

6. Child Safety & Client Protection Policy and Procedure

Summary

Lord Somers Camp and Power House (LSC&PH) has zero tolerance toward child / client abuse and is committed to providing a safe and secure environment for its employees, members, visitors, volunteers, program participants and particularly for children and vulnerable people.

LSC&PH has established policies, procedures and practices that comply with the Victorian [Child Safe Standards](#).

Any person who believes a child is in immediate risk of abuse should telephone 000.

Policy statement

Lord Somers Camp and Power House (LSC&PH) has zero tolerance toward child / client abuse and is committed to providing a safe and secure environment for its employees, members, visitors, volunteers, program participants and particularly for children and vulnerable people.

All children and vulnerable people, regardless of their gender, race, religious beliefs, age, disability, sexual orientation, gender identity, family or social background, have equal rights to protection from abuse.

LSC&PH supports and respects children, staff and volunteers. LSC&PH is committed to the cultural safety of First Nations children, and those from culturally and/or linguistically diverse backgrounds, and to providing a safe environment for children, members of the LGBTIQ+ community, and clients living with a disability.

The core expectations of any responsible organisation are that

- all people are treated with fairness and dignity and
- those who are less powerful and in need of nurture and protection are cared for and provided with safety.

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

Definitions

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| Abuse | <p>Abuse can consist of one or more of but is not restricted to the following:</p> <p>a) Physical Abuse: any non-accidental physical injury resulting from practices such as: hitting, punching, kicking shaking, burning (irons, cigarettes), biting, pulling out hair, alcohol and/or other drug administration.</p> |
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| | <p>b) Sexual Abuse: any assault or abuse of a sexual nature, sexual molestation, indecent exposure, sexual harassment or intimidation.</p> <p>c) Emotional Abuse: the chronic attitude or behaviour 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 vulnerable person's presence.</p> <p>d) Financial Abuse may include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Misappropriation of money, valuables or assets. • Denial of access to personal assets. • Accessing a person's funds electronically and/or; • Forced or unauthorised changes to legal documents |
| Child | Any person under the age of 18. |
| Child protection | Any responsibility, measure or activity undertaken to safeguard children from harm. |
| Child sexual assault | Any act which exposes a child to, or involves a child in, sexual processes beyond his or her understanding or contrary to accepted community standards. Sexually abusive behaviours can include the fondling of genitals; masturbation; oral sex; vaginal or anal penetration by a penis, finger or any other object; fondling of breasts; voyeurism; exhibitionism; or exposing the child to or involving the child in pornography. It includes child grooming, which refers to actions deliberately undertaken with the aim of befriending and establishing an emotional connection with a child to lower the child's inhibitions in preparation for sexual activity with the child. |
| Contractor | Any person or company which is engaged to provide services to LSC&PH. |
| Duty of care | <p>A common law concept that refers to the responsibility of the organisation and individual to provide children with an adequate level of protection against harm.</p> <p>It is the duty of the organisation and its individuals to protect children from all reasonably foreseeable risk of or real injury.</p> |
| Employee | Any person employed by Lord Somers Camp and Power House. |
| Executive Team | A leadership team for a specific LSC&PH program or activity. Specific members/ roles of an Executive Team are at the discretion of the Program |

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| | or Activity Leader. |
| Leader | <p>Any person (paid or unpaid) over the age of 18 who is responsible for the control and safety of members/volunteers placed in their care whilst holding a formal position in Lord Somers Camp and Power House. A Leader could include but is not limited to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Camp Leaders • Deputy Camp Leaders • Executive Officers • Programs Leader • Slushie King and Slushee Queen • Heads of Departments |
| Member | Any person who has a current membership subscription to LSC&PH, including various life memberships, term membership or honorary life membership. |
| Neglect | Failure to provide for basic needs. Any serious omission or commission which jeopardises or impairs a person’s health or development |
| Online Grooming | The act of sending an electronic message with indecent content to a recipient whom the sender believes to be less than 16 years of age, with the intention of procuring the recipient to engage in or submit to sexual activity with another person, including but not necessarily the sender. |
| Participant | Any person who attends an LSC&PH program as a participant or a grouper. |
| Reasonable grounds for belief | <p>A belief based on reasonable grounds that child abuse has occurred when all known considerations or facts relevant to the formation of a belief are taken into account and these are objectively assessed. Circumstances or considerations may include the source of the allegation and how it was communicated, the nature and details of the allegation, and whether there are any other related matters known regarding the alleged perpetrator.</p> <p>A reasonable belief is formed if a reasonable person believes that:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> a) the child is in need of protection: b) the child has suffered or is likely to suffer “significant harm as a result of physical injury” and/or |

