

CHILD SAFETY AND WELLBEING POLICY

1. INTRODUCTION

- 1.1. Leisure City is a group of businesses that offers a range of products and services in the sports and leisure industry. Many of these businesses, including Melbourne Swimming Club and Melbourne Swimming Academy, have direct dealings with children and young people through the provision of learn to swim lesson and swim squad programs.
- 1.2. Leisure City is committed to ensuring that children and young people who participate in its programs and activities have a safe and enjoyable experience. Leisure City supports and respects all children and young people, as well as our staff and volunteers.
- 1.3. The aim of Leisure City's Child Safety and Wellbeing Policy (**Policy**) is to protect the safety of children in our care and prevent abuse.
- 1.4. Leisure City will use its best endeavours to ensure that any allegations raised in relation to breaches of this Policy are properly addressed. All reports will be treated seriously and fully investigated and handled with maximum confidentiality and discretion.
- 1.5. Should a person wish to make any enquiries in relation to this Policy they should contact management as soon as possible.
- 1.6. This Policy aligns with the 11 [Victorian Child Safe Standards](#).
- 1.7. Leisure City is a ChildSafe Australia subscriber, which provides it with relevant resources, training materials, and access to training sessions facilitated by ChildSafe Australia's experienced team.

2. POLICY STATEMENT

- 2.1. Leisure City is committed to promoting positive behaviours and attitudes, protecting the privacy, health, safety and wellbeing of all participants particularly children.
- 2.2. Leisure City has zero-tolerance for racism, child abuse, and inequality, and is committed to promoting and protecting children from abuse and neglect to the greatest extent possible. All children have equal rights to protection from child abuse, regardless of their sex, religion, disability, sexual orientation, ethnicity, or cultural background. Leisure City, through its processes and

procedures, seeks to ensure that instances of racism are consistently identified, investigated, and addressed with appropriate and proportionate consequences.

- 2.3. Child protection is a shared responsibility between Leisure City, its employees, workers, contractors, associates, parents/guardians, coaches, spectators, volunteers, and anyone who engages in its activities, programs, and events (**Community**). Everyone that participates in Leisure City's activities is responsible for the care and protection of children and for reporting information about child abuse.
- 2.4. Leisure City supports the active participation of all children. It encourages children to speak up about their views, listens and respects their views, and involves them when making decisions, where appropriate, especially about matters that will directly affect them (including their safety).
- 2.5. Leisure City is also committed to the cultural safety of Aboriginal children, and those from culturally and/or linguistically diverse backgrounds. It is also committed to providing a safe environment for children living with a disability.
- 2.6. Leisure City requires its staff and volunteers to encourage and support children to express their culture and enjoy their cultural rights. It actively supports and facilitates participation and inclusion by Aboriginal children and their families, and also celebrates Aboriginal peoples, their achievements, communities, and cultures.
- 2.7. Leisure City promotes fairness and consideration for all staff, volunteers, and participants. For further details please refer to the Swimming Australia [Member Protection Policy](#).
- 2.8. Leisure City believes that feedback is a crucial for growth and improvement, and warmly welcomes it from our Community. Feedback can be provided anonymously via our [dedicated form](#).

3. SCOPE

- 3.1. This Policy applies to participants, parents, spectators, contractors, coaches, volunteers, and staff engaged in Leisure City events and activities.
- 3.2. This Policy will continue to apply to any person or Member following the cessation of their association or employment with Leisure City.

4. RELATED DOCUMENTS & LEGISLATIVE REQUIREMENTS

4.1. This Policy must be read in conjunction with:

4.1.1. the law of the Commonwealth and Victoria including but not limited to:

4.1.1.1. Children, Youth and Families Act 2005 (Vic)

4.1.1.2. Child Wellbeing and Safety Amendment (Child Safe Standards) Act 2015 (Vic)

4.1.1.3. Crimes Act 1958 (Vic); and

4.1.1.4. Working with Children Act 2005 (Vic)

4.1.2. Leisure City policies and procedures, including but not limited to:

4.1.2.1. Privacy Policy;

4.1.2.2. Child Safety Reporting Process;

4.1.2.3. Codes of conduct;

4.1.2.4. Grievance and Discipline procedures; and

4.1.2.5. Photography Policy

5. DEFINITIONS

5.1. **Child** means a person involved in the activities of Leisure City (including athletes) and under the age of 18 years unless otherwise stated under the law applicable to the child.

5.2. **Child protection** means any responsibility, measure or activity undertaken to safeguard children from harm.

5.3. **Sexual offence** means a criminal offence involving sexual activity or actions of indecency or any act which exposes a child to, or involves a child in, sexual activity or matters beyond his or her understanding or contrary to accepted community standards. Sexually offence 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, and exposing the child to or involving the child in pornography. It includes child grooming, which includes actions deliberately undertaken with the aim of befriending and establishing an emotional connection with a child (or the child's carer, family or supervisor) to lower the child's inhibitions and prepare them for engagement in a sexual offence.

5.4. **Mandatory reporter** means a person who is legally required to make a report to the Department of Human Services or the Police if they form a belief on

reasonable grounds that a child is in need of protection. It includes teachers, principals, registered psychologists, nurses, doctors and midwives.

6. RECOGNISING AND REPORTING CHILD ABUSE

6.1. A person may, in the course of participating in any activity of Leisure City or carrying out its work, form a belief on reasonable grounds that a child is in need of protection from child abuse.

6.2. If a person is concerned about an immediate risk to a child's safety, the person must phone "000" as soon as practicable.

6.3. **Child abuse** can be divided into five categories:

6.3.1. **Bullying:** intentional and usually repeated and aggressive behaviour aimed at causing harm, distress, or intimidation. Bullying can take various forms, including physical, verbal, social, and cyberbullying.

Possible physical and behavioural indicators are listed in the table below.

Physical Indicators	Behavioural Indicators
Unexplained injuries <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Bruises• Cuts• Scratches	Withdrawal from friends and activities, especially those which were previously enjoyed, or increased desire for solitude
Damaged or missing belongings <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Torn clothes• Damaged books• Missing supplies	Changes in school performance such as a drop in grades or reluctance to go to school
Frequent headaches or stomach aches, especially before school or other social situations	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Mood swing or emotional distress• Unexplained increased in moodiness, sadness or crying
Changes in eating habits	Self-destructive behaviours or self-harm

6.3.2. **Physical abuse:** occurs when a child has suffered, or is likely to suffer, significant harm as a result of a physical injury, such as a non-accidental physical injury.

Possible physical and behavioural indicators are listed in the table below.

Physical Indicators	Behavioural Indicators
Unexplained bruises or welts <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Appear on any part of the body • May be in various stages of healing • Often shaped like the object used (e.g. belt marks) 	Wearing in appropriate clothing for the season to cover up injuries. For example, long sleeves on hot days
Damaged or missing belongings <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Torn clothes • Damaged books • Missing supplies 	Changes in school performance such as a drop in grades or reluctance to go to school
Fractures: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Unexplained • Appear to have resulted from pulling, twisting, or forcibly bending limbs 	Fear of the abuser being contacts or fear of parents or caretakers
Burns: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Cigarette burns • Appliance burns (e.g. iron) • Immersion burns (e.g. hot liquid) 	Behavioural extremes: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Appearing overly compliant and passive • Unusually aggressive and disruptive
Lacerations or abrasions: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • May be from ropes or bindings on wrists, ankles, neck, or other parts of the body 	Flinching or nervousness: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Around sudden movements • When touched unexpectedly
Antisocial behaviour: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Fear of physical contact • Withdrawal from friends or usual activities • Reluctance to go home 	Depression, anxiety, or unusual fear / sudden loss of self-confidence
Facial injuries: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Bruises, swelling, or fractures around the eyes, cheekbones, or jaw 	Avoidance of eye contact, reluctance to speak, secrets about home life

Head injuries: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Scalp wounds • Discrepancies in the account of a head injury 	Reports of injury by the child or siblings, or an admission of infliction of injury by the parent or guardian
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6.3.3. **Sexual abuse:** occurs when a child has suffered, or is likely to suffer, significant harm as a result of sexual abuse, such as when a child is exploited, or used by another for his or her sexual gratification or sexual arousal, or for that of others.

Possible physical and behavioural indicators are listed in the table below.

Physical Indicators	Behavioural Indicators
Difficulty walking or sitting	Knowledge of sexual acts or sexual behaviour and language inappropriate for the child's age
Torn, strained, or bloody underclothing	Fear of a specific person or unusual fear of physical contact
Unexplained pain, itching, bruising, or bleeding in the genital or anal area	Withdrawal, depression, or anxiety
Bruises and/or bite marks	Regressive behaviours or development - for example, thumb-sucking, bedwetting, or fear of the dark
Self-harm or suicidal tendencies including thoughts, gestures, or attempts	Avoidance of undressing or marked change in attitude towards undressing
Antisocial behaviour: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Fear of physical contact • Withdrawal from friends or usual activities • Reluctance to go home or running away from home 	Significant change in appetite or sleep disturbances

6.3.4. **Emotional and psychological abuse:** occurs when a child has suffered, or is likely to suffer, emotional or psychological harm of such a kind that the child's emotional or intellectual development is or is likely to be significantly damaged; and

Possible physical and behavioural indicators are listed in the table below.

Physical Indicators	Behavioural Indicators
Frequent headaches, nausea, abdominal pains, or other medical symptoms with no identifiable physical cause	Withdrawn, passive, or extreme behaviours: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Increasingly introverted Withdrawn from social interactions Unusually passive Overly compliant and overly demanding
Changes in eating habits or significant weight gain or loss that is not linked to medical causes	Anxiety or fearfulness <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Excessive worry about doing something wrong Fear of making mistakes Constant need for reassurance
Sleep disturbances such as insomnia, excessive sleeping, nightmares, or night terrors	Avoidance of certain situations: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Going home Interactions with other children Expressing a strong dislike of specific individuals
Delay physical development especially in younger children	Low self-esteem <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Persistent negativity Self-criticism Expressions of hopelessness or worthlessness
Poor hygiene, neglect in personal cleanliness, or inappropriate clothing that may indicate a lack of care at home	Self-harm or suicidal thoughts and behaviours

6.3.5. **Neglect:** occurs when a child's physical development or health has been, or is likely to be significantly damaged. It refers to an omission, such as depriving a child of food, clothing, warmth, hygiene, intellectual stimulation, supervision and safety, attachment to and affection from adults, or medical care.

Possible physical and behavioural indicators are listed in the table below.

Physical Indicators	Behavioural Indicators
Consistent hunger: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Signs of being underfed • Always asking for food • Hoarding food when available 	Frequent lateness or absence from school or other obligatory engagements without justification
Poor hygiene: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Unkempt appearance • Dirty skin • Body odour • Inadequate clothing for the weather 	Begging or stealing food
Untreated medical issues or signs of delayed medical care: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Untreated injuries • Chronic illness without treatment • Frequent physical complaints without medical attention 	Social withdrawal or isolation: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Avoiding interaction with others • Spending excessive time alone
Developmental delays - physical, emotional, intellectual lags in development not attributable to innate disabilities	Fatigue or lethargy - unusually tired or lacks energy for normal activities
Weight and growth issues - underweight or stunted growth compared to peers	Unexplained changes in emotional attachment to or detachment from adults or caregivers

6.4. Child abuse includes any actions that results in actual or potential harm to a child, in circumstances where the child's parents have not protected, or are unlikely to protect, the child.

6.5. **Mandatory Reporters**

6.5.1. Select classes of people in the community (including teachers, nurses and doctors) are required by law to report to the Child Protection Unit of the Department of Health and Human Services (DHHS) where they have formed a belief, on reasonable grounds, that a child is in need of

protection because they have suffered (or are likely to suffer) significant harm due to physical or sexual abuse.

6.5.2. This report must be made as soon as practicable, and after each occasion where he or she becomes aware of a further reasonable grounds for the belief.

6.5.3. For further information regarding raising concerns about child safety, [click here](#).

6.6. Reasonable grounds for belief

6.6.1. A reasonable belief is formed if a reasonable person believes that:

- 6.6.1.1. the child is in need of protection;
- 6.6.1.2. the child has suffered or is likely to suffer significant harm as a result of physical or sexual injury; and
- 6.6.1.3. the child's parents are unable or unwilling to protect the child.

6.6.2. To form a reasonable belief, you should consider and objectively assess all the relevant facts, such as the source of the allegation and how it was communicated, the nature of and details of the allegation, and whether there are any other related matters known regarding the alleged perpetrator.

6.6.3. A 'reasonable belief' or a 'belief on reasonable grounds' is not the same as having proof but is more than mere rumour or speculation.

6.6.4. You will have reasonable grounds to notify if:

- 6.6.4.1. a child states that they have been physically or sexually abused;
- 6.6.4.2. a child states that they know someone who has been physically or sexually abused (sometimes the child may be talking about themselves);
- 6.6.4.3. someone who knows a child states that the child has been physically or sexually abused;
- 6.6.4.4. 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; or
- 6.6.4.5. signs of abuse lead to a belief that the child has been physically or sexually abused.

6.7. Voluntary Reporters

- 6.7.1. In addition to the mandatory reporting obligations above, any person who believes on reasonable grounds that a [child](#) is in need of protection from any form of child abuse, may disclose that information to the Police or DHHS.

6.8. Reporting Child Sexual Abuse

- 6.8.1. If a person receives information that leads them to form a reasonable belief that a sexual offence has been committed in Victoria against a child (under the age of 16 years) by another person (of or over the age of 18 years), the person has a legal obligation to disclose that information to the Police as soon as it is practicable. Individuals who fail to comply with this obligation under the Crimes Act 1958 (Vic) may be subject to a penalty of 3 years imprisonment.

6.9. Leisure City approach to Reports of Abuse

- 6.9.1. Leisure City has created the Child Safety Reporting Process to assist in the reporting of potential child safety breaches.
- 6.9.2. Leisure City supports and encourages a person to make a report to the Police or DHHS if they form a belief on reasonable grounds that a child is in need of protection, or they are concerned about the safety, health or wellbeing of a child.
- 6.9.3. Any person that makes a report in good faith in accordance with their reporting obligations (whether mandatory or discretionary) will be supported by Leisure City, and will not be penalised by Leisure City for making the report.
- 6.9.4. If a person is uncertain as to whether they should make a report to an external authority in relation to the safety of a child, they may speak to management for guidance and information. If in doubt, ask for assistance.
- 6.9.5. If an allegation is made against a member of staff or volunteer, Leisure City will follow the reporting procedure outlined in the Commission for Children and Young People (CCYP) Guidance for Organisations - Investigating a Reportable Conduct Allegation ([click here](#)) and take all steps to ensure that the safety of the child is paramount. An initial step may involve the withdrawal of the accused person from active duty, which could entail standing down, reassignment to a role without direct contact with children, working under closer supervision during an investigation, working from home, or any other measures deemed appropriate depending on the seriousness of the allegation.

- 6.9.6. Leisure City will investigate allegations of inappropriate conduct against a child in accordance with procedural fairness and will handle the allegations in a confidential manner to the greatest extent possible.
- 6.9.7. Leisure City will cooperate with the directions of the Police, CCYP, and/or DHHS in relation to any investigation conducted by these authorities.
- 6.9.8. Leisure City will keep a register of any allegations regarding inappropriate conduct.

7. ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES OF PERSONNEL PROTECTING CHILDREN

- 7.1. Personnel involved in protecting children include the board, management, staff, and volunteers within Leisure City. Those people have responsibilities in relation to protection of children and are expected to:
 - 7.1.1. understand the rights of children, as appropriate to their role;
 - 7.1.2. respect the cultural and religious practices of families who access Leisure City's services, programs, or events;
 - 7.1.3. understand and appropriately respond to the needs of children with developmental delays or disabilities;
 - 7.1.4. appropriately act on any concerns raised by children;
 - 7.1.5. understand the definitions, indicators, and impact of child abuse;
 - 7.1.6. know and follow regulations in relation to the care of children;
 - 7.1.7. co-operate with police and/or other formal investigations to the best of their ability; and
 - 7.1.8. not harm or exploit children who access Leisure City's services.

8. ENGAGING NEW PERSONNEL

- 8.1. The minimum standard for background checks of employees and volunteers of Leisure City and its members is the law as it applies in Victoria.
- 8.2. Leisure City undertakes a comprehensive recruitment and screening process for all staff and volunteers which aims to:
 - 8.2.1. promote and protect the safety of all children who participate in the activities of Leisure City;
 - 8.2.2. identify and recruit the safest and most suitable candidates who share Leisure City's

- 8.2.3. values and commitment to protect children; and
- 8.2.4. prevent a person from working at Leisure City if they pose an unacceptable risk to children.
- 8.3. Leisure City requires staff and volunteers to pass the recruitment and screening process prior to commencing their engagement with Leisure City. Child safety messaging is embedded throughout the employment processing including in the job descriptions / advertisement, screening, interview, induction, and training.
- 8.4. As part of the screening and recruitment process, an applicant must provide appropriate evidence (e.g. WWCC or other state equivalent and/or Police Check) to show that they are suitable to work with children and young people in a recreational setting.
- 8.5. All Leisure City staff require a WWCC.
- 8.6. The follow key event personnel must have a valid WWCC:
 - 8.6.1. those paid by Leisure City for their services (excluding bump in and bump out);
 - 8.6.2. trainees, including swim teachers completing their shadow hours;
 - 8.6.3. volunteers;
 - 8.6.4. relevant contractors who may have unsupervised access to children; and
 - 8.6.5. anyone else who Leisure City feels requires a WWCC due to the nature of the work that they are undertaking for the organisation.
- 8.7. The type of evidence that an applicant is required to provide to Leisure City will vary depending on the type of position that they are applying for. However, an applicant will not be offered a position until they provide the required evidence to Leisure City.
- 8.8. Leisure City will exercise discretion and may require applicants to provide a Police Check, in accordance with the law and as appropriate, before they commence their engagement and during their time with Leisure City in regular intervals.
- 8.9. Leisure City will undertake thorough reference checks prior to engaging any personnel.
- 8.10. Once engaged, Leisure City will provide staff and volunteers with access to this policy and staff and volunteers must review and acknowledge their understanding of this policy. Staff will also complete an on-site induction,

including details about Leisure City's child safety practices. Leisure City will perform annual [status checks](#) of all WWCC on file to ensure their validity.

- 8.11. Leisure City requires Melbourne Swimming Club personnel who have contact with children, including owners, Committee Members, Volunteers, and Coaches, to possess a valid working with children check. Any costs associated with gaining a valid WWCC will be dealt with in a manner determined by that club.

9. STAFF TRAINING AND CONSULTATION

- 9.1. Leisure City employees are required to complete annual child safety training which may include an online course (e.g. Sport Integrity Australia Safeguarding Children and Young People) and/or an in-person session organised by Leisure City (e.g. hosted by ChildSafe Australia).
- 9.2. Employees are also required to attend regular training sessions in which child safety is a standing discussion item. Feedback from staff meetings and consultations is used to develop, review, and update policies and procedures relating to child safety.

10. RISK MANAGEMENT APPROACH

- 10.1. Child safety is a part of Leisure City's overall risk management approach.

11. POLICY BREACHES

- 11.1. It is a breach of this policy for any person or organisation to which this policy applies, to have been found to have done anything contrary to this policy. Any person who may breach this policy is subject to discipline by Leisure City in accordance with established policies and procedures.

12. POLICY PROMOTION

- 12.1. This policy will be made available to all members via the Melbourne Swimming Academy and Melbourne Swimming Club websites and Leisure City customer portal.
- 12.2. This policy will be made available to all personnel via the Leisure City staff portal.
- 12.3. References to this policy will be included in documentation provided to all personnel involved with Leisure City.

13. REVIEW PROCESS

- 13.1. This policy, and the company's performance in delivering child safety and wellbeing, will be reviewed by Leisure City on a minimum of an annual basis or upon the introduction of updated Victorian child safety standards.
- 13.2. If you would like to provide Leisure City with any feedback or suggestions to improve this policy, please contact Management.
- 13.3. In addition to the regular review of this policy, recommendations for changes to the policy may be submitted for consideration at any time. Should the changes be accepted, the policy will be updated, and circulated to all stakeholders via appropriate communication channels.