

LIFE CAMPS AUSTRALIA INCORPORATED

Child Safe Standards

All organisations in Victoria that provide services or facilities for children are required to comply with Child Safe Standards, to ensure that the safety of children is promoted, child abuse is prevented and allegations of child abuse are properly responded to.

Life Camps Australia has developed policies and procedures that address the safety, inclusion and protection of all children.

BACKGROUND

- As an organisation, and as individuals within the organisation, Life Camps Australia Inc. trading as Life Camps Australia aims to ensure the safety of all children in its care.
- Christian faith strongly upholds the virtues of love, mercy and justice. From Luke's Gospel we know that Jesus came to give freedom to the captives, sight to the blind and liberty to those who were oppressed. Jesus came for all people. He came to give all of humankind the gift of salvation but was interested in the practicalities of people's lives as well.
- Life Camps Australia aims to follow the example of Jesus and seeks to free, heal and liberate those who are captives, sick or oppressed. The example of Jesus is one on which all Leaders within our Camps and missions model their leadership and their lives. As a community of God's people, we are also committed to ensuring that our Camps are a place that are safe in every respect for those who join with us, especially, but not only, children.
- Where it exists, the Duty of Care is a moral, spiritual and often legal responsibility that we have, both as individuals and corporately, towards all those that we come in contact with in the various Camps and missions. Our Duty of Care is to act with a standard of reasonable care and in a manner that will minimise the risk of people with whom we have contact incurring injury or distress.

- We address the seven Child Safe Standards¹ with the following statements.

DEFINITIONS

- **Camp** means an event or Camp offered by Life Camps Australia; and
- **Leaders** means all people who attend Camp for some or all of the time who have any role in organising or facilitating it or who provide services to Campers in any way. It includes but is not limited to the Camp Organisers, cabin co-ordinators, cabin leaders, spiritual leaders, junior leaders, trainee leaders, worship leaders, cooks, first aid officers and support personnel whether they are volunteers or Employees who act as leaders from time to time.

STANDARD ONE: GOVERNANCE AND LEADERSHIP

- **Strategies to embed an organisational culture of child safety, including through effective leadership arrangements.**
 - Life Camps Australia ensures that Employees and Leaders at a Camp offered by Life Camps Australia recognise the need to keep children safe.
 - Life Camps Australia has developed policies and procedures demonstrating its commitment to child safety. Life Camps Australia takes a zero-tolerance approach to child abuse and has well documented policies and procedures in the event:
 - *a Camper discloses child abuse; or*
 - *a Leader forms a belief on reasonable grounds that a Camper may be at risk of child abuse.*
 - Life Camps Australia seeks to provide Camps which respect, embrace and support the diversity of children.
 - Life Camps Australia provides Child Safe Training immediately before the commencement of each Camp offered to youth and children under 18 years of age. Attendance at the training is compulsory for all Leaders who will attend the Camp.

STANDARD TWO: CLEAR COMMITMENT TO CHILD SAFETY

- **A Child Safe Policy or Statement of Commitment to Child Safety.**
 - A Statement of Commitment to Child Safety is annexed to this document. It is available on the website of Life Camps Australia.

¹ See for example: <https://providers.dffh.vic.gov.au/child-safe-standards> and <https://ccyp.vic.gov.au/child-safety/being-a-child-safe-organisation/>



- Copies of policies in relation to child safety include:
 - *Disclosure of Child Abuse;*
 - *Risk Minimisation Procedures; and*
 - *Code of Conduct.*
- These policies are available from the Manager of Life Camps Australia and are provided to Leaders prior to Camps. Leaders are required to familiarise themselves with and act in accordance with the policies in relation to child safety.

STANDARD THREE: CODE OF CONDUCT

- **A Code of Conduct that establishes clear expectations for appropriate behaviour with children.**
 - A Code of Conduct for all Leaders is provided to every person before the commencement of each Camp.
 - The Code of Conduct addresses, among other things:
 - *Appropriate conduct and behaviour towards children;*
 - *The expected standards of behaviour for Leaders and what will happen if a person does not comply; and*
 - *The need to respect Camper privacy and personhood.*
 - Life Camps Australia conducts risk assessments of its activities and regularly reviews and updates its Risk Minimisation procedures.

