

Uncle's charter and mothers' obligation

The community, society and world that we live in have a wide variety of differing ethics, values and morals that are driven by a wide group of individuals, businesses and governments. While The Uncle Project 'Uncle' respects and supports diversity and individuality of thought, in order to responsibly represent the world to boys, Uncle supports the following charter to ensure consistent messages between our management, staff, members and the boys in our organisation. This is particularly important at our activities and camps where lots of men and boys of different ages, backgrounds and experiences come together to interact as a group. Please contact Uncle's activities co-ordinator if you would like to discuss any of these issues in more detail.

- Uncle does not encourage the endorsement of 'celebrities' as heroes for our young people. Actors and musicians and not necessarily good role models in their public or private lives, neither are traditional sporting heroes. Uncle encourages 'real' role models from the community who more truthfully understand the consequences of their actions
- Uncle promotes the positive representation and honouring of women
- Uncle has a policy of no junk food at our camps and activities; we encourage men not to buy treats for boys at activities, and we encourage mothers not to give boys money to spend at our activities, as we cannot always control the way that they spend it.
- Uncle does not allow mobile phones or electric games at our camps and does not encourage mobile phones at our activities; we encourage men to respect this also. A contact person and phone number is always available for camps and activities.
- Uncle encourages the use of Australian language and culture, respect for the original indigenous inhabitants of Australia and support for modern multiculturalism inclusive of all cultures, races and religions. Uncle acknowledges the traditional owners and custodians of the land at camps and activities.
- Uncle is non-denominational and non-political (if a mother has strong beliefs she should discuss this with Uncle's activities co-ordinator or management committee).
- Uncle does not permit smoking and drinking alcohol at camps and activities in front of boys (if a man must smoke he is to find a place where he can do so out of site and smell). Uncle does not encourage the use of alcohol and tobacco and considers carefully being part of any event or using products that advertise alcohol or tobacco.
- Uncle understands that at some stage in every boy's develop he will be exposed to the risks of illicit drugs. While not condoning the use of drugs, and forbidding the use of drugs as an illegal activity, Uncle does encourage open and frank discussion around this difficult subject along with other contentious issues like pornography and masturbation.
- Uncle is an organisation committed to a full expression of responsible adult manhood. This includes the full range of non-exploitative human sexuality. Uncle will not discriminate on the basis of sexuality.

The following information outlines what we consider to be the standard charter of attitude and behaviour for uncles and obligation of mothers involved with Uncle in order to keep all mentoring and activities safe, fun and productive for all participants.

Please contact Uncle's activities co-ordinator or management committee if you are finding it difficult to abide by this charter or you witness or suspect a breach from other persons.

An Uncle's Charter-

Our goal is to help boys who do not live with their fathers or have enough positive male role models in their lives grow into men of depth and character who are able to make their way in the world with joy and integrity. At all times we attempt to be completely conscious of the impact we have on the boys we work with and to make this real by actively considering issues of safety and ethics while having fun.

We are committed to providing the highest possible duty of care, exemplifying appropriate language and behaviour. We are committed to the reduction of harm in areas such as delinquency, depression, drug use, self-harm and child abuse. We aim to model positive qualities such as support, patience, enthusiasm, integrity and responsibility. At all times we respect that the mother's role in her son's life is paramount and we attempt to honour and support that role including the discipline boundaries that the mother sets for her son. As an Uncle, you need to agree to support these goals:

1. Creating powerful and positive one to one 'uncle – boy' friendships that are committed, of integrity and long-term
2. Creating activities that boys and men can be involved in that exemplify the positives of maleness while being respectful to women at all times
3. Changing the attitudes of our community so that boys are more universally supported in their growth to manhood.

In order to best support the boys in our program we strongly suggest that the boy be the Uncle's main focus and that support of the mother, siblings or other family members come secondary and not be an expectation of the mentor relationship with the boy. For the boys sake we also strongly advise that the Uncle does not become involved in a sexual relationship with the mother.

A Mother's Obligation-

As the mother of a boy (or boys) involved in Uncle you have certain responsibilities that you must fulfil for the sake of the organisation and most importantly for the sake of your son.

At all times be aware of issues of safety – we run activities with some inherent risks and this is often what makes them attractive to your son – we do everything possible to ensure your sons safety but think about the risks and if they are unacceptable to you then do not let your son go on that activity. When you join Uncle you sign a waiver form which is for insurance purposes – if you send your son to an activity you are acknowledging and accepting the risks inherent in that activity and in your sons involvement in Uncle.

There is no way to know for certain which people are safe for children in our community; family members and friends commit most assaults of children. We have a wide range of procedures designed to ensure that the men involved with Uncle are safe, however you are one of the most important parts of your children's safety. Please be very conscious of the interactions your child has with any adult and if anything disturbs you in any way, take action - 'protective behaviours' lessons are run as part of our state primary schools, discuss this with your son's school or for further information see:

<http://www.protective-behaviours.org.au/>

In relation to the men involved with Uncle you must, for the sake of your son and for the sake of the organisation, report any negative feelings you have even if you think it is a bit silly or embarrassing. Please immediately contact Uncle's activities co-ordinator or management committee to report any concerns at all.