



1. POLICY NAME: CHILD, MEMBER & CLIENT PROTECTION POLICY

| | | | |
|----------------------|-----------------|---------------------------------|--------------------|
| Current From: | August 2021 | For Review: | August 2023 |
| Version: | 3.0 | Replaces (last version): | August 2019 |
| Custodian: | Level 3 - Board | File/Lifesaving Unit | Corporate Services |

Policy Statement:

The Royal Life Saving Society Western Australia Inc. (RLSSWA) is committed to providing a safe and secure environment for all its Employees, Members, Visitors, Volunteers and particularly to Children and Vulnerable People.

RLSSWA's ***Child, Member and Client Protection Policy*** aims to reduce the risk of abuse occurring, and to ensure that a caring and appropriate response is taken should abuse occur.

Scope:

This Client Protection Policy applies to all Employees, Members, Volunteers, Contractors and Visitors within RLSSWA or engaged by RLSSWA.

Authority:

RLSSWA is committed to implementing the ***Child, Member and Client Protection Policy*** and to training our Employees, Members, Contractors and Volunteers in its content and application.

In doing so, each of the above stakeholders and the organisation itself reserves certain rights and carries certain responsibilities that are reflected in the matrix below:



| | Rights | Responsibilities |
|---|---|---|
| RLSSWA Participants: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Children, • Members & • Clients | All RLSSWA Participants have the right to: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> I. Be safe; II. Be respected; III. Have privacy; IV. Take calculated risks in a protected environment; V. Participate in an inclusive environment; VI. Referral to professional help if needed; VII. Be protected from abuse by RLSSWA personnel or external sources; VIII. Clear processes for providing feedback and reporting concerns and; IX. Be confident in receiving and appropriate organisational response | All RLSSWA Participants are responsible for: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> I. Showing respect to other participants and RLSSWA personnel; II. Keeping themselves safe and; III. Accurately reporting inappropriate behaviour, risky situations or suspected abuse. |
| RLSSWA Personnel: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Employees, • Contractors & • Volunteers | RLSSWA personnel have the right to: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> I. Access ongoing training and information on all aspects of ensuring Child, Member & Client protection; II. Receive support in the reporting of suspected abuse; III. Access to professional support services; IV. Fair and equitable treatment by RLSSWA according to RLSSWA Policies and; V. Be protected from abuse. | RLSSWA personnel are responsible for: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> I. Fostering an environment that ensures safety for participants in their care; II. Using appropriate management behaviour; III. Responding to participants' statements and concerns about alleged abuse; IV. Ensuring that the rights and responsibilities of participants are enforced; V. Reporting suspected abuse; VI. Not abusing participants physically, emotionally or sexually and; VII. Maintaining confidentiality about sensitive information. |
| RLSSWA | RLSSWA has the right to: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> I. Expect all personnel to comply with organisational Policies; II. Expect participants to maintain standards of reasonable behaviour; III. Take appropriate action if participants or personnel breach organisational Policy; IV. Expect that personnel will not abuse participants physically, emotionally or sexually; V. Take appropriate action in the event of accusations and; | RLSSWA has the responsibility for: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> I. Provision of a safe environment for participants; II. Provision of ongoing training and information for RLSSWA personnel; III. Broad promotion of this Policy and related Procedures; IV. Providing appropriate referral for participants reporting accusations of abuse; V. Treating suspected abuse information confidentially and; |



| | | |
|--|---|---|
| | VI. Acquire Police Clearances & WWC Clearances for personnel where required/relevant. | VI. Taking appropriate action in case of any breach of standards of behaviour or organisational Policy. |
|--|---|---|

