

Position Statement

Safeguarding Children

Jewish Care has one clear vision: **Together, building and supporting a healthy, resilient, and inclusive Jewish community.** Our values are universal and enduring in nature, but are also particular to the Jewish approach to creating a meaningful life, and a strong, cohesive community.

Our foundational values define who we are and underpin everything we do. The values, **Respect** (*derech erez*), **Community** (*kehilla*), **Inclusion** (*hachlala*) and **Social Responsibility** (*achrayoot chevratit*), are about people - they provide a moral compass for the way we respond to challenges and the decisions we make.

These values pervade every aspect of Jewish Care, informing relationships between colleagues, staff and clients, and our organisation and the wider community.

The Board of Jewish Care seeks to demonstrate our commitment to these values by clearly stating Jewish Care's position on important issues that are contextual to the Jewish community's rich history, and because it frames the way we will conduct ourselves and our engagement with members of the community.

Preface

Child abuse¹ and neglect² is a significant societal issue that can have devastating impacts on the lives of children. Children under the age of 18 years are powerless to stop abuse, so we as adults need to speak up and take action to prevent child abuse and neglect.

Child abuse and neglect includes physical and emotional ill-treatment, sexual abuse, neglect, and exploitation that results in actual or potential harm to a child's health, welfare, and development of dignity. It occurs in the context of a relationship of responsibility, trust, or power. Children exposed to family violence directly or indirectly are now, in law, also considered to be placed at significant risk of harm³.

In 2014-15 there were 320,169 reports of child abuse or neglect across Australia and 91,586 in Victoria⁴.

¹Please refer to definitions to clarify meanings of these terms

²Ibid.

³ Campo, M, (2015) *Children's exposure to domestic and family violence. Key issues and responses*, CFA Paper No. 36, Australian Institute of Family Studies, <https://aifs.gov.au/cfca/sites/default/files/publication-documents/cfca-36-children-exposure-fdv.pdf> viewed on 11 April 2017

⁴ Australian Institute of Health and Welfare 2016, *Child protection Australia 2014–15. Child welfare series no. 63. Cat. no. CWS 57*. Australian Institute of Health and Welfare, Canberra, viewed on 11 April 2017, <<http://www.aihw.gov.au/WorkArea/DownloadAsset.aspx?id=60129554973>>.

דרך ארץ
derech erez
respect

קהילה
kehilla
community

הכללה
hachlala
inclusion

אחריות חברתית
achrayoot chevratit
social responsibility

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As an organisation committed to improving the lives of the Victorian Jewish community, Jewish Care believes that concerted effort must be made to prevent, increase awareness, and provide support to victims of child abuse and neglect both past and present.

Jewish Care:

- Supports the rights of the child as laid out in the United Nations *Convention on the Rights of the Child*⁵;
- Is committed to the safety and wellbeing of our children and young people and seeks to ensure that our work environment and services provide a safe place for children at all times;
- Recognises that this issue cannot be tackled by one agency alone and that a collaborative approach is required if we are to ensure the protection of our children;
- Requires all staff to undertake pre-employment screening and receive induction and regular training on child safety and wellbeing;
- Requires staff to report all allegations of child abuse and neglect; and
- Is committed to ensuring it maintains its status as a child safe organisation in collaboration with the Australian Childhood Foundation.

Community education, advocacy, early intervention, identification, reporting and support for those affected by abuse and neglect provide the holistic response needed to protect and support our children.

Jewish Care supports a range of organisations in their endeavour to prevent child abuse and its effects on our community.

We work in partnership with our community to ensure the health and wellbeing of children.

⁵ The UN Convention on the Rights of the Child states the rights of all children and young people under the age of 18.

Definitions

Child Abuse - An act or omission by an adult that endangers or impairs a child's physical or emotional health and development. Not always a single event, usually takes place over time.

Neglect - Includes failure to provide the child with an adequate standard of nutrition, medical care, clothing, shelter or supervision to the extent where the health or development of the child is significantly impaired or placed at risk. A child is neglected if they are abandoned or left uncared for over unreasonable periods of time that is inconsistent with their age, stage and development.

This Position Statement was reviewed and approved by the JCV Board in August 2021.