



Child Safe Policy

June 2020

1. Integrity

It is non-negotiable that the Commissioner for Children and Young People and the office's staff act in the interest of the Western Australian community, and especially in the interests of children and young people each and every day through the decisions we make, the policies we enact and adhere to, and by the actions we take. It is our intention that our policies and procedures demonstrate how we act in an honest and transparent manner, which forms a basis for our reasoned decision-making affected without bias utilising fair and objective processes.

2. Purpose

Commitment to the safety of children and young people

Children and young people are entitled to live in a caring and nurturing environment and to be protected from harm and exploitation. Children and young people should be safe, feel safe and be respected wherever they are. The Commissioner for Children and Young People prioritises the safety and wellbeing of children and young people in all work of the office and in our work with other organisations. The Commissioner has publicised this commitment visibly on the website of the office.¹

Policy intent

This policy aims to give effect to the Commissioner's commitment to the safety of children and young people. It does so by outlining how the National Principles for Child Safe Organisations² guide our approach to promoting child safety, actions we take to meet these responsibilities, and how we minimise risk of any harm to children and young people.

This policy is also intended to empower the children and young people we are involved with, who are vital and active participants in the work we do. We listen to their views, respect what they have to say and involve them when making decisions, especially about matters that directly affect them. The Commissioner has produced a Service Commitment for Children and Young People to inform them it is important for children and young people to enjoy working with the Commissioner and staff, and to feel safe and respected at all times. This service commitment is on the Commissioner's website and is made directly available to all children and young people with whom we work.

¹ <https://www.cyp.wa.gov.au/about-us/what-we-do/>

² Commissioner for Children and Young People WA 2019, *National Principles for Child Safe Organisations WA: Guidelines*

3. Definition

Child Safe Organisation

A child safe and friendly organisation values children, understands safety doesn't just happen and balances a safety focus with positive interactions and environments that contribute to the healthy development of children.³

It takes action to protect children from physical, sexual, emotional, psychological and cultural abuse and from neglect. In a child safe organisation, this commitment to protecting children is embedded in the organisation's culture and responsibility for taking action is understood and accepted at all levels of the organisation.⁴

4. Position statements, relevant legislation and policies

Convention on the Rights of the Child, Article 19

Children have the right to be properly cared for and to be protected from violence, abuse and neglect at all times and in all places.⁵

Commissioner for Children and Young People Act 2006⁶

In performing a function under this Act the Commissioner or any other person must regard the best interests of children and young people as the paramount consideration. The Commissioner has many functions within the Act of particular relevance to this policy including:

- advocating for all children and young people
- promoting the participation of children and young people
- promoting and monitoring laws, policies and practices that affect the wellbeing of children and young people
- consulting children and young people from a broad range of communities and age groups each year
- inquiring on behalf of children and young people about issues relating to their wellbeing.

The National Principles for Child Safe Organisations were agreed to by the Council of Australian Governments, including the WA Premier, in February 2019. The Commissioner published updated guidelines for WA organisations on implementing the National Principles in November 2019 *National Principles for Child Safe Organisations in WA: Guidelines*. All of the National Principles draw on the recommendations of the Royal Commission into Institutional Responses to Child Sexual Abuse.⁷

³ <https://www.cyp.wa.gov.au/about-us/what-we-do/>

⁴ Commissioner for Children and Young People WA 2019, *National Principles for Child Safe Organisations WA: Guidelines*

⁵ <https://www.cyp.wa.gov.au/about-us/what-we-do/>

⁶ Commissioner for Children and Young People WA 2019, *National Principles for Child Safe Organisations WA: Guidelines*

⁷ Royal Commission into Institutional Responses to Child Sexual Abuse 2017 *Final Report Volumes 6,7, 8* <https://www.childabuseroyalcommission.gov.au/child-safe-institutions>

This policy, the *Guidelines*, and the *Child Safe Organisations WA: Self-Assessment and Review Tool* have been developed with input from the children and young people who have participated in our consultations on child safe organisations. Other internal policies which provide detailed guidance for staff and volunteers in contributing to a child safe organisation are noted in the process section of this policy.

