

Skilling Queenslanders for Work

Operating Standards for Young People Under 18

Both the Queensland Government acting through the Department of Employment, Small Business and Training (DESBT), and the Supplier (funded service providers under the *Skilling Queenslanders for Work* initiative) have a substantial duty-of-care towards young people under the age of 18. Organisations must foster young people's safety and wellbeing as set out in the National Principles for Child Safe Organisations as well as comply with other relevant State and Commonwealth laws, policies and provisions when working with children and young people including the *Working with Children (Risk Management and Screening) Act 2000*, *Education (General Provisions) Act 2006*, *Child Protection Act 1999* and the *Human Rights Act 2019*.

National Principles for Child Safe Organisations

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| Principle 1 | Child safety and wellbeing is embedded in organisational leadership, governance and culture. |
| Principle 2 | Children and young people are informed about their rights, participate in decisions affecting them and are taken seriously. |
| Principle 3 | Families and communities are informed and involved in promoting child safety and wellbeing. |
| Principle 4 | Equity is upheld and diverse needs respected in policy and practice. |
| Principle 5 | People working with children and young people are suitable and supported to reflect child safety and wellbeing values in practice. |
| Principle 6 | Processes to respond to complaints and concerns are child focussed. |
| Principle 7 | Staff and volunteers are equipped with the knowledge, skills and awareness to keep children and young people safe through ongoing education and training. |
| Principle 8 | Physical and online environments promote safety and wellbeing while minimising the opportunity for children and young people to be harmed. |
| Principle 9 | Implementation of the national child safe principles is regularly reviewed and improved. |
| Principle 10 | Policies and procedures document how the organisation is safe for children and young people. |

The guidance detailed below is intended to assist both DESBT and the Supplier in implementing and adhering to the National Principles and relevant laws to ensure young people under 18 years of age who are participants on programs under the *Skilling Queenslanders for Work* (SQW) initiative are protected.

Guidance

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| <p>Documentation and Resources</p> | <p>The Supplier has publicly available and current documentation such as:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • a child safety and wellbeing policy; • information sharing protocols; • staff and volunteer codes of conduct; • risk management strategies (including physical and online risks); • record keeping; and • complaints and investigation processes. <p>The Supplier has specific policies in place that promote equity and respect diversity for the safety and wellbeing of all young people.</p> <p>The Supplier has programs and resources that are regularly reviewed:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • to educate young people on their rights including their right to safety and right to be listened to; and • to provide age appropriate platforms to regularly seek young people’s views and encourage participation in decision making. <p>The Supplier ensures young people are informed of their roles and responsibilities in helping to ensure the safety and wellbeing of their peers.</p> <p>The Supplier ensures all documentation and resources are easily accessible to young people and are presented in ways that are culturally safe and easy to understand.</p> |
| <p>Organisational Decision Making</p> | <p>The Supplier encourages young people to participate in decision making within the organisation, including in relation to safety issues and risk identification.</p> <p>The Supplier engages and openly communicates with families and community about its child safe approach and provides for opportunities for families to have their say in the development, review and feedback on these policies and processes.</p> <p>The Supplier engages with and supports approaches that build cultural safety through partnerships and respectful relationships.</p> <p>The Supplier makes available reports on findings of relevant reviews to staff, community, families and young people.</p> |
| <p>Staffing</p> <p>Required Skills and Knowledge</p> | <p>All staff (paid or unpaid in whichever capacity, are the sole responsibility of the Supplier. The Supplier should regularly enforce attitudes and behaviours that value young people and this should be evidenced through duty statements, performance agreements and staff and volunteer review processes.</p> <p>Staff understand:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • the principles, goals and objectives of the Supplier; • young people’s rights, including their right to feel safe and be heard, and the accountabilities that accompany these rights; |

