

Child Safety and Wellbeing

Statement of Intent

AUTHORITY: CEO

RESPONSIBILITY: All persons, businesses and/or organisations engaged with LCIS in any capacity

Our commitment to child safety and wellbeing

All persons engaged by LCIS, all our partners current and future, are bound by the following;

'We value children and young people by making a commitment to child safety, child wellbeing and cultural safety. We embed this as part of our governance and daily practices.'

'Children and young people have the right to feel safe, respected and their voices heard. We involve them in making decisions, especially about matters that directly affect them'

This statement is intended to empower children who are vital and active participants in our organisation.

Legislative requirements

All LCIS staff, volunteers and workplace students are mandatory reporters and will comply with their legal responsibilities. This is a condition of employment/engagement, they are trained and supported to do so.

- **Failure to disclose:** Reporting child sexual abuse is a community wide responsibility. All adults in Victoria who have a reasonable belief that an adult has committed a sexual offense against a child under 16 have an obligation to report that information to the police.
- **Failure to protect:** People of authority in our organisation will be committing an offence if they know of a substantial risk of child sexual abuse and have the power or responsibility to reduce or remove the risk, but negligently fail to do so.

See Appendix 1 for a list of relevant Victorian Legislations

Child Safety

- LCIS has risk management strategies that focus on preventing, identifying, and mitigating risks to children and young people.
- We have zero tolerance of child abuse. All allegations and safety concerns will be treated seriously and consistently with legislative requirements and LCIS Policies and Procedures
- We have a legal and moral obligation to contact authorities when we are worried about a child's safety which we always follow.
- Our organisation is committed to preventing child abuse, identifying risks early and removing or reducing these risks.
- Our organisation is committed to regularly training and educating our staff and volunteers on child abuse risks.
- We have specific policies, procedures and training in place that supports our staff volunteers to achieve these commitments

Child Wellbeing

- We want children to be safe, happy, and empowered. We support and respect all children
- We are committed to the safety, participation, and empowerment of all children
- Our organisation has robust human resources and recruitment practices for all staff and volunteers

Equity and Diversity

LCIS promotes equity, diversity, and tolerance across our organisation. People from all cultural, ethnic, ability/disability types are welcome. In particular we;

- Promote the cultural safety, participation, and empowerment of Aboriginal children
- Promote the cultural safety, participation, and empowerment of children from culturally and/or linguistically diverse backgrounds
- Ensure that children with a disability are safe and can participate equally

If you believe that a child is at immediate risk of abuse phone 000

Appendix 1 - Relevant legislation in Victoria

Crimes Amendment (Protection of Children) Act 2014

- Section 49C relates to a failure by person in authority to protect child from sexual offence.
- Section 327 relates to failure to disclose sexual offence committed against a child under the age of 16 years.
- Establishes an offence of 'child endangerment' by negligently failing to reduce or remove a substantial risk that a person will commit a sexual offence against a child.
- Requires people to act on a risk of sexual abuse to children by an adult associated with an organisation.
- Establishes an obligation to report to the police when there is a reasonable belief that a sexual offence has been committed against a child.
- Applies a maximum penalty of 5 years imprisonment.

Crimes Amendment (Grooming) Act 2014

- The Act establishes grooming as a criminal offence in Victoria.
- Prohibits communication or conduct that is linked to the intention of facilitating a sexual offence, whether an act has occurred or not.
- Applies a maximum penalty of 10 years imprisonment.

Charter of Human Rights and Responsibilities Act 2006

- Article 17 on protection of families and children states "Every child has the right, without discrimination, to such protection as is in his or her best interests and is needed by him or her by reason of being a child".

Children, Youth and Families Act 2005

- The principle legislative document in Victoria.
- Requirement to promote children's best interests.
- Legislates the field of youth justice.
- Sets out common principles to guide practice and decision making.
- Sets Child Protection reporting and responses standards.
- Authorises information sharing to promote children's safety, wellbeing and development.

Working with Children Check Act 2005

- Outlines the purpose of the WWC Check and what constitutes child-related work.
- Outlines occupations that apply and exemption from the WWC Check.
- Explains offences and findings that are relevant to the WWC Check.
- Sets out obligations of individuals and organisations and how personal information is stored and disposed of.

Child Wellbeing and Safety Act 2005

- Established the Victorian Children's Council and Child Safety Commissioner.
- Establishes principles for the wellbeing of children in Victoria.
- Provides for the notification of births to municipal councils.