

CHILD SAFE-CHILD PROTECTION POLICY

Purpose

This policy was written to demonstrate the strong commitment of Youth Opportunities to child safety and establishing and maintaining a child safe and child friendly environment.

This policy reflects our commitment to provide a safe environment where every person has the right to be treated with respect and is safe and protected from harm.

It complies with our obligations under the *Children's Protection Act 1993*, including:

- Section 8B – 8D – Child safe environments and criminal history assessments for people working with children; and
- Section 11 – Mandatory reporting.

Commitment to child safety

All children who come to Youth Opportunities have a right to feel and be safe. Youth Opportunities is committed to the safety and wellbeing of all young people accessing our services and the welfare of the young people in our care will always be our first priority.

Youth Opportunities will not tolerate incidents of child abuse. Abuse and neglect includes:

- Physical abuse – when a person purposefully injures or threatens to injure a child or young person.
- Emotional abuse – an attack on a child or young person's self-esteem, for example through bullying, name calling, threatening, ridiculing, intimidating or isolating the child.
- Sexual abuse – any sexual act or sexual threat imposed on a child or young person.
- Neglect – where a child or young person is harmed by the failure to provide the basic physical or emotional necessities.

This policy applies to all employees, volunteers, children and relevant individuals involved in our organisation.

- a. Employees and volunteers are required to sign a written statement indicating they have read the policy. The signed acknowledgement will be retained on the personnel file and the organisation will also ensure that a copy is available to the individual
- b. Individuals who are directly involved in our organisation's delivery of services have access to a copy of the policy when appropriate. This includes the young people we work with and their parents, guardians or carers who can access the policy via our website.

Nominated contact for child safety

Youth Opportunities have a nominated employee to undertake the duties of Child Safe Officer with specified 'child-safe' duties in their job description to ensure that child safety and wellbeing is prioritised. Their primary role is to

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ensure that employees and volunteers are adequately trained, developed and supported. The nominated Child Safe Officer also provides a single contact for children, parents and employees/volunteers to seek advice and support regarding the safety and wellbeing of children when dealing with the organisation.

Children’s rights to safety and participation

Youth Opportunities’ employees and volunteers encourage children to express their views and make suggestions, especially on matters that directly affect their safety and wellbeing. We actively encourage all children who use our services to ‘have a say’ about those things that are important to them. We provide a safe environment for students to express their views openly, to be listened to and to be given timely feedback of any action taken. We value diversity and do not tolerate any discriminatory practices.

The organisation seeks feedback on the service it provides through the use of written feedback forms. These forms are available on our website and in hard copy and allow children, and/or parents/ guardians, the opportunity to anonymously provide complaints, comment and compliments to our organisation.

The Organisation has procedures to inform children of their rights.

- a. Children and Young people in care have access to or are communicated to, the Charter of Rights
- b. Children and parents or other adults are aware of how they can access help and advice beyond the organisation’s roles to help a student flourish which are outlined in our trainer packs and available to service users.

Recruitment of employees and volunteers

The Organisation has a comprehensive procedure for recruiting staff and volunteers to ensure suitability for working with young people. This is fully described in our Recruitment and Selection policy and includes:

- A comprehensive application form
- A thorough interview with the candidates
- Professional reference checks
- Confirmation of qualifications

A relevant history assessment for prescribed positions as specified under the Children’s Protection Act 1993 is completed through a Child-related Employment Screening by the DCSI (Department of Communities and Social Inclusion) Screening Unit,. Our statement of commitment to child safety and our requirements are included in all relevant recruitment advertising.

The Children’s Protection Act 1993 (SA) defines a prescribed position as one in which a person is engaged in the following:

- *regular contact with children or working in close proximity to children on a regular basis, unless the contact or work is directly supervised at all times; or*
- *supervision or management of persons in positions requiring or involving regular contact with children or working in close proximity to children on a regular basis; or*

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- *access to records of a kind prescribed by regulation relating to children; or*
- *functions of a type prescribed by regulation (see Regulation 10).*

The Youth Opportunities Chief Executive will conduct initial assessment on completed Child-related Employment Screens and make judgement on suitability in line with Youth Opportunities commitment to providing child safe environments.

Child-related Employment Screening will be updated periodically at two years and nine months.

