

Code of Conduct (Child Safety and Wellbeing) Policy

Policy Index: Code of Conduct

1. Summary

The Code of Conduct (working with children) outlines the minimum expectations of Yooralla employees. This policy is to read in conjunction with the Yooralla Code of Conduct Policy and the NDIS Code of Conduct.

The Policy is applied in conjunction with any relevant Industrial Agreement, Workplace Arrangement, or Award and applies to all employees, that is Board Directors, employees, volunteers, contractors, students on placement, and/or anyone who is otherwise engaged in a professional capacity with Yooralla.

In brief, employees must:

- a.) Safeguard and uphold the human rights of children
- b.) Respect the dignity and worth of each child
- c.) Ensure children are freedom from discrimination, exploitation, abuse, harassment, neglect and bullying.
- d.) Provide supports and services in a safe and competent manner with care and skill.
- e.) Uphold the rights of the child and always prioritise their needs
- f.) Report any disclosures of harm or abuse

2. Scope of Policy

This policy applies to all Yooralla Board Directors, employees, volunteers, contractors and students on placement.

3. Purpose

To outline the minimum expectations of Yooralla employees as expressed in Yooralla's Code of Conduct (Child Safety and Wellbeing), to describe how employees are expected to conduct themselves whilst working with children and to reflect/uphold the organisation's values, professionalism, reputation and ongoing success.

4. Policy Statement

Yooralla is committed to providing a service that is safe for all children where child abuse and harm are not tolerated. Child safety and wellbeing is a priority for Yooralla and the prevention and reporting of abuse is mandated for all employees. All Board Directors, employees, volunteers, contractors and students are responsible for promoting the safety, wellbeing and empowerment of children. Yooralla recognises that discrimination can harm children and will treat all children with dignity and respect.

Yooralla prioritises the safety of children and young people and will not tolerate child abuse or harm. Yooralla is committed to child safety to create an organisation where children are safe, happy and empowered.

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All employees must:

- a) take all reasonable steps to protect children from abuse
- b) take disclosures of harm or abuse made by a child seriously
- c) raise concerns with management if risks to child safety are identified. Report and act on any concerns or observed breaches of this Code of Conduct
- d) participate in all compulsory training and professional development including training on child safety and wellbeing
- e) promote an environment of cultural safety that is free from discrimination or denial of culture;
- f) treat all children and young people with respect, regardless of race, sex, gender identity, sexual orientation, language, religion, political or other opinion, nationality, cultural background, financial situation, disability or other characteristics
- g) consider the different needs of all children at Yooralla, support them to participate fully in programs and help them and their families feel included at Yooralla
- h) support Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islands children and families to feel included and welcome at Yooralla and support Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islands children to express their culture and enjoy their cultural rights
- i) value children and young people's ideas and opinions and respond to any disclosures where children feel unsafe
- j) involve children and young people in decisions about the activities they participate in at Yooralla and welcome the participation of parents and carers in these decisions
- k) identify and mitigate risk in the online and physical environments without compromising a child's right to privacy, access to information, social connections and learning opportunities
- l) report any conflicts of interest (such as an outside relationship with a child and/or family) that may affect the ability to perform a role
- m) respect the privacy of children and their families, including keeping all personal information confidential unless required by legislation
- n) inform parents and carers/guardians if there are situations that need to be safely managed but are outside the boundaries of this Code of Conduct
- o) ensure breaches of this Code are reported to management and/or a Child Safety Officer immediately
- p) comply with all relevant Victorian legislation and our child safety and wellbeing policies and procedures

Some breaches of this Code of Conduct may need to be reported to the Victorian Police, or to the Commission for Children and Young People. Any employee found engaging in these behaviours or other unlawful or unethical practices, may be subject to disciplinary action.

All employees must not:

- a) condone or participate in illegal, unsafe, abusive or harmful behaviour towards children – this includes physical violence, sexual abuse, emotional or psychological abuse, grooming, neglect or sexual misconduct
- b) ignore or disregard any concerns, suspicions or disclosures of child abuse or harm

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- c) exaggerate or trivialise child abuse issues
- d) use hurtful or offensive behaviour or language with children
- e) fail to report information to police and/or other organisations if it is known that a child has been abused
- f) touch children in a way that is unnecessary or unsuitable and falls outside what is reasonable to provide therapeutic or other support to children
- g) persistently criticise and/or denigrate a child
- h) verbally assault a child or create a climate of fear
- i) offer children and young people alcohol, cigarettes or other drugs
- j) show children pornographic images
- k) share details of sexual experiences with a child
- l) use sexual language or gestures in the presence of children
- m) initiate unnecessary physical contact with children or do things of a personal nature that children can do for themselves such as changing clothes
- n) develop 'special' relationships with specific children or show favouritism through the provision of gifts or unnecessary or unsuitable attention
- o) have unauthorised contact with children and young people online, on social media or by phone
- p) take photographs, screenshots or share images of children involved in activities that are not authorised by Yooralla
- q) be alone with a child when there is no professional reason for doing so.

