



PUBLIC STATEMENT OF COMMITMENT TO CHILD AND YOUNG PERSON SAFETY

The Office for Youth (OFY) is committed to promoting and maintaining a culture that does not tolerate child abuse, neglect, or exploitation and the priority is to ensure the wellbeing and safety of every child that has contact with the Office for Youth employees, contractors, consultants, officials and providers engaged by the Office for Youth to deliver services to children and young people.

The Office for Youth:

- is committed to embedding the National Principles for Child Safe Organisations
- has child safe policies and practices in place which demonstrate a clear commitment to keeping children and young people safe from abuse and neglect
- publicly communicates its commitment to all stakeholders associated with the Office for Youth.

The Office for Youth will not tolerate any abuse of children or young people and is committed to:

- creating conditions that reduce the likelihood of harm to children and young people
- creating conditions that increase the likelihood of identifying any harm
- preventing the abuse of children and young people in their care, by identifying risks early and removing and reducing these risks
- responding to harm of children and young people by reporting to the appropriate authorities and providing appropriate support.

The Office for Youth believes all children and young people have a right to feel safe and be safe.

The Office for Youth is committed to:

1. Driving a child safe culture at all levels of the organisation by:

- embedding child safety in the organisation's culture, as reflected in policies and procedures, and understood and practiced at all levels of engagement
- expecting that safeguarding children and young people is everyone's responsibility
- endorsing a governance structure that reflects the commitment to prioritising the safety and wellbeing of children and young people engaged by the Office for Youth.

2. Ensuring children and young people are at the centre of Office for Youth operations by:

- committing to provide a child safe and child friendly environment where children and young people are safe and able to actively participate in decisions that affect their lives
- creating an environment where children's safety and wellbeing is the centre of thought, values and actions placing emphasis on genuine engagement with, and valuing of, children and young people
- involving and communicating with young people in the development of a safe, inclusive and supportive environment.

3. Valuing the partnerships with families and communities that work alongside the Office for Youth by:

- actively engaging with the families and communities impacted by the work of the Office for Youth
- always keeping them informed about the Office for Youth work and activities
- listening to their feedback and ensuring that their views are taken into consideration.

4. Promoting equity and respecting diversity by:

- actively anticipating young people's diverse circumstances and responding effectively to those with additional vulnerabilities
- giving young people access to information, support and complaints processes in ways that make sense to them
- considering the needs of all young people, particularly Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Young People, young people with a disability, LGBTQIA+ young people and young people from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds.

5. Minimising the likelihood of recruiting a person who is unsuitable by:

- meeting the requirements of the relevant Australian child protection legislation
- requiring workers at the Office for Youth to hold and maintain Working with Children Checks in the Australian Capital Territory and other relevant locations as required
- requiring members of the Australian Government Youth Advisory Groups who are 18 years and older to obtain Working with Children Checks in their relevant jurisdiction
- reviewing police checks and Working with Children Checks periodically.

6. Ensuring complaints processes are child focussed by:

- making sure children and young people who are engaged with the Office for Youth know how to raise a concern and know who they can talk to if they feel unsafe
- taking all allegations and concerns about abuse seriously and responding to them consistently via a specified process, in line with Office for Youth policies and procedures
- complying with all legal requirements, including reporting suspicions of abuse to the relevant authority and documenting any allegation, disclosure or concern regarding child abuse and monitoring responses to all allegations, disclosures or concerns.

7. Educating employees, volunteers, contractors and stakeholders about child safety by:

- ensuring that each person, in the delivery of services to young people, understands their role and the behaviour the Office for Youth requires in relation to keeping children and young people safe from abuse and neglect through application of the Office for Youth Child Safe policies, processes and appropriate induction
- position descriptions and engagement planning with young people clearly stating relevant child safe requirements
- having child safe practices and child safe professional behaviours that outline Office for Youth expectations for behaviour towards children and young people in the Child Safe Code of Conduct
- Office for Youth workers completing regular child safety training as outlined in the Professional Learning Framework and tracked in the Professional Learning register.

8. Ensuring all online and physical environments are safe by:

- completing comprehensive child safety risk management plans for online meetings and in person meetings and responding to all identified risks
- having adequate supervision levels in place whenever Office for Youth workers are directly engaged with children or young people.

9. Maintaining and improving the Office for Youth policies and practices by:

- monitoring all Office for Youth employees and contractors to ensure appropriate practice, behaviour, and policies are followed to keep children and young people safe from abuse and neglect through regular supervision
- formally reviewing engagement practices to identify and document potential risks to children and young people
- undertaking formal reviews of policies and procedures, at least annually, to identify potential risks to young people associated with program delivery and responding to any identified risks
- retaining a child safe policy register with routine review cycles
- documenting child safe incidents and analysing data and themes as required.

10. Documenting how the Office for Youth keep children safe through its Child Safe Framework by:

- operating under strict child safe policies and practices, which include, amongst others, the Australian Government Department of Education Child Safe Policy, Office for Youth Workplace Behaviour Policy, Safer Recruitment Practices Framework, Child Safe Professional Learning Framework and the Recognising and Responding to Risk of Harm Procedures
- adhering to the five key safeguards documented and evidenced in the Child Safe Framework.