

1.0 Safeguarding Children and Young People

Parkerville Children and Youth Care Inc. (Parkerville CYC) is a not for profit organisation providing services to children and young people between the ages of 0 and 25 years and their families. Parkerville CYC is committed to the health, safety and general wellbeing of all children and young people and families. Parkerville CYC strives to:

1. provide a safe environment for all children and young people;
2. take an inclusive approach in all activities;
3. ensure the safety and wellbeing of children and young people, in particular, through its Safeguarding Children and Young People Process.
4. provide support to families and to work with the community to prevent child abuse.

Parkerville Children and Youth Care respects the rights of children and young people. Our organisation is committed to prioritising their safety and taking every action necessary to provide a safe healthy environment for children and young people to thrive.

In delivering on our commitment to the health, safety and wellbeing of all children and young people, Parkerville CYC takes seriously its positive obligation to educate and inform each member of staff their responsibilities in:

- protecting children and young people from all forms of abuse, bullying and exploitation by our staff;
- being alert to incidents of child abuse and neglect occurring outside the scope of our operations and services that may have an impact on the children and young people to whom we provide a service; and
- creating and maintaining a child safe culture that is understood, endorsed and implemented by all the individuals who work for, volunteer or access our programmes and services.

The term 'staff' is used throughout this document and should be taken to refer to staff, volunteers, students and contractors.

1.1 Our Commitment

Parkerville CYC endorses and supports the principles of the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child 1989 (ratified in Australia in 1990). The Convention recognises that children under the age of 18 years need special care and protection.

In recognition of our support for the Convention on the Rights of the Child and with the purpose to protect the children, young people and families who access our activities, programmes, services and facilities, we make the following commitments:

Our commitment to children and young people

- We are committed to the safety and wellbeing of all children and young people who access any of our activities, programmes, services or facilities.
- We are committed to providing children and young people with positive and nurturing experiences.

- We will support families and communities to promote children and young people's healthy development and wellbeing.
- We will take action to ensure that children and young people are protected from abuse, family violence and neglect.
- We will take action to ensure that children and young people are not exploited, abused or harmed during the time that they are involved with any of our activities, programmes, services or facilities.
- We will listen to children and young people and address any concerns that they raise with us.

Our commitment to parents and carers

- We are committed to supporting parents and carers to protect their children.
- We will offer assistance that builds on a family's strengths, is sensitive to their cultural and religious beliefs and empowers them to meet the changing needs of their children.
- We are committed to communicating honestly and openly with parents and carers about the wellbeing and safety of their children.
- We aim to be transparent in our decision-making with parents and carers as long as doing so does not compromise the safety of children or young people or breaches any confidentiality obligations.

Our commitment to the employees and volunteers

- We are committed to providing our employees and volunteers with the necessary support to enable them to fulfill their roles.
- We will put in place a management structure that supports and develops employees and volunteers in their roles.
- We are committed to providing employees and volunteers with appropriate guidance and development.
- We will work to ensure that employees and volunteers have access to a line manager or director to make decisions in relation to any action required to protect children and young people from abuse, bullying and exploitation.
- We will work to ensure that there are safeguards in place to protect our employees and volunteers from violence or any kind of harassment in their work place.

Our commitment to ensuring a child safe organisation

- We are committed to using best practice and appropriate standards and processes in the recruitment, screening and appointment of any staff.
- We will work to create an environment in which children and young people are safe and feel safe in any of our programme, activities, events or facilities.

- We will work to ensure that staff do not harm, abuse or exploit children and young people who are involved with our programmes, services or facilities.

1.2 Responsibility

The Safeguarding Children and Young People Policy is endorsed by the Board of Parkerville CYC. The Board has delegated the implementation of the policy to the Chief Executive.

The role of each relevant entity in relation to the development of and compliance with the Parkerville CYC Safeguarding Children and Young People Policy is detailed below.

Senior Management Group is responsible for:

- promoting the commitment to this policy and its expectations
- supporting policy review on an annual cycle as a minimum or at a time governed by legislation, regulations, or organisational learning that promote a change to the Policy and all relevant process or procedural guidelines
- ensuring compliance to the policy via an inbuilt review mechanism
- ensuring adequate resources are allocated to allow for the development and effective implementation of this policy
- developing opportunities for regular discussion at all levels to support a culture of openness and continued improvement and accountability to child protection and member welfare
- advocating and promoting children's rights, empowering and engaging children and young people in support of this Policy and its expectations

The CSO Coordinator is responsible for:

- maintaining and enhancing Parkerville CYC's approach to safeguarding children and young people from abuse and neglect
- report (to the appropriate personnel) or taking action to rectify any deficiencies identified
- acting as the key contact for queries, comments or concerns raised by personnel or stakeholders in relation to the Safeguarding Children Program or any aspect of Parkerville CYC's approach to safeguarding children and young people from abuse or neglect
- reviewing and updating Parkerville CYC's processes related to safeguarding children and young people from abuse and neglect

The Directors and Programme Managers are responsible for:

- ensuring that all staff understand their obligations under the Safeguarding Children and Young People Policy and any relevant process and procedural documentation. This includes induction, a minimum of completing Safeguarding Children online course, and regular discussion and guidance at supervision and team meetings
- ensuring the Safeguarding Children and Young People Policy is implemented and adhered to amongst relevant member stakeholders
- ensuring the development and implementation of required internal processes/work procedures and guidelines to support child protection practice in accordance with the expectations of the Safeguarding Children and Young People Policy
- ensuring adequate resources are allocated to allow effective implementation of the Safeguarding Children and Young People policy

- ensuring that support is provided to staff, students or volunteers that initiate any form of action to protect a child or young person from abuse, neglect, grooming or exploitation
- ensuring appropriate supports, such as counselling and formal debriefing, are provided for any staff involved in a matter relating to responding to a concern for the safety and wellbeing of a child or young person
- advocating and promoting children and young people's rights and empowering and engaging children and young people in support of this policy
- sharing resources and experience in the development of child safe initiatives as they are identified
- developing opportunities for regular discussion at all levels to support a culture of continuous improvement and accountability of child protection and member welfare
- ensuring that staff are aware of the appropriate recruitment, screening and employment practices in relation to individuals with specific roles in working, coaching or volunteering with children and families

The employees and volunteers are responsible for:

- maintaining an understanding of the commitments and expectations of this policy, as well as all other processes relevant to safeguarding children and young people
- participating in any induction and training anticipated in this process
- seeking guidance from a line manager or director if there is ever any lack of understanding about the commitments and expectations as set out in this policy
- Acting to protect children and young people from all forms of abuse, bullying and exploitation
- assisting in creating and maintaining a child safe culture and a culture of inclusion and safety

1.3 Communication

Parkerville CYC commits to ensuring our Safeguarding Children and Young People Policy is communicated to:

Service users

- on our website
- in age-accessible formats for children and young people
- as part of promotional and programme information provided to parents and families

All Employees and volunteers

- during recruitment and induction processes
- in minimum compulsory training on safeguarding children and young people policies and processes.
- on agendas for team meetings
- in the Standard of Care process manual
- when there are any updates or changes to this document

1.4 References

Parkerville Children and Youth Care (2016). What is Child Abuse? Definitions of Child Abuse. Retrieved from the web: www.parkerville.org.au/child-abuse/
United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child 1989 (ratified in Australia in 1990)