



**Standing Tall in
Hamilton Inc.**

School-based Mentoring

Mentor Handbook

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Mentor Responsibilities in Mentoring Sessions

Understanding and Engaging with Your Student's Interests: It is essential as a mentor to actively inquire about your student's interests, listen to what brings them happiness, and identify areas in which they may want to further explore.

Initiate Fun Activities and games that promote conversation: An activities box is provided at each of our schools; however, we do encourage you to bring along games and activities that are aligned to what your student enjoys. Feel free to propose cooking or creative projects for you and your student that go beyond the activities provided by the Standing Tall team. However, please coordinate these ideas with the team, as they will need to liaise with the school and assist in booking facilities or finding an appropriate space for your activities. The Standing Tall program can fund a couple of group cooking projects per term but outside of this scope will need to be supplied by the mentor.

Taking Initiative in Unplanned Weeks: During weeks when no organized activities are scheduled, it's your responsibility to collaborate with your student and decide on mutually enjoyable and meaningful activities.

Your role as a mentor is vital in making this mentoring relationship a success. By actively engaging with your student's interests and suggesting exciting activities, you'll help create a rewarding experience for both you and your mentee. Remember to keep open communication with the Standing Tall team to ensure a smooth process, we are here for you and will try as hard as possible to bring your ideas into fruition.

Mentor's Credo

The aim of mentoring is to make a connection with a young person, to support and encourage them to become resilient and fulfil their full potential.

- I am not here to persuade you to see the world from my point of view.
- I am here to help you in any way you see appropriate.
- It is not my role to impose my tastes, goals, and life objections upon you.
- Nor is it for me to convert you to my ideas of right and wrong, good, or bad.
- My values need not be your values, although we might both learn much from coming to understand each other's points of view.
- I will listen to your thoughts and ideas about what you hope to achieve in your lifetime. I may question them but will not pass judgment on them.
- Perhaps I can help you explore new ways of attaining your goals by introducing you to people, organisations and facilities which could be of help to you.
- Together we may find outlets for your talents and abilities which you may never have considered. You may be surprised; I certainly hope so.
- Most importantly, I want to help you to discover your own true potential, to realise the opportunities open to you, and the steps you could take to enrich your future.
- I cannot do this for you. But I may be able to point you in the right direction so you can do it for yourself.
- The decisions you will have to make will be yours, not mine.
- I can only introduce you to possibilities. It is up to you what you make of them.

Mentor Boundaries

STiH Volunteer Mentors must NEVER:

- Meet with a student mentee alone or without supervision.
- Contact a student mentee outside the STiH Program (on social media, phone or any other means).
- Request, record or share personal information of the student mentee.
- Give their home address, phone number or email address to a student mentee.
- Give or loan money to a student mentee.
- Engage in intrusive conversations with the student mentee about their parents/guardian.
- Touch a mentee.
- Offer to drive the student mentee anywhere.
- Take a student mentee on a 'high-risk activity'.
- Try to deal with a crisis with a student mentee on your own. The Program Manager or Coordinator must be informed immediately.

Social Media Usage Policy

Purpose

The purpose of this policy is to provide an acceptable framework for the use of social media by employees, volunteers, consultants and contractors engaged by Standing Tall in Hamilton Inc (STiH). It is recognised that there is great potential for STiH in the use of social media in the areas of program expansion and promotion, fundraising and as a communication tool to the wider community and between STiH employees and volunteers. It is also acknowledged that social media poses potential risks that must be mitigated to fulfil the organisations commitment to and obligation as a Child Safe Organisation.

It is important that employees, volunteers, consultants and contractors engaged by STiH understand and meet the obligations and recommended standards of behaviours set out within the existing STiH Code of Conduct and Child Safe Policy when using social media for personal or professional uses.

Definitions

Confidential information means any information of or relating to Standing Tall which is not in the public domain (other than by a breach of notice), including any information which might reasonably be expected to be confidential, and which a program participant may have obtained access to or become aware of in their dealings with Standing Tall.

Posting means any content which is published or placed on social media, including the act of publishing or placing content on to social media, via any means, and post has similar meaning.

Program participant includes committee of management, staff, mentors, contractors, consultants, volunteers and mentees.

Social media means all online media allowing user participation and interactions (including but not limited to all social networking sites (e.g. Facebook and LinkedIn), video and photo sharing sites (e.g. YouTube and Flickr), blogs (whether personal, corporate or hosted by other persons including media outlets), micro-blogging (e.g. Twitter), forums, discussion boards, groups, instant messaging and podcasting.

Policy

This policy applies to all program participants. Different parts of the policy are applicable to the different roles of program participants.

Social media is seen as an acceptable tool for program participants to use for the purposes of:

- staff communicating with mentors

- promoting the work of Standing Tall to the broader community
- recruiting further participants into the program.

