



• Land • Community • Young People

Purpose

The Youth Enterprise Trust (YET) Child Safety and wellbeing policy demonstrates our organisation's commitment to the safety and wellbeing of children and young people by creating and maintaining a child safe and child-friendly organisation, where children are safe and feel safe.

This policy informs all management, staff, and volunteers of their obligations to act safely and ethically towards children and guides our processes and procedures that aim to ensure children's safety and wellbeing across all areas of the organisation's work.

Scope

This policy applies to board members, executive leadership, employees, volunteers, students, and contractors for all activities in the organisation which involve or relate to contact with children.

Responsibilities

Board members, executive and non-executive leaders

Our board members, executive and non-executive leaders are responsible for ensuring that a strong child safe culture is created and maintained, and that policies and practices are developed and implemented effectively, in accordance with relevant legislation and standards.

Board members, executive and non-executive leaders will:

- ensure effective child safety and wellbeing governance, policies, procedures, codes, and practices are in place and followed
- ensure recruitment, screening practices, induction and supervision processes support the organisations commitment with suitable staff to ensure the safety and wellbeing of children
- model a child safe culture that facilitates the participation of children, families, and staff in promoting and improving child safety, cultural safety and wellbeing
- enable inclusive practices where the diverse needs of all children are considered
- reinforce high standards of respectful behaviour between children and adults, and between children
- promote regular open discussion on child safety issues within the organisation including at leadership meetings and staff meetings

- encourage and facilitate regular professional learning for staff and volunteers (where appropriate) to build deeper understandings of child safety, cultural safety, and child wellbeing
- create an environment where child safety complaints and concerns are readily raised, complaints are responded to according to the organisations procedures and no one is discouraged from reporting an allegation of child abuse to relevant authorities
- risk assessment and management process
- policies or procedures on external reporting, record keeping and information sharing

Employees, volunteers, students, and contractors

All employees, volunteers, staff, and contractors will:

- participate in child safety and wellbeing induction and training provided by YET, and always follow the organisation's child safety and wellbeing policies and procedures
- act in accordance with our Child Safety Code of Conduct
- identify and raise concerns about child safety issues to the Chief Executive Officer or another leader in YET
- implement inclusive practices that respond to the diverse needs of children

Definitions

Child / children: a person under 18 years of age. For the purpose of mandatory reporting in Queensland, *child* means a person under 16 or a person under 18 with an impairment of the mind.

Child abuse: There are four different types of child abuse:

- physical abuse
- sexual abuse
- emotional abuse
- neglect.

Child abuse can be a single incident or can be several different incidents that take place over time. Under the *Child Protection Act (1999)*, it does not matter how much a child is harmed, but whether a child:

- has suffered harm, is suffering harm, or is at risk of suffering harm
- does not have a parent able and willing to protect them from harm

Child sexual offence: is an offence of a sexual nature committed against a child and includes:

- Indecent treatment of a child
- Carnal knowledge with or of a child
- Rape
- Incest
- Grooming a child (or their parent or carer)
- Making child exploitation material
- Maintaining a sexual relationship with a child

Cultural safety: an environment that is spiritually, physically, socially, and emotionally safe for people, where there is no challenge on a person's identity.

Emotional abuse: occurs when a child's social, emotional, cognitive, or intellectual development is impaired or threatened. It can include emotional deprivation due to persistent:

- rejection
- hostility
- teasing/bullying
- yelling
- criticism
- exposure of a child to domestic and family violence

Grooming a child: (or their parent or carer) refers to the way some offenders form relationships and build trust with children, parents, carers, teachers, and other children in order to get close to a child and create the opportunity for sexual abuse. It can be difficult to identify because the behaviour itself may not be abusive or sexual. Grooming can often occur online.

Harm: is defined as any detrimental effect of a significant nature on the child's physical, psychological, or emotional wellbeing (section 9 of the Child Protection Act 1999). For harm to be significant, the detrimental effect on a child's wellbeing must be substantial or serious, more than transitory and must be demonstrable in the child's presentation, functioning or behaviour.

