



Child Protection Policy

Purpose

This policy aims to protect children and young people from risk of harm in the delivery of Sustainable Neighbourhood activities. This policy aims to:

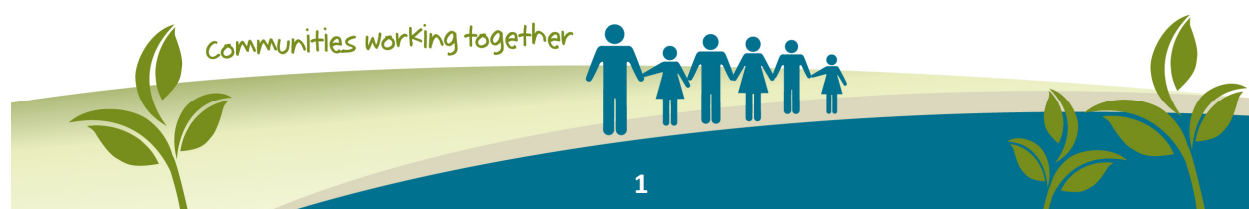
- Establish an organisational culture of child safety.
- Clarify responsibilities and procedures to identify and prevent risks of harm to children and young people.
- Establish clear reporting and investigation procedures if child abuse is detected or suspected.

Policy Statement

The Lake Macquarie Sustainable Neighbourhood Alliance (the Alliance) is committed to promoting and protecting the interests and safety of all children involved in our programs and activities.

The Alliance has zero tolerance for child abuse.

All volunteers, contractors, and associates throughout the Sustainable Neighbourhood network are responsible for the protection of children attending or participating in our events and reporting information about risks of harm to children.



Responsibilities

Person(s)	Responsibilities
Alliance Board	<p>Ultimate responsibility for the detection, prevention and reporting of risk of harm to children.</p> <p>Ensure that appropriate and effective systems are in place.</p>
Alliance Secretariat	<p>Contact person for all reporting disclosures</p> <p>Management of child protection procedures</p> <p>Ensure all staff, contractors, and volunteers are aware of their obligations according to relevant laws, policies and procedures</p> <p>Provide support for staff, contractors and volunteers to undertake their child protection responsibilities</p>
All Sustainable Neighbourhood volunteers, contractors and staff	<p>Promote child safety at all times</p> <p>Assess the risk of harm to child within their area of control and eradicate, or minimise, any risk to the extent possible</p> <p>Familiarise themselves with the relevant laws, this policy, and procedures in relation to child protection, and comply with all requirements</p> <p>Never be responsible for the direct supervision of any child (except their own), and avoid contact with children without other adults being present.</p> <p>Report any reasonable belief that a child's safety is at risk to the relevant authorities (eg police and / or the state-based child protection service) and to the Alliance Secretariat</p>

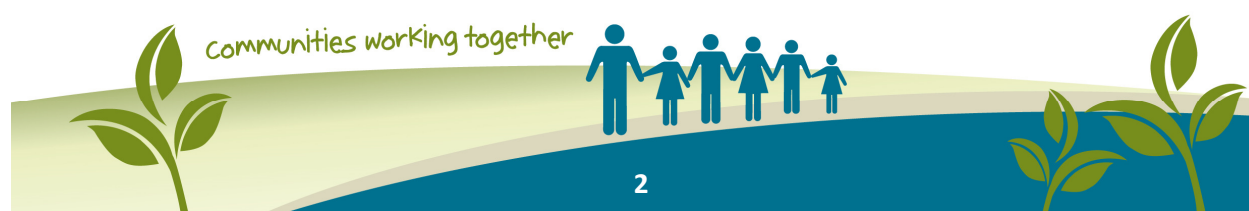
Child Protection Procedures

- **Managing children's attendance at Sustainable Neighbourhood events and activities**

We encourage the participation of families, including children, in many of our events and projects. Sustainable Neighbourhood groups must consider and document any risks associated with child safety as part of the Alliance's risk management process.