Responsibilities of all program participants

1. All program participants are entitled to post on social media platforms privately, however, are expected to use common sense and discretion when posting.
2. If program participants use social media to communicate with the broader community, they must be aware that they may be perceived as representing Standing Tall and/or the program.
3. When posting on social media, all program participants must do so in a manner that is consistent with STiH code of conduct.
4. Without limiting the above point, when posting on social media, program participants:
 - a. must not disclose any confidential information
 - b. except with the prior written approval of Standing Tall, must not make any post that could appear to be endorsed or supported by, or originating from Standing Tall, for example by:
 - i. suggesting, claiming or implying that they are speaking on behalf of Standing Tall
 - ii. giving the impression that the views expressed are those of Standing Tall
 - iii. including any of Standing Tall's logos, trademarks or other insignia in the post, and must, if necessary, make it clear they are expressing a personal view only (e.g. by adding a disclaimer)
 - c. must not make any post that might be construed as obscene, offensive, disrespectful, threatening, harassing, bullying, discriminatory or otherwise offensive or unlawful
 - d. must not make any post which disparages or defames Standing Tall or any other program participant, or which may otherwise bring Standing Tall or any other program participant into disrepute
 - e. must not seek to adopt the identity or likeness of another person, or to misrepresent their own identity
 - f. should seek to ensure that the post is accurate, factual and objective – if an error is made, it should be corrected immediately.
5. Notwithstanding 4.b above, program participants may identify themselves as part of the Standing Tall program in incidental mentions of their place of employment or about their personal activities. However, all program participants should then regard all communication concerning Standing Tall or the program on that network as they would a professional network.
6. All program participants must bear in mind any post on social media carries the same obligations as any other kind of publication or commentary. When posting on social media, all program participants must therefore ensure that a post does not contravene:
 - a. any Standing Tall policy or procedure
 - b. any obligation or duty owed to Standing Tall (express or implied)
 - c. any applicable laws or regulations including in respect of (but not limited to) intellectual property, equal opportunity, bullying, sexual harassment, defamation, confidential information, fiduciary duties, privacy and required standards of conduct.
7. In the event of program disruption, i.e., such as commencement of remote learning due to pandemic lockdown. Upon mutual approval between schools, parents and STiH, video conferencing tools eg. Zoom may be used to maintain mentoring connections for a period of time. This will be facilitated by the Standing Tall staff, allowing only approved program participants access to participate and will follow all prior policies regarding privacy etc.

All program participants must adhere to the following:

- a. When video conferencing within each participant's home, neither participant should be videoed in their private spaces, eg. Bedrooms/Bathrooms, they must always use public spaces within their homes.
- b. The usual protocols regarding privacy will be observed, be aware of other people in the space and do not communicate about private matters. Respect each other's confidentiality, unless a program participant sees something of concern and suspects that the other participant may be in danger to either

themselves or others. If something of concern arises, the participant must report this to the Standing Tall program staff and the appropriate line of reporting will commence.

c. The usual mandatory child reporting protocols apply.

Responsibilities of Standing Tall Staff

Social-Media-Usage-Policy Date Created – Revised Jun 2023 Standing Tall in Hamilton Inc.

1. Staff must seek to ensure that, where permitted, any use of social media does not interfere with or undermine the proper performance of their employment duties.
2. Program staff using social media to post on behalf of STiH Inc to communicate with a wider audience must ensure the high quality of posts.

Communication between young people and mentors

1. Committee of management, staff, mentors, contractors, consultants, volunteers and mentees must observe STiH's published Code of Conduct. The code of Conduct states "The use of social media can pose danger to participants, staff, volunteers and organisations. Participants under 18 should not be 'friended' on social media. Be aware that whatever you post online cannot be taken back. Again, only share what you would be happy for a caregiver to see".
2. Exception to the above may only occur, in the event of Remote Learning, where it will be decided upon through mutual agreement between schools, care givers, mentees and STiH Inc if communication is to take place between mentors and mentees via social media avenues.

Breach of Policy

Committee of management, staff, mentors, contractors, consultants, volunteers and mentees are required to comply with this policy at all times. If a staff member breaches this policy, he or she may be subject to disciplinary action which in serious cases may include termination of employment. Agents and contractors of Standing Tall who are found to have breached this policy may have their contracts with Standing Tall terminated. If a mentor or young person is found to have breached this policy they may be excluded from future involvement in the program. The Standing Tall in Hamilton committee of management have the oversight responsibility and are the authority, should any breaches of this policy occur.

Child Safe Policy

Purpose

The Victorian Government introduced the Child Safe Standards, which are compulsory minimum standards for organisations that provide services for children and young people (or are used by children and young people), to help protect them from harm. The purpose of this Child Safe Policy is to ensure that all employees, consultants, contractors, or volunteers engaged by Standing Tall in Hamilton Inc. (STiH) are aware of our organisations commitment and obligation to creating a child safe organisation.

The policy aims to communicate our commitment to child safety, in a way that can be understood by all, including children and young people, and it explains key features of our approach to meeting the standards.

Scope

This policy applies to the following people and organisations:

- All staff engaged by the STiH.
- All volunteers engaged by STiH, this includes members of the Committee of Management, and volunteer mentors.
- All STiH formal School Partners.
- Consultants and contractors engaged by STiH.

