



Kehillat David Hamelech (Kedem Inc)

SAFEGUARDING CHILDREN POLICY

1 COMMITMENT TO SAFEGUARDING CHILDREN

Kedem is a lay led Progressive Jewish community in Melbourne established in 1995. The Kedem motto is ***Joyful Jewish Life*** – which reflects the emphasis on creating a vibrant inclusive community of people who come together in a spirit of joy to celebrate and engage with how to meaningfully apply Judaism in their lives. Kedem welcomes people from diverse backgrounds, ages, and lifestyles. A core component of the community is the practice of Tikkun Olum – repairing the world. Tikkun Olum is embedded throughout all aspects of the community.

Kedem is governed by a Board of Management. Contractors include a part-time Jewish Life and Education Coordinator and Administrative Officer. Rabbinical support is provided over some High Holyday periods.

Kedem has always considered children and young people to be at the centre of its communal life, wanting them to feel welcome and included.

Kedem is committed to providing a child safe and child friendly environment, where all children and young people who are part of the Kedem community, or visiting, are safe and feel safe. It recognises that keeping children safe is a child's human right¹.

Kedem has zero tolerance for any abusive behavior toward children from anyone involved with the Kedem community.

This policy relates to the safety of children and young people up to the age of 18, and the responsibilities of all adults associated with Kedem toward children and young people.

In addition to this policy, Kedem has A Safeguarding Children Code of Conduct that all leadership and child related roles must commit to, and a Kedem Safeguarding Children Procedures Document for responding to child safety concerns and allegations of abuse. Both are available on the Kedem website.

Protecting children is everyone's responsibility and Kedem encourage all people to raise concerns should they suspect the safety of a child is at risk.

2 DESIGNATED PERSON

Kedem's Jewish Life & Education Coordinator is the Designated Person who has responsibility for the implementation of the Kedem Safeguarding Children Policy. The

¹ United Nations Human Rights Office of the High Commissioner, Convention on the Rights of the Child (1990).

Designated Person can be reached through the Kedem office: PO Box 1043 Caulfield North, 3161, Telephone: 0414 328 272.

Should there be any concerns relating to the Designated Person, these should be immediately referred to the current President, who can also be reached via the office. Kedem also has a Board Member who has responsibility for oversight of the Kedem response to Safeguarding Children obligations.

The Designated Person may consult with the President and the Board Member who has responsibility for Safeguarding Children in responding to child safety concerns. This will not occur if any concerns arise in relation to any or all people mentioned.

Details of the Designated person, the President, and the Board Member responsible for oversight of Safeguarding Children can be found on the Safeguarding Children Page of the Kedem website.

3 BACKGROUND CONTEXT

Child abuse refers to any act which endangers a child's physical or emotional health or development. It can be a single act but usually takes place over time. Sexual abuse is any act in which a person with power or authority over a child involves the child in sexual activity. An abuser can be an adult (including a parent or caregiver), adolescent or older child.

Abuse and neglect may be intentional and/or unintentional and includes, but is not limited to, emotional, verbal, intellectual, sexual, psychological, or physical abuse and exposure to domestic violence. Definitions of abuse can be found in Appendix Two of this Document.

Increased evidence and awareness over recent years has revealed that many children have been victims of abuse across many environments including while in the care of religious organisations. The findings of the Protecting Victoria's Vulnerable Children Inquiry (2012), the Royal Commission into Institutional Responses to Sexual Abuse (2015) and the Victorian Royal Commission into Child Abuse (2017) highlighted those children and young people are placed in danger if organisations which are responsible for them do not have clear guidelines and procedures for protecting them.

Within religious organisations there was evidence that in addition to the failure to prevent abuse, children and families' reports of abuse were denied, and on occasions these families were rejected or chose to leave the organisation. There was also evidence of perpetrators being moved away from the victim and the victim's community rather than being reported to appropriate civil authorities. These findings highlighted the imperative for religious organisations being particularly mindful and vigilant to address this issue.

Another significant finding from the inquiries and commissions is that children living with disability experience an increased risk of abuse across all services and locations.

The Royal Commission and the Victorian Inquiry brought to light the extent of abuse of children and young people and the significant and wide-ranging impact of such abuse, together with the failure of appropriate organisational responses, for children and young people. This damage often has had a devastating effect on children and young people's development, health and quality of life extending into adulthood.

