



LIFEkids Hepburn Heights | Safe Ministry & Duty of Care Policy

At C3 Hepburn Heights the spiritual, physical and emotional safety of our children, families and children's volunteers is of utmost importance.

Therefore, we believe:

- the children should be in a safe environment whilst they are attending any of our children's programmes
- parents should be able to leave their children in our care with the peace of mind that they will be safe
- our teams should be able to minister to children in a safe and positive environment

With respect to these values, we have put the following procedures in place. Please familiarize yourself with them, and ask the LIFEkids Pastor to elaborate on anything you don't understand.

This Conduct Policy is in place to protect team members from any false accusations that may occur. By setting a high standard in our conduct, we leave no door open for accusations to occur.

DUTY OF CARE

Whenever a team member/child relationship exists, the team member has a special duty of care. This is defined as follows:

- A LIFEkids team member/leader is to take such measures as are reasonable in the circumstances to protect a child under the member's/leader's charge, from risks of injury that the member/leader should have reasonably foreseen." As part of that duty, members/leaders are required to supervise children adequately. This requires not only protection from known hazards, but also protection from those that could arise (that is, those that the member/leader should have reasonably foreseen) and against which preventative measures could be taken.
- Our 3 Years and Under Program aims to provide safe, hygienic, well managed, quality care for short periods while parents engage in an activity. This program is only available to the participants in the group's activities and only for the duration of the activities. During this time organisations, groups and their employees have a **duty of care** to the children accepted into the 3 Years and Under Room.

LIFEKIDS AIMS TO PROVIDE DUTY OF CARE THROUGH THE FOLLOWING GUIDELINES

- LIFEkids Team Members over 18 must complete a "Working With Children" card. Parents who have children in the same group in which they serve are not required by law to get a WWC check, however we do require this as our LIFEkids Policy.
- Team members are required to attend LIFEkids training meetings. These usually occur once per school term.
- A Team Leader will not begin admitting children into their room without appropriate support staff. After children have been accepted into the room the Team Leader will maintain the appropriate ratio of carers to children (see table below).
- All LIFEkids personnel are required to follow the check-in and check-out procedure as communicated by the LIFEkids Pastor.
- It is important that no child/children be left alone under the supervision of only one carer.

- Supervision is deemed to start when the Leader takes responsibility of the child at the door and finishes when either the parent collects their child from the room or two staff members return the child to the parent/guardian.

ROOM CAPACITY

The number of children allowed in a programme is dictated by the following guidelines as recommended by "**Australian Children's Education & Care Quality Authority**"

Age range of enrolled Children	Contact staff members to enrolled children ratio
0-24 months	1:4
25-35 months	1:5
36 months to preschool age	1:11

[taken from Guide to the Education and Care Services National Law and the Education and Care Services National Regulations 2011]

TOILETING

Toilets are an area requiring your serious attention since they provide an opportunity for abuse. The children's safety and protecting the integrity of the LIFEkids volunteers are our utmost concern.

3 Years and Under

- Nappy changes **MUST** be done by the parent only; unless permission has been given in writing for the nursery leader to change them.
- Children capable of using the toilet need to use the toilet located in the room they are already located in – D10.
- If assistance for toileting is necessary, the Team Leader will nominate a female team member to supervise the child.
- All children must wash hands before leaving the toilet area and before eating food.

Pre Kindy – Year 6

- Children are to use the toilets located in the room they are already in.
 - All children must wash hands before leaving the toilet area and before eating food.
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BEHAVIOUR MANAGEMENT

PHYSICAL DISCIPLINE IS STRICTLY NOT ALLOWED

Children are not to be berated, yelled at or intimidated verbally or physically. If a child is displaying aggressive, dangerous, disruptive or disrespectful behaviour – then we apply the Behaviour Management Plan steps. It is vital that the Team Member steps in as soon as they see inappropriate behaviour to ensure that a safe environment is maintained at all times. Team Members may need to bring disruptive behaviour to the Team Leaders attention quickly so that it can be dealt with promptly.

BEHAVIOUR MANAGEMENT PLAN

At the beginning of every programme, the behaviour expectations and '3 step warning procedure' must be explained to the children. This should be done in a fun, yet clear way. We expect the children in these age groups to be able to co-operate and be responsible for their behaviour.

