

Child and Youth Safety and Wellbeing Policy

Purpose

To ensure the Department of State Growth (the department) respects and promotes the safety and wellbeing of children and young people related to the services we provide and with whom the department has contact.

The Child and Youth Safe Organisations Framework (the Framework) was established through the *Child and Youth Safe Organisations Act 2023 (the Act)*. The Framework sets out clear expectations for:

- how the department prioritises and promotes the safety and wellbeing of children and young people (the Child and Youth Safe Standards and Universal Principle)
- how the department responds when there are concerns about a worker's behaviour towards children and young people (the Reportable Conduct Scheme).

Through embedding the Child and Youth Safe Organisations Framework, the department's approach will support child safe practices, respect the cultural safety of the children and young people we engage with, and promote the wellbeing of children and young people.

This policy outlines the department's commitment and obligations in keeping children and young people safe from harm.

Scope

This policy applies to:

- all workers undertaking work for the department
- all activities in the department which involve, result in, or relate to contact with children and young people.

The department provides a diverse range of services used by children and young people including (but not limited to): school crossings, school bus services, athlete coaching and development, driver assessments, vehicle enforcement and safety checks, apprentices and traineeships and the Tasmanian Museum and Art Gallery.

Policy statements

The department is committed to the safety and wellbeing of children and young people and has zero tolerance for child harm of any kind. The department is committed to protecting children and young people from harm and providing an environment where children and young people are safe and feel safe.

Keeping children and young people safe is everyone's responsibility. Being a child safe organisation is an evolving process that will require ongoing commitment from everyone to keep children and young people safe.

The department supports participation and empowerment of children and young people in our programs and services.

Shared responsibilities

It is everyone's responsibility to understand the important role individually and collectively in ensuring that children and young people are protected from harm and provided with a safe and supportive environment.

Our leaders will:

- champion zero tolerance of child harm
- prioritise the safety of children in all decisions
- ensure systems, policies and procedures are in place to prevent, identify and respond to harm of children and young people
- support workers to develop their understanding of their obligations and responsibilities
- promote and ensure compliance with child and youth safe legislation, policies and procedures
- seek feedback on our practices to support continuous improvement
- report all concerns of child harm
- respect the rights of the parties involved.

All workers will:

- actively support and abide by this Policy, the Reporting and Investigating Reportable Conduct Policy and Procedure and related legislation
- support and participate in building and maintaining the department's child safe culture
- hold and maintain a current Tasmanian registration to work with vulnerable people, if applicable, and workers must notify their Manager and the Director People and Culture if the status of their registration changes including suspension and cancellation
- report all concerns of child harm (whether observed, reasonably suspected or disclosed)

Requirements

The Child and Youth Safe Standards (the Standards) are 10 standards that outline how the department can develop a culture with child safety and wellbeing at its centre. In putting the Standards into practice, the department will also give effect to the Universal Principle for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Cultural Safety. The Universal Principle says the department must provide an environment that ensures that the right to Cultural Safety of Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander children and young people is respected. The Universal Principle applies to all 10 Standards.

The Child and Youth Safe Standards

- Standard 1: Child safety and wellbeing is embedded in organisational leadership, governance, and culture.
- Standard 2 Children and young people are informed about their rights, participate in decisions affecting them and are taken seriously.
- Standard 3 Families and communities are informed and involved in promoting child safety and wellbeing.
- Standard 4 Equity is upheld and diverse needs respected in policy and practice.
- Standard 5 People working with children and young people are suitable and supported to reflect child safety and wellbeing values in practice.
- Standard 6 Processes to respond to complaints and concerns are child focused.
- Standard 7 Staff and volunteers are equipped with the knowledge, skills and awareness to keep children and young people safe through ongoing education and training.

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| Standard 8 | Physical and online environments promote safety and wellbeing while minimising the opportunity for children and young people to be harmed. |
| Standard 9 | Implementation of the Child and Youth Safe Standards is regularly reviewed and improved. |
| Standard 10 | Policies and procedures document how the organisation is safe for children and young people. |

Reportable Conduct Scheme

The Reportable Conduct Scheme (the Scheme) is about creating a culture where organisations that engage with children and young people investigate concerns about conduct related to a child or young person in a thorough, transparent, safe and child-centred way.