This policy applies to a broad range of situations where interaction with children and young people may occur. For example, the Child Safe Policy will apply when staff and volunteers come into contact with children and young people:

- In the STiH office.
- At schools during mentoring sessions, meetings or interviews.
- At events, incursions or excursions hosted by STiH or school partners.
- Through services provided by school partners.
- Through incidental contact (e.g. via at local cafes, parks, gardens, shops etc).

It is important that all staff and volunteers are aware of their obligations under the Reportable Conduct Policy, whereby allegations of staff and volunteer misconduct involving children and young people can be made against a member even if the conduct occurred outside of their work or mentoring sessions.

Statement of Commitment

STiH is committed to the safety and wellbeing of children and young people. We seek to prevent harm of any kind impacting children and young people and have zero tolerance for racism, child abuse and inequality. Children and young people's rights, relationships, identity, and culture must be recognised and respected, their voices heard, and their concerns acted upon. We aim to foster a culturally safe, child safe and child friendly environment for all children and young people we have contact with, deliver services to, or are impacted by our work. STiH requires all staff and volunteers to uphold these commitments. STiH has specific policies, procedures, and training in place to achieve these commitments.

Our approach to child safety

This section provides an overview of the measures in place to support child safety across our organisation.

Building a child safe culture

All staff and volunteers have a responsibility to support our Organisation's commitment and obligation to creating a child safe environment.

STiH Child Safe Code of Conduct

All staff and volunteers must always ensure that they display appropriate standards of behaviour towards children and young people, ensuring their rights are respected, they feel safe and protected and their concerns are taken seriously.

The STiH Child Safe Code of Conduct outlines appropriate standards of behaviour by adults towards children and young people. It aims to protect children and young people and reduce opportunities for abuse or harm to occur. It also helps staff and volunteers by providing them with guidance on how to best support children and young people and how to avoid or better manage difficult situations.

Recruitment

The recruitment and selection of staff and volunteers aims to support our organisations commitment to promoting an organisational culture of child safety. STiH has robust recruitment and selection processes. Our team carries out interviews, reference checks, and requires a valid and clear Working with Children Check and Police Records Checks, as well as the satisfactory completion of Child Safe Training by all applicants, to ensure that only the right people are recruited.

For positions that involve contact with children and young people, recruitment is based on selection criteria which clearly demonstrate commitment to child safety to assist STiH in ensuring that the most appropriate staff and volunteers are employed. Selection reflects an understanding of, and commitment to, a child safe environment. It is a requirement for all prospective/new staff members to undertake a National Criminal History Record Check prior to commencement of employment.

All people engaged in child-related work as defined in the Working with Children Act 2005, including volunteers, are required to hold a Working with Children (WWC) Check and to provide evidence that the WWC Check always remains valid whilst employed or engaged by STiH.

Training and supervision

STiH is committed to ensuring that staff have access to appropriate professional learning and training opportunities to develop and maintain an understanding of child safety and prevention of harm. To support staff and volunteers, relevant training programs, including the STiH volunteer mentor onboarding program, includes appropriate content which outlines our organisations expectations and commitment to child safety. Training will also include how to identify, assess, and minimise risks of child abuse and to detect potential signs of child abuse. Child Safe Training will be delivered at least every two years and will include guidance on:

- National and State child safety standards.
- STiH Child Safe policies, procedures, codes, and practices.
- Protecting children – mandatory reporting.
- Recognising indicators of child harm.
- Responding effectively to issues of child safety and wellbeing and supporting others who disclose harm.
- How to build culturally safe environments for children and students.
- Information sharing and recordkeeping obligations.
- How to identify and mitigate child safety and wellbeing risks in the school environment.

Reporting a child safety concern or complaint

STiH works to ensure all children and young people, families, staff and volunteers understand their obligations and know who to tell if they observe abuse, are a victim, or if they notice inappropriate behaviour. STiH takes all allegations of child abuse and reportable conduct seriously. It is committed to ensuring that such allegations are addressed in accordance with legal processes for responding to and reporting suspected child abuse.

Child safe issues should be reported to the STiH Child Safety Officers. If a staff member or volunteer has a reasonable belief that reportable conduct may have occurred, then they must report the incident immediately to the STiH Child Safety Officer/s. If the incident is a criminal offence, the incident must also be reported to the police on 000.

The following reportable conduct must be reported:

- A sexual offence committed against, with or in the presence of, a child, whether a criminal proceeding in relation to the offence has been commenced or concluded.
- Sexual misconduct, committed against, with or in the presence of, a child.
- Physical violence committed against, with or in the presence of, a child.
- Any behaviour that causes significant emotional or psychological harm to a child.
- Significant neglect of a child.

Making complaints:

Any child, parent, child's trusted adult representative, independent support person, staff member, volunteer or adult supervisor may make a complaint about abuse or inappropriate behaviour undertaken by any person engaged by STiH. Abuse can involve neglect, emotional abuse, physical abuse, sexual abuse, domestic violence, and bullying.

