



AGTV Child Safe Policy 2016

About AGTV Inc.

The Association of German Teachers of Victoria Inc. (AGTV Inc.) provides services to support teachers and students of German. These services are organised and coordinated by an elected Committee with the support of members of the association, volunteers and contracted personnel. From time to time, the AGTV collaborates with personnel from other organisations in the delivery or promotion of services and opportunities for teachers and students.

Our Commitment to Child Safety

The AGTV Inc. respects all children, as well as members and volunteers.

The AGTV Inc. aims to provide child-safe and child-friendly environments, programs and services. We take our duty of care seriously and at all times aim to provide the safest possible programs and environments for children. This includes identifying, managing and reducing risks that may lead to harm; developing, implementing and reviewing processes and procedures to promote child-safe practices; and taking action to comply with related legislation. All decisions regarding the welfare and protection of children are made in the best interests of the child.

The AGTV Inc.-

- has zero tolerance for child abuse,
- actively works to listen to and empower children,
- has systems to protect children from abuse, and will take all allegations and concerns very seriously and respond to them consistently in line with the AGTV's policies and procedures,
- has a legal and moral obligation to contact authorities when we are worried about a child's safety, which we follow rigorously.

If anyone believes a child is at immediate risk of abuse phone 000.

Children

This policy is intended to empower children who are involved in services provided or promoted by our association. We listen to their views, respect what they have to say, and encourage them to report behaviour that makes them feel unsafe.

We promote diversity and tolerance in our association, and people from all walks of life and cultural backgrounds are welcome. In particular, we:

- promote the cultural safety, participation and empowerment of Aboriginal children
- promote the cultural safety, participation and empowerment of children from culturally and/or linguistically diverse backgrounds
- promote safe and equal participation in our services of all children, regardless of their gender, sexual orientation, disability or family background.

In most cases, services provided by the AGTV Inc. for children involve the cooperation of teachers in schools and/or their families, who share responsibility for the safety of children. (For example, the AGTV-BJR exchange, competitions and events for students.)

AGTV-BJR Student Exchange

The AGTV Inc. is a registered Student Exchange Organisation with the Victorian Registration and Qualifications Authority (VRQA) and Tasmanian Qualifications Authority (TQA). The AGTV Inc. facilitates a reciprocal exchange program in Victoria and Tasmania with the Bayerischer Jugendring (BJR - Bavarian Youth Council) in Bavaria, Germany. The BJR is a public commissioned organisation by the Bavarian state government body providing services for young people including worldwide student exchanges.

The AGTV Inc. and BJR are committed to providing child-safe environments for students and their families and both organisations implement and regularly review processes and practices to safeguard children and to comply with the requirements of VRQA registration. www.vrqa.vic.gov.au

Members and Volunteers and others

The AGTV Inc. will ensure all members and volunteers involved with children in our care are aware of appropriate behaviour with children, and are required to follow child-safe policy, processes and practices.

Most members are working in schools and are registered teachers with the Victorian Institute of Teaching (VIT), which requires a current police check.

Volunteers aged 18 and over without VIT or similar registration, who are involved in delivering or supporting services for children provided by the AGTV Inc., or who will come in extended contact with children through our services, will be required to prove a current Working with Children Check and to become aware of the AGTV Child Safe Policies and procedures.

Further information: www.workingwithchildren.vic.gov.au

In all cases where our services involve contact with children, the AGTV Inc. will assess and take steps to identify and reduce risk. (For example, when students in our care are visiting workplaces or aged-care facilities, or when guests are invited to speak at events organised and promoted by the AGTV Inc., or other services promoted by the AGTV Inc. to students.)

Fair procedures for personnel

The safety and wellbeing of children is our primary concern. We are also fair and just to personnel. The decisions we make when recruiting, assessing incidents, and undertaking disciplinary action will always be thorough, transparent, and based on evidence.

We record all allegations of abuse and safety concerns using our incident reporting form, including investigation updates. All records are securely stored.

If an allegation of abuse or a safety concern is raised, we provide updates to children and families on progress and any actions we as an organisation take.

Risk management

In Victoria, organisations are required to protect children when a risk is identified. In addition to general occupational health and safety risks, we proactively manage risks of abuse to our children.

We have risk management strategies in place to identify, assess, and take steps to minimise child abuse risks, which include risks posed by physical environments (for example, any doors that can lock, access to toilets), and online environments.

Legislative responsibilities

Our organisation takes our legal responsibilities seriously, including:

- **Failure to disclose:** Reporting child sexual abuse is a community-wide responsibility. 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 the 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.
- Any personnel who are mandatory reporters must comply with their duties.

Further information:

<http://www.justice.vic.gov.au/home/safer+communities/protecting+children+and+families/failure+to+disclose+offence>

Allegations, concerns and complaints

Our organisation takes all allegations seriously and has practices in place to investigate thoroughly and quickly. Our members and volunteers are trained to deal appropriately with allegations.

We work to ensure all children, families, members 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 (see information about failure to disclose above).

If an adult has a reasonable belief that an incident has occurred, then they must report the incident.

Factors contributing to reasonable belief may be:

- a child states they or someone they know has been abused (noting that sometimes the child may in fact be referring to themselves)
- behaviour consistent with that of an abuse victim is observed
- someone else has raised a suspicion of abuse but is unwilling to report it
- observing suspicious behaviour.

Privacy

All personal information considered or recorded will respect the privacy of the individuals involved, whether they be members, volunteers, parents or children, unless there is a risk to someone's safety and/or to comply with legal obligations. We have safeguards and practices in place to ensure any personal information is protected. Everyone is entitled to know how this information is recorded, what will be done with it, and who will have access to it.

Regular review

This policy will be reviewed at least every two years and following significant incidents if they occur. We will ensure that members and volunteers, families and children have the opportunity to contribute. Where possible we do our best to work with local Aboriginal communities, culturally and/or linguistically diverse communities and people with a disability.

Developed using VRQA and DHS support documents and <https://www.plan.org.au/contact/child-protection-policy>