation and have fun.

Aliya welcomes youth from all different backgrounds, so having behavioural standards to manage the risks to children is important. This Code of Conduct identifies positive child safe behaviours that we ask staff and volunteers to demonstrate. It also identifies behaviours that we consider unacceptable and not permitted at our organisation.

Not following standards of acceptable and unacceptable behaviour is a breach of this Code of Conduct and may result in disciplinary action. Some behaviours on their own may not be a serious breach of the Code of Conduct but together may indicate a concerning pattern of behaviour that poses a risk to the safety of children.

Aliya staff and volunteers must always follow these standards of behaviour, including when at the Aliya Youth Space, attending an excursion and when engaging with Aliya members and their families at any time.

4. Positive behaviours

Staff and volunteers of Aliya must at all times:

- (a) take all reasonable steps to protect children from abuse;
- (b) take disclosures of harm or abuse made by a child seriously;
- (c) raise concerns with management if risks to child safety are identified. Report and act on any concerns or observed breaches of this Code of Conduct;

- (d) participate in all compulsory training and professional development including training on child safety and wellbeing;
- (e) treat all children and young people with respect, regardless of race, sex, gender identity, sexual orientation, language, religion, political or other opinion, nationality, cultural background, financial situation, disability or other characteristics;
- (f) consider the different needs of all children at Aliya, support them to participate fully in programs and help them and their families feel included in the organisation;
- (g) never discriminate against anyone at Aliya;
- (h) help Aliya be a place where people of all backgrounds feel safe and included;
- (i) listen to children and respond to them if they feel unsafe;
- (j) value children and young people's ideas and opinions;
- (k) promote friendships and encourage children and young people to support their peers;
- (l) involve children and young people in decisions about the activities they participate in at Aliya and welcome the participation of parents and carers in these decisions;
- (m) report any conflicts of (such as an outside relationship with a child) that may affect ability to perform a role;
- (n) respect the privacy of children and their families, including keeping all personal information confidential unless required by law to share it;
- (o) inform parents and carers if there are situations that need to be safely managed (such as driving a child to an excursion or having a one-on-one catch up);
- (p) ensure breaches of this Code of Conduct are reported to a Child Safety Person immediately. A Child Safety Person can be contacted Menny Overlander, 0490024142, Director@aliya.org.au;
- (q) comply with all relevant Australian and Victorian legislation and our child safe policies and procedures; and
- (r) uphold the rights of the child and always prioritise their needs.

5. Unacceptable behaviours

Staff and volunteers of Aliya must **not**:

- (a) condone or participate in illegal, unsafe, abusive or harmful behaviour towards children, this includes physical violence, sexual abuse, emotional or psychological abuse, grooming, neglect or sexual misconduct;
- (b) ignore or disregard any concerns, suspicions or disclosures of child abuse or harm;
- (c) exaggerate or trivialise child abuse issues;
- (d) use hurtful or offensive behaviour or language with children;

- (e) fail to report information to police if it is known that a child has been abused;
- (f) touch children in a way that is unnecessary or unsuitable and falls outside what is reasonable to engage in the activities of Aliya;
- (g) persistently criticise and/or denigrate a child;
- (h) deliberately prevent a child from forming friendships;
- (i) verbally assault a child or create a climate of fear;
- (j) offer children and young people alcohol, cigarettes or other drugs;
- (k) show children pornographic images;
- (l) share details of sexual experiences with a child;
- (m) use sexual language or gestures in the presence of children;
- (n) initiate unnecessary physical contact with children or do things of a personal nature that children can do for themselves such as changing clothes;
- (o) develop 'special' relationships with specific children or show favouritism through the provision of gifts or unnecessary or unsuitable attention;
- (p) have unauthorised contact with children and young people online, on social media or by phone;
- (q) take photographs, screenshots or share images of children involved in activities that are not authorised by Aliya;
- (r) be alone with a child for reasons other than carrying out Aliya's support services;
- (s) engage in babysitting, mentoring and/or tutoring a child out of Aliya program and event hours; and
- (t) enter changing facilities.

6. Breach

If there is a suspected breach of this Code of Conduct by another person, Aliya requires staff and volunteers to:

- (a) act to prioritise the best interests of the child or children;
- (b) promptly take actions to ensure the child or children are safe;
- (c) as soon as possible report the incident or concerns to a Child Safety Person. If the concern relates to a Child Safety Person report the incident to Shuie Gestetner, Shuieg@gmail.com; and
- (d) maintain the privacy of those involved.