5. Process

Processes to ensure the safety of children and young people are outlined in this section according to the ten National Principles for Child Safe Organisations. Processes and actions required of staff and the organisation itself are explained, as well as references to relevant Commissioner for Children and Young People policies and procedures that further outline organisational and staff obligations related to the safety of children and young people.

National Principle	Commissioner for Children and Young People process/actions	Related Commissioner for Children and Young People policies and procedures
<p>1. Leadership, governance and culture</p>	<p>Safety is prioritised and everyone across the organisation understands and enacts child safe principles. Everyone in the team feels confident to raise any concerns or worries and knows how they can do this.</p> <p>We recognise the importance of a risk management approach to working in ways that best support children and young people to participate and to minimise the potential of harm. We use this to inform our policies, procedures and project and activity planning.</p> <p>The Commissioner has in place a Corporate Governance Framework which outlines policies that collectively provide guidance for staff and volunteers about risk management strategies, staff behaviour, the participation of children and young people and their families and complaints processes.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Corporate Governance Framework 2020 • Service Commitment to Children and Young People • Code of Conduct • Risk Management Framework and Policy
<p>2. Empowering children to participate</p>	<p>Children and young people have opportunities to actively participate in the Commissioner’s work, to provide feedback and be involved in decision making.</p> <p>Involvement of children and young people with the Commissioner and staff is voluntary. If a child or young person does not want to participate or</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ethical Research and Consultation with Children and Young People <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Ethics Review Self-Audit tool template • Participation policy • Participation consent policy

	to express a view on a particular issue, that choice is respected. We ask children and young people for their consent before we use their words, thoughts or images in our work.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Survey Distress and Disclosure protocol SOS19
3. Involving family and community	<p>Families and communities are informed about and involved in the Commissioner’s work which assists children and young people to feel respected and safe.</p> <p>The Commissioner is guided by the principle within the <i>Commissioner for Children and Young People Act 2006</i> that states parents, families and communities have the primary role in safeguarding and promoting the wellbeing of their children and young people and should be supported in carrying out their role.</p> <p>When we are engaging with children and young people, their parents and guardians are informed of the role of the Commissioner, the work we do, what we talk to children about, and we seek their consent for their child to participate and to have their child’s words, thoughts or images used.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • National Principles for Child Safe Organisations WA: Information for parents, carers and family members • Child Safe Organisations WA: Checklist for Parents • Information for Parents of Children and Young People – Visit by Commissioner or consultation template
4. Equity and Diversity	<p>Within the <i>Commissioner for Children and Young People Act 2006</i> the Commissioner must have special regard for the interest and needs of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children and young people and children and young people who are vulnerable or disadvantaged for any reason.</p> <p>The Commissioner values diversity and meets with children and young people across Western Australia. In all our work we ensure that children are treated fairly, regardless of culture, ethnicity, religion, sexuality, gender identity, and abilities.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • LGBTI Inclusion Policy: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ LGBTI Inclusion Internal Audit tool template • Reconciliation Action Plan • Disability Access and Inclusion Plan • Aboriginal Terminology Policy • Aboriginal Cultural Protocols and Guidelines • Guidelines for accessible documents – website • Improving the odds for WA’s vulnerable children and young people
5. Managing staff and volunteers	Suitable staff and volunteers are recruited and supported to work with children and young people.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Recruitment, Selection and Induction Policy • Recruitment checklist • Staff Induction 2020 onwards

	<p>The Commissioner has robust practices to recruit and screen all staff and volunteers safely, ensuring all necessary checks are made. Effective management, supervision, support, training and quality assurance measures are also in place.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Occupational Health and Safety
<p>6. Child friendly complaint process and reporting</p>	<p>Children and young people of all ages and abilities feel empowered and supported to raise any concerns they have, and feel confident that our team will do something about their concerns. We review concerns and feedback from all stakeholders, analyse issues and undertake actions to address these.</p> <p><i>Reporting a safety concern about a child or a complaint</i></p> <p>The Commissioner has a zero tolerance of child abuse, and any safety concerns or allegations of harm will be treated very seriously and responded to straight away.</p> <p>We have a moral obligation to contact the right authorities when we are worried about a child's safety, and we do so rigorously. We share concerns and information only with those who need to know and involve children, young people, parents, families and carers appropriately.</p> <p>We always seek feedback from the children and young people we work with. If they have any complaints or concerns we listen, take the concern seriously and make changes to address any problems.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Complaints Policy - Commissioner for Children and Young People • Complaints Policy - other organisations • Top tips for making a complaint (for children and young people) • Customer Service Charter • Commissioner's Commitment to Working with Children and Young People • Grievance Internal Policy • Survey Distress and Disclosure protocol SOS19 • Are You Listening – Guidelines for making complaints systems accessible and responsive to children and young people
<p>7. Education and development</p>	<p>Staff and volunteers receive ongoing professional development or training to ensure they have the knowledge and information needed to perform all aspects of their roles effectively. We are committed to regularly training and educating our staff and volunteers on child abuse risks.</p> <p>We also provide resources about child safety to children and young people,</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Policy – Performance Appraisal and Development System • Template - Performance Appraisal and Development Agreement • Discipline Policy • Planning for Professional Development and Learning • Substandard performance