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| <p>Procedures for Selection of Staff</p> <p>Performance Management</p> <p>Training</p> <p>Staffing Levels</p> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • the signs of harm and facilitate age appropriate ways to allow young people to express their views and raise concerns; • young people’s developmental needs and diverse circumstances; • the importance and contribution of young people’s families and communities; and • child safety policy and procedures and meet their record keeping, information sharing and reporting responsibilities. <p>All staff champion attitudes and behaviours that respect the human rights of all young people, and are inclusive, well informed and responsive to diverse needs.</p> <p>The Supplier must ensure that safety screening and criminal history checks are undertaken on all staff (employed or voluntary) that may come into contact with young people in accordance with Chapter 8 Screening for regulated employment and regulated businesses under the <i>Working with Children (Risk Management and Screening) Act 2000</i>.</p> <p>The Supplier emphasises its commitment to child safety and wellbeing when advertising for, recruiting and screening staff and volunteers.</p> <p>The Supplier ensures ongoing staff support, supervision and performance management processes involve child safety elements.</p> <p>The Supplier provides regular opportunities to educate and train staff on:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • child safety and wellbeing policies and procedures and evidence-based practice; • how to respond effectively to issues of child safety and wellbeing; and • how to build culturally safe environments for young people. <p>The Supplier ensures that adequate numbers of staff are available to provide effective supervision of the young people and ensure their safety at all times.</p> <p>Staff or volunteers to be present at all times when young people are in residence or participating in activities.</p> |
| <p>Physical Environment</p> <p>Size</p> <p>Maintenance/ Modifications</p> <p>Safe Practices</p> | <p>The Supplier provides an environment that is friendly and welcoming for young people and ensures that the premises comply with all the relevant Acts, Regulations, by-laws and associated requirements.</p> <p>The premises contain adequate internal and external areas to provide for the needs of the maximum number of young people at any one time, and allow appropriate gender and age grouping.</p> <p>The premises are maintained in good safe repair and are appropriate to the needs of the young people.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The project operates according to safe working practices. • Parents or guardians should be informed of details of activities to be undertaken and supervision to be provided. Written permission, where appropriate, should be obtained from parents or guardians for young people to be involved in residential or off-site activities. • All activities undertaken by young people are age, gender and culturally appropriate and do not expose them to unnecessary risk or harm. |

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| | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Supplier ensures that appropriate emergency and safety procedures are in place and safety equipment (e.g. fire extinguishers, emergency communications equipment) is readily available. • All staff are trained in the use of safety equipment and are conversant with safety procedures. All young people are aware of the safety procedures. • For any camping or off-site activity, all staff should be aware of the hazards that may be encountered including: environmental hazards (e.g. adverse climatic conditions, falling branches); physical hazards (e.g. tent pegs, tent guy ropes, gas lights, cooking equipment, inadequate hygiene); and biological hazards (e.g. ticks, snakes, bees). • Suppliers that contract facilities and services from third parties must have procurement policies in place that ensure the safety of young people. |
| Online Environment | <p>The Supplier's online environment promotes the use of safe online applications for young people to learn, communicate and seek help.</p> <p>The Supplier is proactive in identifying and mitigating online risks without compromising a young person's right to privacy, access to information, social connections and learning opportunities.</p> <p>Young people and their families are informed, in culturally appropriate ways, about the use of the Supplier's technology and safety tools.</p> |
| Health and Well-Being | <p>The Supplier must ensure that:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • the physical and mental well-being of young people is promoted and maintained; • young people can identify trusted adults and friends; and • the importance of friendships is recognised and support from peers is encouraged to help young people feel safe and be less isolated. |
| General Health | <p>Young people who are ill, who complain of illness, or who demonstrate symptoms of physical or mental difficulties are given prompt access to appropriate health services.</p> |
| Diet | <p>Where meals or snacks are provided, these should be nutritionally sound and adequately meet the needs of active young people and cater for any special dietary requirements a young person may have (religious, cultural or medical).</p> |
| Medication | <p>Medication is stored securely and administered safely.</p> <p>Young people are encouraged to take maximum control of the management of their medical condition.</p> |
| Personal Cleanliness and Appearance | <p>Young people are encouraged to understand the social and health implications of good hygiene.</p> |
| Social interactions and Personal Relationships | <p>The Supplier must encourage young people to maintain contact with family and community members and participate in positive social networks.</p> |