Impairment of the mind: as defined in the Criminal Code, means a disability due to an intellectual, psychiatric, cognitive, or neurological impairment (or a combination of these), which leaves the person with both:

- a substantial reduction in their capacity for communication, social interaction, or learning
- a need for support

Indecent treatment of a child: covers a range of conduct of a sexual nature. Examples may include:

- fondling a child in a sexual manner
- having the child touch a sexual body part
- taking a sexual photograph of a child

Mandatory reporting: the legislative requirement that all adults must report sexual offending against children to the police unless they have a reasonable excuse.

Neglect: occurs when a child's basic necessities of life are not met, and their health and development are affected. Basic needs include:

- food
- housing
- health care
- adequate clothing
- personal hygiene
- hygienic living conditions
- timely provision of medical treatment
- adequate supervision.

Reasonable excuse: for not reporting sexual abuse against a child is not exhaustively defined in the legislation. It may include if:

- you have already reported the offence to an appropriate authority, or you know another person has or will report it—for example, if you are:
- you received information about the victim who is now an adult, and you reasonably believe they do not want to reveal it to the police

- you believe reporting the offence would endanger you or another person (other than the alleged offender)

You will not need to report an offence to the police if it has already been reported to an appropriate authority, such as Child Safety Services.

Relevant legislation and standards

Child Protection Act 1999

Child Protection Regulation 2011

Criminal Code (Child Sexual Offences Reform) and Other Legislation Amendment Act 2020

National Disability Insurance Scheme Practice Standards

National Standards for Disability Services

National Principles of Child Safe Organisations

QLD Human Rights Act 2019

United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child

Working with Children (Risk Management and Screening) Act 2000

Working with Children (Risk Management and Screening) Regulation 2011

Related organisational policies and procedures

Client Records Management policy

Code of Conduct policy

Complaints and Feedback policy

Disciplinary Action and Termination policy and procedure

External Reporting policy and procedure

Incident Management policy and procedure

Performance Appraisal policy

Privacy and Confidentiality policy

Recruitment and Screening policy

Risk Assessment and Management policy and procedures

Policy status and review

Version and date endorsed	V1, July, 2022
Approved by	Board of Directors
Reviewed	Annually
Contact	CEO, Ian Frame

Principles for Youth Enterprise Trust (YET)

YET has aligned our principles to the National Principles for Child Safe Organisations.

Principle 1: *A commitment to child safety and wellbeing.*

YET puts into practice our commitment to child safety and wellbeing modelling a child safe culture at all levels of the organisation by:

- A public commitment to child safety and wellbeing and the promotion and protection of children's rights by the organisation and its leadership. YET programs support children to work from a child rights-based perspective ensuring that their experiences are valued, that they are the experts of their own story and understand their own rights
- Child safety and wellbeing policies and procedures, and governance arrangements that facilitate their implementation
- Child Safe Code of Conduct
- Risk assessment and management process
- Policies and guidance on record keeping, information sharing and external reporting

Principle 2: *Taking children's right and responsibilities seriously.*

YET will implement the following strategies to enable children to have their rights respected, participate in decision-making, and have their voices heard.

- Programs or resources the organisation uses to educate and engage with children about their rights, safe environments, protective strategies for staying safe and seeking help when needed
- Information or training provided to staff and volunteers to ensure they understand child rights-based approaches and are skilled at engaging with children
- Ways the organisation seeks the views of children and encourages their participation in decision-making, including on safety and wellbeing issues
- Processes to regularly review opportunities for children's participation
- Policies and practices for seeking children's consent for relevant activities

Principle 3: *Involving families and communities.*

YET places at the centre of our client work their experiences by implementing effective communication and participation strategies for engaging with and responding to their diverse needs and the needs of families and communities.

- YET's child safety and wellbeing policies and procedures are made clear and accessible to families and communities through the YET website and information in our office

- c seeks the input of families and communities on the organisation's approach to child safety and wellbeing, including when reviewing policies and procedures
- YET engages with families and communities to build cultural safety and inclusion through partnerships and respectful relationships
- YET has policies and practices for seeking parental consent for relevant activities

Principle 4: *Respecting equity and diversity.*

YET creates an environment where children's diverse circumstances and needs are recognised, and all children feel safe, welcome, and included by:

