
Section:	Behaviours	Original Date:	October, 2016
Subsection:	Child Protection	Approval Date:	April, 2019
Subject:	Code of Conduct	Review Date:	June, 2020



Child Protection Policy and Code of Conduct

Cottage by the Sea is committed to the safety and protection of children. We have zero tolerance for child abuse and discrimination.

Cottage by the Sea is proud to be accredited by the Quality Tourism Framework.

Accreditation indicates that we have been independently appraised and meet the requirements for the safe and reasonable operation of a campsite.



1 Policy Statement

- 1.1 Cottage by the Sea, Queenscliff Inc. Is committed to protecting the personal worth and dignity of all Children, Employees and Volunteers. We promote a happy, healthy work environment which supports diversity and equal opportunity and is free of disrespectful behaviour, offensive language, discrimination, and workplace bullying, harassment and workplace violence.
- 1.2 We are committed to a best practice to protect children, no matter what gender, age, ethnicity, disability, sexual orientation, religion, family or social back round, from harm. CBTS has zero tolerance for child abuse.
- 1.3 Cottage by the Sea respects all children, staff and volunteers. CBTS is committed to the cultural safety of Aboriginal and Torres Straight Island children and those from culturally and/or linguistically diverse backgrounds and to provide a safe environment for children with a disability.
- 1.4 Cottage by the Sea has a legal and moral responsibility to protect all participants (children and teenagers) within our care. This includes reporting information about suspected child abuse.
- 1.5 Child protection is the shared responsibility between CBTS, all employees, board members, volunteers, associates, and members of the CBTS extended community. Further, all adults must be vigilant and be aware of any indications of abuse or non-accidental injury. All staff and volunteers are to make themselves familiar with the role of Designated Child Protection Officer and report any suspicions immediately, no matter how trivial it may seem or who the alleged perpetrator / victim is.
- 1.6 Cottage by the Sea, has a place in ensuring that children are protected from harm and believes that all children have a right to be kept safe.
- 1.7 CBTS recognises that abuse can take many forms, these are sometimes hard to recognise and they occur across all socio-economic groups. CBTS has a responsibility to provide training for staff to assist them in recognising the indicators of abuse and in the mandatory reporting of child abuse (where applicable).
- 1.8 Cottage by the Sea employs a number of staff and volunteers who during the course of their duties work either directly or indirectly with children. CBTS acknowledges their responsibility both to protect children and protect staff and volunteers from allegations of child abuse. This policy is designed to assist in this process and to ensure that all current legislative requirements are met.
- 1.9 It is essential for staff and volunteers to adopt and adhere to work practices that not only ensure the safety of children, but also minimise the possibility of allegations of child abuse and neglect being made against them, vexatious or otherwise. Where allegations against a staff or volunteer member are made, CBTS holds a responsibility to investigate these.
- 1.10 Follow care selection procedures for recruitments, provide effective training to all staff and volunteers on this policy, the code of conduct and clear information as to what constitutes as child abuse. CBTS will provide effective management for all staff and volunteers through supervision and support.
- 1.11 All staff hired or volunteers bought in by CBTS must have current WWCC, staff will also have a Police check and a clear understanding of their responsibilities and how they should operate within an appropriate code of conduct, as well as what their 'duty of care' is and how this relates to their position.

1.12 Promoting inclusion and the feeling of safety extending further than this Policy and Code but also in the environment if Cottage itself by introducing inclusive signage and child protection signage as appropriate.

1.13 Cottage by the Sea endeavours to safeguard children by;

- Adopting these child protection guidelines
- Developing a child safe environment through clear procedures for responding and reporting allegations and suspicions of child abuse
- Development of this, a Code of Conduct for all current and new staff and volunteers.
- Follow careful selection procedures for recruitment and selection including all position advertisements stating our commitment to child safety.
- Provide effective management for all staff/volunteers through supervision and support.

2 Purpose and Commitment

CBTS is highly committed to protecting children from exploitation and abuse. Children can be extremely vulnerable and deserve higher standards of protection. CBTS takes its duty of care seriously, particularly in protecting children.

