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| Responsible person:        | Chief Executive Officer | Approval date:        | August 2022 |
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## CHILD SAFE POLICY AND PROCEDURE

### **Purpose & Scope**

This policy demonstrates the strong commitment of the management, staff and volunteers to child safety and provides an outline of the policies and practices DSV has developed to keep everyone safe from any harm, including abuse.

Legislation, regulations and standards relevant to this policy and procedure include:

- *National Principles for Child Safe Organisations*
- *Child Wellbeing and Safety Act 2005*
- *NDIS Practice Standards and Quality Indicators v4 2021*
- *Victorian Child Safe Standards 2022*

Documents relevant to this policy and procedure include:

- *Participant Charter*
- *Participant Handbook*
- *Staff Code of Conduct*
- *Human Resources Policy and Procedure*
- *Participant Rights and Responsibilities Policy and Procedure*
- *Feedback, Compliments and Complaints Policy and Procedure*
- *Participant Incident Management Policy and Procedure*
- *Risk Management Policy and Procedure*

### **Applicable NDIS Practice Standard**

### **Violence, Abuse, Neglect, Exploitation and Discrimination**

**Outcome:** Each participant accesses supports free from violence, abuse, neglect, exploitation or discrimination.

### **To achieve this outcome, the following indicators should be demonstrated:**

- Policies, procedures and practices are in place which actively prevent violence, abuse, neglect, exploitation or discrimination.
- Each participant is provided with information about the use of an advocate (including an independent advocate) and access to an advocate is facilitated where allegations of violence, abuse, neglect, exploitation or discrimination have been made.
- Allegations and incidents of violence, abuse, neglect, exploitation or discrimination, are acted upon, each participant affected is supported and assisted, records are made of any details and

outcomes of reviews and investigations (where applicable) and action is taken to prevent similar incidents occurring again.

This policy was developed in collaboration with staff, volunteers and the children and their parents who use services. It applies to all staff, volunteers, children and individuals involved in the organisation.

## **Policy**

### **Commitment to child safety**

All children who come to Down Syndrome Victoria have a right to feel and be safe. The welfare of children in DSV's care will always be the first priority, with a zero tolerance to child abuse. DSV aims to create a child safe and child friendly environment where children feel safe and have fun.

### **Children's rights to safety and participation**

Down Syndrome Victoria staff and volunteers encourage children to express their views. DSV listens to their suggestions, especially on matters that directly affect them. DSV actively encourages all children who use services to 'have a say' about things that are important to them. DSV teaches children about what they can do if they feel unsafe. DSV listens to and acts on any concerns children, or their parents, raise.

### **Valuing diversity**

DSV values diversity and does not tolerate any discriminatory practices. To achieve this DSV:

- promotes the cultural safety, participation and empowerment of Aboriginal children and their families
- promotes the cultural safety, participation and empowerment of children from culturally and/or linguistically diverse backgrounds and their families
- welcomes children with a disability and their families and act to promote their participation
- seeks appropriate staff from diverse cultural backgrounds.

## **Procedures**

### **Recruiting staff and volunteers**

Down Syndrome Victoria applies the best practice standards in the recruitment and screening of staff and volunteers. DSV interviews and conducts referee checks on all staff and volunteers and requires police checks or NDIS screening checks and Working with Children Checks for relevant positions. DSV's commitment to Child Safety and screening requirements are included in staff recruitment procedures.

### **Supporting staff and volunteers**

Down Syndrome Victoria seeks to attract and retain the best staff and volunteers. DSV provides support and supervision so people feel valued, respected and fairly treated. DSV has developed a  
*Supporting Victorian families since 1978*

*Staff Code of Conduct* to provide guidance to staff and volunteers, all of whom receive training on the requirements of the Code.

### **Reporting a child safety concern or complaint**

The Family Support Manager will be appointed as the Child Safety Officer with the specific responsibility for responding to any complaints made by staff, volunteers, parents or children. DSV's complaints processes are outlined in the *Participant Incident Management Policy and Procedure*.

### **Risk Management**

DSV recognises the importance of a risk management approach to minimising the potential for child abuse or harm to occur and use this to inform policy, procedures and activity planning. In addition to general occupational health and safety risks, DSV proactively manages risks of abuse to children.

### **Monitoring and Review**

This policy will be reviewed every two years by the Chief Executive Officer or Delegate and DSV undertake to seek views, comments and suggestions from children, parents, carers, staff and volunteers