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| | <p>c) the parents are unable or unwilling to protect the child.</p> <p>A reasonable belief is formed if a reasonable person in the same position would have formed the belief on the same grounds. For example, a reasonable belief might be formed if:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a) a child states that they have been physically or sexually abused b) a child states that they know someone who has been physically or sexually abused (sometimes the child may be talking about themselves) c) someone who knows a child states that the child has been physically or sexually abused d) Professional observations of the child’s behaviour or development leads a professional to form a belief that the child has been physically or sexually abused or is likely to be abused, and/or e) Signs of abuse lead to a belief that the child has been physically or sexually abused. |
| <p>Visitor</p> | <p>Any person attending an LSC&PH program or activity who is not an employee, volunteer, member or participant of that activity. Can be differentiated as</p> <p>Invited visitor: Any person invited to visit an LSC&PH program or activity.</p> <p>Uninvited visitor: An intruder or someone who attends an LSC&PH program or activity without being invited to do so.</p> |
| <p>Volunteer</p> | <p>Any Non-Member who attends LSC&PH activities as a member of the camp's staff under direction of a Camp Leader.</p> |
| <p>Vulnerable Person</p> | <p>Any person who is or may be in need of community care services by reason of intellectual or other disability, age, or illness.</p> |
| <p>Wellbeing / Safety Officer</p> | <p>A designated role within each LSC&PH program or activity that includes the role of a Child Safety Officer.</p> |
| <p>WWCC/ Working with Children Check</p> | <p>A screening process for assessing or re-assessing people who work with or care for children in Victoria.</p> <p>It includes a detailed look at the criminal history and relevant professional conduct findings of applicants.</p> |

Responsibilities

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| Board | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ultimately responsible for detecting and preventing child / client abuse and for ensuring that appropriate and effective internal control systems are in place. • Ensure that appropriate policies and procedures and a Code of Conduct are in place. • Appoint an ‘alternative head of organisation’ in the event that the CEO is suspected of harming or abusing a client. |
| CEO | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Act as LSC&PH’s ‘head of the organisation’ under the Reportable Conduct Scheme, unless they are involved in an allegation of reportable conduct. • Respond to and investigate reports of child / client abuse • Review allegations made against an LSC&PH employee, member or volunteer • Report the results of the review to the President and Camp Chief of the Board. • Ensure that all employees, members, volunteers and contractors are aware of relevant laws, organisational policies and procedures • Ensure that all adults within the LSC&PH community are aware of their obligation to report suspected sexual abuse of a child in accordance with these policies and procedures • Ensure that all employees, members, volunteers, visitors and contractors are aware of their obligation to observe the Code of Conduct (particularly as it related to child safety) • Provide support for employees, members, volunteers, visitors and contractors (if applicable) in undertaking their child protection responsibilities. <p>NOTE: If the CEO is suspected of perpetrating harm or abuse, the Board will appoint someone to undertake their responsibilities under this Policy.</p> |
| Wellbeing / Safety Officer | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Be the nominated Child Friendly Focal Point for Program/Activity involving participants under the age of 18 years old. • Gather information and make an assessment of the situation. • If, on the basis of the available information, they reasonably believe that a child / young person is in need of protection because they have |

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| | <p>suffered or are likely to suffer from physical, sexual, or emotional abuse or neglect, notify Child Protection or police in accordance with ethical and professional obligations.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Inform the young person of what action is to be taken as long as this will not jeopardise the safety of the child, young person or staff member(s). • Where the child/young person continues to attend LSC&PH activities, closely monitor their behaviour, and liaise with the child protection service to ensure that any additional support required is being provided. |
| <p>The Program/Activity Leadership Teams</p> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Promote safety at all times • Assess the risk of child abuse within their area of control and eradicate / minimise any risk to the extent possible • Educate members, volunteers and visitors about the prevention and detection of child abuse and • Facilitate the reporting of any inappropriate behaviour or suspected abusive activities. |
| <p>Leadership teams</p> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Be familiar with the types of abuse that might occur within their area of responsibility for the prevention and detection of child abuse • Familiarise themselves with the relevant laws, the Code of Conduct, and LSC&PH's policy and procedures in relation to child protection, and comply with all requirements • Report any suspicion that a child's safety may be at risk to the CEO (or, if the CEO is involved in the suspicion, to a Board Member of LSC&PH) for escalation procedures • If they have mandatory reporting obligations (<i>refer to Appendix 1</i>), report any reasonable belief that a child's safety is at risk to the relevant authorities (such as the police and/or the state based child protection services) • In the case of child sexual abuse, all adults in Victoria and not just professionals who work with children, who hold a reasonable belief that a sexual offence has been committed, are required to report this to the police and should also complete an incident report and submit this to the Wellbeing / Safety Officer |