Definitions:

| | |
|--------------------------|--|
| Abuse | <p>Can consist of one or more of, but is not restricted to the following:</p> <p>Physical Abuse: any non-accidental physical injury resulting from practices such as:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Hitting/Punching • Kicking • Shaking • Burning • Biting • Pulling hair • Alcohol and/or other drug administration. <p>Physical signs of any of the above may include cuts, scratches, bruises, marks (e.g. from belt buckles), burns (irons/cigarettes).</p> <p>Sexual Abuse: any assault or abuse of a sexual nature including sexual molestation, indecent exposure, sexual harassment or intimidation.</p> <p>Emotional Abuse: the chronic attitude or behaviour of one person which is directed at another person, or, the creation of an emotional environment which erodes a person's self-esteem and social confidence over time. Behaviours may include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Insulting • Bullying • Devaluing • Ignoring • Rejecting • Corrupting • Isolating • Terrorizing • Or other extreme acts in a vulnerable Child, Member or Client's presence. |
| Neglect | Characterised by the failure to provide for basic needs. Any serious omission or commission which jeopardises or impairs a person's health or development. |
| Child | Any person under the age of 18. |
| Member / Client | Any person, including children, who attends or participates in RLSSWA's activities and objectives or strategic plan. |
| Volunteer | Any unpaid person over the age of 16 who is invited to assist with RLSSWA's activities. |
| Vulnerable Person | Any person who is, or may be in need of community care services by reason of mental or other disability, age or illness. |





Obligations:

Responsibility: The core expectations of any responsible Organisation require us to treat all people with fairness and dignity, and to care for those who are less powerful and in need of nurture and protection.

Legal: All relevant organisations within Australia are bound by Federal and State legislation and principles established through common law. RLSSWA is committed to adhering to all relevant legislation.

Ethical: Some actions may not be regarded as Abuse, but are deemed to be unacceptable behaviour for RLSSWA. These include:

- Inappropriate conversation of a sexual nature;
- Coarse language, especially that of a sexual nature;
- Suggestive gestures or remarks;
- Jokes of a sexual nature;
- Inappropriate touching;
- Inappropriate literature (e.g. PG, M, MA, R or X rated material used with Vulnerable Persons);
- Recording or filming without prior consent; and
- Acts of violence committed by a Worker, Leader or Volunteer in the course of an activity

RLSSWA will ensure that high standards of conduct are maintained at all times.

Each client of RLSSWA has the right to:

- full and effective use of his or her personal, civil, legal and consumer rights;
- be treated with dignity and respect and to receive services without exploitation, abuse or neglect;
- personal privacy;
- be treated and accepted as an individual, and to have his or her individual preferences taken into account and treated with respect;
- select and maintain social and personal relationships with any other person without fear, criticism or restriction;
- freedom of speech;
- maintain his or her personal independence, which includes recognition of personal responsibility for his or her own actions and choices, even though some actions may involve an element of risk which the client has the right to accept, and that should then not be used to prevent or restrict those actions;
- complain and to take action to resolve disputes as a part of our ongoing commitment to ongoing quality improvement;
- have access to advocates and to other avenues of redress; and
- be free from reprisals, or a well-founded fear of reprisal, in any form for taking action to enforce his or her rights.



Selection & Screening:

Employees, Contractors and Volunteers involved in activities or programs with children and/or vulnerable people must be carefully selected and screened. Prior to commencing employment or volunteer services, the following precautions will be taken:

- All RLSSWA Position Descriptions must reference adherence to this policy;
- All short-listed candidates must undertake a formal interview which includes an analysis of past experience working with children and vulnerable people;
- Interview notes must be taken and kept on file for all successful candidates;
- At least two professional referees must be consulted and asked;
 - Questions that seek to establish the applicants suitability for the role or position, and;
 - If the referee has any concerns about the candidates intentions to work with children.
- All referee checks/interviews must be documented and kept on file;
- A National Police Clearance and Working with Children Check which complies with legislative requirements will be requested and received prior to the Employee or Volunteer commencing their proposed role. The check must show that the individual is not precluded from working with children or vulnerable people;
- The relevant Lifesaving Unit Manager must validate each candidates Working with Children certification with the Working with Children Screening Unit before commencing employment the Working with Children screening unit;
- If a new employee presents with an existing Working with Children clearance, the relevant Lifesaving Unit Manager must register RLSSWA as the person's employer with the Working with Children screening unit. Registration enables the Manager to receive updates to any change in status of an employees' Working with Children clearance;

Where the organisation has identified that an applicant has previously committed a violent or sexually related offence, they cannot, under any circumstances, be considered for employment or engagement with RLSSWA.

