

LITHUANIAN SCOUTS AUSTRALIA

Child Safety and Protection Policy

1. PURPOSE

This policy sets out the Lithuanian Scouts' commitment to the safety and wellbeing of all youth members involved in Scouting activities. It provides clear guidance to all Adults in Scouting on their obligations to protect youth members from harm and on how to respond to allegations or disclosures of child abuse or inappropriate conduct.

2. SCOPE

This policy applies to all Adults in Scouting, including leaders, volunteers, committee members, and any other adults acting in an official capacity on behalf of Lithuanian Scouts.

3. POLICY STATEMENT

Lithuanian Scouts is committed to the safety, wellbeing, and best interests of all youth members. Every young person has the right to feel safe and be safe. All Adults in Scouting share a responsibility to:

- Provide a safe, supportive, and inclusive environment for all youth members
- Act in the best interests of youth members at all times
- Respond appropriately and promptly to any concern, allegation, or disclosure of harm
- Model appropriate behaviour and uphold the values of the Scout movement

4. DEFINITIONS

Child / Youth Member

Any person participating in Lithuanian Scouts activities who has not yet been awarded their adult tie (purple for males, blue for females), regardless of age.

Adult in Scouting

Any person who holds an adult tie (purple for males, blue for females) within Lithuanian Scouts, or who is acting in a leadership or volunteer capacity on behalf of the organisation.

Child Abuse

Child abuse includes physical abuse, emotional abuse, sexual abuse, neglect, grooming, and exposure to family violence. Any one of these forms of abuse can cause significant harm to a youth member.

5. RESPONSIBILITIES

Camp Leader / Tuntininkas

- Ensure all Adults in Scouting sign a declaration confirming they have read and agree to comply with this policy
- Respond to allegations of inappropriate conduct promptly and in accordance with the procedures outlined in this policy
- Maintain oversight of all matters referred under this policy and escalate to the **national head of Lithuanian Scouts Australia**

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Organisation Committee

- Provide advice and support during any investigation into allegations of inappropriate conduct

All Adults in Scouting

- Act responsibly and exercise a duty of care to all youth members at all times
- Create and maintain a safe environment for all Scouting activities
- Report any concerns, disclosures, or allegations of child abuse or inappropriate conduct in accordance with this policy
- Be aware of mandatory reporting obligations — see Section 8.1 for guidance
- Never place themselves in a situation where they are alone with a youth member away from the general group without the knowledge of another adult
- Refrain from any form of physical, emotional, or sexual abuse, grooming, or neglect toward any youth member

6. PHOTOGRAPHY AND DIGITAL SAFETY

Photography and digital safety at Lithuanian Scouts activities is governed by the Photography and Image Policy (PH-001). All Adults in Scouting are expected to be familiar with that policy. Any concerns about the inappropriate use of photography or images involving youth members must be reported immediately to the camp leader or Tuntininkas.

7. BEHAVIOURAL EXPECTATIONS TOWARD YOUTH MEMBERS

All Adults in Scouting must:

- Treat all youth members with dignity, respect, and fairness
- Use appropriate language and maintain appropriate boundaries at all times
- Avoid engaging in roughhousing, inappropriate physical contact, or behaviour that could be misinterpreted
- Not engage in any form of bullying, discrimination, or harassment toward a youth member
- Not initiate or maintain private one-on-one digital communication with youth members outside of Scout activities unless they are a family member or have the prior knowledge and consent of the youth member's parent or guardian

Two Adults Present

During Scout activities, camps, and inspections, leaders should ensure that no adult is alone with a youth member in an unsupervised or enclosed setting. Where an adult needs to enter a youth sleeping or changing area, another adult should be present or nearby and aware. This applies to any situation where an adult and youth member are away from the general group.

Change Rooms and Sleeping Areas

Adults must not enter areas where youth members are changing, showering, or in their sleeping quarters during camps or activities. Exceptions apply only in a genuine emergency or where agreed upon by the camp leader. Any such exception should be communicated to the camp leader as soon as practicable.

8. RESPONDING TO ALLEGATIONS OF CHILD ABUSE OR INAPPROPRIATE CONDUCT

8.1 Immediate Response

Any Adult in Scouting who receives a disclosure from a youth member or witnesses or suspects child abuse must:

- Ensure the immediate safety of the youth member
- Listen calmly and without judgement if a youth member is disclosing — do not promise confidentiality
- Not attempt to investigate the matter themselves
- Report the matter immediately to the camp leader or Tuntininkas
- If the matter involves a risk to life or an immediate criminal matter, contact emergency services (000) without delay

Mandatory Reporting — What This Means

Mandatory reporting is a legal obligation in Victoria. If you witness or suspect that a youth member is being harmed or is at risk of harm, you must report it. This applies to all Adults in Scouting, regardless of your role. Speak to the camp leader or Tuntininkas immediately if you are unsure what to do. If a youth member is in immediate danger, call 000.

8.2 Managing an Allegation

Upon receiving an allegation of inappropriate conduct toward a youth member, the camp leader or tuntininkas will determine whether the Adult in Scouting subject to the allegation should:

- Remain in their current role pending investigation
- Be temporarily placed in a different role, or
- Be stood down from all Scouting duties pending the outcome of the investigation

Any decision to stand down an Adult in Scouting should be escalated to the Australian Commissioner as soon as practicable.

8.3 Referral to Authorities

If an allegation relates to conduct that may constitute a criminal offence, the matter must be referred to the relevant State Police. **The person reporting the allegation should be encouraged to make a report to police directly.** A Scouts investigation may still proceed in parallel where appropriate.

9. INVESTIGATION PROCESS

All allegations will be investigated promptly, thoroughly, and in a procedurally fair manner. The following principles apply:

- The investigation will be conducted by a person with no conflict of interest in the matter
- The Adult in Scouting subject to the allegation will be given the opportunity to respond
- All parties involved in the investigation are required to maintain confidentiality throughout the process
- The investigation will be completed within 28 days of the allegation being received, unless exceptional circumstances apply
- The outcome of the investigation will be communicated in writing to all relevant parties

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Possible Outcomes

Following an investigation, the camp leader, Tuntininkas, or **national head of Lithuanian Scouts Australia** may determine one or more of the following outcomes:

- No further action
- Direction to conduct Scouting activities under supervision for a specified period
- Reassignment to a different role within the organisation
- Withdrawal of participation in Lithuanian Scouting

10. CONFIDENTIALITY

All matters raised under this policy must be treated with strict confidentiality. Information must only be shared on a need-to-know basis and in accordance with applicable privacy legislation. Breaching confidentiality may itself constitute a breach of this policy.

11. PROTECTION FROM RETALIATION

Any Adult in Scouting who raises a concern or makes a report in good faith under this policy will be protected from retaliation, victimisation, or any other adverse treatment as a result of making that report. Any retaliation will itself be treated as a serious breach of this policy.

12. POLICY REVIEW

This policy will be reviewed every two years or sooner if required by changes in legislation, organisational structure, or best practice guidance. The camp leader or Tuntininkas is responsible for ensuring this policy is communicated to all Adults in Scouting and remains current and fit for purpose.

Declaration

All Adults in Scouting are required to sign a declaration confirming they have read, understood, and agree to comply with this Child Safety and Protection Policy prior to commencing any role within Lithuanian Scouts.