French Bilingual Association Inc.
Child Safety and Wellbeing Policy 2026

1. Policy Objective

This Child Safety and Wellbeing Policy (**Policy**) sets out the commitment of the French Bilingual Association Inc. (**FBA**) to child safety and the steps the FBA will take to establish and maintain a child-safe and child-friendly environment.

2. Commitment to Child Safety

All children, regardless of their gender, race, religious beliefs, age, disability, sexual orientation, gender identification or family or social background, have equal rights to protection from child abuse or harm.

FBA is committed to promoting the best interests of all children involved in its activities and events, particularly ensuring their safety and wellbeing.

The FBA recognises the importance of, and a responsibility for, ensuring our organisation is a safe, nurturing, inclusive and enriching environment which:

a) respects and fosters the dignity and self-esteem of all children;
b) encourages children's voices to be heard and valued; and
c) enables children to thrive in their learning and development.

The FBA values diversity and has zero tolerance for child abuse or harm. We will treat all allegations of child abuse or harm very seriously. We have legal and moral obligations to contact authorities when we are worried about a child's safety, which we follow rigorously. Our organisation is committed to preventing child abuse and identifying risks early, and removing and reducing these risks.

3. Application

This Policy applies to **all persons** involved in child-related work with the FBA including:

- Committee members;
- Employees (permanent and casual);
- Contractors;
- Sub-contractors;
- Volunteers; and
- Members of the FBA (**Personnel**).

This Policy applies to **all activities and events** organised by the FBA including L'école du samedi, Les Petites Grenouilles Playgroup, Café Popote, L'après-midi de la francophonie and any incursions or excursions, regardless of where or how such activity or event is being run.

4. Legal framework

This Policy reflects legislation and guidance that seeks to protect children, namely:

- National Principles for Child Safe Organisations;
- Victorian Child Safe Standards;
- *Charter of Human Rights and Responsibilities Act* 2006 (Vic)
- *Children, Youth and Families Act* 2005 (Vic)
- *Child Wellbeing and Safety Act* 2005 (Vic)
- *Crimes Act 1958* (Vic)
- *Working With Children Act 2005* (Vic)

5. Definitions

Child abuse includes:

- Psychological abuse (also known as emotional abuse) which includes bullying, threatening and abusive language, intimidation, shaming and name calling, ignoring and isolating a child, and exposure to domestic and family violence;

- Physical abuse which includes physical punishment, such as pushing, shoving, punching, slapping and kicking, resulting in injury, burns, choking or bruising;

- Sexual abuse which includes sexual offences against a child under relevant legislation, but also includes the sexual touching of a child, grooming, and production, distribution or possession of child abuse material;

- Grooming is a process where a person manipulates a child or group of children and sometimes those looking after them, including parents, carers, teachers and leaders. They do this to establish a position of 'trust' so they can then later sexually abuse the child; and

- Serious neglect of a Child.

Child harm includes any behaviour or treatment that results in the actual and/or likelihood of causing physical or emotional harm to a child (including discriminatory practices).

Child Protection means the Victorian Child Protection Service as part of the Department of Families, Fairness and Housing

6. Responsibilities

Safeguarding children is a shared responsibility across the FBA. It is the responsibility of all Personnel to create and maintain a child safe culture.

Specific responsibilities for each role are outlined as follows:

Committee Members

- Set the policy and procedures related to child safety and wellbeing;
- Ensure all Personnel are aware of relevant laws and FBA's policies and procedures;
- Provide support for Personnel in undertaking their child safety responsibilities;
- Promote the safety and wellbeing of children;
- Undertake any learning activities supporting the implementation of this policy and the Child Safety Standards;
- Must report any concern or complaint relating to child abuse or harm or child safety and wellbeing in accordance with this policy and the Child Safety Standards.

Child Safety Persons

- First point of contact for all matters related to children safety and wellbeing.
- Provides advice and support to all Personnel, as well as children, parents and caregivers regarding the safety and wellbeing of children involved in the FBA.
- Responsible for monitoring our Child Safety and Wellbeing Policy and the implementation of the Child Safety Standards.
- Promote the safety and wellbeing of children.
- Undertake any learning activities supporting the implementation of this policy and the Child Safety Standards.
- Must report any concern or complaint relating to child abuse or harm or child safety and wellbeing in accordance with this policy and the Child Safety Standards.

