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CHILD SAFETY POLICY

SEPTEMBER 2018

Contents

Overview	3
Jewish Values Support Child Safety	3
Legal Obligations.....	4
Definitions of Abuse.....	5
Sexual abuse	5
Physical abuse.....	6
Emotional or psychological abuse	7
Neglect.....	7
Witnessing family violence	8
Grooming.....	8
Sexually harmful behavior in Children.....	9
Policy Scope	9
Policy Definitions	10
The Seven Child Safe Standards.....	12
Child Safe Standard 1 (Embed a Culture of Safety)	15
Child Safe Standard 2 (Developing a Policy)	15
Child Safe Standard 3 (Clear Expectations)	16
Child Safe Standard 4 (Screening and HR Policies).....	16
Child Safe Standard 5 (Reporting Abuse)	16
Child Safe Standard 6 (Identify Risks)	17
Child Safe Standard 7.....	17
Communications	17
Recruitment & Screening.....	17
Training and Supporting Staff and Volunteers.....	18
Management of Specific High Risk Areas.....	19
Bet Midrash	19
Overnight Stays/ Shabbatonim/ Camps	20
Counselling.....	21
Grooming/Gift Giving	21
Sick Visiting Society.....	22
Kashrut Authority	22
Supervision of Children on the Mizrahi site before and after Bnei Akiva operations	23
Attendance during Prayer Services.....	23
Conduct and Behaviour Standards	23
Policy Implementation.....	24

Policy Review 24

Additional policies..... 24

Appendices..... 25

 Appendix 1: Phase 1: Pre-selection — Ensuring transparency and natural justice in the selection process 25

 Appendix 2: Phase 2: Screening/Background Check — Verifying the Applicant’s Identity, Suitability and Qualifications 25

 Pre - Employment Questionnaire (For Employees and Volunteers) 27

Overview

Thank you for taking the time to read this important document.

The document outlines the child protection policy of the Mizrachi Organisation and all its subsidiary and legally associated entities.

Mizrachi aims to ensure any organisations utilising Mizrachi premises have robust child safety policies and procedures in place, and that Mizrachi will maintain systems to ensure their effective application.

This policy was compiled in response to our community's awareness of the significant harm and damage caused by child abuse. This policy aims to educate its members about child abuse, and to provide guidance to all members of Mizrachi in the implementation of practices that minimize the risk of harm to children and promotes their wellbeing.

This policy also outlines the processes involved in reporting abuse and our legal obligations in reporting child abuse to the authorities

This policy is based on Victorian Child Safe Standards¹.

All Victorian agencies that provide services to children and young people are currently based on these standards. These standards result from recommendations from the Betrayal of Trust inquiry and evidence about what is necessary to prevent child abuse.

Jewish Values Support Child Safety

Mizrachi upholds a number of Jewish values that support child safety. These values include:

1. Pikuach Nefesh – The principle that the preservation of human life is of primary importance. A person's physical safety and psychological safety are overriding priorities.
2. Kol Yisrael Arevim Zeh La'Zeh – The whole community has a collective responsibility for one another and therefore has a responsibility for the protection of children's safety.
3. Dina D'malkhuta Dina – The halachic rule that the law of the country is binding. In Australia there is specific legislation relating to child protection. Specifically, children need to be protected from harm and when abuse occurs the perpetrator must be held accountable. The Mizrachi Organisation rejects the application of 'Mesira' (not dobbing into authorities) to cases of child abuse.

¹ Victorian Child Safe Standards- <http://providers.dhhs.vic.gov.au/child-safe-standards>

Legal Obligations

Mizrachi is committed to upholding its obligations under the following legislation.

The followings the Acts that govern Child Protection and provides some insight as to the nature of the legislation:

Children, Youth and Families Act (CYFA), 2005 – Governs and guides the process of child protection in Victoria. Under this Act a person can make a report to Child Protection Services if they have: A significant concern for a child's wellbeing; belief the child is in need of protection; significant concern before the birth of a child about his/her wellbeing after his/her birth. The Commission for Children and Young People (CCYP) was established by the Child Wellbeing and Safety Act 2005 (the Act) (Children Legislation Amendment (Reportable Conduct) Act 2017), indulging he reportable conduct scheme that came into effect 1 July 2017. The CCYP is responsible for administering the scheme.

- **Children Legislation Amendment (Reportable Conduct) Act 2017** – From 1 July 2017, the Commission for Children and Young People will administer a 'reportable conduct scheme' in Victoria. The scheme will improve oversight of how organisations respond to allegations of child abuse and child-related misconduct by workers and volunteers. Under the scheme, the Commission for Children and Young People will have the power to: Monitor organisations' investigations of abuse or misconduct and report on trends; share information with key organisations, such as the Working with Children Check Unit and certain professional registration bodies, to improve child safety; inquire into the safety systems of organisations engaged in child-related work; and share relevant information to better protect children from the risks of abuse.
- **Child Wellbeing and Safety Act (2015)** – Establishes the Victorian Children's Council and Child Safety Commissioner; establishes the principles for wellbeing of children in Victoria.
- **Commission for Children and Young People (CYPP)** – Amongst other function, the CYPP oversees the Victorian Reportable Conduct Scheme.
- **Crimes Amendment (Grooming) Act 2014** – Refers to the offence of grooming. A grooming offence is committed if the offender communicates by works or conduct with a child under the age of 16 years or their carer or supervisor; and Intends to commit a sexual offence involving the child.
- **Crimes Amendment (Protection of Children) Act 2014, s.49c** – refers to the **failure to protect** children from sexual offences. If any individual or organisation could have reasonably protected a child from sexual abuse and fails to do so it may be considered a criminal offence.
- **Crimes Amendment (Protection of Children) Act 2014, s.327** – Refers to the responsibility of all individuals to disclose to authorities if they have a reasonable belief that a child under the age of 16 years has been sexually abused. Failure to do so is a criminal offence.
- **Working with Children Check (WWCC) Act 2005** – Outlines the purpose of the WWC and what constitutes child-related work; outlines occupations that

apply and explains relevant offences and findings that are relevant to the WWCC. It sets out obligations of individuals and organisations and how personal information is stored and disposed of.

