



Safeguarding Children & Young People Policy

Guiding Values

In keeping children and young people safe, the following values are a mechanism for guiding our actions and assisting in decision-making; they are a reference to which workers can refer to ensure their responsibilities to children and young people are upheld:

- safeguarding children and young people is a shared responsibility; it is reliant on all individuals within our organisation to keep children and young people safe in our care;
- any form of abuse or neglect towards children and young people will not be tolerated, and immediate action will be taken upon the report of any suspected harmful or abusive behaviours.
- the best interest of the child will be the primary consideration in all actions and decisions concerning the safety or wellbeing of a child or young person.
- we are accountable to the children and young people we work with by fostering high ethical standards in a culture of openness and transparency.
- we empower children by informing them of their rights and responsibilities and support them to speak up about any matters of importance to them, including if something goes wrong.
- we work to include the participation of children and young people in decision-making regarding any services or other matters affecting them.

Purpose

Lambert School has zero-tolerance towards the abuse and neglect of children and young people. We are committed to the rights of all children and young people to feel safe and be safe when participating in our school's activities, services and programs.

The purpose of this policy is to outline the responsibilities, procedures and practices required by all workers within Lambert School in relation to keeping children and young people free from abuse and neglect. This Policy supports our international obligations under the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child, the Child Safe Standards recommended by the Royal Commission into Institutional Responses to Child Sexual Abuse and is aligned with the Australian Human Rights Commission National Principles for Child Safe Organisations. Lambert School upholds the [National Principles](#) and the [Child and Youth Organisations Act 2023](#) and [Tasmanian State Legislation](#).

As such, our policies and procedures reflect child-safe legislation and promote best practice and care for the children and young people within our school. Our Board approves and endorses the Safeguarding Children and Young People Policy.

The school takes our responsibility seriously to deliver a supportive, learning environment that is caring, nurturing and safe. We are committed to taking action in advancing the safety and wellbeing of children and young people and ensuring compliance with all requirements set out in this Policy.

Safeguarding Children & Young People

The Safeguarding Children and Young People Policy applies to all workers, including employees, casual staff, Board and committee members, volunteers and contractors involved with Lambert School. This policy applies in all our operational environments and without fail wherever children and young people are participating in our organisation's activities, programs, services or facilities.

Definition of terms for the purpose of this Policy:

- Bullying involves the inappropriate use of power by one or more persons over another less powerful person or group and is generally an act that is repeated over time. Bullying has been described by researchers as taking many forms which are often interrelated and include: Verbal (name-calling, put-downs, threats) Physical (hitting, punching, kicking, scratching, tripping, spitting) o Social (ignoring, excluding, ostracising, alienating) Psychological (spreading rumours, stalking, dirty looks, hiding or damaging possessions)
- Child or young person is a person under the age of 18 years.
- Code of Conduct aims to identify and prevent behaviour that may be harmful to children and young people in our communities. The Code of Conduct outlines what is and what is not acceptable behaviour or practice when working with or engaging with children and young people.
- Emotional or psychological abuse occurs when a child does not receive the love, affection or attention they need for healthy emotional, psychological and social development. Such abuse may involve repeated rejection or threats to a child. Constant criticism, teasing, ignoring, threatening, yelling, scapegoating, ridicule and rejection, or continual coldness are all examples of emotional abuse. These behaviours continue to the extent that they result in significant damage to the child's physical, intellectual or emotional wellbeing and development.
- Family Violence occurs when children are forced to live with violence between adults in their home. It is harmful to children. It can include witnessing violence or the consequences of violence. Family violence is defined as violence between members of a family or extended family or those fulfilling the role of the family in a child or young person's life. Exposure to family violence places children and young people at increased risk of physical injury and harm and has a significant impact on their wellbeing and development.
- Grooming is a term used to describe what happens when a perpetrator of abuse builds a relationship with a child with a view to abusing them at some stage. There is no set pattern in relation to the grooming of children. For some perpetrators, there will be a lengthy period of time before the abuse begins. The child may be given special attention and, what starts as an apparently normal display of affection, such as cuddling, can develop into sexual touching or masturbation and then into more

serious sexual behaviour. Other perpetrators may draw a child in and abuse them relatively quickly. Some abusers do not groom children but abuse them without forming a relationship at all. Grooming can take place in any setting where a relationship is formed, such as leisure, music, sports and religious activities, or in internet chatrooms, in social media or by other technological channels.

