



# YOUR LIBRARY

## Child Safe Code of Conduct

<b>Approval:</b>	Board
<b>Endorsement Date:</b>	24/8/2023
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<b>Review Date:</b>	Every two years and no later than 31 March in the review year.

It is recognised that, from time to time, circumstances may change leading to the need for minor administrative changes to this document. Where an update does not materially alter this document, such a change may be made administratively and noted in document history.

### Document History

Date	Change Type	Version	Review Year
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## 1. Purpose

The Victorian Government introduced the Child Safe Standards (the standards), which are compulsory minimum standards for organisations that provide services for children and young people (or are used by children and young people) to help protect them from harm. The Standards require organisations that provide services for children and young people to have a Code of Conduct that establishes clear expectations for appropriate behaviour with children and young people.

The Your Library Limited (YLL) Child Safe Code of Conduct outlines the child-safe principles and minimum expectations for appropriate behaviour that all personnel engaged by YLL must observe when in the company of children and young people.

## 2. Scope

The company's Child Safe Code of Conduct applies to all personnel of YLL. It applies to a broad range of situations where interaction with children and young people may occur. For example, the Child Safe Code of Conduct will apply when personnel come into contact with children and young people as part of their duties. For example:

- in our libraries, mobile services, and outreach services
- through incidental contact (e.g. via home visits, holiday programs, festivals, events, etc.)
- when communicating online and by telephone
- through services provided by partners and contractors.

All personnel must be aware of YLL's obligations under YLL's **Child Safe Policy, Child Safe Standards**, and **Child Safe Reportable Conduct Scheme Procedures** which are available at available at: <https://www.yourlibrary.com.au/about/>. Allegations of personnel misconduct involving children and young people can be made against personnel even if the conduct occurred outside of their work.

## 3. Our Child Safety Commitment

YLL is committed to the safety and wellbeing of children and young people.

We seek to prevent harm of any kind impacting children and young people and have zero tolerance for racism, child abuse, and inequality. Children and young people's rights, relationships, identity, and culture must be recognised and respected, their voices heard, and their concerns acted upon.

We aim to foster a culturally safe, child-safe, and child-friendly environment for all children and young people we have contact with, deliver services to, or are impacted by our work.

YLL requires all personnel to uphold these commitments. The company has specific policies, procedures, and training in place to achieve these commitments.

## 4. Definitions

**Child** means a child or young person under the age of 18 years.

### **Child abuse:**

Types of child abuse can include:

- Physical violence:
  - Actual violence — a child suffers or is likely to suffer harm or an injury from physical force against, with, or in their presence and the action was either intentional or reckless.
  - Apprehended physical violence — a child thinks that physical force is about to be used against them or another person, as a result of action by a Councillor, staff or volunteer.
- Sexual abuse — a child is exposed to or suffers from sexual behaviour to them, or in their presence, or they are exposed, by an adult, to sexually explicit material.
- Emotional abuse — a child is severely or repeatedly rejected, isolated, humiliated or threatened, or through witnessing violence by others.



- **Neglect** — occurs where there is a significant, deliberate or reckless failure to meet the basic needs of a child in circumstances where the adult understood the needs of the child, or could have understood those needs and had the opportunity to meet those needs but failed to do so. This includes supervisory, physical, educational and emotional neglect.
- **Family violence** — is any violent or threatening behaviour including physical, verbal, emotional, psychological, sexual, financial or social abuse that occurs in any current or previous family, domestic or intimate relationship.
- **Grooming** — targets communication, including online communication, with a child or their parents, with the intent of committing child sexual abuse. Grooming does not necessarily involve sexual activity or discussion. It is the establishment of a relationship with the child, parent or carer for the purpose of facilitating sexual activity at a later time. It is illegal to groom a child under 16 years of age and a significant breach of this policy to groom or sexually harass any child.
- **Racial, cultural and religious abuse** — is behaviour that demonstrates contempt, ridicule, hatred or negativity towards a child because of their race, culture or religion. It may be direct or indirect by demonstrating a lack of cultural respect and awareness or failing to provide positive images about another culture.

**Child Safe Standards** as made under section 17(1) of the *Child Wellbeing and Safety Act 2005*.

**Disclosure** is when a child or young person tells someone that he/she/they feels unsafe or has been harmed. A disclosure can also be made by adults including parents and carers or any person in contact with the child or young person, where that person reveals that they believe a child or young person has been harmed or is likely to be harmed.

**Personnel** includes all staff, volunteers, work experience members, consultants and contractors engaged by YLL.

## 5. Statement of Code of Conduct

The Child Safe Standards require organisations that provide services for children to have a Code of Conduct that establishes clear expectations for appropriate behaviour with children and young people.

All YLL personnel must observe the child-safe principles and expectations for appropriate behaviour towards and in the company of children and young people.

The Code outlines appropriate standards of behaviour by personnel towards children and young people. It aims to protect children and young people and reduce opportunities for abuse or harm to occur. It also helps personnel by providing them with guidance on how to best support children and young people and how to avoid or better manage difficult situations.

Everyone in YLL has a role to play – the Board, CEO, executive, leadership group and all personnel – they need to understand their roles and be supported to take action.

## 6. Standards and Obligations

All personnel of YLL are responsible for the safety, wellbeing, and empowerment of children and young people who engage with YLL. All personnel are expected to act in accordance with all relevant legislation, this Code of Conduct, and other YLL policies.

