

Child Safety

Lisa's Staffing Solutions takes child safety very seriously for every single child. We incorporate child safety into our organisation through our strict recruitment guidelines, yearly police checks for each nanny, monthly status check for nanny's WWCC and educating our team members about child safety.

Child Safe Policy

Our commitment to child safety

Our organisation is committed to child safety.

We want all children to be safe, happy and empowered. We support and respect all children, as well as our team members.

We are committed to the safety, participation and empowerment of all children.

We have zero tolerance for child abuse, and all allegations and safety concerns will be treated very seriously and consistently with our robust policies and procedures.

We have legal and moral obligations to contact authorities when we are worried about a child's safety, which we follow rigorously.

Our organisation is committed to preventing child abuse and identifying risks early, as well as removing and reducing these risks.

Our organisation has robust human resources and recruitment practices for all team members.

Our organisation is committed to training and educating our staff on child abuse risks.

We are committed to the cultural safety of Aboriginal children, the cultural safety of children from culturally and/or linguistically diverse backgrounds, and to providing a safe environment for children with a disability.

We have specific policies, procedures and training in place that supports our team members to achieve these commitments.

If you believe a child is at immediate risk of abuse phone 000.

Our children

This policy is intended to empower children, who are vital participants in our organisation.

We promote diversity and tolerance in our organisation, and people from all walks of life and cultural backgrounds are welcome. In particular we:

- promote the cultural safety, participation and empowerment of Aboriginal children
- promote the cultural safety, participation and empowerment of children from culturally and/or linguistically diverse backgrounds
- ensure the safety, participation and empowerment of children with a disability

Our team members

This policy guides our team members on how to behave with children in our organisation.

All of our team members must agree to abide by our Code of Conduct, which specifies the standards of conduct required when working with children. All team members, as well as children and their families, are given the opportunity to contribute to the development of the code of conduct.

Training

Training and education is important to ensure that everyone in our organisation understands that child safety is everyone's responsibility.

Our organisation's culture aims for all team members (in addition to parents/carers and children) to feel confident and comfortable in discussing any allegations of child abuse or child safety concerns. We train our team members to identify, assess, and minimise risks of child abuse and to detect potential signs of child abuse.

We also support our staff through ongoing supervision to: develop their skills to protect children from abuse; and promote the cultural safety of Aboriginal

children, the cultural safety of children from linguistically and/or diverse backgrounds, and the safety of children with a disability.

New team members will be assessed to ensure they understand our organisation's commitment to child safety and that everyone has a role to play in protecting children from abuse, as well as feedback from clients regarding team members' behaviour towards children is safe and appropriate (please refer to this organisation's code of conduct to understand appropriate behaviour further). Any inappropriate behaviour will be reported through appropriate channels, including the Department of Health and Human Services and Victoria Police, depending on the severity and urgency of the matter.

Recruitment

We take all reasonable steps to recruit skilled people to work with children. We develop selection criteria and advertisements which clearly demonstrate our commitment to child safety and an awareness of our social and legislative responsibilities. Our organisation understands that when recruiting team members we have ethical as well as legislative obligations.

All people engaged in child-related work are required to hold a valid Working with Children Check and to provide evidence of this Check. These checks are verified by our organisation monthly as well as when team members are recruited to ensure they remain clear. Please see the [Working with Children Check](#) website for further information.

We carry out reference checks and police record checks to ensure that we are recruiting the right people. Police record checks are used for the purposes of recruitment and continuing safety, we ensure they are updated every 12 months.

If, during the recruitment process, a person's records indicate a criminal history then the person will be given the opportunity to provide further information and context. Our organisation will then decide if this criminal record impacts the safety of our clients, their children, their homes and their property.

Fair procedures for personnel

The safety and wellbeing of children is our primary concern. We are also fair and just to personnel. The decisions we make when recruiting, assessing incidents, and undertaking disciplinary action will always be thorough, transparent, and based on evidence.

We record all allegations of abuse and safety concerns using our incident reporting form, including investigation updates. All records are securely stored.

If an allegation of abuse or a safety concern is raised, we provide updates to children and families on progress and any actions we as an organisation take.

