

CHILD SAFE POLICY

PURPOSE:	To demonstrate the strong commitment of the Board, management, staff, students and volunteers to child safety and to provide policies to keep children safe from harm.
RELEVANT TO:	All Board, Staff, Students, Volunteers
RESPONSIBLE STAFF:	Management
RELATED POLICY:	Mandatory Reporting – Child Protection Termination of Employment Policy
RELATED FORMS:	Child Safe Procedure Child Safe Code of Conduct Youth Projects Code of Conduct Working with Children Check Procedure

DEFINITIONS

Definitions

Child means a person below the age of 18 years.

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 and negligent treatment, commercial (e.g. for financial gain) or other exploitation of a child and includes any actions that result in actual or potential harm to a child.

Child sexual assault is any act which exposes a child to, or involves a child in, sexual processes beyond his or her understanding or contrary to accepted community standards. Sexually abusive behaviours can include the fondling of genitals, masturbation, and oral sex, vaginal or anal penetration by a penis, finger or any other object, fondling of breasts voyeurism, exhibitionism, and exposing the child or involving the child in pornography. It includes child grooming, which refers to actions deliberately undertaken with the aim of befriending and establishing an emotional connection with a child to lower the child's inhibitions in preparation for sexual activity with the child.

'Reasonable grounds for belief', that child abuse is occurring or has occurred, 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 and details of the allegation, and whether there is any other related matters known regarding the alleged perpetrator.

There may be reasonable grounds for belief that child abuse has occurred 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;

- a) A child states that they have been physically or sexually abused;
- b) A child states that they know someone who has been physically or sexually abused (sometimes the child may be talking about themselves);
- c) Someone who knows a child states that the child has been physically or sexually abused;
- d) 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;

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- e) Signs of abuse lead to a belief that the child has been physically or sexually abused.

POLICY

Responsibilities

The Board of Youth Projects has ultimate responsibility for the detection and prevention of child abuse and is responsible for ensuring that appropriate and effective internal control systems are in place. The Board is also responsible for ensuring that appropriate *Child Safe* policies, procedures and code of conduct are in place.

The CEO of Youth Projects is responsible for:

- Dealing with and investigating reports of child abuse;
- Ensuring that all Board members, staff, students, contractors, and volunteers are aware of relevant laws, organisational policies and procedures, and the organisation's code of conduct;
- Ensuring that all within Youth Projects community are aware of the obligation to report suspected abuse of a child in accordance with these policies and procedures;
- Ensuring that all Board members, staff, students, contractors and volunteers are aware of their obligation to observe the organisations *Code of Conduct* and the *Child Safe Code of Conduct*;
- Providing support for Board members, staff, contractors and volunteers in undertaking their child safe responsibilities.

All Managers must ensure that they:

- Promote child safety at all times;
- Assess the risk of child abuse within their area of control and eradicate/minimise any risk to the extent possible;
- Educate employees about the prevention and detection of child abuse; and
- Facilitate the reporting of any inappropriate behaviour or suspected abusive activities.

Management should be familiar with the types of abuse that might occur within their area of responsibility and be alert for any indications of such conduct.

All Board members/staff/students/volunteers/contractors share in the responsibility for the prevention and detection of child abuse, and must;

- Familiarise themselves with the relevant laws, Youth Projects' policy and procedures, and code of conduct in relation to child safety, and comply with all requirements;
- Report any reasonable belief that a child's safety is at risk to the relevant authorities (such as the police and/or the state based child protection service);
- Report any suspicion that a child's safety may be at risk to their supervisor (or, if their supervisor is involved in the suspicion, to the *Child Safe Person* (CEO)); and
- Provide an environment that is supportive of all children's emotional and physical safety.

Commitment to child safety

All children who come to Youth Projects have a right to feel and be safe. The welfare of the children in our care will always be our first priority and we have a zero tolerance to child abuse. We aim to create a child safe and child friendly environment where children

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feel safe and have fun.

