



Australian Men's Shed Association
SHOULDER TO SHOULDER

The Australian Men's Shed Association Policy Statement

WORKING WITH CHILDREN & YOUNG PEOPLE



Introduction

This document outlines the Australian Men's Shed Association (AMSA) policy guidelines for any Men's Shed that has children and/or young people attending. In this document the terms 'abuse' and 'neglect' refer to:

- Sexual abuse
- Physical abuse
- Emotional or psychological abuse
- Bullying
- Neglect
- Systems abuse

Policy Statement

Many Men's Sheds across Australia are involved in mentoring/intergenerational programmes. In order to keep children and young people safe whilst accessing Men's Sheds, AMSA is committed to protecting children and young people from abuse and neglect. We promote an organisational culture within Men's Sheds that:

- Safeguard children and young people
- Provide Men's Sheds with information about training that enable members and volunteers to become skilled in protecting children and young people.

Objectives

i. A commitment to safeguarding children

Through this statement, the Australian Men's Shed Association (AMSA) documents its clear commitment to safeguarding children and young people.

ii. Personnel roles and conduct

AMSA encourages all Men's Sheds who have a role in mentoring children to ensure that each person involved in the Shed operations understands their role and the behaviour expected in safeguarding children and young people.

iii. Recruitment and screening practices

AMSA encourages all Men's Sheds to have appropriate measures in place to minimise the likelihood that the Men's Shed engages any paid person who is unsuitable to work with children or young people.

iv. Personnel induction and training

AMSA encourages all Men's Sheds to have induction, education and training programmes as a vital part of our commitment to safeguarding children and young people.

v. Involving children, parents and schools

In developing a safe, inclusive and supportive environment AMSA encourages involvement and communication with children, young people, their parents and their school or referring agency. We encourage parental and school involvement and behaviour that helps to protect children and young people.

vi. Child abuse reports and allegations

AMSA encourages each Men's Shed to have measures in place to ensure that all those people who work with children and young people understand their responsibility to report possible abuse or neglect and understand the reporting procedures.

vii. Supporting a child-safe culture

AMSA encourages each Men's Shed to have measures in place to ensure that all those members who work with children and young people understand their responsibility to report possible abuse or neglect and understand the reporting procedures.

viii. Protecting Men's Shed Members

AMSA recognises that by following child safe measures the likelihood of false accusations against any 'shedder' is minimised and therefore adds extra protection for members.

Principles

AMSA encourages each Men's Shed to undertake the principles of this Policy which are to:

- Respect and support the rights of children and young people and be committed to their safety, welfare and wellbeing. In so doing sheds recognise that children and young people have a right to be safe from abuse and neglect.
- Have a responsibility and Duty of Care to ensure all children and young people who access a Men's Shed are kept safe from abuse and neglect at all times.
- Be proactive in ensuring all possible measures and systems are in place to prevent abuse and neglect of children and young people occurring.
- Have strong organisational processes in place that continually monitor how each Men's Shed is doing in keeping children and young people safe from abuse and neglect.
- Act decisively and take appropriate action, using clear policy directions, where and when a Men's Shed finds any abuse or neglect of children and young people has occurred or been alleged in any of the Men's Shed programmes.
- Be prepared to devote whatever skills and resources are appropriate to ensure that shed systems work effectively to prevent and act against the occurrence of abuse and neglect of children and young people.

Policies

AMSA encourages all Men's Sheds to have the following Guidelines in place:

- whenever children/young people are present there will be a minimum of 2 shed members present (in visual sight of) in the same area/space
- No child/young person is to be accompanied to the toilet/bathroom
- Men's Shed members should not have a relationship outside the Men's Shed with any child/young person who attends the Men's Shed (except where there is an existing relationship e.g. grandfather/grandchild)
- Men's Shed members should be vigilant for any suspicious interaction between a Shed members and a child/young person and, if noticed, report immediately to a member of the Management Committee and/or Shed Manager/Coordinator.
- All Shed members and volunteers are to be made aware of these policies.

