

# Membership Rules

## Context

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The Eltham Concert Band is a non-auditioning Community Concert Band. It exists to provide an outlet for its members to rehearse and perform music under the direction of a Musical Director.

The band has members ranging in age from their teens to their seventies. The presence of younger members is essential for the longevity of the band, but makes it essential that there is a Child Safety and Wellbeing policy in place. Any instances of mistreatment of individuals in the band is to be deplored, and requires action by the band. Mistreatment of children is especially to be avoided and the action on its occurrence must be immediate.

Though members of the band have varying musical abilities and competence, all share the desire to perform together as well as possible. It is the role of the Musical Director to enable this, however the Musical Director cannot achieve this without the cooperation of all members of the band.

By its nature, the band can only operate effectively when members attend regularly. Though it is often possible to rehearse effectively when a single member of a section is missing, the lack of a complete section can be far more problematic. Missing players are easier to deal with when they are known and can be planned for. To this end, it is essential the band collect contact details from all members.

This document contains the guidelines and rules for all of the above. Regulations, especially with respect to Child Safety, are liable to change, therefore, this document is also subject to revision. All revisions of the document will be displayed on the band website for the benefit of both current and prospective members.

## Acknowledgements

There are many bands and orchestras that need to address similar issues. Child Safety and Wellbeing is a matter that has become subject to regulation recently, and that has been addressed by other similar organisations. Eltham Concert Band acknowledges their indebtedness to the Monash Concert Band for the vast majority of the Child Safety and Wellbeing policy.

## Roles

The document refers to various roles such as “President” and “Attendance Secretary”. The first of these is a single person, but has an email address that delivers to at least two people in case of absence. The second is again a multiple email address, but, like others in the band, is in the process of being automated to avoid the need for intervention by a person.

## Code of conduct for band members

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As a member or provisional member of Eltham Concert Band, you are expected to:

1. Attend rehearsals, or when you cannot attend, notify the Attendance Secretary preferably via the band's website. (See roles above. Use of the website means that recording of attendance can be automated)
2. Arrive on time for rehearsals, being warmed up and ready to play when each rehearsal starts. If you arrive late, you should enter the rehearsal area quietly and take your place only at a suitable break in proceedings so that the disruption is kept to a minimum. If you are aware that you will be arriving late (or leaving early), then the Attendance Secretary should be informed, again preferably via the website.
3. Be attentive during rehearsals and follow the requests or instructions of the Musical Director. This includes remaining quiet when you are not called on to play, such as when other sections of the band are being rehearsed.
4. Be considerate to all other members of the band, to the Musical Director, to any visitors at rehearsals, and to the audience at concerts or performances.
5. Avoid disrupting rehearsals or performances. Should you have any specific concerns to raise, you should take these up with the Musical Director or a member of the band committee during a break, or otherwise outside rehearsal time.
6. Abide by decisions of the Musical Director as they relate to rehearsals, concerts or performances. If, for example, the Musical Director considers your contribution to the ensemble to be below the standard required for a forthcoming performance, the Musical Director may ask you not to take part in the performance or the final rehearsal(s) leading up to it.
7. Follow the Child Safety and Wellbeing Policy contained in this document.
8. Report anything that makes any members feel uncomfortable to a member of the band committee

## Details Required from Members

All members are required to supply the following information to the membership secretary:

1. Contact details, including email address, home address, and contact phone number(s), so that the Band can contact them as required.
2. Date of Birth for those under 18 - this is required in order for the Band to administer its obligation at law to ensure children obtain Working with Children Checks when they become adults. The contact details for parents/guardians are also required for those under 18.
3. Agreement to the code of conduct and Membership rules contained in this document. This must be supplied:
  - a. When first joining the band
  - b. Annually when responding to the request for fees. (The fee request document also enables the member to update any details they have omitted to update during the year)
4. Details of their Working with Children Check (or equivalent for teachers, police officers, etc.)

The membership secretary role is currently split between more than one person, but is again implemented via an email address that directs to multiple people. Again this caters for the automation of the collection of data.

## Breaches of the code of conduct

Where possible, the committee will attempt to deal with breaches as simply as possible. Minor breaches can be resolved by merely making the member aware of the breach. More serious matters, and repeated breaches may necessitate immediate action, up to and including the cancellation of an individual's membership. Such serious breaches will in all cases be handled in accordance with the disciplinary procedures as described in the Constitution of the Eltham Concert Band, including a right to appeal the decision.

## Child Safety and Wellbeing Policy

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All children have the right to feel safe and be safe, but safety does not just happen. Victoria's [Child Safe Standards](#) exist to prevent harm and abuse from happening in organisations.

Eltham Concert Band is committed to promoting and protecting the interests, safety, and wellbeing of children. We have zero tolerance for child abuse and discrimination.