The CBTS Child Protection Policy and practices are guided by the points listed below

Childs Rights - As an organisation CBTS is committed to protecting the rights of all children to live safely, without fear of abuse or exploitation. We are committed to keeping children safe by all reasonable means.

Zero tolerance of child abuse- CBTS will not tolerate any form of child abuse by anyone who is wor within our programs or represents the organisation in any way. The organisation will not permit representatives to work with children or access communities with whom we work if they pose an unacceptable risk to children's safety or wellbeing.

Shared Responsibility - We believe that child protection is a shared responsibility, meaning that successful implementation of child protection initiatives is reliant on all CBTS staff, volunteers and board members committing to and upholding the principles of this policy. CBTS will work to ensure that all personnel meet the minimum standards of protection for children associated with our programs and organisation.

Risk management approach - While it is not possible to eliminate all risks of child abuse, CBTS will ensure risks of child abuse are identified, monitored and reasonably mitigated against in the assessment of all our activities.

3 Child protection Code of Conduct

This Code of Conduct aims to protect children and reduce any opportunities for child abuse or harm to occur. It also assists in understanding how to avoid or better manage risky behaviour and situations. It is intended to complement child protection legislation, Department policy, school policies and procedures and professional standards, codes or ethics as these apply to staff and other personnel.

Management along with Designated Child Protection Officer will support implementation and monitoring of the Code of Conduct, and will plan, implement and monitor arrangements to provide an inclusive and safe environment. CBTS will also provide information and support to enable the Code of Conduct to operate effectively.

All staff, volunteers and board members of Cottage by the Sea Queenscliff are required to observe child safe principles and expectations for appropriate behaviour towards and in the company of children, as noted below.

All personnel of Cottage by the Sea Queenscliff are responsible for supporting the safety, participation, wellbeing and empowerment of children by:

- adhering to Cottage by the Sea Queenscliff child safe policy at all times / upholding Cottage by the Sea statement of commitment to child safety at all times
- taking all reasonable steps to protect children from abuse
- treating everyone with respect
- listening and responding to the views and concerns of children, particularly if they are telling you that they or another child has been abused and/or are worried about their safety or the safety of another
- promoting the cultural safety, participation and empowerment of Aboriginal children (for example, by never questioning an Aboriginal child's self-identification)
- promoting the cultural safety, participation and empowerment of children with culturally and/or linguistically diverse backgrounds (for example, by having a zero tolerance of discrimination)
- promoting the safety, participation and empowerment of children with a disability (for example, during personal care activities)
- ensuring as far as practicable that adults are not left alone with a child
- reporting any allegations of child abuse to Cottage by the Sea Child Protection Officer - Belinda / Management, and ensure any allegation to be reported to the police or Child Protection
- reporting any child safety concerns to Cottage by the Sea designated Child Protection Officer Belinda / Management
- if an allegation of child abuse is made, ensure as quickly as possible that the child(ren) are safe
- encouraging children to 'have a say' and participate in all relevant organisational activities where possible, especially on issues that are important to them

Staff and volunteers must not:

- develop any 'special' relationships with children that could be seen as favouritism (for example, the offering of gifts or special treatment for specific children)
- exhibit behaviours with children which may be construed as unnecessarily physical
- touch a child unless required to do so in order to fulfil your duties and there is another adult present. i.e assistance when putting on wetsuits or other safety equipment. Avoid hugging, piggybacks, play fights, sitting on laps etc or any other physical contact
- put children at risk of abuse (for example, by locking doors)
- do things of a personal nature that a child can do for themselves, such as toileting or changing clothes
- allow inappropriate behaviours including ignoring, humiliating, isolating, threatening or verbal abuse by any adult or child
- engage in open discussions of a mature or adult nature in the presence of children (for example, personal social activities)
- use inappropriate language in the presence of children
- express personal views on cultures, race or sexuality in the presence of children
- discriminate against any child, including because of culture, race, ethnicity or disability
- have contact with a child or their family outside of our organisation without our child safety officer's knowledge and/or consent (for example, no babysitting). Accidental contact, such as seeing people in the street, is appropriate
- have any online contact with a child or their family (unless necessary to fulfil your duty, for example providing families with e-newsletters, responding to messages)
- ignore or disregard any suspected or disclosed child abuse
- promise to keep a secret about sensitive information that may be disclosed to you by a child
- treat a child unfavourably because of their disability, age, gender, race, culture, vulnerability, sexuality or ethnicity

By observing these standards you acknowledge your responsibility to immediately report any breach of this code to Cottage by the Sea Child Protection Officer Belinda / Management.