Making the requirements and boundaries clear to the children (of all ages), empowers them to make good choices, and takes the pressure off the leaders to be responsible for choices that only the individual child can make.

LIFEkids will apply this concept of co-operation, correction, and consequence, in an age appropriate fashion. Ultimately, if a child continues with distracting or disruptive behaviour, or their actions put others at risk, their parents will be asked to remove them from the programme.

THREE STEP WARNING PROCEDURE EXPLAINED:

Step 1

Get the child's attention, and then give a clear verbal warning to stop the inappropriate behaviour, let them know that this is their first warning, and the next warning will mean that they will be made to sit out of the group. Avoid doing this publicly or from the front of stage if possible, as our intention is not to embarrass or intimidate.

Step 2

If the child fails to respond to this warning, separate the child from the other children, (Use a 'time out' spot or area) under the supervision of a Team Member.

- It is important at this stage to speak to the child on a pastoral level and ascertain if there are reasons for the child's behaviour, especially if it is out of character for them. Also show the child practices that lead to positive and responsible behaviour. That way, should they choose to curb wrong behaviour, they will know what is expected and how to head in that direction.
- The Team Member should speak to the child and explain that if they continue to behave inappropriately they may be removed from the programme and put in the care of their parent (or guardian).

Step 2 may be repeated (i.e. child will receive a 2nd time out, for a longer period of time) if the behaviour continues (depending on the severity of the behaviour).

Step 3

If the child continues negative and disruptive behaviour, the Team Leader will speak to the LIFEkids Pastor for guidance. If needed the parent/guardian must be sent for, to collect their child for the remainder of the programme. The LIFEkids Pastor will discuss incident and follow-up after the service with the parent/child.

- Team Members aren't expected to speak to the parents about the behaviour problems and parenting issues – only the LIFEkids Pastor or their representative (Team Leaders) are permitted to do so, as this is a Pastoral issue and can be a sensitive area.

If a pattern of bad behaviour develops, the parents may be asked to keep the child with them for a specified time, at the discretion of the Kids' Pastor.

INTERACTING WITH CHILDREN

- For primary school aged children only appropriate body touches are acceptable (i.e. Side-on hugs, pat on the shoulder, high fives). Primary-aged children are never permitted to sit on a leader's lap. For children aged 5yrs or under, the leader's knee is considered appropriate. It is acceptable for Children in the Nursery area to be held if they are crying or need comforting. When a child has settled then they should be placed on a mat, rocker, etc.
- If a child shows any discomfort with acceptable physical touch (i.e. hand on a shoulder) then it must be discontinued at once.
- However, when a child is endangering themselves, others, or equipment then reasonable force may be used to restrain them. Reasonable force is the minimum required for any situation. This force would be imposed for the sake of safety.
- A child must never be wilfully intimidated, verbally or non-verbally, at any time during their time in our care.

REPORTING SUSPECTED ABUSE

- Child abuse is intolerable, and must be dealt with promptly through established procedures. If a Team Member suspects a case of abuse, (physical, sexual, emotional, or neglect) this should be reported to the LIFEkids Pastor immediately. On no account should this be discussed amongst the team or with other children. The LIFEkids Pastor will in turn bring the issue to the child's parents and the Senior Ministry within 2 hours for a Pastoral Response. The Board will be informed of the general nature of the incident and the appropriate authorities (if required) will be contacted, i.e. Police or the Department of Child Protection & Family Services (DCFS) by the LIFEkids Pastor or the Lead Pastor.
- If a Team Member sees another team member behaving in a way deemed unsafe, abusive, negligent or irresponsible then they need to inform the Team Leader straight away and/or report to the LIFEkids Pastor. This information will be assessed and if required the team member will be asked to leave the program and the matter further discussed with the LIFEkids Pastor. Once information has been gathered the LIFEkids Pastor will in turn bring the issue to the Lead Pastors and an action plan will be developed. Parents will be contacted if the team member's behaviours relate to a specific child or children. The board members as well as the appropriate authorities (i.e. Police, DCFS) will be contacted as required.
- If a child discloses that they are suicidal or uses suicidal language (i.e. I don't want to be here anymore) then report to LIFEkids Pastor immediately. LIFEkids Pastor to discuss an action plan with child's parents and inform Lead Pastors.