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| | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Provide an environment that is supportive of all children’s emotional and physical safety. |
| All Staff (Employees and Volunteers) | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Be familiar with the types of abuse that might occur within their area of responsibility for the prevention and detection of child abuse • Familiarise themselves with the relevant laws, the Code of Conduct, and LSC&PH’s policy and procedures in relation to child protection, and comply with all requirements • Report any suspicion that a child’s safety may be at risk to the CEO (or, if the CEO is involved in the suspicion, to a Board Member of LSC&PH) for escalation procedures • If they have mandatory reporting obligations (<i>refer to Appendix 1</i>), report any reasonable belief that a child’s safety is at risk to the relevant authorities (such as the police and/or the state based child protection services) • In the case of child sexual abuse, all adults in Victoria and not just professionals who work with children, who hold a reasonable belief that a sexual offence has been committed, are required to report this to the police and should also complete an incident report and submit this to the Wellbeing Officer • Provide an environment that is supportive of all children’s emotional and physical safety. • Contribute towards a positive, safe, and inclusive organisational culture |

Procedures

1. Criminal history screening / Working with children checks

Where LSC&PH has identified that an employee / member / volunteer has previously committed and/or been convicted, or is currently being investigated for a violent and/or sexual related offence, they cannot, under any circumstances, be considered for employment, membership or to volunteer with LSC&PH.

A register of any identified persons who have previously committed and/or been convicted, or is currently being investigated for, a violent and/or sexual or related offence will be securely maintained at the LSC&PH office.

If their WWCC or equivalent is for any reason made void, then it will be the responsibility of that

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individual to notify the LSC&PH office immediately so that LSC&PH can take further action accordingly.

2. Training

All new employees, members, volunteers and contractors will be issued with a copy of this Policy and Procedure, and the policy will be published on the LSC&PH website.

LSC&PH Board Members, Employees, and Executive Teams will receive annual training in:

- The content and application of this Policy and Procedure
- Client protection risk assessment, selection and screening
- Reporting procedures and the associated legal requirements.

This training will be provided annually to all Board members, employees, members and volunteers. A record is to be kept of names of those who have completed the training and when.

All employees/volunteers involved with camps and activities, regardless of whether or not they work with participants, are required to complete a document that states that they have familiarised themselves with the policy and fully understand it. This must be signed by the employee/volunteer and kept on file by the LSC&PH office.

3. Providing a safe environment

LSC&PH screens its employees, members, volunteers and contractors to reduce the risk of the environment being unsafe – see **Appendix 3** for details of the screening procedures.

Incidents of abuse are unlikely to take place in front of another person, and the presence of a witness can assist in clarifying allegations. For these reasons, all employees, members and volunteers must work in pairs at all times that they are in the presence of children/vulnerable people.

Wherever possible, employees, volunteers and members will not visit vulnerable persons or children in their homes unless a friend or relative is present or another employee, volunteer or member accompanies them.

When transporting people under their care, employees, volunteers and members will take them directly to and from arranged venues and will not spontaneously detour or make additional arrangements. A minimum of two employees, volunteers or members (including the driver) over the age of 18 must be in the vehicle when transporting people in their care.

All personal counselling is to be carried out within sight of another employee, volunteer or member.

Adults and Children are expected to respect each other's privacy during times that require undressing, dressing or changing clothes. Employees, volunteers and members will set an example by protecting their own privacy in similar situations. No employee, volunteer or member will be alone in a room with a

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child or a vulnerable person while any/either is changing clothes.

Employees, members and volunteers have the right to ask people who do not have a valid reason to be present at such activities to leave. Police may be contacted if such persons refuse to comply with any reasonable request to leave.

Visitors must be accompanied by an employee, volunteer or member at all times when visiting an LSC&PH program or activity.

Contractors must be accompanied by an Employee, Volunteer or Member at all times when working at the same time as an LSC&PH program or activity is taking place.

In situations where employees, volunteers or members communicate with participants via social media, guidelines included in the LSC&PH Social Media Policy must be adhered to.

4. Reporting procedures

LSC&PH actively encourages the reporting of all abuse including sexual abuse – see **Appendix 2** for *guidance on reporting*.

LSC&PH is committed to building an environment where either a victim or employee / volunteer / member feels able to report such abuse.

Employees, Leaders, parents/guardians, and/or volunteers must report reasonable grounds for belief of abuse to the appropriate child protection service or the police (*in the case of Mandatory Reporters – refer to Appendix 1*) or the CEO of LSC&PH or a Board Member (*in the capacity of Voluntary Reporters – refer to Appendix 1*) – contact details can be found in the Critical Incident and Emergency Management Plan (CIEMP).

Based on the grounds of suspected abusive activity, the CEO or Board member must notify the appropriate child protection service or the police, if this has not already occurred.

