



YOUTH LIVE4LIFE LTD

Child Safety Code of Conduct

Document Administration

Classification	Internal Policy
Policy owner	CEO
Related documents	<ul style="list-style-type: none">● YL4L Risk Management Policy● YL4L Core Values and Principles Document● YL4L Code of Conduct● YL4L Child Safeguarding Policy
Review and approval body	Management

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SECTION 1: INTRODUCTION

1.1 PURPOSE OF THIS DOCUMENT

Youth Live4Life (YL4L) is committed to living our values and principles daily and wants to ensure the safety of children and young people.

The aim of this Code of Conduct is to ensure that children and young people feel listened to and supported before, during and after participating in YL4L programs.

This Code of Conduct will identify the actions that YL4L will take to ensure that the needs of children and young people are considered and planned for as part of its program responsibilities. It will outline the management, mitigation and abatement of welfare risks during and following participation in any YL4L programs.

Child safeguarding is a proactive approach to creating a safe and friendly environment for children and young people during and after YL4L programs. Child safeguarding is vital to ensure children and young people do not encounter any harm. It also supports staff and volunteers who work in these environments.

In order to ensure the safety of children and young people working in communities the Victorian Government has introduced Child Safe Standards. The standards are compulsory for all organisations providing services to children, and aim to drive cultural change in organisations so that protecting children from abuse is embedded in the everyday thinking and practice of leaders, staff and volunteers. This will assist organisations to:

- prevent child abuse
- encourage reporting of any abuse that does occur
- improve responses to any allegations of child abuse.

Much of these standards address the requirements for organisations to have strategies and procedures that establish clear expectations from staff about appropriate behaviour when dealing with children. However, the standards also note that strategies should be in place that promote the participation and empowerment of children.

1.2 SCOPE

This Policy applies to all YL4L representatives, staff, contractors and partners across all workplaces we operate in and all activities we undertake.

1.3 ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES

It is the responsibility of all employees and contractors to be familiar with the content of this Policy and report any concerns or breaches as appropriate.

1.4 BREACHES

Breaches of this Code of Conduct must be escalated to the CEO within 24 hours of becoming aware of the breach.

In instances of non-compliance with this Code of Conduct, YL4L's actions would be determined in accordance with the circumstances in question and may include counselling, use of disciplinary procedures including termination of employment, civil action, or reporting of actions to police that may result in the laying of criminal charges.

SECTION 2: CHILD SAFETY CODE OF CONDUCT

2.1 ACTIONS REQUIRED BEFORE YL4L PROGRAMS

YL4L protects the community's welfare through ongoing development and implementation of prevention strategies and programs. In this planning and prevention phase, YL4L will ensure that the needs of children and young people are considered, and actions identified to address them.

Actions that are or can be undertaken in the preparedness phase include:

Staff and Volunteers recruited that will have contact with children during a YL4L program

- Pre - Screening – police check and current working with children checks
- Accountability lines established (clear who they report to)
- Able to be identified in the community programs
- Aware how to raise/report a concern about the safety or wellbeing of a child/young person
- Read and sign the Code of Conduct at Appendix D

Education & Training

- Youth Mental Health First Aid or Mental Health First Aid training for staff and volunteers who will have contact with children
- Familiarisation of this plan
- Code of ethical practice for the youth sector

2.2 ACTIONS REQUIRED DURING YL4L PROGRAMS

During and after a program, YL4L has a role to provide leadership and assistance to communities. Activities that are undertaken during and after a program, where the needs of children and young people must be considered are as follows.

Appropriate Referrals

Ensure that local health services are able to take referrals for children after programs.

Community led Programs

Community led Programs, supported by YL4L, are supervised environments, operated by trained and pre-screened staff, in which parents and caregivers can leave their children.

- All staff and volunteers working in Community Led Programs (CLP) to be screened in a uniform manner with a Working With Children Check and sign Code of Conduct for working with children and wear identification
- All staff and volunteers formally appointed to work in CLP – not allow people to turn up and offer to volunteer unsolicited
- Child Safe Team Leader (CSTL) be appointed by the Community Partnership Group and be easily identifiable – main contact point for children, young people, parents, and staff and volunteers to contact if they have a concern about the safety or wellbeing of a child or young person
- Reporting mechanisms for concerns about a child/young person or an adult be made clear to everyone in the community (include local statutory reporting mechanisms)
- Adequate child/adult ratios for supervision of children and young people
- Supervision of staff and volunteers by CSTL
- Physical environment assessed to ensure child safety. E.g. Toilet areas accessible and well-lit.
- Program activities take into account different activities that would appeal to boys and girls
- Children and young people made aware of evacuation and emergency procedures

Role of Child Safe Team Leader

- Specific people designated as Child Safe Team Leader (CSTL) for the duration of a Community Led Program to operationalize and monitor child safeguarding procedures,
- Responsible for investigating any reports of children at risk
- Responsible for supervision of separated children and young people and collaborate with agencies on reunification

Online Engagement Programs

Typically, online engagement is delivered with a mix of YL4L staff and community staff and volunteers.

