SLSQ Procedure

Subject: Reporting Sexual Misconduct & Child Safety Reportable Conduct	**Department:** Compliance, Governance & Human Resources
Procedure No: GOV32	**Version No:** 1
Effective Date: 09.06.2026	**Approved Date:** 09.06.2026
Revision Date: 09.06.2029	**Approved by:** Governance

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Purpose

This procedure provides a clear, confidential, and safe process for responding to allegations of sexual harassment (for Members) and child safety matters. This procedure will ensure compliance with relevant legislation, Surf Life Saving policies, and the organisation's duty of care. It aims to support early intervention/ Prevention, protect individuals, and uphold a culture of safety and respect

This procedure addresses both:

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- Adult-to-adult misconduct, which is managed in accordance with Surf Life Saving complaints, member protection, and workplace conduct policies.
- Reportable conduct involving children, which must be managed in accordance with the Queensland Reportable Conduct Scheme; and

Only matters involving conduct towards a child by a worker fall within the statutory Reportable Conduct Scheme.

Scope

This procedure applies to all individuals involved in Surf Life Saving activities, including:

- Members (active, associate, life, probationary)
- Volunteers and employees (Clubs/Branches)
- Contractors and officials
- Visitors, spectators, and third parties attending Club-run events or premises

SLSQ Staff are to refer to the Discrimination, Harassment, Bullying and Victimisation Policy for information on employee issues.

It applies in all environments and contexts where individuals are engaging in or representing Surf Life Saving, including but not limited to:

- Patrolling and training activities
- Clubhouse, surf club premises, and licensed areas
- Competitions, carnivals, and interclub events
- Junior Activities and member development programs/events
- Social, fundraising, and presentation functions
- Online platforms, digital communications, and social media
- Work Places

Conduct is reportable regardless of whether it occurred during the employment/ Volunteering. This includes conduct that takes place outside of work/ volunteers hours or while off duty.

This procedure relates specifically to the reporting, investigation of misconduct and supports a broader suite of policies and codes designed to uphold a safe, respectful, and inclusive organisation.

It should be read in conjunction with:

- SLSA Policy 6.05 – Member Protection
- SLSA Policy 6.06 – Complaints Resolution
- SLSA Policy 6.04 – Child Safe
- Club Code of Conduct
- SLSQ Sexual Prevention Plan
- SLSA Complaint Resolution Plan

Definitions	
Allegation	An allegation is any information, report, disclosure, or complaint that suggests a person may have engaged in misconduct or reportable conduct. An allegation does not need to be proven or substantiated.
Child / Young Person	A child or young person is any individual under the age of 18 years.
Complainant	A complainant is the person who makes a report or allegation. This may include a child, parent, carer, worker, member, or member of the public.
Complaint	A complaint is a formal expression of concern regarding alleged misconduct, including breaches of SLSQ policies, Member Protection matters, or reportable conduct involving children.
Confidential Information	Confidential information includes any information relating to a complaint, allegation, investigation, or individual involved in a matter that is not publicly available and must be handled in accordance with privacy and legal requirements.
Head of Entity	The Head of Entity is the Chief Executive Officer (CEO) of Surf Life Saving Queensland (SLSQ), who holds ultimate responsibility for compliance with the Reportable Conduct Scheme under the *Child Safe Organisations Act 2024 (Qld)*. The CEO may delegate functions; however, accountability remains with the CEO.
Investigator	An investigator is a person appointed by SLSQ to assess and investigate allegations or complaints in accordance with this procedure and relevant policies.
Member	A member includes any individual affiliated with SLSQ, including active, associate, probationary, and life members.
Misconduct	Misconduct refers to behaviour that breaches SLSQ policies, codes of conduct, or applicable legislation, including but not limited to sexual harassment, discrimination, bullying, or child safety breaches
Pattern of Behaviour	A pattern of behaviour refers to multiple incidents or concerns that, when considered together, may indicate a risk.
Provisional Action	Provisional action refers to temporary measures implemented to manage risk and protect individuals while a matter is being assessed or investigated. These actions are not disciplinary findings and do not imply guilt
Reportable Conduct	Reportable conduct includes the following conduct by a worker involving a child: • A child sexual offence; • Sexual misconduct committed in relation to, or in the presence of, a child; • Ill-treatment of a child; • Significant neglect of a child; • Physical violence committed in relation to, or in the presence of, a child; • Behaviour that causes significant emotional or psychological harm to a child. Reportable conduct may arise from a single act or a pattern of behaviour and may occur inside or outside of SLSQ activities.
Reportable Allegation	A reportable allegation is an allegation or information that leads a person to form a reasonable belief that a worker has engaged in reportable conduct.
Reportable Conduct Scheme	The Reportable Conduct Scheme is a legislative framework under the *Child Safe Organisations Act 2024 (Qld)* requiring organisations to identify, report, and investigate allegations of child abuse or misconduct involving workers.
Respondent	The respondent is the person who is the subject of an allegation or complaint.
Risk Assessment	Risk assessment is the process of identifying and evaluating potential risks to children and determining appropriate actions to mitigate those risks. Risk assessments must be ongoing and reviewed as new information becomes available.
Sexual Misconduct (Adult-to-Adult)	Sexual misconduct (adult-to-adult) refers to inappropriate or unlawful sexual behaviour between adults, including sexual harassment, sexual assault, or other conduct in breach of SLSQ policies and relevant legislation.
Trauma-Informed Approach	A trauma-informed approach recognises the impact of trauma and ensures that responses to allegations prioritise the safety, dignity, and wellbeing of affected individuals, particularly children, while minimising the risk of re-traumatisation.