In addition, Mizrachi also adheres to the following:

- United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (1989)
- Charter of Human Rights and Responsibilities Act 2006 (Vic)
- Victoria Institute of Teaching Act 2001 (Vic)
- Education and Training Reform Act 2006 (Vic)
- Privacy Amendment (enhancing privacy protection) Act 2012
- Commonwealth Powers (Industrial Relations) Act 1996

It is our understanding that this Child Protection Policy is consistent with the above laws and our obligations for child protection.

In cases where this policy is inconsistent with existing policies, this policy takes precedence to the extent that it creates a stricter standard of conduct.

This policy is not intended to replace or conflict with areas of the secular governing law, rather it is to operate in conjunction with them. When any policy or procedure contradicts State or Federal law, the law prevails.

Definitions of Abuse

Mizrachi is committed to safeguarding the children in our care from sexual, physical, emotional, or psychological abuse; neglect; witnessing domestic/ peer/interpersonal violence, and grooming behavior.

An important component in the prevention of child abuse is having a shared understanding of the definitions of child abuse. We define (but does not limit the definition of) child abuse as follows:

Sexual abuse

Sexual abuse is any act in which a person with power or authority over a child (female or male) uses a child for sexual gratification. An abuser can be an adult, adolescent or older child.

Sexual abuse spans a range of contact and non-contact behaviour.

SEXUAL ABUSE	
<p>CONTACT BEHAVIOUR</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Fondling a child’s genitals or getting a child to fondle the perpetrator • Rubbing the perpetrators genitals against the child’s body • Intimate kissing • Sexual penetration (vaginal/anal) • Exploiting a child through prostitution • Any physical contact that may be of a sexual nature (e.g. touching, hugging, masturbation, oral sex) 	<p>NON-CONTACT BEHAVIOUR</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Making sexual comments (in person, in letters, by telephone, text messages or email) • Voyeurism – including commenting on physical attractiveness • Exposing a child to pornography • Nudity – an abuser exposing parts of their body or the child’s body

These are the common physical and behavioural indicators of Sexual Abuse:

SEXUAL ABUSE	
<p>PHYSICAL SIGNS</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Presence of bruising around the thighs, sexually transmitted disease, pregnancy, or vaginal or anal bleeding or discharge may indicate sexual abuse 	<p>BEHAVIOURAL SIGNS</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Child/Youth tells someone they trust that they have been abused • Displaying sexual behaviour or knowledge which is unusual for their age. • Complaining of headaches or stomach aches • Experiencing problems with school work • Showing behaviour such as frequent rocking sucking and biting • Experiencing difficulties in sleeping • Having difficulties in relating to adults and peers

Physical abuse

Physical abuse occurs when a caregiver or any other person subjects a child to non-accidental physically aggressive acts. The abuser may inflict an injury intentionally or inadvertently as a result of physical punishment or the aggressive treatment of a child. Physically abusive behaviour includes (but is not limited to) shoving, hitting, slapping, shaking, throwing, punching, biting, burning and kicking.

PHYSICAL ABUSE	
<p>PHYSICAL SIGNS</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Bruises, burns, sprains, dislocations, bites and cuts • Fractured bones especially in infants where a fracture is unlikely to occur accidentally • Poisoning • Internal injuries 	<p>BEHAVIOURAL SIGNS</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Showing weariness or distrust with adults • Wearing long sleeved clothes in hot weather (to hide bruising or other injuries) • Demonstrating fear of caregiver and of going somewhere with caregiver • Becoming fearful when other children cry or shout • Being excessively friendly to strangers • Being very passive and compliant

[Emotional or psychological abuse](#)

Emotional or psychological abuse occurs when a caregiver or any other person repeatedly rejects or threatens a child. Often there is a pattern of emotional or psychological abuse, rather than a single incident. Such abuse may involve humiliating, terrorising, name-calling, belittlement, inappropriate symbolic acts or continual coldness from the caregiver or person, to the extent that it results in significant damage to the child’s physical, intellectual or emotional wellbeing and development.

EMOTIONAL ABUSE	
<p>PHYSICAL SIGNS</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Possible delays in emotional, mental or even physical development 	<p>BEHAVIOURAL SIGNS</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Displaying low self esteem • Tending to be withdrawn, passive or tearful • Displaying aggressive or demanding behaviour • Being highly anxious • Showing delayed speech • Acting like a much younger child e.g. soiling/wetting pants • Displaying difficulties in relating to adults and peers

[Neglect](#)

Neglect occurs when a caregiver fails to provide a child with the basic necessities of life. Such neglect includes the failure to provide adequate food, clothing, shelter, medical attention or supervision to the extent that the child’s health and development is, or is likely to be, significantly harmed.