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| <p>Families</p> | <p>Young people are able to maintain contact with their family network if appropriate.</p> <p>Where young people are not living with their families or in their own communities, the families and communities are actively encouraged to maintain contact with the young people, if appropriate.</p> |
| <p>Social Networks</p> | <p>Young people are encouraged to develop age/gender appropriate social networks.</p> |
| <p>Records</p> <p>Record Keeping</p> <p>Incident Reporting</p> | <p>The Supplier implements and maintains a suitable system that ensures relevant information about young people is recorded and maintained. Only authorised personnel are able to access this information.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Confidentiality of young people’s personal and family records is maintained at all times. • A daily written log or diary is kept showing the names of staff on duty, young people present, activities, significant incidents, accidents, illnesses, medical treatments and visitors. • The log or diary is made available to DESBT on request. <p>Significant incidents include: death, injury requiring medical treatment or hospital admission, attempts or threats of self-harm, police interviews, absconding or removal from the project, notification of child abuse, and alleged criminal behaviour by staff.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • DESBT is advised of any significant incident with minimum delay. • Child protection allegations involving the Supplier’s staff are to be investigated. • If a significant incident occurs, the Supplier ensures the personal safety of the residents and staff and maintains a safe environment. |
| <p>Privacy and Confidentiality</p> | <p>The Supplier ensures that young people’s rights to personal privacy and confidentiality are respected.</p> <p>Young people are able to have contact with their family and community members at reasonable times and in privacy.</p> <p>Young people have a right to have contact with their legal representative, a police officer or other identified advocate in confidence whenever necessary. In the case of young people who are subject to court orders this includes their case worker (contact is identified as visits, telephone calls and mail).</p> |
| <p>Behaviour Management</p> | <p>Staff to work with young people in ways which encourage the development of positive behaviours. Methodologies which respond positively to seriously disruptive behaviours and which help to develop skills and strengthen alternative behaviours are used.</p> <p>Any strategy used is just, logical, psychologically appropriate, directly related to the behaviour (either appropriate or inappropriate) and suitable for the young person. It is applied positively and sensitively.</p> |

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| | <p>Positive behaviour is rewarded while any consequences for negative behaviour are fair and age appropriate. Certain procedures and techniques not used in any circumstances include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • any sustained verbal abuse • corporal punishment • denial of access to medical attention, medication, mail, family or other advocate • isolation in other premises or in any locked environment; and • any other dangerous or cruel practices. <p>Restraint and time-out shall only be used when absolutely necessary. Only reasonable physical restraint may be used for the minimum possible time, as necessary, to ensure the protection of the young person, other people or property.</p> |
| <p>Finances and Possessions</p> | <p>The Supplier ensures that appropriate management practices are in place in relation to young people’s property and finances, and that young people are assisted to manage their clothing, possessions and finances.</p> <p>Finances – young peoples have access to their own money and are encouraged to take maximum control in managing their own financial affairs.</p> <p>Clothing – young people must have adequate and appropriate clothing and footwear.</p> <p>Possessions – adequate and appropriate storage facilities for storage of possessions are available.</p> |
| <p>Discharge Procedures</p> | <p>The Supplier ensures that discharge from the program is established as part of the project.</p> <p>Young people are provided with a clear explanation of the reasons for early discharge. If young people who are subject to court orders choose not to remain on the project, the Department of Justice and Attorney- General will make alternative arrangements or return them to court if conditions of bail or the order have been breached.</p> |
| <p>Complaints, Disputes and Disclosures</p> | <p>The Supplier must ensure that young people and their families are free to raise any complaints, disputes or disclosures that they may have regarding the Supplier and the project.</p> <p>Complaints handling processes and policies must be readily accessible and child focussed and must prioritise the safety and wellbeing of young people. Young people and their families are aware of these policies and processes.</p> <p>Complaints management processes must be linked to the Supplier’s Code of Conduct and staff must be well informed of their roles and responsibilities, reporting and privacy obligations, and processes for responding to complaints, disputes and disclosures.</p> <p>All complaints must be taken seriously, responded to promptly and thoroughly, and handled in a manner consistent with the privacy and confidentiality standards.</p> |

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| <p>Reporting and obligations</p> | <p>Timely feedback is provided to young people, families and staff who raise concerns or complaints.</p> <p>Complaints, disputes, concerns and incidents should be regularly reviewed to inform continuous improvement of child safe practices.</p> <p>The Supplier ensures information about all complaints and concerns, including breaches of relevant policies or the Code of Conduct, is recorded and analysed, including in relation to processes, timeframes and record keeping practices.</p> <p>The Supplier has policies and procedures in place that address reporting of complaints or concerns to relevant authorities, whether the law requires reporting or not.</p> |
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For practical tools and resources to further support the implementation of the National Principles, please visit: <https://childsafe.humanrights.gov.au/tools-resources>.