Employees, contractors, sub-contractors, volunteers and members

- Ensure they understand and comply with the relevant laws and FPA's Child Safety and Wellbeing Policy, Code of Conduct and any other related policies and procedures.
- Promote the safety and wellbeing of children.
- Undertake any learning activities supporting the implementation of this policy and the Child Safety Standards.
- Must report any concern or complaint relating to child abuse or harm or child safety and wellbeing in accordance with this policy and the Child Safety Standards.

7. Support and supervision

FBA recognises that support, training and education is important to establish and maintain a child-safe and child-friendly environment.

FBA aims for all Personnel as well as children and their parents/carers to feel confident and comfortable in discussing any allegations of child abuse or child safety concerns.

This policy will be provided to Personnel as part of their induction at FBA and after any changes have been made to this policy. It will also be provided to all FBA members. FBA will endeavour to provide training and/or education sessions about child safety and wellbeing to Personnel, parents/carers and to children in an age appropriate way.

8. Recruitment

FBA takes all reasonable steps to employ and recruit skilled and appropriately qualified and screened people to work with children.

All Personnel are required to hold a current Victorian Working with Children Check and to provide evidence of this to the Child Safety Person or any other nominated person.

9. Code of Conduct

All Personnel must comply with FBA's Child Safe Code of Conduct at all times. Any potential breaches of the Code of Conduct will be investigated and may result in restriction of duties, suspension or termination or contract or volunteer status or membership or other corrective action. In addition, matters may need to be referred to external bodies such as the police, Child Protection or the Social Services Regulator in accordance with this policy.

10. Empowerment and Participation of children

FBA recognises that children are more likely to raise concerns when they feel confident, valued, empowered, and heard. FBA is committed to listening to the needs of children and involving them in decisions in an age-appropriate manner as appropriate.

FBA also recognises the important role that families can play in keeping children safe and supporting children who receive services from the FBA. FBA supports the participation of families in children's care, where appropriate, having regard to their age, capacity and wishes.

Children and their families are encouraged to report any concerns or complaints relating to the safety and treatment of children who are engaged with FBA in accordance with this policy.

11. Diversity, inclusion and cultural safety

FBA supports equity and inclusion and recognises that some children may be more vulnerable to child abuse and harm than others. FBA recognises and respects that children who receive services or are engaged with FBA may come from a diverse range of circumstances. FBA aims to provide services that are tailored and appropriate for the diverse needs of such children.

FBA respects and values Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Children and understands the importance of culture and community to the wellbeing and safety of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Children.

FBA is committed to ensuring that services are delivered or facilities provided in a culturally sensitive manner. Children are encouraged to express their culture and enjoy their cultural rights. FBA does not tolerate racism. Reports of racism should be referred to the Child Safety Persons.

12. Safe physical and online environment

FBA is committed to providing physical and online environments in which children feel, and are, safe. In providing safe environments, FBA also recognises that it should not compromise a child's right to privacy, access to information, social connections or learning opportunities.

Photographs or videos

Personnel must not take photographs or videos of children receiving services or facilities from, or otherwise engaged with FBA without prior consent of the child/children's parent or guardian.

Where a parent or guardian has given consent to the capture of photographs and/or videos of their child/children, FBA will obtain additional written consent of a child/children's parent or guardian before using any images on FBA's social media platforms or in on-line material or other publications.

Private communications

Personnel must not communicate directly with children through personal or private contact channels (including by social media, email, messaging or texting) except where the communication is reasonable in all the circumstances (because, for example, there is an urgent safety concern or it relates strictly to FBA's activities and the parents/carers of the child/children have given their permission.

13. Reporting concerns or complaints about child safety and wellbeing

Immediate danger

If any child is in immediate danger, please call 000 immediately.