Worker	A worker is any person who carries out work for SLSQ in any capacity, including: • Employees; • Volunteers; • Members performing duties or roles on behalf of SLSQ; • Contractors and consultants; • Office holders and appointed officials. A person does not need to be paid to be considered a worker.
Queensland Family and Child Commission (QFCC)	The Queensland Family and Child Commission is the independent oversight body responsible for administering and monitoring compliance with the Reportable Conduct Scheme in Queensland.

Making a Report – Adult-to-Adult Sexual Misconduct

SLSQ Staff are to refer to the Discrimination, Harassment, Bullying and Victimisation Policy for information on employee issues.

Where an adult discloses sexual assault by another adult, regardless of the relationship (e.g. member-to-member, employer/employee), there is no legal requirement to report the matter to the police on their behalf, unless the disclosing adult is considered impaired (as defined in the legislation). However, support should still be offered, including referrals to appropriate services, and individuals should be encouraged to report if they feel safe to do so.

A report may be made via any of the following channels:

- Triple Zero (000) – if there is an immediate threat to life or safety,
- SLSA Complaints Portal – https://complaints.sls.com.au,
- Direct report to SLSQ Complaints Team – via complaints@lifesaving.com.au,
- Internal reporting to a Club President, Complaints Manager, Member Protection Information Officer, or Team Leader.

Reports can be made:

- Verbally or in writing,
- Anonymously, although this may limit the capacity to investigate,
- At any time, regardless of when the incident occurred.

Initial Response

Upon receiving a report, the responsible officer will:

- Submit the report to SLSQ via Complaints | Surf Life Saving Queensland
- Acknowledge the report in writing (unless submitted anonymously),
- Provide access to support services (counselling, advocacy),
- Explain the investigation options and next steps,
- Confirm the complainant's wishes regarding:
    - Police reporting,
    - Requests for investigation by SLSQ or the Club under Policy 6.06,
    - Declining further action.

Where criminal conduct is alleged, the complainant will be encouraged to report to the Police. SLSQ may assist but cannot report on their behalf unless the complainant is legally impaired.

Please note: any matters referred to police will be dealt with under the GOV03 Dealing with Police Investigations Policy.

Reportable Conduct – Child Safety

What is Reportable Conduct?

Reportable conduct includes allegations or convictions of:

- Child sexual offences,
- Sexual misconduct in relation to or in the presence of a child,
- Ill-treatment of a child,
- Significant neglect of a child,
- Physical violence in relation to or in the presence of a child,
- Behaviour causing significant emotional or psychological harm.

Resources and further definitions on what is reportable

- What are child sexual offences? | Daniel's Law
- Guide to Queensland's Reportable Conduct Scheme

This applies whether conduct happens inside or outside SLSQ activities, and even if no criminal charges are laid.

