

# Safeguarding Policy

All yourtown



## 1. Purpose

**yourtown** is dedicated to upholding and safeguarding the rights of children, young people, and adults at risk from actions that cause them harm.

## 2. Policy Statement

**yourtown** aims to safeguard children, young people and adults at risk by:

- implementing policies and procedures to prevent harm;
- ensuring that all compliance checks for working with children, young people, and adults at risk are undertaken and maintained;
- ensuring initial and ongoing education and training is provided to all personnel;
- supporting and managing personnel and organisational partners to meet **yourtown's** safeguarding requirements and expectations;
- ensuring safeguarding risks are identified, assessed, prioritised and managed with regular oversight and governance at an operational and Board level to ensure the efficacy of risk controls and mitigation plans; and
- engaging children, young people and adults at risk in the design and delivery of programs, services and advocacy campaigns.

## 3. Scope

This policy applies at all times and equally to:

- **yourtown** personnel, including paid staff and volunteers;
- **yourtown** Board Members;
- all partner organisations, including their personnel, who are involved or contractually engaged to **yourtown**; and
- anyone visiting a **yourtown** site, program or activity.

## 4. Safeguarding Principles

yourtown safeguarding principles and practices align with the National Principles for Child Safe Organisations, National Catholic Safeguarding Standards and the Commonwealth Child Safe Framework.

Figure 1 - Wheel of Child Safety



### PRINCIPLE 1 - Committed leadership, governance, and culture

The safety and wellbeing of children, young people, and adults at risk is embedded in organisational leadership, governance and culture.

yourtown has zero tolerance for abuse or exploitation of children, young people, and adults at risk. yourtown's leadership team leads by example, ensuring that the safety and wellbeing of each child, young person or adult at risk are the primary consideration in all decisions and actions concerning them.

Safeguarding risk management strategies and plans are documented, monitored, and reviewed by the Safeguarding Committee. yourtown's Safeguarding Risk Assessment and Management Framework forms part of yourtown's enterprise wide Risk Management Framework and is integrated into day to day functions, operations, business and strategic planning.

Oversight and governance of Safeguarding risk management is assigned to executive managers and CEO at a corporate level, and at Board level to the Audit and Risk Management Committee, who also have a key role in monitoring and responding to risk at yourtown.

#### Core Components

- yourtown leaders commit to upholding and promoting a culture that prioritises the safeguarding of children, young people and adults at risk.
- The safety of children, young people, and adults at risk is a shared responsibility at all levels of the organisation.
- Risk management strategies focus on preventing, identifying and effectively mitigating risks to children, young people and adults at risk.
- Personnel comply with the Code of Conduct that sets clear standards for behaviour.

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- e) Personnel are provided with ongoing development opportunities to ensure that contemporary Safeguarding knowledge is maintained.
- f) Governance of Safeguarding risk and risk management is embedded in both corporate and Board level oversight and governance structures.

## PRINCIPLE 2 - Participation and empowerment

**Children, young people, and adults at risk are informed about their rights, participate in decisions affecting them, and are taken seriously.**

**yourtown** is committed to the continuing development of its Youth Participation Strategy to improve organisational impact through safer and better services, informed by the knowledge and lived experience of young people across Australia.

### Core Components

- a) Children, young people, and adults at risk have opportunities to express their views and, to the greatest extent possible, participate in decisions that affect their lives.
- b) The importance of friendships in helping children, young people and adults at risk feel safer and less isolated is recognised, and peer support is encouraged.
- c) **yourtown** actively supports children, young people, and adults at risk to understand and exercise their rights.
- d) All children, young people, and adults at risk have easy access to information, support and complaints processes in relation to any aspect of **yourtown** services, and **yourtown** maintains multiple pathways for this to be done.
- e) Children, young people, and adults at risk contribute to the development and review of **yourtown** policies and procedures.

## PRINCIPLE 3 - Partnering with families, carers, and communities

**Families and communities are informed and involved in promoting the safety and wellbeing of children, young people and adults at risk.**

**yourtown** actively engages families and communities in activities that promote awareness and involvement in Safeguarding. **yourtown** uses accessible language to communicate with service users, personnel and partners to ensure Safeguarding obligations and support processes are clear and easy to understand.

