

# Information for Parents and Guardians about Safeguarding Children and Young People



## Our Commitment

Little Dreamers prioritises the health, safety, and wellbeing of all children and young people above all else. Our utmost commitment lies in ensuring their protection and welfare through our Safeguarding Children and Young People Policy and Commitment Statement.

Endorsed and approved by the Little Dreamers Board and Senior Leadership Team, our Safeguarding Children and Young People Policy and Commitment Statement forms the foundation of our policies and procedures regarding the safeguarding of children and young people. These guidelines govern:

- ★ The screening and recruitment process of our staff members.
- ★ The conduct of our personnel towards children and young people.
- ★ The training and orientation of our personnel on safeguarding children and young people.
- ★ Our transparent and effective communication with children, young people, and their parents.
- ★ Our response to instances of child abuse and neglect.
- ★ Our dedication to maintaining a culture of safeguarding within our organization.

All our personnel are expected to approach and interact with children and young people in a sensitive, respectful, and inclusive manner, regardless of their backgrounds or abilities. We actively promote equity and embrace diversity by:

- ★ Anticipating and effectively addressing the diverse circumstances of children, especially those with additional vulnerabilities.
- ★ Granting all children access to information, support, and avenues for complaints.
- ★ Paying special attention to the needs of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children, children with disabilities, and children from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds.

Our staff members are required to:

- ★ Undergo a thorough screening process, including a Working with Children Check and a National Criminal Records Check.
- ★ Behave professionally and responsibly towards children and young people, refraining from exceeding the boundaries of their duties or using their position within the organisation to engage with clients/members who are children or young people.
- ★ Understand and uphold their crucial responsibility to protect children and young people from all forms of abuse, bullying, and exploitation, whether perpetrated by our personnel or occurring outside our operations and services.
- ★ Foster and sustain a culture that ensures the safety and wellbeing of children.

We expect everyone in our organisation, regardless of their role or level of responsibility, to actively safeguard children from harm by:

- ★ Adopting the practices and behaviors established as our standard while carrying out their duties.
- ★ Reporting any instances of abuse or neglect to our management, external authorities responsible for child protection, or the police, regardless of whether the abuse is perpetrated by individuals within or outside our organisation, including the child's family, extended family, their network, or strangers.

At Little Dreamers, we are fully committed to protecting the children and young people within our community. We are proud to have achieved Accreditation with the Australian Childhood Foundation's Safeguarding Children Program.

### **Responding to Child Abuse Reports and Allegations**

Under no circumstances do we tolerate any type of child abuse, which encompasses emotional, physical, and sexual abuse, family violence, grooming, or neglect.

We hold a legal, moral, and mission-oriented obligation to safeguard children and young people from harm. It is crucial that any instance of suspected child abuse is addressed promptly and appropriately. Our personnel have a duty to report any suspicions of child abuse to their immediate manager, as well as to the child protection authorities or the police. Little Dreamers is committed to cooperating fully with child protection authorities, the police, and other relevant agencies as mandated by law.

### **Practice and Behaviour Guidelines (Safeguarding Code of Conduct)**

At Little Dreamers, we expect all staff and volunteers to uphold the utmost levels of professional conduct when interacting with children and young people. To ensure their safety and wellbeing, we have established Practice and Behaviour Guidelines specifically designed to identify and prevent any actions that may pose harm to the children and young people under our supervision. The following is a concise overview of these Guidelines.

#### Supervision

To ensure the safety of the children and young people we serve, our personnel must avoid situations where they are alone with them. Whenever possible, all activities and discussions with service recipients should take place in the presence of other personnel. For one-to-one program delivery, sessions should be conducted in an appropriate, public, child-friendly space.

#### Transportation

Transporting children and young people is only permitted with prior authorisation from a parent/guardian and a member of the Little Dreamers Senior Leadership Team. Our personnel are strictly prohibited from giving casual rides to children or young people. To obtain approval from a member of the Little Dreamers Senior Leadership Team, personnel must provide details of the proposed journey, including the mode of transportation, the purpose, and the individuals who will be present.

#### Positive Guidance

Our objective is to help children and young people understand the acceptable boundaries of their behavior while fostering a sense of safety and security. There may be occasions when our personnel need to employ appropriate behavior management strategies to maintain a positive and safe environment for participants in our programs and services, ensuring their wellbeing and the wellbeing of personnel involved.

Any behavior management approach utilised must be fair, respectful, and suitable for the developmental stage of the children or young people involved. Clear instructions should be given, allowing the child or young person the opportunity to redirect their misbehavior in a positive manner. Under no circumstances should our personnel resort to disciplinary actions involving physical punishment or any treatment that may be perceived as degrading, cruel, frightening, or humiliating.

#### Use of Language and Tone

The language and tone of voice used in the presence of children and young people should not be harmful but instead provide clear guidance, boost their confidence, and offer encouragement and affirmation.

#### Professional Role Boundaries

To ensure adherence to their designated duties as outlined in their position descriptions, our personnel are not permitted to engage in activities outside the scope of delivering our programs and services, as specified by Little Dreamers. The organisation actively discourages personnel and volunteers from participating in activities such as babysitting and weekend trips with children who are involved in Little Dreamers programs, unless prior written approval is obtained from the CEO.

#### Photographs of Children and Young People

Our personnel may only capture photographs of children and young people while they are actively participating in our programs and services if the following conditions are met:

- ★ Prior written authorisation from a parent or guardian has been obtained (excluding special events such as concerts, festivals, performances, open days, and competitions).
- ★ The context of the photograph is directly related to their involvement in our programs and services.
- ★ The child is appropriately dressed and posed.

#### Use of Electronic and Online Communication

Whenever possible, any email or text message communication sent to a child or young person should be copied to their parent or guardian. Communication should be limited to matters directly associated with delivering our programs and services, such as notifying them of a cancelled event. Interaction with young people on social networking sites is only permitted through official Little Dreamers sites and must be carried out by designated Little Dreamers Social Media Administrators.

#### Use, Possession, or Supply of Alcohol or Drugs

While on duty, personnel must not:

- ★ Be under the influence of alcohol, illegal drugs, or any other substance that impairs their capacity to perform their duties.
- ★ Provide alcohol or drugs (including tobacco) to children and young people participating in our programs.

#### Giving Gifts

Giving gifts to children and young people who receive our services requires prior authorisation from the CEO and the parents/guardians.

### Promoting Equity and Diversity

It is the responsibility of all personnel to approach and interact with children and young people in a manner that is sensitive, respectful, and inclusive of all backgrounds and abilities. When our organisation engages with children who are Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander, from culturally and/or linguistically diverse backgrounds, or have a disability, our personnel will actively promote their safety, participation, and empowerment, including cultural safety.

### **Further Information**

If you have any concerns regarding the safety of a child or young person, or if you would like to discuss any of the provided information in greater detail, please don't hesitate to reach out to our Programs Director.

To access comprehensive information about child safety at Little Dreamers and to review our complete set of Safeguarding Children Policies, please visit our website at [www.littledreamers.org.au](http://www.littledreamers.org.au).