In the case of child sexual abuse, all adults in Victoria, and not just professionals who work with children, who hold a reasonable belief that a sexual offence has been committed, are required to report this to the police. They are also to complete an incident report and submit this to the Wellbeing / Safety Officer.

In situations where a Leader is suspected of involvement in the activity, or if the person having the suspicion does not believe that the matter is being appropriately addressed or dealt with, the matter should be reported to the next highest level of supervision.

5. Investigating suspicions / allegations

If the appropriate child protection service or the police decide to conduct an investigation of this report,

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all employees, volunteers, members, visitors and contractors must co-operate fully with the investigation. LSC&PH understands that if an allegation of abuse concerns an Aboriginal child, culturally and/or linguistically diverse child or child with a disability, particular measures should be taken to support the child and the parents/ guardians.

Whether or not the authorities decide to conduct an investigation, the CEO will consult with the authorities to determine whether an internal investigation is appropriate. If it is decided that such an investigation will not conflict with any proceeding of the authorities, the CEO may decide to conduct such an investigation. All employees, volunteers, members, visitors and contractors must co-operate fully with the investigation.

Any such investigation will be conducted according to the rules of natural justice and procedural fairness.

The CEO will make every effort to keep any such investigation confidential; however, from time to time other employees, volunteers or members may need to be consulted in conjunction with the investigation.

After an initial review and a determination that the suspected abuse warrants additional investigation, the CEO shall coordinate the investigation with the appropriate investigators and / or law enforcement officials. Internal or external legal representatives will be involved in the process, as deemed appropriate.

Where the incident occurs at a program that is run with a partnering organisation, the partnering organisation will be informed of the investigation by the CEO. If the victim of the abuse is a member of the partnering organisation, the partnering organisation will take responsibility for following up with the member and their parents/guardian.

6. Responding to suspicions / allegations

If it is alleged that an employee, volunteer or member may have committed an offence or have breached the organisation's policies or its Code of Conduct, the person concerned may be stood down (with pay, where applicable) while an investigation is conducted.

If the investigation concludes that, on the balance of probabilities, an offence (or a breach of the organisation's policies or Code of Conduct) has occurred, then disciplinary action may follow, up to and including dismissal or cessation of involvement with the organisation. The findings of the investigation will also be reported to any external body as required.

7. Ensuring participant and family awareness of this policy

This policy and procedure will be placed on LSC&PH's website and reference made to it in information

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provided to program and activity participants when they register.

The Wellbeing / Child Safety Officer at each program or activity will be available to provide information on the content of this Policy and Procedure as required.

8. Records of incidents

An incident report should be made using LSC&PH's incident reporting processes.

This report, along with all records of investigation and investigation outcomes, including records of any external reporting, will be stored securely.

Whilst these records may be archived, they will be retained indefinitely to allow for future allegations to be addressed.

Other relevant policies and procedures

There are a number of LSC&PH policies which support or relate to the Client Protection Policy including, but not limited to:

- Code of Conduct
- Critical Incident and Emergency Management Plan
- Diversity and Social Inclusion
- Social Media Policy
- Risk Management Policy
- Privacy Policy
- Wellbeing Procedure

Associated documents

- Mandatory and Voluntary Reporting Requirements in Victoria – Appendix 1
- Guidance on responding to abuse and suspected/alleged abuse – Appendix 2
- Screening Procedures – Appendix 3
- Working with Children: Application process for members and volunteers – Appendix 4

Policy review

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Every three years at most, and following every reportable incident, a review shall be conducted to assess whether the organisation's client protection policies or procedures require modification to better protect children and vulnerable people under the organisation's care. This will be led by the Child Safety Committee.

Changes to the policy will be recommended for resolution by the LSC&PH Board.

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Appendix 1 – Mandatory and Voluntary Reporting Requirements in Victoria

| Mandatory reporting requirements in Victoria | | | |
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| Legislation | Mandated reporters | When must a report be made? | Who is a child? |
| <p><i>Children, Youth and Families Act 2005 (Vic)</i></p> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Registered medical practitioners • Nurses • Midwives • Registered teachers and early childhood teachers • School principals • School counsellors • Police officers • Out of home care workers (excluding voluntary foster and kinship carers) • Early childhood workers • Youth justice workers • Registered psychologists • People in religious ministry | <p>A mandated reporter must make a report if:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • They form a belief on reasonable grounds that a child is in need of protection from physical injury or sexual abuse • The parents cannot or will not protect the child; and • The belief is formed in the course of practising his/her position of employment. <p><i>NB: exceptions may apply.</i></p> | <p>A person under 17 years old*</p> |
| <p><i>Child Wellbeing and Safety Act 2005 (Vic)</i></p> <p>The 'failure to disclose' offence</p> | <p>The offence applies to all adults in Victoria, not just professionals who work with children, unless they have a reasonable excuse</p> | <p>Any adult who forms a reasonable belief that a sexual offence has been committed by an adult against a child under 16 has an obligation to report that information to police.</p> | <p>For this Victorian legislation, a child is defined as under 16 years old.</p> |

