

# Leo

## Policy Template



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## LEO CLUBS CHILD SAFE PROCEDURE TEMPLATE

Leo Clubs are formed, managed and operated by the sponsoring Lions Club and are therefore beyond the scope of the Multiple District Child Safe Policy.

This template is a guide for sponsoring Lions Clubs. It is essential that any Lions Club that operates a Leo Club develops its own Child Safe policies consistent with the Multiple District approach, and reflecting the rules and laws operating within its State.

It should be noted that a detailed risk assessment should be completed that identifies risks associated with the particular Leo Club to which the Child Safe Policy applies.

A Lions Club must not simply endorse this guideline without proper review, consideration and if needed, training. Compliance with Child Safe legislation and rules in your jurisdiction is the responsibility of your Lions Club.

Lions Clubs that sponsor Leo Clubs are encouraged to review the Multiple District Child Safe Policy that covers:

- Lions Youth of the Year Program
- Lions Leo of the Year Program
- Lions Youth Exchange Program

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# GUIDELINE

## 1 OBJECTIVES

The aim of this policy is to protect children and young people whilst they participate in Lions Club 201 youth programs. This will be done by providing an explicit structure when working with children and young people.

It will explain:

- a) Procedures for working with children and young people.
- b) Education in child safe conduct for both children, young people and Lions members.
- c) How allegations of abuse will be managed.
- d) How incidents are managed and reported.

## 2 BELIEFS UNDERPINNING THIS POLICY.

Lions members have a wealth of experience and are genuinely altruistic. Lions Clubs at all times believe in the principle that the best interest of the child and young person is paramount. We are volunteers who are determined to do the best we can and be the best person we can be.

We run children and young persons' programs in order to help them achieve goals they may not otherwise have available to them. In doing this we need to assure ourselves and others we act appropriately at all times when working with children and young people, who due to their age are vulnerable.

We acknowledge child safety is every member's responsibility. As proud members of Lions Clubs Australia we are transparent in our actions and therefore do not hesitate in upholding the principles as defined in this policy.

## 3 SCOPE OF THIS POLICY.

Although this policy has allowed for the most stringent of state or territory child-protection related acts it is unable to account for any future legislative changes and it will therefore be reviewed initially annually to ensure our Lions Club maintains a very high standard and compliance.

For the purpose of this policy any youth regardless of their age, participating in a Lion's Youth Program will be covered by this policy but may have different statutory responses. In particular, the rules around obtaining a Working with Children clearance varies from state to state.

This policy relates specifically to the Leo Club sponsored by the Lions Club of

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## 4 INTRODUCTION.

- a) Children and young people have a right to grow up in healthy communities.
- b) Our Club recognises its responsibility to promote the safety and welfare of every child and young person having contact with the club and to work in a coordinated and cooperative

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manner to ensure protection and timely intervention where children and young people are at risk of harm.

- c) Our Lions Club, in operating its programs for young people, aims to protect children and young people from situations that pose harm or risk of harm.
- d) In all actions and decisions concerning a child or young person, the safety, welfare and wellbeing of the child or young person must be the paramount consideration.
- e) Wherever a child or young person is able to form their own views on a matter concerning their welfare, they must be given an opportunity to express those views freely and those views are to be given due weight in accordance with the developmental capacity of the child or young person and the circumstances.
- f) In all decisions relating to children or young people, account must be taken of the culture, developmental capacity, language, religion and sexuality of the child or young person and, if relevant, those with parental responsibility for the child or young person.
- g) In deciding what action it is necessary to take, whether by a legal or administrative process, in order to protect a child or young person from harm, the course to be followed must be the least intrusive intervention in the life of the child or young person and their family. This will be consistent with the paramount concern to protect the child or young person from harm and promote the child or young person's development.

## **5 CHILD SAFE ORGANISATIONS.**

Our Lions Club is committed to being a child safe organisation. As such:

- a) We will build an environment that will mitigate harm to children or young people.
- b) We will build an environment that will significantly improve the possibilities of identifying and reporting harm.
- c) We will react appropriately to any disclosure or allegations of harm

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## **6 POLICY DEFINITIONS.**

### **ADULT.**

Any person who is 18 years and over. In some circumstance if a young person is 16 or 17 and is acting in a position of authority and where their behaviour is the subject of concern, they will be deemed as adults under this policy.