Disclosure to police

Personnel who have information that leads them to form a reasonable belief that a sexual offence has been committed by an adult against a child must report that information as soon as practicable to police unless exceptions apply (for example if the person fears for the safety of any person if they were to disclose the information to the police). This information must also be reported to FBA's Child Safety Person.

Mandatory reporting to child protection

Some Personnel including registered teachers, early childhood workers and medical practitioners have mandatory reporting obligations and must report to Child Protection if in the course of practising their profession or carrying out their duties they form a reasonable belief that a child is in need of protection from physical injury or sexual abuse (**Mandatory Reporters**). Reports should be made as soon as practicable after forming a reasonable belief. Mandatory reporters who fail to comply with these reporting obligations may be committing a criminal offence.

Mandatory reporters must also inform FBA's Child Safety Person if any report to Child Protection is made.

Voluntary reporting to child protection

All Personnel may also make a report to Child Protection if they form a reasonable belief that a child is in need of protection from child abuse or significant harm.

Factors contributing to reasonable belief may be:

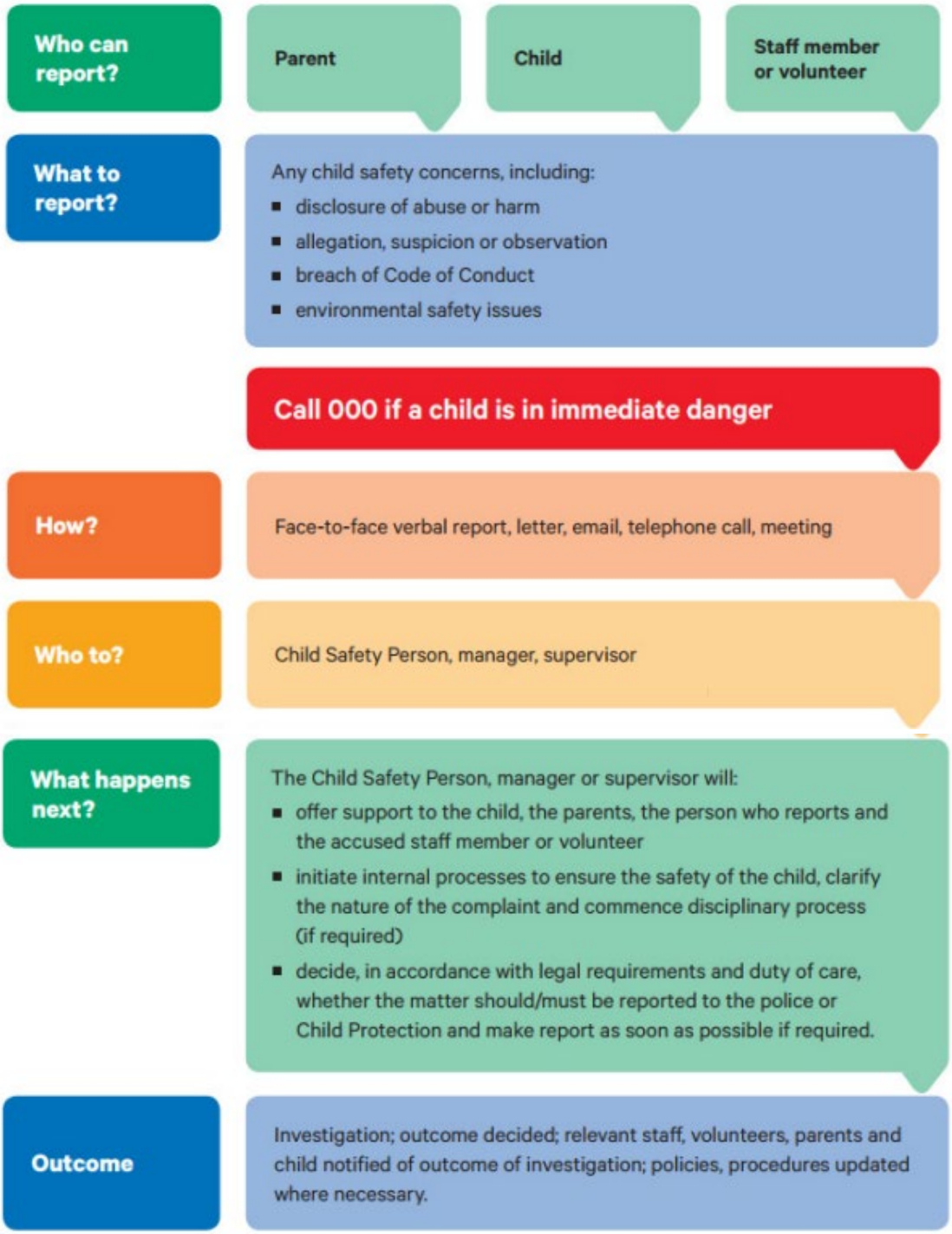
- a child states that they or a child they know has been victim to child abuse;
- behaviour consistent with that of a child abuse victim is observed; or
- someone else has raised a suspicion of child abuse but is unwilling to report it.

