



CHILD SAFE ORGANISATION POLICY & PROCEDURES

Reviewed 17.04.2018

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Introduction

Our policy guides Life Church workers (employees, contractors, labour hire workers, outworkers, apprentices, students or volunteers) on how to behave with children. The policy focuses on how we can promote the safe participation of children who may attend LIFE CHURCH with their families.

Policy Statement

LIFE CHURCH is committed to providing a safe and secure environment for all its employees, volunteers and particularly to children, aged and vulnerable people. LIFE CHURCH aims to reduce the risk of abuse occurring, and to ensure that a caring and appropriate response is taken should abuse occur.

Authority

The policy was developed in conjunction with the Soul Café Child Safe Policy and was first adopted for use at LIFE CHURCH on 8 February 2016 and further updated on the 11 April 2016.

- The date of this review is the 17.04.2018.
- The policy will be due for review again on the 17.04.2020.

The LIFE CHURCH Team is committed to implementing this Child Safe Organisation Policy and providing Child Safe Organisation information and training to all LIFE CHURCH workers (employees, contractors, labour hire workers, outworkers, apprentices, students or volunteers).

All workers (employees, contractors, labour hire workers, outworkers, apprentices, students or volunteers) receive a copy of the LIFE CHURCH Child-safe Organisation Policy, Code of Conduct and the Hazard / Abuse / Incident reporting process in their Induction.

The Church Community and Children's Program Workers attend external or have provided to them internal LIFE CHURCH Child-safe Organisation Training.

All policies and training for LIFE CHURCH Child Safe Organisations are available on the LIFE CHURCH website www.lifechurch.org.au and is provided annually through the LIFE CHURCH Community meetings.

Definitions

Abuse, can consist of one or more of but is not restricted to the following:

Elder Abuse, a single or repeated act, occurring in any relationship where there is an expectation of trust, which causes harm or distress to an older person.

Physical Abuse, any non-accidental physical injury resulting from practices such as:

- hitting, punching, kicking (marks from belt buckles, fingers), shaking, burning (irons, cigarettes), biting, pulling out hair, alcohol and/or other drug administration.

Sexual Abuse, any assault or abuse of a sexual nature, sexual molestation, indecent exposure, sexual harassment or intimidation.

Emotional Abuse, the chronic attitude or behavior of one person which is directed at another person, or, the creation of an emotional environment which erodes a person's self-esteem and social confidence over time. Behaviours may include:

- Insulting, bullying, devaluing, ignoring, rejecting, corrupting, isolating, terrorising or other extreme acts in the aged or vulnerable person's presence.

Financial Abuse may include:

- Activities by an attorney in violation of their powers, duties and responsibilities under an Enduring Power of Attorney (EPA),
- Misappropriation of money, valuables or assets,
- Forging signatures on cheques,
- Denial of access to personal assets,
- Accessing a person's funds electronically and/or
- Forced or unauthorised changes to legal documents.

Financial abuse may also occur where a person takes advantage of an older person who has already lost (or is losing) capacity, by coercing or arranging for the older person to sign an EPA in circumstances where the older person is unable to understand the nature and effect of the document.

Neglect, characterised by the failure to provide for basic needs. Any serious omission or commission which jeopardises or impairs a person's health or development.

Child, any person under the age of 18*.

*Legally, a "child" is generally defined as a person who is under the age of 18 years. ... However, for the purposes of the **Children and Young Persons (Care and Protection) Act 1998 (NSW)** (s 3) a distinction is made between a "child" — a person under 16 and a "young person" — a person who is aged 16 or 17. Dec 11, 2017
[Section 6 - Children and young people](https://www.judcom.nsw.gov.au/publications/benchbks/equality/section06.html)
<https://www.judcom.nsw.gov.au/publications/benchbks/equality/section06.html>

Organisation, Life Church Ltd [LIFE CHURCH], located at 49 Hunter St, Newcastle 2300 (PO Box 686, Newcastle 2300).

Vulnerable Person, any person who is or may be in need of community care services by reason of mental or other disability, age or illness.

Worker, previously known as 'employee'. The term worker includes employees, contractors and sub-contractors and their employees, labour hire employees, outworkers, apprentices and trainees, work experience students and volunteers.

Obligations

Responsibility

The core expectations of any responsible organisation require us to treat all people with fairness and dignity and to care for those who are less powerful and in need of nurture and protection.

Legal

All relevant organisations within Australia are bound by Federal and State legislation and principles established through common law. LIFE CHURCH is committed to adhering to all relevant legislation.