Any Employee, Contractor or Volunteer who is found guilty of a relevant offense whilst employed/engaged with RLSSWA may be terminated immediately.

Training:

All new Employees, including Contractors and Volunteers will be issued with a copy of this policy and have access via computer at any time.

This policy will be reviewed annually and distributed to all personnel staff following each review.



Disciplining Children:

Is not the responsibility of RLSSWA or its personnel to discipline a Child. If a Child does not abide by the rules set down by the organisation, or becomes an obstruction to the care of other Children, Members or Clients, and may cause harm, the Child will be removed and referred back to their parent or guardian.

At no time will any RLSSWA personnel administer any form of physical, emotional, financial or mental discipline.

Reporting Procedures:

RLSSWA is committed to building an environment where either a victim or any personnel feels supported to report abuse or suspected abuse.

RLSSWA employees and volunteers **must** report any abuse or suspicion of abuse to the senior management of RLSSWA.

Reasonable Suspicion means fair and practical reason to believe an incident involving abuse has occurred based on any of the following:

- verbal communication – someone tells you
- hearsay
- rumour, or
- observation of behaviour and/or injuries

Before compiling any report RLSSWA, employees and volunteers who suspect that a child/client/member has been abused should:

- Ensure that the person is safe from immediate harm;
- Maintain the safety of other clients/members; and
- Maintain appropriate care, including:
 - Treating each allegation seriously and not attempting to deny the allegation or minimise its impact on the alleged victim. The matter should not be ignored.
 - Not pushing the individual to disclose details of the alleged assault or attempting to investigate the allegation.
 - Assuring the person that they are understood and that their disclosure is being taken seriously.
 - Reporting the incident to the relevant authorities and organisational personnel.
 - Not making contact with the alleged perpetrator.

An independent person will be appointed by RLSSWA with the specific duty of dealing with any allegations of harm or abuse that may arise.

The details of those reporting abuse will be kept private and confidential.

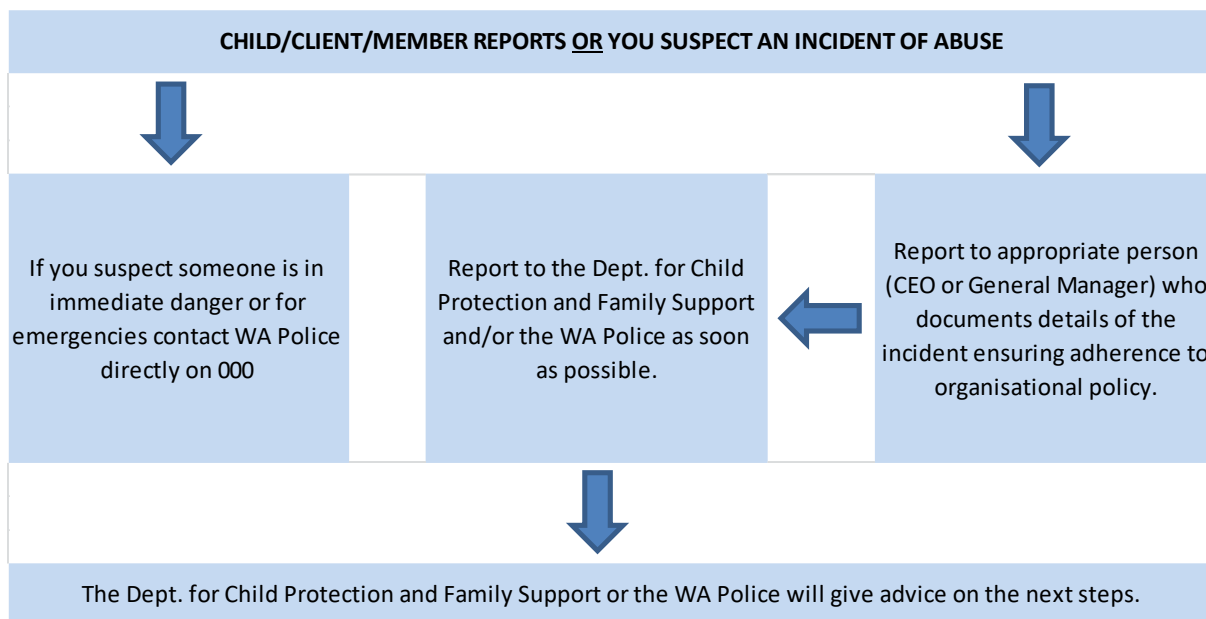
A documented reporting process with escalating procedures has been established by RLSSWA for handling allegations of abuse.

