



# Keeping Children Safe - Code of Conduct

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## Overview

The Salvation Army is committed to ensuring it provides a safe worship and program environment for all people, regardless of their age, culture, ability, gender, language, racial origin, religious belief and/or sexual identity.

The safety and well-being of children and youth is of significant importance to The Salvation Army, and it will not tolerate or condone abuse of any kind within any of its operations or by any person working for or under the banner of The Salvation Army.

The Salvation Army continually works to provide the safest possible worship and program environments for children and youth through identifying and managing risks that may lead to harm.

This Code of Conduct outlines the standards of personal and professional conduct, which are in keeping with organisational and community expectations, for all Salvation Army officers, employees, volunteers and any other person engaged by or working under the banner of The Salvation Army (hereafter termed 'workers').

The absence of any reference to particular behaviour or conduct in this code does not imply that it is acceptable.

## Keeping Children Safe Code of Conduct

It is the responsibility of all Salvation Army officers, employees, volunteers and any other person engaged by or working under the banner of The Salvation Army, to be aware of and meet the standards outlined in this Code of Conduct, and other relevant organisational policy and procedure.

It is the responsibility of Salvation Army officers and senior Salvation Army representatives to ensure that the personal and professional behaviour and practice of all persons engaged by or working under the banner of The Salvation Army is consistent with this Code, and that any breach is taken seriously and may be subject to disciplinary action, and if required by law report to the relevant authorities.

**If a worker holds a reasonable concern for the immediate safety and wellbeing of a child, they must:**

- Immediately consult with the line manager or other senior Salvation Army representative or the Territorial Professional Standards Unit; and
- Under direction of the line manager and/or senior Salvation Army Representative, remove and/or reduce the risk to the child and/or other children; and
- Report the matter to the police (in an emergency call 000; in non-emergency situations contact the local police station) and/or the relevant child protection authority; and
- Document the concerns, consultation process and reporting details.

**All workers will:**

- Consider the safety and wellbeing of children as paramount.
- Reflect the mission and values of The Salvation Army through their interaction with children and youth.
- Treat all children with respect in a manner that conveys their worth as individuals, and conduct themselves at all times in a way that is a positive example to the children they serve.
- Be aware that children and youth often have limited or no power or voice in adult-child relationships and may not have the ability and/or capacity to report concerns.
- Only engage in and conduct one-to-one activities with children (i.e. mentoring, counselling, 'Big Bud' programs) in line with The Salvation Army and funding body policy and procedural guidelines and requirements where relevant, and with the approval and oversight of a senior Salvation Army representative, and with the consent of the child's parent/guardian.
- Engage in respectful and transparent use of electronic communications and social media, and comply with relevant organisational policy in relation to such.
- Ensure that any electronic communication with a child and/or their family, regardless of the communication means, is conducted in a 'team' context (e.g. texts are carbon copied to the team leader or other relevant senior Salvation Army representative) and is conducted according to organisational policy and procedure, unless otherwise authorised by a line manager/senior Salvation Army representative or as specified under specific program and/or funding body guidelines.
- Where privacy and/or private communication is necessary, the worker and the child should remain visible to another adult/worker, unless otherwise authorised by a line manager/senior Salvation Army representative or as specified under specific program and/or funding body guidelines.
- Speak up if they observe concerning behaviours of a colleague or another person.
- Respond to all concerns, complaints and/or allegations of abuse, and seek advice, support and assistance to manage the issue as soon as possible, and to ensure that any allegation of abuse is reported to the police and/or child protection authorities as required.
- Ensure the safety of children as quickly as possible, and under the direction of the line manager or senior TSA representative, where an allegation of abuse is made.
- Raise all concerns, issues and problems with their line manager, another senior Salvation Army representative and/or the Territorial Professional Standards Unit, as soon as possible.

**No worker will under any circumstances:**

- Engage in any behaviour for the purposes of 'grooming' a child or young person, or for the purposes of 'grooming' an adult as a means of gaining access to a child, for the purposes of sexual contact and exploitation.
- Engage in behaviour or use language that is intended to harm, abuse, bully, harass, shame, humiliate, belittle or degrade children.
- Use inappropriate, offensive or discriminatory language when speaking with a child.
- Act in a way that shows unfair or differential treatment to a child.
- Physically assault a child, including smacking and/or hitting.
- Use computers, mobile phones, video and/or digital cameras outside of, or contrary to, The Salvation Army policy for the purposes of exploiting or harassing a child.

- Seek to make contact or spend time alone with any child outside of usual ministry and/or program times or outside of their stated role and/or responsibilities, including through personal social media networks, face to face and phone contact without prior consent from parent/guardian/care giver, and without the knowledge and consent of a Salvation Army line manager or senior representative.
- Photograph or video a child without consent of the child and their parent/guardian/care giver, or contrary to Salvation Army policy, unless otherwise authorised by a Salvation Army line manager or senior representative, or as specified under specific program and/or funding body guidelines.
- Make a complaint that they know to be untrue or malicious.

With respect to the differing cultures of children and their families, **all workers will:**

- Show respect to cultures, family traditions and support structures different from their own, noting that differences may affect the degree of participation of children in activities.
- Allow individuals from other cultures and family traditions to choose to participate, or not to participate, freely in any activities.
- Be sensitive about using words which make assumptions about any participant's background, family status or principal caregivers.
- Not use or condone language or activities that discriminate on the basis of gender, race, or ability, and will not make statements which reflect bias or ridicule about other religions or cultures.

With respect to the special needs and abilities of children, **all workers will:**

- Ensure activities are inclusive and flexible enough to meet the varying needs of children with special needs, including, where possible, the need for extra team members where one-on-one assistance is required.
- Engage parents and caregivers as the best source of information about how to include children with special needs in activities.
- Be mindful of the privacy and respect for participants with special needs who may need additional help with personal self care activities.
- Encourage and guide children to behave and interact in a respectful, honest and fair way.
- Ensure children know how to raise and voice concerns and issues, and are aware of who within The Salvation Army they can raise their concerns to.

The Salvation Army recognises that children may also exhibit and/or engage in problem sexual behaviour or sexually abusive behaviours. Workers will seek guidance through their line manager and/or The Salvation Army Territorial Professional Standards Unit in relation to the management and support of these issues, including reference to specialist service options for specific consultation and support options for all individuals involved.

**Taking into account the age and capacity of each individual child, workers will model positive behaviours such as:**

- Encouraging children to speak up about concerns and issues.
- Giving and receiving feedback.

- Identifying and raising risk concerns.
  - Providing input into service and program structures and processes that affect them.
  - Conducting surveys to gather feedback from children and families on service and program structures and processes that affect them.
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**Failure by any worker to comply with any aspect of this Code of Conduct may constitute serious misconduct, and:**

- **May result in internal disciplinary action;**
- **May result in termination of appointment/employment;**
- **May result in a report to police and/or other statutory authorities.**

**The Territorial Professional Standards Unit will be notified of all breaches of this policy and the Keeping Children Safe Code of Conduct.**

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Any breaches of this Code of Conduct may constitute serious misconduct and may result in disciplinary action and if required by law, report to the authorities.

If you have a concern that an officer, employee, volunteer and any other person engaged by or working under the banner of The Salvation Army is in breach of this Code, you must contact your immediate line manager, or someone in a senior role within The Salvation Army, or contact The Salvation Army Territorial Professional Standards Unit on:

**Phone:** (03) 8878 4500

**Email:** [professionalstandards@aus.salvationarmy.org](mailto:professionalstandards@aus.salvationarmy.org)