Community Services (formerly Department of Community Services) is responsible for overseeing and upholding child protection in NSW. Numerous Acts (laws) help to govern and guide the process of child protection in the NSW. The acts include:

Principal Acts:

Children and Young Persons (Care and Protection) Act 1998

Other relevant Acts:

- Children and Young Persons (Care and Protection) Amendment (Parental Responsibility Contracts) Act 2006
- Child Protection (Offenders Registration) Act 2000
- Crimes Act 1900
- Commission for Children and Young People Act 1998
- The Ombudsman Act 1974
- Family Law Act 1975 (Cth)

Link to [Australian Child Protection CFCA Resource Sheet March 2018](#)

Ethical Behaviour

Some actions may not be regarded as abuse but are unacceptable behaviour for LIFE CHURCH workers.

These include:

- Inappropriate conversation of a sexual nature.
- Coarse language, especially that of a sexual nature.
- Suggestive gestures or remarks.
- Jokes of a sexual nature.
- Inappropriate touching.
- Inappropriate literature (e.g. PG, M, MA, R or X rated material used with Vulnerable Persons).
- Recording or filming with or without prior consent.
- Acts of violence committed by a Worker, Leader or Volunteer in the course of an activity.
- Bullying in any form

Life shapers Family Services Trustees and LIFE CHURCH Management will ensure that high standards of conduct are maintained at all times.

Rights

Every person at LIFE CHURCH has the right:

- To full and effective use of his or her personal, civil, legal and consumer rights;
- To quality care which is appropriate to his or her needs;
- To be treated with dignity and respect and to receive services without exploitation, abuse or neglect;
- To receive services without discrimination or victimization, and without being obliged to feel grateful to those providing his or her care and accommodation;
- To personal privacy;
- To be treated and accepted as an individual, and to have his or her individual preferences taken into account and treated with respect;
- To select and maintain social and personal relationships with any other person without fear, criticism or restriction;
- To freedom of speech;
- To have access to services and activities which are available generally in the community;
- To have access to information about his or her rights, care, accommodation and any other information which relates to him or her personally;
- To complain and to take action to resolve disputes;
- To have access to advocates and to other avenues of redress; and
- To be free from reprisals, or a well-founded fear of reprisal, in any form for taking action to enforce his or her rights.

Working with Children Checks

LIFE CHURCH is aware that it is illegal to employ a 'barred' person to work with children/ young persons – paid or unpaid.

Trustees of Lifeshapers Family Services

LIFE CHURCH Directors are required to have a current working with children's check clearance.

Paid Staff and WWCC

LIFE CHURCH requires workers who are paid to have a current working with children's check clearance.

Where LIFE CHURCH has identified that an applicant has previously committed a violent or sexually related offence, they cannot, under any circumstances, be considered for employment or engagement with LIFE CHURCH.

Volunteers and WWCC

LIFE CHURCH requests where volunteers are working directly with children in a church program they must have a working with children's check clearance as part of its volunteer screening and selection process. If the volunteer's role is not in direct contact with children as a part of that role then it is not a requirement.

Contractors & Service Providers

Contractors and service providers are not in a role that is in direct contact with children as a part of their role and are not required to get a working with children check.

WWCC Record Keeping

A hard copy of workers clearance number verification is kept in a locked filing cabinet.

An electronic 'verification register' and 'role classification' is kept on a password protected computer with a backup hard drive. Information on this sheet includes,

- The Working with Children Check application number
- The current check status
- The date verified and,
- The expiry date of the Working with Children Check clearance

Communication of Child Safe Policies and Practise

All new workers are issued with a copy of the LIFE CHURCH Child Safe Code of Conduct and provided access to the LIFE CHURCH Child Safe Policies and Procedures. They receive annual training in LIFE CHURCH Child Safe Practises. This includes,

- Links to resources about Child Protection Legislations
- The Contact Details of the 'LIFE CHURCH Child Safe Officer'
- What is Child Abuse / Safe Environment resources
- Key Child Safe Principles at LIFE CHURCH
 1. 'Keep an eye on kids / Be Aware'
 2. Two Adults (18yrs+) Present Rule
 3. Children accompanied by their parents / guardians at all times at LIFE CHURCH
- The LIFE CHURCH Child Safe Code of Conduct
- Support of the Child
- Working with Children Checks

LINK TO: [LIFE CHURCH Child Safe Organisation Training 2018](#)

A Safe Environment

Incidents of abuse are unlikely to take place in front of another person and the presence of a witness can assist in clarifying questionable allegations. At LIFE CHURCH if there is a minor present with their parent / guardian the following practises are to be followed,

- No worker will be alone in a room with a minor.
- Doors to be left open or there is a clear line of sight through the door or wall.
- If a minor needs assistance with toileting or changing this is to be supervised by a parent or guardian.
- All personal counselling to be carried out within sight of another Worker and if it is a minor in the presence of a parent or guardian.

