

**Lively Feet**

**CHILD SAFE ENVIRONMENTS POLICY**

April 2022

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## 1. Purpose

Lively Feet recognises the importance of establishing and maintaining a safe, child-friendly environment where all children and young people who attend our podiatry clinics are valued and feel safe.

Our Child Safe Environments Policy aligns with the **National Principles for Child Safe Organisations** and has been developed to demonstrate Lively Feet's commitment to children's safety and wellbeing and emphasises maintaining a child safe and consumer-friendly environment.

This policy complies with Lively Feet's obligations under the **South Australian Children and Young People (Safety) Act 2017** and the **Child Safety (Prohibited Persons) Act 2016**, which requires organisations to establish and periodically review policies to ensure that:

- Child safe environments are maintained within the organisation; and
- Appropriate reports of risk of harm are made.

## 2. A family-friendly workplace

Lively Feet is a family-owned business. We are proud to be a family-friendly workplace where children of employees may visit with their parents from time to time.

In addition to the children and young people who attend our practice as patients, this policy supports a child safe and child-friendly environment for the occasions that employees' children are on site.

## 3. Scope

This policy applies to all persons working at Lively Feet Podiatry Clinics – Blackwood Podiatry and Morphett Vale Podiatry – including Directors, employees, students on placement or work experience, contractors, and locums.

The Children and Young People (Safety) Act 2017 defines a child or young person as a person who is under 18 years of age.

## 4. Child safe culture

It is the responsibility of all people working at Lively Feet to create and maintain a safe child culture at our podiatry clinics by:

- Valuing all children and young people and seeking to protect them;
- Promoting an environment in which children feel respected, safe and valued and are encouraged to reach their potential;
- Embedding the protection and support of children, including the unborn child, into the organisational culture such that everyone is aware of their responsibility;
- Ensuring a process of recruitment and selection of staff supports the provision of child safe environments.

## 5. Cultural safety

Cultural safety is the positive recognition and celebration of cultures. It is more than just the absence of racism or discrimination and more than cultural awareness and cultural sensitivity. It empowers people and enables them to contribute and feel safe to be themselves.

In a child safe, culturally safe organisation, children, young people, family, and community members feel that their culture and identity are respected.

Cultural safety upholds the rights of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children to:

- Identify as Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander without fear of retribution or questioning;
- Receive an education that strengthens their culture and identity;
- Maintain a connection to their land and Country;
- Maintain their strong kinship ties and social obligations;
- Be taught their cultural heritage by their Elders;
- Receive information in a culturally sensitive, relevant and accessible manner; and
- Be involved in culturally respectful services.

## 6. Engaging children and young people

We actively engage children and young people who attend our podiatry services by:

- Providing clear age-appropriate or developmentally appropriate explanations to children and young people and allowing for questions during consultation and treatment;
- Involving children and young people in making decisions that affect them;
- Building culturally safe professional relationships;
- Listening to and acting upon any disclosures, feedback or complaints that children, young people or their families/carers raise with us.

Lively Feet welcomes feedback about our podiatry services from patients and their families/carers through structured feedback surveys and general feedback forms.

Our *New Patient Welcome Pack* provides details on how children, young people, and families/carers can give feedback to Lively Feet.

Details about our feedback process can also be accessed online via our website <https://www.blackwoodpodiatry.com.au/feedback-form>

## 7. Confidentiality and privacy

### Privacy Administration

Maintaining the privacy and confidentiality of children and young people who participate in our services is vital in ensuring their safety and wellbeing.

We require parents/guardians to provide us with their child's personal details and complete medical history so that we can properly assess, diagnose, and treat them.

We understand that health information is personal.

Lively Feet has a Privacy Policy that ensures personal and health information is maintained with the utmost care for security, accuracy and confidentiality.

Lively Feet's Privacy Policy outlines:

- How we collect, use, disclose and store personal and health information;
- How patients/parents/guardians can ask what information we have, request access to, advise corrections and make changes to your personal data; and
- How patients/parents/guardians may complain about a breach of privacy and how we will deal with any complaints.

Paediatric-specific new patient information forms have a section for parents/guardians to nominate whom Lively Feet workers may communicate with about the child or young person.

Any communication between Lively Feet and the patient will only take place with the parent(s)/guardian(s) nominated on this form to ensure the safety and wellbeing of the child or young person.

### Clinical Photography and Digital Images

Digital images are frequently used in our podiatry clinics to support assessing, diagnosing, and treating lower limb conditions.

The release of images of a child or young person to the public can adversely impact their safety and wellbeing as it could disclose their whereabouts to a potential perpetrator.

As such, Lively Feet will obtain consent from a child or young person and their parent/guardian before taking an image of the child.

When obtaining consent, the child or young person and their parent/guardian will be informed about:

- the use of the image,
- how the image will be stored, and
- their right to withdraw consent for its use.

The parent/guardian may access the image at any time.

