CHILD PROTECTION POLICY

		Version	
Drafted by	Elizabeth Spencer CEO (adapted from Policy Bank)	Approved by Board on	3 July 2026
Responsible person	Elizabeth Spencer CEO	Scheduled review date	3 July 2027

Chair Approval: Karen Little- Herbert 3/7/2026

INTRODUCTION

The Literature Centre is committed to promoting and protecting the interests and safety of children. We have zero tolerance for child abuse.

Everyone working at The Literature Centre is responsible for the care and protection of children and reporting information about child abuse.

PURPOSE

The purpose of this policy is

1. To facilitate the prevention of child abuse occurring within The Literature Centre.
2. To work towards an organisational culture of child safety.
3. To prevent child abuse within The Literature Centre.
4. To ensure that all parties are aware of their responsibilities for identifying possible occasions for child abuse and for establishing controls and procedures for preventing such abuse and/or detecting such abuse when it occurs.
5. To provide guidance to staff/volunteers/contractors as to action that should be taken where they suspect any abuse within or outside of the organisation.
6. To provide a clear statement to staff/volunteers/contractors forbidding any such abuse.
7. To provide assurance that any and all suspected abuse will be reported and fully investigated.

Policy

The Literature Centre is committed to promoting and protecting the best interests of children involved in its programs.

All children, regardless of their gender, race, religious beliefs, age, disability, sexual orientation, or family or social background, have equal rights to protection from abuse.

The Literature Centre has zero tolerance for child abuse. Everyone working at The Literature Centre 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 The Literature Centre, all employees, workers, contractors, associates, and members of The Literature Centre's community.

The Literature Centre will consider the opinions of children and use their opinions to develop child protection policies.

The Literature Centre supports and respects all children, staff and volunteers. The Literature Centre 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.

Authorisation

Approved by The Board after Review on 3 July 2026
The Literature Centre

CHILD PROTECTION PROCEDURES

Date of Issue	3 July 2026	Contact: Karen Herbert-Whittle – Chair	
Document Number		Version	2

RESPONSIBILITIES

The Board of The Literature Centre has ultimate responsibility for the detection and prevention of child abuse and is responsible for ensuring that appropriate and effective internal control systems are in place. The Board is also responsible for ensuring that appropriate policies and procedures and a Child Protection Code of Conduct are in place.

The Chief Executive Officer (CEO) of The Literature Centre is responsible for:

- Dealing with reports of child abuse;
- Ensuring that all staff, contractors, and volunteers are aware of relevant laws, organisational policies and procedures, and the organisation's Code of Conduct;
- Ensuring that all adults within The Literature Centre community are aware of their obligation to report suspected sexual abuse of a child in accordance with these policies and procedures;
- Ensuring that all staff, contractors and volunteers are aware of their obligation to observe the Code of Conduct (particularly as it relates to child safety);
- Providing support for staff, contractors and volunteers in undertaking their child protection responsibilities.

All managers must ensure that they:

- Promote child safety at all times;
- Assess the risk of child abuse within their area of control and eradicate or minimise any risk to the extent possible;
- Educate employees about the prevention and detection of child abuse; and
- Facilitate the reporting of any inappropriate behaviour or suspected abusive activities.

Management should be familiar with the types of abuse that might occur within their area of responsibility and be alert for any indications of such conduct.

All staff/volunteers/contractors share the responsibility for the prevention and detection of child abuse, and must:

- Familiarise themselves with the relevant laws, the Code of Conduct, and The Literature Centre's policy and procedures in relation to child protection, and comply with all requirements;

- Report any reasonable belief that a child's safety is at risk to the relevant authorities (the police and/or Department of Communities) and fulfil their obligations as mandatory reporters;
- Report any suspicion that a child's safety may be at risk to their supervisor (or, if their supervisor is involved in the suspicion, to a responsible person in the organisation); and
- Provide an environment that is supportive of all children's emotional and physical safety.

DEFINITIONS

Child young person means a person below the age of 18 years **Child protection** means any responsibility, measure or activity undertaken to safeguard children from harm.

Child abuse means all forms of physical abuse, emotional ill-treatment, sexual abuse and exploitation, neglect or negligent treatment, commercial (e.g. for financial gain) or other exploitation of a child and includes any actions that results in actual or potential harm to a child, including in an online environment.

Child sexual assault is any act which exposes a child to, or involves a child in, sexual processes beyond his or her understanding or contrary to accepted community standards. Sexually abusive behaviours can include the fondling of genitals, masturbation, oral sex, vaginal or anal penetration by a penis, finger or any other object, fondling of breasts, voyeurism, exhibitionism, and exposing the child to or involving the child in pornography. It includes child grooming, which refers to actions deliberately undertaken with the aim of befriending and establishing an emotional connection with a child to lower the child's inhibitions in preparation for sexual activity with the child.