Inappropriate behaviour (that can be sexual in nature) includes but is not limited to:

- Showing favours to one child over others (eg. giving a child a lift home).
- Taking unauthorised photos, storing and sharing photos of a child in the Program.
- Sharing sexual photos or videos or other photos of the child.
- Creating situations to be alone unsupervised with a child.
- Repeatedly visiting a child and/or their family at their home.
- Providing excessive gifts or favours to a child or their family.
- Using sexual language or gestures.

- Making written or verbal sexual advances.
- Sharing details with a child of one's own sexual experiences.
- Taking a child to one's house to be alone with the child.
- Arranging to meet a child alone away from the school.
- Sharing phone numbers with a child.
- Engaging with a child via social media.
- Asking children to keep a relationship secret.
- Not respecting the privacy of children when they are using the bathroom or changing.

Note: While it is understood that there are some pre-existing family relationships within the Program, which may mean that some volunteers and staff have connections with a child outside the program, it remains the child safety policy of the organisation not to engage in inappropriate behaviour in the context of this Program. Below are examples of conduct, which if proven, would constitute a criminal offence:

- Obscene exposure (for example, an adult masturbating in front of a child or exposing their genitals).
- Having, attempting to have, or facilitating any kind of sexual contact with a child.
- Possessing, creating or exposing children to pornography.
- Giving goods, money, attention or affection in exchange for sexual activities or images.
- Voyeurism.
- Sexting.
- Grooming offences (as defined by law in most jurisdictions).

Complaints should ideally be made in writing, but we understand that this is not always possible. If a complaint is made verbally, the person to whom the complaint is made should record it in writing as soon as possible. Complainants should be encouraged to report their allegation to the Police where the conduct is criminal.

The STiH Child Safety Officers can be contacted by email or phone as follows:

- President - Rob Vecchiet president@standingtallhamilton.com.au or by phone 0427 712 480.
- Program Manager - Dee Barrera dee@standingtallhamilton.com.au or by phone 0432 984 400.
- Program Coordinator - Mel Fitzpatrick mel@standingtallhamilton.com.au or by phone 0448 712 351.

Please refer to the STiH Reportable Conduct Scheme Policy for further information on the process for reporting and responding to allegations of reportable conduct.

Privacy

For STiH to perform its functions under the Child Safe Standards, it may be required to collect personal information about an employee, consultant/contractor or volunteer and disclose that information to a third party. Personal information which is collected and/or disclosed about an individual will be managed in accordance with the Privacy and Data Protection Act 2014 and the Child Wellbeing and Safety Act 2005.

Privacy Policy

Standing Tall in Hamilton Inc.

Our website address is: <https://standingtallhamilton.com.au>

Privacy Collection Statement

We are required by law (in Australia and New Zealand) to provide information to you about how we collect, use, store and disclose your personal information. This document provides you with the details in relation to this. Particulars of our identity and contact details are at the end of this notice.

We collect your personal information to conduct or collate police background checks to ensure the safety of our youth mentees.

What personal information do we collect?

The personal information we collect about you includes (or may include) your name, contact details, date and place of birth, gender, place of work and position title, current and previous residential address(es) and other data as may be required in relation to student mentoring.

How we collect your personal information

We initially collect your personal information directly from you via the mentor application forms. We may also collect your personal information directly from your referees and from third party providers:

1. Australia Police Check
2. Working With Children Checks

You may choose what personal information you provide to us

It is up to you what personal information you provide to us. However, if you choose not to provide certain information, it may affect eligibility to become a mentor.

How we use your personal information

In providing our information services, you accept that:

1. the primary purpose for collecting your personal information is to ensure the safety of our youth mentors.
2. your information will be kept in hard and electronic copy, accessible to the Standing Tall in Hamilton Program Manager, Coordinator and Committee of Management.
3. we may, at any time, use and disclose your personal information to:
 - monitor traffic on our website;
 - investigate any complaint made by you or on your behalf, either privately or by a relevant regulator or law enforcement agency.

Direct Marketing Consents

If you have elected by checking the box on our Application page, we may, at any time, use your personal information (other than sensitive information) to send you information about us and our mentoring program. This will include material including but not limited to communications of the following kind:

- newsletters
- surveys
- training opportunities
- program information; and
- other, if any.

We may do this by using a variety of means including:

- electronic means such as emails, SMS, MMS or similar devices
- hardcopy to your nominated address; and
- phone call, subject to Do Not Call Register.