Yooralla expects all employees to comply with its policies and procedures, as well as with the provisions of relevant legislation and regulations. It is a criminal offence in Victoria for failing to act on child safety issues.

If any person in a position of authority within Yooralla becomes aware of a substantial risk that a child may become the victim of a sexual offence committed by an adult associated with Yooralla (for example, an employee, contractor or volunteer), and they have the power or responsibility to reduce or remove the risk, then they must take all reasonable steps to do so. A person in authority who negligently fails to take appropriate action to address the risk may be charged with the criminal offence of 'failing to protect' and may face a term of imprisonment.

If an adult reasonably believes a sexual offence has been committed by an adult against a child under the age of 16, they must report it to Victoria Police by calling 000 or going to their local police station. Failure to disclose the information may be a criminal offence.

5. Responsibilities

Chiefs, Executive Directors and Line Managers are responsible for communicating Yooralla's expectations regarding Child Safety and Wellbeing to their employees. They are responsible for supporting them appropriately in their work and providing a work environment that facilitates the effective performance of their duties.

All Board Directors, employees, volunteers, contractors and students are expected to behave in accordance with the Code of Conduct (Child Safety and Wellbeing).

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This is a public facing policy

6. Employee Training and Development

Yooralla Induction

Protecting Vulnerable Children

Child Safety Officer

7. Related policies and procedures

[Conflict of Interest for Employees Policy](#)

[Management of Customer Incidents Policy](#)

[Child Safety and Wellbeing Policy](#)

[Preventing and Responding to Abuse and Neglect – Statement of Intent](#)

[Respect in the Workplace Policy](#)

[Risk Management Policy](#)

[Yooralla Disciplinary Workplace Investigations Guidelines](#)

[Yooralla Employee Handbook](#)

8. Standards and Conventions

The following Standards apply to this policy and supporting documentation:

[NDIS Practice Standards and Quality Indicators](#)

- 2. Provider Governance and Operational Management
 - Governance and Operational Management

[NDIS Code of Conduct](#)

[Child Safe Standards](#)

Standard 1 – Organisations establish a culturally safe environment in which the diverse and unique identities and experiences of Aboriginal children and young people are respected and valued

Standard 2 – Child safety and wellbeing is embedded in organisational leadership, governance and culture

Standard 3 – Children and young people are empowered about their rights, participate in decisions affecting them and are taken seriously

Standard 4 - Families and communities are informed, and involved in promoting child safety and wellbeing

Standard 5 – Equity is upheld and diverse needs respected in policy and practice

Standard 6 – People working with children and young people are suitable and supported to reflect child safety and wellbeing values in practice

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Internal Version

Standard 7 – Processes for complaints and concerns are child focused

Standard 8 – Staff and volunteers are equipped with the knowledge, skills and awareness to keep children and young people safe through ongoing education and training

Standard 9 – Physical and online environments promote safety and wellbeing while minimising the opportunity for children and young people to be harmed

Standard 10 – Implementation of the Child Safe Standards is regularly reviewed and improved

Standard 11 – Policies and procedures document how the organisation is safe for children and young people

[Victorian Early Childhood Intervention Standards](#)

Standard 2 – Access and Engagement

[Victorian Disability Worker Commission – Code of Conduct](#)

The following Agreements apply to this policy and supporting documentation:

[Yooralla Enterprise Agreements](#)

9. Legislation

The following Legislation applies to this policy and supporting documentation:

[Fair Work Act 2009](#) – (Cth)

[Occupational Health and Safety Act 2004](#) – (Vic)

[Equal Opportunity Act 2010](#) – (Vic)

[Children Youth and Families Act 2005](#) – (Vic)

[Health Complaints Act 2016](#) – (Vic)

[United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples \(2008\)](#)

[United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child \(1989\)](#)

[Charter of Human Rights and Responsibilities Act 2006](#) – (Vic)

10. Glossary – refer to the [Glossary](#) in the Controlled Documents Library for common definitions

Any defined terms and abbreviations below are specific to this document

Disciplinary action – The circumstances surrounding an employee’s actions and the seriousness of such actions will determine the appropriate level of disciplinary action to be undertaken and can include: performance counselling; verbal or written warnings; investigations; and/or termination of employment.

Reportable Conduct Scheme - requires some organisations to respond to allegations of child abuse (and other child-related misconduct) made against their workers and volunteers, and to notify the Commission for Children and Young People of any allegations.