



Child Safe Policy

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Purpose

This policy demonstrates Yarra Plenty Regional Library's (YPRL's) commitment to child safety. YPRL aims to provide children with an environment that is safe and welcoming and encourages participation. The objectives of this policy include:

- To reflect YPRL's commitment to provide a safe environment where every child and young person has the right to be treated with respect and is safe and protected from harm and abuse
- To provide staff, volunteers and contractors with guidance on their responsibilities in relation to the Victorian Child Safe Standards and Victorian Reportable Conduct Scheme
- To ensure systems, decisions and actions are consistent with the Victorian Child Safe Standards and Victorian Reportable Conduct Scheme.

Scope

This policy applies to all YPRL staff, volunteers, contractors, work experience students and industry placement students.

Policy

All children who come to YPRL have a right to feel and be safe. YPRL is committed to the safety and well-being of all children participating in our programs and visiting our libraries. We aim to create a safe and friendly environment where children feel safe and valued and where the views of children are encouraged and respected.

YPRL will develop and maintain targeted policies, procedures and training to support staff, volunteers and contractors to achieve our commitment to child safety.

YPRL has zero tolerance to child abuse and will take all allegations of reportable conduct and safety concerns very seriously.

YPRL is committed to complying with all legal requirements regarding child safety concerns and where a suspected or alleged incident occurs. YPRL takes allegations of abuse seriously and will investigate all allegations fairly and appropriately to protect and support the health and wellbeing of children.

YPRL staff, volunteers, contractors, work experience students and industry placement students must be vigilant to signs of abuse, challenge unacceptable behaviours and report all allegations or suspicions of abuse in accordance with YPRL Policies, Procedures and Guidelines. All positions at YPRL are required to report child abuse or suspected child abuse.

YPRL is committed to promoting and protecting at all times the best interests of children involved in its programs.

All children, regardless of their gender, race, religious beliefs, age, disability, sexual orientation or family or social background, have equal rights to protection from abuse.

YPRL supports and respects all children, staff and volunteers. YPRL values and celebrates diversity within the community and workforce and does not tolerate any discrimination practices. YPRL is committed to the cultural safety of Aboriginal children, and those from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds, and to providing a safe environment for children living with a disability.

YPRL will ensure that child safety is part of its overall risk management approach and will identify and implement management strategies to mitigate risk.

If any person believes a child is in immediate risk of abuse, telephone 000.

Definitions

Term	Meaning
Child	A person who is under the age of 18 years.
Child Abuse	Includes: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> any act committed against a child involving a sexual offence or an offence under the Crimes Act 1958; or the infliction on a child of physical violence or serious emotional or psychological harm; and the serious neglect of a child.
Child Safe Organisation	A child safe organisation is one that meets the child safe standards by proactively taking measures to protect children from abuse.
Commission	Commission for Children and Young People
Failure to Disclose	Any adult who holds a reasonable belief that a sexual offence has been committed in Victoria by an adult against a child (aged under 16) must disclose that information to police. This applies to everyone in the community, not just mandated professionals. Failure to disclose the information to police is a criminal offence.
Failure to Protect	Applies to people who hold a position of authority within organisations who know of a risk of child sexual abuse by someone in the organisation and have the authority to reduce or remove the risk, BUT negligently fail to do so. Maximum penalty is 5 years imprisonment.
Grooming	Individuals, who communicate, including online communication, with a child under the age of 16 or their parents, with the intent of committing child sexual abuse. Maximum penalty is 10 years imprisonment.
Reasonable Belief	Reasonable grounds for belief is a belief based on reasonable grounds that child abuse has occurred when all known considerations or facts relevant to the formation of a belief are taken into account and these are objectively assessed. Factors contributing to reasonable belief may be: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> A child states they, or someone they know, has been abused (noting that sometimes the child may in fact be referring to themselves); Behaviour consistent with that of an abuse victim is observed; Someone else has raised a suspicion of abuse but is unwilling to report it; or Observing suspicious behaviour.
Victorian Child Safe Standards	The seven child safe standards are: Standard 1: Strategies to embed an organisational culture of child

	<p>safety, including through effective leadership arrangements.</p> <p>Standard 2: A child safe policy or statement of commitment to child safety.</p> <p>Standard 3: A code of conduct that establishes clear expectation for appropriate behaviour with children.</p> <p>Standard 4: Screening, supervision, training and other human resource practices that reduce the risk of child abuse by new and existing personnel.</p> <p>Standard 5: Processes for responding to and reporting suspected child abuse.</p> <p>Standard 6: Strategies to identify and reduce or remove risks of child abuse</p> <p>Standard 7: Strategies to promote the participation and employment of children.</p>
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Breaches

Breaches of this policy may lead to action in accordance with YPRL’s disciplinary policy and procedure, which may include termination of employment and/or referral to Victoria Police.

Reviewing this policy

This policy will be reviewed at least once every three years, and following any significant incidents if they occur.

Related Documents

This policy must be read in conjunction with other relevant YPRL policies and procedures, as well as relevant legislative requirements.

Related Legislation

Child Safety and Wellbeing Act 2001
Victorian Charter of Human Rights and Responsibilities Act 2006
Working with Children Act 2005, amended 2016
Crimes Act 1958

Related Guidelines

Victorian Child Safety Standards
Victorian Reportable Conduct Scheme

Related Documents

YPRL Child Safe Procedure
Employee Code of Conduct
Incident Report Form