



**Commissioner for
Children and Young People**
Western Australia

Code of Conduct

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Message from the Commissioner

As Commissioner for Children and Young People, I am the independent person who works closely with children and young people, their families, community and government to make Western Australia a better place for children and young people.

My staff assist me in this work, providing research and advice, policy, communications and internal support to enable me to work effectively.

As the advocate for our youngest citizens, our office must always work towards the best interests of the child.

We obtain and represent the views of children and young people; present research and policy on how the needs of our children and young people can best be fulfilled; promote the work and the profile of the office; and ensure that children and young people are given the voice they need.

As employees of the WA Public Service, we have obligations to each other, to the Government of WA as our employer, and to the people of WA. These obligations include ensuring that we serve the public interest, make accountable and ethical decisions and conduct our work and our relationships professionally.

This Code of Conduct helps guide all of us in our behaviour in the workplace, to ensure we meet those obligations.



A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Colin Pettit'. The signature is stylized and somewhat cursive.

Colin Pettit

Commissioner for Children and Young People WA

Introduction

The Western Australian Public Sector Code of Ethics is established under the *Public Sector Management Act 1994*. It sets out minimum standards of conduct and integrity to be complied with by public sector bodies and employees and establishes high level principles and values to guide our behaviour in the workplace, with colleagues and with stakeholders. The Code of Ethics principles are:

- **Personal Integrity:** We act with care and diligence and make decisions that are honest, fair, impartial, and timely, and consider all relevant information.
- **Relationships with Others:** We treat people with respect, courtesy and sensitivity and recognise their interests, rights, safety and welfare.
- **Accountability:** We use the resources of the State in a responsible and accountable manner that ensures the efficient, effective and appropriate use of human, natural, financial and physical resources, property and information.

Further information can be found in the Public Sector Commissioner's Instruction No.7 - <https://publicsector.wa.gov.au/node/1691>

Section 9(a) of the *Public Sector Management Act 1994 (WA)* of the PSM Act requires all public sector bodies and employees to observe the principles of conduct and to comply with the provisions of:

- the PSM Act and any other Act governing their conduct
- the Commissioner's Instructions, public sector standards and codes of ethics, and
- any code of conduct applicable to the public sector body or employee concerned.

It also requires public sector bodies and employees to act with integrity, courtesy, consideration and sensitivity in dealings with employees and members of the public.

The Commissioner for Children and Young People Code of Conduct complies with this code and provides additional scope specific to the Agency.

The Code of Conduct applies to:

- All staff including permanent, fixed-term, seconded and casual staff
- Volunteers
- Student placement program and work experience attendees.

In this document, **Commissioner** refers to the person in the role of Commissioner for Children and Young People, and **we/our** refers to staff of the Commissioner's office.

Vision, values and principles

Our job

We support the Commissioner to work proactively with children and young people, their families, the community and government in Western Australia to improve the wellbeing of children and young people.

Our hope for the future

All children and young people in Western Australia are heard, are healthy and safe, reach their potential and are welcomed as valued members of the community.

Our special priorities

The Commissioner represents and advocates on behalf of all children and young people under 18 years of age in Western Australia. The Act requires the Commissioner to give priority to the interests and needs of:

- Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children and young people
- children and young people who are vulnerable or disadvantaged for any reason or circumstance.

In accordance with statutory obligations, the Commissioner:

- advocates for children and young people – children and young people are entitled to live in a caring and nurturing environment, to be protected from harm and exploitation, and encouraged to reach their potential
- promotes strategies and outcomes which enhance the wellbeing of children and young people
- monitors the wellbeing of children and young people generally in the community
- recognises parents, guardians, families and communities have the main role to protect children and young people and promote their wellbeing, and advocates that they should be supported in carrying out this role
- monitors the way in which a government agency investigates a complaint against it by a child or young person and monitors trends in these complaints
- promotes the participation of children and young people in decision making that affects their lives and encourages government and non-government agencies to include children and young people in decision making
- promotes and encourages the views of children and young people as valuable and that they should be seriously considered when decisions are made on matters that affect them
- promotes awareness and understanding in the community about the wellbeing of children and young people
- consults with children and young people and their families in their communities

- considers and make recommendations on laws, policies, programs and services affecting children and young people
- inquires into any matter affecting the wellbeing of children and young people.

Our values

We strive to be:

Respectful | Honest | Inclusive | Creative | Positive | Determined | Independent

Legislation and guidelines

The principal legislation includes the *Commission for Children and Young People Act 2006*, *Public Sector Management Act 1994 (WA)* and the *Financial Management Act 2006* and associated relevant legislation, regulations, policies and procedures.

We need to know the responsibilities of our employment and be aware that they impose certain conditions on us. These include adherence to this Code of Conduct.

The Commissioner approved a Commitment to Child Safety in 2017 reflecting the work of the office in leading Child Safe Organisation in Western Australia. The commitment statement reflects the principle of the act s1(4)(a):

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.

Personal behaviour

We put the best interests of children and young people first.

We provide all necessary and appropriate assistance to members of the public.

We adhere to child-safe and child-friendly work policies, practices and procedures to ensure children and young people feel safe and respected.

We treat members of the public and other employees with courtesy, respect, sensitivity and equity.

We respect the diversity of our community, including diversity in culture, gender, sexuality, ability, and heritage.

We conduct ourselves in a professional manner when representing the office, including appropriate dress and behaviour.

We do not tolerate any form of discrimination, harassment or bullying.

We do not engage in any private activity that may adversely affect the performance of our duties. Such behaviour includes, but is not limited to, harming a child, alcohol or drug abuse or violent behaviour.

We make sure that all matters we handle are dealt with consistently, promptly and fairly. Matters must be dealt with in accordance with approved policies and procedures and without discrimination on any grounds.