### **ALLEGATION.**

An assertion made by someone which is not yet proven in court.

### **BREACH.**

A failure of duty of care (see Lions Australia Child Safe Policy section 17 – Failure in Duty of Care).

### **CHILD, CHILDREN OR YOUNG PERSON, PEOPLE.**

Sometimes referred to as a minor, it is someone under the age of 18. For the purpose of this policy, any person who is participating in a Youth Program is afforded the protection of a child safe environment.

### **CHILD SAFE.**

The most current term for what has been up until recently referred to as child protection.

### **CHILD SAFE TRAINING.**

Lions Australia encourages its members working with children to source community-based training to supplement this policy. The availability of such training can be sourced through government child safety regulation websites. Please refer to the [Lions Australia Child Safe Policy Resources](#) web page for more information.

Where ‘training’ is referred to in this policy, it refers to:

- Reading and becoming familiar with this policy and procedures, and
- Discussing this policy and procedure at a Club meeting.

Minutes of the meeting where the Child Safe Policy has been reviewed should be kept, documenting the names of attendees.

### **CODE OF CONDUCT.**

Expected appropriate behaviour as deemed by Lions Australia and has been codified for both members, and children and young people for their own protection.

### **DISCLOSURE.**

When a child or young person informs someone of any age they have been either sexually, physically, emotionally abused or neglected.

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**EMOTIONAL ABUSE.**

Serious psychological harm as a result of behaviours such as excessive criticism, exposure to domestic violence, intimidation or threatening behaviours resulting in a loss of self-worth and confidence.

**GROOMING.**

When a child or young person is psychologically manipulated by an adult to form a trust which is highly detrimental to them but allows the adult to advance their chance to sexually exploit the child or young person. Often children and young people do not know they are being groomed. This is commonly done either by face to face, texting or via social media.

**HARM.**

The impact of physical, psychological and emotional abuse and neglect.

**LIONS YOUTH PROGRAM VOLUNTEER.**

The term is used to cover any person who volunteers to work in any Lions youth program but is not themselves a Lions member but will hold a Working with Children Check or equivalent.

**NEGLECT.**

Neglect is when a parent or caregiver consistently fails to give a child or young person the basic things needed for their growth and development such as food, clothing, shelter, medical attention, supervision, parenting and care.

**PHYSICAL ABUSE.**

As defined in state and territory legislation but usually referring to physical contact on a child or young person that may include the following but not limited to: - Corporal punishment of any kind (e.g., smacking, hitting open or close hand). Restraining by use of force to any body parts. Restricted practices such as locking a child or young person in a room.

**REPORTING.**

Informing Police, Statutory Child Protection Services and Lion’s officials of an incident of sexual or physical abuse by a Lions member, volunteer or young person on a child or young person.

**RISK ASSESSMENT.**

An evaluation of the probability of an adverse departure and its consequences from an organisation’s principles. It is the first phase in managing risks to an organisation.

**SEXUAL ABUSE.**

As defined in state and territory legislation but usually referring to sexual contact of any kind with a child or young person under the age of 18 with or without consent. The perpetrator of this act could be an adult or under some circumstances a minor.

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**WORKING WITH CHILDREN CHECK.**

The ‘Working with Children Check’ refers to the government-regulated system in each State and Territory where individuals working with children can apply to be screened for voluntary or paid employment to enable them to work with children. It involves a national criminal history check and a review of findings of workplace misconduct.

It only identifies individuals who have come to the attention of authorities and must therefore be used in conjunction with sound risk management processes and local checks.

**7 LIONS CONDUCT WHEN WORKING WITH CHILDREN**

Lions Australia is a highly respected organisation through its excellent work in the community and overseas projects. Its logo is highly recognisable, and our members are often seen in the wider community performing much needed beneficial tasks and as members we are proud of our achievements. Given this, it is important for both our members and the community to maintain confidence in our activities. A significant part of maintaining this confidence is for all members to adhere to a Code of Conduct. Therefore, the following are reasonable expectations we put on ourselves when working with children.