All Child Safety matters must be submitted through the SLSA Portal then SLSQ will review and complete the requirements to Queensland Family Child Commission.

Important: These matters may still be managed in accordance with the SLSQ Member Protection Policy and Complaints Policy depending on the severity.

If a child reports use this for helpful tips on how to respondDMF_FS_Responding_to_a_disclosure_of_abuse_2025.pdf

Threshold for Reportable Conduct

SLSQ is not required to prove that reportable conduct has occurred prior to making a notification. A matter must be reported where there is information that gives rise to a reasonable belief that alleged reportable conduct may have occurred.

The threshold for reporting is intentionally low and is based on:

- Available facts and information;
- Credibility and plausibility of the allegation; and
- Whether a reasonable person would suspect the conduct may have occurred.

SLSQ will prioritise early reporting of allegations, recognising that matters do not need to be substantiated before notification

Conduct That Is Not Reportable Conduct

(Insert after the Reportable Conduct definitions)

The Reportable Conduct Scheme does not apply to behaviour that is reasonable and appropriate for the discipline, management or care of a child.

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Examples of conduct that is not reportable include:

- Reasonable behaviour management by supervisors or instructors
- Accidental injury to a child where there was no negligence or reckless behaviour
- Appropriate physical contact necessary for instruction, safety or emergency response
- Lawful and reasonable directions provided to a child in a sporting or training environment

Initial Report

Any worker/volunteer who knows, reasonably suspects or receives information suggesting reportable conduct must report the matter immediately.

All SLSQ workers and volunteers must report any concern, allegation, or conviction of reportable conduct through the Complaints Portal for Child Safety Concerns: Child Safety Concerns or to the State Complaints Manager through complaints@lifesaving.com.au

Immediate Risk & Emergency Response

- If a child is in immediate danger: Call the Police or Emergency Services on Triple Zero (000),
- If you suspect harm/neglect within a family setting (not organisational misconduct): Contact the Department of Families, Seniors, Disability Services and Child Safety.
- Upon becoming aware of a reportable allegation, SLSQ must take immediate risk management assessment to protect children. This may include
    - Suspension pending investigation
    - Restricting duties
    - Supervision arrangement
    - Temporary removal from child-related activities.
- SLSQ does not investigate private family matters, our role relates to child safety in our organisational context however these will be reported to the appropriate authorities.

Reporting to Queensland Family Child Commission

The Chief Executive Officer (CEO) of Surf Life Saving Queensland (SLSQ) is the Head of the Entity for the purposes of the *Child Safe Organisations Act 2024 (Qld)* and holds ultimate responsibility for ensuring compliance with the Reportable Conduct Scheme.

The CEO may delegate functions under this procedure; however, accountability remains with the CEO.

Once SLSQ receives a report or becomes aware of information suggesting alleged reportable conduct:

- Undertake an initial assessment to determine whether the matter constitutes a reportable allegation.
    - When assessing allegations, SLSQ must consider whether the conduct forms part of a pattern of behaviour, including any prior complaints, concerns or historical information
- Notify the Queensland Family and Child Commission (QFCC) within 3 business days of becoming aware of the allegation.
- Provide the name and contact details of the investigator to the QFCC as soon as practicable after appointment.
- Provide an update report within 30 business days outlining the status of the investigation and risk management actions taken.

- Provide a final report to the QFCC as soon as practicable after the investigation is finalised.

Reports must include:

- Details of the allegation
- Information about the worker involved
- Risk management actions implemented
- Whether the matter has been reported to police or another authority
- The outcome of the investigation
- Findings made by the organisation
- Any disciplinary or risk management action taken
- Any organisational improvements identified.

Refer to section 7 Reporting Requirements: Guide to Queensland's Reportable Conduct Scheme

Investigation Process for both adult and child misconduct

Overarching process

If an investigation proceeds with SLSQ, the following steps will apply:

1. Possible implementation of provisional actions, including interim safety measures
2. Assignment of a Complaint Manager and/or Investigator,
3. Preliminary assessment of the complaint to determine scope, risk, and urgency,
4. Notice to Respondent, which provides them with the opportunity to respond,
5. Interview with both parties and relevant witnesses using trauma-informed approach,
6. Collection and review of evidence, including documents, digital records, or third-party reports.
7. Preparation of the final report, which is reviewed under natural justice principles,
8. Determination of outcomes and actions.