4 LEGISLATIVE OBLIGATIONS AND STANDARDS

Victoria has introduced legislation measures to help protect children from abuse and ensure children's safety within all organisational settings and in the community. Kedem is committed to upholding all legal obligations to promoting children's safety under legislation and all other relevant laws. A full list of relevant legislations is found on the Kedem website

- Crimes Act 1958 (Vic)
- The United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (1990).
- The Education and Training Reform Act 2006 (the Act).
- Children, Youth and Families Act 2005 (Vic)
- Child Wellbeing and Safety Act 2005 (Vic)
- Education, Training and Reform Act 2006 (Vic)
- Crimes Amendment (Grooming) Act 2014 (Vic)
- Crimes Amendment (Protection of Children) Act 2014 (Vic)
- Commission for Children and Young People Act 2012 (Vic) (with amendments 1 November 2018)
- The Reportable Conduct Scheme (2017).

Child Safety Standards²

Kedem is committed to the Victorian Child Safe Standards that have been developed to embed child safety across all organisations. The Standards require us to:

1. Embed a culture of child safety through effective leadership
2. Have a Child Safe Policy or Statement of Commitment to Child Safety
3. Have a clear Code of Conduct that establishes appropriate behaviour with children
4. Implement screening, supervision, training, and other human resource practices that reduce the risk of child abuse by new and existing personnel
5. Identify clear processes for responding to and reporting suspected child abuse
6. Identify and reduce or remove risks of child abuse
7. Embed strategies to promote the participation and empowerment of children

In applying each Child Safe Standard, Kedem will embed the:

- Cultural safety of children from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds
- Safety of children with disabilities
- Cultural safety of Aboriginal children

Children with disability have been identified as one of three priority groups. Consequently, organisations are required to take specific steps to meet children and young people with disability safety and participation needs.

² New Child Safety standards will come into effect on 1st July 2022. These are outlined in Appendix One.

5 APPLICATION OF THE POLICY

This policy provides guidance for all matters related to Safeguarding Children in the context of Kedem. It encompasses the behaviour of

- Members of the Board of Management
- Staff and Contractors
- Adult members and visitors to Kedem
- Tutors & volunteers employed to undertake specific child related activities including (but not limited to) mentoring and tutoring children studying for their B'nei Mitzvah and offering child and young people centred activities during services

6 PROTECTING OUR COMMUNITY

Every child is entitled to feel safe and to be safe from abuse and neglect and be protected from the risk of harm. Kedem is committed to safeguarding children who are part of our community from abuse and neglect.

Kedem is committed to creating a safe environment for all children under the age of 18 years who attend Kedem activities. Whilst this Policy refers to children, the guidelines equally apply to all vulnerable persons. Kedem takes seriously our responsibility to create a safe and caring environment as we recognize this is essential for educating, empowering, and impassioning our children.

Kedem is committed to safeguarding children in all religious; social and cultural activities whether held at Kedem's location at King David School or offsite or on-line activities.

6.1 Duty of Care

The Kedem community has a duty of care to protect the safety, health, and wellbeing of children in their care.

Child abuse refers to any act which endangers a child's physical or emotional health or development. It can be a single act but usually takes place over time. Sexual abuse is any act in which a person with power or authority over a child involves the child in sexual activity. An abuser can be an adult (including a parent or caregiver), adolescent or older child. Definitions of abuse can be found in Appendix Two of this Document.

Members of the Kedem community must not intentionally fail to protect a child from significant harm arising out of a physical injury or sexual abuse which may harm the child's physical development or health. It is a criminal offence for any adult to fail to report that a sexual offence has been committed against a child.

If a member of the Kedem community has any concerns regarding the health, safety or wellbeing of a child he or she must take immediate action in accordance with this Policy.

It is important to note that these are topics that are distressing to consider and to read about. Kedem also has a duty of care to all members to ensure that if adult members are disturbed by this material that they are supported to receive appropriate support.

6.2 Approach to preventing and responding to abuse

6.2.1 Empowering Children

Kedem will provide an environment where children and young people are empowered to be heard and have any concerns taken seriously.

Empowerment of children is important, but this does not imply children are responsible for their own safety.

6.2.2 Communicating this policy

The Board is responsible to provide the policy and anyone acting for or on behalf of Kedem is obliged to follow the guidance. Key personnel (including but not limited to Board members and paid staff) are also required to participate in discussions, training, and reviews relevant to the policy.

It is Kedem's responsibility to provide guidance and understanding of this Policy. The Policy is available on the Kedem website, and a copy provided upon request.

This Policy is to be included in the induction, employment and hiring procedure for the Board of Governance, staff and volunteers engaging in child related activities.

Within two weeks of commencing roles with Kedem, all Board Members, staff (including contracted staff and teachers / mentors) are required to read and commit to following:

- This Safeguarding Children Policy
- The Kedem Safeguarding Children Code of Conduct
- The Kedem Safeguarding Children Procedures Document

At the time that families request information about membership or are not members but enrol to attend a program or activity that Kedem is offering they will receive a copy of this Policy.

Contact details of help lines and support services will be listed on Kedem's website - <https://www.kedem.com.au>

6.2.3 Child safe hiring of staff and volunteers undertaking child related roles

a) Position Description & Recruitment

Kedem takes the following steps when recruiting staff and appointing volunteers in child related roles to increase the likelihood of a safe environment for children:

- Applicants are informed that Kedem is vigilant in the protection of children.
- Position descriptions provide clear guidance about the scope of each role and require current Criminal History Check and Working with Children Check to be maintained.
- All employment advertisements include the notification that a satisfactory Criminal History Check and Working with Children Check is required as a prerequisite to employment
- Vacancies are widely advertised

b) Reference and Identity Checks

Kedem conducts a minimum of two reference checks for a preferred applicant including an identity check and employment history. Reference checks include questions about child safety.

c) Police and Working with Children Checks

Prior to engagement, Kedem requires a current Police Check and Working with Children Check to be completed in relation to all staff and volunteers in child related roles in accordance with existing national standards.

Police checks must be undertaken at least every three years and Working with Children Checks are required to be renewed every five years.

d) Induction and Education

Kedem will provide training and education in relation to this Policy in respect of each staff member or volunteer working with children.

7 REPORTING CONCERNS

Kedem encourages all persons to immediately report any concerns, disclosures, indicators of abuse and inappropriate behaviour, as defined in Kedem's Safeguarding Children Procedures Document. While some professions have additional legal obligations to report, all adults have a role to play in keeping children safe and are expected to respond to child safety.

Information about an allegation of abuse will be handled in a sensitive; confidential and professional manner ensuring procedural fairness. Reporting obligations must be adhered to by our Designated Person or the President or Board member Portfolio Holder and anyone who is defined as a Mandatory Reporter.

If any allegation of abuse involves an Aboriginal or Torres Strait islander child, Kedem will engage with their family, local Aboriginal communities, or an Aboriginal community-controlled organisation to ensure a culturally appropriate response.

Kedem acknowledges awareness that some people from culturally and/or linguistically diverse backgrounds may face barriers in reporting allegations of abuse. For example, people from some cultures may experience anxiety when talking with police and communicating in English may be a barrier for some. Sensitivity is required for these issues and to meet people's needs where possible, such as having an interpreter present who could be a friend or family member or a professional interpreter.

Children with a disability may experience barriers in disclosing an incident and require additional supports (e.g., sign language interpreters or the support of family or a professional).

Kedem encourages all persons, who believe on reasonable grounds that a child needs protection to report their concerns to the Department of Families, Fairness and Housing (DFFH) (previously DHHS) Child Protection Unit, Victoria Police or Child FIRST.

Contact details in relation to DFFH Child Protection and Child FIRST are on the Kedem website

8 RESPONDING TO HISTORICAL CASES OF ABUSE

Kedem is aware those Kedem community members, or other persons involved with Kedem, may have a historical grievance, complaint. or allegation.

On hearing a historical grievance, complaint or allegation, Kedem will act in accordance with natural justice and listening without bias. At all stages, the complainant will be heard without judgement and will be treated with respect.

Kedem may undertake the following steps, amongst others, in response to a historical grievance, complaint or allegation:

- Provide an apology
- Offer appropriate counselling
- Make a report to a relevant agency, including a mandatory report
- Other appropriate action

9 POLICY AND CODE EVALUATION AND REVIEW

Kedem is committed to evaluating and reviewing this Policy every three years or more frequently if required. Amendments will be presented to the Board for ratification.

This Policy and associated documents will be reviewed by identifying:

- significant experiences in the past three years relating to the Policy and associated documents
- significant problems in the Policy and associated documents which arose during these experiences
- significant functional issues in relation to the Policy and associated documents.

Input will be sought from the Kedem community, including staff, volunteers, parents and Board Members.

