Fishcare Child Safety Guide for Volunteers

Quick guide for volunteers and partner club volunteers

Before you help at a clinic

- Complete Fishcare's Child Safety and Working with Children (WWC) induction before taking on participant duties, and acknowledge the Child Safe Code of Conduct. Current volunteers can revisit the modules as a refresher. Fishcare refreshes training at least annually and when relevant requirements change.
- If your role requires a WWC Check, provide your details securely so Fishcare can verify your clearance before you start child-related duties. Ask the Executive Officer if you think an exemption applies. Renew on time and promptly tell Fishcare if your details or clearance status change, or you finish volunteering. A pending application or renewal receipt alone is insufficient under Fishcare's policy.
- Fishcare manages your connection in WWC Connect where required. The Victorian Government's WWC training is a separate step for new applications, renewals and changes from volunteer to employee clearance.

At the clinic

- Every participant under 18 must stay with a parent, guardian or responsible adult throughout the activity, including at FishAbility. At school and group sessions, teachers or authorised group adults stay with their participants. If the adult leaves, pause the child's participation, keep them safely supervised in view of others and get the facilitator.
- Teach in visible areas and avoid isolated one-to-one contact. Use approved Fishcare channels with the responsible adult included. Keep contact with children off personal accounts and leave private transport to approved arrangements.
- Ask what would help someone take part and respect their culture, identity and choices. Speak up about racism or discrimination. Explain before offering hands-on help and respect a child's choice to decline touch, photos or participation. Take photos only with the required permission and the child's agreement.

If something worries you

1. **Make the child safe.** Call **000** for immediate danger or urgent medical help.
2. **Listen calmly.** Thank the child for telling you. Explain that you'll share the concern with people who can help. Avoid leading questions, promises of secrecy and investigating it yourself.
3. **Report immediately.** Call the Executive Officer (EO), Fishcare's safeguarding lead, on **0437 672 242**. If the EO is involved or unavailable, contact **president@fishcarevictoria.org.au**, then **vicepresident@fishcarevictoria.org.au**. Report suspected abuse, disclosures, unsafe behaviour and boundary breaches, including accidental private contact. You can report directly to the relevant authority. Make any required external report without waiting for Fishcare's permission.
4. **Capture the facts securely.** Note what happened, when and where, who was present, the child's words where possible and what you did. A verbal report is enough to get the process started. The safeguarding lead maintains the formal record. Keep sensitive details out of shared activity reports and group chats.

Read more in Fishcare's Child Safe Public Commitment and Reporting Contacts.