



Commissioner for Children and Young People
Western Australia



National Principles for Child Safe Organisations WA: In brief

Revised November 2019



This is the second edition of *Child Safe Organisations WA: In brief*, produced by the Commissioner for Children and Young People. This edition replaces the 2016 edition shown here.

The Commissioner for Children and Young People WA has created a range of resources to support organisations to develop child safe strategies including:

- *National Principles for Child Safe Organisations WA: Guidelines*
- *National Principles for Child Safe Organisations WA: Self-assessment and review tool*

All resources are available at ccyp.wa.gov.au

Contact us

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What is a child safe organisation?

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.

The ten National Principles for Child Safe Organisations¹ are achievable, relevant and reliable in reducing the likelihood of children and young people experiencing harm when in the care of organisations.² Each of the principles are of equal importance and are interrelated.

A child safe organisation proactively implements the principles to enhance the overall experiences of children they engage with, balancing the focus on child safety with continued positive interactions and environments that contribute to healthy development.



National Principles for Child Safe Organisations WA

Leadership, governance and culture



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

Leaders are responsible for prioritising safety and ensuring everyone across the organisation understands and enacts the child safe principles. Everyone in the organisation feels confident to raise any concerns or worries and knows how they can do this.

Empowering children to participate



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

Children and young people have opportunities to provide feedback and actively participate in decision making. When children and young people feel understood and supported within an organisation they are more likely to speak up about any concerns.

Involving family and community



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

Organisations should value the diversity of family cultures, backgrounds and structures. Inclusive practice is essential for children and young people and the significant adults in their lives to feel welcome, respected and safe.

Equity is upheld and diversity needs respected



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

The strengths and differences of all children and young people are celebrated regardless of age, ability, sex, gender, economic or cultural background. Organisations recognise and respond to the diverse needs of children and young people and their families and eradicate bullying, exclusion or discrimination.

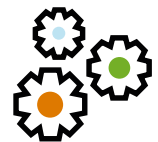
Managing staff and volunteers



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

Identifying suitable staff and volunteers to work with children and young people requires a transparent and robust recruitment and selection process. Staff and volunteers should further be supported by induction, training, ongoing support and supervision.

Child friendly complaint processes and reporting



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

Children and young people of all ages and abilities need to feel empowered and supported to raise any concerns they have, and feel confident that staff and volunteers will do something about their concerns. Oversight of informal and formal concerns from all stakeholders includes analysis of issues and actions to address these.

Education and development

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.



Staff and volunteers require ongoing professional development to ensure they have the knowledge and information needed to understand the responsibilities and perform all aspects of their roles effectively. A lack of understanding and knowledge of child abuse contributes to a culture of complacency and even denial.

Safe environments – physical and online

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



Buildings, homes, off-site locations and online spaces used by organisations can be designed or adjusted to increase child safety while also supporting healthy development and positive interactions. Natural surveillance, for example, decreases the opportunity and likelihood of harmful behaviour.

Continuous improvement

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



An ongoing cycle of assessment, action and reflection assists organisations to be vigilant as they regularly review, update and refine policies and practices to assess their effectiveness and strive for excellence. Involving children and young people and their families in reviews will build confidence of all involved in the organisation in the child safety approach.

Child safe and friendly policies

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



Child safe and friendly policies outline a commitment to safety and how things should happen in an organisation – attitudes, behaviours, responsibilities and procedures. Policies must be understood, implemented and actioned every day to prevent harm.

What can organisations do?

Creating and maintaining a safe and friendly organisation is the responsibility of everyone - board members, managers, administrative staff, frontline staff and volunteers. It is dynamic and requires ongoing learning and review.

Organisations can implement child safe strategies to:

- create environments where children's safety and wellbeing is the centre of thought, values and actions³
- place emphasis on genuine engagement with, and valuing of children
- reduce the likelihood of harm occurring
- increase the likelihood of any harm being discovered
- respond appropriately to any disclosures, allegations or suspicions of harm.⁴

Organisations can be proactive by:

- determining how to begin and designating who will lead the review and implementation processes
- considering how the principles complement, align with, or enhance existing organisational processes, standards or quality or review systems
- seeking support from peak bodies or funding agencies to share strategies and resources that have been successful in particular types of service delivery
- assessing the whole organisation, identifying areas of strength and what can be done better
- taking action and improving child safe strategies and practices
- monitoring and reviewing progress over time.



Continuous improvement cycle

The following continuous improvement cycle is recommended for organisations in their work to establish and maintain the highest quality child safe and friendly environments.



For more information about Child Safe Organisations WA visit ccyp.wa.gov.au

Endnotes

- 1 Australian Human Rights Commission 2018 National Principles for Child Safe Organisations.
- 2 Royal Commission into Institutional Responses to Child Sexual Abuse 2016, *Creating Child Safe Institutions*, Commonwealth of Australia, Sydney.
- 3 Ibid p. 4.
- 4 Australian Children's Commissioners and Guardians 2013, *Principles for Child Safety in Organisations*.



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