SLSA POLICY

6.04A Child Safe Commitment

Title:	Child Safe Commitment
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Responsible Portfolio:	Integrity

Surf Life Saving Australia (**SLSA**) and its member organisations comprise an organisation involving children and young people (**CYP**). SLSA operates across Australia and engages CYP through its programs and activities. SLSA takes seriously its responsibility to deliver a safe, fair and inclusive environment for CYP involved in Surf Lifesaving (**SLS**). SLSA promotes equity, respect and diversity by:

- actively anticipating CYP's diverse circumstances and responding effectively to those with additional vulnerabilities;
- providing all CYP access to information, support and reporting processes;
- empowering CYP by giving them a voice and encouraging them to speak up on decisions that affect them;
- creating a fun and positive environment for CYP to be involved in; and
- paying attention to the needs of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander CYP, CYP with a disability, CYP who identify as LGBTIQ and CYP from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds

SLSA's Board endorses this commitment to keeping CYP safe from abuse and neglect. Everyone in SLS, from Board to Executives to Staff and Volunteers, is responsible to:

- protect CYP from all forms of abuse, bullying and exploitation by SLS people;
- be alert to incidents of child abuse and neglect occurring outside of SLS that may have an impact on the CYP involved in SLS programs and activities;
- provide CYP with information, support and reporting processes; and
- create and maintain a child safe culture that is understood, endorsed and put into action by all the individuals who work for, volunteer or access our programs and services.

All people within SLS, regardless of role or level of responsibility, must act to keep CYP safe from such harm. They do this by adopting the practices and behaviour SLS has set as its standard when carrying out their roles, and reporting any concerning behaviours or reasonable belief of abuse or neglect of which they become aware to a Person in Position of Authority and/or to external authorities responsible for child protection or to Police, regardless of whether that abuse is being perpetrated by volunteers or employees within SLS, or by those outside SLS including those from the CYP's family, extended family, their family's extended network or strangers.

RESPONSIBILITIES

SLSA's Board is responsible for the development and endorsement of this Child Safe Commitment. It delegates the implementation of the Child Safe Policy to the CEO. The role of each entity in relation to the development and compliance of this Child Safe Commitment is detailed in the table below.

Entity	Role/Responsibility
SLSA Board	The Board, where practical, reasonable and within available resources will: • Promote the commitment to this statement and its expectations. • Support policy review on an annual cycle as a minimum or at a time governed by legislation, regulations, or organisational learnings that promote a change to the policy and all relevant procedural guidelines. • Ensure compliance to the Child Safe policy via an inbuilt review mechanism. • Ensure adequate resources are allocated to allow for the development and effective implementation of the Child Safe policy. • Develop opportunities for regular discussion at all levels to support a culture of openness and continuous improvement and accountability to child protection and member welfare. • Advocate and promote child rights, where appropriate empowering and engaging CYP in support of the Child Safe policy and its expectations.
CEO	The CEO, where practical, reasonable and within available resources will: • Ensure all volunteers and staff understand their obligations in accordance with the Child Safe Commitment and any relevant policy and procedural documentation. • Ensure the Child Safe policy is implemented and adhered to amongst relevant member stakeholders. • Ensure the development and implementation of required internal policy/work procedures and guidelines are in place to support child protection practice in accordance with the expectations of the Child Safe Commitment. • Ensure adequate resources are allocated to allow effective implementation of the child safe policy and associated resources • Provide appropriate resources to volunteers and staff so that they may be able to protect a child from abuse, neglect, grooming or exploitation. • Ensure appropriate supports, such as counselling and formal debriefing, are provided for any volunteers and staff involved in a matter relating to responding to a concern for the safety and wellbeing of CYP. • Proactively share resources and experience in the development of child safe initiatives as they are identified. • Develop opportunities for regular discussion at all levels to support a culture of continuous improvement and accountability of child protection and member welfare. • Ensure that SLS volunteers and staff are aware of the appropriate recruitment, screening and employment practice in relation to individuals with specific roles in working, coaching or volunteering with children and families.
Volunteers and Staff	• Understand the commitments and expectations of the Commitment Statement and Child Safe Policy, as well as all other relevant child safe resources. • Undertake any induction and training anticipated, in relation to the Child Safe Policy to ensure the safety of CYP. • Undertake any recruitment or screening processes required to demonstrate suitability to volunteers or work with CYP. • Seek guidance from a supervisor or manager if there is ever any lack of understanding in relation to the commitments and expectations as set out in the Child Safe Policy. • Take action to protect CYP from all forms of abuse, bullying and exploitation. • Assist in creating and maintaining a child safe culture and a culture of inclusion and safety.

SLS' COMMITMENT

SLS is committed to ensuring the safety and wellbeing of all CYP who are involved in SLS. SLS policies and procedures seek to address risks to child safety and to establish child safe culture and practices in line with the National Principles for Child Safe Organisations. The Child Safe Policy is:

- accessible in forms that are easy to understand;
- informed by stakeholder consultation; and
- available to CYP and their families, SLS' volunteers and staff and the general public.

SLS is committed to keeping CYP safe

Through SLS' Child Safe Framework, SLS documents its clear commitment to keeping CYP safe from harm, risk of harm, abuse and neglect. SLS communicates its commitment to all SLS volunteers and staff and give them access to a copy of SLS' commitment statement.

SLS' Child Safe Policy, Child Safe Guideline, Child Safe Commitment statement, and other associated resources are available on our dedicated Child Safe Website.

SLS promotes equity and respect diversity

SLS aims to consider the needs of all CYP. SLS uses inclusive programs designed to support CYP to participate safely in SLS sport, particularly CYP with increased vulnerabilities, such as:

a. Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander CYP;

b. CYP from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds;

c. CYP with disability;

d. CYP living in out of home care,

e. CYP with diverse genders and/or sexualities

SLS recognises the rights of lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender and intersex CYP to be recognised for their gender identity, sexual orientation or intersex status, and to feel safe and respected when participating in SLS.

SLS volunteers and staff know the behaviour expected

All members should understand their role and the behaviour expected in relation to keeping CYP safe from abuse and neglect through the application of the Child Safe Policy. Clear position descriptions which clearly state relevant child safe requirements are utilised.

SLS has a Child Safe Policy including a Child Safe Code of Conduct; these are approved and endorsed by the SLSA Board and outlines our expectations for behaviour towards Children/Young People.

SLS volunteers and staff have access to the Child Safe Policy. SLS volunteers confirm that they have read and are committed to the Child Safe Policy annually through Membership forms and renewal.

SLS minimises the likelihood of appointing or accrediting a person who is unsuitable

SLS has appropriate measures in place to minimise the likelihood that it will recruit volunteers or staff who are unsuitable to work/volunteer with CYP. This is achieved through the use of

best practice recruitment and screening processes, and meeting the requirements of the relevant state or territory Working with Children Check regulations.

Induction and training are part of SLS' commitment

SLS provides all volunteers and staff with information about its commitment to keeping CYP safe, including SLS' Child Safe Policy and reporting process (http://sls.com.au/childsafe). SLS has a process for encouraging all volunteers and staff to complete appropriate child safe training. SLS supports ongoing education and training for its volunteers and staff to ensure child safe information provided is current and regularly updated.

SLS encourages the involvement of children, young people and their parents

SLS involves and communicates with CYP, and their families in developing a safe, inclusive and supportive environment. SLS provides information to CYP and their carers (such as brochures, posters, handbooks, guidelines) regarding:

- its commitment to keeping CYP safe and communicating their rights;
- the behaviour expected of SLS volunteers and staff and of themselves;
- its policy about responding to child abuse.

SLS has processes for encouraging two-way communication with CYP and families. SLS seeks feedback and has a process for responding. SLS wants to empower CYP. SLS respects diversity and seek to facilitate effective communication with, and empowerment and involvement of CYP.

SLS volunteers and staff understand their responsibility for reporting child abuse

SLS' Child Safe Policy is responsible for responding to alleged child abuse and is approved and endorsed by the SLSA Board and applies to all SLS volunteers and staff. SLS volunteers and staff must:

- immediately report abuse or neglect and any concerns with policies, practices or the behaviour of volunteers and staff;
- meet any legislated mandatory or other jurisdictional reporting requirements;
- follow a specified process when reporting abuse or neglect.

SLS volunteers and staff are given a copy of, or have access to, the Complaints Resolution policy and have a dedicated Online Reporting & Complaints website, and understand the implications of the policy for their role.

SLS documents any allegation, disclosure or concern regarding child abuse, and SLS monitors responses to all allegations, disclosures or concerns. Online Child Safe training is available for all stakeholders within SLS.

SLS maintains and improves its policies and practices

SLS is committed to maintaining and improving its policies, procedures and practices to keep CYP safe from neglect and abuse. SLS has assigned responsibility for maintaining and improving its policies and procedures to the CEO. SLS monitors its volunteers, staff and external providers to ensure appropriate practice, behaviour, and policies are followed. SLS requires its volunteers and staff to disclose convictions or charges affecting their suitability to work with CYP, and SLS reviews police records and/or WWCC checks periodically.

SLS has formally reviewed its service delivery to identify and document potential risks to CYP. SLS undertakes formal reviews, at least annually, to identify and document potential risks to CYP associated with its service delivery.