	parents and community members and provide leadership and resources to organisations within Western Australia about creating child safe organisations.	
8. Safe environments – physical and online	The office, off-site locations and online spaces we use are assessed for safety and practices or spaces adjusted to reduce risk whilst also supporting healthy development and positive interactions.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Website Policy • Social Media Policy and Guidelines • Meeting Room Booking and Access Policy • Template – Meeting Room Booking Agreement Form • Contract Management • Project Plan Template • DOTAG – Computer & Telecommunications Facilities Policy – includes email policy • Work related transport and vehicle use policy • Acquisition and use of attractive and portable assets/mobile devices policy • Commissioner’s regional travel planning policy
9. Continuous improvement	<p>We have an ongoing cycle of assessment, action and reflection in place and regularly review, update and refine policies and practices to assess their effectiveness and strive for excellence. We involve children and young people and their families in developing and reviewing our work.</p> <p>The Commissioner and staff utilise the Child Safe Organisations WA: Self-Assessment and Review Tool to identify, review and strengthen our strategies and practices across the ten National Principles for child safe organisations.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Complaints Policy • Corporate Governance Framework 2020
10. Child safe and friendly policies	All relevant policies outline a commitment to safety and how things should happen including attitudes, behaviours, responsibilities and procedures. Policies are understood, implemented and actioned every day to prevent harm and promote wellbeing.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Corporate Governance Framework 2020

	<p>All relevant policy documents, publications and works of the Commissioner will reflect the principles and strategies of a child safe organisation, acknowledging children and young people should be safe, feel safe and be respected wherever they are, including when we work with them.</p> <p>As policies come up for review, they will be reviewed to improve alignment with the National Principles for Child Safe Organisations.</p> <p>We take a risk-based approach to determining what Commissioner for Children and Young People policies and procedures are reviewed to ensure full alignment with the National Principles and our Child Safe Policy. This risk-based approach takes into account whether or not the policy is administrative in nature with no impact or interface with children and young people in intent or effect.</p>	
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6. Responsibility / Accountability

This policy applies to the Commissioner, all staff and volunteers and to agencies or organisations we contract to conduct work on our behalf.

This policy is available on the Commissioner's website and information and specific resources for children and young people and their families have been developed and are used in consultations and activities with children and young people.

This policy and relevant policies within the corporate governance framework will be reviewed every two years by the Commissioner and his executive team.

7. Exemptions

No exemptions.

8. References / Supporting documentation

- Commissioner for Children and Young People 2019, *National Principles for Child Safe Organisations WA: Guidelines* pg. 6
- Child Safety Commissioner 2006, *A Guide for Creating a Child-safe Organisation*, Child Safety Commissioner, Melbourne, p. 1.
- United Nations 1989, *Convention on the Rights of the Child*, United Nations Human Rights, Office of the High Commissioner, Geneva, Switzerland, p. 5.

- *Commissioner for Children and Young People Act 2006*
<https://www.ccyp.wa.gov.au/about-us/what-we-do/>
- National Principles for Child Safe Organisations WA resources
 - Guidelines
 - Self-Assessment and Review Tool
 - In brief
 - Information for Children and Young People
 - Information for Parents and Carers
 - Creating Child Safe Organisations: Report on consultation with children and young people

All available at <https://www.ccyp.wa.gov.au/our-work/resources/child-safe-organisations/>