

CHILD SAFETY AND WELLBEING POLICY

Committing to a zero tolerance approach to child abuse.

1. Why we need this policy

This policy ensures compliance with relevant state and federal legislation and standards that work to keep children safe. It commits to the prioritisation of the health, wellbeing and safety for children and a zero-tolerance approach to child abuse.

2. Who this policy applies to

This policy applies to all Launch Housing employees, board directors and volunteers.

3. What this policy includes

Policy Principles

Launch Housing embraces diversity and inclusion. All children, regardless of their gender, race, religious beliefs, age, disability, sexual orientation, family background and social background, have equal rights to protection from abuse. To achieve zero tolerance to child abuse, we commit to taking the following actions:

- (a) Listening to children and responding to the concerns they raise so that we can learn from their experiences and incorporate their contributions into our practices.
- (b) Treating all allegations and safety concerns very seriously, and promptly implementing robust policies and procedures when responding to, and reporting, concerns.
- (c) Embedding protection in the everyday thinking and practice of leaders, staff and volunteers by providing information, training and support to all persons.
- (d) Complying with the Child Safe Standards including maintaining this policy, a Reporting Child Safe Procedure, and a Code of Conduct for use and application by all parties at Launch Housing.
- (e) Regularly reviewing our activities across the organisation to ensure compliance is maintained and continuous quality improvement is achieved.
- (f) Applying zero tolerance to child abuse by following rigorous recruitment and employment processes and training that ensure we minimise the chances of bringing people who pose a risk to children into the organisation.
- (g) Providing training for staff, Board members, volunteers, students/interns, and information for contractors of Launch Housing, about Child Safety, use of the Child Safe documents, and their responsibility to report concerns related to child abuse, either immediately if necessary, or with urgency.
- (h) Including children and young people in the development, review and design of its services, and listening to children's experiences and comments to help to prevent institutional child abuse.

Supporting Diversity

- (i) Launch Housing recognises that First Nations children have been disproportionately affected by institutional child abuse, and encounter ongoing difficulties engaging in the service system. Launch Housing commits to providing culturally safe services to First Nations children, and has zero tolerance for racism.
- (j) Launch Housing acknowledges the strength and resilience of First Nations children and their families and commits to providing culturally safe services to these children.
- (k) Launch Housing recognises that other groups of children have also been disproportionately affected by institutional child abuse, and face ongoing difficulties engaging with the service system.
- (l) Launch Housing commits to providing safe and inclusive services to these children. These groups include children with disabilities, children from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds and children who identify as LGBTIQ+.

Complaints and reporting

- (m) Launch Housing treats complaints from children and their families seriously, and responds in a timely and considered manner.
- (n) Launch Housing takes robust action upon learning about any suspected or actual incidences of child abuse. Details of this action are set out in the Launch Housing Reporting Child Abuse Procedure.

4. What happens if we fail to comply with this policy

As Launch Housing personnel are subject to the Victorian Child Safe Standards and the Reportable Conduct Scheme, any child abuse allegations against Launch Housing personnel will be referred to the Commission for Children and Young People and the Victorian Police.

Breaches of, or failure to comply with this Policy will be investigated and may result in limited duties, suspension, termination of employment or other action including reporting to statutory authorities as required by law.

5. Who is responsible for this policy

Role	Responsibilities
CEO	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Key role in embedding Launch Housing's commitment to the safety and wellbeing of children in the organisation's management structures • Ultimate responsibility for ensuring the Child Safe Standards are actively applied throughout all aspects of Launch Housing's operations. • Investigates complaints made under the Reportable Conduct Scheme, unless the CEO is involved in the complaint.
Chief Impact Officer	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Responsible for ensuring that all staff, volunteers, students and contractors are subject to the appropriate screening, both pre-employment and during employment. • Responsible for ensuring that all staff receive appropriate training for their roles. • Oversee the investigation of any reported concerns or disclosures • Provide advice to the CEO and Child Safe Officer throughout the process and investigation.
Child Safe Officer	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Receive reports of concerns or disclosures • Liaise with Manager – People and Workforce Development over reports • Support reporters and children involved. • Ensure records are maintained accurately and archived securely.
All Staff, Board and volunteers	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Comply with this Policy, the Reporting Child Abuse Procedure, the Code of Conduct and all other relevant documents and protocols. • Report any observed or known concerns about the safety of children in any Launch Housing environment, by any member of Launch Housing personnel. • Deliver services in a way that is respectful of children. • Respond respectfully and responsibly to any concerns or disclosures made to them by any other person.

APPENDIX: ADMINISTRATION

6. Definitions

Term	Definition
Child	A person under the age of 18.
Child abuse	Child abuse constitutes any act committed against a child involving: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Physical abuse Sexual abuse Grooming Serious emotional or psychological abuse Serious neglect Family violence in any form, including witnessing family violence occur between parents/ guardians
Child Safe Organisation	An organisation that meets the Child Safe Standards.
Child Grooming	Grooming is a type of child abuse. It is any behaviour that is undertaken by an adult to prepare a child for sexual activity at a later time. This behaviour does not have to be sexual in nature. Grooming can be overt or subtle. Examples of grooming may include: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Developing a close relationship with a parent to secure access to a child Spending extra time with a child Paying special attention to a child or fostering a 'special' relationship with a child Giving presents to a child Asking a child to keep secrets Exposing a child to explicit content Making escalating physical contact with a child
Culturally Safe Services	Culturally safe services respect First Nations cultural values, strengths and differences, and addresses racism and inequity.
Culturally Safe environment	An environment that is safe for First Nations people. It is a fundamental human right, and a legislative requirement.
Launch Housing environment	Any physical or virtual place where directors, employees, volunteers, students/interns and contractors of Launch Housing come into contact with children or young people.
Launch Housing personnel	Any person who could reasonably be interpreted to work for, on behalf of, or auspiced by Launch Housing. This includes: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Staff Volunteers Students/ interns Board members Auspiced or partnership staff Contractors & vendors

7. Supporting documents

Document name	Description	Type
Code of Conduct	Guide for day-to-day activities for all staff at all levels	Code
Reporting Child Abuse Procedure	Instruction for reporting child abuse	Procedure
Action Plan: Achieving the Child Safe Standards	Launch Housing's articulation of commitment to Child Safe Standards	Document

Cultural Safety Plan	Commitment to providing culturally safe services and a culturally safe workplace	Plan
Privacy Policy	Launch Housing's commitment to Privacy Principles	Policy

8. Amendments to this Policy

This policy may be amended, terminated or replaced at Launch Housing's discretion. This policy will be reviewed, and updated as required, on a periodic basis.

In the event any related State or Commonwealth legislation changes, the legislation/directions will prevail to the extent of any inconsistency with this policy.

Amendments			
Date first approved:	16 12 2022	Date of effect:	16 12 2022
Date last amended:	16 12 2022	Date of next review:	16 12 2023
Owner:	CIO	Approver:	CEO
Portfolio:	All		

9. Version Control

Version	Effective Date	Approved By	Amendment
V1.0	05 2017		First Version
V2.0	05 2018		Re-write by working party
V3.0	07 2019		Streamlined, inclusion of reportable conduct information
V4.0	12 2022	CEO	Updated to comply with new Child Safe Standards, new format