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| Mandatory reporting requirements in Victoria | | | |
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| Legislation | Mandated reporters | When must a report be made? | Who is a child? |
| <p>A new offence for failure to disclose child sexual abuse came into effect on 27 October 2014.</p> | | <p>Failure to disclose the information to police is a criminal offence.</p> <p>“Reasonable belief” is not the same as having proof but is formed if a reasonable person in the same position would have formed the belief on the same grounds.</p> <p>Examples include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • a child states that they have been sexually abused. • a child states that they know someone who has been sexually abused (sometimes the child may be talking about themselves). • someone who knows a child states that the child has been sexually abused. • professional observations of the child’s behaviour or development leads a professional to form a belief that the child has been sexually abused. • signs of sexual abuse leads to a belief that the child has been sexually | |

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| Mandatory reporting requirements in Victoria | | | |
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| Legislation | Mandated reporters | When must a report be made? | Who is a child? |
| | | abused. | |
| <i>Crimes Act 1958 (Vic)</i> | Any person 18 years or older | A mandated reporter must make a report if they form a reasonable belief that a sexual offence has been committed in Victoria against a child by another person of or over the age of 18 years. <i>NB: exceptions may apply.</i> | A person under 16 years old |

| Voluntary reporting requirements in Victoria | | | |
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| Legislation | Mandated reporters | When must a report be made? | Who is a child? |
| <i>Children, Youth and Families Act 2005 (Vic)</i> | Any person | A voluntary reporter must make a report if the person has reasonable belief that there is a significant concern for the wellbeing of a child. | A person under 17 years old* |

* The *Children, Youth and Families Act 2005 (Vic)* defines a child as a person under 17 years old. LSC&PH uses the definition of a person under the age of 18 in relation to this policy and the reporting requirements.

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Appendix 2 – Guidance on responding to abuse and suspected/alleged abuse

This appendix provides guidance on 6 different situations relating to abuse or suspected / alleged abuse:

1. Where a young person discloses to you about physical or sexual abuse.
2. When you suspect abuse or risk of harm to a young person.
3. How the Wellbeing / Safety Officer makes a notification.
4. Where allegations have been made against a LSC&PH representative.
5. Where a person discloses past abuse by a person who may still have access to other young people.
6. Where an adult participant discloses current abuse or risk or past abuse.

1. Responding to disclosure of abuse

When a child or young person confides in you and tells you that they have been abused, there are a number of steps that must be followed in order to keep the young person as safe as possible and avoid further distress.

*(NOTE: When a child or young person has not disclosed specific abuse or a specific fear or risk of abuse, but you have identified indicators of harm or risk of harm you **must** discuss and report these to the Mental Health or Wellbeing / Safety Officer or a member of the Executive as soon as possible, to decide the best approach to keep the child safe. See the next section which deals with suspected abuse or risk of harm.)*

Identifying possible issues affecting participants with barriers to communication may be through noting

- changes to their usual pattern of behaviour e.g. suddenly introverted or shy where they previously had been outgoing and friendly, overly sexualised behaviour
- sleep disturbances
- unexplained marks, bruises, or sores on their body
- changes in appetite
- self-harming behaviour

(a) Responding to disclosure of abuse in a sensitive manner

It is important to remember that children and young people are vulnerable and dependent on adult care. They are usually powerless to stop abuse and require adult assistance to intervene. Accordingly, LSC&PH believes that it is the responsibility of all Members and Volunteers to respond appropriately to disclosures or suspicions of abuse occurring either within or outside of the organisation.

When a child or young person tells you that they have been abused, they may be feeling scared, guilty,

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ashamed, angry or powerless. You, in turn, may feel a sense of outrage, disgust, sadness, anger, and sometimes disbelief. However, it is important for you to remain calm and in control of your feelings in order to reassure the child/young person that something will be done to keep them safe.

You can show your care and concern for the child/young person by:

- Telling the young person you believe them.
- Telling them that it is not their fault and that they are not responsible for the abuse.
- Letting the child or young person know that you will tell someone appropriate in order to help stop the abuse, and immediately introducing the young person to the Wellbeing / Safety Officer.
- Telling the child or young person you are pleased that they told you.
- Listening carefully to what they are saying and enabling an exploration of the issue to occur with the presence of the Wellbeing / Safety Officer as soon as there is any indication of concerns.

