

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 eleven Child Safe Standards<sup>1</sup> 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, senior and 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:

ORGANISATIONS ESTABLISH A CULTURALLY SAFE ENVIRONMENT IN WHICH THE DIVERSE AND UNIQUE IDENTITIES AND EXPERIENCES OF ABORIGINAL CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE ARE RESPECTED AND VALUED

- Life Camps encourages a culture in which diverse and unique identities respected and valued. Life Camps Australia:
  - ensures that a child's ability to express their culture and enjoy their cultural rights is encouraged and actively supported.
  - has strategies which equip all members to acknowledge and appreciate the strengths of Aboriginal culture and understand its importance to the wellbeing and safety of Aboriginal children and young people.
  - has adopted measures to ensure racism within the organisation is identified, confronted and not tolerated. Any instances of racism are addressed with appropriate consequences.
  - actively supports and facilitates participation and inclusion within it by Aboriginal children, young people and their families.
- The policies, procedures, systems and processes of Life Camps Australia together create a culturally safe and inclusive environment and meet the needs of Aboriginal children, young people and their families.

## STANDARD TWO:

CHILD SAFETY AND WELLBEING IS EMBEDDED IN ORGANISATIONAL LEADERSHIP, GOVERNANCE AND CULTURE

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



- **Life Camps Australia is committed to child safety**
  - A Statement of Life Camps Australia's Commitment to Child Safety is annexed to this document. It is available on the website of Life Camps Australia.
  - A child safe culture is championed and modelled at all levels from the top down and bottom up.
  - Governance arrangements facilitate implementation of the child safety and wellbeing policies at all levels. Policies in relation to child safety include but are not limited to:
    - *Disclosure of Child Abuse;*
    - *Risk Minimisation Procedures which focus on preventing, identifying and mitigating risks to children and young people; and*
    - *Code of Conduct which, among other things, provides guidelines for employees and volunteers on expected behavioural standards and responsibilities.*
  - 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, information sharing and record keeping.
- **Life Camps Australia seeks to minimise the risk of reportable conduct as well as ensuring that any obligation to report is complied with.**

### STANDARD THREE:

#### CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE ARE EMPOWERED ABOUT THEIR RIGHTS, PARTICIPATE IN DECISIONS AFFECTING THEM AND ARE TAKEN SERIOUSLY

- **Life Camps Australia seeks to empower children and young people.**
  - Children and young people are informed about their rights including to safety, information and participation.
  - The importance of friendships is recognised and support from peers is encouraged to help children and young people feel safe and minimise feelings of isolation.
  - Where relevant to the setting or context, children and young people are offered access to sexual abuse prevention programs and to relevant related information in an age-appropriate way.
- **Employees and volunteers are attuned to signs of harm and facilitate child-friendly ways for children and young people to express their views, participate in decision-making and raise their concerns.**
  - Life Camps Australia encourages participation and is responsive to the input of children and young people.



- It provides opportunities for children and young people to participate and is responsive to their contributions, thereby strengthening confidence and engagement.

#### STANDARD FOUR:

##### FAMILIES AND COMMUNITIES ARE INFORMED AND INVOLVED IN PROMOTING CHILD SAFETY AND WELLBEING

- To the extent it is practical to do so, Life Camps Australia enables families to participate in decisions affecting their child.
- Life Camps Australia engages and openly communicates with families and the community about its child safe approach and relevant information is accessible.
  - Families and communities are able to have a say in the development and review of Life Camps Australia's policies and practices.
  - Families, carers and the community have access to information about Life Camps Australia's operations and governance.

#### STANDARD FIVE:

##### EQUITY IS UPHHELD AND DIVERSE NEEDS RESPECTED IN POLICY AND PRACTICE

- Life Camps Australia, including its employees and volunteers, understands children and young people's diverse circumstances and provides support and responds to those who are vulnerable.
- Children and young people have access to information, support and complaints processes in ways that are culturally safe, accessible and easy to understand.
- Life Camps Australia pays particular attention to the needs of:
  - children and young people with disability;
  - children and young people from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds;
  - those who are unable to live at home;
  - lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender and intersex children and young people; and
  - Aboriginal children and young peopleand makes every endeavour to provide a culturally safe environment for them.

