

# CHILD SAFE POLICY

## Entrust Women Inc.

### Statement of Commitment to child safety

Entrust Women Inc. (**Entrust Women**) is committed to protecting the safety of all people who attend its annual conference (**Conference**).

We recognise that:

- the welfare of the child is paramount, and is everyone's responsibility as outlined in the *National Framework for Protecting Australia's Children*
- all children, regardless of age, disability, gender, racial heritage, religious belief, sexual orientation or identity, have a right to equal protection from all types of harm or abuse
- some children are additionally vulnerable because of the impact of previous experiences, their level of dependency, communication needs or other issues
- abuse is not limited to children and can include vulnerable adults.

### The purpose of this Policy

At all times during the Conference, children under 18 years of age are required to be supervised by their parent/guardian. The only exception is when they attend the seminar specifically catered for the teenagers (**Teen Seminar**). This requirement is published on Entrust Women's website.

The purpose of this Policy has two parts, namely:

1. To outline the set of safeguard measures Entrust Women will implement in order to provide a safe environment for children when they attend the Teen Seminar; and
2. To provide Entrust Women Committee Members and volunteers with the overarching principles that guide our approach to child protection.

Entrust Women believes that a child or young person should never experience abuse of any kind. We have a responsibility to promote the welfare of all children and young people and to keep them safe. We are committed to practice in a way that protects them.

### Our Policy aims to:

- Minimise the risk of abuse, misconduct and the misuse of positional power.
- Ensure that all cases of suspected abuse and misconduct are handled thoroughly.
- Ensure that leaders and programs are safe.
- Ensure that all people are respected and valued.

### Values

The following values reflect the culture that we are committed to promoting within Entrust Women: Due diligence, Integrity, Duty of Care, Transparency, Inclusivity, Teamwork.

### Safeguarding measures

#### Volunteers

All volunteers involved on the day of the Conference:

- must complete Entrust Women's Child Safe Training covering the Child Safe Policy, the Code of Conduct which sets out boundaries of behaviour and expectations of interactions with children and the Child Safety Reporting Process. A training register is maintained;

- will be given a copy of Entrust Women's Child Safe Policy, Code of Conduct and the Child Safety Reporting Process as part of the Child Safe Training; and
- must adhere to the Code of Conduct by signing and returning the Code of Conduct to Entrust Women prior to commencing their volunteer role.

### **Teen Seminar**

In addition to compliance with all the requirements noted above, volunteers directly involved in the Teen Seminar (**Relevant Volunteers**) must also undergo the safeguarding measures set out below.

Entrust Women commits to:

- a. Safe recruitment of Relevant Volunteers: We will screen all Relevant Volunteers before they are appointed through conducting two reference checks and Working with Children Check.
- b. Prohibit the engagement of any Relevant Volunteers from working in the Teen Seminar if they have prior convictions relating to violence or sexually related offences or if they do not have a valid Working with Children Check.

### **Responding to allegations of risk of harm (abuse) and serious misconduct.**

All leaders will report disclosures or suspicions of child abuse, according to our procedure. We will listen to and believe children who raise concerns.

We will ensure that procedures are clear and appropriate in responding to allegations of abuse.

Where an allegation of misconduct is made against a person in the organisation in relation to a child, we will prioritise support to the child. We will seek appropriate support for the person implicated to protect the safety of the child as the paramount consideration. Our insurance provider will be notified of any allegations of abuse.

We understand that responding to abuse is not limited to children, but also includes adults within our programs who may be vulnerable at any given time where abuse could be present and that everyone understands the most appropriate steps to take in supporting our vulnerable people within our community.

### **Provide an open safe environment.**

We will afford participants a say in the Teen Seminar in which they participate by fostering and valuing their ideas and encouraging participation. We will be accountable and transparent.

We will create a child-friendly environment, allowing people to raise their concerns in an appropriate manner.

### **Understand and value diversity.**

In our Teen Seminar, we will be mindful to be inclusive for all people. We will be sensitive to those from culturally and linguistic diverse backgrounds (by way of making transcripts available) and those within the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities. We will also respect all cultures and encourage the participation of all people and recognise their unique contribution to our community.

### **Legal framework**

This Policy reflects legislation and guidance that seeks to protect children, namely:

**Victorian legislation and other documents**

- *Children, Youth and Families Act 2005 (Vic.)*
- *Working With Children Act 2005 (Vic.)*
- Victorian Child Safe Standards
- Reportable Conduct Scheme.

**DEFINITIONS**

**Abuse:** Abuse and neglect includes but is not limited to:

- Physical Abuse
- Emotional Abuse
- Family Violence
- Sexual Abuse
- Grooming
- Neglect

**Child:** a person who is under the age of 18 years (eg: The Commission for Children and Young People Act 2012, Victoria).

**Disclosure:** a disclosure occurs when someone informs a person in authority/leadership (or a trusted adult) within Entrust Women that they have been subject to abuse or knows of abuse. A disclosure may or may not be an allegation or a notifiable circumstance, but it is the responsibility of the person in authority to investigate and take any appropriate action.

**Child Safe Environment:** discharges duty of care by taking steps to keep all those in our care safe, including e.g. spiritual, physical, sexual, emotional abuse (including bullying) or neglect.

**Vulnerable Person:** a person who may be considered to be susceptible to abuse or exploitation based on factors such as their health status (physical or mental), age, grief, previous experience of abuse, social isolation or financial hardship. In this sense vulnerability can be temporary or permanent.

**We are committed to reviewing our Policy and good practice annually.**

Date this Policy was last reviewed: April 2023

Reviewed by: Entrust Women