

## DEFENCE YOUTH SAFETY RISK MANAGEMENT

### INTRODUCTION

1.1 The Defence Youth Safety Framework (DYSF) creates and maintains a youth safe organisation through the adoption of appropriate and consistent approaches to youth safety and youth safety governance. Defence does not tolerate child abuse or exploitation and recognises that it is the shared responsibility of all adults to protect young people under the age of 18 from foreseeable harm.

### POLICY INTENT

1.2 Defence youth safety risk management details the approach, roles and responsibilities for managing risks associated with youth safety in Defence and the ADF Cadets. It conforms with the purpose of youth safety governance by ensuring appropriate organisational systems and processes are in place to:

- a. support risk control action in accordance with leading practice
- b. enable risk management action and outcome monitoring against known and emerging standards
- c. ensure risk management deficiencies and outcomes are addressed.

1.3 Defence youth safety risk management guidance has been designed to:

- a. align with extant Defence risk management processes
- b. enshrine a culture of responsibility, accountability, fairness and transparency in all aspects of Youth Safety Risk Management
- c. align with the Commonwealth Child Safe Framework and the [National Framework for Protecting Australia's Children 2009 – 2020](#)
- d. enable a consistent and flexible approach to managing youth safety risks and issues across Defence and the ADF Cadets.

### KEY ELEMENTS OF YOUTH SAFETY RISK MANAGEMENT

1.4 There are three key organisational elements to be considered when defining youth safety risk actions – culture, people and the physical environment.

#### ELEMENT 1 – DEFENCE ORGANISATIONAL CULTURE

1.5 Defence promotes a culture of individual and collective responsibility for the safety and wellbeing of young people.

1.6 Defence acknowledges and controls risks inherent in all activities that include adults interacting with young people.

1.7 In making decisions under the DYSF, the interests of young people are given the highest priority.

1.8 Defence empowers young people, families, personnel and volunteers to report suspicions, allegations and disclosures of harm to young people, or risks of harm to young people.

## ELEMENT 2 – DEFENCE PEOPLE

1.9 Defence personnel, members of the ADF Cadets, contractors and volunteers know the standards to which they are held when interacting with young people and the consequences of any breaches of the DYSF, particularly breaches of codes of conduct.

1.10 Defence personnel, members of the ADF Cadets, contractors and volunteers strive constantly to uphold the Defence and/or ADF Cadets organisation values and behave in a way that authenticates Defence as a youth safe organisation.

1.11 Defence and the ADF Cadets have sound practices in place to ensure that adults are suitable and have received training about working with young people.

1.12 Defence personnel, members of the ADF Cadets, contractors and volunteers are supported to make good decisions about their interactions with young people.

## ELEMENT 3 – DEFENCE PHYSICAL ENVIRONMENT

1.13 Defence creates spaces that are welcoming and safe for young people.

1.14 Defence supports personnel and volunteers to provide safe and protective activities in suitable and appropriate environments.

1.15 Defence proactively manages risk across physical environments, work practices and relationships.

## YOUTH SAFETY RISK MANAGEMENT FRAMEWORK

1.16 Defence recognises that:

- a. young people are considered vulnerable and prone to be less risk aware and less risk averse than adults because of their age, physical and emotional immaturity and inexperience
- b. the law regards those adults who have, or assume, responsibility for their care and supervision as owing these young people a special duty of care.

1.17 Defence youth safety risk management guidance focuses on prevention through identification and control of both potential and actual risks of harm to young people who interact with Defence.

1.18 A key aspect of youth safety risk management is that interactions with young people involves risk not only for the young person but also for the adult Defence personnel involved, and ultimately for Defence as an organisation. The main risks for young people are physical abuse, sexual abuse, emotional abuse and neglect. The main risks for adult Defence personnel, and ultimately for Defence, are:

- a. failure to protect the safety and wellbeing of all our people including those under the age of 18

- b. legal liability for failing to comply with legislative obligations
- c. damage to Defence's reputation.

1.19 Effective risk management provides decision makers with the evidence to make informed decisions about where, why and how to undertake actions and allocate appropriate and proportionate resources to prevent or control youth safety related risks. This approach reflects the existing Defence risk management requirements.

### **YOUTH SAFETY RISK MANAGEMENT FUNDAMENTALS**

1.20 Youth safety actions need to be relevant to the type and nature of contact and proportionate to the risk inherent in each of the central Defence contexts. These contexts include:

- a. service of ADF members and employment of APS under the age of 18
- b. Defence Youth Programs
- c. ADF Cadets
- d. domestic and international operations
- e. Defence entities.

1.21 Defence youth safety risk management fundamentals underpin all interactions between adults and young people, with risk assessment and control appropriate to the context. The Defence youth safety risk management fundamentals are:

- a. a commitment to youth safety by all Defence and ADF Cadet personnel involved in programs that have interaction with young people
- b. appropriate suitability assessment of adults to work with young people
- c. appropriate youth safety education, training and professional development to ensure Defence personnel, contractors and ADF Cadets volunteers are aware of, and compliant with, the DYSF and relevant legislation, including working with vulnerable people/children checks and mandatory reporting requirements.
- d. consistently applied processes for reporting and responding to suspicions, allegations and disclosure of harm or risk of harm to young people

### **RISK ASSESSMENT**

1.22 In conducting youth safety risk assessments, some general risks tend to apply across the organisation while other risks will be specific to the context.

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- 1.23 General risks include, but are not limited to:
- a. opportunities for unsupervised access to, or physical contact with, young people
  - b. development of inappropriate relationships between adults and young people
  - c. opportunities for youth to have inappropriate exposure to alcohol and/or prohibited substances.

### COMMON RISK CONTROLS

1.24 Notwithstanding the different contexts in which adult/youth interaction may occur, a number of risk controls are common to effective youth safety across Defence. These actions include:

- a. ensuring boundaries for appropriate behaviours are clearly articulated, and regularly reinforced through a code of conduct
- b. conducting appropriate suitability screening
- c. ensuring adult personnel and young people complete appropriate training
- d. ensuring adults work in multiples (pairs or groups) when around young people
- e. ensuring adults work in line of sight of others when around young people
- f. minimising one-to-one interactions between adults and young people to the shortest periods of time and fewest number of occasions
- g. briefing young people prior to any physical contact, for example stating that physical contact may occur during physical skills training sessions to ensure safety and correction of technique
- h. establishing clear boundaries for overnight stays, sleeping arrangements and change room activity (for example: ensuring that young people do not share rooms with adults participating in, or supervising, an activity except under exceptional circumstances)
- i. activities that include overnight stays/accommodation carry additional risk, unsafe situations such as billeting of young people in Defence youth programs in all circumstances is prohibited
- j. maintaining and monitoring adherence to policies regarding:
  - (1) use, possession or supply of drugs and alcohol or other youth inappropriate materials
  - (2) mobile phone usage including guidance on games, apps and social media usage
  - (3) physical contact with young people
  - (4) ADF member leave management.

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1.25 The [risk management guide](#), located on the policy resources page of YouthHQ, includes a detailed youth safety risk and control matrix.

Accountable Officer: Chief of Joint Capability

Policy Officer: Head Reserve and Youth Division/Commander ADF Cadets

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