

Child Safety and Wellbeing Policy

1 INTRODUCTION

Best Lives is committed to promoting and protecting the interests and safety of children. We have zero tolerance for child abuse.

Everyone working at Best Lives is responsible for the care and protection of children and reporting information about child abuse.

2 DEFINITIONS

Child / children: A person under 18 years of age.

Child safety and wellbeing: The protection of children from harm and abuse, and the promotion of environments where children feel safe, respected and heard.

Child abuse: Any act or omission that results in harm to a child, including physical abuse, sexual abuse, emotional or psychological abuse, neglect and grooming.

Grooming: Manipulative behaviours used to gain a child's trust or compliance for the purpose of exploitation or abuse.

Reasonable suspicion / belief: A concern based on observations, information or disclosures that would cause a reasonable person to suspect a child is being abused or is at risk.

Worker: Anyone engaged by Best Lives in a paid or unpaid capacity, including employees, volunteers, contractors, consultants, and Board members.

3 PURPOSE

The purpose of this policy is to set out Best Lives commitment to child safety and wellbeing and to describe the expectations, responsibilities and processes that help prevent, identify and respond to child abuse and other harm.

- Embed a child safe culture across all Best Lives business units, aligned to the National Principles for Child Safe Organisations.
- Clarify roles and responsibilities for workers to act ethically, maintain safe boundaries, and prioritise children's safety and wellbeing.

- Describe reporting and response processes so concerns are identified, escalated and addressed promptly and appropriately.
- Support continuous improvement through training, risk management, and learning from incidents and feedback (including children's voices).

4 SCOPE

This child safety and wellbeing policy applies:

- To all people who conduct work for Best Lives in a paid or unpaid capacity, including Board members, executive leadership, employees, volunteers, contractors, associates, and any other person representing Best Lives.
- To all Best Lives activities that involve, result in, or relate to contact with children (including in-person, online or digital contact).
- To on-site and off-site programs, events and excursions, including any situations where Best Lives arranges or provides transport.
- To third parties engaged by Best Lives (including partner organisations and service providers) when they are involved in activities where children are present or may be affected.

5 POLICY

Best Lives is committed to promoting and protecting the best interests of children involved in its programs. Best Lives promotes a culture that prioritises the safety and wellbeing of children at all levels of the organisation.

All children have equal rights to safety, dignity and protection from abuse and harm. Best Lives is committed to inclusive and culturally safe practice and to removing barriers so that every child can participate safely.

Best Lives has zero tolerance for child abuse. Everyone working at Best Lives is responsible for the care and protection of the children within our care and reporting information about suspected child abuse.

Child protection is a shared responsibility between Best Lives, all employees, workers, contractors, associates, and members of the Best Lives community.

Best Lives will consider the opinions of children and use their opinions to develop child protection policies.

Best Lives supports and respects all children, employees and volunteers. Best Lives is committed to the cultural safety of Aboriginal children, and those from culturally and/or linguistically diverse backgrounds, and to providing a safe environment for children living with a disability.

If any person believes a child is in immediate risk of abuse, telephone 000.

6 RELATED DOCUMENTS

This policy relates to the following policies and procedures in use within Best Lives:

- Code of Conduct Policy (expected standards of behaviour and professional boundaries);
- National Police Clearance, Working with Children Check and Worker Screening Policy (screening requirements and maintenance);
- Privacy, Dignity and Confidentiality Policy (privacy obligations and secure handling of records);
- Privacy Statement Policy (information provided to clients and stakeholders about privacy);
- Protection of Human Rights and Freedom from Abuse Policy (rights-based practice and safeguarding);
- Protective Disclosure (Whistle-Blower) Policy (how to raise concerns safely and confidentially);
- Operations Risk Management Policy (risk assessment and controls for child-safe operations);
- Recruitment Policy (safe recruitment practices and role suitability);
- Workplace Health and Safety and Injury Management Policy (safety, hazards, and incident management).

This policy must be read in conjunction with:

- The law of the Commonwealth or of the relevant state or territory;
- [The United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child](#);

- National Principles for Child Safe Organisations ([Commonwealth Child Safe Framework](#))
- [The Working with Children \(Criminal Record Checking\) Act 2004](#);
- [Parliamentary Commissioner Amendment \(Reportable Conduct\) Act 2022 \[WA\]](#);
- [Children and Community Services Act 2024 \[WA\]](#); and
- Best Lives Employee Disciplinary Procedures

CHIEF EXECUTIVE OFFICER

END OF DOCUMENT

Electronic documents, once printed, are uncontrolled and may become outdated

