


WESTERN
LEISURE
SERVICES

SAFEGUARDING CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE POLICY



WYN | ACTIVE

Approval date: 26 September 2016



Western Leisure Services Pty Ltd (WLS) is committed to providing an environment which protects the health, safety and wellbeing of all children and young people. We want children to be safe, happy and empowered. We are committed to ensuring the protection of children and young people from any form of abuse or conduct that puts children at risk.

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MESSAGE FROM THE CEO

Western Leisure Services (WLS) is committed to safeguarding children and consider any form of abuse intolerable.

Our challenge is to continually improve our services to adequately safeguard and promote the welfare of children and young people.

We are meeting this challenge, in part, through our Safeguarding Children and Young People Policy which provides the framework to help us continually embed a child and young people safe culture into our organisation.

We are aiming to systematically build our capacity to keep children and young people safe from abuse and exploitation by any persons and we recognise the vital role we play in the health, well-being, care and education of children and young people.

We

- will establish transparent, safe and nurturing environments for children and young people
- recognise our responsibilities to protect children from harm and to ensure that any incidents of suspected abuse are promptly and appropriately managed
- will ensure our employees understand the process for reporting any concerns they have about a child or young person's wellbeing
- will have clear Policy, Procedures and Guidelines to support our organisational position.

WLS believes that safeguarding children is everyone's responsibility and we will consciously act to be a child-safe organisation which supports children to flourish.

Regards,

Alison Dixon
CEO





DEFINITIONS

Child, children and young people: includes any person or persons who are under the age of 18 years.

Child abuse: is conduct which puts children at risk (usually by adults, sometimes by other children) and often by those they know and trust. Child abuse can include verbal and physical actions and people failing to provide them with basic care. It may include the following:

1. **Physical abuse:** Physical abuse occurs when a child suffers or is likely to suffer significant harm from an injury inflicted by a child's parent or caregiver. The injury may be inflicted intentionally or may be the inadvertent consequence of physical punishment or physically aggressive treatment of a child. The injury may take form of bruises, cuts, burns or fractures
2. **Sexual abuse:** Sexual abuse occurs when a person uses power or authority over a child to involve the child in sexual activity and the parent or caregiver has not protected the child. Physical force is sometimes involved. Child sexual abuse involves a wide range of sexual activity. It includes fondling of the child's genitals, masturbation, oral sex, vaginal or anal penetration by a finger, penis or other object, or exposure of the child to pornography
3. **Emotional abuse:** Emotional abuse occurs when a child's parent or caregiver repeatedly rejects the child or uses threats to frighten the child. This may include name calling, put downs, or continual coldness from the parent or caregiver, to the extent that it significantly damages the child's physical, social, intellectual or emotional development
4. **Neglect:** Failure to provide the child with the basic necessities of life such as food, clothing, shelter, medical attention or supervision, to the extent that the child's health and development is, or is likely to be significantly harmed

Code of Conduct: Refers to WLS' Policy C-008 Code of Conduct.

Safeguarding/Safeguard: The term 'safeguard' or 'safeguarding' covers recruitment and selection practices, safe working practices including code of conduct and behaviour standards, dealing with allegations and adequate reporting systems to external authorities

Working with Children Check (WWCC): A working with children check is a legal requirement for people doing child-related work unless they qualify for an exemption under the *Working with Children Check Act 2005*.

Procedural fairness: A duty to accord a person procedural fairness (also known as natural justice) when making a decision that affects a person individually. Procedural fairness incorporates three principles:

1. The right to be heard
2. The right to an unbiased decision maker
3. The right to have a decision based on evidence.

“Our challenge is to continually improve our services to adequately safeguard and promote the welfare of children and young people.”