### Core Components

- a) Parents have primary responsibility for decisions affecting their children; **yourtown's** role is to encourage and promote safe, positive parenting and ultimately serve the best interests of the child.
- b) **yourtown** engages in open, two-way communication with families and communities about its Safeguarding approaches, and relevant information is easy to access.
- c) **yourtown** provides resources and information to support the progression of Safeguarding across all communities.
- d) **yourtown** informs the public about its approach to Safeguarding.

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## PRINCIPLE 4 - Equity is promoted and diversity is respected

**Equity is upheld and diverse needs respected, in policy and in practice.**

**yourtown** respects culturally diverse family systems and approaches to raising children, and practises cultural sensitivity in working and communicating with children, young people, adults at risk and their families.

### Core Components

- a) **yourtown** seeks to understand the diverse circumstances of all those who access programs and services, so as to respond inclusively and effectively.
- b) **yourtown** ensures policy and practice respond to the diverse needs of children, young people, adults at risk, and families from Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander and Culturally and Linguistically Diverse backgrounds.
- c) **yourtown's** personnel mirrors the diversity of its service users to the greatest extent possible.

## PRINCIPLE 5 - Robust human resource management

**People working with children, young people, and adults at risk are suitable, and supported to reflect safety and wellbeing values in practice.**

**yourtown** does not knowingly engage personnel who pose a risk to the safety or wellbeing of children, young people, or adults at risk, and takes immediate action to respond to suspected abuse or exploitation. **yourtown** takes all reasonable steps to ensure that personnel do not pose an unacceptable risk to children, young people, or adults at risk.

In the recruitment of personnel, **yourtown** undertakes screening processes to determine suitability, including reference checks, criminal history checks, and working with children checks. **yourtown** provides ongoing professional development to personnel with regard to Safeguarding to ensure contemporary knowledge and practice is maintained,

### Core Components

- a) **yourtown** recruitment and selection processes screen for suitability to work within Safeguarding standards.
- b) From commencement, all personnel receive an appropriate induction, and ongoing training inclusive of Safeguarding.
- c) **yourtown** maintains and implements a framework for the ongoing professional development of all personnel with regard to Safeguarding.
- d) Managers and supervisors maintain an explicit focus on Safeguarding; expectations are clearly articulated in performance and development conversations and agreements.
- e) **yourtown** provides the means for ongoing practice development and review, and supports all personnel working with children, young people and adults at risk with practice supervision support.

## PRINCIPLE 6 - Effective complaints management

**Processes for raising complaints and concerns are responsive, easy to understand, and accessible to children, young people, adults at risk, families, carers, communities, and personnel.**

**yourtown** promotes an organisational culture which encourages and welcomes feedback and complaints about any aspect of Safeguarding policy and practice. **yourtown** maintains and actively promotes feedback channels that are tailored for easy access by children, young people, and adults at risk. Feedback is incorporated in review and continuous improvement processes.

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## Core Components

- a) Complaints related to Safeguarding and/or practice are prioritised.
- b) Allegations, concerns and complaints handling policies and procedures clearly outline roles and responsibilities, approaches to dealing with different types of concerns, and obligations to act and report, and comply with all related legislative requirements.
- c) Feedback channels are customised, and information related to complaints and/or feedback is made visible at all **yourtown** sites.

## PRINCIPLE 7 - Ongoing education and training

**yourtown** personnel are equipped with the knowledge, skills, and awareness to keep children, young people, and adults at risk safe through information, ongoing education, and training.

**yourtown** provides all personnel with a formal induction including training on their responsibilities with regard to **yourtown's** Statement of Commitment, Code of Conduct, and Safeguarding Policy within three months of commencement. Ongoing training and professional development are provided at least every two years.

## Core Components

- a) All personnel receive ongoing training on the nature and indicators of abuse, particularly child sexual abuse, and on organisational Safeguarding policy and practice.
- b) All relevant personnel receive training in responding to disclosures and to signs of abuse.
- c) All personnel working with children, young people and adults at risk complete Client Skills Essentials training, which includes specific modules related to Safeguarding practice.
- d) All personnel working with children, young people and adults at risk participate in practice supervision.

## PRINCIPLE 8 - Safe physical and online environments

**Physical and online environments promote safety and wellbeing while minimising the opportunity for children, young people and adults at risk to be harmed.**

**yourtown** services are provided virtually, in person, and via blended modalities. **yourtown's** work inevitably entails risk, including risk to the safety and wellbeing of children, young people, and adults at risk. We are committed to identifying and minimising preventable risk, and to mitigating the impacts of incidents when they occur.