Lion members and volunteers shall: -

- i. At all times whilst at a youth camp or other Lions organised youth events wear a Lions Identification Badge or Passes or lanyards.
- ii. At all times we will take all reasonable steps to protect children and young people in our care.
- iii. Not develop a relationship with child or young person that could be misconstrued as grooming behaviour by others.
- iv. Not develop a relationship with a child or young person that could threaten the child or young person’s safety or wellbeing.
- v. Will not disclose children or persons private information other than within the obligations of the Child Safe Policy.
- vi. Be accepting of all children and young people in our care regardless of their ethnicity, religious beliefs or gender identification.
- vii. Always treat children and young people in our care with respect.
- viii. Always act in accordance with our Lions Club Child Safe policy.
- ix. Never offer alcohol or illicit drugs of any kind to a child or young person.
- x. Never be under the influence of alcohol or illicit drugs whilst in the position of care or responsibility of a child or young person.
- xi. Never expose children or young people to pornographic material from any medium.
- xii. Always know where the child or young person is when in your charge.
- xiii. Never intimidate a child or young person through tone of voice and verbally abusive language.
- xiv. Report any breach of the code of conduct through the Lions Feedback and Enquiries form located on the website here <https://lionsclubs.org.au/keep-in-touch/feedback/>
- xv. Uphold, respect and protect those members and volunteers who in good faith report a breach of this code.

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xvi. Any breach of the Child Safe Policy may result in action by the Lions club to restrict the member’s activities, suspend or cancel their membership.

### 7.1 LEO RECORDS

The Sponsoring Lions Club shall keep a record of Leo members to enable complaints to be investigated.

- a) The name and suburb of each participant in the program and the sponsoring club shall be registered in the MyLCI system.
- b) The names and contact details of the Leo Club Advisor associated with each Leo Club.
- c) Incident reports shall be recorded.
- d) Such information will be archived by the sponsoring Club.
- e) It should be noted that MD201 will extract a record from the “MyLCI” system each year recording the names of Leo participants to assist with future complaints.

### 7.2 WORKING WITH CHILDREN CHECK

All Lions or other adults having direct contact with Leos under the age of 18 years must comply with relevant WWCC requirements. Since our club operates Lions youth programs, it is highly desirable that all members hold the relevant WWCC.

- a) Any members who refuse to undergo a Working with Children Check or its state or territory equivalent will not be permitted to undertake any child or young person related function in a Lions program.
- b) The club will keep a confidential record of all members WWCC.
- c) New and prospective members must be informed that under Clause 5.1 of the Constitution of Multiple District 201, “membership of the Multiple District shall be deemed to constitute an acknowledgement that each Lions Club and its members accept and shall observe the Code of Conduct from time to time in force as adopted by the Council.

The Leo Advisor or Child Safe Officer appointed by the club is the person responsible at club level for ensuring WWCC register is up to date.

### 7.3 LEO CLUB ACTIVITIES INVOLVING ALPHA AND OMEGA MEMBERS.

Lions Clubs International specifies that:

*“The Leo Club Program is for youth ages 12 - 30. A Leo club must be designated as either an Alpha club (12-18 years) or an Omega club (18- 30 years) and may not include members of both age brackets.”*

Leo Clubs in both age groups routinely cooperate in projects and activities, and Child Safe practices must reflect the legal status of some of these members as ‘adults’.

Where over 18 members participate in activities with under-18 members:

- a) All Leo members over the age of 18 years must have WWCC or its state equivalent.
- b) Care must be taken to ensure that all interactions between club members occur in public spaces.
- c) Where possible, at least two Leo advisors or Lions members should be present at all times when younger Leos are involved.

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- d) Parental approval must be obtained before allowing an adult Leo to transport an under 18 years Leo to any club activity.

#### 7.4 ATTENDANCE AT LEO CLUB MEETINGS, FUNCTIONS OR PROJECTS

It is recommended that at least two Lions members of differing genders attend all Leo activities (unless held on school premises with school staff present).

#### 7.5 TRANSPORTING LEOS TO CLUB ACTIVITIES

When a child or young person is required to be transported by a Lion in order to participate in a Club program the following must apply.