In doing so, we will be relying on the consent that you have provided via your application form. At all times you are free to choose not to receive some of or all the communications sent by or on behalf of us. To exercise that choice, you need to communicate that to:

Standing Tall Program Manager:

Email: programmanager@standingtallhamilton.com.au or

Phone: 0432 984 400

How we store and disclose your personal information

Criminal History Checks

Where your personal information is used to procure a criminal history check (however described), you acknowledge that:

- (a) by submitting an application form, you warrant that the personal information you provide in your application form is correct and the purpose is accurately identified;
- (b) we will keep your application and related documentation for the duration of your mentoring relationship, but otherwise for no longer than necessary and dispose of it when it is no longer needed;
- (c) in Australia, the details you submit may be forwarded to the AFP, ACIC and/or the police services of the States or Territories of the Commonwealth of Australia;
- (d) it is usual practice for an Applicant's personal information and police information to be used by police services and the ACIC for law enforcement, including for the purposes set out in the Australian Crime Commission Act 2002 (Cth);
- (e) Spent Convictions legislation (however described) in the Commonwealth and many States and Territories protects "spent convictions" from disclosure, but that a check applied for may be in a category for which exclusions from the Spent Convictions legislation applies;
- (f) any application to ACIC or the AFP for such a check is submitted on the basis set out in the disclosures as to use and purpose, as well as other terms, set out as part of that application, those being substantially in the form of Schedule 1 to this Collection Statement; and
- (g) any criminal history check provided by ACIC is subject to the Disclaimer in Schedule 2 Storage of personal data; we will store your personal data for so long as you are involved with Standing Tall in Hamilton Inc mentoring program. After this time, we will delete or de-identify your personal data.

Your rights

Where we process any personal data about you on the basis of any consent given by you, you have the right to withdraw your consent at any time by giving notice to us (which you can do using our contact details set out above). We will give effect to your withdrawal of consent promptly and will cease any processing that you no longer consent to, unless we have another lawful basis for that processing.

You have the right to request access to a copy of the personal data that we hold about you and to request that we correct or rectify any inaccurate personal data that we hold about you. You may also request that we erase any personal data that we hold about you which is no longer necessary for any of the purposes that we collected it for. We will comply with such requests unless we are permitted or required by law to retain that information.

Authorisation

This document is to be approved by the Standing Tall committee of management when any change is made to the content. This does not include

changes to related Documents or Document Control Notes.

Responding to complaints

If a complaint is made by a child (and is not subject to Police processes), the most important thing is to listen and tell the child that they are not to blame. Do not press for information or push the child to reveal the details of the abuse. Do not ask leading questions, rather listen carefully and if possible, take notes.

Reassure the child that they are right to tell and that what they say is taken very seriously, but do not promise them that no one else will be informed about the complaint.

Complaints may be made by someone who witnesses abuse towards a child or is informed about abuse that has allegedly occurred. These complaints should be taken just as seriously as if the complaint was coming from the child directly.

STiH responds promptly and consistently to all complaints. Members of STiH are mindful of diversity and the cultural norms and expectations that are within the group of people coming into contact with STiH. It is important to be educated about the specific diversity needs within STiH. Additional safeguards may be required to meet the needs of children with disability, children from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children, or children who live in out-of-home care.

DEFINITIONS

Child means a child or young person under the age of 18 years.

Child abuse means a sexual offence committed against, with or in the presence of, a child, whether or not a criminal proceeding in relation to the offence has been commenced or concluded, sexual misconduct, committed against, with or in the presence of, a child, physical violence committed against, with or in the presence of, a child, any behaviour that causes significant emotional or psychological harm to a child or significant neglect of a child.

Child Safe Standards as made under section 17(1) of the Child Wellbeing and Safety Act 2005.

APPROVAL

This Child Safe Policy is issued following formal endorsement by the Standing Tall in Hamilton Inc. Committee of Management on Wednesday 22 March 2023, and in accordance with section 16K (1) of the Child Wellbeing and Safety Act 2005.

The contents of this document represent the current policy of STiH and reflect its current practices and experience. This policy is subject to regular review and will be altered (and the alterations communicated to users) as, and when, appropriate in order to ensure that it remains current.

CONTACT

Please contact the President, Standing Tall in Hamilton Inc. in relation to the matters arising under this policy:

Rob Vecchiet

President, Standing Tall in Hamilton Inc.

Phone: 0427 712 480

Email:

Reportable Conduct Policy

If you believe that a child is in immediate harm, please contact the police on 000 (Triple Zero).

This policy provides directions on how to contact our team to report allegations of child abuse by employees, contractors, consultants, and volunteers engaged by Standing Tall in Hamilton (STiH).

If you wish to report allegations of child abuse involving another organisation, you can contact the Commission for Children and Young People (CCYP) via email at childsafestandards@ccyp.vic.gov.au.

If you want to learn more about the Child Safe Standards and the Reportable Conduct Scheme, you can visit the Commission for Children and Young People's website:

<https://ccyp.vic.gov.au/child-safe-standards/> .

Reportable Conduct Scheme

From 1 July 2017, the Reportable Conduct Scheme imposes new obligations on organisations to have systems in place to prevent child abuse, and if child abuse is alleged, to ensure those allegations can be brought to the attention of appropriate persons for investigation and response.

STiH must also notify the Commission for Children and Young People of allegations of child abuse (and other child-related misconduct).

What can be reported?

Reportable conduct includes any of the following:

- A sexual offence committed against, with or in the presence of a child, whether or not a criminal proceeding in relation to the offence has been commenced or concluded.
- Sexual misconduct, committed against, with or in the presence of a child.
- Physical violence, committed against, with or in the presence of a child.
- Any behaviour that causes significant emotional or psychological harm to a child.
- Significant neglect of a child.

