GWN - Child Safety Policy

1. Purpose

The Great Walk Network is committed to creating a safe and respectful environment for children who take part in our walks, camps, and activities.
All members share the responsibility to uphold this commitment.

2. Scope

This policy applies to all **members, committee members, volunteers, and guests** who participate in Great Walk Network activities.
It covers all **walks, camps, meetings, events and activities**.

3. Our Commitment

We will:

- Treat all children and young people with care, respect, and fairness.
- Create an environment where children are listened to and feel safe.
- Take all concerns about a child's safety seriously and act quickly.
- Follow legal and ethical responsibilities in responding to suspected abuse or neglect.

4. Code of Conduct

All members and volunteers agree to:

- Always behave respectfully towards children and young people.
- Avoid being alone with a child who is not in your care — stay within sight of others.
- Use appropriate language and never engage in behaviour that could be considered abusive, intimidating, or discriminatory.
- Not take photos or share images of children without consent from their parents or carer.
- Avoid non-consensual unnecessary physical contact.
- Report any concerns or incidents immediately (see Section 6).

5. Safe Practices

- **Supervision:** Parents or carers are responsible for the direct care and supervision of their children at all events unless specific arrangements are made with members known to them.

- **Camping and sleeping arrangements:** Adults and children (other than family members or carers) should not share tents or sleeping spaces, without parent consent. Keep tents open and visible during play.
- **Transport:** Members should avoid being alone in a vehicle with a child who they are not responsible for, without parent/carer consent.
- **Working with Children's Check:** Members interested in facilitating children's activities are strongly encouraged to have WWCC. One of these people will be nominated at each camp to be the Child Safety Coordinator.
- **Communication:**
    - At the opening circle members with WWCC are identified.
    - The GWN Child Safety Policy is available on our website.
    - In our Welcome Booklet we alert new members to our child safe practices.
    - Child protection is a discussion point on the committee agenda template.
    - Our registration form has a checkbox for WWCC and agreement to the policy practices.

6. Reporting Concerns

What to do if a child discloses something concerning?

1. **Respond calmly** – listen, tell the child you care about them and will support them and that you will now ensure the right people are informed to help them be safe.
2. **Report** – share your concern as soon as possible with the nominated **Child Safety Coordinator**, or if unavailable, to those who identified as having a WWCC.
3. **Record** – write down what happened, including times, dates, and what was said or witnessed.
4. **Due Process** - All reports will be taken seriously and handled with sensitivity and confidentiality. The Child Safety Coordinator will discuss with the leadership team to decide on appropriate action.
5. **Escalate** – the Child Safety Coordinator will report to the convenor for appropriate action, which may include a police report or notification to the **Department of Communities – Child Protection**. If a child is in immediate danger, contact the **police (000)**.

7. Review

This policy will be reviewed every two years or after any incident to ensure it remains effective and appropriate for our community.
Feedback from members and families is welcome at any time.