(b) Reporting disclosures of abuse

All members and volunteers **must** report all disclosures of abuse to the Wellbeing / Safety Officer as soon as possible but within 24 hours. The report can be made over the phone or face to face or electronically, but you must ensure receipt of the report if the report is made electronically. The Wellbeing / Safety Officer will advise you of the next steps.

If the disclosure relates to sexual abuse of a young person you **must**, together with a Wellbeing / Safety Officer, report the abuse to the police.

The Wellbeing / Safety Officer immediately informs the leader of that program and CEO, if they are not party to the allegations received.

(c) Responding to suspected abuse or risk of harm

Responding to indicators of abuse in a sensitive manner

If you suspect abuse, but the young person has not disclosed to you or told anyone else, be sensitive to the emotional distress that the young person may be experiencing. Approach the young person in a caring and sensitive manner and assure them that you are willing to listen and to help if there is a problem.

You will not be helping the child/young person if you:

- Make promises you can't keep, such as promising that you will not tell anyone.
- Push the child/young person into giving details of the abuse. Your role is to listen to what they want to tell you but not to conduct an investigation. Do not ask them any direct questions.

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- Indiscriminately discuss the circumstances of the child/young person with others not directly involved with helping them.
- Make a joke to lighten the atmosphere.

In all cases, the Wellbeing / Safety Officer must be informed as soon as possible and before the young person has left the program or activity.

The Wellbeing / Safety Officer will gather information and make an assessment of the situation. If, on the basis of the available information, the Officer believes on reasonable grounds that a young person is in need of protection because they have suffered or are likely to suffer from physical, sexual or emotional abuse or neglect, the Officer must notify Child Protection in the appropriate state or police in accordance with ethical and professional obligations. The Wellbeing / Safety Officer will immediately inform the leader of that program and CEO, if they are not parties to the applications received.

Principles of good practice dictate that unless it will create increased risk, any actions or intentions to report will be notified to the young person and ideally to their family. Such a decision should be made in consultation with a member of Executive Team.

If the Wellbeing / Safety Officer concludes that the young person is at immediate risk (e.g. they will have direct contact with the person who is perpetrating the abuse in the immediate future) the notification must be made immediately.

The young person's right to privacy and confidentiality, as well as that of the alleged perpetrator, must be respected and maintained at all times subject to ensuring safety and minimising risk of harm to the young person.

A person making a notification to Child Protection Services (the notifier) does not need permission from parents or caregivers to do so; nor do the parents or caregivers need to be informed that a notification is being made. It is preferable that the notifier informs the child or young person and, where appropriate, the parents or caregivers that a notification is being made to the Department of Families, Fairness and Housing (DFFH) in Victoria. It is the Child Protection Worker's job to investigate and prove significant harm. Other professionals need only have **reasonable grounds for belief**.

Where a decision is made that notification is required, see the section below regarding how the Wellbeing / Safety Officer should make a notification.

(d) Making a notification to the Child Protection Service

All notifications made to appropriate child protection services by LSC&PH employees, members and volunteers should be made along with the Wellbeing / Safety Officer in consultation with the Program/Activity and be fully documented in an incident report form.

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Contacting the Child Protection Service

Where the Wellbeing / Safety Officer determines the young person is at significant risk and it is necessary to make a notification to the Child Protection Service, contact must be made with the relevant regional office as soon as possible. In these situations, it is important that the Wellbeing / Safety Officer informs the young person of what action is to be taken as long as this will not jeopardise the safety of the young person or staff member(s). It should be noted that the identity of reporters is kept confidential by DFFH.

Call the appropriate Child Protection Region phone number. The Child Protection Worker at the regional office will ask you for certain information, including:

- Details - the child's or young person's name, age and address.
- Indicators of harm - the reason for believing that the injury or behaviour is the result of abuse or neglect.
- Reason for reporting - the reason why the call is being made now.
- Safety assessment - assessment of immediate danger to the child or children. For example, information may be sought on the whereabouts of the alleged abuser or abusers.
- Description - description of the injury or behaviour observed.
- Child's whereabouts - the current whereabouts of the child or young person.
- Other services - your knowledge of other services involved with the family.
- Family information - any other information about the family.
- Cultural characteristics - any specific cultural or other details which will help to care for the child - for example, Aboriginality, interpreter or disability needs.

Note: a notification should still be made, even if you don't have all the information listed above.

Upon receipt of a notification, a Child Protection worker will determine whether the child or young person's described circumstance fall within the legal definition of 'a child in need of protection'. If the notification is accepted, an investigation process will begin.

Where the young person continues to attend LSC&PH activities, the Wellbeing / Safety Officer will liaise with the child protection service to ensure that any additional support required is being provided. It is also vital that any further relevant information is passed on to the Camp Executive and the Child Protection worker allocated to the young person's case.

