

A video message from Stephen to Junior Members, Parents/Guardians

Hello, I'm Stephen Griffin, CEO of Victoria State Emergency Service and I would like to take this opportunity to tell you about our organisation's commitment to Child Safety.

We take the protection of children very seriously.

To make sure our junior members get the most out of their time with VICSES, in both safe and nurturing environment, we have a Child Safety Policy and a Child Safety Code of Conduct that sets out the obligations for all staff and volunteers.

The basic principles of the policy are ... that children have a fundamental right to be safe from any form of abuse or neglect, and that VICSES is committed to eliminating any opportunity where this may take place.

Child protection is a responsibility shared by all VICSES volunteers and staff.

One of our core values is that we pride ourselves on our credibility. This underpins our commitment to child safety.

Junior members may apply to become a volunteer with VICSES from the age of 15.

Once they have applied, they will take part in an interview, which all our volunteers undergo.

This is to confirm they have the necessary attributes to ensure a meaningful and rewarding experience.

Some of these include ...

The ability to take direction and undertake required tasks that support their Units capability ... the ability to work in a team ... an understanding and commitment to VICSES Values and our Code of Conduct ... demonstrated positive social behaviour ... and both the willingness and ability to meet the training requirements for the role.

Once accepted, our junior members are assigned a VICSES Buddy.

This will be an adult volunteer, who has completed the pre-requisite training and has a Working with Children Check.

Junior members initially undergo an induction program at their chosen Unit.

Parents and guardians are also invited to participate in the program, so they can see firsthand what their child is experiencing.

It is important to note, parents and guardians are asked to give formal consent that their child can participate in selected supervised training and other operational activities.

At VICSES, another of our values is that “safely drives our decisions.”

The work we do can be challenging, both physically and psychologically.

When we engage with our junior members, we take extra care to ensure that they are protected from harm and at the same time, have meaningful learning experiences with us.

It is never our intention to expose junior members to any trauma and their operational duties will reflect this intent.

All junior members will be equipped with appropriate personal protective clothing and equipment for operational duties.

It’s our hope that junior members enjoys a long and fulfilling volunteer relationship with VICSES ... gaining life skills, as they support their community.

If you have any further questions please contact your Unit Controller, Regional Staff, or you can email our Child Safety Officer at childsaftey@ses.vic.gov.au

Thank you for taking the time to watch this video.