



1. Statement of Commitment

YFS Ltd is committed to ensuring the safety and wellbeing of children and young people. Our commitment is aligned to and guided by the National Principles for Child Safe Organisations.

YFS has zero tolerance of child abuse, and all allegations and safety concerns will be treated very seriously and consistently as per our policies and procedures.

In line with our legal and moral obligations to children and young people, we will contact relevant authorities when we are concerned about a child's safety.

We are committed to preventing child abuse and identifying risks early, and removing and reducing these risks consistent with our What we do – to prevent and report harm, abuse and neglect policy.

We are committed to safe recruitment procedures, and regularly training and educating our staff on child abuse risks.

We are committed to providing a culturally safe environment for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children, children from culturally and/or linguistically diverse backgrounds, and to providing a safe and accessible environment for children with a disability.

YFS has specific policies, procedures and training in place that support our staff to achieve these commitments.

**** Staff who believe a child is in immediate danger must phone 000 ****

2. Code of Conduct

To ensure that children and young people are protected from harm, all YFS employees, contractors, volunteers and students must abide by a Code of Conduct.

3. Handling disclosures or suspicions of harm, including reporting guidelines

YFS' What we do – to prevent and report harm, abuse and neglect (101889) document provides guidance to recognise, respond and report disclosures and suspicions of harm.

The Family and Child Connect website provides useful materials, including information in relation to family support services, which can assist further: <https://familychildconnect.org.au/> The Department of Children, youth Justice and Multicultural Affairs website has definitions of harm:

<https://www.csyw.qld.gov.au/child-family/protecting-children> Reports of harm by professionals can be made at - <https://secure.communities.qld.gov.au/cbir/ChildSafety#>

Child protection is everybody's responsibility and every person SHOULD report to Child Safety if that person forms a reasonable suspicion that a child (including an unborn child) has suffered, is suffering, or is at unacceptable risk of suffering significant harm AND does not have a parent/carer able and willing to protect the child from the harm.

Sexual offences by adults to children and young people under 16 years of age or a person under 18 years with an impairment of the mind: It is mandatory for YFS staff to report to the Police, information relating to child sexual offences. This is not required if the sexual offence has already been reported to Child Safety. A reasonable excuse for not reporting a sexual offence would be if we believe reporting the offence would endanger a staff person or another person (other than the alleged offender).

Media attention

A disclosure or suspicion of harm may attract media notice. It is critical to avoid giving out protected or potentially damaging information. YFS' News Media policy and YFS Crisis Communication Strategy are used as a guide when dealing with the media.

4. Managing breaches of the risk management strategy

What is a breach?

A breach is any action or inaction by any staff member, board member, volunteer or client of YFS, including children and young people, that fails to comply with any part of this strategy.

YFS takes any breach of this Child and Youth Risk Management Strategy very seriously and will take action to ensure that breaches are responded to appropriately and reviewed to ensure the risk of breaches reoccurring is minimised.

Process for managing breaches

1. Staff are responsible for reporting breaches to their line manager
2. The line manager will manage the process and report to their Client Service Manager and the CEO.
3. All people concerned will be able to provide their version of events to the Client Service Manager.
4. The details of the breach, including the versions of all parties and the outcome will be recorded as 'confidential' in the Quality Management System database.
5. The Client Service Manager will report to the CEO with recommendations for courses of action to be taken.
6. An appropriate outcome will be decided by the CEO.

All matters discussed in an investigation will be confidential.

Depending on the nature of the breach, outcomes may include:

- emphasising the relevant component of the child and youth risk management strategy, for example, the code of conduct
- providing closer supervision
- further education and training
- mediating between those involved in the incident (where appropriate)
- disciplinary procedures if necessary; or
- reviewing current policies and procedures and developing new policies and procedures if necessary.

5. Risk management plans for high risk activities and special events

A high-risk activity or special event, due to their nature, will require extra planning to ensure that appropriate control measures are implemented to manage the identified risks.