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Contacts for making a notification/seeking advice

Use the following contact numbers for notifications or advice.

| Victorian metropolitan regions | Victorian rural regions |
|--|---|
| <p>For emergency child protection matters outside of normal business hours, phone the Child Protection Crisis Line: 131 278</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Eastern: 1300 360 391 • Southern: 1300 655 795 • Northern: 1300 664 977 • Western: 1300 664 977 | <p>For emergency child protection matters outside of normal business hours, phone the Child Protection Crisis Line: 131 278</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Gippsland: 1800 020 202 • Grampians: 1800 000 551 • Hume: 1800 650 227 • Loddon Mallee: 1800 675 598 • Barwon South Western: 1800 075 599 |

(e) Allegations made against an LSC&PH employee, member or volunteer

Where an allegation of harm to a young person is made against an employee, volunteer or member of LSC&PH, the CEO must be notified in the first instance. The CEO will take the allegation seriously and review the facts as presented and consult with appropriate members to confidentially consider the allegation.

If the allegation requires mandatory reporting this will be done as soon as possible. The CEO will be responsible for managing a process, in conjunction with the relevant members, to review the allegation made, as soon as possible. The person making the allegation and the affected person at LSC&PH will both be informed of the process and timing and will both have an opportunity to be heard or make a written statement to this group.

During this process, the CEO may choose to suspend the person against whom the allegation has been made from conducting child-related work, while an assessment takes place.

All allegations, once reviewed in accordance with these steps, are to be reported to the President and Camp Chief of the Board. Where an allegation of harm is made against the LSC&PH CEO, the President and Camp Chief of the Board is to be notified in the first instance.

(f) Where a person discloses past abuse by a person who may still have access to other young people

Where a disclosure occurs of past abuse by a person who may still have access to other young people, the Wellbeing / Safety Officer or Camp Executive will alert the relevant authority.

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(g) Where an adult participant discloses current abuse or past abuse

Where a disclosure occurs by an adult participant in an LSC&PH program of current abuse, the Wellbeing / Safety Officer will encourage them to seek the appropriate support and make a police report if required.

Where a disclosure occurs by an adult participant in an LSC&PH program of past abuse, the Wellbeing / Safety Officer will offer support and referral as appropriate.

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Appendix 3 – Screening Procedure

Employees, members, volunteers and contractors involved in activities or programs with children and/or vulnerable people must be carefully selected and screened.

Prior to commencing **employment**, the following precautions will be taken:

- All prospective employees must complete an application form which requests details of relevant past experience, positions held, details of two referees and permission to contact them.
- Both referees will be checked and spoken to, using an agreed set of questions which have been drafted by LSC&PH. These questions will seek to establish the applicant's suitability for the role or position and the conversation will be documented and retained on file.
- All short-listed candidates must undertake a formal interview which includes an analysis of past experience working with children, the elderly or vulnerable people.
- A police check and an Employment Level Working with Children Check (WWCC) which complies with the legislative requirements of Victoria will be requested and received prior to the Employee commencing their proposed role. The checks must show that the individual is not precluded from working with children or vulnerable people.
- Their Victorian WWCC account needs to be linked with LSC&PH via MyCheck so LSC&PH will receive the required confirmation letter for its files, from the Dept. of Justice.

*(See **Appendix 4** for details on the WWCC application process)*

Prior to participating as a **Member / Volunteer** on LSC&PH official Camps and Programs, the following precautions will be taken:

For those 18 years or over:

- All volunteers / members must complete an application form for a program or activity.
- All volunteers / members over the age of 18 at LSC&PH are required to have a current Working with Children Check (WWCC), distributed by the Department of Justice and Community Safety, which enables a volunteer/ member to work with young people under the age of 18. The check must show that the individual is not precluded from working with children.
- LSC&PH must be a nominated organisation on the submitted check for the volunteer to participate on LSC&PH programs with young people under the age of 18.
- A record of a member / volunteer WWC Check must be stored on file at the LSC&PH office.
- Victorian Teachers or Police Officers are excluded from this requirement but must submit proof to

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LSC&PH of their relevant Victorian Teacher or Police Officer Registration Number.

- In addition to the requirements above, any new volunteers (with no previous involvement with the organisation) registering for a volunteer role are required to provide contact details for a referee. A member of the LSC&PH staff is required to call and ask the referee an agreed set of questions which have been drafted by LSC&PH. These questions will seek to establish the applicant's suitability for the volunteer role and the conversation will be documented and retained on file.

For those under 18:

All volunteers / members must complete an application form for a program or activity.

