



National Principles for Child Safe Organisations

Information and checklist for staff and volunteers working with children and young people

A child safe and friendly organisation values children and understands safety doesn't just happen. A commitment to protecting children is embedded in the organisation's culture and is understood and accepted by everyone.

Child safe organisations proactively implement the National Principles for Child Safe Organisations (National Principles) to enhance the safety and wellbeing of the children and young people that they work with and protect them from harm.

The Commissioner for Children and Young People has created a range of resources available online to support organisations to develop child safe strategies and align practice with the National Principles. These include comprehensive guidelines, an organisational self-assessment and review tool, information for parents, carers and family members and information for children and young people.

What do children and young people say about staff and volunteers?

Children and young people identify staff and volunteers as being very important in helping them feel safe in their organisations. They shared clear suggestions with the Commissioner about the actions adults working in organisations can take to help them feel safe and happy in organisations.¹ These actions include:

- Being engaging, trustworthy and involved.
- Supervising children and young people closely to monitor behaviour, particularly bullying.
- Actively connecting with and listening to them to enable them to raise issues.
- Taking children and young people seriously if they raise a concern.
- Paying attention to children and young people who may be more vulnerable, particularly those without strong friendship groups or parental support.
- Being non-judgemental and understand that choices, options and respect for individual differences are important.

¹ Commissioner for Children and Young People WA 2015, *Creating Child-Safe Organisations: Report on consultation with children and young people*, Commissioner for Children and Young People, Perth.

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Checklist for staff and volunteers

This checklist has been developed to help staff and volunteers to understand and reflect on their responsibilities to promote child safety in their organisation in line with the National Principles. There are a few simple steps:

1. Read the statements in the checklist and:

- Consider how they apply to you in your role
- How you can build on your strengths and
- Identify gaps in your knowledge or practice and how to address these.

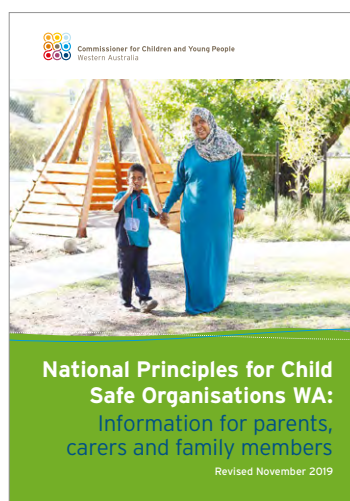
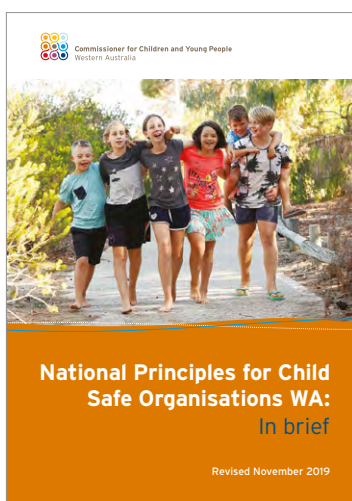
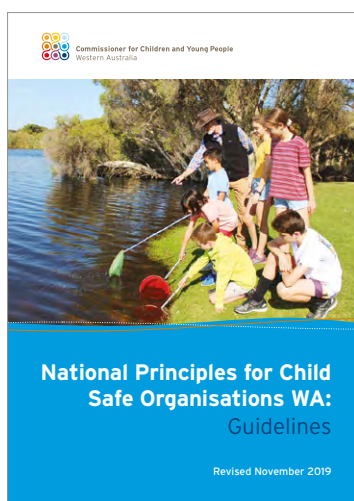
2. Write your comments, ideas and plans in the space under each principle.

3. Use the notes you have made to:

- Share and discuss any child safe strengths with colleagues
- Speak with your manager or child safe leaders to access additional training or support that you may require
- Provide feedback on child safety into the organisation's continuous improvement processes.

While roles vary between individuals working or volunteering with children and young people in different settings, all staff and volunteers play a critical part in preventing harm to children and young people, promoting their safety, and supporting their wellbeing and development.

The Commissioner has resources available for organisation staff, volunteers, parents and children to support understanding of the National Principles for Child Safe Organisations:



National Principles for Child Safe Organisations

1

Leadership, governance and culture

Yes No Don't know

National Principle 1: Child safety and wellbeing is embedded in organisational leadership, governance and culture

I understand my role and responsibilities in promoting the safety of children and young people and protecting them from harm and abuse.

I have a clear understanding of what my organisation considers as unacceptable behaviour by adults working with children and young people.

I know who to speak to about any concerns I have about the safety of children and young people in our organisation, including about the behaviour of other staff members or volunteers.

Comments, ideas and any next steps:

2

Empowering children to participate

Yes No Don't know

National Principle 2: Children and young people are informed about their rights, participate in decisions affecting them and are taken seriously

I inform children and young people about their right to speak up about any concerns, to be safe, feel safe and be respected.

I encourage and support children and young people to have a say about any aspects of the activities and services they participate in.

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I provide child-friendly ways for children to express their views and raise concerns, and identify and remove any barriers they may face in participating or speaking up.

