

CHAPTER 2

YOUTH PROTECTION COMMUNICATION POLICY

INTRODUCTION

5.2.1 Defence is committed to ensuring youth who engage with Defence are informed about their rights and feel comfortable in communicating their views and concerns in a youth safe environment.

5.2.2 Effective communication of Defence's youth related policies, procedures and training requirements to all Defence and non-Defence personnel, including volunteers and contractors is critical to ensuring their obligations and the rights of youth engaging with Defence are understood and promoted.

5.2.3 Joint Support Services Division (JSSD) must ensure the families of youth engaging with Defence can access information, provide feedback and have the opportunity to be involved in promoting Defence's youth safe culture.

POLICY INTENT

5.2.4 The intent of this policy is to articulate the minimum level of internal and external communication required to meet Defence's obligations as a youth safe organisation.

5.2.5 Defence's Youth Protection Communication policy reflects the following National Principles for Child Safe Organisations:

- a. Principle 2: *Children and young people are informed about their rights, participate in decisions affecting them and are taken seriously*
 - (1) Key Action Area 2.1: *Children and young people are informed about all of their rights, including to safety, information, and participation.*
 - (2) Key Action Area 2.4: *Staff and volunteers are attuned to signs of harm and facilitate child-friendly ways for children to express their views, participate in decision-making and raise their concerns.*
- b. Principle 3: *Families and communities are informed and involved in promoting child safety and wellbeing*
 - (1) Key Action Area 3.2: *The organisation engages and openly communicates with families and the community about its child safe approach and relevant information is accessible.*
 - (2) Key Action Area 3.4: *Families, carers and the community are informed about the organisation's operations and governance.*
- c. 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.*

- (1) Key Action Area 7.4: *Staff and volunteers receive training and information on how to build culturally safe environments for children and young people.*
 - d. Principle 9: *Implementation of the national child safe principles is regularly reviewed and improved*
 - (1) Key Action Area 9.3: *The organisation reports on the findings of relevant reviews to staff and volunteers, community and families and children and young people.*
- 5.2.6 This policy should be read in conjunction with the following:
- a. Youth Protection Documentation Records and Privacy policy (refer [Section 1, Chapter 2](#))
 - b. Youth Safe Culture policy (refer [Section 2, Chapter 1](#))
 - c. Use of Social Media by Youth in Defence and Defence Youth Programs policy (refer [Section 6, Chapter 3](#))
 - d. Diversity and Inclusion policy (refer [Section 6, Chapter 4](#)).

POLICY

YOUTH PROTECTION COMMUNICATION CHANNELS

5.2.7 JSSD must ensure accurate and relevant information about its youth protection policies is accessible to all Defence and non-Defence personnel engaging with youth, to youths engaging with Defence and to the broader community through a variety of avenues.

5.2.8 **Defence News Publications.** JSSD must ensure key messages, stories and/or factsheets on youth protection matters are available to Defence personnel and the broader community. These will be distributed through existing Defence publications and social media platforms, including service newspapers and publications such as *Defence Family Matters* magazine.

5.2.9 **YouthHQ Website.** The [YouthHQ](#) website is Defence's repository for all current youth protection policies, directives and instructions. JSSD must ensure YouthHQ content is accessible and current and that [YOUTH ConCERN](#) and [Feedback](#) submissions are responded to promptly.

5.2.10 **Social Media.** Social media may be useful to:

- a. raise community awareness of Defence Youth Programs (DYP) and Defence's commitment to youth protection
- b. engage with and promote feedback from the community on youth protection within Defence.

5.2.11 All youth protection related social media must comply with [Section 6, Chapter 3](#).

5.2.12 **Youth Protection Forum.** JSSD must host an annual Youth Protection Forum. Relevant stakeholders from each Service/ Group will be invited to participate together with external stakeholders from other organisations with a youth protection focus.

5.2.13 Feedback collected from youth and families through youth protection surveys, YOUTH ConCERN and Feedback submissions should be considered in designing the Forum.

COMMUNICATION REQUIREMENTS

5.2.14 JSSD must ensure communication with the broader community reflects the diversity of youth and community members and reflects diversity in society in an inclusive manner. Communication must not contain:

- a. gender, sexual, or cultural stereotyping
- b. negative depictions of people in relation to race, ethnic origin, disability, age, gender or sexual orientation.

5.2.15 JSSD must ensure youth protection communication activities and avenues are reviewed on an annual basis to maintain currency, reflect lessons learned and ensure policy and processes relating to youth are effective in promoting a youth safe environment.

5.2.16 Commanders and managers must ensure findings and lessons learned from youth protection investigations are communicated via appropriate communication mechanisms to reinforce youth safe behaviours and culture within Defence (refer [Section 3, Chapter 4](#)).

5.2.17 JSSD must engage with other agencies that have youth protection responsibilities to:

- a. share Defence's experiences and gain best practice youth protection knowledge and learning relating to youth protection and implementation of the Commonwealth Child Safety Framework and National Principles for Child Safe Organisations
- b. showcase best practice government examples on YouthHQ
- c. actively contribute to a whole of government approach to youth protection.

5.2.18 JSSD must ensure feedback provided by youth and families from targeted youth protection surveys is incorporated into youth protection policies and practices where appropriate in accordance with [Section 1 Chapter 2](#) and [Section 4, Chapter 1](#).

Accountable Officer: Chief of Joint Capabilities (CJC)

Policy Owner: Head Joint Support Services Division (HJSSD)