- Implementing policies on accessibility, anti-discrimination, cultural safety, diversity, and inclusion
- Strategies used at all levels of the organisation to counter discrimination and exclusion, including guidance on creating environments that are safe and welcoming for all children
- Considering and addressing the needs of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children, children with disability, children from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds, children who are unable to live at home, and lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, and intersex children
- Providing and supporting training for staff and volunteers on identifying and responding to children with diverse backgrounds and needs
- Providing accessible, child-friendly and culturally safe information to children about the support and complaints processes available through the YET website and information in our office

Principle 5: *Ensuring staff are suitable and supported.*

YET puts into practice its recruitment and staff development policies including screening, induction, and supervision to ensure that staff and volunteers reflect child safety and wellbeing values in practice:

- Policies or guidance on recruitment, including advertising, selection criteria, pre-employment screening, referee checks and duty statements that includes Child Safety and Wellbeing statements and information
- Systems for ensuring that all relevant staff have current working with children checks or equivalent background checks
- Induction training for all staff and volunteers on their child safety and wellbeing responsibilities, the organisation's child safety and wellbeing policies and procedures, external reporting obligations (e.g. mandatory reporting) and the Code of Conduct.
- Policies and strategies for ongoing supervision, support and performance management of staff and volunteers

Principle 6: *Child focused complaints system.*

YET ensures that it has accessible and responsive complaints management processes that are focused on the needs of children and that their voices are always heard by staff and volunteers in the organisation by:

- Having an accessible policy for receiving, responding to and investigating complaints of child harm or abuse that prioritises the safety and wellbeing of children. Complaints may relate to concerning conduct, misconduct or criminal conduct

- Providing child-friendly and culturally safe information to children, families, and communities about how they can raise concerns and how those concerns will be responded to and investigated
- Responding to concerns or complaints relating to harm caused to a child by another child.
- Policies on reporting to external authorities, record keeping and information sharing, and systems to ensure the organisation meets its reporting requirements and employment law and privacy obligations
- Training for staff and volunteers on the complaints process, their roles and responsibilities, reporting and privacy obligations, and responding to children who disclose abuse (including recognising the different ways that children may disclose)

Principle 7: *Staff and volunteers' knowledge, skills and awareness.*

YET promotes child safety and wellbeing by ensuring that staff and volunteers are provided with relevant knowledge and skills on an ongoing basis by providing to staff and volunteers:

- Periodic training on children's rights, child development, the organisation's child safety and wellbeing policies and procedures, recognising signs of harm or abuse, responding to disclosures, understanding and responding to harmful behaviours by a child towards another child, record keeping, risk assessment and management, external reporting obligations, and creating culturally safe environments
- Ongoing professional development and information exchange opportunities relating to child safety and wellbeing
- Strategies for ensuring that staff or volunteers who disclose harm or risk to children are supported

Principle 8: *Safe physical and online environments.*

YET promotes child safety and wellbeing in physical and online environments in order to reduce the risk of harm. YET monitors the comments on our social media pages to ensure they are managed appropriately to maximise the safety of children who are interacting with YET through our pages and programs. YET is committed to ensuring processes include:

- Risk assessment and management for physical and online environments that address risks arising from those environments, organisational activities, adult to child interactions and child to child interactions
- Staff and volunteers minimise risks without compromising children's right to privacy, access to information, social connections and learning opportunities
- Staff and volunteers use online environments in line with the Code of Conduct, an online safety policy and/or relevant communication protocols
- Provide information to children and families about physical and online safety and appropriate conduct in physical and online environments
- Promotion of cultural safety in physical and online environments
- Meeting workplace health and safety responsibilities, as they relate to child safety and wellbeing
- Policies and procedures for ensuring that visitors to the organisation are appropriately logged and supervised
- Procurement policies that aim to ensure child safety and wellbeing when contracting third parties

Principle 9: *Review of child safe policies and practices.*

YET continues to reflect on and improve its child safety and wellbeing policies and practices.

- YET has a commitment to review this policy, and the organisation's other child safety and wellbeing policies and procedures, on an annual basis
- YET engages children, families, communities, staff, and volunteers in review processes and provides feedback on review outcomes
- YET records and regularly analyses complaints, incidents, and concerns in order to identify causes or systemic weaknesses and implements improvements

Principle 10: *Documenting policies and procedures.*

YET documents and makes available its policies and procedures for ensuring the safety and wellbeing of children and young people. All policies and procedures demonstrate our commitment to ethical, professional, and safe services for children.