Whenever children are present and/or participating in a Sustainable Neighbourhood event, children must be under the direct supervision of their parent or guardian (eg school teacher) at all times. This must be clearly communicated to all participants.

Sustainable Neighbourhood volunteers must never be responsible for the direct supervision of any child (except their own), and should avoid contact with children without other adults being present.



- **Working with children check**

In some instances, a Sustainable Neighbourhood event or activity may be directed primarily at children, and may be considered 'child-related work'. This includes volunteer work.

For Sustainable Neighbourhood groups, this might be for example, a kids' vegetable gardening workshop, craft activities for children, presenting an environmental education workshop at a school, or having a face painter as part of a larger event.

In this case, relevant Sustainable Neighbourhood volunteers, or the person providing the child-related service may be required to complete a *Working with Children Check*. The check is free for volunteers.

For more information about *Working with Children Checks*, visit: www.kidsguardian.nsw.gov.au/working-with-children.

Note: the general guideline for all children participating in Sustainable Neighbourhood activities still applies. Sustainable Neighbourhood volunteers who have completed a *Working with Children Check* are still required to ensure that children are under the direct supervision of their parent or guardian at all times.

- **Risk Management**

The Alliance ensures that child safety is a part of its overall risk management approach. The Sustainable Neighbourhood risk assessment form prompts volunteers to consider and document any risks related to child safety arising from their planned event or project. These risk assessments are reviewed by the Alliance Board prior to approval, and any concerns are discussed and addressed with the project organisers.

Reporting Procedures

- **Reporting**

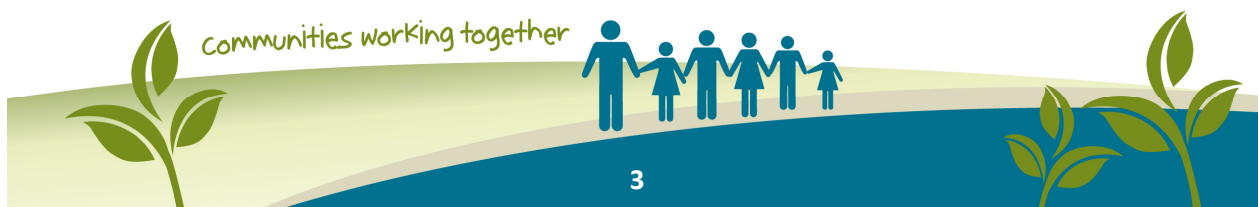
Any staff member, volunteer or contractor who has grounds to suspect abusive activity must immediately notify the appropriate child protection service or the police. They should also advise the Alliance Secretariat about their concern.

- **Investigating**

If the appropriate child protection service or the police decide to conduct an investigation of this report, all employees, contractors or volunteers must co-operate fully with the investigation.

- **Responding**

If it is alleged that a member of staff, contractor or a volunteer may have committed an offence, or have breached the organisation's policies or procedures, the person concerned may be stood down (with pay, where applicable) while an investigation is conducted.



If the investigation concludes that on the balance of probabilities an offence (or a breach of the organisation's policies or procedures) has occurred then disciplinary action may follow, up to and including dismissal or cessation of involvement with the organisation. The findings of the investigation will also be reported to any external body as required.

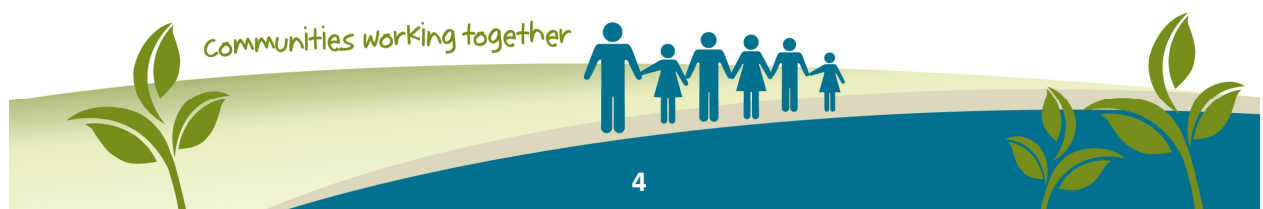
- **Privacy**

All personal information considered or recorded will respect the privacy of the individuals involved unless there is a risk to someone's safety. The Alliance will have safeguards and practices in place to ensure any personal information is protected.