#### STANDARD SIX:



PEOPLE WORKING WITH CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE ARE SUITABLE AND SUPPORTED TO REFLECT CHILD SAFETY AND WELLBEING VALUES IN PRACTICE

- **Life Camps Australia seeks appropriate Leaders and supports them to reflect these Child Safe Standards.**
  - Recruitment, including advertising, referee checks and employee and volunteer pre-employment screening has an emphasis on child safety and wellbeing.
  - Employees and volunteers have current working with children checks or equivalent background checks.
  - Employees and volunteers receive an appropriate induction and are aware of their responsibilities to children and young people including but not limited to record keeping, information sharing and reporting obligations.
  - Ongoing supervision and people management has a strong focus on child safety and wellbeing.

STANDARD SEVEN:

PROCESSES FOR COMPLAINTS AND CONCERNS ARE CHILD FOCUSED

- **Life Camps Australia has an accessible and child focused complaint handling policy.**
  - The complaint handling policy clearly outlines:
    - *the roles and responsibilities of leadership, employees and volunteers;*
    - *approaches to dealing with different types of complaints, breaches of relevant policies or the Code of Conduct; and*
    - *obligations to act and report.*
- **Life Camps Australia seeks to ensure that its complaint handling policy:**
  - is understood by children and young people, families, employees and volunteers;
  - is culturally safe.
- **Life Camps Australia takes complaints seriously and responds to any complaint promptly and thoroughly.**
  - It has policies and procedures in place that address reporting of complaints and concerns to relevant authorities, whether or not the law requires reporting, and co-operates with law enforcement.
  - Reporting, privacy and employment law obligations are met.



#### STANDARD EIGHT:

EMPLOYEES AND VOLUNTEERS ARE EQUIPPED WITH THE KNOWLEDGE, SKILLS AND AWARENESS TO KEEP CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE SAFE THROUGH ONGOING EDUCATION AND TRAINING

- **The employees and volunteers of Life Camps Australia:**
  - are trained and supported to effectively implement the organisation's child safety and wellbeing policies.
  - receive training and information to recognise indicators of child harm including harm caused by other children and young people;
  - receive training and information to respond effectively to issues of child safety and wellbeing and support colleagues who disclose harm; and
  - receive training and information on how to build culturally safe environments for children and young people.

#### STANDARD NINE:

PHYSICAL AND ONLINE ENVIRONMENTS PROMOTE SAFETY AND WELLBEING WHILE MINIMISING THE OPPORTUNITY FOR CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE TO BE HARMED

- **Life Camps Australia is very mindful of the changing environment in which it operates and the changing risks and opportunities that arise.**
  - Employees and volunteers identify and mitigate risks in the online and physical environments without compromising a child's right to privacy, access to information, social connections and learning opportunities.
  - The online environment is used in accordance with Life Camps Australia's Code of Conduct and child safety and wellbeing policies and practices.
  - Risk management plans consider risks posed by Life Camps Australia's setting, activities and the physical environment in which it operates.
  - Life Camps Australia limits circumstances where services are provided by third parties direct to children.

#### STANDARD TEN:

IMPLEMENTATION OF THE CHILD SAFE STANDARDS IS REGULARLY REVIEWED AND IMPROVED.

- **Life Camps Australia has a culture of seeking continuous improvement.**
  - It regularly reviews, evaluates and improves child safe practices.



- Complaints, concerns and safety incidents are analysed to identify causes and systemic failures to inform continuous improvement.
- Life Camps Australia reports on the findings of relevant reviews to employees and volunteers, community and families and children and young people, as appropriate.

#### STANDARD ELEVEN:

##### POLICIES AND PROCEDURES DOCUMENT HOW LIFE CAMPS AUSTRALIA IS SAFE FOR CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE.

- Life Camps Australia's policies and procedures address all of the Child Safe Standards.
  - Its policies and procedures are documented and easy to understand.
  - To the extent it is possible to do so, they reflect best practice models.
- Where it is appropriate to do so, Life Camps Australia utilises stakeholder consultation to inform the development of policies and procedures.
- Leaders champion and model compliance with policies and procedures.
- Employees and volunteers understand and implement policies and procedures.

Last reviewed: *September 2021*

Last reviewed: *August 2022*

*Text amended to reflect new Child Safety Standards introduced 1 July 2022*



# 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.