- a) Where transporting must occur, best practice states that it should occur only by a minimum of two adults preferably of differing gender. It is recognised this may not be possible at all times but should be practised whenever possible.
- b) Any member transporting a child or young person must have a valid Working with Children Check and have undergone child safety awareness training.

#### 7.6 INTERVIEWS FOR LEO OF THE YEAR

Many of our programs require children or young people to attend an interview, this teaches them valuable interviewing skills and techniques.

- a) When a child or young person is required to participate in an interview, face to face or online, for any Club program it will only be conducted with the consent of a parent or guardian, with the attendance of at least two Lions members or youth program volunteers preferably of differing genders. A record of the names and contact details of those attending the interview will be maintained.
- b) Other than for Youth of the Year and Leo of the Year Judging panels, where attendance of a parent or support person is contrary to the competitive nature of the program, young people may bring a support person to any interview.
- c) To help mitigate child safe issues in the process of interviewing youth, a Lion shall be present at all times.
- d) Any member interviewing a child or young person must have a valid Working with Children Check or their state or territory equivalent and demonstrate an understanding of the Club Child Safe Policy.

#### 7.7 CONTACT WITH LEO MEMBERS

- a) All email communication is to be issued to the club's email address.
- b) Email addresses and contact details for Leo members are held securely and are only provided to the Lions Club President, Secretary and Leo Advisor.
- c) Where it is necessary to email individual Leo members, this should be issued on official template, and copied to club or parent email address.
- d) Names of Leo Club members will be periodically archived from the MyLCI system and held securely at the Lions National office. Clubs should maintain their own secure records noting that only contact information should be archived once Leos have left the club.

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## 7.8 PHOTOGRAPHY AND SOCIAL MEDIA

Photos of young people involved in Lions activities are a valuable tool in promoting youth programs. However, photos are easily taken these days especially with the use of mobile phones. These images can be readily transmitted leaving young people vulnerable to online grooming and exploitation.

Therefore, any photos taken of children or young people involved in Lions activities shall only be done with the consent of the young person and if under 18 years of age also with a parent or guardian consent. This consent can be obtained as part of the initial application into a Lions youth program or through a specific documented photograph permission form for an event.

Any photo taken must be appropriate and cannot be of a sexualised nature. Particular care should be taken when posting photos on social media.

All social media communication with children and young people should be transparent and accessible to parents. Content should be focused on the youth program and appropriate in tone and language at all times.

Event organisers should check that consent for photographs exists prior to each activity.

## 7.9 LEO CAMPS AND CONFERENCES

- a) Leo Camps and conferences may be held within District or State boundaries. They often take place over 2-3 days and include residential accommodation in a youth camp facility. Leo members aged between 12 and 30 years may attend these events, so particular care must be taken to ensure that the young people are safe.
- b) A camp registration list indicating Leos and Lions attending must be archived at National Office and local copies destroyed within 3 months after the camp is held. The name of the participant, camp and dates of participation will be held by the National Office for 45 years.
- c) All adults (including Leos over the age of 18 years) participating in Leo camps or conferences must provide valid WWCC to the organising committee.
- d) All participants in Leo Camps must sign a Code of Conduct as part of the registration process.
- e) Accommodation in Leo camps must separate males and females. Leo camps must not accommodate Leos under the age of 18 in the same dormitories as over 18's.
- f) In some circumstances, it may be prudent to allow a 17-year old to share a room with a close friend who may be 18 years old. Permission should only be granted for a 17-year-old to co-share a room with the following consents: 1. Written consent from a parent or guardian. 2. Verbal consent from the youth, not hearsay. 3. The room is only to be shared by one other person (two people in total in the room). These consents are required to help confirm the youth is not agreeing to co-share a room under duress.

## 7.10 LEOS ATTENDING LIONS CONVENTIONS

- a) Leos under the age of 18 years who attend Lions conventions must attend with a parent/guardian or have a nominated chaperone, with appropriate WWC clearance and approved by parents/guardians.
- b) Leos involved in Leo of the Year program are under the jurisdiction of the MD Leo Committee and must abide by all reasonable requests regarding their conduct and attendance throughout the convention.
- c) It is recommended that any accommodation required for a Leos attending Convention is arranged by parents or guardians. If however, billeting with a Lion or other host is required,

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then the principles of Youth Exchange Hosting apply. (See Lions Australia Child Safe Policy Section 23.10) Hosts must complete a Youth Exchange Host application form.