Everyone is entitled to know how the personal information is recorded, what will be done with it, and who will be able to access it.

Reviewing

Every two years, and following every reportable incident, a review shall be conducted to assess whether the Alliance's child protection policies or procedures require modification to better protect the children under the organisation's care.



Definitions

Child means a person below the age of 18 years unless, under the law applicable to the child, majority is attained earlier.

Child protection means any responsibility, measure or activity undertaken to safeguard children from harm.

Child abuse means all forms of physical abuse, emotional ill-treatment, sexual abuse and exploitation, neglect or negligent treatment, commercial (e.g. for financial gain) or other exploitation of a child and includes any actions that results in actual or potential harm to a child.

Reasonable grounds for belief is a belief based on reasonable grounds that child abuse has occurred when all known considerations or facts relevant to the formation of a belief are taken into account and these are objectively assessed. Circumstances or considerations may include the source of the allegation and how it was communicated, the nature of and details of the allegation, and whether there are any other related matters known regarding the alleged perpetrator.

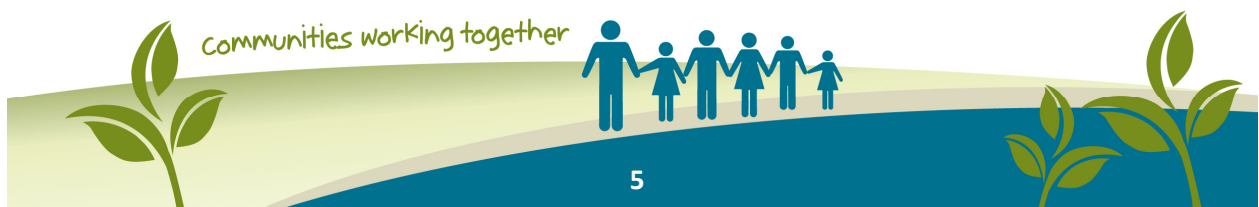
A reasonable belief is formed if a reasonable person believes that:

- a) The child is in need of protection,
- b) The child has suffered or is likely to suffer “significant harm as a result of physical injury”,
- c) The parents are unable or unwilling to protect the child.

A ‘reasonable belief’ or a ‘belief on reasonable grounds’ is not the same as having proof, but is more than mere rumour or speculation.

A ‘reasonable belief’ is formed if a reasonable person in the same position would have formed the belief on the same grounds. For example, a ‘reasonable belief’ might be formed if:

- d) A child states that they have been physically or sexually abused;
- e) A child states that they know someone who has been physically or sexually abused (sometimes the child may be talking about themselves);
- f) Someone who knows a child states that the child has been physically or sexually abused;
- g) Professional observations of the child’s behaviour or development leads a professional to form a belief that the child has been physically or sexually abused or is likely to be abused; and/or
- h) Signs of abuse lead to a belief that the child has been physically or sexually abused.



Related Documents

- **Alliance Privacy Principles**, [www.sustainableneighbourhoods.org.au/uploads/6/7/0/6/6706950/7 -_alliance_privacy_principles_-_policy.pdf](http://www.sustainableneighbourhoods.org.au/uploads/6/7/0/6/6706950/7_-_alliance_privacy_principles_-_policy.pdf)
- **Activities Notification and Risk Assessment Form**, http://www.sustainableneighbourhoods.org.au/uploads/6/7/0/6/6706950/activities_notification_and_risk_assessment_form_-_apr16.doc
- **Child Protection Toolkit** – What every not-for-profit organisation must do NOW, www.communitydirectors.com.au/icda/tools/?articleId=6737
- **Office of the Children’s Guardian**, www.kidsguardian.nsw.gov.au

