

Bendigo Orienteers – Child Safe Standards 2018

Background

The Victorian Betrayal of Trust Inquiry (2013) which examined the historic child abuse in religious and non-government organisations in Victoria has resulted in new laws and standards that must be applied by every organisation in Victoria that provides a service to young people under 18 years of age.

Bendigo Orienteers Inc is required to implement 7 Child Safe Standards which will help it to be a safe organisation for children.

These are the standards we must implement:

- strategies to embed an organisational culture of child safety, including through effective leadership arrangements
- a child safe policy or statement of commitment to child safety
- a code of conduct that establishes clear expectations for appropriate behaviour with children
- screening, supervision, training and other human resources practices that reduce the risk of child abuse by new and existing personnel
- processes for responding to and reporting suspected child abuse
- strategies to identify and reduce or remove risks of child abuse
- strategies to promote the participation and empowerment of children.

Orienteering Victoria, in its role as the state association for all orienteering clubs in Victoria, has drafted a comprehensive Child Safety Standards 2018 document. This covers clubs' roles in event hosting events as well as its state-wide role in coordinating/organising school based events and training camps for children.

Bendigo Orienteers Inc. is a club which, because of its location in Central Victoria and the preference of its volunteer members, has specialised in mainly bush based foot orienteering events. The club has developed a Child Safe Statement of Commitment and a Child Safe Code of Conduct which apply to its weekly bush orienteering events and the Park and Street Challenge series of events.

When and if Bendigo Orienteers organises any State Series events, school based events or any training activities or camps primarily for children, it will apply the more extensive Orienteering Victoria Child Safety Standards 2018 guidelines.

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Bendigo Orienteers Child Safe Statement of Commitment:

1. Bendigo Orienteers recognises that orienteering is good for young people and young people are good for orienteering.
2. We respect, encourage and hope to empower young orienteers to enjoy orienteering and get a sense of achievement through orienteering.
3. Orienteering is a Family Friendly Sport:
Children usually attend orienteering with members of their family or friends to support them. Bendigo Orienteers recognises that children become involved in the sport with the support of their parents and are most likely to continue their involvement when their parent/s participate in and enjoy the sport too. We want to support families with children to participate so that all can enjoy orienteering.
4. Orienteering is a sport for people of all ages:
Bendigo Orienteers values intergenerational participation and enjoyment of orienteering. We recognise that friendships can develop between people of different ages through the enjoyment of shared activities and wish to promote the development of appropriate and respectful friendships.
5. Bendigo Orienteers commits to ensuring that young people are always included and invited to participate in all development activities being offered.
6. Bendigo Orienteers will endeavour to ensure there are at least 2 people with WWC check cards present whenever children are involved in our local orienteering events.
7. Bendigo Orienteers will endeavour to provide culturally safe and inclusive activities to all children regardless of their background or abilities.
8. Orienteering Victoria organises child specific events, usually at school level. Bendigo Orienteers will support Orienteering Victoria with these events by encouraging local schools to get involved and with our own volunteers supporting events when they are able.

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Bendigo Orienteers – Child Safe Strategies:

1. Enjoyment and Respect

Bendigo Orienteers recognises that we participate to enjoy ourselves and we expect all participants at an orienteering event to:

- Recognise that everyone else has the right to enjoy the activity
- Behave respectfully towards all other people regardless of their age, background and abilities.
- Understand the organisers are volunteers and be grateful they are providing the opportunity for you to enjoy orienteering.
- Adults are responsible to ensure all their communication with children is appropriate, communicates respect to children and legal .

2. Working with Children Check cards (WWC cards)

All committee members have valid WWC check cards. All committee members will be familiar with the Orienteering Victoria Child Safe Standards and Bendigo Orienteers relevant commitments and Code of Conduct.

3. The Newcomer Welcoming role:

This is a rostered role filled by volunteers with WWC check cards whose role is to introduce beginners to the sport, including children. This person must be easily identifiable to all, but especially to a child who may seek support, by wearing a high visibility vest at the weekly events. These volunteers must be willing and able to provide '*on course support*' to a child who is learning navigation but not confident enough to be independent.

4. Guidelines for providing 'On course Support' for a child:

This role involves following a child who is developing their confidence in orienteering in the bush, and only intervening if the child is having difficulty with their navigation and requires help. The '*on course support*' role must be outlined clearly for the child and their parent/s to understand what this involves. Anyone who provides this support for a child in bush orienteering should either be that child's parent or be entrusted by the child's parent in the role. Any club volunteer doing this should have a WWC check card.

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5. Guidelines for use of whistles:

All orienteers are encouraged to take a whistle with them when participating in bush orienteering. Children must take a whistle when bush orienteering alone. While adults only use the whistle if they are injured, children can use them if they feel unsafe and need help. Orienteers hearing a whistle must be prepared to abandon their course and assist as appropriate.

6. Be safe in the bush and provide appropriate support

If a child is alone and distressed about their location, other orienteers should stop, assist them to feel safe and support their return to the assembly area.

Some parents may prefer to track their child's location using a GPS device, when their child is out on a course in the bush, alone. This would be the responsibility of that parent.

7. Privacy and electronic communication:

Only certain club officers with WWC check cards can have access to the club's member database. Therefore, only these people have the club's authority to communicate with all members via email.

8. Reporting suspected child abuse:

The newcomers welcoming person, president or vice president will be the club's officers to whom a report of real or suspected abuse can be made. They will assist the process of response and further reporting (to Police or Child Safe).

Any person witnessing any abusive behaviour towards a child, is expected to intervene in a calm and reasonable manner to protect the child. If it is unsafe to do so, the police should be called.