If you believe a child is at immediate risk of abuse phone 000.

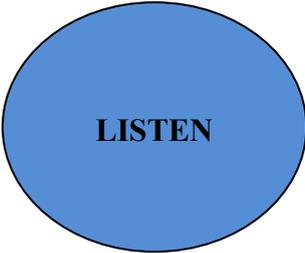
I agree to adhere to this Code of Conduct:

Name:

Signature:

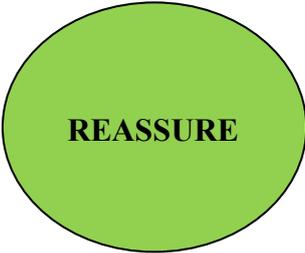
Date:

4. Responding to a child making a disclosure or allegation of abuse



LISTEN

- Move to a suitable environment, free of distractions but still in view of others.
- Be calm and patient—allow for the child or young person to be heard.
- Let the child or young person use their own words—avoid asking leading questions.
- Avoid “quizzing” the child or young person about details of the abuse.
- Don’t be afraid of saying the “wrong” thing. Listening supportively is more important than what you say.



REASSURE

- Reassure the child or young person that it is OK that they have told you what’s been happening.
- Address any concerns about the child or young person’s safety.
- Reassure the child or young person that he or she is *not* at fault, and *not* the cause of any distress you or others may feel.



RESPECT

- Respect that the child or young person may only reveal some details.
- Acknowledge the child or young person’s bravery and strength.
- Avoid making promises you can’t keep—manage the child or young person’s expectations.
- Explain to the child or young person that in order for them to be safe you will need to report their experience to someone else.

What happens next?

If a child or young person discloses abuse, you should report it to the relevant authorities.

Who to contact?

To report concerns that are life threatening call Victoria Police 000

To report concerns about the immediate safety of a child within their family unit, call the Child Protection Crisis Line 13 12 78 (24 hours, 7 days a week, toll free within Victoria)

Note: this is an emergency service for weekends and after hours only and will pass on cases to the relevant regions the following working day

Notify your Designated Child Protection Officer as soon as the opportunity presents

5. Responsibilities

5.1 Board of directors

5.1.1 Are legally responsible for ensuring appropriate policies and practices are in place to minimise the risk of child abuse, and appropriately respond to suspected allegations.

5.1.2 The Board of Cottage by the Sea has ultimate responsibility for the detection and the prevention of child abuse.

5.2 General Manager

5.2.1 Is accountable to the Board for ensuring that appropriate policies and practices are implemented, monitored, reported on and evaluated in a timely and diligent manner. Including the review of child protection policies and practices are done annually.

5.2.2 Ensure that all staff and volunteers are aware of the relevant laws, organisational policies, procedures and Code of Conduct.

5.2.3 Ensure that access to training and development and emotional support (access to an independent counsellor) is provided to employees and volunteers.

5.3 Designated Child Protection Officer

5.3.1 The Designated Child Protection Officer at Cottage by the Sea is Belinda Saya

5.3.2 Is required to understand and act in line with Cottage by the Sea Child protection policy and Code of Conduct. Including reporting any suspected child abuse to the relevant state/territory child protection authority and or police department (whether the suspected perpetrator is within or outside Cottage by the Sea).

5.3.3 Fully cooperate with all relevant state / territory child protection authorities or other recognised bodies in their investigations of suspected child abuse.

5.3.4 Provide support for staff and volunteers in undertaking their child protection responsibilities.

5.3.5 Must ensure that the following are completed;

- Copies of this policy are made available in the main office and in staff room
- The section on 'responding to a child making a disclosure or allegation of abuse' is printed and given to new and existing staff, this process to be repeated when any changes or updates occur.
- The 'Flowchart: Child safety reporting process' is laminated and affixed to walls in the main office, dining room, art room and staff room.