I listen to what children and young people say and follow up their suggestions and communicate their feedback to my leaders.

I recognise the importance of friendship and peer belonging, and support children and young people to connect with their peers.

Comments, ideas and any next steps:

3

Involving family and community

Yes No Don't know

National Principle 3: Families, carers and communities are informed and involved in promoting child safety and wellbeing

I make sure that families, carers and community members of the children engaged with my organisation, are welcomed and included in decisions that affect their child, including asking them about their child's specific needs.

I make sure that families, carers and communities are informed and supported to understand about child safety and the organisation's child safe approach, including relevant policies, the code of conduct for staff, and how to raise concerns or make complaints.

Comments, ideas and any next steps:

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4

Equity is upheld and diverse needs respected

Yes No Don't know

National Principle 4: Equity is upheld and diverse needs respected in policy and practice

I understand and respect the diverse strengths, needs and experiences of children and young people that I work with, including Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children, children with disability, children from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds, those who are unable to live at home, and lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender and intersex children and young people.

I have the skills and knowledge to meet the needs of children and young people from diverse backgrounds and be inclusive in my practice.

I know who to ask for guidance to support me to meet the needs of children and young people with diverse backgrounds.

I make sure the resources, activities and information I provide for children and young people reflect diversity and are accessible and culturally safe.

Comments, ideas and any next steps:



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5

Managing staff and volunteers

Yes No Don't know

National Principle 5: People working with children and young people are suitable and supported to reflect child safety and wellbeing values in practice

If eligible, I have an up-to-date Working with Children check (or other required background checks), and let my employer know if my circumstances change in a way that will affect the status of this, or other background checks.

I understand my recordkeeping, information sharing and reporting obligations regarding children and young people.

I engage in supervision with my manager or supervisor, and discuss issues or concerns relating to child safety.

I can identify and respond appropriately to behaviour that poses a risk or is harmful to children, including the behaviour of colleagues or other children and young people.

Comments, ideas and any next steps:



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6

Child friendly complaints process and reporting

Yes No Don't know

National Principle 6: Processes to respond to complaints and concerns are child focused

I understand my organisation's complaints system and my responsibilities and obligations within this process.

I can identify and respond appropriately to different kinds of concerns and complaints, including informal complaints and disclosures of harm.

I understand that children and young people may disclose concerns of harm or abuse in a variety of different ways.

I inform children and young people in my organisation about their right to make a complaint, and the ways in which they can do this.

I listen supportively to children and young people's concerns and complaints, take them seriously, respond promptly, and offer them support to progress their concerns.

I make sure children and young people who have made a complaint are informed of which staff or volunteer will keep them informed of the progress of their complaint.

I understand my reporting responsibilities under my organisation's complaints system for different types of complaints, including complaints about the service, breaches of the code of conduct, harm caused by other children, harm occurring within the family, community or other organisations.

Comments, ideas and any next steps:

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7

Education and development

Yes No Don't know

National Principle 7: Staff and volunteers are equipped with the knowledge, skills and awareness to keep children and young people safe through ongoing education and training

I have received training and am able to recognise and respond to the signs of child abuse and harm, including grooming behaviours.

I have undertaken training and can respond appropriately to child safety concerns if I believe a child or young person is at risk of harm or discloses abuse or harm.

I reflect on my knowledge and practices relating to child safety, and seek advice, support, and training to develop my skills in these areas.

I am aware of how to build culturally safe environments for children and young people and have undertaken training around this.

Comments, ideas and any next steps:

8

Safe environments – physical and online

Yes No Don't know

National Principle 8: Physical and online environments promote safety and wellbeing while minimising the opportunity for children and young people to be harmed

I am able to identify risks to the safety of children and young people in the online and physical environments I work in, and take action to address these.

I implement, and contribute to, my organisation's child safety risk management strategies, taking into consideration the different settings of our work, the activities we plan, off-site activities, and managing children and young people's support needs.

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I know and apply my organisation's rules and guidelines about online environments, social media, photo taking, online communications, and the use of phones and devices.

I take action to protect children from bullying and other types of harm between children and young people.

Comments, ideas and any next steps:

9

Continuous improvement

Yes No Don't know

National Principle 9: Implementation of the National Principles for Child Safe Organisations is regularly reviewed and improved

I always look for ways to improve and make things safer for children and young people and provide this feedback to people within my organisation.

I seek feedback from children and their families, including how child safety or children and young people's experiences could be improved, and provide this feedback to my organisation.

I contribute to discussions in my organisation about child safe practices, policies and areas for improvement, to actively inform my organisation's continuous improvement across all the Principles.

Comments, ideas and any next steps:

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10

Child safe and friendly policies

Yes No Don't know

National Principle 10: Policies and procedures document how the organisation is safe for children and young people

I know how to access my organisation's child safe policies and procedures, including the Code of Conduct, and review, understand and implement these.

I inform children and young people about my organisation's child safe policies, how to access them and provide assistance to them to help them understand these.

I encourage other children and young people, and their families, to participate in the development and review of child safe policies and practices.

Comments, ideas and any next steps:

+

Suggestions, feedback or areas to follow up within or your organisation:



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