

Policy Name:	Child Safety and Wellbeing	
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Authorised By: Board of Governance	Policy Group: 4. Risk Management	
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1. PURPOSE

Living Learning Pakenham’s (LLP) primary purpose is the provision of educational courses to adults and delivery of a range of services to the community with a strong focus on multiculturalism. In offering programs and services, occasionally this involves the presence and involvement of children, either on our site, or at external venues, usually incidentally, but occasionally by design. The purpose of this policy is to ensure that children who are present or are involved in any way with our programs and services, are safe and their wellbeing assured.

2. SCOPE

This policy applies to all activities conducted on-site at LLP and any activities conducted off-site to which LLP is involved. It includes children who are:

- The children of LLP program participants;
- Older children enrolled in programs such as VCAL;
- Children involved in third party programs (i.e. Room hire activities such as dancing, church groups, etc.);
- Children who are accompanying adults to appointments with other service providers;
- Children participating in programs such as homework clubs; and
- Children who are participating in other programs run by LLP but are run off-site at another venue.

3. DEFINITIONS

Child	An individual who is under the age of 18 years old.
Program	A planned, organised and structured activity into which participants are enrolled.
Child Abuse	All forms of physical and/or emotional ill-treatment, sexual abuse, neglect or negligent treatment or commercial or other exploitation, resulting in actual or potential harm to the child’s health, survival development or dignity in the context of a relationship of responsibility, trust or power.

	<p>Different types of child abuse and neglect have different features. The main subtypes of child abuse and neglect are:-</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Physical abuse 2. Emotional abuse 3. Neglect 4. Sexual abuse 5. Grooming 6. Exposure to family violence
“Risk of Significant Harm”	<p>Circumstances that are causing concern for the safety, welfare or wellbeing of the child or young person are present to a significant extent.</p>
Child FIRST	<p>Child FIRST (Child and family information, referral and support teams) are the entry point into family services. Child FIRST teams are located in sites across Victoria and is delivered in your local area by community service organisations. Cardinia: (03) 9705 3939</p>
Orange Door	<p>The Orange Door is a free service for adults, children and young people who are experiencing or have experienced family violence and families who need extra support with the care of children. https://orangedoor.vic.gov.au/ 1800 319 353</p>

4. POLICY

This policy has been developed and informed by the Victorian Child Safe Standards Policy, National Principles for Child Safe Organisations, Mandatory Reporting legislation and Failure to Protect Legislation.

A Child Safe Culture

LLP is committed to zero tolerance of child abuse. This commitment is shared, openly and transparently by all members of the Board, staff and volunteers. Organisational culture trains and encourages staff and volunteers to raise, discuss and scrutinise concerns on child safety, making it more difficult for abuse to occur and remain hidden.

Statement of Commitment to Child Safety:

LLP is an incorporated not-for-profit Learn Local community centre that is dedicated to supporting and facilitating education programs, community development programs and other personal enrichment activities for the whole of its community. LLP promotes participation and inclusion in a caring, supportive environment contributing to the social, cultural development and wellbeing of individuals and the community.

LLP is committed to the safety and wellbeing of all people, especially children and young people. This commitment is at the centre of everything we do and the decisions we make.

LLP has zero tolerance for any forms of abuse and particularly abuse perpetrated against children. In all its forms of service delivery LLP is committed to providing a safe environment where all people, including children and young people are safe and feel safe, and their voices are heard about decisions that affect their lives.

Particular attention is paid to the cultural safety of Aboriginal people, children from culturally and/or linguistically diverse backgrounds, as well as the safety of children with a disability.

Every person involved in LLP has a responsibility to understand the important and specific role he/she plays individually and collectively to ensure that the wellbeing and safety of all people, including children and young people is at the forefront of all they do and every decision they make.

Mandatory Reporting:

In Victoria, mandatory reporting is required by legislation for people who work in specific professions to report if worried that a child is at risk of physical or sexual abuse. In respect to staff and volunteers at LLP, mandated reporters include:

- Wellbeing counsellors
- Early childhood workers
- Registered Teachers

Reporting must be made by any person in the above positions who has a reasonable belief that a child has been or is at risk of, physical or sexual or emotional abuse. Reasonable grounds include:

- A child states that they have been abused
- A sibling, relative, friend or acquaintance states that a child has been, or is at risk of being abused
- A child states that they know someone who is being abused
- Own observations of a child's physical and or emotional condition or behaviour gives rise to the suspicion that a child has suffered abuse
- Other circumstances lead to the suspicion that a child has been abused

It is important to note that evidence that abuse has occurred is not required for it to be reported. The law requires only that abuse is suspected to have occurred, is occurring or is at risk of occurring in order for a report to be filed.

Reporting of child abuse is not limited to mandated professionals. All staff, volunteers and third party room hirers have a duty of care to protect any child associated with LLP, and to report concerns of child abuse and neglect. In the first instance reports should be made to the CEO. All Allegations and reports of abuse and neglect will remain confidential to protect the child and their family (in as far as family members are not the alleged abuser/s).

Reportable Incidences:

Mandated reporters must contact the Department of Human Services Child Protection Unit – Southern Division (1300 655 7985). The Department of Human Services is the statutory body

responsible for the protection of children and have the authority to investigate matters of suspected child abuse.

The information required from the Unit includes:

- Child's details
- Family details and information relating to the family situation and history
- Details of the alleged abuse
- Details on the grounds for the suspicion of child abuse, including the name of the alleged perpetrator/s and contact details if they are available.

Concerns for Wellbeing:

Where there are significant concerns for the wellbeing of a child, but there is not the belief that they are at risk of significant harm and where the immediate safety of the child will not be compromised, a referral to Child FIRST or The Orange Door may be appropriate. Such concerns may include where families:

- Are experiencing significant parenting problems that may be affecting the child's development
- Are experiencing family conflict, including family breakdown
- Are under pressure due to a family member's physical or mental illness, substance abuse, disability or bereavement
- Are young, isolated, unsupported or abandoned
- Are experiencing significant social or economic disadvantage that may adversely impact on a child's care or development

The Board and CEO

Are responsible for:

- Management of child safety standards and ensuring that organisational values and legislation on reporting are upheld.
- Embedding an organisational culture of child safety and defining what constitutes acceptable and unacceptable behaviour by people within the organisational community.
- Lead a commitment of zero tolerance to child abuse which is shared openly and transparently by all members of the organisational community.
- Encourage a culture whereby staff, volunteers and third party providers will raise, discuss and scrutinise concerns making it more difficult for abuse to occur and remain hidden.
- Ensure all staff, volunteers and third party providers understand their roles and responsibilities with regards to the Code of Conduct.
- Ensure that procedures are in place to investigate and report all allegations of abuse and safety concerns.

Staff and Volunteers

All staff and volunteers must agree to:

- Abide by the LLP code of conduct which specifies the standards required when working with children.
- Hold a Working with Children Check and a Police Check (see Policy 5.5 Police and Working with Children's Check).

- Report child safety concerns or complaints as per legislative requirements.

5. REFERENCE

Children, Youth and Families Act 2005 (Vic)

Child Wellbeing and Safety Act 2005 (Vic): A framework to promote children's safety, wellbeing and development

Mandatory Reporting to Child Protection in Victoria (Community Fact Sheet)

Ministerial Order 870 Child Safety

National Principles for Child Safe Organisations

6. RELATED POLICIES:

5.5 Police and Working with Children's Checks

Living Learning Pakenham Code of Conduct