Bruce Mackay, CEO





STATEMENT OF POLICY:

WLS is committed to:

1. Providing opportunities for children to actively engage in activities that are inclusive, meaningful, educational and positively contribute to the development of children and young people in the community
2. Supporting and respecting all children. We are committed to the cultural safety of Aboriginal children, the cultural safety of children from culturally and/or linguistically diverse backgrounds, and providing a safe environment for children with a disability
3. Implementing systems to safeguard children and minimise the risk of abuse and mistreatment in WLS activities and programs, including the development of a Protecting Children and Young People Procedure
4. Ensuring that all WLS employees are provided with adequate support to achieve these commitments, including identifying the indicators of child abuse and their obligations to report all concerns to relevant authorities
5. Providing support and guidance to WLS employees in maintaining professional standards relating to relationships with children and young people in the workplace
6. Ensuring that all employees and volunteers hold a current Working with Children Check (WWCC) and police check prior to commencing employment
7. Ensuring all allegations associated with child abuse or mistreatment are investigated and appropriate action is taken in relation to the findings
8. Ensuring procedural fairness is applied in situations where a decision is to be taken which could have detrimental effects on the rights, interests or legitimate expectations of an individual
9. Promoting a child-safe culture to ensure WLS employees and other applicable parties feel supported to speak up and report suspected abuse, neglect or mistreatment.

Employees, volunteers, contractors and user groups will:

1. Always act in a professional manner when dealing with children and young people in the workplace
2. Take reasonable steps to not be alone with children and young people, unless as part of a specific WLS program or membership activity
3. Always act in the best interest of children and young people participating in WLS programs and services
4. Always act in a manner that protects and respects a child's individual, cultural and developmental needs
5. Not make direct contact with children and young people by phone, social media or email, unless as part of a specific WLS program or membership activity
6. Report their concerns to WLS Management immediately if they have reasonable grounds to believe that a child or young person's safety is at risk
7. Maintain a valid WWCC
8. Comply with the WLS Code of Conduct.

Privacy:

All personal information reviewed or recorded will respect the privacy of the individuals involved, whether they are WLS staff, volunteers, parents, children or external parties unless there is a risk to someone's safety.

RESPONSIBILITIES:

Board:	<ol style="list-style-type: none">1. Ensure adequate resources are allocated to allow effective implementation of this policy
Chief Executive Officer (CEO)	<ol style="list-style-type: none">1. Ensure WLS management understand their obligations in accordance with this policy2. Plan organisational resources and requirements for this policy3. Ensure adequate reporting systems are in place to monitor the effectiveness of this policy
Chief Operating Officer (COO)	<ol style="list-style-type: none">1. Ensure the implementation of the policy is integrated into operations2. Ensure managers and supervisors have access to the policy and to related procedures and understand their obligations in relation to this policy3. Actively support managers and supervisors in the implementation of the policy
General Manager – Corporate Services	<ol style="list-style-type: none">1. Ensure the implementation of the policy is embedded in corporate policies and procedures2. Ensure the policy and related procedures are kept up to date3. Actively support managers and supervisors in the implementation of the policy4. Ensure the policy and related procedures are monitored through WLS’s audit program
Managers and supervisors	<ol style="list-style-type: none">1. Ensure the policy is implemented within their business unit2. Ensure all employees and volunteers have received relevant training in the protection of children and young people.3. Support staff and volunteers in reporting concerns of suspected child abuse
Child Safety Ambassador	<ol style="list-style-type: none">1. Assist in providing training to WLS employees on the Safeguarding Children and Young People Policy and Protecting Children and Young people procedure2. Provide support to WLS employees raising concerns regarding the safety of children and young people3. Report concerns regarding the safety of children and young people through WLS incident reporting system4. Report concerns regarding the safety of children and young people to external authorities including Child Protection and Victoria Police5. Ensure WLS employees are provided with appropriate support from WLS EAP support program
Staff and volunteers, contractors and user groups	<ol style="list-style-type: none">1. Take reasonable steps to protect and safeguard children and young people from any form of abuse2. Participate in required training and induction programs on protecting children and young people3. Immediately report any suspected child abuse to WLS management4. Maintain a valid WWCC in line with the working with children check procedure

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