

SOUTHERN CROSS KIDS' CAMPS

CHILD SAFETY REPORTING PROCEDURE

BACKGROUND

This procedure sets out who needs to report what, when, to whom and when there is a current safety concern. It includes all forms of child safety, including child sexual abuse.

WHO SHOULD REPORT?

This policy applies to everyone involved with children at Southern Cross Kids' Camps. A child is anyone under the age of 18.

WHAT SHOULD BE REPORTED?

Any child safety concerns must be reported including:

- Disclosure of abuse or harm
- Allegation, suspicion or observation of inappropriate behaviour
- Breach of Code of Conduct
- Environmental safety issues
- Any behaviour or circumstances that create some concern about safety

Abuse means all forms of physical, sexual, emotional or psychological abuse and neglect, and includes actions that result in actual or potential harm to a child.

WHO TO REPORT TO

- All safety issues must be reported to the Child Safety Officer.
- Depending on the issue, the person with the concern may also need to report to the authorities, as set out in this procedure.
- The National Office must be informed of any reports that are made.
- Our Insurance company ACS Insurance Services 1800 646 777.
- In the state of Victoria only, a report must also be made to The Commission for Children and Young People - Reportable Conduct Scheme 8601-5281.

PROCEDURE

Please contact the Child Safety Officer at any stage for assistance.

1. CALL EMERGENCY SERVICES 000 IF THERE IS IMMEDIATE DANGER

***Remove any immediate threat if possible, and call 000.**

2. LISTEN TO ANY CONCERNS BEING RAISED

If you are under 18, and a child starts to talk with you about behaviour which sounds concerning because it may indicate child abuse, ask the Child Safety Officer, Director, or another leader for help. If you are over 18, interact with the child as follows:

- Support the child and reassure them that telling someone was the right thing to do.
- Emphasise that what occurred was not their fault.
- Stop questioning the child, if the conduct described is likely to constitute criminal conduct. Involve the child safety officer as soon as possible.
- Consider whether expert assistance is needed to support a child to communicate their concern or disclosure (for example, disability expert, language or cultural interpreter).
- Limit questioning; ask only open questions.
- Undertake to do something in response to what the child has said and, where appropriate, explain what will be done and the expected time frame.
- Don't make promises that cannot be kept, including that the information will remain confidential; tell the child who will be told and why.
- Document the conversation using the child's exact words as far as possible. If in doubt, ask a leader or the Child Safety Officer for help.

3. WRITE UP THE CONCERN

- Make notes straight away using the SCKC Child Safety Reporting Notes form, available on Podio. If the form isn't immediately available, make a note of the following:
 - Date & time and who was present.
 - Information that has led to concerns about the child's safety (e.g. physical injuries, behaviour).
 - The source of this information (e.g. observation of behaviour, report from child or another person).
 - The actions taken as a result of the concerns (e.g. consultation with the Child Safety Officer, report to Police or Child Protection).

4. REPORT TO POLICE IF YOU HAVE A REASONABLE BELIEF OF CHILD SEXUAL ABUSE

WHO HAS TO MAKE A REPORT TO POLICE?

If you are 18 or over, you are personally obliged to report to police if you have a reasonable belief that a person who is 18 or older has committed or attempted to commit a sexual offence against a child who is under 16, unless:

- reporting would endanger someone other than the perpetrator; or
- all of the information has already been reported to police by someone else

A 'reasonable belief' is formed if a reasonable person in the same position would have formed the belief on the same grounds. It is not the same as having proof, but is more than mere rumour or speculation.

A 'reasonable belief' might be formed when:

- a child states that they have been sexually abused;

- a child states that they know someone who has been sexually abused (sometimes the child may be talking about themselves);
- someone who knows the child states that the child has been sexually abused; or
- signs of sexual abuse leads to a belief that the child has been sexually abused.

If in doubt, you can contact the Child Safety Officer or the police for guidance, but you have to make your own decision about whether to report to the police or not.

HOW TO MAKE A REPORT TO POLICE

To make a report to police when there is no immediate danger, contact your nearest Sexual Offences and Child Abuse Investigation Team (SOCIT). Numbers are available on State Police websites.

NOTIFYING OTHERS

- You must also complete an SCKC “Child Abuse Report” form accessible on podio. The Child Safety Officer can help you do this. Once completed give form to Child Safety Officer, unless the allegation is against that person. The form would then be given to the Camp Director. **This information must be forwarded to the National Office.**
- You should respect everyone’s privacy and not discuss your concerns with anyone else, except confidentially if you need to seek support yourself.
- If in doubt about how to provide or receive support, speak to the Pastor of Men/Women.
- You must also inform our insurance company ACS Insurance Services 1800 646 777.

5. REPORT TO CHILD SAFETY OFFICER

All concerns about abuse including suspected or potential abuse must be reported to the Camp’s/Club’s Child Safety Officer, or Camp Director if the Child Safety Officer is suspected of inappropriate behaviour. Further guidance can be sought from the National Office if required.

6. FOLLOW UP TO ENSURE THE CHILD IS PROTECTED

If you are an adult on Camp/Club you must follow up to make sure that appropriate action has been taken to protect the child. Failure to do so may constitute a criminal offense.

7. WHAT ABOUT MANDATORY REPORTING?

A mandatory reporter is only required to make a report to DHS if your concern arises while you are acting in your capacity as a mandatory reporter.

However, steps 1 – 6 of this Reporting Procedure will always be followed.

Likewise, you do not need to make a report if you can prove that you honestly and reasonably believe that all allegations of abuse have already been reported.

WHO IS A MANDATORY REPORTER?

This varies from State to State. If you are unsure, you can look it up on your States websites. The following list applies in the State of Victoria: registered medical practitioners, nurses, midwives, registered teachers and early childhood teachers, school principals, police officers, some staff of children's services, registered psychologist, youth justice officers, and youth parole officers. Youth, social and welfare workers may also be mandatory reporters.

DO I HAVE TO MAKE A REPORT?

While a number of people are mandated to report, at SCKC you will report if you have formed a belief on reasonable grounds that the child is in need of protection, that is:

- the child has suffered or is likely to suffer significant harm as a result of physical injury or sexual abuse

AND

- the child's parents have not protected, or are unlikely to protect the child from that harm.

A belief is based on reasonable grounds that criminal child abuse has occurred when all known considerations or facts relevant to the formation of a belief are taken into account and these are objectively assessed. Circumstances or considerations may include the source of the allegation and how it was communicated, the nature of and details of the allegation, whether there are any other related matters known regarding the alleged perpetrator.

You do not need to make a report if you can prove that you honestly and reasonably believe that all allegations of abuse have already been reported.

HOW TO MAKE A REPORT?

Refer to the DHS/DOCS, or other State equivalents guide to making a report to child protection. Refer to the Agency in your states guide to making a report to child protection.

WHEN TO MAKE A REPORT?

You must make a report as soon as practicable after forming the belief and after each occasion on which you become aware of any further grounds for the belief.

Report to Child Protection if you believe a child is in need of protection.

- Reporting can be done in conjunction with the Child Safety Officer, unless the report is against that person.

You do not need to report if you can prove that you honestly and reasonably believed that all of the grounds for your belief have already been reported.

Report to Child Safety Person and SCKC General Manager

All child safety concerns must be reported to the Child Safety Person and the SCKC General Manager. If either of those people is suspected of inappropriate behaviour, seek guidance from your Camp Director or Club Leader.

If you are an adult in a responsible position, you must follow up to make sure that appropriate action has been taken to protect the child, or risk committing an offence.