



## **CHILD PROTECTION**

### **Scope**

The document describes the procedures and principles pertaining to Child Protection as they apply to Le Ferve Community Children's Centre.

### **Applicability**

This Policy applies to all Employees, Volunteers, Carers, Students, Other Individuals (collectively known as 'staff') in addition to the Children and Parents involved in the organisation.

This document satisfies obligations under The Act inclusive of Sections 8A-D and 11.cy.

### **Introduction and Commitment to Child Safety**

1. This policy is derived from the Children's Protection Act 1993 ('The Act'), the Education and Care services National Regulations 2011 and is in keeping with the principles of the United Nations Convention on the Rights of a Child (UNCRC). Under the principles of The Act, the following overarching points are to be followed: The safety of the child is to be the paramount consideration, and
2. The powers must always be exercised in the best interests of the child.

Le Ferve Community Children's Centre seeks to create and maintain a child safe environment, one that protects children from abuse and harm, at all times. This policy outlines the procedures and practices Le Fevre Community Children's Centre Inc. will implement and follow to attain this goal.

### **Privacy**

Two priorities exist with regard to privacy; the right of the child and family to privacy and confidentiality within a child safe environment, and secondly the obligation to disclose information relating to cases of abuse and neglect. At times these priorities may conflict.

Information that is obtained and stored pertaining to a child at LFCCC should be treated with sensitivity. Details acquired during enrolment are stored confidentially according to LFCCC information storage policy. Names, photographs and other identifying information are not to

be used in the public domain in any identifying manner (e.g. a room photo may be used to promote LFCCC, however only without names of the photographed children being used)

A member of staff has an obligation to report any suspected abuse or neglect under The Act. This onus of responsibility may also require the reporter to divulge family information such as names and addresses to the relevant authorities (e.g. Police, Ministerial Inquiry, Coroner or Families SA Officers) during the conduct of any investigation.

The identity of any person reporting suspected child abuse or neglect is protected under The Act. The Director (or any other member of staff that suspected child abuse is reported to) shall not breach the reporter's confidentiality, except as required in the above paragraph.

## **Staff**

### *Recruitment and Training*

A number of measures are in place to ensure the most appropriate staff are recruited:

- a. Criminal History Assessments completed prior to employment, and handled in accordance with LFCCC information storage policy;
- b. Mandatory Notification Training current during tenure with LFCCC;
- c. Interview and Referee checks conducted during recruitment;
- d. Staff will also complete a Statutory Declaration in the presence of a Justice of the Peace to declare they are a fit and proper person prior to commencing work.

Staff induction and bi-annual training includes:

- a. exposure to and education on the LFCCC Code of Conduct;
- b. Regular discussion and review of child protection matters
- c. Discussion of protocols in certain circumstances (such as aggressive clients)

### *Staff Well-Being*

Child Abuse is highly emotional and upsetting issue. To support staff in discharging this role and to fulfil its duty of care, Le Fevre Community Children's Centre Inc. will, on request, provide staff with necessary support to address stress or other mental health issues relating from the fulfilment of their role as a mandated reporter. Counselling is available from a wide array of public and private organisations.

Where this cost may exceed Expenditure Guidelines the authority can be given by the management committee to allocate additional funding to facilitate adequate support and counselling to affected staff.

## **Identifying Abuse**

Although by no means an exhaustive list, indicators may occur either singularly or in combination

- Obvious physical signs (bruising)
- Significant changes in behaviour e.g. aggression, overt shyness, other anti-social behaviours
- Disclosure by the child or parent (may include artwork or stories in older children)
- Unwillingness to have nappy changed, difficulties or changes in toileting.

When engaged with children in discussing issues staff are to ask open questions such as “how did that make you feel?” rather than leading questions, such as “was that scary?”. Below is a guide of do’s and don’ts in response to abuse disclosures sourced from Department of Education and Child Development in 2012.

DO	DON'T
Respect the enormity of what is being shared with you	Stop the child from talking
Listen with care, show care and ask open questions	Act scared or shocked
Be patient, don't rush them or yourself	Don't doubt the child (question the validity of their story)
Record what you have been told	Threaten to harm or punish the perpetrator
Report discussions to the Child Abuse hotline or talk to a senior member of staff about your concerns	Promise that everything will be fine and they will be safe, happy, better.
Look after yourself; seek support from other or senior staff	Ask leading questions or interview others
	Leave the child alone or let them leave the site if you are worried about their immediate safety

## Communication and Reporting,

### **Communication and Reporting**<sup>[G1]</sup>

*As Mandated Notifiers under The Act staff are legally bound to report suspicions of child abuse (exposure to, or actual physical, sexual, emotional or psychological abuse) or neglect. A staff member observing such an occurrence may handle the matter in one of three ways:*

1. *Report the matter through the director, if you feel comfortable doing so.*
2. *Report the matter to the Child Abuse Hotline directly, 131 478.*

3. If you suspect the director may be involved you may report through the staff representative to the management committee. Please also see the grievance policy if this is the case.

The Child Abuse hotline phone number is 131 478. Information on this service is available from the website [www.families.sa.gov.au/childsafe](http://www.families.sa.gov.au/childsafe).

The Director (or staff representative) is to report to the LFCCC MC, without identifying information, on significant occurrences. The Board is to consider informing parents, subject to permissions received or denied by Authorities and / or Court Orders, to reduce the effect of rumours stimulated by incorrect or incomplete information, subsequently damaging LFCCC's reputation.

Identifying abuse is difficult and staff may feel apprehensive about making a report. The Child Abuse hotline or senior staff can assist other staff to clarify any doubts. Regularly documenting observations can help staff feel more confident in the long term. Any written reports or observations given to the Director will be stored confidentially in accordance with the LFCCC's information storage policy.

### **Intoxicated Parents**

Parents who present to collect their child and are intoxicated should be encouraged not to drive with their child. Staff may offer to call them a Taxi or another person to collect the child.

Staff, however have no right to prevent parents from leaving with their child and to do so may place themselves at risk.

Staff shall make a police report once the parent has left the building.

### **Students and Volunteers**

Under no circumstances should Students or Volunteers be responsible for the care of children. All volunteers (including Administrative placements) must also complete a Police Clearance as designated staff.

Parents, Grandparents or friends who volunteer on excursions will be expected to complete Police Checks

### **Risk Management**

Child protection will be a major consideration in the development of the centre including building development and alterations, planning excursions and involvement in community events or other foreseeable activity that could involve child protection issues.

The Centre will also minimise risk by adopting these principles

- 2 staff always on duty when children present
- Staffing practices will promote staff awareness of supervision issues to maximise time children are under visual supervision

- Ensure Digital images of children do not leave the centre unless permission is given
- Any Published images for the purposes of promotion, use in media, where ownership and thus control be given to an external agency or for publication in any other form outside of the centre will be signed for separately by guardians.
- Staff will not photograph children naked or toileting
- Discuss Child Protection as part of staff Induction.

### **Children's participation**

As part of children's daily programs children will be taught protective behaviours appropriate to their age. This may include learning basic assertive skills, teaching children safety concepts and the recognition of different emotional states.

The centre will also encourage older children to begin to recognise different "safe" strangers within the community such as Police, Doctors and the roles that they play within their communities.

Staff will not shame children for their natural curiosity about their own and other bodies, but will use opportunities to talk about safe behaviours such as respecting others personal space and hygiene considerations.

### **Providing Children Physical Support**

Touch is very important to children's development in the early years. A hug can provide comfort for a child when hurt. Touch also communicates love and reassurance, especially with infants. Children also require physical support in toileting and nappy changes. Le Fevre Community Children's Centre wants staff to feel confident that they can provide children with this support, but to ensure staff protection we recommend that

- Staff ensure they do not hide themselves away when providing physical reassurance
- Staff remain visible as much as possible
- Staff clearly Communicate where they are going to each other and avoid unnecessarily leaving the floor

### **Sourced**

*Children's Protection Act 1993 Amendment 16 of 2000, 1 July 2000*

*Education and care Services National regulations- under the education and care services National Law, December 2011*

Department for Education and Child Development – Child Safe Environments website  
<http://www.families.sa.gov.au/pages/protectingchildren/CSEHome/>

Department for Education and Child Development – An Example of a Child Safe Policy  
<http://www.decd.sa.gov.au/docs/documents/1/SampleChildSafePolicy.doc>

Responding to Abuse and Neglect; Volunteers Handbook, Department of Education and Children’s Services, Government of South Australia, 2010

**APPENDIX 1- Child Abuse Notification Information**

Once you have formed a suspicion of Abuse The Department of Families and social Inclusion is to be contacted via the Child Abuse Hotline on 131 478

Completing this form will provide you with the necessary information to make a report

**Notifiers Details (You):**

Name:.....Job Title:.....

Contact Details:.....

Relationship to Child of Concern:.....

Notifiers contact with Family? How Often?.....

Does the Notifier work with the Child of Concern?.....

**Child information:**

Child’s Name: .....

Date of Birth:.....

Ethnicity:.....Language spoken:.....

Home Address:.....

Child Lives with:.....

Parents Names:.....

Dates of Birth:.....

**Perpetrator:** (As much information as known/ If known)

Name:.....

Date of Birth/ Age:.....

Relationship to child:.....

Address:.....

Phone Numbers:.....

Current Location:.....

**Details of Concern: (specific details about the suspicions).**

Did the child disclose to you?.....

(if not it is likely that the operator will want to talk to the person who the information was disclosed to)

What was observed (seen, heard)?.....

Are there any visual signs e.g. bruising, cleanliness?

.....

Describe any behaviours or non verbal signals that have been observed?

.....

How long have these behaviour been present?

.....

**Family Information:**

Are there any court orders Y / N

Is there any historical information about the family that may be pertinent e.g. Guests staying at house, Alcohol or drug use, extended family?

.....

**Other information:**

What prompted your call( if not already obvious) ?

.....

Are the child's caregivers aware of the notification being made?

.....

Are any other agencies working with the family (Police, Domestic Violence support, Support agencies, Disability SA)

.....

*Once report is made place this sheet and any observations into a sealed envelope and store confidentially within the guidelines of Le Fevre CCC privacy policy*