All images are held and stored in accordance with Lively Feet's Digital Images Policy and Privacy Policy.

## 8. Code of conduct

Lively Feet's Code of Conduct states the rules, values, ethical principles and vision for our business.

The code defines Lively Feet's company culture and provides the team with clear standards and expectations of how to do their job.

The Code of Conduct must be followed whenever employees work for or represent Lively Feet. This includes:

- performing work in the workplace;
- attending work-related training/education;
- attending work-related social events;
- representing Lively Feet in any capacity.

Podiatrists also need to abide by The Podiatry Board of Australia's Code of Conduct and The Podiatry Board's guidelines and policies.

## 9. Recruitment practices

Lively Feet ensures that it engages the most suitable and appropriate people to work with children and young people through human resource selection and checking processes to safeguard children and young people.

The following screening measures are undertaken:

- Referee checks on selected applicants;
- National Criminal History Record Check; and
- Working With Children Check (also known as Child Related Employment Screening).

All new employees:

- Receive a copy of our Code of Conduct and Child Safe Environments policies; and
- Complete an orientation program that includes training on the Code of Conduct and Child Safe Environments.

## 10. Training and development

Lively Feet seeks to attract and retain outstanding employees. We provide ongoing mentoring so that our team feels supported, valued and respected.

Every two years, Lively Feet employees attend **Safe Environments for Children and Young People Training** (at Safe Place Training, Goodwood SA).

We also ensure employees have ongoing support to develop and enhance their performance to promote a child safe environment through weekly clinical mentoring sessions (for clinicians) and weekly catch-up meetings (for clinical staff).

## 11. Mandatory notifiers

Chapter 5 of the Children and Young People (Safety) Act 2017 (Safety Act) requires certain people to report to the Department for Child Protection if they suspect on reasonable grounds that a child is or may be at risk, and this suspicion is formed in the course of their work.

There is a legal obligation for mandatory notifiers to report harm or risk of harm, which carries a penalty if the individual fails to comply.

**All employees of Lively Feet are mandatory notifiers.  
This includes both clinical and administrative workers.**

## 12. Definitions of risk and harm

Section 18 of the Safety Act states that a child or young person will be **“at risk”** if:

- they have suffered harm, or there is a likelihood they will suffer harm being of a kind against which ordinarily they should have been protected
- there is a likelihood they will be removed from the State for the purpose:
  - of a medical procedure that would be unlawful in South Australia (including female genital mutilation)
  - of taking part in a marriage that would be void or invalid under the Marriage Act 1961 (Cth)
  - of taking part in an activity that would be illegal in South Australia
- their parent or guardians are unable or unwilling to care for them, have abandoned them, cannot be found or are dead
- they are of compulsory school age and are persistently absent from school without explanation
- they are homeless or of no fixed address.

Section 17 of the Safety Act defines **“harm”** to mean physical or psychological harm (whether caused by an act or omission), including harm caused by sexual, physical, mental or emotional abuse or neglect.

**“Reasonable grounds”** to form a suspicion that a child or young person may be at risk may include:

- when a child or young person tells you they are at risk or have been harmed
- when your own observations of a particular child or young person’s behaviour and/or injuries lead you to suspect they are at risk, or harm is occurring
- when a child or young person tells you that they know of someone who is at risk or has been harmed (they may possibly be referring to themselves)
- when you hear about risk or harm to a child or young person from someone who is in a position to provide reliable information, perhaps a relative or friend, neighbour or sibling of the child or young person.

**If a child is at immediate risk of harm, SA Police  
should be notified by telephoning 000.**

### 13. Reporting that a child or a young person may be at risk of harm

Information about making appropriate reports of harm or risk of harm is available from the South Australian Department of Child Protection website:

<https://www.childprotection.sa.gov.au/reporting-child-abuse>

All employees at Lively Feet understand their obligation to notify the

#### **Child Abuse Report Line (CARL) on 13 14 78**

as soon as practicable if they have a reasonable suspicion that a child has been harmed, or is at risk of being harmed.

The report line is open 24 hours, seven days a week.

**Always call 000 in an emergency  
or if a child is at immediate risk of harm.**

When making a notification, the reporter will need to tell the child abuse report line as much information as they have about:

- The child's name, age, date of birth, address;
- A description of injury, harm or risk of harm (current and previous);
- The child's current situation;
- The location of the child, parent or caregiver and alleged perpetrator;
- When and how did you find out about the harm.

If the child is Aboriginal, you should also provide the Clan group of the child, if known.

The reporter will be asked to provide details about themselves, including their:

- Full name, job title, agency name or address, contact number;
- Relationship to the child or children of concern;
- Type of contact with the family, frequency and last time they saw the child or children;
- If they are working with the child or the family, and if so, in what capacity.