Privacy

All personal information considered or recorded will respect the privacy of the individuals involved, whether they be team members, parents or children, unless there is a risk to someone's safety. We have safeguards and practices in place to ensure any personal information is protected. Everyone is entitled to know how this information is recorded, what will be done with it, and who will have access to it.

Legislative responsibilities

Our organisation takes our legal responsibilities seriously, including:

- **Failure to disclose:** Reporting child sexual abuse is a community-wide responsibility. All adults in Victoria who have a reasonable belief that an adult has committed a sexual offence against a child under 16 have an obligation to report that information to the police.
- **Failure to protect:** People of authority in our organisation will commit an offence if they know of a substantial risk of child sexual abuse and have the power or responsibility to reduce or remove the risk, but negligently fail to do so.
- Any personnel who are **mandatory reporters** must comply with their duties

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1. A person will not commit this offence if they have a reasonable excuse for not disclosing the information, including a fear for their safety or where the information has already been disclosed.

2. Further information about the failure to disclose offence is available on the Department of Justice and Regulation website: <https://www.justice.vic.gov.au/home/safer+communities/protecting+children+and+families/failure+to+disclose+offence>
3. Mandatory reporters (doctors, nurses, midwives, teachers (including early childhood teachers), principals and police) must report to child protection if they believe on reasonable grounds that a child is in need of protection from physical injury or sexual abuse. See the Department of Health and Human Services website for information about how to make a report to child protection <https://www.dhs.vic.gov.au/about-the-department/documents-and-resources/reports-publications/guide-to-making-a-report-to-child-protection-or-child-first>

Risk Management

In Victoria, organisations are required to protect children when a risk is identified (see information about failure to protect above). In addition to general occupational health and safety risks, we proactively manage risks of abuse to our children. Although as a nanny agency, we are not in a position to control the environment that the nanny works in or who else has contact with the children whom the children's parents approve of. However, what we can control as an agency is our monthly verification of carers' Working With Children Checks, in addition to our screening and recruitment process for each nanny on our team.

Regular review

This policy will be reviewed every two years and following significant incidents if they occur. We will ensure that families and children have the opportunity to contribute. Where possible we do our best to work with local Aboriginal communities, culturally and/or linguistically diverse communities and people with a disability.

Allegations, concerns and complaints

Our organisation takes all allegations seriously and has practices in place to investigate thoroughly and quickly. Our team members are trained to deal appropriately with allegations.

We work to ensure all team members know what to do and who to tell if they observe abuse or are a victim, and if they notice inappropriate behaviour.

We all have a responsibility to report an allegation of abuse if we have a reasonable belief that an incident took place (see information about failure to disclose above).

If an adult has a **reasonable belief** that an incident has occurred then they must report the incident. Factors contributing to reasonable belief may be:

- a child states they or someone they know has been abused (noting that sometimes the child may in fact be referring to themselves)
- behaviour consistent with that of an abuse victim is observed
- someone else has raised a suspicion of abuse but is unwilling to report it

For example behaviour, please see An Overview of the Victorian child safe standards: https://www.dhs.vic.gov.au/data/assets/word_doc/0005/955598/Child-safe-standards_overview.doc

Code of Conduct - Child Safety

All team members and board members of Lisa's Staffing Solutions are required to observe child safe principles and expectations for appropriate behaviour towards and in the company of children, as noted below.

A Child Safety Code of Conduct lists behaviours that are acceptable and those that are unacceptable. It provides a high-level statement of professional boundaries, ethical behaviour, and acceptable and unacceptable relationships.

When individuals are clear about behavioural expectations, they are much more likely to act appropriately with each other and with children. When everyone is educated about the Code of Conduct and the reasons it is so important to uphold, the work environment becomes much more transparent, and people are accountable for their behaviour. Above all, a Child Safety Code of Conduct helps to protect children from harm.

The code is made available to all staff, volunteers and families. All personnel of Lisa's Staffing Solutions are responsible for supporting the safety, wellbeing and empowerment of children by:

- Always adhering to Lisa's Staffing Solutions child safe policy at all times / Upholding Lisa's Staffing Solutions statement of commitment to child safety
- Taking all reasonable steps to protect children from abuse
- Behaving as a positive role model to children
- Providing age-appropriate supervision for children
- Treating everyone with respect
- Using positive and affirming language toward children
- Helping to provide an open, safe and supportive environment for all children
- Listening and responding to the views and concerns of children, particularly if they are telling you that they or another child has been abused and/or are worried about their safety or the safety of another
- Encouraging children to 'have a say' especially on issues that are important to them
- Promoting the safety, welfare and wellbeing of all children
- Promoting the cultural safety, participation and empowerment of Aboriginal children (for example, by never questioning an Aboriginal child's self-identification)
- Promoting the cultural safety, participation and empowerment of children with culturally and/or linguistically diverse backgrounds (for example, by having a zero tolerance of discrimination)
- Promoting the safety, participation and empowerment of children with a disability (for example, during personal care activities)
- Respecting all cultural, religious and political differences
- Reporting any allegations of child abuse to Lisa's Staffing Solutions Child Safety Officer Brooke Parsons, and ensure all allegations are reported to the police
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- Report concerns about child safety to Lisa's Staffing Solutions and ensure that your legal obligations to report allegations externally are met. This can be done by reporting directly to the office via phone or email:
 - Ph: 0406 163 578
 - Email: brooke@lisasstaffing.com.au
- If an allegation of child abuse is made, ensure as quickly as possible that the child(ren) are safe
- **Call the Police on 000 if you have immediate concerns for a child's safety.**
- Respect the privacy of children and their families and only disclose

information to people who have a need to know.

Team members must not:

- Develop any 'special' relationships with children that could be seen as favouritism (for example, the offering of gifts or special treatment for specific children)
- Exhibit behaviours with children which may be construed as unnecessarily physical (for example kissing on the lips)
- Put children at risk of abuse
- Do things of a personal nature when a child can do it for themselves, such as toileting or changing clothes
- Engage in open discussions of a mature or adult nature in the presence of children (for example, personal social activities)
- Engage in any form of sexual conduct with a child including making sexually suggestive comments and sharing sexually suggestive material.
- Use inappropriate language in the presence of children (such as swear words)
- Express personal views on cultures, race or sexuality in the presence of children
- Discriminate against any child, including ethnic, cultural, racial, sexist, homophobic or ableist discrimination
- Have any online contact with a child or their family (unless approved by the client)
- Ignore or disregard any suspected or disclosed child abuse
- Take photos of children without their parent/guardian's permission
- Post photos of children on social media or use photos of children for any purpose other than for showing their parents
- Post online any information about a child that may identify them such as their full name, age, email address, telephone number, residence, school, or details of a club or group they may attend
- Invite anyone over to the clients' home or take the children to your friend or family member's home
- Contact a child on any form of social media
- Engage in any verbal or physical violence towards any child, including yelling, bullying, smacking, hitting, name calling, or rough physical play
- Use physical means or physical punishment to discipline or control a child
- Have children out of their sight whilst in their care, including leaving them unsupervised or unattended at home or in a public place (for

example allow children to go by themselves into a public toilet block or public change room – always go into a female or family toilet or change room together, if the child is old enough to go the toilet unassisted, you must stay outside the closed toilet door until the child comes out)

- Leave children unattended in a pool, staff must be in the water with them and actively supervise
- Leave children in the car while they run into a shop or somewhere else quickly
- Allow children to cross the road by themselves – always ensure you hold their hands or if multiple children, they hold the pram or each other's hands and cross safely together
- Lose a child in a public place – you must always teach children that if they do get lost in a busy public place to approach someone working in a shop or a police officer and not just a stranger

Report to Lisa's Staffing Solutions any charges, committals for trial, or convictions in relation to a sexual offence, or physical or psychological abuse, by an employee, or certain allegations or concerns about an employee.

For more information:

<http://www.vrqa.vic.gov.au/childsafes/Pages/resources.html>

A Child Safety Code of Conduct cannot, however, cover every situation or anticipate every eventuality. If you are unsure of the appropriate action to take in a particular situation, discuss the matter with your manager or check if Lisa's Staffing Solutions has issued policy, procedures or guidelines on related matters.