5.4 All Managers

5.4.1 Promoting Child Safety at all times.

5.4.2 Educating employees about the prevention and detection of child abuse.

5.4.3 Facilitate the reporting of any inappropriate behaviour or suspected abuse.

5.5 All Staff and Volunteers

5.5.1 Be familiar with relevant laws, CBTS Policies, Procedures and Child Protection Policy and Code of Conduct and comply with all requirements.

5.5.2 Report any reasonable belief that a child's safety is at risk to the relevant people and authorities.

5.5.3 Provide an environment that is supportive of all children's emotional and physical safety.

6. Definitions

6.1 "Child"- means a person below the age of 18 years unless, under the law applicable to the child, majority is attained earlier.

6.2 "Child protection"- means any responsibility, measure or activity undertaken to safeguard children from harm.

6.3 "Child abuse"- means all forms of physical abuse, emotional ill-treatment, sexual abuse and exploitation, neglect or negligent treatment, commercial (e.g. for financial gain) or the other exploitation of a child and includes any action that results in actual or potential harm to a child.

6.4 "Physical abuse"- Occurs when a child suffers or is likely to suffer significant harm from a non-accidental injury or injuries inflicted by another person. Physical violence can be inflicted in many ways including beating, shaking, burning or use of weapons (such as belts).

6.5 "Sexual abuse"- Occur when a person involves a child in sexual activity, or deliberately puts the child in the presence of sexual behaviors that are exploitative or inappropriate to his/hers age and development.

Child sexual abuse can involve a range to sexual activity. It can also include exposure to or exploitation through pornography or prostitution, as well as grooming behavior.

6.6 "Serious emotional and psychological abuse"- Occurs when harm is inflicted on a child through repeated rejection, isolation, either by threats or violence.

It can include derogatory name calling and put downs, or persistent and deliberate coldness from a person, to the extent where the behaviour of the child is disturbed or their emotional development is at serious risk of being impaired.

Serious emotional or psychological abuse could result from conduct that exploits a child without necessarily being criminal, such as encouraging a child to engage inappropriate or risky behaviours.

6.7 "Serious Neglect"- Is the continued failure to provide a child with the basic necessities of life, such as food, clothing, shelter, hygiene, medical attention or adequate supervision, to the extent that the child's health, safety and/or development is, or likely to be, jeopardised.

Serious neglect can also occur if an adult fails to adequately ensure the safety of a child where the child is exposed to extremely dangerous or life threatening situations.

6.8 “Racial, cultural, religious, linguistic”- Is conduct that demonstrates contempt, ridicule, hatred or negativity towards a child because of their race, culture or religion. It may be overt, such as direct racial vilification or discrimination, or covert, such as demonstrating a lack of cultural respect (attitude and values) and awareness (knowledge and understanding) or failing to provide positive images about another culture.

6.9 “Disclosure”- means when a child speaks about an alleged abuse.

6.10 A “reasonable belief”- is not the same as having proof, but is more than a mere rumour or speculation.

A “reasonable belief”- might be formed if;

- A child states that they have been physically or sexually abused.
- A child states that they know someone who has been physically or sexually abused (it is possible in this case that the child is talking about themselves).
- Professional observation of the child’s behaviour or development leads a professional to form a belief that the child may have been physically abused or is likely to be; and/or.
- Signs of abuse lead to the belief that the child has been physically or sexually abused.

7. Reporting

If any person believes a child is in immediate risk of abuse, telephone 000.

If any person has grounds to suspect abusive activity in CBTS they must immediately notify the appropriate child protection service or the police. They should also advise their supervisor or the DCPO about their concern.

In situations where a supervisor or DCPO is suspected of involvement in the activity, or if the person having the suspicion does not believe that the matter is being appropriately addressed or dealt with, the matter should be reported to the next highest level of supervision, ultimately to the CEO

In cases where a disclosure is made to any staff or volunteer that the guidelines within this policy and code of conduct are followed and reported to the DCPO as soon as practical after the disclosure

7.1 Child safety complaints, disclosers and breaches of the Code of Conduct, and accidents will be archived on site at CBTS. Records will be kept in staff files, group files or the archive room. Reference must be given to authority before any disposal.

7.2 A record must be taken and kept of;

- any action taken
- any internal investigations
- any reports made to statutory authorities or professional bodies

Mandatory reporting requirements:

Legislation	Mandated reporters	When must a report be made?	Who is a child?
<i>Crimes Act 1958 (Vic.)</i>	Any person over 18 years or older	A mandated reporter must make a report if they form a reasonable belief that a sexual offence has been committed in Victoria against a child by another person of or over the age of 18 years. NB. Exceptions may apply	A person under 16 years old.
<i>Children, Youth and Families Act 2005 (Vic.)</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Registered medical practitioners, midwives and registered nurses • Teachers registered or granted permission to teach under the Education, Training and Reform Act 2006 • Principals • Police 	A mandated reporter must make a report if: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • They form a belief on reasonable grounds that a child is in need of protection from physical injury or sexual abuse; • The parents cannot or will not protect the child and; • The belief is formed in the course of practising his/her position of employment. NB. Exceptions may apply	A person under 17 years old.

Legislation	Voluntary reporters	When can a report be made?	Who is a child?
<i>Children, Youth and Families Act 2005 (Vic.)</i>	Any person	A voluntary reporter may make a report if the person has a significant concern for the wellbeing of child.	A person under 17 years old

7.3 Steps on how to report

	Description This table describes how to make a mandatory report, to report child abuse or child protection concerns.
1	<p>In case of emergency or if a child is in immediate danger contact Triple Zero (000) or the local police station.</p> <p>Alternatively, to report concerns about the immediate safety of a child within their family unit to DHHS Child Protection, call the Child Protection Crisis Line on 13 12 78 (24 hours 7 days, toll free)</p>
2	<p>Keep comprehensive notes that are dated and include the following information: (CBTS has a Child disclosure form available for staff to fill out).</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ information that has led to concerns about the child's safety (e.g. physical injuries, child's behaviour) ▪ the source of this information (e.g. observation of behaviour, report from child or another person) ▪ the actions taken as a result of the concerns (e.g. consultation with DCPO, report to DHHS Child Protection etc.).
3	<p>Discuss any concerns about the safety and wellbeing of child with the Designated child protection officer or a member of management. The DCPO should then make their own assessment about whether they should make a report about the child or young person and to whom the report should be made.</p>
4	<p>Gather the relevant information necessary to make the report. This should include the following information:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ full name, date of birth, and residential address of the child or young person ▪ the details of the concerns and the reasons for those concerns ▪ the individual staff member's involvement with the child and or young person ▪ details of any other agencies who may be involved with the child or young person, if known.
5	<p>Make a report to the relevant agency</p> <p>To report concerns that are life threatening phone 000 or the local police station. To find the nearest Victoria Police Sexual Offences and Child Abuse Investigation Team contact your local police station.</p> <p>To report concerns about the immediate safety of a child within their family unit to DHS Child Protection, call the Child Protection Crisis Line on 13 12 78 (24 hrs 7 days, toll free)</p> <p>To report concerns to DHHS Child Protection, contact your local child protection office.</p>

6	<p>Make a written record of the report which includes the following information:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ the date and time of the report and a summary of what was reported ▪ the name and position of the person who made the report and the person who received the report. ▪ You can get a form off the designated child protection officer, to help with this process.
7	<p>Notify relevant staff of a report to DHHS Child Protection or Child FIRST. The allegations must be reported to the:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ President of the Board ▪ General Manager ▪ Designated Child Protection Officer

8. Recruitment

8.1 Cottage by the Sea have a number of procedures in place to help us identify the most suitable candidates to work with the children. These specific selection criteria can also deter unsuitable persons from applying or being appointed, either in a paid or voluntary capacity.

8.2 Cottage by the Sea job advertisements will clearly state our commitment to child safety. This will be included in all advertisements, duty statements and other documentation.