NEGLECT	
<p>PHYSICAL SIGNS</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Frequent hunger • Malnutrition • Poor hygiene • Inappropriate clothing for season e.g summer clothes in winter • Left unsupervised for long periods • Abandoned by parents 	<p>BEHAVIOURAL SIGNS</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Excessive avoidance of spending time at home • Stealing food • Staying at school outside school hours • Often being tired and falling asleep during activities • Abusing alcohol or drugs • Displaying aggressive behaviour • Not getting on well with peers

[Witnessing family violence](#)

Witnessing family violence is a specific form of emotional or psychological abuse. Family violence is defined as violence between members of a family or extended family or those fulfilling the role of family in a child or young person’s life. Exposure to family violence places children and young people at increased risk of physical injury and harm and has a significant impact on their wellbeing and development.

[Grooming](#)

The offence of grooming concerns predatory conduct undertaken to prepare a child for sexual activity at a later time.

The offence applies where an adult communicates, by words or conduct, with a child under the age of 16 years or with a person who has care, supervision or authority for the child with the intention of facilitating the child’s involvement in sexual conduct, either with the groomer or another adult.

Grooming does not necessarily involve any sexual activity or even discussion of sexual activity – for example, it may only involve establishing a relationship with the child, parent or carer for the purpose of facilitating sexual activity at a later time.

The offence can be committed by any person aged 18 years or over. It does not apply to communication between people who are both under 18 years of age.

Grooming is now considered a criminal offence [Crimes Amendment (Grooming) Act 2014, which commenced in Victoria on 9 April 2014)]. The penalty for grooming is a maximum of 10 years imprisonment.

INDICATORS OF GROOMING BEHAVIOURS

- Paying special attention to a particular child/ singling them out.
- Showing favouritism
- Giving of gifts
- Befriending the family
- Making sexually natured jokes at the child
- Physical touch
- Going above and beyond their contracted role.

Sexually harmful behavior in Children

If a child or young person causes harm to another child of a similar age, for example by bullying, fighting or harassing the other child, this does not necessarily constitute child abuse. Such behaviours between peers are generally not considered child protection issues. However, it may be appropriate to regard a young person's behaviour as abusive if:

1. There is a large difference in power (for example age, size, ability, development) between the young people concerned; or
2. The perpetrator has repeatedly tried to harm one or more other children; or
3. There are concerns about the intention of the alleged perpetrator.

If the evidence suggests that there was an intention to cause severe harm to the victim, this should be regarded as abusive whether or not severe harm was actually caused.

Policy Scope

The Mizrahi Organisation operates a number of entities. Some of these entities have direct involvement with children and some have only indirect and infrequent interaction with children.

The organisation has taken the view that all employees and volunteers of the organisation must comply with the Mizrahi Child Safety policies regardless of their specific roles within the organisation.

At present, the Mizrahi Organisation operates a number of prayer services throughout the week. These are the Mizrahi Early Morning Minyan, The Hashkama Shabbat Minyan, The Bet Yehudah Minyan, Bet Haroeh, Kehillat Ohr David, Elsternwick Synagogue. Further prayer groups may be added from time to time and all would be required to adhere to this policy.

Mizrahi also operates a sick visiting volunteer group, a charity provider, a Bet Midrash (informal and formal education centre), a Kosher certification organization and a school.

The School, Leibler Yavneh College (LYC) is legally associated with the Mizrachi Organisation and it has its own Child Safety policy.

As the President of Mizrachi is an Executive Board member of LYC Board of Management this provides a direct mechanism for Mizrachi Executive to be fully aware of the College's compliance.

The President must ensure that the Mizrachi Executive is made aware of any serious breaches of the LYC Child Safety Policy within a reasonable timeframe (not more than 3 working days)

Bnei Akiva Youth Movement operates from the Mizrachi Caulfield campus but is not a legally associated entity. Bnei Akiva has its own child safety policy overseen by the Australian Zionist Youth Council (AZYC)

The leaders and youth of Bnei Akiva are however inextricably linked to the wider Mizrachi Organisation. Indeed, there is a community perception that Bnei Akiva is a part of the Mizrachi community.

As such, the following practices must be followed to ensure that child safe policies are adhered to and clear.

Bnei Akiva has a direct responsibility to ensure that all the children within its care are protected and that child safety is paramount in all aspects of their programming.

A Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) exists between Mizrachi and Bnei Akiva that articulates the following practice. In the event of a Reportable Conduct incident occurring at any time on the Mizrachi campus, the President must be notified as soon as possible, so that he/she can lodge the required report within 72 hours. For the purposes of defining Head of Organisation, the President will make the report on behalf of Mizrachi and Bnei Akiva for incidents on the Mizrachi Campus.

Incidents that occur elsewhere (camps etc) will be reported by the Merakez of Bnei Akiva and he/she will assume the role of Head of Organisation.

A delegate of the Bnei Akiva Executive attends all Mizrachi meetings and regular assurances (at least every 3 months) must be given, that all aspects of the Bnei Akiva Child Safe policies are being adhered to.

