



Child & Youth Risk Management & Protection Strategy

Policy Number	MSLS004
Date Issued	4/9/19
Approved/Endorsed By	MSLSC Executive Management Committee
Review Date	4/9/20
Document Owner	J Wilson - <i>JWilson</i>

All members must:

- remember that the welfare of the child or children is always of paramount importance.
- know the policies, complaint processes and guidelines under *6.05 SLSA Member Protection Policy* and how they apply to you.
- understand and commit to *SLSQ Codes of Conduct*.
- understand how the child protection legislation in Queensland affects you.

Scope

The following principles or actions will assist coaches, trainers, age managers, officials, parents, guardians and carers provide a safe environment for children.

It is important to have Clubs relevant Code of Conduct/s available at any induction to parents, guardians and young people. Refer to the SLSA Policy *6.05 Member Protection Policy* – Appendices for a copy of the code of conduct or MSLSC policy Number MSLS001.

Parents/Guardians and Carers will be supplied with MSLSC 'Important Information for Parents/Guardians & Carers' MSLS005 information sheet.

Policy

Communication

Activity Induction

Prior to commencement of the activity, an induction is to be provided, regardless of whether it is a 'one off' activity or an activity conducted over a period of time. Provide this information to parents, carers and the children or young people taking part. Ensure that the induction:

- Clearly identifies what will happen and what is expected of the activity
- Highlights anything that would be of concern to parents, carers, children, or young people
- Answer any questions people may have
- Let participants know what will happen if anything goes wrong, and
- Let participants know who they can discuss any issues or concerns with you



Child & Youth Risk Management & Protection Strategy

- Setting up basic rules at the beginning of the season, such as: follow instructions; have a go; no put-downs. Ensure children are aware of these rules.

From the perspective of parents, carers, children and young people, the induction must:

- provide an opportunity to ask questions and clarify issues
- help them understand what is expected of them
- make them aware of what will happen if an issue arises, and
- let them know who to contact if they have any concerns in the future
- supply a copy of the 'Important Information for Parents/Guardians & Carers' information handout.

Language and tone of voice:

It is important when communicating with children that you remember not all will interpret what you say in the same manner. It is important to ensure you:

Do's	Don'ts
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Be positive and use age-appropriate when talking to and in the presence of children.• Provide clear direction, boost their confidence, encourage or affirm them.• Talk to the Child in a professional manner and with respect• Address when negative language or tone is used by a Child, Parent/guardian or other member and reinforce that it is not appropriate	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Do not use aggressive language that could intimidate a child or set a bad example.• Loose your temper (verbally or physically). If you find you regularly lose your temper with children you should seek support or do not work with children.• Separate yourself and a child from the line of sight of other people.• Make inappropriate comments about a child's appearance, including excessive flattery• Have inappropriate conversation or enquires of a sexual nature• Use pet names• Make jokes or innuendo of sexual nature, including obscene gestures and language

Electronic:

Electronic communication is becoming more and more prevalent due to the ease and speed at which messages can be sent and the growing number of children and young people with access to social media and smart devices. It is important that when communicating via these channels that members remember to:



Child & Youth Risk Management & Protection Strategy

Do's	Don'ts
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Include parents/guardians in all communication (such as txt, email or Facebook)• Try to communicate in a group txt rather than individually• Use polite and respectful language at all times• Limit content to issues directly associated with delivering services, activities or programs e.g. advising training is cancelled	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Befriend children on social media sites e.g. Facebook• Ask a child to keep communication secret from their parent/guardian• Send photos or Videos directly to a child without prior consent from a parent or guardian• Upload or publish still/moving images or audio recordings of children or young people without the prior authorisation of their parent or guardian

Physical contact during training:

All members working with children and young people need to be aware that not all will understand an action or request in the same manner. One child may see an action as usual or acceptable behaviour while another may find it unacceptable. A child's interpretation of an action may also be influenced by cultural and religious differences, gender and prior experiences. Any physical Contact with Children must be appropriate to the delivery of surf life saving services, events, program or activities.