Our Standard Activity Risks are documented to identify some high-risk activities and the controls used to manage them, and a Risk Planner is used to plan high-risk activities or special events.

6. Recruitment, selection, training, and management

YFS' Recruitment and Selection Process, Recruitment and Advertising procedure, Conditions of Employment procedure, and Staff Induction: An overview ensures appropriate and effective recruitment and selection of employees, students and volunteers.

7. Compliance with the requirements of the blue card system

Employment at YFS is conditional upon employee's possessing and maintaining a valid blue card. If an employee receives a negative notice (deemed not suitable to work in regulated child-related employment) or their blue card is cancelled or withdrawn, they will be immediately suspended and/or possibly terminated without notice.

A register of the status of staff, volunteer and student blue cards is maintained and monitored by Human Resources.

YFS' Recruitment and Selection Process, Recruitment and Advertising procedure, Conditions of Employment procedure and Code of Conduct ensure compliance with the requirements of the blue card system.

8. Strategies for communication and support

Communication

YFS has strategies in place to ensure the effective communication of the Child and Youth Risk Management Strategy to stakeholders. They include:

- Compulsory induction covering YFS' Child and Youth Risk Management Strategy and What we do to prevent and report harm, abuse and neglect for all staff and volunteers
- Child Protection being discussed regularly during case review and supervision
- Making the Strategy available on the YFS website and encouraging stakeholders to provide feedback for YFS to uphold safeguards for children
- Conducting Q&A sessions for staff and volunteers relating to child protection processes
- Promoting the rights of clients to be safe by displaying the YFS Client Information Poster in common areas and providing and explaining the YFS Client Information Pocket Guide to clients
- Conducting regular and mandatory training for staff in relation to the various policies and procedures which make up this Strategy, with a focus on managing disclosures or suspicions of harm
- Subscribing to relevant industry journals and training materials for staff
- Providing relevant individuals with information to understand their obligations as a blue card holder.

Support

Staff may require support to deal with issues such as behaviour management, stress, conflict, bullying, and child protection concerns, breaches of the risk management strategy and dealing with disclosures or suspicions of harm. If staff concerns are not addressed effectively, YFS' ability to provide a safe and supportive environment for children and young people may be affected.

YFS offers support to all people involved in our organisation, as per our methods listed below.

- Regular supervision and line management
- Staff are encouraged to access an Employee Assistance Program – ASSURE
- Regular training and professional development is provided to staff
- YFS has processes in place to provide support to individuals impacted by a critical incident
- YFS provides support to clients, parents, families or other stakeholders by making internal and external referrals to an appropriate support service.

References

- Child Protection Act 1999
- Criminal Code (Child Sexual Offences Reform) and Other Legislation Amendment Act 2020 (Qld) –Amendment of Child Protection (Offender Reporting and Offender Prohibition Order) Act 2004
- Working with Children (Risk Management and Screening) Act 2000
- Working with Children (Risk Management and Screening) Regulation 2011
- *What we do – to prevent and report harm, abuse and neglect (101889)*
- YFS Code of Conduct (101140) and Directors Code of Conduct (101437)
- Communicating with Child Safety (101766)
- Guidelines for Parental/Carer Consent (Minors – under 15) (101228)
- YFS Recruitment and Selection Process Flow Chart (102540)
- Recruitment and Advertising procedure (100289)
- Conditions of Employment procedure (101257)
- Staff Induction: An overview (102614)
- YFS Induction Checklist (102615)
- YFS' Media policy (102114)
- YFS Crisis Communication Strategy (102587)
- YFS Quality Manual (100667)
- YFS Standard Activity Risks (101496)
- Group or Community Education Risk Planner (101195)
- YFS Client Information Poster (100494)
- YFS Client Information Pocket Guide (101304)
- *Supervision procedure (100368)*
- *Workplace Health and Safety Handbook (100742)*
- Suicide Prevention Reference (101724) and Procedure (101723)
- No Harm Contract (102543)
- YFS Practice Approach Principles (102833)