- Harm to a child is any detrimental effect of a significant nature on the child's physical, psychological or emotional wellbeing. It is immaterial how the harm is caused. Harm can be caused by: physical, psychological or emotional abuse or neglect; sexual abuse or exploitation; a single act, omission or circumstance; a series or combination of acts, omissions or circumstances. National Principles for Child Safe Organisations (National Principles) are designed to build capacity and deliver child safety and wellbeing in organisations, families and communities and prevent future harm. The principles have been endorsed by all Commonwealth, State and Territory governments. childsafefhumanrights.gov.au/national-principles.
- Neglect is the persistent failure or deliberate denial to provide the child with the basic necessities of life. Such neglect includes the failure to provide adequate food, clothing, shelter, adequate supervision, clean water, medical attention or supervision to the extent that the child's health and development are, or are likely to be, significantly harmed. Categories of neglect include physical neglect, medical neglect, abandonment or desertion, emotional neglect and educational neglect. The issue of neglect must be considered within the context of resources reasonably available to all staff and volunteers who work for the organisation, whether in a paid or unpaid capacity.
- Online environment is anywhere online that allows digital communication, such as social networks, text messages and messaging apps, email and private messaging, online chats, comments on live streaming sites and voice chat in games.
- Physical abuse occurs when a person subjects a child to non-accidental, physically aggressive acts. The abuser may inflict an injury intentionally or inadvertently as a result of physical punishment or the aggressive treatment of a child. Physically abusive behaviour includes (but is not limited to) shoving, hitting, slapping, shaking, throwing, punching, biting, burning, excessive and physically harmful over training, and kicking. It also includes giving children harmful substances such as drugs, alcohol or poison. Certain types of punishment, whilst not causing injury, can also be considered physical abuse if they place a child at risk of being hurt.
- Risk management is in the context of creating safe environments for children and young people. Risk management consists of assessing and taking steps to minimise the risks of harm to children and young people because of the action of an employee, volunteer, contractor or another child or young person. Risk management includes planning the work of the organisation to reduce or minimise situations where children and young people may be abused. • The Royal Commission into Institutional Responses to Child Sexual Abuse (Royal Commission) is an independent inquiry established in 2013 by the Australian Government to examine and report upon responses by institutions to instances and allegations of child sexual abuse in educational institutions, religious groups, sporting organisations, state institutions and youth organisations. The findings provide recommendations to the Government on how to improve laws, policies, structures and practices to prevent such harm from re-occurring. childabuseroyalcommission.gov.au
- Sexual abuse occurs when an adult or a person of

authority (e.g. older) involves a child in any sexual activity. Perpetrators of sexual abuse take advantage of their power, authority or position over the child or young person for their own benefit. It can include making sexual comments to a child, engaging children to participate in sexual conversations over the internet or on social media, kissing, touching a child's genitals or breasts, oral sex or intercourse with a child. Encouraging a child to view pornographic magazines, websites and videos are also sexual abuse. Engaging children to participate in sexual conversations over the internet is also considered sexual abuse. Sexual exploitation occurs when children are forced into sexual activities that are then recorded in some way and/or used to produce pornography. Such pornography can be in the form of actual photos or videos or published on the internet. Exploitation can also involve children who are forced into prostitution. Safeguarding children and young people is a shared responsibility.

It is the responsibility of all at Lambert School, from employees, volunteers and contractors, to:

- protect children and young people from all forms of abuse and neglect by workers;
- be alert to incidents of child abuse and neglect occurring outside the scope of our operations and services that may have an impact on the children and young people to whom we provide a service;
- create and maintain a child-safe culture that is understood, endorsed and put into action by all the individuals who work for, volunteer, support or access our programs and services.

We expect all within Lambert School, regardless of their role or level of responsibility, to act to safeguard children and young people from such harm by:

- adopting appropriate safeguarding practice and behaviour set within our policy and procedural guidelines when carrying out their roles;
- reporting any abuse and neglect of which they become aware to management and/or to external to authorities responsible for child protection or to the Police, regardless of whether that abuse is being perpetrated by workers within Lambert School or by those outside the organisation, including those from the child's family, extended family, their family's extended network or strangers.

We expect all within Lambert School to promote equity and respect diversity by:

- actively anticipating children and young people's diverse circumstances and responding effectively to those with additional vulnerabilities;
- informing children and young people of their rights and giving all children and young people access to information, support and complaints processes;
- respecting the rights of children and young people to participate in decision making, paying appropriate attention to diversity, inclusion and equitable access.
- The responsibility of each role in relation to the development and compliance of this policy.

Lambert School is committed to ensuring the safety and wellbeing of all children and young people who access our activities, programs, services or facilities. Our policies and procedures seek to address risks to child safety and to establish a safeguarding culture and practices. Our safeguarding policies and procedures are:

- publicly accessible, online and in forms that are easy to understand;
- informed by stakeholder consultation;
- communicated to children, young people and their families, our workers, our partners and contractors and the general public. To inform and review our safeguarding policies, we seek feedback from all our services users and providers. We gain endorsement and advise stakeholders of any changes.

Lambert School is committed to safeguarding children and young people: Through this policy, we state our clear commitment to safeguarding children and young people from abuse and neglect. We communicate our commitment to all of our employees. We have a zero-tolerance approach towards child abuse and neglect and take seriously any concerns or incidents raised. Our approach to risk management recognises the potential risks to children and young people. It considers online and physical or psychological environments and any vulnerable or diverse circumstances of children or young people utilising our services.

We ensure that each person involved at Lambert School understands their role and the behaviour we expect in relation to safeguarding children and young people from abuse and neglect. We utilise position descriptions that clearly state relevant responsibilities and safeguarding requirements. We have a Code of Conduct, which is approved and endorsed by the board levels of our organisation that outlines our expectations for behaviour towards children and young people. We monitor and supervise all workers, including contractors and partner for appropriate practice and behaviour in the delivery of our service to children and young people. Any failure to observe our behavioural guidelines is taken seriously, and we are committed to taking appropriate disciplinary and legal action wherever necessary.

We minimise the likelihood of recruiting a person who is unsuitable: The school has appropriate measures in place and will employ a person who is suitable to work/volunteer with children or young people. We have recruitment procedures that ensure:

- our safeguarding commitment is communicated to potential applicants for all positions;
- face-to-face interviews are held, which include safeguarding-related questions;
- reference checks are undertaken which include 'working with children' checks and qualification and registration checks. We ensure that there will be no discrimination as part of the recruitment process, with respect to inclusion and equal opportunity and, where possible, hire appropriate workers that represent the diverse range of children and young people and their families involved in our organisation.

Induction and training is part of our commitment: We have an induction process ensuring all new workers are informed and supported to understand Lambert School's safeguarding children and young people policies, procedures and practices. Our staff are provided with copies of the school's Safeguarding Children and Young People Policy, Code of Conduct and Responding to Child Abuse Reports and Allegations Policy. Lambert School's induction process provides guidance relating to an individual's safeguarding responsibilities and offers opportunities to seek clarity in relation to the commitments and behavioural expectations set out in the policies.

We encourage the involvement of children, young people and their families: We have processes for seeking and incorporating input and feedback with children, young people and their families. We respect diversity and seek to facilitate effective communication and engagement. We promote the participation and empowerment of young people and provide the opportunity for their voice and ideas to be heard and space to express their needs and concerns. We actively encourage children and young people to take part in the decision-making process, particularly on matters affecting them. We create opportunities for involvement and seek input and feedback to inform our policies, procedures and practices. We involve children, young people, and their families in developing a safe, inclusive and supportive environment. We provide information to children, young people and their families (such as brochures, posters, handbooks, guidelines) about:

- our commitment and approach to upholding and safeguarding the rights of children and young people;
- the behaviour we expect of our employees;
- the behaviour we expect from the children, young people and their families
- our policy and mechanism for reporting abuse or concerns.

Our employees understand their responsibility for reporting child abuse:

employees must immediately report abuse or neglect and any concerns with policies, practices or the behaviour of workers;

employees must meet any legislated mandatory reporting requirements;

employees must follow a specified process when reporting abuse or neglect, including who will receive reports;

failure to report is serious misconduct. Workers are given a copy of and have access to the Policy and understand the implications of the Policy for their role. We document any allegation, disclosure or concern regarding child abuse and monitor responses to all allegations, disclosures or concerns.

We maintain and improve our policies and practices: Lambert School seeks to continuously review and improve our policies, procedures and practices to safeguard children and young people from abuse and neglect. The responsibility for implementing and reviewing our safeguarding children and young people approach is led by the Principal and Deputy Principal. To identify any key improvements needed assesses our ongoing compliance with our responsibilities to keep children and young people safe, input and feedback received by children and young people and their families, feedback gained from communication with our workers and feedback gained from complaints and compliments received.

Monitoring and Review

This Policy will be reviewed at least every three years, after consultation. Some circumstances may trigger an early review; this includes but is not limited to legislative changes, organisational changes, incident outcomes and other matters deemed appropriate by the Board and/or the Principal. When there are any updates or changes to this Policy, they will be communicated to all employees and stakeholders.

The School:

- advocates and promote child rights, empowering and engaging children and young people in support of this Policy and its expectations;
- promote the commitment to this policy and its expectations both internally and publicly;
- support policy review on a three-year 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 policy or procedural guidelines;
- ensure compliance with the Policy via an inbuilt mechanism for ongoing monitoring and review;
- ensure adequate resources are allocated to allow for the development, effective implementation, communication and continuous improvement of this Policy;
- develop opportunities for regular discussion and review at all levels to support a culture of openness and continuous improvement and accountability to keeping children and young people safe from abuse and neglect.

The board and principal :

- advocate and promote child rights, empowering and engaging children and young people in support of this policy;
- ensure all workers understand their obligations in accordance with this policy and any relevant policy and procedural documentation;
- ensure this [policy is implemented and adhered to amongst employees;
- ensure the development and implementation of required internal policy/procedures and guidelines are in place to support safeguarding children and young people practices in accordance with the expectations of this Policy;
- ensure adequate resources are allocated to allow effective implementation of this policy;
- ensure to fully support workers with any decision to initiate action to protect a child from abuse and neglect;
- ensure appropriate supports, such as counselling and formal debriefing, are provided for any workers involved in a matter relating to responding to a concern for the safety and wellbeing of a child or young person;
- proactively share resources and experience in the development of child-safe initiatives as they are identified;
- develop opportunities for regular discussion and review at all levels to support a culture of continuous improvement and accountability of keeping children and young people safe from abuse and neglect;
- ensure that all employees are aware of the appropriate recruitment, screening and employment practice in relation to safeguarding children and young people.