Personnel will:

- uphold the rights of children and young people who come into contact with YLL to feel heard on matters relevant to their safety;
- provide a welcoming, inclusive, and safe environment that supports and values the ideas and opinions of children and young people and treats them with respect regardless of their race, colour, gender identity, sex, sexual orientation, language, religion, political, or another opinion, national, ethnic or social origin, culture, property, disability or other status;
- actively promote and consider the cultural safety and inclusion of all children and young people;



- empower children and young people by providing an environment where they can actively participate and 'have a say', especially on issues that are important to them;
- listen and respond to the views and concerns of children and young people, including where it relates to concerns that they feel unsafe;
- abide by YLL's commitment and obligation to be a child-safe organisation;
- identify and mitigate risks to the safety and wellbeing of children and young people;
- take all reasonable steps to protect children and young people from abuse;
- challenge unacceptable behaviour and report all allegations or suspicions of abuse to the Child Safety Officer;
- report any concerns, allegations, disclosures, or observations of child abuse in line with YLL's policies and processes, mandatory reporting, and reportable conduct reporting requirements;
- report all child safety concerns to the Child Safety Officer, or other relevant people;
- work with children and young people openly and transparently. For example, by ensuring that where appropriate, interactions with children and young people can be observed by other adults;
- respect the privacy of children and young people and their families and only disclose information to people on a need-to-know basis and in accordance with privacy legislation;
- observe professional boundaries with children and young people at all times; and
- disclose any information of charges, convictions of abuse, and all other offense history.

The personnel of YLL must not:

- condone or participate in illegal, unsafe, or abusive behaviour toward children and young people;
- ignore or disregard any concerns, suspicions, or disclosures of child abuse;
- exaggerate or trivialise allegations or issues relating to child abuse or the safety and wellbeing of children and young people;
- discriminate against children and young people based on their age, gender identity, sex, race, cultural or sexual orientation;
- develop inappropriate relationships with children or young people, including relationships that show favouritism;
- display violent or inappropriate behaviour towards a child or young person;
- initiate unnecessary physical contact with children and young people or exhibit behaviours with children and young people which may be construed as inappropriate;
- put children and young people at risk of abuse (for example, by allowing unnecessary one-adult/one-child encounters to occur);
- conduct a sexual relationship with a child or young person or indulge in any form of sexual contact or grooming with a child or young person;
- engage in open discussions of a mature nature in the presence of children and young people;
- use inappropriate, offensive, harassing, abusive, sexually provocative, demeaning, culturally inappropriate, or discriminatory language when speaking with, or in the presence of, a child or young person;
- discriminate against any child or young person, including because of age, gender, race, culture, vulnerability, sexuality, ethnicity, or disability;
- use any computer, mobile phone, video, or digital camera to exploit or harass children and young people or expose them to offensive or sexualised content;
- exchange personal contact details with a child or young person such as phone number, social networking sites, or email address, unless necessary; and
- have unauthorised contact with a child or young person client or their family outside of YLL, including online, on social media, or by phone.



## 7. Breach of the Code of Conduct

All personnel are obliged to report any breaches of this Code of Conduct to the Child Safety Officer or appropriate person. In instances where a reportable allegation has been made, the matter will be managed in accordance with YLL's **Child Safe Reportable Conduct Scheme Procedures** and may be subject to referral to Victoria Police.

If a personnel member thinks that this Code of Conduct has been breached by another personnel member, they will:

- act in the best interest of the child or young person
- act promptly to ensure that the child or young person is safe
- promptly follow departmental reporting procedures.

## 8. Consequences of breaching the Child Safe Code of Conduct

All personnel of YLL who breach this Code of Conduct may be subject to disciplinary procedures in accordance with the relevant industrial instrument and/or relevant terms of engagement.

## 9. Related documents

- Child Safe Policy
- Child Safe Standards
- Child Safe Reportable Conduct Scheme Procedures

Available at: <https://www.yourlibrary.com.au/about/>

## 10. Approval

This Child Safe Code of Conduct is issued under the authority of the Board.

The contents of this document represent the current Child Safe Code of Conduct of YLL and reflect its current practices and experience.

This Code of Conduct is subject to biennial review and will be altered (and the alterations communicated to users) as, and when, appropriate in order to ensure that it remains current.

## 11. Disclaimer

The information provided in this Code is intended as general information only. The Corporation strives to provide information as accurately as possible.

The Corporation makes no claims, promises, or guarantees about the accuracy, completeness, or adequacy of the contents of this Code, and expressly disclaims liability for errors and omissions in the contents of this Policy.

## 12. Contact

Please contact a Your Library Child Safety Officer in relation to matters arising under this policy, including advice, support and internal reporting:

Chantell Harris – Phone: (03) 9800 6414

Emma Wallis – Phone: (03) 9800 6428

Email: [childdsafe@erl.vic.gov.au](mailto:childdsafe@erl.vic.gov.au)

If further advice is required after speaking to one of our Child Safety Officers, please contact the person responsible for Child Safety in your relevant Council area:

- Knox City Council - Child Safe Advisor – 9298 8000
- Maroondah Council - Youth & Children's Planning and Strategy Advisor – 9298 4598
- Yarra Ranges Council - Child Safety Business Partner – 9294 6905