Upon receipt of an authenticated written request from a parent, guardian or caregiver of a child directly receiving Youth opportunities the Organisation will provide evidence of child related employment screening for inspection.

The support, training and supervision of staff and volunteers

The Organisation provides support, training opportunities and the supervision of functions of staff and volunteers for the purpose of promoting a child safe environment

All staff in prescribed positions must complete a full day face-to-face responding to abuse and neglect/education and care (RAN-EC) training with a DECD approved training organisation, prior to engaging with DECD students.

Alternatively staff and volunteers, who have previously participated in a full day of Child Safe Environment training, will meet this DECD requirement if they also:

- complete the 90 minute RAN-EC online update training
- obtain and record on staff HR record, a certificate of participation/completion from the online update training
- receive the Protective Practice Handbook which can be downloaded from DECD website
- for volunteers to receive and read the RAN-EC Induction Volunteer Handbook available for downloading on the DECD website

Training for Child Safe Environments and RAN-EC – responding to abuse and neglect/education and care will be updated periodically **at two years and nine months.**

The Organisation has initiated a Performance and Development review for all staff which focuses on developing skills, knowledge and capabilities to ensure ongoing improvements to child safe environments

Employees delegated to specific projects are involved in regular meetings and review of work for the purpose of alignment of all tasks to Child Safe Environments.

Reporting and responding to suspected abuse and neglect

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Relevant employees and volunteers must notify of suspected Child Abuse as soon as practicable if they have reasonable suspicion that a child has been or is being abused or neglected. Reasonable grounds of suspicion may include:

- When your own observations of a particular child's behaviour and/or injuries, lead you to suspect a child is being abused or neglected;
- When a child tells you that they have been abused;
- A child telling you that they know of someone who has been abused (they may possibly be referring to themselves);
- When your own observation about the behaviour of the child , or their adult caregiver/s, give you cause to suspect that a child is being , or is at risk of being, abused or neglected;
- When you hear about it from someone who is in a position to provide reliable information, perhaps a relative or a friend, neighbour or sibling of a child who is at risk.

Youth Opportunities is responsible for ensuring that employees and volunteers in prescribed positions are aware how to make appropriate reports of abuse or neglect using one of the following methods.

- By calling the Child Abuse Report Line 13 14 78
- By submitting an online report at <http://www.reportchildabuse.families.sa.gov.au>

Employees and volunteers in prescribed positions must also report any form of abuse or neglect to the Training Services Manager and/or the Child Safe Officer for further support or to ensure that Youth Opportunities takes all reasonable steps to keep the child and others safe.

For the purpose of best practice, staff are to complete the Child Abuse Report form for Youth Opportunities records.

This form is to be filed in a secure location to ensure confidentiality and privacy requirements are maintained.

When a child makes an allegation employees and volunteers are trained and supported to ensure:

- a relationship of trust is established
- the trauma experienced by the child is minimised in the telling of the abuse
- the incident is reported with the greatest possible factual accuracy
- the child understands that the issue may need to be taken further

Code of Conduct

The Organisation has a clear Code of Conduct as part of the induction process which all employees and volunteers are required to sign up to.

The conduct code for each group of students is developed with their full participation to facilitate ownership and adherence. A list of non-negotiable elements to be included in these Group Agreements are clearly defined and trainers assist the group to include any that may have been overlooked. A copy of the Group Agreement is provided to all students and referred to when required.

Risk Management Processes

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The Organisation has a detailed Risk Management policy and risk assessment process to ensure that the program and each venue has any hazards and risks identified and quantified with clear risk mitigation activities to reduce the risk to an acceptable level.

Forms and References

<i>Child Abuse Reporting Form</i>	
<i>Child Abuse Reporting Checklist</i>	
<i>RAN-EC Induction Volunteer Handbook</i>	
<i>Protective Practice Handbook</i>	
<i>Children’s Protection Act 1993</i>	
<i>Charter of Rights</i>	
<i>Code of Conduct Policy</i>	
<i>Risk Management Policy</i>	
<i>Risk Assessment Form</i>	
<i>Workforce Development Guide</i>	
<i>Recruitment and Selection Policy</i>	
<i>Supervision and Support Policy</i>	
<i>List of services for help and advice for young people</i>	
<i>Complaints and feedback form</i>	
<i>Daily outline Day 1 Group Agreements</i>	