Reasonable grounds for belief is a belief based on reasonable grounds (see below) that child abuse has occurred when all known considerations or facts relevant to the formation of a belief are taken into account and these are objectively assessed. Circumstances or considerations may include the source of the allegation and how it was communicated, the nature of and details of the allegation, and whether there are any other related matters known regarding the alleged perpetrator.

A reasonable belief is formed if a reasonable person believes that:

(a) the child is in need of protection,

(b) the child has suffered or is likely to suffer "significant harm as a result of physical injury," or

(c) the parents are unable or unwilling to protect the child.

A 'reasonable belief' or a 'belief on reasonable grounds' is not the same as having proof, but is more than mere rumour or speculation.

A ‘reasonable belief’ is formed if a reasonable person in the same position would have formed the belief on the same grounds. For example, a ‘reasonable belief’ might be formed if:

a) a child states that they have been physically or sexually abused;

b) a child states that they know someone who has been physically or sexually abused (sometimes the child may be talking about themselves);

c) someone who knows a child states that the child has been physically or sexually abused;

d) professional observations of the child’s behaviour or development leads a professional to form a belief that the child has been physically or sexually abused or is likely to be abused; and/or

e) signs of abuse lead to a belief that the child has been physically or sexually abused.

Employment and Screening of New Staff

The Literature Centre undertakes a comprehensive recruitment and screening process for all workers and volunteers that aims to:

- promote and protect the safety of all children under the care of the organisation;
- identify the safest and most suitable people who share The Literature Centre’s values and commitment to protect children; and
- prevent a person from working at The Literature Centre if they pose a risk to children.

The Literature Centre requires all workers/volunteers and contracted artists to pass through the organisation’s recruitment and screening processes prior to commencing their engagement with The Literature Centre.

The Literature Centre requires applicants to provide a Police and Working with Children check in accordance with the law and as appropriate, before they commence working at The Literature Centre and during their time with The Literature Centre at regular intervals.

The Literature Centre will undertake thorough reference checks as per the approved internal procedure.

Once engaged, workers/volunteers and contracted artists must review and acknowledge their understanding of this Policy.

Mandatory Reporting Training

As mandated by the Department of Education all new staff with a professional teaching qualification employed by The Literature Centre including casual teachers must do online or face to face mandatory reporting training or provide evidence that it has been

completed in the last 12 months. Free training is available through the Department of communities website.

https://moodle.communities.wa.gov.au/file.php/1/PublicCourses/Mandatory_Reporter_Training/story.html

Risk Management

The Literature Centre will ensure that child safety is a part of its overall risk management approach.

The Literature Centre will have a risk and compliance committee committed to identifying and managing risks at The Literature Centre. Risk and compliance committee members will receive regular training in relation to child safety.

Reporting

Any staff member, volunteer or contractor who has grounds to suspect abusive activity must immediately notify the appropriate child protection service or the police. They should also advise their line manager about their concern.

In situations where the line manager is suspected of involvement in the activity, or if the person having the suspicion does not believe that the matter is being appropriately addressed or dealt with, the matter should be reported to the next highest level of supervision.

Line managers must report complaints of suspected abusive behaviour or misconduct to the CEO and also to any external regulatory body such as the police. The CEO will report any complaints received to the Board immediately.

Teachers have a legal obligation under section 124B of the *Children and Community Services Act 2004* (WA) to report child abuse.

Investigating

If the appropriate child protection service or the police decide to investigate a report, all employees, contractors or volunteers must co-operate fully with the investigation.

Whether or not the authorities decide to conduct an investigation, the Director will consult with the authorities to determine whether an internal investigation is appropriate. If it is decided that such an investigation will not conflict with any proceeding of the authorities, the CEO may decide to conduct such an investigation. All employees, contractors and volunteers must co-operate fully with the investigation.

Any such investigation will be conducted according to the rules of natural justice.

The CEO will make every effort to keep any such investigation confidential; however, from time to time other members of staff may need to be consulted in conjunction with the investigation.

After an initial review and a determination that the suspected abuse warrants additional investigation, the CEO shall coordinate the investigation with the appropriate investigators

and/or law enforcement officials. Internal or external legal representatives will be involved in the process, as deemed appropriate.

Responding

If it is alleged that a member of staff, contractor or a volunteer may have committed an offence or have breached The Literature Centre's policies or its Code of Conduct the person concerned may be stood down (with pay, where applicable) while an investigation is conducted.

If the investigation concludes that on the balance of probabilities an offence (or a breach of the Literature Centre's policies or Code of Conduct) has occurred then disciplinary action may follow, up to and including dismissal or cessation of involvement with the organisation. The findings of the investigation will also be reported to any external body as required.

Privacy

All personal information considered or recorded will respect the privacy of the individuals involved unless there is a risk to someone's safety. The Literature Centre will have safeguards and practices in place to ensure any personal information is protected.

Everyone is entitled to know how the personal information is recorded, what will be done with it, and who will be able to access it.

Reviewing

Every two years, and following every reportable incident, a review shall be conducted to assess whether The Literature Centre's child protection policies or procedures require modification to better protect the children under the organisation's care.

Related Documents

- This policy must be read in conjunction with:
    - The law of Western Australia;
    - The Literature Centre's Code of Conduct;
    - The Literature Centre's Employee Handbook.

Appendix

Best Practice Principles

The below principles have been provided by the WAIS as best practice in relation to working with children and young people.

1. **Safe Practices**

These Child/Young Person Safe Practices set out requirements for how Relevant Organisations and Relevant Persons must behave with and around Children/Young People. A failure to comply with the Child/Young Person Safe Practices will be considered a breach of this policy. The Literature Centre will communicate the below principles to all organisations, and individuals working with us and delivering services for children and young people.

Professional Boundaries

(a) A Person in a Position of Authority including a teacher or an artist delivering creative learning services must establish and maintain professional boundaries (both in person and online) **when** working with Children/Young People. Professional boundaries ensure that the nature of the relationship between a Person in a Position of Authority and Child/Young Person does not move from a professional one to a personal one and becomes harmful or exploitative of the Child/Young Person and/or family.

(b) A Person in a Position of Authority, teacher or artist unless they are also an Approved Person must not:

i. provide any form of support to a child or their family unrelated to the scope of their role (e.g., financial assistance, babysitting, provide accommodation);

ii. use a personal phone, camera, or video camera to take images or video footage of Children/Young People unless prior written authorisation from the Relevant Organisation, school or parent is provided;

iii. exhibit any type of favouritism towards a Child/Young Person; iv. transport Children/Young People unless given permission by school, parent or relevant organisation;

iv. give gifts/presents to Children/Young People other than the provision of official awards;

v. have one on one contact with a Child/Young Person outside of authorised arts and cultural activities (includes direct contact such as in-person as well as indirect, such as by phone, or online); or

vi. attend any private social function at the request of a Child/Young Person or their family.

(c) If Relevant Persons become aware of a situation in which a Child/Young Person requires assistance that is beyond the scope of that person's role, they must undertake any or all of the following at the earliest opportunity:

i. refer the matter to an appropriate support agency;

ii. refer the Child/Young Person to an appropriate support agency;

iii. contact the Child/Young Person's parent or carer; and/or iv. seek advice from a Relevant Organisation.

2. Responding to Risk of Harm to Children and Young People

Under relevant state/territory laws, failure to report any reasonable suspicion or knowledge that a Child/Young Person is or is likely to be at risk of harm could result in criminal proceedings.

You must:

ACT

As a person involved in protecting Children/Young People. You must follow the four actions set out below when responding to any Child Abuse allegations.

Action 1 - Responding

If a Child/Young Person is at risk of immediate harm, you must ensure their safety by:

- Calling 000 for medical and/or police assistance to respond to urgent health or safety concerns;
- Administering first aid, if required:
- Separating at-risk Child/Young Person and others involved;
- Advise the CEO If there is no immediate harm, go to Action 2 below.

Action 2 – Reporting

If you suspect, on reasonable grounds, that a Child/Young Person was, is, or is at risk of being abused and/or neglected, you must report it to the CEO or Board who will report it to the police and/or the WA Department of Communities.

Mandatory Reporters must also fulfill their legal requirement in addition to the above by making a report to the WA Department of Communities Mandatory Reporting Service.

Action 3 – Contact

You must contact the police and/or the WA Department of Communities to determine the information that may be shared with parents/carers, and who should lead this contact (i.e., police, WA Department of Communities or relevant TLC representative). This could include advice:

- not to contact the parents or carers in circumstances where they are alleged to have engaged in the abuse.
- to contact the parents/carers and provide agreed information as soon as possible.

Action 4 – Support

- Support should be provided to any Child/Young Person that has experienced abuse.

- It is important that the person providing support to the Child/Young Person does not attempt to provide support which is outside of the scope of their role.
- Support should include maintaining a calm open manner when listening to any allegations and disclosures, while avoiding seeking detailed information or asking leading questions.
- Information regarding allegations of Abuse need to be well documented and shared with the CEO and or Board
- Further support for the Child/Young Person, relevant Adults and others involved may be required, including a referral to wellbeing or healthcare professionals and or the development of a safety plan.