Who can an allegation of reportable conduct be made against?

An allegation of reportable conduct can be made about any person over 18 years of age who is an employee, contractor, consultant, and volunteer of STiH, even if:

- They do not have direct contact with children as part of their engagement.
- The conduct occurred outside of their direct engagement with STiH.

How do I make an allegation of reportable conduct?

You may make an allegation of reportable conduct to the STiH Child Safety Officer:

- by phone: 0427 712 480
- by email: President@standingtallhamilton.com.au
- by post:

Child Safety Officer

Standing Tall in Hamilton Inc.

87 Thompson Street

Hamilton VIC 3300

STiH treats all allegations very seriously and will endeavour to respond to all allegations in a timely manner.

When an allegation is made via email, the sender will receive an email acknowledging receipt of the allegation by the Child Safety Officer. Should an acknowledgement email not be received within one day of submitting an allegation, the sender is encouraged to contact the STiH President 0427 712 480.

Alternatively, an allegation of reportable conduct can be made directly to the Commission for Children and Young People.

CCYP Contact Details:

Commission for Children and Young People

Level 18

570 Bourke Street

Melbourne VIC 3000

Phone: (03) 8601 5281

Email: childsafestandards@ccyp.vic.gov.au

Website: www.ccyp.vic.gov.au

Child Safe Code of Conduct 2023

The reputation and success of Standing Tall in Hamilton Inc. (STiH) depends upon the actions of each of employee and volunteer. Every action we take should honour our values and follow our Code of Conduct (The Code) to ensure the safety of all and maintain the positive reputation of our organisation.

Employees and Volunteers representing STiH are responsible for how they behave during their term of engagement and seek to live up to our values. This includes:

- Acting with integrity: honoring our commitments, upholding our Code, obeying the law and acting responsibly and in good faith at all times.
- Building trust: empowering young people to fulfil their potential by encouraging them to take full advantage of the opportunities offered in a school setting. Actively listening, seeking fair resolutions, dealing honestly with all, and maintaining transparency at all times.
- Showing respect: valuing diversity of thought and opinions, encouraging open and frank dialogue, and considering the impact of our decisions on all.
- Sharing responsibility: working together to build a strong sense of ownership of the Program amongst our School Partners and the community to ensure we get the best outcome for the young people in our Program.

Mentoring does not replace the vital roles that teachers, counsellors and parents perform; it enhances them.

The Code means that everyone in our team understands the expectations – we are all ‘on the same page’.
What Does the Code cover?

- Behaviour
- Language
- Physical Contact
- Mentor Session Style
- Cultural Awareness

- Special Needs
- Supervision
- Privacy & social media Guidelines

1. Behaviour

What we do as staff and volunteers reflects our values. It is vital to behave in a way that upholds what we believe about children and vulnerable people – that they are valued and deserve to be treated with respect and dignity.

Be a Good Role Model

Children and vulnerable people learn as much from what we do as from what we say. Avoid behaviour that gives the impression of favouritism or encourages 'special' relationships with individual children. Where parents, carers or members of the community observe us at work, they need to see a caring style that demonstrates the positive values your organisation seeks to uphold.

What To Do

- Treat all participants with respect and take notice of their reactions to your tone of voice and manner.
- Do not be alone with a child.
- Be aware of situations when children or vulnerable people might be changing or using the toilet.

2. Language

Words can hurt so it is important to use language that affirms the worth, dignity and significance of the participants. It is not unusual to use negative or critical language towards people in an attempt at humour, however we must ensure that jokes are not made at the expense of others as this erodes the sense of safety and care.

Do not:

- Use derogatory language towards other staff or volunteers or children – even when meant as sarcasm or as a joke.
- Use 'in jokes', negative language, put downs or sexist language with other staff and volunteers or participants.
- Speak down to children or young people in a superior way, instead speak to them as people of value.
- Where private conversations are necessary, staff, volunteers and children should remain visible to other adults in the group.

3. Physical Contact

Many children enjoy physical contact and will seek it as a simple expression of affection and confidence; however others do not appreciate or seek physical contact. Physical contact between adults and children may be misconstrued. Children and vulnerable people may not be aware of creating such situations. It is your duty to be alert to such circumstances. We must always be SEEN to be doing the right thing as well as knowing that we are.

Expectations

Physical contact should:

- Be in response to the participant's need and not that of the mentor.
- Be with the child or vulnerable person's permission – resistance from the person should be respected.
- Never be in the area normally covered by bathers/ swimwear.
- Be open and not secretive.
- Be governed by the age and developmental stage of the person.

Let the Participant Choose

Children and vulnerable people should be allowed to choose the degree of physical contact they have with others, apart from exceptional circumstances or when needing medical attention. It is inappropriate to initiate close physical contact; this should come from the participant, if at all. Physical contact between staff, volunteers, and children and vulnerable people is inappropriate if it could be perceived as a threat, if it causes embarrassment to either person, or if it does not allow either person to disengage easily.