Policy Definitions

- **Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander** – A person who is of Aboriginal or Torres Strait descent, identifies as Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander and is accepted as Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander by an Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander community.
- **Adult** – a person 18 years of age or older and includes persons who are employees, volunteers and associates of Mizrachi Organisation.
- **Child** – any person under the age of 18; see **Youth Member**
- **Child Abuse** – see definitions in, 'Forms of Abuse'

- **Child Safe** – refers to an organisational environment that has an open and aware culture, understands child abuse, is supported by well-known child safety policy, promotes the empowerment and participation of children, manages child safety risks; and expects all stakeholders to report all allegations, disclosures or concerns. Child safety encompasses matters related to protecting all children from child abuse and neglect, intervening early where concerns arise, preventing abuse where possible, managing the risk of child abuse, providing support to a child at risk of child abuse, and responding to incidents or allegations of child abuse. Child safety includes **cultural safety** for children.
- **Child Protection** – refers to legislation, statutory authority responsible for child protection, and all measures taken to minimise the risk of child abuse. Child protection is a core part of the broader, over-arching concept of child safety.
- **Code of Conduct** – the Mizrahi Organisation policy which specifies behaviours expected of all employees, volunteers and directors in the organisation.
- **Cultural safety** – the positive recognition and celebration of cultures. It is more than just the absence of racism or discrimination, and more than cultural awareness and cultural sensitivity. It is an environment which is socially and emotionally safe, as well as physically safe for children. It is about shared respect, shared meaning, shared knowledge and experience, of learning, living and working together with dignity and truly listening².
- **Culturally and/or linguistically diverse background (CaLD)** – identification with particular cultural or linguistic affiliations by virtue of place of birth, ancestry or ethnic origin, religion, preferred language or language spoken at home or because of parents' identification on a similar basis.
- **Department of Health and Human Services (DHHS)** – the statutory authority responsible for receiving and investigating reports of child abuse.
- **Disability** – any physical, sensory, neurological disability, acquired brain injury or intellectual disability or developmental delay that affects a child's ability to undertake everyday activities. A disability can occur at any time in life. Some disabilities may be obvious while others are hidden.
- **Disclosure** – refers to a child telling someone (through words, drawings or actions) that he or she feels unsafe or has been harmed.
- **Employee/Employees** – refers to any individual employed by Mizrahi Organisation
- **Gender Identity** – a person's concept of self as male, female, a blend of both or neither. Gender identity refers to how individuals perceive themselves and how they self-identify. One's gender identity can be the same or different from their sex assigned at birth.³
- **Leader (or other term used with THE ORGANISATION)**– For the purposes of this document, leader will refer to any employee or volunteer whose role means they hold lead responsibility for key organisational functions including recruitment, selection, supervision, program planning, risk management and program delivery.

² Revised from *An Overview of the Victorian Child Safe Standards* (November 2015) -State of Victoria, Department of Health and Human Services and

A Guide for Creating a Child Safe Organisation (Version 2.0 December 2015)- Commission for Children and Young People

³ Human Rights Campaign, www.hrc.org

- **Mandated Reporter** – any adult who holds the following occupations is mandated to report child abuse to child protection authorities or police: Teachers, School Principal, Doctor, Nurse or Police Officer.
- **Movement** – refers to the Mizrahi Organisation more broadly (national/ global)
- **Parent helper** – a Mizrahi Organisation volunteer; should a parent of a Mizrahi Organisation youth member support Mizrahi Organisation activities at a frequency of more than once per quarter, they shall be considered a Mizrahi Organisation volunteer and be subject to Mizrahi Organisation volunteer vetting procedures.
- **Sexual Orientation** – An inherent or immutable enduring emotional, romantic or sexual attraction to other people⁴
- **Visitor** – a person who is not a volunteer, or employee, who participates in, or is present at, any Mizrahi Organisation activity.
- **Volunteer** – means an unpaid member of Mizrahi Organisation supporting program delivery or operations.
- **Youth Member** – A youth member of Bnei Akiva is a male and/or female aged between 7 - 25 years inclusive who satisfies the requirements of membership.

The Seven Child Safe Standards

There are seven standards:

Standard 1: Governance and leadership

Standard 2: Clear commitment to child safety

Standard 3: Code of conduct

Standard 4: Human resource practices

Standard 5: Responding and reporting

Standard 6: Risk management and mitigation

Standard 7: Empowering children.

To create and maintain a child safe organisation, organisations must have:

1. strategies to embed an organisational culture of child safety, including through effective leadership arrangements
2. a child safe policy or statement of commitment to child safety

⁴ Human Rights Campaign, www.hrc.org

3. a code of conduct that establishes clear expectations for appropriate behaviour with children
4. screening, supervision, training and other human resources practices that reduce the risk of child abuse by new and existing personnel
5. processes for responding to and reporting suspected child abuse
6. strategies to identify and reduce or remove risks of child abuse
7. strategies to promote the participation and empowerment of children

In complying with the child safe standards, organisations need to be mindful of the diversity of students and school communities and include the following inclusion principles as part of each standard:

- promoting the cultural safety of Aboriginal children
- promoting the cultural safety of children from culturally and/or linguistically diverse backgrounds
- promoting the safety of children with a disability.

Victoria's Child Safe Standards

All organisations that work with children and young people are required to meet Child Safe Standards



COMMISSION FOR CHILDREN
AND YOUNG PEOPLE

For more information about the Child Safe Standards and how to meet them, go to our website or connect with us.

www.ccp.vic.gov.au

(03) 8601 5281



ccypvictoria

Child Safe Standard 1 (Embed a Culture of Safety)

The Mizrahi Organisation is managed by a working Executive led by the President. The Mizrahi Organisation is committed to ensuring full compliance with all legislation that underpins Child Safety.