### Purpose

Eltham Concert Band commits to upholding the Child Safe Standards and ensuring child safety. The purpose of this policy is to:

- facilitate the prevention of discrimination, harm or child abuse occurring within Eltham Concert Band
- work towards an organisational culture of child safety and wellbeing
- ensure that everyone is aware of their responsibilities to care for children in our organisation and prevent or report instances of poor behaviour or abuse
- provide guidance about how to report any harm or abuse within or outside of the organisation
- provide assurance that all suspected abuse will be reported and appropriately investigated
- implement procedures that encourage and support all members to feel safe and included.

This policy applies to all members, volunteers, children and other individuals involved with Eltham Concert Band. All members of Eltham Concert Band are responsible for the care and protection of children, and reporting information about child abuse.

### We value our community heritage and diversity

Eltham Concert Band respectfully acknowledges the traditional owners of the lands on which we rehearse and perform, the Wurundjeri peoples of the Kulin Nation. Through our rehearsals and performances we honour the continuation of one of the oldest music practices in the world.

We acknowledge that members of Eltham Concert Band and the people of Eltham have diverse cultural, religious, and language backgrounds. We welcome all people to our organisation and recognise that cultural safety is of critical importance to the safety and wellbeing of children.

We welcome everyone into our band and welcome input from all of our members and volunteers to make our organisation more inclusive, accessible, and safe.

## Children should always feel safe in our organization

We acknowledge that children who participate in our organisation have the right to:

- participate and be heard,
- be safe and not harmed by anyone,
- live and grow up healthy,
- express their views and have a say about decisions that affect them, and
- receive information, such as information about the policies and procedures that affect them.

We will uphold these rights for our child members and are open to feedback on how we can improve.

## Role of Adult Band Members in child safety

Adult members are expected to uphold the safety and wellbeing of young people who participate in our activities. Particular attention will be paid to the cultural safety of children from Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander backgrounds, and the safety needs of children from culturally and/or linguistically diverse backgrounds, the LGBTIQ+ community or those living with a disability.

Members will not:

- treat another member or volunteer in a disrespectful way;
- physically or verbally hurt or abuse another person;
- tease, bully or harass another person within the band community;
- exclude people from our activities;
- enter toilets or change rooms other than their own;
- use inappropriate language or discuss matters of an adult nature in the presence of children;
- discriminate against any child or any other member, including because of age, sex, culture, race, religion, disability, sexuality or gender identity;
- communicate or exchange personal contact details with child members of the band without the knowledge of a parent/guardian;
- transport children (other than their own) to band events without parent/guardian consent.

### Role of band committee(s) in child safety

Eltham Concert Band Committee is responsible for ensuring that child safety and wellbeing is embedded in our organisational leadership, governance and culture. The committee will:

- take all reasonable steps to protect children and young people from abuse, discrimination, and other harms;
- ensure children, young people and their families are engaged as active participants in decision-making processes, particularly those that have an impact on their own safety and wellbeing;
- listen and respond to the views and concerns of children and their families, particularly if they are telling you that they are worried about their safety, or are being harmed;
- assess child safety risks and take action to reduce these risks;
- ensure as far as practicable that adults are not left alone with a child;
- undertake training as required to build a child safe organisation.

### Recruiting members, volunteers and musical directors

Anyone in our community can join Eltham Concert Band. All members and volunteers must be willing to follow this Policy and our Code of Conduct. We will publish this Policy and Code of Conduct on our website to ensure that prospective members understand our expectations.

To ensure that members are appropriate to be involved in an organisation alongside children, we require all members hold a valid Volunteer Working With Children Check. Equivalents such as an Employee Working With Children Check or teaching equivalents are also acceptable.

Members will be asked for their Working With Children Check details when they complete our membership form. If a prospective member does not hold a Working With Children Check, they must apply for a Working With Children Check before they can join Eltham Concert Band. This assists us to protect children from harm by ensuring that everyone who joins Eltham Concert Band is subject to a basic child safety screening process. Members don't require a Working With Children Check if they hold registration with the Victorian Institute of Teaching or are a sworn member of Victoria Police.

To allow prospective members the chance to see whether they enjoy the band before committing to membership, the band does not charge fees for a period of four weeks. After this time membership fees will be charged (but with the first four weeks not included in the calculation of a pro rata fee for the year). All new members must complete their Working With Children Check before the expiry of the four week grace period.

Candidate Musical Directors must also have a Working With Children Check and the committee must be satisfied that such candidates are suitable to work with children as part of the recruitment process. Our commitment to child safety and diversity and screening requirements will be included in all advertisements for musical director positions.

## Reporting a child safety concern or complaint

Any member or volunteer who has a child safety concern or complaint, or who witnesses a child safety incident must report that concern, complaint or incident to the President or Secretary of Eltham Concert Band.