7. Disciplinary Procedure

Staff and volunteers who breach our Code of Conduct may also be subject to disciplinary action in accordance with the Disciplinary Procedure. The Disciplinary Procedure may include the below steps where appropriate:

(a) Step 1: Preliminary Investigation

In the event there is an allegation of breach of this Code of Conduct by an Aliya staff member or volunteer, The CEO [Menny Overlander] and/or the Treasurer [Shuie Gestetner] will examine the allegation to determine whether or not there is any substance to the allegation.

(b) Step 2: Advice to staff member or volunteer

Where the CEO and/or the Treasurer determine that the allegation has substance, where appropriate the staff member or volunteer concerned will be advised of the nature of the allegation, the potential impact on their position in the organisation if the allegation is sustained and the fact that the matter will be fully investigated. They will be entitled to a support person.

(c) Step 3: Suspension

Where the seriousness or nature of the incident requires, The CEO and/or the Treasurer may where appropriate suspend the staff member or volunteer from Aliya while the matter is being investigated.

(d) Step 4: Formal Investigation

A formal investigation may be carried out by Menny Overlander and/or Shuie Gestetner. Discussions will be held with all persons considered appropriate by Shuie Gestetner.

(e) Step 5: Interview staff member or volunteer

Where appropriate, the staff member or volunteer concerned will then be advised of the time, date and venue of a meeting to discuss the matter further. The staff member or volunteer will be reminded of their right to bring a support person.

In any meeting, where appropriate, the allegations will be described to the staff member or volunteer concerned, together with any and all information obtained during the investigation.

During any meeting the staff member or volunteer concerned will be given the opportunity to provide an explanation, make further submissions on their own behalf and ask questions.

Menny Overlander and/or Shuie Gestetner will then consider any explanation given by the staff member or volunteer.

The meeting may be adjourned to consider the explanation and any other information provided by the staff member or volunteer. Further investigations will be conducted if required.

(f) Step 6: Decision

If Menny Overlander and/or Shuie Gestetner determine that the allegation is not substantiated no action will be taken against the staff member or volunteer. The staff member or volunteer shall then be free to resume duties as directed.

If Menny Overlander and/or Shuie Gestetner determines that the allegation is substantiated, the appropriate form of disciplinary action may be determined and applied.

In cases of serious breaches of the Code of Conduct, the staff member or volunteer may be dismissed from the organisation immediately.

Less serious breaches of the Code of Conduct may be subject to other disciplinary action including verbal and written warnings, increased supervision, appointment to an alternative role or suspension.

(g) Step 7: Implementation

Menny Overlander and/or Shuie Gestetner may call a meeting to explain the decision to the staff member or volunteer.

The staff member or volunteer is entitled to be represented and/or have another person present as a witness.

After the meeting any decision will be confirmed in writing.

Each warning may be for unrelated matters. A copy of each warning will be kept on the staff member or volunteer personal file.

8. Reporting

Some breaches of this Code of Conduct may need to be reported to the Victorian Police, or to the Commission for Children and Young People (CCYP).

If any person in a position of authority within our organisation becomes aware of a substantial risk that a child may become the victim of a sexual offence committed by an adult associated with the organisation (for example a volunteer), and they have the power or responsibility to reduce or remove the risk, then they must take all reasonable steps to do so. A person in authority who negligently fails to take appropriate action to address the risk may be charged with a criminal offence, e.g. 'failing to protect' and may face a term of imprisonment.

If an adult reasonably believes a sexual offence has been committed by an adult against a child under the age of 16, they must report it to Victoria Police by calling 000 or going to their local police station. For non-urgent crimes and events, call 131 444 or submit an online report. Failure to disclose the information may be a criminal offence.

9. Supporting documents

The following policies and procedures work together to support child safety and wellbeing across all of our operations:

- (a) Child Safety and Wellbeing Policy;
- (b) Complaint Handling Policy;
- (c) Risk Management Plan; and



(d) Child Safe Training Plan.

Date: Last reviewed: 1 July 2022

Next review date: 1 July 2024

Responsible Officer: Rabbi Menny Overlander

Signature

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

Name: