

LIFE INDEPENDENCE DISABILITY SERVICES

www.lifeindependence.com.au

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CHILD SAFE POLICY

Policy number	7	Version	1
Drafted by	Merryn Farnsworth	Approved on	20/11/2020
Responsible person	Merryn Farnsworth	Scheduled review date	20/11/2021

INTRODUCTION

This policy describes and outlines how Life Independence will keep children safe while delivering support services on a 1:1 basis in a community setting.

PURPOSE

This policy is designed to make a clear commitment to child safety by outlining the steps Life Independence takes to address risks to child safety. This includes but is not limited to Life Independence's dedication to maintaining the cultural safety of Aboriginal Children and any children from a culturally or linguistically diverse background as well as the safety of children with a disability. This policy is also designed to outline how Life Independence will respond to any known or suggested incidences of unsafe practices that have or have the potential to harm a child or young person. The policy describes how the service will put procedures in place to prevent this harm wherever possible and respond to any harm of a physical, sexual, emotional, psychological or neglectful nature in matters relating but not limited to racial, cultural or religious beliefs or practices. The policy is designed to be read in conjunction with other policies such as the Incident Reporting policy and Professional Conduct & Abuse policy which give depth to specific measures Life Independence will take in instances where abuse or other incidents occur or are suspected to have occurred.

Guiding Legislation, Rules, Regulations & Guidelines

- National Disability Insurance Scheme Act, 2013
- National Disability Insurance Scheme (Incident Management and Reportable Incidents) Rules, 2018

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- NDIS (Provider Registration and Practice Standards) Rules, 2018
- NDIS (Practice Standards – Worker Screening) Rules, 2018
- Life Connect Disability Services Professional Conduct and Abuse Policy
- Life Connect Disability Services Child Safe Code of Conduct
- Life Connect Disability Services Guidelines
- The Charter of Human Rights and Responsibilities Act, 2006 (Victorian)
- The Crimes Act, 1958 (Victoria)
- Responding to allegations of abuse involving people with disabilities. Guidelines for disability service providers and Victoria Police – June 2018. Published jointly by Victoria Police and Victorian Department of Health and Human Services.
- Child Wellbeing and Safety Act, 2005 (Victoria)
- Child Safe Standards, Commission for Children and Young People, Victoria.

COMMITMENT TO CHILD SAFETY

Life Independence believe that all children receiving services have the right to be and feel safe at all times. Our first priority is always to the welfare and safety of all children we work with and Life Independence has a zero tolerance approach to child abuse. Our aim is to create and encourage a child safe environment allowing children to feel safe and participate in community based activities to promote ongoing development.

POLICY

This policy clearly describes how Life Independence will maintain and promote the safety of all children and their supporters receiving services. This commitment is further outlined in the following terms of the policy.

Life Independence commits to granting opportunity to all children and young people who engage in service delivery to receive information on how the service will keep them safe in a manner that best facilitates understanding and be given opportunity to ask for service in a way that suits their individual needs. The use of forms, personal consultations and online resources available through the website allow this obligation to be met.

Services delivery to children and young people will be provided in a public domain and take reasonable measures to avoid situations where the service deliverer is alone in a secluded location with a child or young person. Life Independence will perform risk assessments on any proposed activity or location that has the potential to propose a risk prior to it being performed.

Services will only be delivered by staff who have provided Life Independence with a Police Check clearance, Disability Workers Insurance Scheme clearance and a current Working With Childrens check. Further to this, no staff will be employed to provide

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services on behalf of Life Independence without first having undergone a successful interview process and reference checking. The service has in place policies relating to staff recruitment and management which can be accessed at any time via the services website or on request.

The service will further manage risk by creating awareness of any risks relating to children such as grooming or other inappropriate behaviours. Resources and Risk Management procedures as recommended by the Commissioner for Children and Young People are available for public access via the service website.

Should a child receiving services or any associated supporter or stakeholder wish to make a direct complaint this can be directed to Merryn Farnsworth the manager of Life Independence and also the dedicated Child Safety Person. Communications and complaints can be made verbally, in writing, with use of a complaints form available in hard copy or online and via email. If alternative means of communication are required this can be arranged on request.

If an instance arises where the person may not feel safe or that it is inappropriate to make a formal complaint directly to the service for any reason information and contact details for agencies such as the Disability Services Commissioner and Commissioner for Children & Young People will be available via the service website.

If the complaint can be managed internally between the service, service provider, young person and their supporter it will be done so in accordance with the Life Independence Complaints Policy which is available for public view on the service website.

If the matter is urgent or criminal in nature the service will refer the matter onto an appropriate authority such as Victoria Police. Urgent referrals will comply with best practice guidelines such as immediately contact emergency services on 000 and/or informing the Department of Health & Human Services Child Protection Crisis line on 13 12 78. This report will be made by the service regardless of whether the reported abuse is against the service provider or other person. The service provider will also comply in non-urgent cases with the requirements of any adult in Victoria to report any suspected abuse of a child to the Victorian Police and/or child protection crisis line.

The service will comply with all mandatory child abuse reporting procedures if any member of the service believes on reasonable grounds that a child has or is likely to suffer abuse or sexual abuse and report and record this reporting to the appropriate agencies which may include Victoria Police, The Victorian Department of Human Services, The National Child Abuse Hotline.

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SCOPE

This policy applies to any person delivering services on behalf of Life Independence in any and all capacities. Any person who delivers any service is responsible for ensuring that their actions are in line with the actions described in this policy.

PROCEDURES

Life Independence will comply with the requirements of this policy in collaboration with the associated Child Safe Code of Conduct during its operation and service delivery. Procedures for which are detailed in Life Independence Guidelines. These guidelines are available upon request at any time. The minimum procedural requirements for any person receiving services is to be informed of this policy and be made aware that it along with other resources are available on the service website.