



# CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE SAFETY POLICY

**Authorised by:** CYC Board of Directors

**Authorised Date:** April 2022

**Policy Delegate:** Executive Officer

**Review Date:** April 2027

## PURPOSE

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This policy aims to ensure that Christian Youth Camps of South Australia Inc. (“CYC”) provides child and youth safe environments while fostering a culture of openness and respect, recognising all children and young people have a right to be safe from harm regardless of age, culture, religion, gender, sexuality, identity or disability. It outlines CYC’s commitment to maintaining safe, child and youth friendly environments where safeguarding children and young people is embraced and embedded in appropriate principles, behaviours and practices.

## SCOPE

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This policy applies to

- All CYC directors, officers, employees and volunteers; and
- All guests or hirers of the campsite, including school, church or other groups.

## DEFINITIONS

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<b>Child or young person</b>	A person who is under 18 years of age.
<b>Harm</b>	<p>Physical harm or psychological harm (whether caused by an act or omission) and, without limiting the generality of this subsection, includes such harm caused by sexual, physical, mental or emotional abuse or neglect.</p> <p>Psychological harm does not include emotional reactions such as distress, grief, fear or anger that are a response to the ordinary vicissitudes of life.</p>
<b>“At Risk”</b>	<p>Refer to s18 <i>Children and Young People (Safety) Act 2017</i> for the full definition, which includes:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• The child or young person has suffered harm.</li><li>• There is a likelihood that the child or young person will suffer harm.</li><li>• There is a likelihood that the child or young person will be removed from the state for an unlawful act or procedure to be undertaken.</li></ul>

- The parents or guardian of the child or young person are unable or unwilling to care for them.
- The child or young person is of compulsory school age but has been persistently absent from school without satisfactory explanation of the absence.
- The child or young person is of no fixed address.

<b>Parent</b>	Includes— <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• a biological parent of the child or young person;</li> <li>• a step-parent of the child or young person; and</li> <li>• a person who stands in loco parentis to the child or young person.</li> </ul>
<b>Guardian</b>	guardian or guardians of the child or young person pursuant to an order of the Court under the Safety Act.

## POLICY STATEMENT

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CYC is committed to the safety and wellbeing of all children and young people accessing our campsite. CYC recognises the importance of establishing and maintaining a safe, child friendly environment where all children and young people are valued and feel safe. We see such a commitment as flowing naturally from our vision and mission to operate according to Biblical principles.

The following governing principles will be applied in CYC’s protective practices for children, and young people (under 18 years of age):

- CYC provides a child-safe environment which supports the development of leadership attributes, life skills, and positive self-esteem.
- CYC will ensure that our commitment to children and young people’s safety and wellbeing is embedded within our organisation’s culture, reflected in our policies and procedures and understood and practiced at all levels of the organisation.
- All children and young people have a right to feel safe, and to be safe at all times.
- CYC will not tolerate any harm or risk of harm to children or young people involved with our campsite. We will take all allegations or disclosures of harm or risk of harm seriously, respond appropriately, report concerns to the relevant authorities, and uphold our values and beliefs at all times.
- CYC takes a preventative and proactive approach to the safety and wellbeing of children and young people, that everyone understands and where everyone feels confident to have a say and raise any concerns.
- CYC respects and values the rights of all children and young people, and support them to reach their full potential.
- CYC recognises that particular consideration needs to be paid to the cultural safety of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children and young people. We also acknowledge the particular needs of children and young people arising from their cultural and linguistic background, sexuality, gender diversity, disability, or as a result of domestic and family violence or other trauma.

- CYC will employ and engage only people who are suitable to work with children and young people and provide high quality supervision and support. We will ensure staff are equipped with the knowledge, skills and awareness to keep children safe.

Note: Please refer to Recruitment Practices below.

### **Engaging Children and Young People**

CYC encourages and respects the views of children and young people who access our campsite. Employees and volunteers encourage children and young people to express their views and suggestions through feedback surveys, and through listening to them when they speak about matters that directly affect their sense of safety or wellbeing. CYC will ensure children and young people who feel unsafe, or wish to raise a concern, know who to talk with and feel comfortable to do so. We will listen to and act upon any disclosures, feedback or complaints that children, young people or their families/carers raise with us.