8.3 Some important areas CBTS will need to assess when recruiting new staff and volunteers will include;

- motivation to work with children
- understanding of children's physical and emotional needs
- understanding of physical boundaries
- attitudes to children's rights and how they can be upheld
- values (honesty, integrity, reliability, fairness, and non-discrimination)
- responses from referees

8.4 Screening potential staff and volunteers is essential. This will be completed through reference checks. CBTS will insist that one referee must be the applicant's current or most recent employer. If the reference is in writing, contact the referee to confirm authenticity. Useful questions to ask a referee include;

- would you employ the person again
- do you have any concerns about the applicant working directly with children
- are you comfortable knowing that the applicant might sometimes be working

alone with children

- did the applicant have any disciplinary matters relating to child protection issues

8.5 All staff and volunteers will need to have a current Working with Children's Check, these will be checked annually after commencing at CBTS. Staff and volunteers have a duty to inform Cottage by the Sea of any changes. All staff will have a current Police Check.

Checklist: Choosing, supervising and developing suitable staff and volunteers		
Choosing safe staff and volunteers	Practical Suggestions	Good Outcomes
Develop a duty statement or job description	A duty statement or job description clarifies the role, responsibilities and expectation of the position and outlines reporting lines.	You will recruit the most suitable staff or volunteers.
Develop key selection criteria	Selection criteria help to identify key skills, attributes, experience and qualifications that are required to undertake the duties and tasks outlines in the duty statement.	
Advertise the position	Promote the fact that CBTS is a child safe organisation with a Child Protection Policy	You will encourage the best qualified people to apply.
Interview applicants	<p>Ask about the applicant's motivation to work with children.</p> <p>Discuss the applicant's approach to Aboriginal cultural safety and inclusive practices for all children and their families.</p> <p>Ask questions about the applicant's real life experience.</p> <p>Have three people on the interview panel and have mixed genders if possible.</p> <p>Appoint an interview chairperson</p> <p>Conduct a second interview if you are unsure who you want to appoint.</p>	You will achieve a fair and transparent interview process that allows reasonable opportunity to assess an applicant's skills and suitability.
Conduct a minimum of two reference checks	<p>At least 2 reference checks must be undertaken by telephone or in person. Do not just accept written reference.</p> <p>Insist on references for the applicant's current or most recent employer.</p> <p>Useful questions</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - would you employ the person again - do you have any concerns about the applicant working directly with children - are you comfortable knowing that the applicant might sometimes be working alone with children - Can you give us an example of a time when you 	You will collect accurate information, which enables you to make informed decisions about the applicant's suitability.