FBA encourages Personnel to make reports to Child Protection where appropriate. If Personnel make a voluntary report, they must also inform FBA's Child Safety Person.

Reporting concerns or complaints about child safety or wellbeing to FBA

1) Children or their families who wish to express a concern or make a complaint regarding child safety and wellbeing are encouraged to speak with any Personnel with whom they feel comfortable discussing the concern or complaint.
2) Personnel must promptly refer any concerns or complaints about child safety to the Child Safety Person. If a concern or complaint relates to the Child Safety Person, it should be referred to the President of the FBA.
3) All reports of child abuse or harm will be treated seriously, whether they are made by an adult or a child.
4) The Child Safety Person or the President of the FBA, as the case may be, will:
    a. ensure the immediate safety of the child;
    b. offer support to the child, the parents, the person who reports and (if relevant) the accused Personnel;
    c. clarify the nature of the complaint and if appropriate, investigate the matter in a procedurally fair manner;
    d. decide, in accordance with legal requirements, duty of care and this policy, whether the matter must/should be reported to the police, or Child Protection and make the report as soon as possible if required;
    e. (if relevant) as soon the outcome of any investigation is finalised, notify the relevant Personnel, child and their parent/carer and, if required, refer the matter to the Committee to take any remedial or corrective action, including any disciplinary process.

Visual guide to reporting any concerns relating to child safety and wellbeing



Record keeping
FBA is committed to making and keeping full and accurate records relating to child-safety and wellbeing.

FBA's Child Safety Person will keep a record all complaints, concerns, incidents and near misses relating to child safety and wellbeing. Places, times, dates, names of people, observable behaviours or evidence of harm are to be recorded. Reports must be securely stored by the Child Safety Person and/or Committee Members.

Records which may assist with the investigation of a complaint or safety concern will be identified and kept as part of the record of any investigation into child safety and/or wellbeing. Records will be kept even if an investigation does not substantiate a complaint.

FBA will record and keep the outcome of any investigations, and the resolution of any complaints. This includes findings made, reasons for decisions and actions taken.

Privacy and confidentiality
FBA may share relevant information to promote the safety and wellbeing of children, where it is appropriate and in their best interests.

Those who make reports, and those about whom accusations are being made, are entitled to confidentiality. Where there is suspected abuse or misconduct, Personnel must not disclose or make use of the information in a manner that breaches confidentiality, other than to report and act consistent with this Child Safety and Wellbeing Policy and Code of Conduct, and relevant statutory requirements.

FBA will keep information about complaints confidential, except where it is necessary to share information to respond properly to a complaint or to prioritise child safety. FBA may also need to share information about incidents or complaints with external authorities to comply with the law or to prioritise safety.

Non-compliance
FBA will enforce this Policy, the Code of Conduct and any other related policies. Potential breaches by anyone will be investigated and may result in restriction of duties, suspension or termination of contract or volunteer status or other corrective action.

Related documents:
- FBA Child Safety Code of Conduct
- FBA Implementation of Victoria's Child Safe Standards
- FBA Organisational Health and Safety Policies and Procedures
- FBA Terms and Conditions
- FBA Privacy Policy
- FBA Enrolment Procedures
- FBA Recruitment Procedures

Review history

Version	Date approved	Review/Update Date
Version 1	June 2026	June 2028