

Migrant Information Centre (MIC) (Eastern Melbourne) Children's Safety Policy

Policy

Migrant Information Centre (Eastern Melbourne) (MIC) has a strong commitment to ensuring that all children and young people accessing the MIC are safe and that all of the Child Safe Standards are reflected in our day to day work practices.

Objective

It is the objective of MIC to create and maintain a safe environment for all children and young people at all MIC offices, programs, events and activities.

Scope

The policy applies to all volunteers, students on placement and existing and potential employees of MIC.

Responsibility

The manager is responsible for ensuring staff, volunteers and students on placement comply with the principles and practices of this policy.

Individually, employees are responsible for confirming that they have read the policy and procedures, using them to guide their practice and for seeking assistance when they are unable to meet the policy objective.

This policy is to be read in conjunction with all MIC's Policies and in particular with the policies of Code of Ethics, Professional Misconduct, Client feedback, Client Confidentiality and Privacy, Client Safety, MIC Event and Programs Policy, Positive Work Environment and Facebook policies.

Commitment to child safety

All children and young people who come to the MIC have a right to feel and be safe. We are committed to the safety and well-being of all children and young people accessing our services and the welfare of all children and young people in our care will always be our first priority. We aim to create a child safe and child friendly environment where all children and young people are valued and feel safe, paying particular attention to the needs of children and young people with a disability, children and young people from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds, children from Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander background, those who are unable to live at home, and lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender and intersex children and young people.

Children's participation

MIC encourages and respects the views of children and young people who access our services. For example, in children's and youth, programs we will talk with participants about what they would like to do, we establish agreed standards of behaviour and we seek feedback from participants on the program. The MIC will value the ideas and opinions of children and young people participating in our programs

We listen to and act upon any concerns that children, young people or their families raise with us. We ensure that children, young people and their families know their rights and how to access the complaints procedures available to them.

Recruitment practices

The MIC takes all reasonable steps to ensure that it engages the most suitable and appropriate people to work with children. We employ a range of screening measures and

apply best practice standards in the screening and recruitment of employees and volunteers. We interview and conduct referee checks on all employees and volunteers.

All staff, students on placement and volunteers who:

- have regular contact with children
- work in close proximity to children
- supervises or manages persons who:
 - have regular contact with children or
 - work in close proximity to children on a regular basis; or
- has access to sensitive records relating to children or young people.

Staff, volunteers and students are not offered employment or volunteer work or student placements until they have provided the MIC with a current Police Check and Working With Children's Check.

Volunteers/student on placements are not left in the company of children without a paid MIC staff member in attendance. The only exceptions to this are when volunteers pick children up (either using public transport or in cars) to attend holiday programs or other children's programs such as 'Cool Kids' and pre-arranged one to one tutoring sessions. In these situation the parent/guardian gives consent for the volunteer/student on placement to collect or tutor their child.

Physical Contact

Appropriate physical contact with children and young people is:

- Non –intrusive touch such as shaking hands or a pat on the back or upper arm is given when congratulating a child or young person. Positive reinforcement with encouraging words should accompany this.
- Giving practical assistance if children or young people are hurt or need help
- Required for the child or young person's safety (such as in the swimming program)
- Non-intrusive physical contact is given to comfort a child who is distressed, such as a hand on the upper arm or upper back.
- Occurs in an open environment.

Physical contact is inappropriate, for example if it:

- Includes touching any part of the body that may cause distress or embarrassment
- Frightens, distresses or embarrasses a child or young person
- Occurs in a private place.