

Safeguarding Children and Young People Policy

Purpose

The purpose of this Policy is to ensure that all people engaged with Investing In Our Youth (IIOY) understand their obligations in relation to appropriate behaviour in any setting with children and young people. In addition, this policy is in place to protect children and young people from any behaviour that could endanger their emotional, psychological or physical health, safety and wellbeing, and enable employees to safely deliver effective services as required. The policy outlined below operates simultaneously with the IIOY Code of Conduct.

IIOY supports and values all children and young people and makes a commitment to support the safety and wellbeing of all children and young people, including protection from abuse. This policy is one of the ways IIOY demonstrates its commitment to being child safe and a zero-tolerance approach to child abuse.

This policy aims to reduce the risk of harm and child sexual abuse in our communities by encouraging child safe environments to be created and maintained. IIOY is committed to encouraging local organisations to be child safe and ensure children and young people are safe and empowered.

Overview

This policy has been developed in response to recommendations from the Royal Commission into Institutional Responses to Child Sexual Abuse (The Royal Commission). The Royal Commission Final Report emphasised that members of the public, children and young people, parents, carers, families and communities should feel confident that organisations working with children provide safe environments in which children's rights, needs and interests are met. Royal Commission recommendations 7.8 and 9.8 provide guidance for embedding child safety in leadership, governance, culture and relevant policy frameworks to support appropriate conduct and accountability of individuals and agencies. The final report of the Royal Commission recommended implementing ten child safe standards in organisations engaged with children in any way. These standards have informed the National Child Safe Principles for Child Safe Organisations (Principles) as the vehicle for implementation in organisations across Australia. The principles (see Appendix 1) were endorsed by the Council of Australian Governments (COAG) in November 2019.

The National Principles reflect ten child safe standards recommended by the Royal Commission and are the vehicle for giving effect to recommendations relating to the standards. The National Principles have a broader scope that goes beyond child sexual abuse to cover other forms of potential harm to children and young people.

The Commissioner for Children and Young People WA (the Commissioner) has established the Child Safe Organisations WA Guidelines for the implementation of the Principles. These Guidelines encourage organisations that provide services for children and young people to have a Code of Conduct that establishes clear expectations for appropriate behaviour with children and young people.

Compliance

A key recommendation of the Royal Commission that applies to this Child Safe Code of Conduct is: Recommendation 6.8 state and territory governments should require all institutions in their jurisdictions that engage in child-related work to meet the Child Safe Standards identified by the Royal Commission at Recommendation 6.5. (Royal Commission, December 2017)

The National Child Safe Principles, while currently voluntary to implement, are strongly recommended to all Western Australian organisations that have children involved at any level. The Commissioner has stated that:

...every organisation must embed a child safe culture across all activities and services, with leaders, staff and volunteers being vigilant in providing child safe and friendly environments and interactions. (CCYP, November 2019)

The policy applies to permanent and fixed term employees, casual employees, people employed under contracts for service and contractors providing goods and/or services (where specifically provided for in the relevant contract). It also applies to others in the workplace such as work experience students, trainees, and volunteers.

Scope

The safety and wellbeing of children and young people is everyone's shared responsibility. The policy applies to employees, volunteers, students and contractors of an organisation providing child-related services and activities.

Commitment

ILOY is committed to the safety, wellbeing and best interests of children and young people and;

- will ensure development and age-appropriate environments for children and young people based on best evidence available in the sector
- will uphold the rights of children and young people who come into contact with the organisation so that they feel safe and protected and their safety concerns are heard and responded to
- has zero tolerance for child abuse and take all allegations of harm and safety concerns seriously, ensuring such conduct is dealt with in accordance with organisation policies, procedures and the law

- is committed to preventing child abuse and identifying risk early, and removing and reducing these risks
- will actively work to listen to and empower children and young people who come into contact with the organisation
- has robust human resources and recruitment practices for all staff and volunteers
- will provide training and education to employees on the principles and creating a child safe organisation
- will provide a culturally safe environment for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children and young people and those from culturally and/or linguistically diverse backgrounds, and consider their needs in providing that environment
- will provide a safe environment for, and consider the needs of, children and young people with a disability, and consider their needs in providing that environment
- will provide a safe environment for, and consider the needs, of children and young people who have suffered trauma, and consider their needs in providing that environment
- will provide a safe environment for, and consider the needs of, same sex attracted and intersex children and young people, and recognise gender diversity in providing a safe environment, and consider their needs in providing that environment.

This organisation requires all employees to uphold these commitments. The organisation has specific policies, procedures and training in place to achieve these commitments.

Policy Principles

- The rights of children and young people are upheld.
- Children and young people are respected, listened to, and informed about their rights.
- Children and young people have the fundamental right to be safe and cared for.
- Children and young people have the right to speak up, be heard and taken seriously without the threat of negative consequences.
- The safety and best interests of children and young people are a primary consideration when making decisions that concern them.
- Access to trusted and reliable information, including the National Principles for Child Safe Organisations, helps support organisations to understand what they must do to help reduce the risk of harm and abuse.