The escalating procedures will be as follows:



REPORTING PROCEDURE FOR SUSPECTED CHILD/CLIENT/MEMBER ABUSE

The following diagram provides guidelines about reporting suspected abuse:



For non life-threatening incidents contact:

Dept. for Child Protection and Family Support:

Business Hours: 08 9222 2555 or 1800 622 258

After hours/Crisis care: 08 9223 1111 or 1800 199 008

WA Police: 131 444



Working with Children Policy Statement:

RLSSWA is committed to being a child safe organisation through the prevention, identification and reporting of child abuse and neglect.

Definition of a Child Safe Organisation

The Australian Children's Commissioners and Guardians (ACCG) define a child safe organisation as one that consciously and systematically:

- creates conditions that reduce the likelihood of harm occurring to children and young people;
- creates conditions that increase the likelihood of any harm being discovered; and
- responds appropriately to any disclosures, allegations or suspicions of harm.

A child-safe and child-friendly organisation:

- includes, involves and values children;
- has child-safe and friendly policies and procedures in place;
- has vigilant recruitment, selection and screening of staff and volunteers to ensure their suitability to care for children; and
- supports and respects staff and volunteers by providing training and clear guidelines.

RLSSWA Responsibilities

Royal Life Saving WA, to ensure we are a Child Safe Organisation under the Working with Children (Criminal Record Checking) Act 2004 will:

- Ensure all employees, volunteers, students and self-employed people who engage in child-related work have applied for a WWC Check or hold a current WWC Card. Work is 'child-related work' if the usual duties of the work involve, or are likely to involve, contact with a child.
- Validate WWC Cards of any new employees, volunteers or students who already hold current WWC Cards from other child-related work they engage in;
- Ensure all current WWC card holders renew their WWC Card before it expires if they are continuing to engage in child-related work;
- Keep records to demonstrate compliance
- Never engage a person in child-related work if you know that they have been convicted of a Class 1 offence committed when an adult;
- Never engage a person in child-related work if they have been issued with an Interim Negative Notice, Negative Notice or if they have withdrawn their application for a WWC Check; and
- Notify the WWC Screening Unit if reasonably suspects an employee, volunteer or student has been charged with or convicted of an offence which makes it inappropriate for them to engage in child-related work.

RLSSWA Procedures, Recordkeeping and Documentation

1. All RLSSWA Employees and Volunteers engaged in child related work with RLSSWA must hold a current WWCC.
2. The WWC card number is validated through the WWCC Screening Unit Portal.
3. All current WWC card holders engaged with RLSSWA must renew their WWC Card before it expires and submit a copy to the RLSSWA appointed officer
4. A copy of the WWC card and expiry date is kept on records (VETtrak). This information is stored securely, confidential and updated regularly.
5. RLSSWA uses the "Register card holders" online service to upload WWC cards into the WWC Screening Portal. This service allows organisations and education providers to be advised if any of the



card holders is issued with an Interim Negative Notice or Negative Notice (or of other matters if necessary).

6. RLSSWA employees and volunteers must report any abuse or suspicion of abuse to the senior management of RLSSWA following instructions as per RLSSWA Child, Member & Client Protection Policy

7. Complete the online CHILD, MEMBER & CLIENT PROTECTION POLICY professional learning program.