In the interest of preventing risk, we conduct a detailed Safeguarding risk assessment before implementing new projects, and all existing programs have and maintain Safeguarding risk plans.

On an ongoing basis, **yourtown** ensures risks of abuse and exploitation within programs, operations, activities, and partnership arrangements are identified, assessed, mitigated, monitored and reviewed.

## Core Components

- a) **yourtown** identifies and mitigates risks in online and physical environments without compromising the privacy or healthy development of the child, young person or adult at risk.
- b) **yourtown** sites are developed and maintained to minimise the opportunity for harm.
- c) Online systems and tools are used in accordance with **yourtown's** Code of Conduct and relevant policies.

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## PRINCIPLE 9 - Continuous improvement

**yourtown** regularly reviews and improves implementation of systems to safeguard children, young people, and adults at risk.

**yourtown** commits to continuously improving and strengthening internal Safeguarding systems to ensure accountability to the individuals and communities we serve. Specific Safeguarding roles and responsibilities are delegated to personnel to embed safe organisational practice across all programs, operations and activities.

## PRINCIPLE 10 - Safeguarding policies and procedures

**Policies and procedures document how yourtown is safe for children, young people, and adults at risk.**

**yourtown** ensures that personnel and partner organisations involved in delivery of **yourtown** services have Safeguarding measures in place that meet the requirements of this policy. Partnership agreements require evidence of Safeguarding policies and active procedures, or a commitment to develop these policies and procedures within six months of engagement. **yourtown** shares good practice freely with partner organisations.

### Core components

- a) Safeguarding policies, procedural instructions and support materials align with and support the Child Safe Standards.
- b) Safeguarding policies, procedural instructions and support materials are accessible and easy to understand.
- c) **yourtown's** leadership team champions and models compliance with Safeguarding policies, procedural instructions and support materials.
- d) Safeguarding policies, procedural instructions and support materials are informed by stakeholder consultation and best practice.
- e) Personnel of **yourtown** and partner organisations understand and implement Safeguarding policies, procedural instructions and support materials.

## 5. Breaches of the Safeguarding Policy or Code of Conduct

A breach of this Policy may result in a range of outcomes, including but not limited to: counselling, performance management and/or contract rescission, disciplinary action (including dismissal) following proper investigation.

Breaches involving criminal behaviour will be reported to police.

## 6. Review and Monitoring

This policy is reviewed annually. While the Policy Owner is ultimately responsible for ensuring that this policy is reviewed as per above time line, all key stakeholders including the executive team, Safeguarding Champions and other senior managers will be responsible for enhancing this policy and incorporating lessons learned into subsequent versions. Feedback from stakeholders will be sought in the process.

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## Appendix A - Glossary

### Safeguarding

Safeguarding is the umbrella term for policies, procedures and practices employed to safeguard children, young people and adults at risk who come into contact with an organisation from exposure to harm, including abuse or exploitation.

### Harm

Any detrimental effect or impact on a child's physical, psychological or emotional wellbeing. Harm may be caused by all forms of physical, emotional, or sexual abuse, neglect, or exploitation, whether intentional or unintentional.

### Child

'Child' refers to anyone under the age of 18, consistent with the Convention on the Rights of the Child (CRC) as well as the Commonwealth Family Law Act 1975.

### Young Person

'Young person' refers to older children and adolescents (up to 18 years of age).

### Adult at Risk

An adult at risk is a person aged 18 or older who, for any reason, is unable to take care of themselves or protect themselves from significant harm or exploitation.

### Child Abuse

The World Health Organization ([WHO], 2006, p. 9) defines child abuse and neglect as:

All forms of physical and/or emotional ill-treatment, sexual abuse, neglect or negligent treatment or commercial or other exploitation, resulting in actual or potential harm to the child's health, survival, development or dignity in the context of a relationship of responsibility, trust or power. The following types of abuse are described; however, children often experience more than one type simultaneously:

- **Physical abuse**

The use of physical force against a child that results in harm to the child. Physically abusive behaviour includes shoving, hitting, slapping, shaking, throwing, punching, kicking, biting, burning, strangling or poisoning, and gender-based violence such as female genital mutilation;

- **Emotional abuse**

A continuing pattern of inappropriate verbal or symbolic acts toward a child or failure over time to provide a child with adequate nurturing and emotional availability. Emotionally abusive behaviour includes threats, rejection, isolation, belittling, and name calling.