- Communities are informed and involved in promoting the safety and wellbeing of children and young people including protection from harm.
- Collaboration with the community and our partners promotes the safety, participation and empowerment of all children and young people.

Reporting Suspected Breaches of the Policy

There are external agencies or bodies that investigate misconduct. Avenues for reporting misconduct include the:

- Department of Communities for concerns about a child's wellbeing
- Western Australia (WA) Police for criminal matters
- Ombudsman WA for matters of administration affecting individuals
- Equal Opportunity Commission WA for discrimination matters.

Individuals who make reports or raise concerns in good faith should be supported and protected from reprisals, victimisation or other detrimental action because of making a report or raising a concern.

Consequences for Breaching the Policy

Refer to the IIOY Discipline and Termination Policy for further information. However serious misconduct may lead to summary dismissal. Failure to abide by and comply with this policy and the Code of Conduct may result in disciplinary action up to and including termination of employment.

Definitions

Abuse: Abuse is an act, or a failure to act, towards or on behalf of a child that may result in harm. It can occur on one occasion or multiple occasions. Sometimes the impact of multiple events leads to harm that becomes cumulative in nature. Types of abuse include physical, emotional and sexual abuse, and neglect.

Child/Children: Means a person under 18 years of age, and in the absence of positive evidence as to age, means a person who appears to be under 18 years of age.

Child Safe Organisation: is defined in the Royal Commission Final Report as one that:

- creates an environment where children's safety and wellbeing are at the centre of thought, values, and actions
- places emphasis on genuine engagement with and valuing of children and young people
- creates conditions that reduce the likelihood of harm to children and young people
- creates conditions that increase the likelihood of identifying any harm, and

- responds to any concerns, disclosures, allegations, or suspicions of harm.

Note: In the context of IIOY this would involve referring concerns to the Department of Communities or WA Police to respond as appropriate.

Implementation of the National Principles for Child Safe Organisations give effect to the above.

Child Safe: For this policy, child safe means protecting the rights of children and young people to be safe by taking actions that can help prevent harm and abuse.

Harm: Harm, in relation to a child, means any detrimental effect of a significant nature on the child's wellbeing, whether caused by a single act, omission or circumstance; or a series or combination of acts, omissions or circumstances.

Wellbeing: Wellbeing of children and young people includes the care, development, education, health and safety of children and young people.

Related Policy and Procedure

- Recruitment Policy
- Induction Policy
- Code of Conduct Policy
- Confidentiality Agreement
- Privacy Policy
- Visitor Policy
- Acceptable Use Policy – Technology
- Workplace Social Media Policy
- Discipline and Termination Procedure

Relevant External Documents

Relevant documents that relate to this policy are linked below:

- [Royal Commission Final Report, volume 6](#)
- [Royal Commission Final Report, volume 7](#)
- [Keeping our kids safe: Cultural Safety and the National Principles for Child Safe Organisations \(SNAICC\)](#)
- [Commissioner for Children and Young People \(WA\) Child Safe Resources](#)
- [National Principles for Child Safe Organisations](#)

References

Australian Human Rights Commission. (n.d.). About the National Principles. Retrieved from <https://childsafe.humanrights.gov.au/national-principles/about-national-principles>

Commissioner for Children and Young People WA. (2019). National Principles for Child Safe Organisations WA Guidelines. Retrieved from <https://www.ccyp.wa.gov.au/media/3946/child-safe-organisations-wa-guidelines-updated-november-2019.pdf>

Department of Justice and Community Safety Victoria. (n.d.). Child Safe Code of Conduct. Retrieved from <https://www.justice.vic.gov.au/about-the-department/child-safe-code-of-conduct>

Royal Commission into Institutional Responses to Child Sexual Abuse. (2017). Final Report Recommendations. Retrieved from https://www.childabuseroyalcommission.gov.au/sites/default/files/final_report_-_recommendations.pdf

I _____ understand I have a legal responsibility and a duty of care to uphold this Safeguarding Children and Young People Policy. Failure to comply with this policy and procedure may result in disciplinary procedures and/or termination of my position from Investing In Our Youth.

Name		
Position		
Signature		Date

Date Effective	1 October 2024
Policy Owner	CEO
Approved by	Board
Date to be reviewed	October 2026

Appendix 1

National Principles for Child Safe Organisations

1. Child safety and wellbeing is embedded in organisational leadership, governance and culture.
2. Children and young people are informed about their rights, participate in decisions affecting them and are taken seriously.
3. Families and communities are informed and involved in promoting child safety and wellbeing.
4. Equity is upheld, and diverse needs respected in policy and practice.
5. People working with children and young people are suitable and supported to reflect child safety and wellbeing values in practice.
6. Processes to respond to complaints and concerns are child focused.
7. Staff and volunteers are equipped with the knowledge, skills and awareness to keep children and young people safe through ongoing education and training.
8. Physical and online environments promote safety and wellbeing while minimising the opportunity for children and young people to be harmed.
9. Implementation of the national child safe principles is regularly reviewed and improved.
10. Policies and procedures document how the organisation is safe for children and young people.

Source: <https://childsafe.humanrights.gov.au/national-principles/about-national-principles>