



YOUR LIBRARY

Child Safe Policy

Approval: Board

Endorsement Date: 24/8/2023

Current Version: 5

Review Cycle: 2 years

Review Date: 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
05/05/2017	Initial version	1	2019
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1. Purpose

The Victorian Government introduced the Child Safe 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 Child Safe Policy aims to ensure that all personnel engaged by Your Library Ltd. (YLL) are aware of the company's commitment and obligation to create a child-safe organisation.

The policy aims to communicate the company's commitment to child safety, in a way that can be understood by all, including children and young people, and it explains key features of the company's approach to meeting the standards.

2. Scope

This policy applies to all personnel engaged by YLL.

It applies to a broad range of situations where interaction with children and young people may occur. For example, the Child Safe Policy will apply when all personnel come into contact with children and young people:

- 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.

All personnel must be aware of their obligations under the company's **Child Safe Code of Conduct, Child Safe Standards** and the **Child Safe Reportable Conduct Scheme Procedures** which are available at: <https://www.yourlibrary.com.au/about/>. Allegations of 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. Company's approach to child safety

This section provides an overview of the measures in place to support child safety across the company.

Child Safe Code of Conduct

All personnel must ensure that they display appropriate standards of behaviour towards children and young people at all times, ensuring their rights are respected, they feel safe and protected and their concerns are taken seriously.

The company's **Child Safe Code of Conduct** outlines appropriate standards of behaviour by adults 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.

Building a child safe culture

All personnel engaged by YLL have a responsibility to support the company's commitment and obligation to create a child-safe environment.

Training and supervision

YLL is committed to ensuring that personnel have access to appropriate professional learning and training opportunities to develop and maintain an understanding of child safety and the prevention of harm. To support personnel, relevant training programs, including the company's induction program, will include appropriate content which outlines the company's expectations and commitment to child safety.

In addition to position specific training requirements, training will be available to personnel who are likely to come into regular contact with children and young people. This training will include how to identify, assess and minimise risks of child abuse and to detect potential signs of child abuse.

ChildSafe Australia conducted training for all personnel in October-December 2022, and YLL are committed to renewing this training yearly.



Recruitment

The recruitment and selection of personnel aims to support the company's commitment to promoting an organisational culture of child safety. The company has robust recruitment and selection processes. The company carries out reference checks and police record checks to ensure that the right people are recruited.

For positions that involve direct contact with children and young people, recruitment will be based on selection criteria that clearly demonstrate commitment to child safety to assist the company in ensuring that the most appropriate personnel are employed. Selection policies and guidelines, including pre-screening activities, are to reflect an understanding of, and commitment to, a child-safe environment.

All people engaged in child-related work as defined in the Working with Children Act 2005, including all personnel and volunteers, are required to hold a Working with Children (WWC) Check and to provide evidence that the WWC Check is valid at all times whilst employed by the company.

In addition, positions that may have contact with children and young people due to their working environment are to be assessed as to whether a WWC Check is required to minimise the risk of harm to children and young people.

YLL has resolved that all personnel must have a WWC Check, irrespective of their role within the company.

Reporting a child safety concern or complaint

The company works to ensure all children and young people, families, personnel and volunteers understand their obligations and know whom to tell if they observe abuse, are a victim, or if they notice inappropriate behaviour. The company takes all allegations of child abuse and reportable conduct seriously. It is committed to ensuring that such allegations are addressed in accordance with departmental processes for responding to and reporting suspected child abuse.

Child safe issues should be reported to the appropriate manager and the Child Safety Officer. If any personnel have a reasonable belief that reportable conduct may have occurred, then they must report the incident to the company's Child Safety Officer. If the incident is a criminal offence, the incident must also be reported to the police on 000.

The following reportable conduct must be reported:

Reportable conduct includes:

- a. a sexual offence committed against, with or in the presence of, a child, whether or not a criminal proceeding in relation to the offence has been commenced or concluded, or
- b. sexual misconduct, committed against, with, or in the presence of, a child, or
- c. physical violence committed against, with or in the presence of, a child, or
- d. any behaviour that causes significant emotional or psychological harm to a child, or
- e. grooming of a child, or
- f. significant neglect of a child.

Please refer to the company's ***Child Safe Code of Conduct, Child Safe Standards*** and ***Child Safe Reportable Conduct Scheme Procedures*** available at: <https://www.yourlibrary.com.au/about/> for further information on the process for reporting and responding to allegations of reportable conduct.

For the company to perform its functions under the Child Safe Standards, it may be required to collect personal information about an employee, consultant/contractor, or volunteer and disclose that information to a third party.

Personal information which is collected and/or disclosed about an individual will be managed in accordance with the ***Privacy and Data Protection Act 2014*** and the ***Child Wellbeing and Safety Act 2005***.



6. Approval

This Child Safe Policy is issued under the authority of the YLL Board.

The contents of this document represent the current policy of the company and reflect its current practices and experience.

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

7. Other Your Library Relevant Policies and Procedures

- Child Safe Code of Conduct
- Child Safe Reportable Conduct Scheme Procedures
- Child Safe Standards

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

8. Disclaimer

The information provided in this Policy 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 Policy, and expressly disclaims liability for errors and omissions in the contents of this Policy.

9. 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: childsaf@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

