

Statement of Commitment to Child Safety

Our commitment to child safety

- The Debaters Association of Victoria Inc (DAV) is committed to child safety.
- We want all children to be safe, happy and empowered. We support and respect all children, as well as our staff, volunteers and other participants in DAV programs.
- We have zero tolerance of child abuse, and all allegations and safety concerns will be treated very seriously and consistently with our robust policies and procedures.
- The DAV is committed to preventing child abuse and identifying risks early, and removing and reducing these risks. The DAV works cooperatively with schools, teachers and other organisations as part of this process.
- The DAV has robust processes to reduce the risk of child abuse by new and existing board members, staff and volunteers.
- The DAV is committed to regularly training and educating our Executive members, staff and volunteers on child abuse risks.
- We are committed to the cultural safety of Aboriginal children, the cultural safety of children from culturally and/or linguistically diverse backgrounds, and to providing a safe environment for children with a disability.
- We have specific policies and procedures in place that support our Executive members, staff and volunteers to achieve these commitments.

[If you believe a child is at immediate risk, phone 000.](#)

Our staff and volunteers

- All our staff and volunteers must agree to abide by the DAV's Child Safe Policy which specifies the standards of conduct required when working with children.
- All staff and volunteers are required to maintain a current Working with Children Check. The DAV maintains an up-to-date register to ensure that it can demonstrate that all staff and volunteers comply with this requirement.

Training and supervision

- Our organisational culture aims for all board members, staff, volunteers, families and children to feel confident and comfortable in discussing any allegations of child abuse or child safety concerns. We train our board members, staff and volunteers to identify, assess, and minimise risks of child abuse and to detect potential signs of child abuse.

Legal Responsibilities

The DAV takes its legal responsibilities seriously, including:

- Failure to disclose: All adults in Victoria who have a reasonable belief that an adult has committed a sexual offence against a child under 16 have an obligation to report that information to Victoria Police
- Failure to protect: People of authority in our organisation will commit an offence if they know of a substantial risk of child sexual abuse and have the power or responsibility to reduce or remove the risk, but negligently fail to do so
- Reportable conduct: The DAV President must be made aware of any allegations of physical and sexual abuse, sexual misconduct, significant emotional or psychological harm or significant neglect by an employee or volunteer towards a child. We are also legally required to notify the Commission for Children and Young People of the allegation
- Duty of care: If a child is abused by an individual associated with our organisation, our organisation is presumed to have breached its duty of care unless it can prove that it took 'reasonable precautions' to prevent the abuse in question.

Allegations, concerns and complaints

- The DAV takes all allegations seriously and has practices in place to investigate thoroughly and quickly. Our Executive members, staff and coordinators are trained to deal with allegations appropriately.
- We work to ensure all children, families, board members, staff and volunteers know what to do and who to tell if they observe abuse or are a victim, and if they notice inappropriate behaviour.
- We all have a responsibility to report an allegation of abuse if we have a reasonable belief that an incident took place. If an adult has a reasonable belief that an incident has occurred then they must report the incident.