When conducting online engagement, YL4L will ensure that:

- All staff are made aware of the needs and safety of children and young people.
- All members of the online team have a Working with Children Check (WWCC).
- YL4L workers are never online with a child without another member of the online engagement team or the child's parent or guardian present.
- Distressing imagery or discussion does not take place or is available where children can see/hear it.

If a worker witnesses, suspects or has child abuse disclosed to them they must report it to the Community Coordinator immediately. A YL4L worker may encounter children in the community without an adult present. In this circumstance workers should:

- Not engage the child in in-depth conversation. Do not attempt to complete a needs assessment, provide general or specific information
- Leave a calling card for the appropriate adult/s
- Call the local service / school / youth service worker if the child appears distressed about being left alone.

If a YL4L worker suspects a child is in imminent danger, call 000.

2.3 CHILD SAFE REPORTING MECHANISMS

Any YL4L or community personnel who have reported to them or who have concerns about the welfare of any child in a Community Led Program will immediately inform the CSTL. The CSTL will take immediate action to ensure the child at risk is taken out of the environment causing the risk. This includes physical and psychological risk. The CSTL will then ensure the YL4L Community Engagement Coordinator is notified of the situation.

If there is any uncertainty about the action that should be taken, the YL4L Community Engagement Coordinator or Victoria Police member should refer to DHHS child protection for advice.

2.4 TRAINING

Training of staff and volunteers that have a role in protecting children and young people during and after a YL4L program is an essential component in ensuring their welfare. YL4L will seek to have all staff to undertake Youth Mental Health First Aid training. Staff and volunteers that have a nominated role in protecting children and young people during and after a YL4L program will also have a Working with Children Check (WWCC).

2.5 CHILD PROTECTION CODE OF CONDUCT

(Based on Save the Children Australia: Code of Conduct)

Whilst employed, engaged or representing YL4L,

I will:

- Treat all children and young people with respect regardless of race, colour, sex, language, disability, religion, political or other opinion, national, ethnic or social origin, property, birth or other status
- Provide a welcoming, inclusive and safe environment for all children, young people, parents/carers, community members, personnel
- Not use physical or humiliating punishment on children or young people
- Encourage children, young people, parents/guardians, community members, partner organisation personnel, to speak up about issues that affect them
- Immediately report concerns or allegations for the safety or wellbeing of a child or young person, or breach of this Policy and Code of Conduct in accordance with YL4L Reporting Process
- **Ensure that another adult is present** when I am working with children or in contact with children involved in Community Program activities
- Speak with my Manager about any concerns I have of my involvement in any situation where my words, actions or behaviour may be misinterpreted
- Speak with my Manager if I am involved in any situation which would be likely to have a negative impact on the reputation of YL4L
- Immediately disclose all charges, convictions and other outcomes of an offence which occurred before or occurs during my employment/engagement with YL4L that relates to child exploitation and abuse
- Use any computers, mobile phones, video cameras, cameras or social media appropriately, and never to exploit or harass children or young people or access child exploitation materials through any medium
- Protect children from distressing images and news reports

And I will not:

- Use language that is offensive, discriminatory, demeaning, shaming, culturally inappropriate, abusive or of a sexual nature when speaking with or in the presence of a child or young person
- Engage in behaviour to shame, humiliate, belittle or degrade a child or young person or otherwise emotionally or psychologically abuse a child or young person including exposing them to family violence
- Physically abuse a child or young person
- Use social media to contact, access, solicit or befriend a child or young person involved in a relief or recovery program activity and not place images of those children or young people on personal social media sites
- Hold, kiss, cuddle or touch a child or young person in an abusive, unnecessary or culturally insensitive way
- Condone or participate in behaviour with children or young people which is illegal or abusive
- Discriminate against or act in favour of particular children or young people to the exclusion of others
- Do things for children involved in YL4L programs or activities of a personal nature that they can do for themselves such as toileting or changing their clothes

Use of children's images:

When photographing or filming a child or using children's images for work-related purposes I must:

- Obtain informed consent from the child and parent/guardian of the child before photographing or filming a child. As part of this I must explain how the photograph or film will be used
- Ensure photographs, films, videos and DVDs present children in a dignified and respectful manner and not in a vulnerable or submissive manner. Children should be adequately clothed and not in poses that could be seen as sexually suggestive
- Ensure images are honest representations of the context and facts

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- Ensure file labels, meta data or text descriptions do not reveal identifying information about a child when sending images electronically or publishing images in any form
 - Ensure a child is not subject to a legal order (i.e. Family Court, domestic violence order, child protection or criminal order) where the safety of the child or parent/guardian may be at risk or the privacy of the child is compromised, if the identity and location of the child is revealed

Signed:	
Name:	
Date:	
YL4L position:	