All members of the Executive must have a valid Working with Children approval and are required to be of good character. Good Character is defined as someone who has no prior convictions in his or her criminal history and who acts in a moral and ethical manner.

The Committee and Executive must undertake regular training each year so that they are familiar with their responsibilities under child protection regulations.

The Committee and Executive encourages all children from a variety of backgrounds to participate in communal activities and welcomes children with special needs into our community.

Meetings of the organisation must include an agenda item that provides an opportunity to discuss any child protection concerns.

Regular audits (each year) of the premises must be conducted to ensure that no areas exist that are high risk with regards to child safety.

The Rabbi should regularly (at least twice a year) discuss child safety concerns with the Congregation either in a sermon or through some other means of communication.

Discrimination of any sort has no place within the Mizrahi Organisation.

Child Safe Standard 2 (Developing a Policy)

The Mizrahi Executive will ensure that:

- There is a clear and up to date policy with regards to Child Safety.
- All staff are aware of the policy and adhere to its requirements
- Risks identified in the annual review are addressed
- Regular reviews are undertaken
- Children are consulted with regards to how to promote Child Safety
- The Child Safe Policy promotes cultural safety of all children but especially those from CALD (Culturally and Linguistically Diverse) backgrounds as well as children with a disability
- This policy includes requirements relating to the Failure to Disclose and Failure to Protect legislation

Child Safe Standard 3 (Clear Expectations)

The Mizrahi Executive will ensure that:

- A Code of Conduct explaining acceptable and unacceptable behavior of staff, volunteers and contractors is readily available and promoted
- There are clear guidelines on how to raise a concern with regards to a breach of the code of conduct.
- Posters and regular communication in the newsletter will provide clear guidance on how to make a report.

Child Safe Standard 4 (Screening and HR Policies)

The Mizrahi Executive will ensure that:

- All Employees have a clear position description of their role that provide clear expectations regarding child protection
- It has determined that employees/volunteers require a valid working with children and that a comprehensive system is developed that manages an accurate register to monitor the validity of these checks.
- It has a documented recruitment policy that includes interview questions, referee checks and full screening of candidates. Interview questions must include specific questions that directly address child protection and directly query the applicant regarding any prior child protection concerns, warning or offences.
- At least 2 referees are contact and specific child protection queries are raised with the previous employer or referee.
- There is a staff development strategy to ensure that staff are fully briefed on their responsibilities including the risk of harm, different types of harm and how to identify child abuse.
- There is a robust staff and volunteer performance management process.

Child Safe Standard 5 (Reporting Abuse)

The Mizrahi Executive will ensure that:

- An up to date policy exists outlining the process for reporting and acting on disclosures and or concerns regarding child safety.
- Staff and volunteers are aware of their responsibility to report
- There are policies and procedures regarding record keeping, confidentiality and privacy
- There are child friendly processes in place to ensure children know who to contact if they feel unsafe or have a concern

Child Safe Standard 6 (Identify Risks)

The Mizrachi Executive will ensure that:

- There is a risk management strategy in place
- A specific staff member has been designated as the Child Safety Officer and that he/she is responsible for managing risk
- When managing risks, the policy addresses the additional risks of CALD and children with a disability.

Child Safe Standard 7 (Empowerment of Children and Young People)

The Mizrachi Executive will ensure that:

- It consults with children about decisions that affect them
- It creates opportunities to participate in Child Safe planning
- It informs children of their rights and ensures they know how to raise concerns
- It provides information in child friendly environment establishing an environment of trust and inclusion that enables children to ask questions and speak up if they are worried or feeling unsafe.

Communications

The President of Mizrachi should ensure that there are regular information updates on the Mizrachi Child Protection processes in the newsletter and notice boards. There should be clear guidance on how to report a concern by way of posters and other communications. These should include the names of contact numbers of key staff able to assist in managing a child protection concern.

Mizrachi should further notify its constituents through updates in the newsletter and other communications that Bnei Akiva has its own Child Protection Policy and parental concerns should be directed to the nominated persons in the Bnei Akiva policy document.

Recruitment & Screening

Mizrachi recognises that a skilled, knowledgeable and experienced workforce is vital to the protection of children, and will therefore prioritise child safety in all of its recruitment and selection activities.

Mizrachi is committed to ensuring it recruits employees and volunteers who are committed and able to uphold the principles of child safety and Mizrachi will consistently utilise rigorous recruitment and selection approaches to mitigate risk and ensure the best possible candidates are recruited to the organisation.

All potential employees and volunteers will be subjected a rigorous recruitment and selection process. The recruitment and selection will be child-focused and consider the safety of its children and young people.

Procedures

- Mizrachi will ensure that any advertised recruitment for volunteers or employees will include a statement which reflects its commitment to child safety (see appendices for pre selection activities).
- Mizrachi will ensure that all volunteer and employee position descriptions include a statement of commitment to child safety (see appendices for pre selection activities).
- All staff and volunteers will be required to fill out a pre – employment questionnaire (see appendices for pre-employment activities)
- All potential volunteers and employees will be subject to a recruitment interview which is proportionate to the role. At least one interview will be conducted by a minimum of two Mizrachi leaders and will include behavioural-based questions
- All staff and volunteers must hold a Working with Children Check. Should this reveal criminal records, the matter must be referred to the President for consideration. Mizrachi recognises that a history of criminal offences may not automatically disqualify a candidate from working or volunteering with Mizrachi. The President must undertake a risk assessment which considers the nature of the offence, time elapsed since the most recent offence, frequency of offences and whether it was disclosed by the candidate prior to the check being undertaken. Any offence against a child and/or the failure of a candidate to disclose the offence prior to the check being undertaken will preclude a candidate from taking up a role with Mizrachi.
- All Mizrachi staff and volunteers must continue to hold a valid Working with Children Check (WWCC). Mizrachi must retain the details of the WWCC on file and be assured that the WWCC is formally linked to Mizrachi.
- Mizrachi will undertake at least two references checks for all potential volunteers and employee, which ask questions designed to assess candidates' suitability to work with children.
- Where candidates have worked or volunteered outside of Australia during the preceding 12 months, Mizrachi will require that they provide evidence of an international police check undertaken within 4 weeks of application to Mizrachi.
- Mizrachi will verifying a potential employees, identity, suitability and qualifications (see appendices for verification requirements)

Training and Supporting Staff and Volunteers

Mizrachi is committed to ensuring that all staff and volunteers are equipped with the skills and knowledge to promote child safety and discharge their duties in line with Mizrachi's Child Safe Policy.

Mizrachi is committed to ensuring volunteers and staff must have access to child safety training that is proportionate to their role in order to effectively promote the wellbeing of youth members. Through a commitment to training and support of volunteers and staff, Mizrachi will:

- maintaining a clear process for raising child safety concerns and review any instances where this process has not worked effectively.

- ensure volunteers and staff have access to a Child Safety Officer who is knowledgeable about child safety and can support them with questions or concerns.
- will remain abreast of emerging child safety legislation and policy and ensure its volunteers and staff are equipped with all relevant information.

Procedures

- All staff and volunteers will be provided with induction training upon commencement of their role. All staff and volunteers must sign a declaration that they have read and understood the Mizrahi child safety policies and procedures.
- Annual training will be provided to volunteers and staff and at regular intervals thereafter as required; frequency of training will be determined by the Mizrahi leaders and reflect volunteers' and employees' roles. A register of training will be maintained to ensure all volunteers and employees have had access to appropriate training.
- Mizrahi will ensure that a Child Safety Officer is trained to support volunteers and employees to comply with the requirements of this Child Safe Policy.
- Mizrahi leaders will communicate key legislative and policy changes to all volunteers and employees at regular intervals.

See appendices for recruitment and screening tools:

- Phase 1: Pre-selection — Ensuring transparency and natural justice in the selection process
- Phase 2: Screening/Background Check — Verifying the Applicant's Identity, Suitability and Qualifications
- Pre - Employment Questionnaire (for Employees and Volunteers)

Management of Specific High Risk Areas

Bet Midrash

The Organisation operates a Bet Midrash (Intensive Jewish Study Area) that provides opportunities for children to expand their Jewish knowledge through tutoring and informal activities. These can occur at any time but predominantly at night or out of school hours.

The leaders of the program (Hesder Bachurim, Bnot Midrasha) are generally recruited by Torah Mitzion in Israel and spend a year volunteering in the Bet Midrash. All Bet Midrash staff and volunteers must adhere to Mizrahi recruit and screening requirements (see recruitment and screening section above). In addition, all Bet Midrash staff and volunteers will be provided induction and ongoing training and support regarding organisational child safe policies and procedures.

The following management strategies should be implemented in managing this risk.

- The staff from Israel must be fully vetted prior to their arrival (including responding to the employee questionnaire, reference checked and an International Police Check – Israel conducted). See recruitment and screening section above.
- All leaders will be briefed about the Child Safe standards and the severity of any breach of these standards
- No leader may be alone with any child in the Bet Midrash and no child should be invited to the leader's home to participate in activities. Group activities with three or more children and with the prior knowledge of parents are acceptable.
- No leader should befriend a child on social media and or use electronic communications to conduct a private and personal communication.
- Any tutorial sessions must be in an open area subject to public view
- No leader should provide any child with alcohol or drugs nor should the leader possess or utilize drugs of addiction.
- No leader should transport children on their own and without the express and written knowledge of the parents. To be clear, there must be 2 leaders with children at all times.

Overnight Stays/ Shabbatonim/ Camps

Overnight stays are to occur only with the authorisation of the President and the parents/guardians of the children involved.

Practices and behaviour by leaders, staff and volunteers during an overnight stay must be consistent with this policy incorporating the practices and behaviours expected during delivery of all programs, services and events at other times.

All leaders, staff and volunteers must adhere to Mizrahi recruit and screening requirements (see recruitment and screening section above). In addition, all leaders, staff and volunteers will be provided induction and ongoing training and support, relevant to their role, regarding organisational child safe policies and procedures.

Standards of conduct that must be observed by leaders staff and volunteers during an overnight stay include:

- Providing children and young people with privacy when bathing and dressing.
- Observing appropriate personal standards when children and young people are present. Under no circumstances should children be exposed to adult nudity or states of undress.
- Ensuring children or young people are not exposed to pornographic material of any kind including movies, television, the internet or magazines.
- Not leaving children under the supervision or protection of unauthorised persons such as maintenance staff or friends.

- Under no circumstances will leaders, staff and volunteers sleep in the same bed as a child/ren or young person, or share a room with a child/ren or young person.