APPENDIX ONE:

Child Safety Standards in Victoria, effective 1st July 2022 are:

- Standard 1 – Organisations establish a culturally safe environment in which the diverse and unique identities and experiences of Aboriginal children and young people are respected and valued
- Standard 2 – Child safety and wellbeing is embedded in organisational leadership, governance, and culture
- Standard 3 – Children and young people are empowered about their rights, participate in decisions affecting them and are taken seriously
- Standard 4 – Families and communities are informed, and involved in promoting child safety and wellbeing
- Standard 5 – Equity is upheld, and diverse needs respected in policy and practice
- Standard 6 – People working with children and young people are suitable and supported to reflect child safety and wellbeing values in practice
- Standard 7 – Processes for complaints and concerns are child focused
- Standard 8 – Staff and volunteers are equipped with the knowledge, skills and awareness to keep children and young people safe through ongoing education and training
- Standard 9 – Physical and online environments promote safety and wellbeing while minimising the opportunity for children and young people to be harmed
- Standard 10 - Implementation of the Child Safe Standards is regularly reviewed and improved
- Standard 11 – Policies and procedures document how the organisation is safe for children and young people.

APPENDIX TWO – DEFINITIONS OF ABUSE

Sexual Abuse

Sexual abuse is any act in which a person with power or authority over a child involves the child in sexual activity. An abuser can be an adult (including a parent or caregiver), adolescent or older child. Sexual abuse includes:

Non-contact behaviour:

- making sexual comments (orally or in writing, including by telephone, text messages or email)
- voyeurism including commenting on physical attractiveness
- exposing a child to pornography
- nudity by an abuser exposing parts of their body or the child's body
- exposure of the child to pornography

Contact behaviour:

- kissing
- fondling of the child's genitals or breasts
- masturbation, oral sex, vaginal or anal penetration by a penis, finger or other object
- exploiting a child through prostitution

Physical Abuse

Physical abuse occurs when a child suffers or is likely to suffer significant harm from an injury. The injury may be inflicted intentionally or may be the inadvertent consequences of physical punishment or physically aggressive treatment of a child.

Physically abusive behaviour includes but is not limited to shoving, hitting, slapping, shaking, throwing, punching, biting, burning, and kicking. The injury may take the form of bruises, cuts, burns, or fractures.

Emotional or Psychological Abuse

Emotional or psychological abuse occurs when a child is rejected, threatened, humiliated, terrorised, belittled, or subjected to name calling, putdowns or coldness in manner (or other similar behaviour), and that behaviour results in significant damage to the child's physical, intellectual or emotional wellbeing and development.

Often there is a pattern of emotional or psychological abuse rather than a single incident.

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

Neglect

Neglect is the failure to provide a child with the basic necessities of life such as 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.

APPENDIX THREE

Guidelines for Appropriate Physical Contact and behaviour

Kedem does not seek to ban physical contact between children and adults. At all times physical contact must be appropriate to the child and within context. Examples of appropriate touching include a handshake, high five or fist bump, or comforting a distressed child by picking them up or giving a hug.

1. Touching guidelines

The following guidelines will assist members of the Kedem community with understanding the appropriateness and expectations of physical contact with children and young people:

- Be aware of and observe age related guidance:
 - very young children (e.g., under 7 years) physical contact to assist with changing clothes if required, toileting, comforting a distressed child, general nurturing activities in the company of others.
 - Children (e.g., 8 – 13 years) - physical contact to comfort a distressed child. It is advisable to ask the child beforehand, for example "do you want a hug?" Greeting hug or high five / fist bump generally acceptable if the child is comfortable.
 - Teenagers - physical contact for comfort not normally required, however handshakes, high fives, fist bumps or similar hand to hand contact is acceptable at any age.
- Kedem members should only touch a child with the agreement of the child. If the child is unable to express their permission their parents can be consulted or if unsure no contact should take place.
- A child should never be encouraged to break their comfort zone.
- Kedem members should take care in relation to where they touch children i.e., not near any private areas.
- Touching should only occur when other children or adults are present and/or in physical spaces that are always clearly observable.
- If touch while assisting a child to do something can be replaced by verbal instructions, then this should happen.
- Adults may have physical contact with children to administer first aid where the child is not able to administer it independently.
- Avoid 1:1 contact with children away from their parents/guardians, including provision of regular transport.

Unacceptable physical contact and behaviour

Under no circumstances should any Kedem community member including employed staff, tutors, peers, or volunteers have physical contact with a child that:

- includes touching genitals, breasts, or buttocks
- would appear to a reasonable person to have a sexual connotation or purpose

- is intended to cause pain or distress to the child e.g., physical punishment
- is overly physical including (e.g. tickling or wrestling)
- is unnecessary for the age, stage or physical needs of the student or child e.g., assisting with toileting or showering when not required
- is initiated against the wishes of the child.