2.6 CHECKLIST FOR COMMUNITY LED PROGRAMS

Physical Safety and Security		
Questions	Yes/No	Strategy to address gap
Are children supervised at all times?		
Are there security measures to ensure the children's section is protected at all times?		
Are children secure in an area away from natural hazards? E.g. Rivers and lakes.		
Are children secure in an area away from other physical hazards? E.g. Roads, heavy machinery, cooking equipment.		
Are children secure in an area away from animals that may be dangerous? E.g. Pets or stock.		
Are children able to safely access all relevant areas of the centre without passing hazards? E.g. Bathrooms, play areas.		
Are all areas accessible and safe for children with physical disabilities? E.g. Wheelchair access.		
Are there staff monitoring bathroom activity to reduce the risk of inappropriate activity in bathrooms?		
Are bathrooms segregated by sex and well-lit inside and outside? Are there family bathrooms so that parents can supervise children of a different sex.		
Is there an agency responsible for first aid?		
Are there hygiene standards in place across the Program facilities? E.g. Food, linen, rubbish disposal.		

Child Protection		
Questions	Yes/No	Strategy to address gap
Are children in the care of their parent/legal guardian?		
Is there evidence of child neglect or abuse?		
Are there systems in place to report unlawful acts against children or concerns about the safety or wellbeing of a child? Are centre staff and volunteers aware of this system?		
Has information on reporting concerns regarding child neglect/abuse been made public? Do staff know how to refer to issues if appropriate? Is there a staff member designated to monitor concerns from all those involved in the program/ activity including staff, community and children?		
Have all community staff and volunteers interacting with children been checked for photo ID? Is there a registration process?		
Do all people working with children have police checks and working with children checks? Is there a system to register and monitor this?		
Identify who can provide appropriate support for Aboriginal, CALD and children with a disability in Community Programs		
<p>Factors to be considered to safeguard the safety and wellbeing of children and young people in Community Programs are:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Children & young people separated from parents/guardian ● Children & young people with disabilities ● Homeless young people ● Children experiencing/showing signs of distress, anxiety or confusion 		
Is there a sign in and sign out system for all visitors entering areas that are designated for children?		

Child Friendliness		
Questions	Yes/No	Strategy to address gap
Are there distressing images visible to children? E.g. News footage.		
Are signs and notices also located at a child friendly level? E.g. Directions to bathrooms.		
Is there information letting children know who they can talk to if they have any concerns for their safety or for the safety of others? Is this information displayed in a way and at a level that is appropriate for children?		
Are nutritious, age appropriate meals, drinks and snacks available for children? Are children able to access food outside mealtimes?		
Is the distribution of food being appropriately supervised? E.g. Monitoring hygiene and possible food allergies.		
Are children's mental health needs being assessed and addressed?		
Has the Community program/ activity plan considered the needs of children?		
Protecting children from distressing images and news reports		

Child Rights		
Questions	Yes/No	Strategy to address gap
Are children being treated with respect and consideration?		
Are children's rights being upheld?		
Are photographers seeking parental consent to take photos?		
Are children being listened to?		
Are children's opinions and concerns being acted upon when appropriate?		
Are individual children's needs being discussed confidentially and respectfully?		

2.7 DEFINITIONS

Term	Definition
Child	Anyone under the age of 18 years.
Harm	<p>Refers to anything which individuals, institutions or processes do or fail to do which directly or indirectly causes intentional or unintentional abuse including;</p> <p>Physical: involves the use of violent physical force so as to cause actual or likely physical injury or suffering, (e.g. hitting, shaking, burning, female genital mutilation, torture).</p> <p>Sexual: includes all forms of sexual violence including incest, early and forced marriage, rape, involvement in pornography, and sexual slavery. Child sexual abuse may also include indecent touching or exposure, grooming, using sexually explicit language towards a child and showing children pornographic material. This may also include harmful behaviour between children.</p> <p>Emotional: includes humiliating and degrading treatment such as bad name calling, constant criticism, belittling, persistent shaming, solitary confinement and isolation.</p> <p>Neglect: Neglect describes the failure to provide the child with the basic necessities of life such as food, clothing, shelter, medical attention or supervision, to the extent that the child's health and development is, or is likely to be, significantly harmed.</p> <p>Exploitation: means any actual or attempted abuse of a position of vulnerability, differential power, or trust, for sexual or other purposes, including, but not limited to, profiting monetarily, socially or politically.</p>
Representatives	<p>YL4L permanent, maximum term and casual staff, contractors and board members, volunteers, interns, work experience/placement students and individual contractors and consultants (referred to as representatives).</p> <p>Donors, journalists, celebrities, politicians and other people who visit YL4L programs or offices in order to make contact with children must be made aware that this Policy applies to them while visiting our programs or offices (during this time they are referred to as representatives).</p>
Partners	<p>Individuals, groups or organisations (including consortiums) who have a formal/contractual/MOU relationship with YL4L that involves any contact with children (referred to as partners or staff of partner agencies).</p>
Leaders	Board, CEO, Senior Management Team, Business Unit and Team Leaders etc.

SECTION 3: DOCUMENT REVIEW

The Child Safety Code of Conduct will be thoroughly reviewed biennially by the Risk Management Officer (RMO). At this review any changes will be made that will improve the policy and process.