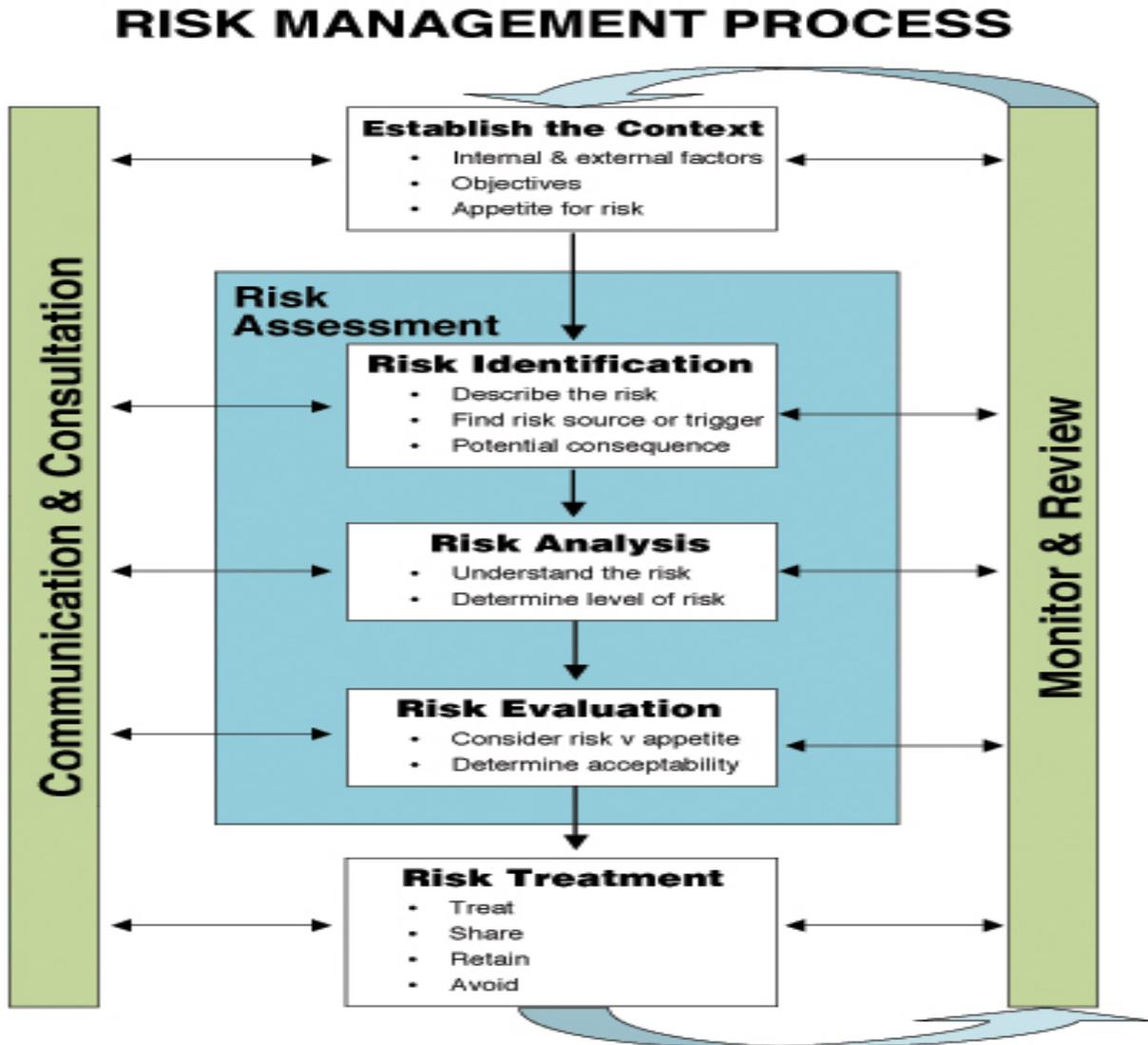
	observed the applicant managing children's behaviour.	
Conduct Identity Checks	<p>Ensure you are background checking the right person.</p> <p>Evidence of identity must be verified (driver's licence or passport).</p> <p>Make sure you sight an original birth certificate.</p> <p>Make sure you sight original certificates of qualifications.</p>	You will employ genuine and suitable employees or volunteers.
Conduct a police check and ensure that applicants have a Working with Children Check	<p>Exclude anyone with a criminal history of violence, abuse of children or serious drug or fraud charges.</p> <p>Ensure you sight the applicant's Working with Children Check card and verify the card is valid.</p> <p>Photocopy the applicant's Working with Children Check card, Police Check and keep this document in secure personnel records.</p>	You will screen out unsuitable people.
Provide supervision, support and monitoring of staff and volunteers	<p>Meet regularly with staff and volunteers.</p> <p>Support them in their roles.</p> <p>Provide training and resources.</p> <p>Raise performance issues and required improvements.</p> <p>Treat staff and volunteers with respect.</p>	You will employ staff and volunteers who enjoy their job and feel valued by your organisation.
Monitor and review	As part of your annual performance management cycle, check that the Working with Children's Checks of relevant staff and volunteers in your organisation are still valid.	You will reduce the risk of inappropriate people working with children in your organisation.

9. Risk Management Process

To support strategic, operational and tactical risk management, the Child Protection Policy is in place to help ensure effective management of risk.

Risk management means identifying the potential for an incident or accident to occur and taking steps to reduce the likelihood or severity of its occurrence.

The Risk Management framework below helps to ensure that risk is managed across Cottage by the Sea in a holistic manner.



Flowchart: CHILD SAFETY REPORTING PROCESS



Outcome

Investigation; outcome decided; relevant staff, volunteers, parents and child notified of outcome of investigation; policies, procedures updated where necessary.