



## CHILD PROTECTION POLICY

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Drafted by	Richard Merton	Approved by board on	16 September 2019
Responsible person	Irwan Wyllie	Scheduled review date	16 September 2020

### Introduction

This Child Protection Policy is a statement of intent that demonstrates a commitment to safeguard children from harm and makes clear to all what is required in relation to the protection of children. It helps to create a safe and positive environment for children and to show that Dharma Care (DC) is taking its duty of care seriously.

DC and all its employees accept the duty to safeguard the welfare of the children in its care. This policy outlines our commitment to providing the children who are in the care of DC, or who are supported by DC's charitable activities with the safest possible environment. This requires action to ensure the protection of children from intentional and unintentional actions which could harm them.

**For the purposes of this policy, references to “employees” include employees, associates, volunteers, contractors, officers and directors of Dharma Care.**

All employees will be individually and collectively responsible for child protection and will be made aware of this policy and any related guidelines, codes or protocols.

The UN Convention on the Rights of the Child states that:

- All children have equal rights to protection from abuse and exploitation;
- Everybody has a responsibility to support the care and protection of children;
- The duty bearers are accountable to eradicate child abuse.

Based on the above guiding context and principles, DC is obliged and committed to ensuring that children are protected from harm.

### Definitions

**Child** means a person below the age of 18 years unless, under the law applicable to the child, majority is attained earlier. 'Children' and 'Child' may be used interchangeably.

**The protection of children** includes any responsibility, measure or activity undertaken to safeguard children from harm, including:

- **Physical Harm:** this occurs when a person purposefully injures or threatens to injure a child. This harm may include slapping, punching, shaking, kicking, burning, shoving or grabbing, with or without the use of a object.
- **Emotional Harm:** this occurs when persistent ill treatment affects a child's self-esteem. This may include name calling, rejection, threatening, intimidating, cursing, slandering or other acts which can affect the child's self-esteem.
- **Neglect:** this occurs when a child's basic needs have consistently not been met to the extent that it has a detrimental effect on the child's health and personal development. These basic needs include food, clothing, shelter and supervision.
- **Sexual Harm:** is any act in which an adult exposes a child to, or involves a child in, sexual processes beyond his or her understanding or contrary to accepted community standards. Sexual harm can include the fondling of genitals, masturbation, oral sex, vaginal or anal penetration by a penis, finger or other object, fondling of breasts, voyeurism, exhibitionism, and exposing the child to or involving the child in pornography, trafficking and prostitution. 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.

## **Purpose**

The purpose of this policy is

1. To protect children within *Dharma Care*
2. To work towards an organisational culture of child safety.
3. To ensure that all parties are aware of their responsibilities for identifying possible failures to protect children and for establishing controls and procedures for preventing such failures.
4. To provide guidance to staff/volunteers/contractors on actions that should be taken to protect children, and where they suspect failure to protect children within or outside of the organisation has occurred.
5. To provide a clear statement to staff/volunteers/contractors on DCs total commitment to the protection of children.
6. To provide assurance that any and all failures to protect children will be reported and fully investigated.

## **STATEMENT OF COMMITMENT**

*Dharma Care* is committed to promoting and protecting the best interests of children involved in its programs and on its premises. This policy conforms to the general principles of the UN Convention of the Rights of the Child.

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

*Dharma Care* has total commitment to the protection of children. All employees of *Dharma Care* and its associated organisations are responsible for the care and protection of the children within our care and for reporting information about situations where this has not occurred.

*Dharma Care* will consider the opinions of children and use their opinions to further develop its child protection policy and child protection manual.

*Dharma Care* supports and respects all children.

## **International Services**

*Where Dharma Care operates a service outside Australia it will abide by this Policy and Procedures unless the Laws of that country require a higher level of protection. In this case Dharma Care will operate at that higher level of protection.*

## **Authorisation**

Approved by the Dharma Care Board on 16 September 2019



Signed ..... (Chairman of Board)