SUSPECTED UNUSUAL BEHAVIOUR

In the situation where you feel you have witnessed unusual behaviour, (i.e. Stranger outside LIFEkids looking in, or a person not in the children's ministry team leaves the adult service early and heads directly to LIFEkids, or a team member is breaking policy please report to the LIFEkids Pastor immediately.

TRANSPORT

Parental permission must be granted in writing prior to a child being transported in any vehicle. The only exception is in cases of emergency. Leaders are not permitted to drive a child home.

REPORTING ACCIDENTS

- If a child sustains any injuries, (however minor) the team leader will notify the parent. The team leader will need to complete an incident form, which will be passed on to the Kids Pastor.
- If first aid is needed, the parent is to be contacted immediately.

PROVIDING MEDICAL ASSISTANCE

- LIFEkids personnel are not permitted to administer medication during a Sunday program. If a parent requests that this be done, they must be called out of the service to administer their child's medication themselves. In some circumstances a child is particularly at risk and may need some medication or injection at very short notice. In that instance a parent may appoint someone to keep watch over their child, and that person may act on behalf of the parent. If this is unacceptable, the child cannot be a part of our programme.

BODY CONTACT

- Never place a primary aged child on your knee/lap.
- Children in a primary age group should not be carried around.
- Leaders are not allowed to kiss the children.
- Frontal hugs are not appropriate—either hug a child on their side or kneel down and hug them.

COUNSELLING

No one is permitted to counsel a child alone. Counselling must only occur in two's.

If the need to counsel a child arises, it should be done in public, yet out of hearing range.

All counselling must be done in the presence of another leader.

Any serious counselling needs must be reported to the LIFEkids Pastor.

IN CASE OF EMERGENCY

In the case of a fire or an emergency that requires evacuation please follow the following procedure:

NURSERY TEAM LEADER:

- Team Leader to put on orange emergency helmet
- As soon as Stage 1 'beep-beep' standby alert sounds arrange for adult helpers and parents to move children towards **the emergency exit doors in readiness for evacuation**
- Allocate another adult to be the one to lead your group around to **the front of the building to the Assembly Area which is the top grassed car park (look for the GREEN MUSTER POINT signs) with other leaders assisting.**
- As soon as Stage 2 'whoop-whoop' evacuation alert sounds instruct everyone to evacuate immediately
- Collect Group Rego File. Check that both Crèche rooms, the cot area and the kitchen have been cleared. Make sure that all 3 x emergency exit doors are closed and then make your way to Assembly Point and report to the Head Warden (wait for them if they haven't arrived).
- Children to stay with the group until the roll-call has been given by the LIFEkids Pastor.

MUSTER POINT

LIFEKIDS TEAM LEADERS:

- Each LIFEkids Team Leader to put on orange emergency helmet
- As soon as Stage 1 'beep-beep' standby alert sounds arrange for adult helpers to move children towards the emergency exit doors, whether it be in the Meeting Room, the Lounge or the Gym in readiness for evacuation
- Allocate another adult to be the one to lead your group around to the front of the building to the Assembly Area which is the top grassed car park (look for the GREEN MUSTER POINT signs) with other leaders assisting.
- As soon as Stage 2 'whoop-whoop' evacuation alert sounds instruct everyone to evacuate immediately
- Collect Group Rego File. Check that the Meeting Room, Lounge, Gym and both storerooms have been cleared. Make sure that both emergency exit doors are closed and then make your way to the Assembly Point and report to the Head Warden (wait for them if they haven't arrived)
- Children to stay with their age group until the roll-call has been given by the LIFEkids Pastor.

LIFEKIDS PASTOR:

- Collect Group Rego Files and distribute to Team Leaders OR open Elvanto Registration lists on mobile device or tablet ready for roll-call
- Oversee Team Leaders and evacuation of all of the age groups
- Ensure that parents are evacuated through the proper emergency exits and don't obstruct or hinder the child evacuation processes.
- Conduct roll-call with all LIFEkids age groups once at the Assembly Point