If a child is present at LIFE CHURCH without a parent or guardian, then a Child Protection report is made to FACs / the police.

Reporting Abuse

LIFE CHURCH actively encourages a culture of reporting of all suspected abuse including Sexual Abuse. An environment where either a victim or worker feels able to report reasonable suspicions of abuse.

Reasonable Suspicion: Workers must report reasonable suspicions of abuse. Reasonable Suspicion means fair and practical reason to believe an incident involving abuse has occurred based on verbal communication, hearsay, rumour or observation of behaviour.

Making a Report: If there is reasonable suspicion that a person has been or is suffering abuse, the Police and Department of Family and community services will be contacted immediately.

Child Protection Report General Public: 132 111

Mandatory Reporting Line 133 627

National Child Abuse Helpline: 1800 99 10 99.

Newcastle Police Station: 4929 0999

Supporting the Child / Person who make a Disclosure

If a disclosure of abuse is made, the person who receives the disclosure will maintain appropriate support to the one making the disclosure. This will include,

- Treating each allegation seriously and not attempting to deny the allegation or minimise its impact on the alleged victim. The matter should not be swept under the carpet.
- Not pushing the Member to disclose details of the alleged assault or attempting to investigate.
- Assuring the Member that they are understood: that their disclosure is being taken seriously; that what has happened is not their fault, and that they are correct in disclosing the incident.
- Reporting the abuse
- Not contacting the alleged perpetrator. If the Worker or Volunteer is already providing counsel to the alleged perpetrator, it may be advisable for another person to assume this responsibility for the duration of any investigation.
- If the alleged assault has taken place recently, clothing worn by the Member should be, if reasonably practical, retained and handed to the police for forensic examination.
- Maintaining confidentiality.

Investigation

Appointment of Independent Investigator: An independent person will be appointed by LIFE CHURCH with the specific duty of dealing with any allegations of harm or abuse that may arise.

Documentation: The details of those reporting abuse will be kept private and confidential.

Notification of a Bar: If LIFE CHURCH received notification of a 'bar' for an existing worker that person would immediately be removed from contact with children / young persons. The individual would receive written confirmation of the change to their authorisation status due to the 'bar'.

Misconduct Report: Life Church is aware that under the legislation, reporting bodies must investigate allegations of such misconduct to make an informed finding as to whether the conduct occurred. To determine whether the conduct meets the criteria, reporting bodies must consider the nature of the conduct itself and the context in which it occurred. If the investigation results in a finding that sexual misconduct or serious physical assault occurred, the reporting body must report this finding to the Office of the Children's Guardian. Under the Child Protection (Working with Children) Act 2012, only findings of sexual misconduct and serious physical assault must be reported, although the Ombudsman may report other misconduct to the Office of the Children's Guardian.

To submit a relevant misconduct finding in respect of a child-related worker Life Church will make a report to the Office of the Children's Guardian on (02) 9286 7219 to request authority to do so. Once permission is granted, Life Church will submit reports online using employer login details.

All persons involved would all be offered counselling.

Dealing with Complaints

LIFE CHURCH is committed to a safe and well-defined incident / concern reporting procedure. A child / person can approach any person in the organisation to express concerns about their treatment and they will be taken seriously, and all workers informed about whom they can approach to express concerns.

Dealing with Complaints Statement

- Everyone in our organisation should be confident that complaints will be dealt with honestly and fairly.
- Everyone in our organisation should be confident in reporting inappropriate behaviour.
- Everyone in our organisation should report any concerns about the safety or welfare of a child or young person immediately.

Complaints to be Reported:

- Disclosure of abuse by any person
- Inappropriate behaviour including sexual around children / young persons / aged or vulnerable
- Suspicion of abuse or harm to children / young persons / aged or vulnerable
- Any form of bullying or discriminatory behaviours against any person
- Any criminal behaviour on the part of any person

Child Safe Officer

All complaints must be reported to the LIFE CHURCH Child Safe Officer.