Do's	Don'ts
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Ensure your actions at all times are unambiguously professional.• Give a verbal explanation, in front of all members (and preferably parents as well) of how, where, when and why you may need to make physical contact with children• Seek permission to make physical contact when skill development is required to ensure the athlete/member is aware of the contact that is required.• Where possible use verbal direction rather than physical contact	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Have contact with a child which involves the touching (unless it is part of delivering medical or allied health services to which you are qualified to deliver):<ul style="list-style-type: none">○ Of genitals○ Of buttocks○ Of the breast area• Engage in or let others engage in any of the following:<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Abusive initiation or bonding activities• Forcing children into 'macho type' activities• Rough, physical, hurtful or sexually provocative games



Child & Youth Risk Management & Protection Strategy

- Ensure that any physical contact with children is appropriate to the skills being developed within the surf lifesaving skills program
- Respect and respond to signs that a child or young person is uncomfortable with touch
- Have sufficient coaches/age managers/chaperones/supervisors/trainers and/or water safety for effective supervision based on the age and number of children involved.
- Have a Club policy that children apply each other's sunscreen if parents are not able to apply the cream on their own children.
- Regular scape goating, ridiculing, rejecting, isolating or taking the 'mickey' out of a child
- Single out the same child when performing demonstrations
- Inflict corporal punishment (physical discipline, smacking, long runs in hot weather, no water breaks etc.)

Please refer to the appropriate policies such as: *1.01 - SLSA Water Safety Policy* and *MS02 -Chaperoning & Supervision of Minors Policy* for the ratio of supervisors to participants.

Change Room Arrangements:

It is important to ensure there is adequate supervision of children in change rooms while balancing the requirement to respect the child's right to privacy. You can ensure that a safe environment is maintained at all times by:

Do's	Don'ts
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Ensure that during training and competition, children go to the toilet in pairs or small groups.• Before entering change rooms knock or announce that you will be coming in and have at least one other adult with you.• Ensure adequate supervision in public change rooms when they are used	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Isolate yourself and a child from others in the change room.• Allow adults to use change rooms , for example, to undress, while children are present unless they are also competing in a SLS event or are participating in a SLS training environment



Child & Youth Risk Management & Protection Strategy

Transport of Members

All members should have their own transportation to and from Surf Life Saving events.

Do's	Don'ts
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Ensure the driver is properly licenced• Have the ride approved by parents/ guardians• Tell the child's parents the route you'll be taking and estimated time of arrival	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Allow a child to sit in the front seat• Isolate yourself and a child from others in a vehicle

Drop off and pick up of participants:

Children must be dropped off before an activity and picked up afterwards by their parents or guardians. In no circumstances should children make their own way to and from an activity. On their way to and from activities children may be exposed to potential risk. Procedures must be put in place to minimise these risks. Clubs must have strategies in place to meet specific circumstances and the following must be considered as a minimum:

Do's	Don'ts
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Agree with parents a set procedure for drop off and pick up arrangements.• Ensure there is a buffer period where a coach or trainer arrives a certain period of time before an activity starts and stays a certain• Have a register of parent/ guardian emergency contact numbers and make sure coaches/ age managers/ trainers/ supervisors have access to a phone period of time after it ends.• Have a Club policy that the second to last child and their parent/ guardian will wait with the coach/ trainer and the child.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Leave children unattended before or after training.• Allow children to leave without their parent or guardian



Child & Youth Risk Management & Protection Strategy

Overnight Trips and sleeping arrangements

From time to time clubs will conduct overnight trips for children and young people. This exposes members to risks outside of 'day to day' operations. To ensure the safety of all children the following points should be considered at a minimum.

- Abide by *MS02 - SLSQ Chaperoning & Supervision of Minors Policy*. Refer to this policy for the ratio of members to supervisors and sleeping arrangements for males and females.
- Obtain separate sleeping accommodation from the children (adults in separate rooms).
- Ensure that adults are within hearing distance of the children to be able to respond to any alarm raised by a child. If an alarm is raised by a child more than one adult must respond
- Follow and use MSLSC policy number/s MSLS008 & MSLS009

Do's	Don'ts
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Ensure members complete <i>Parental Consent Forms</i> if an activity is to be conducted off Club premises.• Familiarise yourself with surroundings and note any possible risk areas and promote this to the other staff/ volunteers/ parents/ chaperones on the trip to ensure suitable measures are implemented to avoid them.• Ensure that pre-requisites are met by all Chaperones.• Plan appropriate accommodation, if children share a room they should be the same age and sex.• Always have more than one adult with children on an overnight trip/ camp, even if the number of children is small.• Perform regular room checks to ensure that all are complying with the <i>SLSQ Codes of Conduct</i>.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Do not separate yourself and children from other adults.• In an emergency do not remove a child's clothing unless you have their permission and at least one other person is present



Child & Youth Risk Management & Protection Strategy

Off-Premises Activities

Organised off –premises activities for children may occur and to ensure the safety of these members the following should be considered:

Do's	Don'ts
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Ensure members complete <i>Parental Consent Forms</i>• Always have more than one adult with a group of children, even if the number of children is small.• Familiarise yourself with surroundings and note any possible risk areas and promote this to the other staff/ volunteers/ parents/ chaperones on the trip to ensure suitable countermeasures are implemented to avoid them.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Leave children unattended

Refer to *MS02 - SLSQ Chaperoning & Supervision of Minors Policy* for the correct ratio of Adults to Children and MSLSC Policy MSL008 and MSL009

The Use of Images of Children

There have been concerns about the risks posed directly and indirectly to children and young people through the use of photographs on web sites and other publications. Evidence in Australia indicates that information posted on an Internet site or published in a magazine or newspaper can be used to target children, to locate them, and then to condition or groom them. Additionally images can be used or adapted for inappropriate use. The end result is that in spite of the best intentions on the part of the publisher, children can end up being victims of abuse. Surf Life Saving Clubs need to be aware of these potential risks and take appropriate steps to address them.

Acquiring Images

Do's	Don'ts
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Seek permission via SLSQ 'Photograph Consent Form' from the child's parent/ guardian prior to taking the image.• Clearly outline and publicise what is considered appropriate behaviour and content to those taking photographic/video images.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Do not allow unsupervised or individual access to members.• Do not approve photo/ video sessions outside the event venue or at a member's home.



Child & Youth Risk Management & Protection Strategy

- Provide details of who to contact if concerns or complaints of inappropriate photographic behaviour or content are raised.
- Ensure all photographers have the club photographers pass which is registered with the Club/Branch/SLSQ

Refer to the *SLSA Photography Policy 6.21* and *MC01 - SLSQ Photography Policy* for information on how to obtain accreditation at events and sample release form.

Displaying Images

Do's	Don'ts
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Seek permission from the member's parent/ guardian prior to using their image.• Ensure that they are aware of the way in which the image is to be used and how long the image will be displayed when used on a website.• If an image is used, avoid naming the member and vice versa. If this is not possible avoid using both a first name and surname.• Only use appropriate images of the member, relevant to the lifesaving activity, and suitably clothed• Images of members in an activity that involves minimal clothing or unusual body positions/ poses, which could potentially be misused, should focus on the activity not on a particular child and avoid full face and body shots.• Reduce/ eliminate the ability for the direct copying of pictures from a website to another source (i.e. disable the 'right mouse click' function).	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Do not display personal information such as residential address, Email address or telephone numbers• Do not display information about hobbies, likes/dislikes, school etc.



Child & Youth Risk Management & Protection Strategy

- Provide details of who to contact if concerns or complaints of inappropriate image use are raised.

Ensure that the *SLSA Social Media Policy 6.20* and *MPA1 – SLSQ Member Social Media and Online Communications Policy* are complied with.

Working with children with disabilities

Working with children with disabilities may require more frequent physical contact and touch as a means of meeting the duty of care to them. Touch may be an agreed form of communication between a child, their parent and coach/age manager/trainer where the child has a communication disability. A coach, age manager, trainer and others will need to be more vigilant and thoughtful in their physical interactions and different approaches that may be required. However, the basic practices and information outlined previously remain applicable to all children.

Surf Life Saving has a duty of care to protect children from physical and emotional harm and, while the ways of meeting this duty may differ for different groups, the duty itself remains unqualified. Everyone expected to meet this duty will do so in a manner that respects the dignity of all children and young people as well as their vulnerabilities.

For more information on coaching children with children with disabilities visit:

<http://www.ausport.gov.au/participating/disability>

Cultural Considerations

Different cultures have different beliefs surrounding the concept of appropriate touch. It is important that coaches/age managers/trainers and others appreciate culturally specific expectations regarding touch so that embarrassment or offence is avoided for everyone. Where children (and families) are known or suspected to have escaped traumatic circumstances, considerable diplomacy, care and effort in early interactions will need to be taken. Many culturally based community organisations are very keen to establish understanding and respect – invite or seek their advice so that club personnel become more familiar with the cultural groups of the children participating in their club activities and surf sports.

References:

- Australian Sports Commission website: (<http://www.ausport.gov.au>)
- Play by The Rules website (<http://www.playbytherules.net.au>)
- SLSA Member Protection Policy 6.05
- MSLS Policy Number MSLS003
- MSLS Policy Number MSLS005
- MSLS Policy Number MSLS008
- MSLS Policy Number MSLS009