As a rule, open displays of affection initiated by children in the presence of others, are acceptable. Staff and volunteers need to be aware that consistent contact with the same person may give the impression of favouritism. It is unwise and may result in others competing for attention or feeling left out.

Any physical activity that is, or may be construed as, sexually stimulating to the mentor or participant is inappropriate and must be avoided. Physical touch has an important role in building healthy relationships. 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 and vulnerable people.

Doing the Right Thing

- Touching a child or vulnerable person between the neck and the knees should be avoided, although contact with the bony areas of the body such as the shoulder, elbow or head, is generally acceptable.
- A sideways hug around the shoulder is more acceptable than an arm around the waist.
- There will be occasions where displays of affection are natural. Children must not be shunned if they initiate and demonstrate their need for comfort, bearing in mind the age of the child and the circumstances. Care needs to be exercised that such situations don't occur in private.
- On no account must any form of corporal or physical punishment be administered, even in fun.
- 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.
- What is reasonable and lawful will depend on the circumstances; appropriate judgement should be used.
- Allow children to determine the degree of physical contact they have with you, without showing favouritism.

4. Mentor Session Style

Children and vulnerable people are not always able to sense the risks associated with participating in activities. Your sessions and activity choices need to be made keeping the participant group's capability

and risk appetite in mind. The activities you choose will speak loudly about the values you and our organisation hold about people.

What do I need to know?

Activities or 'wide games' that require participants to operate on their own or in pairs out of sight need to be managed carefully. Clear boundaries and rules are needed to ensure that participants can engage in activities safely. 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.

As you identify your program activities, take into account their age appropriateness.

What do I need to do?

- 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.
- Ask the Program Manager or Coordinator to help you plan weekly sessions.

5. Cultural Awareness

Sensitivity

Staff and volunteers need to be sensitive to cultures and family traditions different from their own. These differences may affect the degree of participation of children and vulnerable people in activities and games.

Respect

No pressure should be applied to participants from other cultures and traditions to encourage participation.

The family has many forms and leaders must respect a participant's support structures. Staff and volunteers need to be sensitive about using words that make assumptions about any participant's background, family status or principal caregivers. Your team should have zero tolerance for language or activities that discriminate on the basis of gender, race, age or ability.

What do I need to do?

- Show respect for the authority structures of other cultures and traditions.
- Do not make statements that reflect ignorance, bias or ridicule about other religions and cultures.
- Do not hold, kiss, cuddle or touch children or vulnerable people in an inappropriate and/or culturally insensitive way.

6. Special Needs

Who May Have Special Needs?

People with special needs may include very small children, and people with particular intellectual, mental or physical disabilities, children with an autism spectrum disorder and the elderly.

Be Inclusive

Being inclusive of children and vulnerable people with special needs has more to do with a positive attitude and a willingness to learn, than with a list of 'Dos and Don'ts'. Being inclusive means seeing that each person has both the potential to learn and the need to be loved and included like all other children and vulnerable people.

Be Proactive

You may need extra adult help. The number of extra staff and volunteers will depend on the needs of the child or vulnerable person. Some children and vulnerable people will require one-on-one assistance. Privacy and respect are particularly important for participants with special needs who may need help with toileting. Find out as much as you can about the specific disability, as well as constructive ways to include the participant. Caregivers and schools are often the best sources of information on how to include those with special needs. When working with people with special needs, activities should be structured, yet flexible.

Be Creative

Make sure your attitudes and behaviour are positive and inclusive towards children and people with special needs, as this will have a significant influence on how others react. Encourage all children and vulnerable people to participate, play and learn together, and to share responsibilities. Where appropriate, ask the participant what they think or want.

Rather than avoiding some activities because your group includes children or vulnerable people with special needs, be creative in the ways you include everyone. Limit the amount of furniture and other obstructions to allow space to move.

Plan to regular breaks in your activities.

7. Supervision

Every STiH mentoring session is expected to be supervised (line of sight supervision). Sessions will either be supervised by the Program Manager or Coordinator, a School Contact, or a member of the STiH Committee of Management. Staff, volunteer mentors and participants will always be in groups with other mentors and are expected to never be alone with student mentees.

8. Privacy and social media

Personal Information

Staff and volunteers may, at times, gain access to private information about a participant (e.g. via conversations with your student mentee). You have an obligation to abide by the organisation's privacy policy in relation to protecting the right to privacy of participants and their families. Personal information and photographs obtained from your involvement in programs must not be used inappropriately.

Appropriate use would be within the context of the program itself or uses for which permission has been obtained via the Program Manager or Coordinator (as appropriate).

Contact Outside the Program

Incidental contact between staff, volunteers and participants outside the program may occur in our community. It may be unavoidable due to living near one another or being members of the same football or netball club for example.

Contact outside the Program requires care on your part, ensuring the Code is always maintained.

What do I need to do?

- Review our organisations privacy policy and Code of Conduct.