The name or any identifying information about a person who has made a report to the Child Abuse Report Line will not be disclosed unless:

- The reporter chooses to inform the child, young person or family;
- The reporter consents, in writing, that their identity can be disclosed; and/or
- The case proceeds to court and the source of the information is submitted in evidence.

The reporter's identity can also be provided to another service if there is a significant concern for the child's wellbeing. However, the other service will not disclose the reporter's identity to others.



## 14. Notifications made about employees

Following notification to the Child Abuse Report Line, employees are encouraged to make a verbal report to The Director about any reasonable suspicion that a child has been, or is at risk of being harmed by another employee at Lively Feet.

Where a complaint is made, or suspicion is raised, it is paramount that the principles of safety, confidentiality and natural justice must be attributed to all people involved.

The Director will take any immediate protective action required to keep the child and others safe.

Lively Feet recognises that where a report is made about an employee, Lively Feet may still have a role in supporting the child or young person to ensure that their foot health needs are continuing to be met.

This support may include:

- Referring the child, young person or their family to another clinician within the practice;  
or
- Referring the child, young person or their family to another podiatry practice for ongoing care.

## 15. Strategies to minimise risk

The Department of Human Services Child Safe Environments Risk Management Guide has been used to identify, assess and minimise the risks to children and young people at Lively Feet podiatry clinics.

Strategies implemented to minimise and control risks to children and young people include:

### A workplace culture that promotes child safe environments:

- Our Code of Conduct – which includes a specific section on child safe environments – sets the behavioural standards expected when working at Lively Feet.
- The culture of management reflects the strong commitment of Lively Feet to the safety of children and young people.
- National Principles for Child Safe Organisations are embedded in policies and procedures.
- Lively Feet will take reasonable steps to ensure that we respond to any concerns that children or their families or carers raise quickly and fairly.

### Human resources policies that support child safe environments:

- Recruitment processes, including undertaking referee checks to ensure an applicant's suitability, are completed before new employees are appointed.
- All employees must abide by the child safe environments policy and Code of Conduct (the latter is signed on commencement with Lively Feet).
- All employees and students on placement have current Working with Children Checks with 'not prohibited' results.
- Working with Children Checks are updated every five years. Expiration dates are monitored through The Director's quarterly quality audit.

### A safe physical environment for children and young people attending our clinics:

- Lively Feet will take reasonable steps to ensure that all clients and caregivers are made aware that young children entering our practice must be supervised at all times. When a child or young person is unaccompanied by a parent or caregiver, the practitioner must consider whether a chaperone is required.
- Where treatment requires physical contact, podiatrists will first seek the consent of the child, young person and their parents (where applicable).
- Podiatrists must ensure a safe physical clinic environment for children and young people. This includes the handling and secure storage of hazardous substances, and the safe use of podiatry equipment.

## 16. Communication

Lively Feet's Child Safe Environments Policy is provided to all new patients in our *New Patient Welcome Pack*.

Our Child Safe Environments Policy can also be accessed online via our website <https://www.blackwoodpodiatry.com.au/clinic-policies>

We ask employees to sign a written statement indicating that they have read, understood and will abide by our Child Safe Environments Policy. We retain a copy of all signed statements.

## 17. Related policies

Lively Feet policies and procedures that support our Child Safe Environments Policy include, but are not limited to:

- Business Operations Policy 3.11 Complains and Compliments
- Clinical Records and Privacy Policy 4.2 Lively Feet Privacy Policy
- Clinical Records and Privacy Policy 4.9 Digital Images
- Human Resources Management Policy 5.1 Lively Feet Code of Conduct
- Human Resource Management Policy 5.2 Recruitment
- Human Resource Management Policy 5.3 Employee Screening Checks

## 18. Policy review

Child Safe Environments Policies must be reviewed and updated every five years or earlier if changes in legislation or organisational policies necessitate.

**Lively Feet's Child Safe Environments Policy will next be reviewed/updated in April 2027.**

Each time this policy is reviewed and updated, it will be lodged with the Department of Human Services (SA) for application of a new Child Safe Environments Compliance Statement.

## National Principles for Child Safe Organisations

- 1.** Child safety and wellbeing is embedded in organisational leadership, governance and culture.
- 2.** Children and young people are informed about their rights, participate in decisions affecting them and are taken seriously.
- 3.** Families and communities are informed and involved in promoting child safety and wellbeing.
- 4.** Equity is upheld and diverse needs respected in policy and practice.
- 5.** People working with children and young people are suitable and supported to reflect child safety and wellbeing values in practice.
- 6.** Processes to respond to complaints and concerns are child focused.
- 7.** Staff and volunteers are equipped with the knowledge, skills and awareness to keep children and young people safe through ongoing education and training.
- 8.** Physical and online environments promote safety and wellbeing while minimising the opportunity for children and young people to be harmed.
- 9.** Implementation of the national child safe principles is regularly reviewed and improved.
- 10.** Policies and procedures document how the organisation is safe for children and young people.