All responses to reportable conduct must be child-centred and trauma-informed.

Resources
Policy-6.06.A-Complaint-Handling-Guideline.pdf
Child Safety Investigation Protocol

Confidentiality

All parties involved in the complaint process must maintain strict confidentiality during and after the process. Information relating to the complaint, including the identity of the parties, allegations, evidence and discussions, must not be disclosed to any person who is not directly involved in managing the matter. This includes:

- Not discussing the matter with other members or third parties;
- Ensuring any Board or Committee discussions are generalised and de-identified; and
- Maintaining all complaint documentation and records securely and confidentially.

Any unauthorised disclosure of information or breach of confidentiality obligations may constitute a breach of the Surf Life Saving complaints framework and may result in disciplinary action.

Role of the Queensland Family and Child Commission

The Queensland Family and Child Commission provides oversight and monitoring of the organisation's management of reportable conduct matters.

The Commission may:

- Monitor the organisation's investigation
- Request additional information
- Provide guidance on investigation processes
- Conduct its own investigation where necessary.

The organisation retains responsibility for investigating allegations and implementing risk management actions, unless otherwise directed by the Commission.

Dealing with Police Investigations, Criminal Charges, Guilty Pleas and/or Convictions

As soon as an Entity or an officer of an Entity becomes aware that a Member is subject to a Police investigation Criminal Charges, Guilt Please and/or Convictions are raised the GOV02 Dealing with Police Investigations Criminal Charges Guilty Pleas and or Convictions Policy will be enacted.

- SLSQ will not conduct a concurrent internal investigation into alleged criminal conduct while a Police investigation is underway, unless advised otherwise by authorities. SLSQ will not re-investigate the underlying offence and will instead focus on QFCC reporting, risk management, and child safety considerations
- SLSQ will appoint a delegate to support the Club in handling any enquiries.
- Confidentiality and privacy obligations must be strictly adhered to.
- SLSQ will liaise with Police and relevant authorities through the CEO or appointed delegate.
- Confidentiality and privacy obligations must be strictly adhered to.

SLSQ will notify the QFCC for alleged reportable conduct even where the matter is also reported to Police or another authority. External reporting does not remove SLSQ's obligations under the Reportable Conduct Scheme.

Welfare and Support

- Welfare and peer support may be offered to relevant members through the SLSQ Peer Support and referral to other external agencies if required
- The well-being of any victim(s) must be monitored and supported.

Confidentiality and Media Management

All matters relating to reportable conduct, complaints, or investigations must be handled with strict confidentiality.

- Media and Public Statements: No public comment or media statement is to be made in relation to any matter unless **expressly approved by the CEO (or delegated spokesperson)**. All media enquiries must be referred to the CEO or nominated representative.

- Unauthorised Disclosure: Members, workers, and volunteers must not disclose, discuss, or comment on any aspect of an allegation, investigation, or legal matter with any unauthorised person, including other members, external parties, or on social media.
- Privacy and Information Handling: All information must be managed in accordance with applicable privacy legislation and SLSQ policies, ensuring that:
    - Information is only shared on a need-to-know basis;
    - The identity of individuals involved is protected where appropriate; and
    - Records are stored and transmitted securely.
- Breach of Confidentiality: Any unauthorised disclosure or misuse of information may constitute a breach of SLSQ policy and may result in disciplinary action.

Documentation and Record Keeping

SLSQ will maintain accurate and complete records of:

- All allegations received;
- Assessment and decision-making processes;
- Risk assessments and actions taken;
- Notifications made to QFCC and other authorities;
- Investigation processes and outcomes.

All records must be:

- Securely stored;
- Accessible for audit and oversight; and
- Maintained in accordance with privacy and legislative requirements.

Branches and clubs are encouraged to send through the information to SLSQ via complaints@lifesaving.com.au

Non-Compliance Consequences

Failure to comply with obligations under the Reportable Conduct Scheme may result in legislative and organisational consequences.