Code of Conduct

AMSA encourages the following Code of Conduct is adopted and implemented:

Men's Shed members will:

- Follow the 'Working with Children and Young People Policy'
- Treat children and young people with respect, listen and value their ideas and opinions
- Respect cultural, religious and political differences
- Model appropriate adult behaviour
- Listen to children and take action to protect their wellbeing
- Report and act on any breaches of these standards of behaviour
- Respect the privacy of children and their families by only disclosing information to people who have a need to know

Men's Shed members will not:

- Seek to use children in any way to meet the needs of adults
- Use prejudice, oppressive behaviour or language with children
- Discriminate on the basis of age, gender, race, culture, vulnerability or sexuality
- Initiate unnecessary physical contact with children or do things of a personal nature that children can do for themselves
- Develop 'special' relationships with specific children for our own needs
- Show favouritism through provision of gifts or inappropriate attention
- Have a relationship outside the Men's Shed with any child/young person who attends the Men's Shed (except where there is an existing relationship e.g. grandfather/grandchild).

'Working with Children' Checks

NB: Men's Sheds should refer to their individual State requirements and legislation in regards to the legal requirements regarding 'Working with Children' checks.

In Australia, State and Territory governments are responsible for the administration and operation of child protection services. Legislative Acts in each State and Territory govern the way such services are provided.

Men's Shed Management Committees are advised to contact their particular State/Territory Department to obtain guidance and advice. The following table lists the principle Child Protection Acts in each Australian State and Territory, the relevant Department responsible and the website regarding 'Working with Children' checks.

State or Territory	Website
ACT	http://justice.act.gov.au https://www.accesscanberra.act.gov.au/app/answers/detail/a_id/1804/~/working-with-vulnerable-people-%28wvp%29-registration#!tabs-1
NSW	https://check.kids.nsw.gov.au/
NT	http://www.workingwithchildren.nt.gov.au/
Qld	http://www.ccypcg.qld.gov.au/bluecard/index.html

SA	http://www.police.sa.gov.au/sapol/services/information_requests/police_checks.jsp
Tas.	http://www.dhhs.tas.gov.au/about_the_department/our_plans_and_strategies/future_communities/working_with_children_and_vulnerable_people_screening_unit
Vic.	www.justice.vic.gov.au/workingwithchildren/
WA	www.checkwwc.wa.gov.au/

Reporting

AMSA encourages Men's Sheds to consider that all members and volunteers in child-related interaction are mandatory reporters. They must report to the relevant government department any suspicion or knowledge of a risk of harm to a child or young person, provided they have become aware of the risk through their work with their Men's Shed:

- Unless the urgency of the situation precludes it, prior to making a risk of harm report, all members must discuss the risk of harm issue with their Shed Manager/Coordinator
 - When a Risk of Harm report is completed, a copy of the report must be provided to the:
 - AMSA
 - Relevant auspicing agency (if applicable)
 - Men's Shed Manager/coordinator
 - Men's Shed Management Committee.
 - It is acceptable for a member to make a report jointly with their Men's Shed Committee and this will acquit the reporting obligations of both parties.
 - AMSA encourages Shed members and volunteers to undertake training in how to recognise the risk of harm to a child or young person.
- The relevant State Government Department may be able to support this.

'Reasonable grounds'

'Reasonable grounds' for making a report exist where:

- ✓ *a child tells you he/she has been abused or neglected*
- ✓ *you witness omissions of care towards the child*
- ✓ *someone else tells you that a child has been abused or neglected (e.g. a relative, friend, sibling)*
- ✓ *you become aware of a situation where an adult's behaviour leads you to suspect that the child may be abused or neglected*
- ✓ *you observe that the child has injuries or medical symptoms that could be consistent with physical or sexual abuse or neglect*
- ✓ *a particular child's behaviour leads you to suspect that the child may be abused or neglected*
- ✓ *you observe abusive or neglectful behaviour by a caregiver towards a child*
- ✓ *a child witnesses the abuse of another child or witnesses domestic violence*
- ✓ *you have current concerns that the abuse or neglect may continue or be repeated.*