CYC ensures that children, young people and their families/carers know their rights and what complaints processes are available to them with a link provided on the camp application form, to the CYC website,. Where there is contact with children and young people in State Care, the *Charter of Rights for Children and Young People in Care* will be observed and upheld.

### **Confidentiality and privacy of children and young people**

Maintaining the privacy and confidentiality of children and young people who participate in our campsite is paramount in ensuring their safety and wellbeing. Any issues relating to suspected or alleged harm to children and young people is highly sensitive and must be treated in such a way.

The release of images of a child or young person to the public has the potential to adversely impact their safety and well-being as it could disclose their whereabouts to a potential predator. As such, CYC will obtain consent from a child or young person, and their parent/guardian before taking an image of the child. When gaining consent, the child or young person and their parent/guardian are informed about the nature of the use of the image, how the image will be stored and their rights to withdraw consent for its use. The parent/guardian can access the image.

### **Family and Community Involvement**

CYC will promote the Children and Young People Safety Policy and make it readily accessible, on the CYC website, to any child, young person, parent, carer or other stakeholder to ensure a clear understanding of our commitment to the safety and wellbeing of all children and young people who access our services.

CYC will display, in areas accessed by children and young people, information about services that can assist them and their families (such as the Kids Helpline on 1800 55 1800 and Youth Helpline on 1300 13 17 19).

### **Recruitment Practices**

CYC ensures that it engages the most suitable and appropriate people to work with children and young people through selection and checking processes.

The following screening measures are undertaken:

- Extensive interviews with potential employees and volunteers;
- Referee checks on all employees and volunteers; and
- Working With Children Check clearance issued by the Department of Human Services Screening Unit as required in the *South Australian Children and Young People (Safety) Regulations 2016* prior to working with children and young people.

- Ensure that prospective staff and volunteers have a Child-Safe Training Certificate issued by an approved organisation.

We will advise the Screening Unit where the organisation becomes aware of certain information regarding any person involved with our organisation, including any serious criminal offence, child protection information, or disciplinary or misconduct information.

These measures are outlined in the CYC People and Culture Policy.

### **Mandatory Reporting**

All employees and volunteers at CYC are mandated notifiers as per the *South Australian Children and Young People (Safety) Act 2017*.

CYC ensures that all employees and volunteers:

- Understand their obligations to notify the Department for Child Protection's Child Abuse Report Line (CARL) on 13 14 78 as soon as practicable if they have a suspicion on reasonable grounds that a child or young person has been, or is being, harmed, or is at risk of harm or to contact SA Police on 000 if they are at immediate risk.
- Are able to identify, report, and respond to children and young people at risk of harm.
- Understand that the individual who identifies the harm or risk of harm makes the report to CARL and this is not reported internally for another staff member to determine if it is a reportable matter.
- Understand that they are required to notify management when they have made a report to CARL regarding a child or young person receiving a service from CYC.

CYC employees and volunteers may form a view that a child or young person has been, or is being, harmed, or is at risk of harm through:

- Direct observation;
- A disclosure made by a child or young person; and
- A disclosure by someone close to a child or young person (sibling, close friend, relative).

If an employee or volunteer forms a view that harm is occurring or likely to occur, they must act appropriately:

- Do not investigate or push the child or young person for details.
- Reassure the child or young person that they are listened to, they are not at fault, and it was right to report.
- Do not contact the alleged perpetrator.
- Report the incident to CARL and inform the Executive Officer.
- If the alleged perpetrator is a member of staff or volunteer, the Executive Officer will stand them down from duties pending the outcome of an investigation. At the conclusion of the investigation, the Executive Officer will report to the Department for Human Services (DHS) any behavior by an employee or volunteer causing harm to a child or young person.
- If an alleged sexual assault has taken place, clothing worn by the child or young person should be retained for forensic examination.
- Maintain confidentiality.
- Refer the child, young person or their family to other appropriate services.

CYC recognises that the duty of care is not exhausted by making a notification and support might be required to enhance the child's or young person's wellbeing when a notification is made and will identify appropriate services for the child, young person and/or their family.

Failure by mandated notifiers to report a reasonable suspicion that a child has been or is being harmed or is at risk of harm is in breach of this Policy and may result in disciplinary action being initiated against the employee. Failure by mandated notifiers to report is also an offence under the *Children and Young People (Safety) Act 2017*.

### **Professional protection and support for reporters**

Reporters of harm or risk of harm to children will not be held legally liable for the report, or any investigation of the report, if a report is made in good faith and does not constitute unprofessional conduct or a breach of professional ethics.

Mandated notifiers are also protected from ‘threats, intimidation, damage, loss or disadvantage’ because they have reported or propose to report suspected harm or risk of harm to a child or young person.

### **Supervision, Training and Support**

CYC provides a system of supervision, training and support, so people feel valued, respected and fairly treated. To this end we have developed a Code of Conduct to provide guidance to our employees and volunteers. CYC implements strategies and systems in place as follows:

- an induction which includes new employees and volunteers receiving a copy of this policy
- regular performance appraisals
- regular supervision sessions that include a focus on child safety and wellbeing
- include child safety as a standing item on meeting agendas.
- ensure all employees and volunteers read and understand the [Mandatory Notification Information Booklet \(www.dhs.sa.gov.au/cse\)](http://www.dhs.sa.gov.au/cse)
- require mandated notifiers to attend a Child-Safe training course from an approved organisation.

### **Reporting and Responding to Complaints or Feedback**

CYC will deal with all complaints and feedback promptly, sensitively and fairly. This includes suspected breaches of the CYC Code of Conduct and staff misconduct.

The following process applies:

1. Written/oral complaint: letter, phone call, in person is received.
2. Take notes of comments and problems if verbal; if letter highlight key points.
3. Staff member(s) involved discuss and document their version of events. How this is carried out will depend on:
  - a. How serious is the complaint (requires outside intervention – police/counselling/Board, etc.?)
  - b. How recent was the issue/event causing the problem?
  - c. How many people were involved?
  - d. Was anyone outside the paid staff involved? – Do they need to be contacted?
  - e. Is an investigation or enquiry appropriate?

4. If letter/phone complaint → Executive Officer / Senior Staff person rings and talks to complainant (they should document the details of the conversation).
5. If person is on a camp still: Senior Staff / Executive Officer and staff member involved talk to complainant – staff involved will depend on the subject (may need female/male sensitivities) and degree of seriousness. Complainant may want to have moral support from a peer/bunkhouse leader. The teacher should be involved if it is a school camp. Document the conversation. Have witnesses sign off on documentation.
6. If complaint is resolved amicably, keep records: follow up two weeks later to ensure the complainant is still happy with the resolution.
7. If complaint is not resolved: discuss further with those involved to seek resolution; then involve a mediator if appropriate.
8. Debrief staff to make them aware of what has occurred (to learn from mistakes, and keep them informed of the circumstances).
9. If appropriate, debrief campers if they have gained a wrong impression of events.
10. Keep records of the process to ensure if there are any repercussions that there is accurate information of what occurred and how it was managed.
11. Process should proceed efficiently and quickly. Complaints dealt with quickly show respect for the complainant and they are less likely to build us resentment.

### **Strategies to minimise risk**

CYC will identify, assess and monitor all potential and actual sources of harm and take steps to minimise the risk to children and young people who use our campsite. Risk assessment tools are used where appropriate to determine if a child or young person is at risk. Strategies to minimise risks to children and young people are part of CYC's ongoing risk management process.

The following risks to children and young people and relevant risk management strategies have been identified for CYC:

- **Transportation**

Use of fully licensed drivers, and vehicles are appropriately insured.

Bus transportation – use reputable providers with accredited drivers for transport and a leader on the bus to assist the driver.