- Photographs taken during programs must not be kept for personal use or publicly shown, including on social media, without permission as indicated above.
- Keep a record of any incidental contact with participants that occurs outside the program and advise the Program Manager or Coordinator.
- If you do encounter a participant outside the program, communicate with the child or vulnerable person in an open manner, keeping in mind what you would be happy for their family to hear or read.
- Do not take a child or vulnerable person to your home or encourage meetings outside the program activity.
- Ongoing contact with participants outside the program is not permitted. Social Media. The use of social media can pose danger to participants, staff, volunteers and organisations. Participants under 18 should not be 'friended' on social media. Be aware that whatever you post online cannot be taken back. Again, only share what you would be happy for a caregiver to see.

Note: Find helpful resources at - <https://volunteer.esafety.gov.au/>

Code of Conduct

1. STiH Staff and Volunteers are:

- Entrusted to deliver school-based mentoring according to this STiH Code of Conduct and policies.
- Expected to support this Code and organisation policies that have been designed in accordance with updated State and Federal legislative requirements to always ensure the safety of all children in our Program.
- Encouraged to ask questions, seek clarification, and discuss any concerns with the Program Manager or Program Coordinator.
- Committed to mentoring as per this Code and mentor training program, to ensure they can safely deliver each mentoring session.
- Committed to ensuring they have the information they need to carry out their role.
- Expected to be open, supportive, and inclusive.

2. STiH Staff and Volunteers will:

- Communicate using positive and inclusive language.
- Hold a valid Police Check and Working with Children Check and provide evidence of both to STiH.
- Attend STiH organised mentor induction and refresher training as requested.
- Honour the reputation of STiH, positively promoting the organisation within our community.
- Honour their commitment to their assigned student mentee, attending weekly sessions. If for any reason a mentor needs to miss a session, they will contact the STiH team as soon as possible.
- Undertake Child Safe Training and will abide by the Victoria Child Safe Standards, as well as any Child Safe policies specific to the student's school.
- Wear a STiH provided mentor identification lanyard during every mentoring session. This includes the WWCC ID card.
- Maintain the confidentiality of all discussions between themselves and their mentee (unless mandatory disclosure is required to ensure the safety and wellbeing of the child).

- Maintain a high level of moral and ethical standards.
- Advise STiH if they identify any conflicts of interest that may impact their role or mentoring relationship.
- Inform STiH as soon as practical if they feel they are not able to provide support in a specific area, or that a mentee is at risk of any harm.
- Immediately notify STiH of any changes in their circumstances, including changes that may jeopardise their ability to be an effective mentor or put into question the reputation of the program.

3. Mentoring sessions:

- Take place at the same time each week, during school term only, and at the school where the student mentee is enrolled, under supervision.
- Do not take place outside of school hours or off school grounds.
- Should be kept simple, allowing the mentee to take the lead. Aim to ensure the mentee feels safe, supported, and heard.

4. STiH staff and volunteers must NEVER:

- Meet with a student mentee alone or without supervision.
- Contact a student mentee outside the STiH Program (on social media, phone or any other means).
- Request, record or share personal information or photos of the student mentee.

Mentor Agreement

This document and the guidelines, Code, and policies referred to within are deemed to be binding. The role of STiH staff and volunteers cannot commence until the staff member or volunteer has agreed their acceptance in writing.

STiH reserves the right to require staff and volunteers to stand down from involvement if they are deemed to be engaging a negative approach towards the student, fellow mentors, or STiH.

This document will be updated from time to time. When an update is made, you will be notified and provided with a copy of the new document. You will have 4 weeks to contact the STiH Program Manager if you do not agree to abide by the updated Code. After that time, the new document will come into effect. If staff and volunteers feel they cannot agree to the principles and procedures stated in this document, they must record this by sending an email with their issues to the Program Manager programmanager@standingtallhamilton.com.au

Signature: _____

Full Name: _____

Mobile Number: _____

Email: _____

Date: _____

Appendix A

Policies:

All policies in this Mentor Handbook have been approved by Standing Tall in Hamilton Inc. Committee of Management (CoM).

Policy documents occasionally change. It is recommended that you consult the electronic copy to ensure that you have the current version.

Compulsory Review Cycle: 2 years

Social-Media-Usage-Policy Date Created – Revised Jun 2023 Standing Tall in Hamilton Inc.
Policy Name Social Media Usage Policy 2023

Relevant Legislation Reportable Conduct Scheme, Children Youth and Families Act 2005, Commission for Children and Young People Act 2012, Child Wellbeing and Safety (Child Safe Standards Compliance and Enforcement) Amendment Act 2021, Disability Act 2006.

Relevant Legislation Crimes Act 1958 (Vic), Worker Screening Act 2020, Reportable Conduct Scheme, Children Youth and Families Act 2005, Commission for Children and Young People Act 2012, Child Wellbeing and Safety (Child Safe Standards Compliance and Enforcement) Amendment Act 2021, Disability Act 2006.

Relevant Organisation Documents Reportable Conduct Policy; Code of Conduct; Privacy Policy; Social Media Policy.

RESOURCES:

Related Standing Tall Documents:

- Staff and Volunteer Child Safe Code of Conduct
- Reportable Conduct Policy
- Child Safe Policy