<b>Who can make a report?</b>	Anyone - a member of the band (child or adult); a musical director; a parent or guardian of a member; a volunteer, helper or guest of the band	
<b>What can be reported?</b>	Any child safety concern including: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• disclosure of abuse or harm by a child or young person</li> <li>• an allegation/observation of abuse or harm against a child or young person</li> <li>• a breach of the Code of Conduct</li> <li>• a general safety or environmental concern</li> </ul>	<b>Call 000 if a child is in immediate danger</b>
<b>How to report?</b>	Face-to-face verbal report, letter, email, telephone call, at a meeting or any other way that is considered appropriate	
<b>Who to report to?</b>	The Band President or Band Secretary	
<b>What happens next?</b>	The President or Secretary will: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• offer support to the child, parents, the person who made the report and the person who is alleged to have caused harm;</li> <li>• initiate processes to ensure the safety of all children involved;</li> <li>• clarify the nature of the complaint;</li> <li>• determine whether the incident must be reported to police, child protection or the Commission for Children and Young People and make a report as soon as possible;</li> <li>• commence disciplinary processes against the member in line with the rules of Eltham Concert Band</li> <li>• keep and secure accurate records of the incident and the response.</li> </ul>	
<b>Outcome</b>	Once the outcome is known: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• relevant staff, volunteers, parents and children will be notified of the outcome, having regard to the privacy of those involved;</li> <li>• disciplinary action will be taken as required; and</li> <li>• policies and procedures will be reviewed and updated as necessary.</li> </ul>	

Adult members and volunteers must make a report to Victoria Police if they form a reasonable belief that a sexual offence has been committed against a child in Victoria by another person aged over 18. Failure to disclose this information is a criminal offence.

## Review and improvement

Child safety and wellbeing matters will be reviewed by Eltham Concert Band Committee annually and on an as-needed basis to ensure the ongoing protection of children who participate in our organisation. All child safety and wellbeing concerns arising will be addressed as a matter of urgency. A summary of these matters will be noted at committee meetings, or as required.

## ELTHAM CONCERT BAND - MEMBERSHIP RULES

This policy will be reviewed by Eltham Concert Band Committee and presented to the Annual General Meeting of Eltham Concert Band to assess whether our child safety and wellbeing policies or procedures require modification to better protect the children involved in our organisation.

Through the Annual General Meeting, Eltham Concert Band will seek views, comments and suggestions from child members, their parents and adult members within the Band.

Last Review Date	
Next Review Date	



## APPENDIX: What to do if an allegation of child abuse is made

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

If a child discloses an incident of abuse to you:

- Try and separate them from the other children discreetly and listen to them carefully.
- Let the child use their own words to explain what has occurred. Do not interrupt them or make assumptions about what you think happened.
- Reassure the child that you take what they are saying seriously, and that it is not their fault and that they are doing the right thing.
- Explain to them that this information may need to be shared with others, such as with their parent/carer, specific people within the Band (President, Secretary or Committee), or the police.
- Take detailed notes at the time of the report, or as soon as possible after receiving it. Confirm your notes with the person who raised the concern to ensure you have written everything down accurately.
- Do not make promises at this stage, except that you will do your best to keep the child safe. Do not leave the child in a distressed state. If they seem at ease in your company, stay with them.
- As soon as possible after the disclosure, record the information using the child's words and report the disclosure to the Band Secretary or President.
- Ensure the disclosure is recorded accurately, and that the record is stored securely.

If a parent/carer says their child has been abused within our organisation or raises a concern:

- Ask about the wellbeing of the child.
- Explain that Eltham Concert Band has processes to ensure all abuse allegations are taken seriously.
- Allow the parent/carer to talk through the incident in their own words. Do not interrupt them while they are relaying their account of events; do not paraphrase or make assumptions about what you think may have happened.
- Advise the parent/carer that you will take notes during the discussion to capture all details. Confirm your notes with the person who raised the concern to ensure you have written everything down accurately.
- Explain to them the information will need to be repeated to authorities or others, such as the band Secretary or President, the Police, or Child Protection Agencies.
- Explain that all persons 18 years or older are mandated to make a report to Victoria Police if they form a reasonable belief that a sexual offence has been committed against a child in Victoria by another person aged 18 or older.
- Do not make promises at this early stage, except that you will do your best to keep the child safe.
- Ask them what action they would like to take and advise them of what the immediate next steps will be.

- Ensure the incident report is recorded accurately and the record is stored securely.

Be aware that some people from culturally and/or linguistically diverse backgrounds may face barriers in reporting allegations of abuse. For example, people from some cultures may experience anxiety when talking with police, and communicating in English may be a barrier for some. You need to be sensitive to these issues and meet people's needs where possible, such as having an interpreter present (who could be a friend or family member).

If an allegation of abuse involves a child from Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander background, you will need to ensure a culturally appropriate response. A way to help ensure this could include engaging with parents of Aboriginal children, local Aboriginal communities or an Aboriginal community controlled organisations to review policies and procedures.

Some children living with a disability may experience barriers disclosing an incident. For example, children with hearing or cognitive impairments may need support to help them explain the incident, including through sign language interpreters.