- Legislative Obligations (Child Safety Matters): Failure by the Head of Entity (or delegate) to meet reporting obligations under the *Child Safe Organisations Act 2024 (Qld)* may result in:
    - A financial penalty of up to 100 penalty units; and
    - Regulatory action by the Queensland Family and Child Commission (QFCC), including compliance monitoring and potential publication of non-compliance on a public register.
- Organisational Consequences: Breaches of this procedure or failure to comply with reporting requirements may also result in disciplinary action in accordance with SLSQ policies, including:
    - Member Protection Policy;
    - Complaints Policy; and
    - Child Safe Policy.
    -

Disciplinary outcomes will be determined based on the **nature and seriousness of the breach**, and may include suspension, removal from duties, or other appropriate sanctions

Related procedure instruments

This procedure complies with and supports:

- *Work Health and Safety Act 2011 (Qld)* – including s17 duties and Part 5 (divisions 5 & 7A)
- *Sex Discrimination Act 1984 (Cth)* – including Positive Duty reforms
- *Fair Work Act 2009 (Cth)*
- *Anti-Discrimination Act 1991 (Qld)*
- SLSA Policy 6.05 Member Protection
- SLSA Policy 6.06 Complaints Resolution
- SLSA Guidelines Complaint Handling and Risk Management
- SLSQ Employee Sexual Harassment Policy
- SLSA Child Safe Policy
- Child Sexual Offence Reporting - SLSQ Governance Manual - 1
- Complaint Management Process - SLSQ Governance Manual - 1
- Club Resources - SLSQ Governance Manual - 1
- Child Safe | Surf Life Saving Queensland
- Reportable Conduct Scheme | Queensland Family and Child Commission

Monitoring and Review

This procedure will be reviewed annually or earlier if:

- Legislative changes occur,
- Policy updates are made at SLSA or SLSQ level,
- Issues are identified during incident reviews,
- Incident trends and club-specific risk factors.

Appendix 1 - Template Email Receipt of Report – Sexual Misconduct / Harassment

Dear [Complainant's First Name],

Thank you for submitting your report. We acknowledge receipt of your disclosure regarding an incident of alleged sexual misconduct involving [general descriptor – e.g. "another member"] and appreciate you taking the time to raise this matter.

We recognise that discussing such experiences can be difficult, and we want to assure you that your safety and wellbeing are our priority. This letter outlines the available options and next steps.

Your Options

You are entitled to pursue any of the following options:

1. **Report the matter to Police**
   You may choose to refer this matter directly to Queensland Police. We can assist you in making contact with the appropriate unit, should you wish.
2. **Request an internal investigation under SLSQ Policy 6.06 – Complaints Resolution**
   If you do not wish to report to Police, but would like SLSQ to investigate the matter internally, please confirm this request in writing. This process will follow our formal complaint resolution procedures and may involve speaking with an appointed investigator and/or decision-maker.
3. **Take no further action at this time**
   You may also choose not to proceed with any action. If this is your preference, we will respectfully close this matter, noting your wishes.

In matters involving alleged sexual misconduct between adults, there is no legal requirement for Surf Life Saving Queensland (SLSQ) or its affiliated Clubs to report the matter to Police on your behalf, unless you are deemed impaired or unable to act for yourself under legislation.

Support Services Available

Whether or not you decide to proceed with an investigation, you are encouraged to access support. Confidential services include:

- 1800RESPECT – National Sexual Assault Counselling Service – 1800 737 732
- Lifeline – Crisis Support – 13 11 14
- QLD Sexual Assault Helpline – 1800 010 120

Next Steps

Please respond to this letter by **[Insert Date – e.g. 7 calendar days from date of letter]** advising which option you would like to proceed with. If we do not hear from you, we will assume you do not wish to pursue the matter further at this time, and we will take no further action unless new information emerges.

If at any time you change your mind or would like to reopen the matter, you are welcome to contact us.

Should you wish to discuss this further or require assistance in understanding the process, please contact **[Insert Name], [Role] at [Insert Email] or [Insert Phone Number].**

Thank you again for coming forward. We are committed to supporting a safe, respectful, and inclusive environment for all members.

Kind regards,
[Your Full Name]
[Your Role]
[Club or Organisation Name]
[Email] | [Phone Number]

Have clear processes for dealing with any failure to report as part of misconduct processes.

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