- **Sexual abuse**

The use of power or authority to involve a child in sexual activity by an adult or significantly older child or adolescent. Sexually abusive behaviours can include touching genitals or breasts, masturbation, oral sex, vaginal or anal penetration by a penis, finger or any other object, and exposing the child to sex or pornography.

- **Neglect**

The failure by a parent or caregiver to provide a child (where they are in a position to do so) with the conditions that are culturally accepted as being essential for the child's physical and emotional development and wellbeing.

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- Exposure to family violence

Unwanted or unreasonable contact or behaviour which intimidates, humiliates or offends

## Child exploitation

Child exploitation is the use of a child in work or other activities for the benefit of others that is unacceptable because it deprives them of their childhood, education, development or dignity. It includes unacceptable child labour, child prostitution or trafficking, and child pornography.

## Grooming

Behaviour that makes it easier for an offender to procure a child for sexual activity. This can occur in person or through electronic equipment. For example, an offender might build a relationship of trust with the child, and then seek to sexualise that relationship by encouraging romantic feelings or exposing the child to sexual concepts through pornography.

## Contact with children, young people and vulnerable adults

“Contact with” means working on an activity or in a position that involves or may involve direct (including online) contact or indirect contact (such as use of images).

## Working with children, young people and vulnerable adults

“Working with” means engaging in an activity with a child or vulnerable adult where the contact would reasonably be expected as a normal part of the activity, and the contact is not incidental to the activity. Working includes volunteering or other unpaid works.

## Personnel

Personnel are either employed by an organisation, engaged by an organisation on a subcontract basis, or engaged by an organisation on a voluntary or unpaid basis. For the purposes of this policy, personnel include paid personnel, volunteers, trainees, and Board members.

## Contractor

The individuals engaged to perform specific services under a contract and includes:

- specified personnel nominated in a head agreement with an intermediary company (the contractor) to which payment is made; or
- if the person performing the service is the service provider, he/she is an individual contractor



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## Appendix B - Legislation

- [Care and Protection of Children Act 2007 \(NT\)](#)
- [Child Protection Act 1999 \(Qld\)](#)
- [Working with Children \(Risk Management and Screening\) Act 2000 \(Qld\)](#)
- [Children and Community Services Act 2004 \(WA\)](#)
- [Children and Young People Act 2008 \(ACT\)](#)
- [Children and Young People \(Safety\) Act 2017 \(SA\)](#)
- [Child Safety \(Prohibited Persons\) Act 2016 \(SA\)](#)
- [Children and Young Persons \(Care and Protection\) Act 1998 \(NSW\)](#)
- [Child Protection \(Working with Children\) Act 2012 \(NSW\)](#)
- [Children, Young Persons and Their Families Act 1997 \(Tas.\)](#)
- [Registration to Work with Vulnerable People Act 2013 \(Tas\)](#)
- [Children, Youth and Families Act 2005 \(Vic.\)](#)
- [Commonwealth Family Law Act 1975.](#)

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## Appendix C - Related Documents

### De La Salle District

- [Child and Adults at Risk Safeguarding Commitment Statement](#)
- [Lasallian Child Rights Poster](#)
- [Safeguarding Children and Adults at Risk Policy](#)
- [Code of Conduct](#)
- [Disclosure of Abuse and Harm Policy](#)
- [Digital Media Policy](#)
- [Safeguarding Committee Charter](#)
- [DLS Independent Legal Review Panel TOR and Procedural Rules Policy](#)

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- [Safeguarding Commitment Statement](#)
- Child Safeguarding Risk Management Plan
- [Code of Conduct](#)
- [People Management Position Statement](#)
- [Workplace Health and Safety Policy](#)
- [Equal Opportunity and Fair Treatment Policy](#)
- [Ethical Code and Practice Policy in Client Service Delivery](#)
- [Performance Management Policy](#)
- [Recruitment Policy](#)
- [Mobile Device Policy](#)
- [Transfer of Information and Data Policy](#)
- [Bullying Prevention Policy and Procedure for Clients](#)
- [Whistleblower Protection Policy](#)
- [Privacy Policy](#)
- [Feedback and Complaints Policy](#)
- [Information Technology Security Policy](#)
- [Information and Communications Technology \(ICT\) Acceptable Use Policy](#)
- [Records Management Policy](#)
- [Social Media Policy](#)
- [Conflict of Interest Policy and Procedure](#)
- [Induction and Probation Policy](#)
- [Client Information Handbook](#)