Rick Prosser

0404 038 000

admin@lifechurch.org.au

When a complaint is referred to the LIFE CHURCH Child Safe Officer they will take the following action,

- Listen to the person making the complaint and make a record of the complaint using the 'Hazard / Incident/ Complaint Form'.
- Make a report to the Department of Family and Community Services in the case of an allegation of child abuse.
- Inform everyone involved in the complaint of the requirement to make this report.
- If the complaint involves a worker and a breach LIFE CHURCH Policies or Code of Conducts, the officer will refer to the complaint to the LIFE CHURCH CEO to take action in accordance with the internal discipline procedure.

APPENDIX 1: CHILD SAFE ORGANISATION - CODE OF CONDUCT

Statement of Commitment

Life Church volunteers and staff are committed to the wellbeing of all persons who belong to or participate in its programs. We want children and young people who participate to have a safe and happy experience. We support and respect our children, young people, staff, volunteers and students.

Code

Everyone participating in the programs of Life Church including staff, volunteers, children, parents and visitors must keep to the following codes of behaviour:

- DO Treat everyone with respect and honesty
- DO Remember to be a positive role model
- DO Set clear boundaries about appropriate behaviour between yourself and children.
- DO Follow organisational policy and guidelines for the safety of children.
- DO Always have another adult present or in sight when minors are present.
- DO Keep an eye on kids / be aware.
- DO Report concerns related to a child's welfare that you believe are at risk of abuse.

- DON'T Develop any 'special' relationships with children.
- DON'T Do things of a personal nature that a child can do for themselves.

APPENDIX 2 HAZARD/INJURY/INCIDENT REPORT FORM

PART A: HAZARD/INJURY/INCIDENT REPORT *(to be completed by the involved worker or manager)*

What type of report is this <i>(select or circle the type)?</i>		HAZARD		INJURY		INCIDENT	
Is this a 'Notifiable Incident' <i>(selector or circle)?</i>		YES	NO	A notifiable incident means: the death of a person, or a serious injury or illness, or a dangerous incident. MORE AT COMCARE			
DETAILS OF THE PERSON MAKING THE REPORT							
SURNAME:				GIVEN NAME:			
POSITION:				DOB:			
MOBILE:				EMAIL:			
WITNESS / OTHER PARTIES INVOLVED - DETAILS							
SURNAME:				GIVEN NAME:			
POSITION:				CONTACT DETAILS:			
SURNAME:				GIVEN NAME:			
POSITION:				CONTACT DETAILS:			
DETAILS OF INCIDENT							
DATE OF INCIDENT:				TIME OF INCIDENT:		AM / PM	
LOCATION OF INCIDENT:							
NAME OF PERSON INJURED <i>If applicable</i>							
NATURE OF INJURY <i>If applicable</i>							
PART OF BODY INJURED							
DELIFE CHURCHRIPTION OF INCIDENT							
DELIFE CHURCHRIBE EXACTLY WHAT OCCURRED AND ANY CONTRIBUTING FACTORS <i>(If more space is needed please use the back of this sheet):</i>							
Treatment Outcome <i>(circle)</i>		Nil Required		First Aid		Medical GP	
Hospital							
Signature of Person Making the Report							
Date of the Report							
Signature of Team Leader							
DELIFE CHURCHRIPTION OF INCIDENT Page 2.							
DELIFE CHURCHRIBE EXACTLY WHAT OCCURRED							

PART B: HAZARD/INJURY/INCIDENT REPORT CORRECTIVE ACTIONS

To be completed by the Office Manager

WHAT NEEDS TO HAPPEN to ensure that similar incidents do not occur in the future or to minimise the risk?	BY WHEN	PERSON RESPONSIBLE

PART C: HAZARD/INJURY/INCIDENT REPORT SIGN OFF (to be completed by the Office Manager)

Signature of Office Manager	
Date Closed	

APPENDIX 3. LINKS TO ADDITIONAL RESOURCES

Find out more about 'Child Safe Principles' at <http://www.kidsguardian.nsw.gov.au/child-safe-organisations/child-safeprinciples>

NSW Family & Community Services <http://www.community.nsw.gov.au/preventing-child-abuse-and-neglect>

Office of the Children's Guardian <http://www.kidsguardian.nsw.gov.au>

Childwise (Not-for-Profit child abuse prevention organisation) www.childwise.org.au

NSW Government Mandatory Reporter Guide <https://reporter.childstory.nsw.gov.au/s/>
<https://reporter.childstory.nsw.gov.au/s/mrg>