STANDARD FOUR: HUMAN RESOURCES PRACTICES

- **Screening, supervision, training and other human resources practices that reduce the risk of child abuse by new and existing personnel.**
 - A Leadership Selection Process has been prepared and implemented and endorsed by Life Camps Australia. The process includes, but is not limited to, a requirement for each Leader to have:
 - *a Working with Children Check which is current for the relevant period; or*
 - *a current VIT (Victorian Teacher's Registration) or interstate equivalent; or*
 - *a current police check*
 - and



- *a reference from a current pastor, leader or mentor who has known the proposed Leader for at least three years and to whom the proposed Leader is currently known.*
- Leaders are required to support the Statement of Commitment to Child Safety adopted by Life Camps Australia.
- Leaders are required to attend Child Safe Training immediately before the commencement of each Camp.
- Leaders are required to familiarise themselves with and act in accordance with the policies of Life Camps Australia including in relation to child safety.

STANDARD FIVE: RESPONDING AND REPORTING

- **Processes for responding to and reporting suspected child abuse.**
 - All Leaders are aware that Life Camps Australia takes the safety of children extremely seriously and that it is everyone's responsibility.
 - Life Camps Australia encourages children to report if they feel unsafe or concerned and respects their personhood in the event they do so. Children are treated with sensitivity and compassion.
 - The policy in relation to disclosure of Child Abuse sets out the process for responding to and reporting:
 - *abuse disclosed by a Camper; or*
 - *if a Leader forms a belief on reasonable grounds that a Camper may be at risk of child abuse.*

It also sets out who within Life Camps Australia should be notified of a child safety concern and circumstances where the police should be contacted.
 - Life Camps Australia has a formal Incident Report that must be completed in relation to all incidents. The report has special provisions in the event the incident relates to actual or suspected abuse.

STANDARD SIX: RISK MANAGEMENT AND MITIGATION

- **Strategies to identify and reduce or remove risks of child abuse.**
 - The policies of Life Camps Australia alert Leaders to risks and steps they should take to minimise the risk of allegations being made against them, including but not limited to:
 - *Leaders not being alone with Campers;*
 - *The type of physical contact that is and is not acceptable between Leaders and Campers;*
 - *That sexualised language and behaviour are inappropriate and not acceptable; and*



- *The manner in which a Camper might be disciplined, if necessary to do so.*
- Life Camps Australia conducts risk assessments of its activities and regularly reviews and updates its Risk Minimisation procedures.

STANDARD SEVEN: EMPOWERING CHILDREN

- **Strategies to promote the participation and empowerment of children.**
 - Life Camps Australia ensures that activities are able to include all participants and ensures that all children can access buildings.
 - Our Leaders ensure that activities are 'life-giving', inclusive and empowering for all children and encourages them to try new experiences in a safe environment.
 - Life Camps Australia seeks to develop an environment of trust and inclusion and encouraging them to speak up if they are concerned.
 - Life Camps Australia promotes and encourages children's participation in decision making.

Last reviewed: *September 2021*



Statement of Commitment to Child Safety

Every Employee and Leader of Life Camps Australia joins with the organisation in making the following commitment to child safety.

- Life Camps Australia is committed to the safety and wellbeing of all children and young people. This will be the primary focus of our care and decision making.
- Life Camps Australia has zero tolerance for child abuse.
- Life Camps Australia is committed to providing a child safe environment where children and young people are safe and feel safe and their voices are heard about decisions that affect them. Particular attention will be paid to the cultural safety of Indigenous Australian children and children from culturally and/or linguistically diverse backgrounds, as well as the safety of children with a disability.
- Every person involved in Life Camps Australia has a responsibility to understand the important and specific role they have to 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.
- In its planning, decision making and operations Life Camps Australia will:
 - Take a preventative, proactive and participatory approach to child safety;
 - Value and empower children to participate in decisions which affect their lives;
 - Foster a culture of openness that supports all persons to safely disclose risks of harm to children;
 - Respect diversity in cultures and child rearing practices while keeping child safety paramount;
 - Provide written guidance on appropriate conduct and behaviour towards children;
 - Engage only the most suitable people to work with children and high-quality employees and volunteer supervision and professional development;
 - Ensure children know who to talk with if they are worried or are feeling unsafe, and that they are comfortable and encouraged to raise such issues;



- Report suspected abuse, neglect or mistreatment promptly to the appropriate authorities;
- Share information appropriately and lawfully with other organisations where the safety and wellbeing of children is at risk; and
- Value the input of and communicate regularly with families and carers.

