



# Handling Allegations of Child Abuse Policy & Procedures

**If you believe a child or young person is in immediate danger or a life-threatening situation, contact the Police immediately on 000.**

First Hike Project Inc. (**FHP**) will treat any allegation of child abuse or neglect promptly, seriously and with a high degree of sensitivity. These Handling Allegations of Child Abuse Policy & Procedures (**Policy**) have been developed to assist FHP personnel in the correct handling of allegations of child abuse. This Policy is to be read in conjunction with FHP's Safeguarding Children & Young People Policy and Safeguarding Children Practice & Behaviour Guidelines.

## Step 1: Receive the allegation

If a child or young person raises with you an allegation of child abuse or neglect that relates to them or to another child, it is important that you listen, stay calm and be supportive.

Do	Don't
Make sure you are clear about what the child has told you	Do not challenge or undermine the child
Reassure the child that what has occurred is not his or her fault	Do not seek detailed information, ask leading questions or offer an opinion
Explain that other people may need to be told in order to stop what is happening	Do not discuss the details with any person other than those detailed in these procedures
Promptly and accurately record the discussion in writing	Do not contact the alleged offender

## Step 2: Report the allegation

- Immediately report any allegation of child abuse or neglect, or any situation involving a child at risk of harm, to the Police and/or the relevant child protection agency. You may need to make a report to both.
- Contact the relevant child protection agency or Police for advice if there is any doubt about whether the allegation should be reported. See Contact details for advice or to report an allegation of child abuse attached to this Policy.

- If the allegation involves a person to whom this Policy applies, then also report the allegation to FHP's Protection Information Officer (**PIO**) or Director so that he or she can manage the situation.

### Step 3: Protect the child and manage the situation

- The PIO will assess the immediate risks to the child and take interim steps to ensure the child's safety and the safety of any other children. This may include redeploying the alleged offender to a position where there is no unsupervised contact with children, supervising the alleged offender or removing/suspending him or her until any investigations have been concluded. Legal advice should be sought before any interim steps are made if the person is in paid employment with FHP.
- The PIO will consider what services may be most appropriate to support the child and his or her parent/s or guardian.
- The PIO will consider what support services may be appropriate for the alleged offender.
- The PIO will put in place measures to protect the child and the alleged offender from possible victimisation and gossip.

### Step 4: Take internal action

- Up to three different investigations could be undertaken to examine allegations that are made against a person to whom this Policy applies, including:
  - a criminal investigation (conducted by the Police)
  - a child protection investigation (conducted by the relevant child protection agency)
  - a disciplinary or misconduct inquiry/investigation (conducted by FHP)
- Regardless of the findings of the Police and/or child protection agency investigations, FHP will assess the allegations to decide whether the alleged offender should return to his or her position, be dismissed or face any other disciplinary action.
- The PIO of FHP will consider all information relevant to the matter, including any findings made by the Police, the child protection authority and/or court – and then set out a finding, recommend actions and the rationale for those actions.
- If disciplinary action is recommended, FHP will follow the procedures set out in FHP's Disciplinary Action and Dismissal Policy and Procedure.
- FHP will provide the relevant government agency with a report of any disciplinary action it takes, where this is required.

### Step 5: Record the allegation

A Confidential Record of Child Abuse Allegation Form attached to this Policy must be completed. Prior to completion, ensure the procedures outlined in this Policy have been followed and advice has been sought from the relevant government agency and/or Police.

## Contact details for advice or to report an allegation of child abuse

000 Ambulance/Fire/Police  
 000 For those with limited English. A translator will be connected to relay information  
 112 000 if zero reception  
 106 Deaf/Speech Impaired. This is a text-based service  
 +61 400 636 742 = Neil McCulloch, FHP Director

<b>Western Australia</b>	
Western Australia Police Non-urgent police assistance Phone: 131 444	Department of Communities, Child Protection and Family Support <a href="https://www.communities.wa.gov.au/services/child-protection-and-family-support/">https://www.communities.wa.gov.au/services/child-protection-and-family-support/</a> 1800 199 008
<b>South Australia</b>	
South Australia Police Non-urgent police assistance Phone: 131 444	Department of Child Protection <a href="https://www.sa.gov.au/topics/education-and-learning/health-wellbeing-and-special-needs/report-child-abuse/report-child-abuse">https://www.sa.gov.au/topics/education-and-learning/health-wellbeing-and-special-needs/report-child-abuse/report-child-abuse</a> 13 14 78
<b>Victoria</b>	
Victoria Police Non-urgent police assistance Phone: 131 444	Department of Health and Human Services <a href="https://services.dhhs.vic.gov.au/reporting-child-abuse">https://services.dhhs.vic.gov.au/reporting-child-abuse</a> Go to website for area division contact numbers
<b>New South Wales</b>	
New South Wales Police Non-urgent police assistance Phone: 131 444	Department of Family & Community Services <a href="https://www.facs.nsw.gov.au/families/Protecting-kids/mandatory-reporters/how-to">https://www.facs.nsw.gov.au/families/Protecting-kids/mandatory-reporters/how-to</a> 13 21 11
<b>Queensland</b>	
Queensland Police Non-urgent police assistance Phone: 131 444	Department of Child Safety, Youth and Women <a href="https://www.csyw.qld.gov.au/child-family/protecting-children">https://www.csyw.qld.gov.au/child-family/protecting-children</a> 1800 811 810
<b>Australian Capital Territory</b>	
Australian Capital Territory Police Non-urgent police assistance Phone: 131 444	Department of Care and Protection Services <a href="https://www.accesscanberra.act.gov.au/app/answers/detail/a_id/213/~reporting-child-abuse-and-neglect">https://www.accesscanberra.act.gov.au/app/answers/detail/a_id/213/~reporting-child-abuse-and-neglect</a> 1300 556 729
<b>Tasmania</b>	
Tasmania Police Non-urgent police assistance Phone: 131 444	Department of Health and Human Services <a href="https://www.dhhs.tas.gov.au/children/child_protection_services">https://www.dhhs.tas.gov.au/children/child_protection_services</a> 1800 000 123
<b>Northern Territory</b>	
Northern Territory Police Non-urgent police assistance Phone: 131 444	Territory Families <a href="https://nt.gov.au/law/crime/report-child-abuse">https://nt.gov.au/law/crime/report-child-abuse</a> 1800 700 250