

CSA CHILD SAFETY CODE OF CONDUCT

Christian Surfers Australia is committed to the safety and wellbeing of children and young people. It recognises the importance of providing a safe, supporting and positive environment for children.

This Child Safety Code of Conduct aims to reduce risk of harm and abuse to children

Christian Surfers Australia believes that what our leaders do reflects our values as an organisation. We believe that all people, especially children and young people, should be valued and deserve to be treated with respect and dignity. The Code of Conduct ensures that CSA staff and leaders clearly understand the expectations in providing a child safe environment.

Behaviour

Children learn as much from what others do as much as what they say. All children should be treated equally with respect and care.

- Treat all children and participants with respect
- Do not be alone with a child
- Do not enter the sleeping accommodation of members of the opposite gender, except in emergencies.
- Be aware of situations when children might be changing, showering or using the toilet.

Language

What we say can be so powerful. Our words have the ability to lift up or to tear down. It is important to use language that communicates a persons worth and dignity and acceptance within Christian Surfers.

- Do not use derogatory language towards other Leaders, participants and especially children – even when meant as sarcasm or a joke.
- Do not use negative language, put downs or sexist language with other Leaders or participants.
- Do not speak down to children or young people, but instead speak to them as people of value.
- When private conversations are necessary, the Leader and child should remain visible to another adult in the group.

Physical Contact

Many children enjoy physical contact, and many do not. We need to be seen to be doing the right thing as well as knowing that we are. Physical contact with a child should be in response to the child's need not the Leaders and always with the child's permission. Resistance from a child should always be respected. Contact should never be in areas that would normally be covered by swimwear and should be done in the open, never in secret. Remember that physical touch has an important role in building healthy relationship. It needs to be done within these very clear guidelines and with a heightened awareness of changing community attitudes around safe and appropriate touch with children.

- As a general rule, open displays of affection initiated by a child in the presence of others is acceptable.
- Children should be allowed to choose the degree of physical contact they have with others, except if needing medical attention
- Do not initiate physical contact
- Touching a child between the neck and knees should be avoided although contact with shoulders and elbows/arms is generally acceptable.
- A sideways hug around the shoulder is more acceptable than an arm around the waist
- The only form of physical restraint appropriate is to protect children from harm. This includes reasonable restraint to stop a fight, to stop bullying or to avoid an accident.
- Allow children to determine the degree of physical contact they have with you, without showing favouritism.

Program Style

Children are not always able to sense the risks associated with participating in activities. To keep children safe we need to choose activities that are appropriate for the children's needs and abilities.

- Clear boundaries and rules are needed to ensure that participants can engage in the activity safely.
- Activities or 'wide games' that require participants to operate on their own or in pairs out of sight of a Leader need to be managed carefully. This includes activities occurring in public places.
- It is not appropriate for participants to be made to feel stupid or embarrassed. Whilst competitive games or activities can be fun, if they exploit gender, intellectual or physical differences, then they should be avoided
- Be willing to drop an activity if you sense that it is not working safely, or is making participants feel angry or isolated.
- Put in extra planning and support measures when an activity has extra challenges.

Cultural Awareness

Christian Surfers Leaders need to be sensitive to cultures and family traditions different from their own. These differences may affect the degree of participation in activities.

- Do not put pressure on participants from other cultures and traditions to encourage participation.
- Leaders should be sensitive about using words which make assumptions about a participants background.
- We encourage a zero tolerance for language or activities that discriminate on the basis of gender, race, age or ability.

Safe Ratios

Every program must have a safe number of Leaders to children participating in activities. There will be some variation depending on the type of the activity or the age of the child. More detailed information about this is in the Surf Safety Guideline.

- The leader to child ratio for CSA activities is 1:8. This may include water based activities if the child has proved themselves to be proficient in the water at swimming and surf sense.

The content of this Child Safety Policy is used with permission from Child Safe Ltd.