The children must be able to contact their parents, or others, if they feel unsafe, uncomfortable or distressed during the stay

Counselling

Generally, congregants will approach the Senior Rabbi to assist with a range of personal concerns such as marital issues, parenting issues, divorce, illness or death of a loved one. Children may also approach the Rabbi to assist with a range of personal issues.

These sessions can involve severe emotional distress that can require specific management to ensure child protection concerns are addressed.

Staff providing counselling must adhere to Mizrahi recruitment and screening requirements (see recruitment and screening section above). In addition, all the Rabbis and other staff members will be provided induction and ongoing training and support, relevant to their role, regarding organisational child safe policies and procedures

In the provision of Rabbinical services Rabbis and support staff must adhere to Mizrahi recruit and screening requirements (see recruitment and screening section above). In addition, all Rabbi's and other staff members will be provided with induction and ongoing training and support, relevant to their role, regarding organisational child safe polices and procedures.

The Rabbi or any staff member should adhere to the following to minimise the risk associated with counselling children.

- The meeting should not take place in a secluded private location but in an open place such as the Rabbi's office during office hours.
- The meeting should include another adult (parent if appropriate)

Grooming/Gift Giving

The offence of grooming concerns predatory conduct undertaken to prepare a child for sexual activity at a later time.

The offence applies where an adult communicates, by words or conduct, with a child under the age of 16 years or with a person who has care, supervision or authority for the child with the intention of facilitating the child's involvement in sexual conduct, either with the groomer or another adult.

Grooming does not necessarily involve any sexual activity or even discussion of sexual activity – for example, it may only involve establishing a relationship with the child, parent or carer for the purpose of facilitating sexual activity at a later time.

The sexual conduct must constitute an indictable sexual offence. This includes offences such as sexual penetration of a child, indecent assault and indecent act in the presence of a child. It does not include summary offences, such as upskirting and indecent behaviour in public.

Grooming behaviours can include the giving of gifts that develop a relationship of trust with a young person.

It is common practice for some congregants to supply children with sweets designed to make attendance at prayers attractive. Unfortunately, this seemingly innocent behavior could be perceived as grooming in the wrong context. The giving of sweets to children in synagogue is acceptable as long as it is done so in line with the Mizrahi Code of Conduct and is only done in the public synagogue area.

Also see definitions section above.

[Sick Visiting Society](#)

The Sick Visiting society volunteers visit members in Hospital and provides a small get well gift at each visit. When visiting children it is recommended that these visits take place with two volunteers unless a parent is present in the room with the child.

Members of the Society must adhere to Mizrahi recruit and screening requirements (see recruitment and screening section above). In addition, all staff members will be provided with induction and ongoing training and support, relevant to their role, regarding organisational child safe policies and procedures.

Volunteers must adhere to Mizrahi recruit and screening requirements (see recruitment and screening section above). In addition, all Rabbi's and other staff members will be provided induction and ongoing training and support, relevant to their role, regarding organisational child safe policies and procedures

[Kashrut Authority](#)

At present all employees of Mizrahi are required to have a Working with Children check.

The Kashrut Authority operates in a number of locations and roles.

- At the Mizrahi site in the organisational office
- At various caterers, butchers and roving at various restaurants
- At the abattoirs as slaughterers and supervisors

The Kashrut Authority (Kosher Australia) has noted that office staff and roving supervisors must maintain WWC checks, as they may have contact with children either on the Mizrahi site or when attending weddings, Bar/Bat Mitzvah celebrations as Kashrut inspectors at school events.

The abattoir staff never have contact with children and Kosher Australia have decided that they do not require a WWCC checks. The Working with Children guidelines are that staff must meet all five criteria to be required to hold a WWCC:

You do need a WWCC if you meet ALL 5 criteria listed below:

- You engage, or intend to engage, in child-related work as an employee or volunteer.
- You are an adult working with under 18 year olds.
- You are working in any of the occupational fields listed in the Act. Go to Occupational fields for the full list.
- Your work involves direct contact with children. Direct contact means physical, face-to-face, written, oral or electronic contact.
- Your contact with children is part of your duties and not incidental to your work.

Kosher Australia staff at the Butchers or Abattoirs have no contact with children and as such require no WWCC.

[Supervision of Children on the Mizrachi site before and after Bnei Akiva operations](#)

Appropriate supervision of children before and after Bnei Akiva programs must be coordinated between the Mizrachi Organisation and Bnei Akiva. A Memorandum exists defining the process in the event of a Reportable Incident.

[Attendance during Prayer Services](#)

Children regularly accompany parents to prayer services in the Synagogue. Often they spend time playing outside in the common areas while their parents attend prayer services. Children on site during prayer services are the responsibility of parents at all times and must be supervised by their parents.

The Mizrachi Organisation will take all appropriate steps to ensure the safeguarding of children on site but the ultimate responsibility for unsupervised children rests with their parent or guardian..

Appropriate communications clearly advising parents to monitor their child's safety must be provided.

[Conduct and Behaviour Standards](#)

The Mizrachi Organisation has an expectation regarding the standards of behaviour that exemplify the values and ethos of the organisation. These standards guide us in the way we conduct ourselves (manner of speech, dress and behaviour) and how we interrelate and respect others. We strive to establish a safe environment for every child's physical, emotional and spiritual wellbeing.

This is clearly expressed in our core vision.

"We believe in a holistic emphasis on the overall sense of well-being of all our membership: providing a safe environment for their personal, emotional and intellectual needs."