The Scheme is a reporting scheme specifically aimed at providing independent oversight of how organisations respond to concerns about child-related harm by workers.

The Head of Agency (or delegate) is required to notify the Independent Regulator of concerns raised about conduct related to child or young person harm involving a worker, and the conduct of investigation(s).

Reportable conduct includes criminal and non-criminal behaviour including (but not limited to):

- significant neglect
- physical violence
- a sexual offence
- sexual misconduct
- grooming
- causing significant emotional or psychological harm
- failing to report child abuse.

Information outlining how to report child and youth concern(s) and disclosure of information is provided in the department's Reporting and Investigating Reportable Conduct Policy and Procedure.

If a child or young person is at immediate risk, call 000 or contact the [Strong Families, Safe Kids, Advice and Referral Line](#) on 1800 000 123.

Education

It is important to ensure that all workers understand that the safety of children and young people is the responsibility of everyone. Workers will be provided with appropriate training and support to ensure that they understand the department's commitment and obligations to the safety of children and young people. The department aims to ensure that everyone knows how to identify risks of harm to children and young people and how to report concerns and disclosure of information related to child safety.

As a minimum, all employees are to complete the Child Safe Awareness Program available via myGrowth (under development).

The department will actively promote information relating to the child safe practices to all workers and work in collaboration with targeted services to provide resources to support child safety and wellbeing in our environments.

The department will continue working to strengthen our child safe practices to ensure child safety is embedded in our organisational processes, practices and culture.

Risk and compliance

The department is committed to preventing child harm and identifying risks early and removing and reducing these risks.

Non-compliance with this policy increases the risk of the department failing to comply with the Act, other relevant legislation and Tasmanian State Service directives.

Information sharing and record keeping

Inquiries into child abuse in organisational settings have showed there can be serious consequences when information does not flow effectively between relevant groups. It is very important that information is securely shared in a timely manner to protect children and young people from harm. Organisations may hold some information that, when pieced together with information from other sources, creates a more complete picture of conduct or risk of harm to children and young people. Information sharing can minimise these risks.

All information received will be kept and managed as per the retention and disposal schedule outlined in the [Office of the State Archivist Royal Commission Toolkit](#) and the *Personal Information Protection Act 2004*. The department will ensure that any personal information will not be used or disclosed, other than as required under the *Personal Information Protection Act 2004*, the [information sharing rights](#) under the Framework or as permitted to do so under another law.

Definitions

Child and young person	A person under the age of 18 years.
Child harm	Includes all forms of physical, serious emotional, psychological and sexual abuse, neglect or harm and reportable conduct behaviour
Contact with children	Includes physical contact, face-to-face, written, oral or electronic communication, online and social platforms.
Worker	A person who has attained the age of 18 years, who carries out work in any capacity for the department. This includes as an employee, volunteer, contractor, subcontractor, consultant, director, member of a management committee, office holder or officer. A worker must be a natural person who the department has engaged to provide services. It does not apply to corporate entities and doesn't extend to workers of those corporate entities.
Independent Regulator	Person appointed as the Independent Regulator under the <i>Child and Youth Safe Organisation Act 2023</i>

Related legislation

Legislation includes, but is not limited to:

- [Child and Youth Safe Organisations Act 2023](#)
- [State Service Act 2000](#)
- [Employment Direction No 5 – Procedures for the investigation and determination of whether an employee has breached the Code of Conduct](#)
- [Registration to Work with Vulnerable People Act 2013](#)
- [Personal Information Protection Act 2004](#)

- [Public Interest Disclosure Act 2002](#)
- [Right to Information Act 2009](#)

Related policy documents and supporting resources

- [Child and Youth Safe Organisations Framework](#)
- [National Principles for Child Safe Organisations](#)
- *Child Related Professional Conduct Policy*
- *Reporting and Investigating Reportable Conduct Policy and Procedure*

Administration of this policy

Owner	People and Culture
Creator	Project Manager
Approver	Executive Committee
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