



UNITY MENTORSHIP FOUNDATION

UMF Policy - Child Safety & Safeguarding

Unity Mentorship Foundation

Unity Mentorship Foundation (UMF) is a Melbourne-based organisation delivering structured mentorship and life skills programs for young people aged 15–25. UMF provides safe, consistent environments where young people can develop emotional intelligence, confidence, leadership skills, and a strong sense of belonging through weekly mentoring and practical life skills education.

Through a repeatable five-month cohort-based model, UMF is building a pipeline of future leaders while remaining values-driven, inclusive, and community-focused.

Values

 Lead with Care	 Act with Integrity	 Listen & Respect	 Serve with Purpose	 Commit to Growth	 Community & Belonging
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Overview

Unity Mentorship Foundation (UMF) is committed to providing safe, inclusive, and respectful environments for all young people involved in its programs. UMF recognises that children and young people have the right to feel safe, be heard, and be protected from harm, abuse, exploitation, and neglect.

This Child Safety & Safeguarding Policy outlines UMF's approach to preventing harm, responding to concerns, and upholding its duty of care to young people, particularly those under 18 years of age.

UMF maintains zero tolerance for any form of abuse, misconduct, or behaviour that compromises the safety or dignity of a child or young person.

Purpose & Scope

The **purpose** of this policy is to:

- Protect children and young people from harm, abuse, exploitation, and neglect
- Establish clear expectations for safe and appropriate behaviour
- Provide guidance on recognising, responding to, and escalating concerns
- Ensure safeguarding responsibilities are understood across UMF
- Promote a culture of care, accountability, and respect

This **policy** applies to:

- All children and young people participating in UMF programs
- All UMF mentors, volunteers, staff, contractors, and leaders
- All UMF activities, events, digital platforms, and community spaces
- Any situation where UMF representatives engage with young people

UMF's Commitment to Child Safety

UMF is **committed** to:

- Creating environments where young people feel safe, valued, and respected
- Empowering young people to speak up about concerns without fear
- Ensuring adults working with young people understand boundaries and responsibilities
- Acting promptly and appropriately when concerns are raised
- Complying with applicable child safety laws and standards

Safeguarding is everyone's responsibility at UMF.

Alignment with Victorian Child Safe Standards

UMF is committed to upholding the Victorian Child Safe Standards and embedding child safety and wellbeing into all aspects of its operations.

In line with the Child Safe Standards, UMF:

- Demonstrates leadership commitment to child safety and wellbeing
- Creates environments where young people are respected, listened to, and empowered
- Engages families and the broader community in promoting child safety
- Promotes equity, inclusion, and respect for diversity
- Screens, trains, and supervises adults working with young people
- Maintains clear processes for responding to concerns and incidents
- Reviews safeguarding practices to support continuous improvement

This policy supports UMF's compliance with relevant child safety legislation and standards.

Code of Behaviour & Boundaries

All UMF team members are expected to:

- Treat all young people with respect, fairness, and dignity
- Maintain appropriate physical, emotional, and professional boundaries
- Avoid any behaviour that could be interpreted as favouritism, coercion, or manipulation
- Communicate with young people in appropriate, transparent, and professional ways
- Refrain from one-on-one interactions without visibility or accountability

Inappropriate behaviour, even if well-intentioned, is not acceptable.

Recruitment, Screening & Supervision

UMF takes reasonable steps to ensure that individuals working with young people are suitable for their roles.

This includes:

- Requiring valid Working With Children Checks (WWCC) for relevant roles
- Conducting reference checks where appropriate
- Providing induction and guidance on child safety expectations
- Ensuring supervision is present during programs and activities

No individual may engage directly with young people without appropriate screening and approval.

Recognising and Responding to Concerns

UMF encourages early identification and reporting of concerns, including:

- Behaviour that breaches boundaries
- Signs of distress, withdrawal, or harm
- Inappropriate conduct by adults or peers
- Disclosures made by young people

Concerns do not need to be proven to be reported. All concerns must be taken seriously and acted upon appropriately.

Online and Digital Safety

UMF recognises that safeguarding extends to digital spaces.

UMF expects:

- Appropriate online communication boundaries
- No private or secretive communication with young people
- Use of approved platforms for digital engagement
- Respectful and safe online behaviour at all times

Digital misconduct is treated as seriously as in-person misconduct.

Photography, Media and Consent

UMF seeks appropriate consent before:

- Taking photographs or videos of young people
- Sharing images or stories publicly
- Using content for promotional or fundraising purposes

Young people and families have the right to opt out without penalty.

Reporting and Escalation

Any child safety concern must be reported immediately to:

- The CEO, or
- The designated safeguarding and wellbeing lead

UMF will:

- Respond promptly and sensitively
- Maintain confidentiality where possible
- Escalate matters to relevant authorities when required by law
- Take appropriate action to protect those involved

No retaliation will be tolerated against anyone who raises a concern in good faith.

Breaches of This Policy

Any breach of this policy may result in:

- Immediate removal from UMF activities
- Suspension or termination of role
- Referral to external authorities where required

UMF prioritises the safety and wellbeing of young people above all else.