In rare occasions where private transportation in a car is required (eg following a minor accident requiring medical attention) two adults who have a WWCC will accompany the child or young person.

- **Images of Children and Young People**

Images of children and young people from hiring groups are not taken or used without the written permission of the hiring group or parents of the children or young person.

On our CYC camps, we include the following statement on our camp form, where parents can opt out of having their child or young person's photo taken and used in promotional material.

*“If you DO NOT want your child’s photo to be used on the CYC website or on promotional material, including Facebook please inform the Camp Co-ordinator in writing”.*

- **Camper Counselling**

If one on one counselling is required between a camper and a leader, this must be done in a public viewable area.

- **Physical injury**

There are Standard Operating Procedures in place for all equipment used. All of the Instructors for each activity hold relevant qualifications.

- **Accommodation arrangements**

For camps specifically for children and young people, overnight accommodation consists of separately allocated cabins for boys and for girls with two allocated male leaders in each boys’ cabin and two allocated female leaders in each girls’ cabin. Each cabin has its own separate ensuite shower and toilet facilities.

For family camps, each family is accommodated in a separate cabin with its own ensuite shower and toilet facilities.

- **Toilet facilities**

We have designated female and male toilet facilities, and access toilets available for single use as required. During daytime activities, children and young people are not allowed to use the cabin toilet facilities. They are required to use the designated toilet blocks in the main building. The children and young people are always escorted by a leader in groups of 2 or 3 at a time. The leader waits outside the toilet block until the children come out.

If a child or young person requires specific assistance, there will always be two leaders in attendance.

- **Swimming**

There is a maximum of 15 swimmers at a time and at least one staff member with lifeguard qualifications present.

For school camps, there are also teachers in attendance at the pool.

For other camps, swimming is allocated by cabin groups and the two cabin leaders are always present when their group is in the pool. There is also at least one supervisor with lifeguard training.

All mandatory first aid equipment is available by the pool.

### **Policy Review**

CYC will at a minimum, review this policy and relevant procedures once every 5 years as required by the *Children and Young People (Safety) Act 2017*.

CYC will further review this policy and relevant procedures in instances where there may be relevant legislative changes.

CYC will lodge a new Child Safe Environments Compliance Statement with Department of Human Services each time the policy is reviewed and updated.

## RESPONSIBILITIES

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### **CYC Board of Directors**

The CYC Board is responsible for:

- Ensuring that CYC has the appropriate policies, procedures and culture in place to proactively promote child safety, safeguard against the risk of harm to children and young people, and ensure that management responds effectively if harm is suspected or confirmed.
- Ensuring that CYC's strategic plans and statements about our mission are developed with specific consideration of child safety.

### **Executive Officer**

The Executive Officer is responsible and accountable for:

- Leadership that models and reinforces attitudes and behaviours that value children and young people.
- Ensuring the policy is implemented, monitored, reported and evaluated.
- Ensuring mandatory reporting requirements, procedures and associated legal responsibilities are adhered to.
- Ensuring employees and volunteers are aware of their obligations as mandated notifiers and have appropriate skills and knowledge to identify children or young people at risk.

### **Mandated Notifiers**

Mandated Notifiers have obligations under the *South Australian Children and Young People (Safety) Act 2017* to:

- Notify the Child Abuse Report Line (CARL) if they suspect, on reasonable grounds, that a child has been harmed or is at risk of harm or to contact SA Police on 000 if at immediate risk.
- Ensure they are aware of the obligations and the consequences of the obligations and the consequences of failure to comply.
- Ensure they are able to identify, report, and respond to children and young people at risk of harm.

## LEGISLATIVE CONTEXT

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### **South Australian Legislation**

- *Child and Young People Safety Act 2017*
- *Child Safety (Prohibited Persons) Act 2016*
- *Child Safety (Prohibited Persons) Regulations 2019*

## RELEVANT DOCUMENTS

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- Charter of Rights for Children and Young People in Care
- Mandatory Notification Information Booklet
- CYC Code of Conduct
- CYC People and Culture Policy
- CYC Camper Experience Policy