Staff members have a responsibility to act as role models. Staff are required to uphold these standards of behaviour during work hours. These standards govern staff professional and private interactions with colleagues, members and guests. These expectations incorporate specific behaviours that relate to unwanted touching and the exertion of inappropriate verbal, physical or psychological influence or control on members and staff. Certain behaviours are regarded as incompatible with the values and standards of the Organisation and are always prohibited as outlined in this policy.

Policy Implementation

It is the responsibility of all staff to adhere to this policy. Ultimately, the President is accountable for monitoring compliance with the policy. Any violation of this policy or the guidelines within it regarding Child Protection, Conduct and Behavioural Standards will not be tolerated and may result in termination of employment or loss of membership of the organisation.

Please note that fulfilling the roles and responsibilities contained in the procedure does not displace or discharge any other obligations that arise if a person reasonably believes that a child is at risk of child abuse.

Policy Review

This policy is a living document, and the child safety culture discussed in this document will be embedded in all parts of our programs. This Child Protection Policy and associated procedures will be reviewed annually at a nominated board meeting. The purpose of this review will be to reflect on experiences in the past year following this policy and changes that need to be made to improve our practices and to incorporate any legislative changes that affect this policy.

Policy released September 2018. Review date 1 October 2019.

Additional policies

- Mizrahi Child Safe Policy – Conducting an Internal Investigation & Reportable Conduct
- Mizrahi Reporting Child Abuse and Neglect Policy

Appendices

Appendix 1: Phase 1: Pre-selection — Ensuring transparency and natural justice in the selection process

The following requirements are to be addressed prior to recruiting and employing staff and volunteers.

Questions	Yes	No
Has the Organisation reviewed its position description to reflect the child safe standards?		
Has the applicant been provided with a statement that sets out the job's requirements, duties and responsibilities regarding: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • child safety, and • essential or relevant qualifications, experience and attributes in relation to child safety? 		
Has the applicant been informed about the Organisation's child safety practices including the child safety policy?		
Has the applicant been informed of their role in ensuring a child safe environment?		
Has the applicant been advised that the selection process will involve a rigorous background check including a current Working with Children Check (WWCC)?		

Appendix 2: Phase 2: Screening/Background Check — Verifying the Applicant's Identity, Suitability and Qualifications

Prospective employees and volunteers will be asked to provide the following forms of identification and proof of qualification as part of the screening process prior to the offer of employment taking place. The Organisation will determine what constitutes unsatisfactory information based on best practice in Child Protection. Unsatisfactory responses may result in employment not being offered or offered with further requirements such as additional training.

Questions	Yes	No
Have you checked at least two forms of personal identification eg driver's licence, passport? Is the name and address the same as those provided by the applicant?		
If appropriate, does the applicant have an original academic transcript or qualification/s that confirms their claims about their qualifications or registrations?		
Have you sighted and retained a copy of the applicant's current Working with Children Check?		
Are there any unexplained gaps in the applicant's employment history? If so, are there satisfactory explanations such as travel, study leave, family leave?		
Have you conducted any other background searches eg by using Google, Facebook or LinkedIn?		

Has the applicant nominated at least two referees including: the current or most recent employer, and direct supervisor/line manager.		
Is there any personal relationship between the applicant and his or her previous supervisor/manager (this may affect the objectivity of the reference)?		
Have you checked with the referee that the work history and previous employment details the applicant has provided are accurate?		
Has the referee(s) directly supervised the applicant and observed their work with children?		
Would the referee(s) employ the person again?		
Did a referee(s) have any concerns about the applicant working directly with children?		
Did a referee(s) have any concerns about the applicant's adherence to the organisation's code of conduct?		
Have you asked the referee(s) about a time when they observed the applicant managing the behaviour of a child?		
If the reference is in writing, have you contacted the referee to confirm authenticity?		
Does the applicant have experience working with children outside their employment (eg volunteering, private tutoring or coaching, non-commercial child-minding etc)?		

Standard Interview Questions (in keeping with our Child Protection Policy)

Prospective employees and volunteers will be asked to complete this questionnaire as part of the screening process prior to the offer of employment taking place. The Organisation will determine what constitutes unsatisfactory information based on best practice in Child Protection. Unsatisfactory responses may result in employment not being offered or offered with further requirements such as additional training.

Please complete the following Interview questions.

Answers may be filled out on a separate sheet of paper if you would like more space.

1. Please tell us about your experience in relation to working with children and young people.

2. Please outline any action taken against you in relation to working or volunteering with children and young people. This includes, but is not limited to, allegations, substantiated cases and disciplinary action.

3. How do you think your peers, supervisors and referees would describe the way you work with children and young people?

4. Are there any children with whom you would not wish to work and if so, why?

5. In a situation where you felt you had lost control of your emotions with children, how have you managed it? What strategies have you implemented on reflection?

6. How would you respond to a child or young person who disclosed that they were being subjected to abuse?

7. What would you do if you thought another staff member or employee was harming a child or young person?

8. What do you find most rewarding about working with children and young people?

9. What do you find most challenging about working with children and young people?

10. How would you manage a child who is behaving in a manner that is disruptive in a group setting?

11. How would you deal with a child or young person who is acting aggressively?

12. A parent of a child wants someone from the organisation to care for their child out of hours. What would be your response to this request?

13. What would you do if you thought a child or young person was being abused at home?

14. Can you tell us about children or young people you have found challenging to work with? What strategies do you use to manage challenging behaviour?

15. How would you manage a child who appears sad and refuses to participate in activities?