This policy applies to all Board members, staff, students, volunteers, children and individuals involved in our organisation.

Children's rights to safety and participation

Youth Projects' Board, staff, students and volunteers encourage children to express their views. We listen to their suggestions especially on matters that directly affect them. We actively encourage all children who use our services to 'have a say' about things that are important to them.

We teach children about what they can do if they feel unsafe. We listen to and act on any concerns children or their parents, raise with us.

Valuing diversity

We value diversity and do not tolerate any discriminatory practices. To achieve this we:

- Promote the cultural safety, participation and empowerment of Aboriginal children and their families
- Promote the cultural safety, participation and empowerment of children from culturally and/or linguistically diverse backgrounds and their families
- Promote the safety, participation and empowerment of all children and their families who access our services
- Welcome children with a disability and their families and act to promote their participation
- Seek appropriate staff from diverse cultural backgrounds.

Recruitment and employment of New Personnel

Youth Projects undertakes a comprehensive recruitment and screening process for all workers, students and volunteers which aim to:

- Promote and protect the safety of all children under the care of the organisation;
- Identify the safest and most suitable people who share Youth Projects' values and commitment to protect children; and
- Prevent a person from working at Youth Projects if they pose a risk to children.

Youth Projects requires all workers/students/volunteers to pass through the organisation's recruitment and screening processes prior to commencing their engagement with Youth Projects.

Youth Projects require applicants to provide a police check and Working with Children Checks in accordance with the law and as appropriate, before they commence working at Youth Projects and during their time with Youth Projects at regular intervals.

Youth Projects will undertake thorough reference checks as per the approved internal procedure.

Once engaged, workers/students/volunteers must review and acknowledge their understanding of this Policy.

Supporting staff and volunteers

Youth Projects seeks to attract and retain the best staff and volunteers. We provide support and supervision so people feel valued, respected and fairly treated. We have developed an organisational *Child Safe Code of Conduct* to provide guidance to our Board, staff, students and volunteers, all of whom will receive training on the requirements of both

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codes throughout the induction and supervision process.

Reporting a child safety concern or complaint

The Chief Executive Officer has been appointed as the *Child Safe Person* with the specific responsibility for responding to any complaints made by Board, staff, students, volunteers, parents, or children.

Any Board member, staff member, student, volunteer or contractor who has reasonable grounds to believe that child abuse has occurred must immediately notify the appropriate child protection service or the police. They should also advise their supervisor about their concern.

In situations where the supervisor is suspected of involvement in the activity, or if the person having the suspicion does not believe that the matter is being appropriately addressed or dealt with, the matter should be reported to the next highest level of supervision.

Supervisors must report complaints of suspected abusive behaviour or misconduct to the CEO and also to any external regulatory body such as the police.

The CEO will inform the Board of any complaints.

Our complaints processes are outlined in the *Child Safe Procedure*.

Risk Management

We recognise the importance of a risk management approach to minimising the potential for child abuse or harm to occur and use this to inform our policy, procedures and activity planning in addition to general occupational health and safety risks. We will proactively manage risks of abuse to all children using our services.

The Human Resources Manager (HR) will email a reminder four (4) weeks prior to any employee whose Working with Children Check is due to expire. If the updated Working with Children Check is not forwarded to HR prior to expiration, the worker will be stood down on unpaid leave unless the worker chooses to use existing leave, until the updated Working with Children Check is received.

Reviewing this policy

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

FURTHER INFORMATION

This Child Safe Policy was approved and endorsed by the Board of Directors on 30 November 2016. It is due to be reviewed on 28 November 2018.

DOCUMENT HISTORY

Version	Effective Date	End Date	Change & Location
0002	21/02/2018		Update to Risk Management to include update to WWCC expiration
0001	30/11/2016	21/02/2018	Original version of document



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Staff Member Acknowledgement

I have read and understand Youth Projects Child Safety policy and agree to comply with the above mentioned policy.

Signature: Date:

Witnessed by:

Signature: Date: