

## Our Commitment to Child Safety

Lifely is committed to the safety and wellbeing of all children and young people. All Lifely workers have a responsibility to understand the important and specific role they play individually and collectively to ensure that the wellbeing and safety of all children and young people is at the forefront of all they do and every decision they make.

Lifely has a zero tolerance for child abuse and all allegations and safety concerns will be treated very seriously and consistently with our robust policies and procedures.

- We are committed to the safety, participation and empowerment of all children and young people.
- We support and respect all children, workers and have legal and moral obligations to contact authorities when we are worried about a child's safety, and we follow these obligations rigorously.
- Our organisation is committed to preventing child abuse and identifying risks early and removing and reducing these risks.
- Our organisation has robust human resources and recruitment practices for all workers.
- Our organisation is committed to regularly training and educating our workers on child abuse risks.
- We value diversity and do not tolerate any discriminatory practices.
- We are committed to the cultural safety of all children from culturally and/or linguistically diverse backgrounds.
- We ensure that children with a disability are provided with a safe environment.
- We have specific policies, procedures and training in place that support our leadership team and workers to achieve these commitments.

## Child Safe Standards

The Child Safe Standards (the Standards) are compulsory minimum standards for all organisations that provide services to children.

- **Standard 1** - Strategies to embed an organisational culture of child safety, including through effective leadership arrangements
- **Standard 2** - A child safe policy or statement of commitment to child safety
- **Standard 3** - A code of conduct that establishes clear expectations for appropriate behaviour with children

- **Standard 4** - Screening, supervision, training, and other human resources practices that reduce the risk of child abuse by new and existing personnel
- **Standard 5** - Processes for responding to and reporting suspected child abuse
- **Standard 6** - Strategies to identify and reduce or remove risks of child abuse
- **Standard 7** - Strategies to promote the participation and empowerment of children

## Children

This policy is intended as a basis to empower children who are vital and active participants in our organisation. We involve them when making decisions, especially about matters that directly affect them. We listen to their views and respect what they have to say.

We promote diversity and tolerance in our organisation and people from all walks of life and cultural backgrounds are welcome. In particular we:

- Promote the cultural safety, participation, and empowerment of children of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander descent.
- Promote the cultural safety, participation, and empowerment of children from culturally and/or linguistically diverse backgrounds
- Ensure that children with a disability are safe and can participate equally.

## Workers

This policy guides our workers on how to behave with children in our organisation.

All our workers must agree to abide by our code of conduct which specifies the standards of conduct required when working with children. All workers as well as children and their families, are given the opportunity to contribute to the development of the code of conduct.

## Training and Supervision

Training and education are important to ensure that everyone in our organisation understands that child safety is everyone's responsibility.

Our organisational culture aims for all workers (in addition to parents/carers and children) to feel confident and comfortable in discussing any allegations of child abuse or child safety concerns. We train our staff and volunteers to identify, assess and minimise risks of child abuse and to detect potential signs of child abuse.

We also support our workers through ongoing supervision to develop their skills to protect children from abuse; promote the cultural safety of Aboriginal children; promote the cultural safety of children from linguistically and/or diverse backgrounds and promote the safety of children with a disability.

New workers will be supervised regularly to ensure they understand our organisation's commitment to child safety and that everyone has a role to play in protecting children from abuse as well as checking that their behaviour towards children is safe and appropriate (please refer to this organisation's code of conduct to understand appropriate behaviour further). Any inappropriate behaviour will be reported through appropriate channels, including the Department of Health and Human Services and Victoria Police, depending on the severity and urgency of the matter.

### Recruitment

We take all reasonable steps to employ skilled people to work with children. We develop selection criteria and advertisements which clearly demonstrate our commitment to child safety and an awareness of our social and legislative responsibilities. Our organisation understands that when recruiting workers, we have ethical as well as legislative obligations.

We actively encourage applications from people from culturally and/or linguistically diverse backgrounds and people with a disability.

All workers are required to hold a valid Working with Children Check and to provide evidence of this Check.

We carry out reference checks and police record checks to ensure that we are recruiting the right people.

All workers are required to complete a NDIS Workers Screening Check (WSC). If during the recruitment process a person's records indicate a criminal history, then the person will be given the opportunity to provide further information and context.

### Fair Procedures for Personnel

The safety and wellbeing of children is our primary concern. In addition, we are also fair and just to all workers. The decisions we make when recruiting, assessing incidents, and undertaking disciplinary action will always be thorough, transparent, and based on evidence.

We record all allegations of abuse and safety concerns using our incident reporting form, including investigation updates. All records are securely stored.

If an allegation of abuse or a safety concern is raised, we provide updates to children and families on progress and any actions we as an organisation take.

### Privacy

All personal information considered or recorded will respect the privacy of the individuals involved, whether they be workers, parents, or children, unless there is a risk to someone's safety. We have safeguards and practices in place to ensure any personal information is protected. Everyone is entitled to know how this information is recorded, what will be done with it and who will have access to it.

### Legislative responsibilities and the Reportable Conduct Scheme

Our organisation is fully committed to fulfilling our legal obligations as required by the Reportable Conduct Scheme i.e., reporting behavior that causes significant emotional or psychological harm or significant neglect. This is conduct that encompasses physical harm, sexual offences, and sexual misconduct. See for further details see [Early Years Reportable Conduct](#).

Workers engaging working with children with disability and in the early years are required to notify Victoria Police if they have immediate concerns for a child's safety. In relation to responding to incidents, disclosures and suspicions of child abuse they should follow the PROTECT guidelines for reporting such incidents. For further guidance see [Early Years Reporting Flowchart](#)

### Risk Management

Risks always exist for children. As an organisation we undertake to do all that is in our power to reduce the risk of children being harmed e.g., rigorous recruiting practices and checks, examining activities and services and making them as safe as possible and being proactive to reduce the likelihood of risk.

## Regular Review

This policy will be reviewed every two years and following significant incidents if they occur. We will ensure that families and children can contribute. We respect the culture, diversity, values and beliefs of families and their children and where possible we do our best to work with local culturally diverse and/or linguistically diverse communities and people with a disability.

## Reporting procedures

Our organisation takes all allegations seriously and has practices in place to investigate any allegation thoroughly and quickly. Our workers are trained to deal appropriately with allegations.

We work to ensure all children, families, and workers know what to do and who to tell if they observe abuse or are a victim and if they notice inappropriate behaviour.

We all have a responsibility to report an allegation of abuse if we have a reasonable belief that an incident took place (see information about failure to disclose above).

If an adult has a reasonable belief that an incident has occurred, then they must report the incident. Factors contributing to reasonable belief may be:

- A child states they or someone they know has been abused (noting that sometimes the child may in fact be referring to themselves)
- Behaviour consistent with that of an abuse victim is observed<sup>1</sup>
- Someone else has raised a suspicion of abuse but is unwilling to report it
- Observing suspicious behaviour

For example behaviour, please see [An Overview of the Victorian child safe standards:](#)

**Outcome:** That Lifely complies with Child Safety Standards and requirements to provide services that ensure the safety and wellbeing of all children and young people.

## Policy Links:

- [HR 002 – Counselling and Discipline Procedure](#)
- [HR 003– Bullying, Discrimination and Harassment Procedure](#)
- [Man 019 – Internal Incident Reporting Procedure](#)

- [Man 021 – Child Safe Code of Conduct](#)
- [Man 022 – Code of Conduct](#)
- [Man 027 – Conflict of Interest Procedure](#)

## Standards:

NDIS Quality and Safeguard Standards

- NDIS Practice Standards – Provider Governance and Operational Management

Community Care Common Standards

- Standard 1 – Effective Management

National Quality Standards – Education and Care Service National Regulations – OSHC

- Quality Area 7 – Governance and leadership

Child Safety Standards

- Standard 1 – Governance and leadership

## Departments:

- All Departments



