



Safeguarding and Child Safe Policy

Illawarra and South Coast Central Service Office Inc.

1. Purpose

The Illawarra and South Coast Central Service Office Inc. (ISCCSO) is committed to maintaining a safe, respectful and supporting environment for all individuals who interact with Alcoholics Anonymous services in our region.

This policy supports the safety and wellbeing of individuals who may be vulnerable, including newcomers to AA, people in early sobriety and minors who may attend meetings or events.

This policy should be read alongside:

- [Alcoholics Anonymous Australia Safeguarding Policy \(2024\)](#)
- Alcoholics Anonymous Australia, [Child Safety Guideline \(GL-34\)](#)
- Relevant Australian Child Protection laws (see Section 3: Children and Young People).

1. Scope

This policy applies to anyone involved with the Illawarra and South Coast Central Service Office Inc., including:

- Members of the ISCCSO Management Committee (also called the CSO or CSO Committee)
- Members of ISCCSO Sub-committees
- Volunteers helping with ISCCSO activities, such as:
 - telephone or online contact services
 - Literature Office and literature tables at AA events, both open and closed
 - outreach activities, including Public Information and Professional Awareness
 - AA events organised by the Central Service Office or relevant sub-committees

Individual AA groups remain responsible for safeguarding within their own meeting in accordance with the Alcoholics Anonymous Australian Safeguarding Policy (2024), which affirms that AA groups have a duty of care to all people attending their meetings.

2. Principles

The CSO affirms that:

- All people have the right to feel safe, respected and free from abuse, harassment or exploitation.
- ISCCSO activities reflect AA's commitment to the common welfare as expressed in the Twelve Traditions.
 - While AA's Traditions guide our actions, they do not excuse or protect unsafe or illegal behaviour.
 - All activities carried out as part of AA or ISCCSO, must follow the same legal frameworks and regulations that apply outside meetings.
 - Addressing unsafe or illegal behaviour - including asking someone to leave or step down from a service position, or contacting the appropriate authorities when necessary, is consistent with AA's Traditions.

(Adapted from [AA Australia's Safeguarding Policy](#)).

- Volunteers should recognise that AA members are not trained counsellors or professionals and should not provide assistance beyond their competence. This is explained in [Guideline 4 "Information on Alcoholics Anonymous"](#), which describes what AA does and what AA does not do in terms of helping others (as found on the Australian AA member's website).
- Safeguarding concerns should be taken seriously and addressed appropriately. This policy is intended to assist in managing incidents, including:
 - Sexual harassment, bullying or abuse
 - Criminal, sexual, financial or other offences
 - Threats of, or actual violence, or verbal, emotional or social abuse
 - Cultural or identity-based abuse, such as racial, sexual or gender-based discrimination, or hate crime
 - Coercion or exploitation, and
 - Abuse of power.

(Adapted from [AA Australia's Safeguarding Policy](#)).

3. Newcomers

The following is taken directly from the [AA Australia Safeguarding Policy \(2024\)](#):

"Often when a new Member joins AA a feeling of hope and the lifting of despair can lead to thinking that every AA Member has their best interests at heart. Experience shows that most AA Members will offer great support, but a few may not. Groups may wish to include the pamphlet Safety and AA Flyer in their Newcomer literature pack and encourage new Members to join a Group and participate in the Group Conscience."

4. Children and Young People

The CSO recognises that children and young people are vulnerable and require additional care.

CSO committee members and volunteers should follow the Code of Conduct standards outlined in the AA Child Safety Guideline (GL-34). In particular:

- Members should avoid being alone with a person under 18 who has come to AA for help.
- Where possible, activities involving minors (including AA BBQs, rallies and outreach activities such as Public Information and Professional Awareness) should ensure that at least two adults are present at any time when a minor is present.
- Members should conduct themselves in a manner that promotes the safety, dignity and wellbeing of children and young people.

In general, the Illawarra and South Coast Central Service Office Inc (ISCCSO) recognises the NSW Child Safe Standards as a useful reference for good practice in supporting the safety and wellbeing of children and young people.

Volunteers working in the CSO Literature Office are required to provide a current Volunteer Working With Children Check (WWCC) in accordance with NSW Child Protection legislation, including the:

- Child Protection (Working with Children) Act 2012
- Children and Young Persons (Care and Protection) Act 1998

The CSO maintains a confidential register of WWCC numbers or volunteers where required.

When AA activities (Public Information and Professional Awareness) occur within schools, youth services or other organisations affecting minors, CSO members and volunteers must comply with the child protection policies of those organisations, including any screening requirements.

5. Responding to Concerns

If a safeguarding concern arises:

- Members should seek guidance from a trusted AA member or CSO committee member.
- Concerns should be addressed in accordance with the AA Safeguarding Policy.

If someone is in immediate danger, call 000.

Where a child or young person may be at risk, concerns may be reported to the appropriate authorities.

In NSW this includes the **NSW Child Protection Helpline: 132 111**

6. Policy Approval and Review

Approved by: Illawarra and South Coast Central Service Office Inc.

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Review date: February 2027

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