

Child Safe Policy

Purpose

This policy affirms the commitment of the Office of the Commissioner for Children and Young People (this Office) to ensuring the rights, safety and wellbeing of children and young people.

This policy informs all staff, and anyone working with or for this Office, of their obligations to act ethically towards children and young people and provides guidance on how we ensure child safety and wellbeing across all areas of our work.

We endeavour to create and maintain environments for children and young people in which they feel, and are, safe and welcomed, where their participation is valued and their rights are respected.

Who this policy applies to

This policy applies to the Commissioner, their staff (CCYP staff), contractors, volunteers and any other authorised persons engaged by the Commissioner.

Policy statement

Our statutory role in protecting and promoting children's rights, including their right to be safe from all forms of harm, places a particular responsibility on us to be child safe and child-friendly in the way that we work.

This Office was a leading advocate for the introduction of a child and youth safe organisations framework, including child safe standards and a reportable conduct scheme for Tasmania. Consistent with our obligations under the *Commissioner for Children and Young People Act 2016*, we adopt a child rights-based approach in all our work. Our practice reflects the National Principles for Child Safe Organisations and Tasmania's Child and Youth Safe Standards.

We recognise the importance of cultural safety for Aboriginal children and young people. We acknowledge the unique cultural heritage of their peoples, and the ongoing impact of colonisation and historical and intergenerational trauma on their communities. We are committed to creating an environment where Aboriginal children and young people feel respected, valued and supported to maintain their cultural identity and connection to Country.

We interact with children and young people around Tasmania to fulfil the functions under the *Commissioner for Children and Young People Act 2016*. This includes interacting with children and young people in person, as well as by telephone, in writing, and via online platforms (e.g. video conferencing, email, message boards, and social media). We also receive and hold information about individuals and groups of children and young people. This policy reflects our commitment to child safety and wellbeing within those contexts.



Our commitment to child safety

The following principles underpin our work with and for children and young people.

Rights of the child

We put the rights of children and young people at the centre of everything we do, and we expect others to do the same. Our work is guided by the [United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child](#), a widely ratified international agreement on the rights of all children. We are committed to promoting and protecting the rights, interests and wellbeing of all children and young people in Tasmania, including by providing child safe and child friendly physical and online environments for the children and young people we engage with.

Non-discrimination

We value diversity and do not tolerate discriminatory practices. The rights of children and young people are respected and applied to all, irrespective of age; sex; gender; sexual orientation; nationality; ethnic origin; race; language; religious or political beliefs; disability; physical or mental health; family, socio-economic or cultural background; any history of conflict with the law; or any other aspect of their background or identity.

Zero-tolerance of child abuse

We have a zero-tolerance policy towards child abuse and take all reasonable steps to protect children and young people from abuse and harm, ensuring that any action is timely, appropriate and child-centred.

Participation and engagement

We ensure that children and young people are informed, listened to, and heard, and that they have a say in matters that are important to them. Children and young people are encouraged to express their views, and any views they choose to share are considered in making decisions that affect them. Children and young people are informed about how information they may share might be used by this Office.

Best interests of the child

In all our work, we reflect the principle that the wellbeing and best interests of children and young people are paramount. We uphold the principles of the *Commissioner for Children and Young People Act 2016*.

Respect and dignity

In all interactions, we strive to ensure that children and young people are treated with respect for their inherent dignity.

Fostering a child safe culture

We are committed to fostering and embedding a child safe culture. Guidance is provided for staff, contractors, and volunteers about appropriate practices when working with children, including maintaining appropriate professional boundaries. Every opportunity is taken to raise awareness of and encourage government and non-government stakeholders to understand and uphold their responsibilities with respect to child safety.



Openness and accountability

We are committed to being open and transparent with our stakeholders, including children and young people, families, staff, contractors, volunteers, and the wider community. The Commissioner has a responsibility to inform and empower children and young people to learn about their rights, so they are better able to exercise them. This Office will ensure that children, young people and their families know about and understand our commitment to child safety and this policy.

Definitions

Categories of child abuse

- Sexual abuse and grooming
- Physical abuse or violence
- Emotional and psychological abuse
- Neglect, which may include emotional, medical, physical, educational, and/or supervisory neglect
- Experiencing domestic or family violence.

Child safety concern

A child safety concern may include:

- Belief that a child has been exposed to inappropriate content, including online
- Suspicions regarding an inappropriate relationship developing between an adult and a child (that may indicate grooming behaviour)
- Awareness of inadequate adult-child supervision
- Feelings of discomfort about interactions between an adult and a child
- Concerns that a child is exhibiting harmful sexual behaviours
- Concerns about a physical environment that poses a risk for children (including health and hygiene concerns)
- Concerns about a child being denied their right to culture and identity or other discriminatory practice
- Any action or inaction that demonstrates non-adherence to the Commissioner's Child Safe Policy.

Child safety concerns, including suspected child abuse, may be identified through:

- A suspicion or belief that abuse or harm has occurred or is likely to occur
- A disclosure made by a child, their parent/carer, an external agency or any other person
- Observations of concerning changes in a child's behaviour or presentation
- Observations of concerning behaviour about a person's conduct towards or in the presence of a child.



Legislation

- *Commissioner for Children and Young People Act 2016* (Tas)
- *Child and Youth Safe Organisations Act 2023* (Tas)
- *Children, Young Persons and their Families Act 1997* (Tas)
- *Criminal Code Act 1995* (Cth)
- *Criminal Code Act 1924* (Tas)
- *Registration to Work with Vulnerable People Act 2013* (Tas)
- *Youth Justice Act 1997* (Tas)
- The Tasmanian State Service Principles (s. 7 *State Service Act 2000*)
- The Tasmanian State Service Code of Conduct (s. 9 *State Service Act 2000*)

The principles under s. 3 of the *Commissioner for Children and Young People Act 2016* are to be observed:

(1) The Commissioner or any other person performing a function, or exercising a power, under this Act, must –

(a) do so according to the principle that the wellbeing and best interests of children and young people are paramount; and

(b) observe any relevant provisions of the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child.

(2) Subject to [subsection \(1\)](#), this Act is to be administered according to the following principles:

(a) children are entitled to live in a caring and nurturing environment and to be protected from harm and exploitation;

(b) the interests and needs of children and young people who are disadvantaged for any reason or vulnerable should be given special regard and serious consideration;

(c) the contributions made by children to the community should be recognised for their value and merit;

(d) the views of children on all matters affecting them should be given serious consideration and taken into account;

(e) parents, families and communities have the primary role in safeguarding and promoting the wellbeing of children and should be supported in carrying out their role.



Roles and responsibilities

Commissioner

- Adhere to the Child Safe Policy and related policies and procedures.
- Comply with the *Child and Youth Safe Organisations Act 2023* and the Child Safeguarding Framework of the Department for Education, Children and Young People.
- Promote internal and external discussion of a culture of child safety.
- Promote understanding and practices of child safety.
- Follow appropriate reporting processes if a child safety concern arises.

Managers

- Adhere to the Child Safe Policy and related policies and procedures.
- Ensure policies and procedures are current and address the risks of child abuse.
- Promote learning, understanding and practices of child safety.
- Ensure external stakeholders we work with understand our Child Safe Policy.
- Seek feedback on our practices.
- Monitor and continually improve our child safe practice.
- Follow appropriate reporting processes if a child safety concern arises.

Staff

- Adhere to the Child Safe Policy and related policies and procedures.
- Participate in induction and training on child safety, as required.
- Contribute to a child safe culture by promoting, participating in and valuing child safe practices both internally and externally.
- Follow appropriate reporting processes if a child safety concern arises.

Contractors and Volunteers

- Adhere to the Child Safe Policy and related policies and procedures.
- Follow appropriate reporting processes if a child safety concern arises.



Related policies and procedures

CCYP

- Complaints Management Policy
- Engagement Policy and Engagement Procedure
- Images and Other Recordings of Children and Young People Policy
- Reporting and Responding to Child Safety Concerns, Disclosures and Incidents Procedure
- Transporting Children and Young People Policy.

DECYP (some links may not be accessible outside DECYP's systems)

- [Conduct and Behaviour Policy](#)
- [Schedule 1: General Conduct and Behaviour Standards for all Workers](#)
- [Schedule 1.4: Conduct Standards for Workers in all Other Settings.](#)

Supporting information and tools

International

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

National

- Australian Human Rights Commission [Child Safe Organisations](#)
- [National Principles for Child Safe Organisations](#)
- [The National Office for Child Safety](#)
- [eSafety Commissioner](#)
- [Royal Commission into Institutional Responses to Child Sexual Abuse Final Report](#)
- [National Framework for Protecting Australia's Children 2021-2031](#)

Tasmanian

- [Office of the Independent Regulator](#)
- [Child Safety Reform Implementation Monitor](#)
- [Tasmanian Child and Youth Safe Organisations Framework](#)
- [Tellsomeone.tas.gov.au](#)
- [Keeping Children Safe](#)
- [Strong Families, Safe Kids Advice & Referral Line](#)
- Department of Justice (Tasmania) [Tasmanian Response to the Royal Commission into Institutional Responses to Child Sexual Abuse](#) and [National Redress Scheme](#)

Authorisation

Authorised by: Ros Cornish, Interim Commissioner for Children and Young People
Last significant review: July 2026
Review due: June 2027