- All volunteers / members under the age of 18 at LSC&PH are required to have applied for a Working with Children's (WWC) Check, distributed by the Department of Justice and Community Safety, which enables a volunteer / member to work with young people under the age of 18. The receipt number must be provided in writing to the LSC&PH Office prior to the commencement of the program or activity.
- LSC&PH must be a nominated organisation on the submitted check application for the volunteer to participate on LSC&PH programs with young people under the age of 18.
- A record of the receipt number for their member / volunteer WWC Check must be stored on file at the LSC&PH office until the proper documentation is received from the Dept. of Justice.
- In addition, LSC&PH will require a Police Check on file for this person to support their application.
- In addition to the requirements above, any new volunteers (with no previous involvement with the organisation) registering for a volunteer role are required to provide contact details for a referee. A member of the LSC&PH staff is required to call and ask the referee an agreed set of questions which have been drafted by LSC&PH. These questions will seek to establish the applicant's suitability for the volunteer role and the conversation will be documented and retained on file.

For interstate volunteers:

- All volunteers / members must complete an application form for a program or activity.
- All volunteers / members over the age of 18 at LSC&PH are required to have a current State equivalent of a Working with Children's (WWC) Check.
- Where possible, LSC&PH must be a nominated organisation on the submitted check for the volunteer to participate on LSC&PH programs with young people under the age of 18.
- A record of a member / volunteer WWC Check must be stored on file at the LSC&PH Office.
- Australian Teachers or Police Officers are excluded from this requirement but must submit proof to

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LSC&PH of their relevant Australian Teacher or Police Officer Registration Number.

- In addition to the requirements above, any new volunteers (with no previous involvement with the organisation) registering for a volunteer role are required to provide contact details for a referee. A member of the LSC&PH staff is required to call and ask the referee an agreed set of questions which have been drafted by LSC&PH. These questions will seek to establish the applicant's suitability for the volunteer role and the conversation will be documented and retained on file.

For international volunteers:

- All volunteers / members must complete an application form for a program or activity.
- LSC&PH will require an International Police Check on file.
- In addition to the Police Check, LSC&PH will require their Nation's equivalent to a Compliance Check, which will be in line with their own standards of Child Protection.
- In addition to the requirements above, any new volunteers (with no previous involvement with the organisation) registering for a volunteer role are required to provide contact details for a referee. A member of the LSC&PH staff is required to call and ask the referee an agreed set of questions which have been drafted by LSC&PH. These questions will seek to establish the applicant's suitability for the volunteer role and the conversation will be documented and retained on file.

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Appendix 4 – Working with Children: Application process for members and volunteers

Checks generally take 6 – 12 weeks from lodgement to successful notification and are received by mail by the volunteer and the nominated organisation. They are then valid for the next 5 years.

Working with Children Checks can only be lodged by applicants themselves as it is a personal application. Privacy laws prevent LSC&PH from lodging an application for anyone on their behalf or requesting information about their individual check.

New applications

Working with Children Check Application Forms can be obtained online via <http://www.workingwithchildren.vic.gov.au/home/> Follow the instructions on their website to lodge the application.

Applying for a check:

Under *Details of Child-Related Work*

- **Mark 1st code as:** 10 All overnight camps for children
- **Mark 2nd code as:** 72 Clubs, associations, movements of recreational/sporting nature
- Place crosses in the Volunteer boxes beside each code

Under *Details of Organisation/s*

- **Tick the box** 'I WILL be doing child-related work for the following organisations:'
- Enter Lord Somers Camp and Power House as follows

Name of primary Organisation: Lord Somers Camp and Power House

Postal Address: 34 Lakeside Drive

Suburb: Albert Park

State: VIC

Postcode: 3206

Employer/Volunteer organisation contact phone number: 03 9510 7066

If an application is successful, 6 – 12 weeks following a submission, applicants will receive a notification and Working with Children Check card in the mail. The Department of Justice and Community Safety, if

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the applicant has correctly nominated LSC&PH, will mail the office directly to notify LSC&PH of the applicant's new WWC details and confirm they are able to work with young people. Once this notification has been received, LSC&PH will be free to allow the applicant to volunteer for programs.

Applicants will then need to provide their WWC check card number and expiry date on any LSC&PH program application form applied for.

Changing/updating details

Individuals **must** notify the Department of Justice and Community Safety within 21 days **each time** they change name, address and/or phone number.

Renewal

If individuals have kept their contact details up to date, they will receive a reminder to renew from the Department of Justice and Community Safety by email, SMS or letter 28 days before their WWC Check expires.

To renew a WWC Check, the applicant must register or log in to MyCheck.

(<https://online.justice.vic.gov.au/wwccu/login.doj?next=renewcheck>)

If individuals do not maintain their address details within the five years they will not receive their renewal and will miss the deadline. If this happens, individuals will have to submit an entire application again. This may be avoided by updating details online or via calling the information line.