### 7.11 CHILD SAFE OFFICER

Each club operating Lions youth programs will identify the position of a Child Safe Officer (CSO) and appoint a member to this position. The CSO should seek to inform themselves to increase their understanding and awareness of Child safety. References are provided in the MD201 Child Safe Policy Resources section of the Lions Australia Website. The Club Child Safe Officer will:

- a) Ensure members have an understanding of Lions Australia Child Safe Policy and relevant state/territory legislation and regulation, and this understanding is revised annually.
- b) Maintain a register of all members Working with Children Check or its state or territory equivalent. This register will allow the CCSO to remind members of any expiry date.
- c) Review Child Safe Incident Reports and recommend appropriate responses to the Club President. (See Appendix 3 in the Lions Australia Child Safe Policy)

### 7.12 YOUTH SUPPORT OFFICER

Clubs running Leo Projects are also encouraged to appoint a Youth Support Officer. A Youth Support Officer is a Lion that is not an office holder in the Leo Project who can provide assistance to Leos if needed. The position is most useful if a Leo is having difficulties with the Leo Advisor or other existing Leo personnel.

## 8 WHAT NEEDS TO BE REPORTED?

Any form of sexual, physical, emotional abuse or negligence as described in the definitions. If you are the person to whom the allegations have been disclosed or you have been made aware of the allegations, it is critical you do not excessively question the child or young person.

Interviewing is for the purpose of understanding the nature of the allegations and ensuring safety. Excessive interviewing can be traumatic for a victim and may inadvertently compromise the evidence and any further evidence may be deemed inadmissible in a court due to perceived coaching or rehearsing.

All pertinent conversations with the child or young person and relevant other parties need to be documented in an impartial manner and with reference to as many direct quotes as possible. Good documentation helps prevent the child from having to repeat the story.

Report any allegations of child abuse or neglect to the Child Safe Officer responsible for the program who will action the Child Safe Procedure (See Appendix 1 in the Lions Australia Child Safe Policy) and complete the Child Safe Incident Report Form directly (See Appendix 3 in the Lions Australia Child Safe Policy), or with the assistance of the Child Safe Officer.

Once a child or young person has made a disclosure keep them safe and reassure them they have done the right thing in disclosing and that any allegations of abuse are not their fault.

Professional independent counselling should be offered to any child or young person and their families where an allegation of abuse has been made, noting that the records from these sessions are subject to subpoena.

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## 9 WHO REPORTS ABUSE?

A member may become aware of an allegation or incident of abuse by numerous means such as observation, face-to-face, telephone, social media, text etc.

It is the responsibility of all Lions Australia Club members to report abuse if they:

- a) Witnessed the alleged abuse.
- b) Were informed of the alleged abuse by another member and it had not been reported.
- c) Were informed of the alleged abuse by the child or young person who was the victim.
- d) Were informed of the alleged abuse by a child or young person who was not the victim.
- e) Were informed of the alleged abuse by a non-member of Lions Australia.

All immediate safety concerns are to be reported to the Police by any Lion member as a matter of priority. When the allegation is received by the relevant Child Safe Officer and where immediate safety has been assured the CSO activates the Child Safe Procedure (See Appendix 5 in the Lions Australia Child Safe Policy) and completes the Child Safe Incident Report Form. (Appendix 3 in the Lions Australia Child Safe Policy).

The report should be completed at the program level. This means a report for a club activity is completed by the Club Child Safe Officer or program leader, and a District activity by the District CSO or District Program chair.

Note the general reporting structure in the charts. (Appendix 4 in the Lions Australia Child Safe Policy).

*Please Note: So long as a report has been made in good faith, legislation in all states and territories protects reporters, therefore no criminal, civil or administrative proceedings can be brought against them.*

## 10 ADOPTION OF THIS POLICY

This policy was adopted by the Lions Club of \_\_\_\_\_ on this date)\_\_\_\_\_

A copy of the Leo Club Risk Assessment is attached.

*This policy should be filed by the club and provided to any club member working with children.*

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