Physical restraint is not acceptable, except as use as a last resort to respond to the immediate risk of injury or harm to the child or others.

The supply of drugs or alcohol to children is a criminal offence and is prohibited. The supply, possession or taking of illicit drugs whilst at a Kedem sanctioned event is prohibited.

2. A culture of non-violence

An overall culture of non-violence is critical to ensuring a culture of child safety.

- All forms of bullying, including, but not limited to, physical, verbal, or cyber bullying are unacceptable. If a Kedem community member is a victim of, or witnesses, any form of bullying, they should report the bullying to a member of the Kedem Board.
- Any form of abuse or assault, including but not limited to the types of child abuse outlined in Kedem's Safeguarding Children Procedure will not be tolerated.

3. Appropriate Conduct and Behaviour in specific situations in relation to photography, teaching and tutoring, on-line teaching and interacting and gift giving.

3.1 Photography

Kedem acknowledges that images of children can be used inappropriately or illegally. The following applies to people taking images of children including people employed by Kedem and community members:

- obtain the permission of the child's parent or guardian before taking an image of a child and ensure that the parent knows the way the image will be used and how it will be safely stored and deleted.
- only use appropriate images of a child and ensure that the child is suitably clothed.
- do not allow the use of camera phones, videos and cameras inside changing areas, showers, and toilets
- where an image of a child is used, the image should not display identifying personal information such as identifiable school uniforms, residential address, email address, telephone numbers
- ensure that any image or video is taken in the presence of responsible adults (the parent/guardian or caregiver).
- ensure images (digital or hard copy) which unintentionally reveal private body parts are destroyed or deleted.

- The posting of photographs of minors on social network sites may only be done with the permission of a parent / guardian. Children should not be "tagged" by name, or otherwise identified by name on social network sites.

3.2 Teaching and Tutoring

Teaching, tutoring, and mentoring at Kedem regularly occurs in the context of preparation for B'nai Mitzvah. At Kedem, teaching roles are often undertaken by people who are also family friends, or at least well known to them. In all cases, clear delineation between friendship roles and tutoring roles should occur. The following guidance applies:

- It is preferable that teaching children at Kedem takes place in open spaces wherever possible. If teaching or mentoring is to take place in a separate room, it should be in view of, or near and accessible to, other adults.
- Teachers should avoid being alone with children and young people, in a ratio of 1:1, outside of the teaching context.
- If teaching occurs offsite, teachers are required to have a parent or guardian present during the session. If parents/guardians are not in the room with the child, they must be nearby and the door to the room where the tutoring is occurring must be open
- If parent/s or guardian/s engages a member of the Kedem community for private teaching or tutoring or mentoring, those activities will be considered separate and distinct from Kedem. In particular, the relevant parent/s or guardian/s must not rely on the Working with Children and Police checks conducted by Kedem. Kedem recommends the relevant parent/s or guardian/s also conduct their own individual assessments as to an individual's fitness to work with children.

3.3 Online Teaching and Interacting

At times teaching may take place in an online space.

A teacher or tutor is only permitted to tutor a child online when directed to do so by Kedem, or otherwise with the permission of Kedem and the child's parent/guardian. Where Kedem authorises online tutoring to take place, the following process is to be followed:

The tutor/mentor must notify the child's parent/guardian of the time and date of the tutoring or teaching session, provide the child's parent/guardian with an invitation to join the online session and encourage them to do so (whether as a virtual attendee, or by sitting next to or near the child during the online interactions).

In cases of interaction via social network sites, a parent / guardian must be copied into any communication, or otherwise provided with a copy of any communication.

From time to time the Kedem's B'nei Mitzvah Co-ordinator will contact the child and family and ensure all involved are comfortable with the on-line arrangements from the lens of child safety.

3.4 Gift Giving/Favouritism within teaching relationships

The giving of gifts by a Kedem community member to a child whom they provide a service to is prohibited. No favouritism or special treatment should be shown to one child.

An exception to the above guidelines is that appropriate gifts may be given on attendance at a social function, for example a bar or bat mitzvah. In this forum the gift is part of social etiquette and does not signify special treatment. It is therefore unlikely that this gift giving will be misinterpreted by the child or others or used for the purposes of grooming a child for sexual abuse.