

# THE YOUNG SEEDS FOUNDATION

Code of Conduct July 2016

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**Title:** Child Safe Code of Conduct

**Target:** All Young Seed Executive, Committee Members, Employees and Partnership Agencies

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## **CHILD SAFE CODE OF CONDUCT**

As a child centred, charitable non-profit organisation child, committed to the wellbeing of children and to supporting the Convention on the Rights of the Child, YSF does not tolerate child abuse.

This code of conduct applies to all those affiliated with YSF who as a result of their relationship with YSF are in direct contact with children or are party to YSF child-sensitive data (including photographs and personal information)

All YSF members will conduct themselves in a manner consistent with their role as an YSF representative and a positive role model to children.

YSF members must be concerned about perception and appearance in their language, actions and relationships with children.

YSF Australia Participants should seek to maintain YSF's professional reputation and uphold the principles of YSF's Child Protection Policy and Guidelines.

YSF has developed this child safe code of conduct to protect children to provide clear behavioural guidelines and expectations. The following basic principles must be followed by all members of the YSF in the course of carrying out their work and/or during their relationship with YSF.

## **PERSONAL CONDUCT OUTSIDE WORK OR ASSOCIATION WITH YSF**

YSF does not dictate the belief and value systems by which those associated with YSF conduct their personal lives however actions taken by them that are seen to contradict this policy out of working hours are considered as a violation of the policy.

YSF Executive, Committee members, employees and partner agencies are required to bear in mind the principles of the Child Protection Policy and heighten their awareness of how their behaviour may be perceived both at work and outside work. Be aware that where concerns exist about conduct in relation to child protection and/or where there has been a breach of the Child Protection Policy, this will be investigated under this policy either: by consideration of referral to statutory authorities for criminal investigation under the law of the country in which they work; and/or by YSF in accordance with disciplinary procedures.

As a YSF Executive, Committee member or paid staff

I WILL:

- Conduct myself in a manner that is consistent with the values of YSF
- Provide a welcoming, inclusive and safe environment for all children in the care of YSF
- Report any concerns or allegations of child abuse or breaches of this Code in accordance with YSF procedures within 24 hours
- Be available as a witness in any applicable investigation
- Treat all children with respect regardless of gender, race, religious or political beliefs, age, physical or mental health, sexual orientation, family and social background and culture, economic status or criminal background.
- Take responsibility for ensuring I am accountable and do not place myself in positions where there is a risk of child abuse allegations being made
- Wherever possible, ensure that another adult is present when working in the proximity of children
- Use any computers, mobile phones, or video and digital cameras appropriately, and never to exploit or harass children or to access child pornography through any medium
- Comply with all relevant Australian and overseas legislation, including labour laws in relation to child labour
- Consult with the Executive body of YSF if I have any questions regarding child protection and how it relates to my work/relationship with YSF
- Comply with YSF Child Protection Policy

I WILL NOT:

- Use language or behaviour towards children that is inappropriate, harassing, abusive, sexually provocative, demeaning or culturally inappropriate
- Act in ways intended to shame, humiliate, belittle or degrade children, or otherwise
- Perpetrate any form of emotional abuse
- Fondle, hold, kiss, hug or touch children in an inappropriate or culturally insensitive way
- Hit or otherwise physically assault or physically abuse children
- Withhold any relevant information that could be used as part of a child protection investigation.
- Undertake any action on my own regarding a child protection report or concern that is not in line with local policies and procedures and/or, without guidance from relevant focal points and managers.
- Engage in any form of sexual activity or develop physical/sexual relationships with anyone under the age of 18 regardless of the age of consent locally. Mistaken belief in the age of a child is not a defense/excuse based on the unintended harm.
- Develop relationships with, engage in any practice with or develop behaviour towards children which could in any way be deemed or interpreted as exploitive or abusive.
- Do things for children of a personal nature [e.g., taking a child to the toilet/bathroom; helping them get undressed etc] that they can do for themselves
- Condone or participate in behaviour of children which is illegal, unsafe or abusive
- Discriminate against, show differential treatment to, or favor particular children to the exclusion of others
- Hire children as 'domestic/house help' or engage in any form of commercial exploitation of a child or Child labor that undermines the child's rights or physical integrity
- Use YSF's computers, mobile phones, video and digital cameras for the purpose of exploiting or harassing children or young people
- Access child abuse images by any means

## IMPLEMENTATION AND MONITORING OF THE CODE

The Executive body of YSF is responsible for ensuring the implementation and monitoring of the code. This code of conduct forms part of staff contracts of employment, and visit agreements by sponsors / volunteers. Failure to adhere to it could result in your employment, agreements, or engagement with YSF being terminated and / or criminal prosecution.

YSF will:

- Take all concerns and reports seriously at all levels.
- Investigate and act on reports immediately.
- Take appropriate legal or other action against anyone making a false and/or malicious accusation.

## STAFF DECLARATION

YSF takes all possible steps to ensure the protection of children against all forms of child abuse and create an open and aware environment where concerns for the safety and wellbeing of a child can be raised and managed in a fair and just manner, which protects the rights of all.

Within Australia we would require all people, whether they are YSF staff, YSF Associates, to undergo a police check. However, we must also cater for the fact that we work in countries where police checks are not available or may not be reliable.

## Related Documents:

YSF Child Protection Policy

## References:

United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child

ACFID Code of Conduct

DFAT Child Protection Policy

Plan Child Safe Code of Conduct

## DEFINITIONS

In line with the UNCRC, for the purposes of this policy, a Child is defined as any person under the age of 18 years (UNCRC Article 1). National law and guidance or local customs may be based on different definitions/notions of age of childhood/adulthood, but the standard for YSF is that children should receive equal protection as far as possible, regardless of local age limits.

**Child protection** is defined in this policy as the responsibilities and preventative and responsive measures and activities that YSF undertakes to safeguard children ensuring that no Child is subject to Child abuse as a result of their association with us, their contact with YSF Staff and/or their participation in any YSF activity, including our projects and programs.

In addition, it incorporates our responsibility to ensure that where there are concerns over a Child's welfare or where a Child has been subject to Child abuse, actions are taken to address this; concerns are reported and responded to appropriately and in line with the relevant global and local procedures; and incidents are analysed so as to ensure continued learning and growth.

**Child Abuse (Check against UNCRC)** is defined as all forms of physical abuse, emotional ill-treatment, sexual abuse and exploitation, neglect or negligent treatment, commercial or other exploitation of a child and includes any actions that results in actual or potential harm to a child. Child abuse may be a deliberate act or it may be failing to act to prevent harm. Child abuse consists of anything which individuals, institutions or processes do or fail to do, intentionally or

unintentionally which harms a child or damages their prospect of safe and healthy development into adulthood.