

Child & Youth Safe

National Principles for Child Safe Organisations

Evidentiary Guidelines for MA Programs and Services



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Introduction

The Evidentiary Guidelines outline a list of child and youth safe requirements for all Mission Australia (MA) Programs and Services who have contact with children, young people or families. The Guidelines provide an overview of expectations outlining what needs to be implemented at the local level to maintain high standards of child and youth safe practice and to ensure that MA is compliant with the National Principles for Child Safe Organisations. Elements of these requirements will be checked as part of the annual Quality Assurance Framework Child & Youth Safe (CYS) Checklist.

At the end of this Guideline is an **optional** checklist/tool which services can use to track their own program/service's practice, compliance and progress.

For further information or support contact the Child & Youth Safe team –

childsafeteam@missionaustralia.com.au or your local National Child & Youth Safe Lead (NCYSL) &/or Child & Youth Safe Advocate.

Resources are also available on the Child & Youth Safe page of the Internal Policy Hub [Child & Youth Safe \(sharepoint.com\)](#) .



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National Principle 1 – Leadership, Governance & Culture

Key child and youth safe requirements	Guidance/link to relevant resource
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Ensure staff have been provided with a copy of the MA Quick Guide to Child & Youth Safety (CYS) 	<p>It is recommended that the Quick Guide is provided to all staff on commencement of employment and is also stored on site in an easily accessible location for all staff to review as required. The Quick Guide can be accessed on the Child & Youth Safe (sharepoint.com).</p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Ensure staff are aware of the role of the CYS Clinical Care Committee 	<p>It is recommended this is completed through an annual discussion at a staff team meeting. The role of the CYS Clinical Care Committee is outlined in the MA Quick Guide to CYS located on the Child & Youth Safe (sharepoint.com).</p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Ensure all staff have contact details for the National Child & Youth Safe Lead and CYS Advocate and that staff are made aware they can directly access the CYS team for advice, support or consultation on any child youth safe matter as required 	<p>It is recommended that a reminder of the support available is discussed regularly at staff team meetings. Contact details for each National CYS Lead and Advocate are available in the MA Quick Guide to CYS and on the Internal Policy Hub Child & Youth Safe (sharepoint.com). The email for the CYS team is: childsafeteam@missionaustralia.com.au</p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Ensure you consider inviting the National Child & Youth Safe Lead or Advocate to periodically attend team meetings to provide updates on child & youth safety 	<p>Contact your allocated NCYSL or local Advocate and invite them to attend a team meeting for a child and youth safety briefing. The team can be contacted on childsafeteam@missionaustralia.com.au</p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Ensure that the service and staff regularly review updates provided in the National CYS Compliance Framework 	<p>The National CYS Compliance Framework maps out MA’s national regulatory and legislative obligations and monitors for changes in the sector in relation to child safety. It covers the National Principles, state/territory based Child Safe Standards, Reportable Conduct schemes, Mandatory reporting, Information exchange schemes, Working with Children Check requirements, reporting Criminal Offences and other Attestations. Contact the NCYSL for a copy. Updates will also be published in other communication channels.</p>

<ul style="list-style-type: none">○ Ensure that your service Operational Manual is updated with current child and youth safe information	Standard text for child and youth safe practice for Operational Manuals is available setting out mandatory information to be included. CFCS - Operations Manual Template.doc (sharepoint.com)
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National Principle 2 – Children & young people’s rights and participation

Key child and youth safe requirements	Guidance/link to relevant resource
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Ensure children & young people’s views are taken into account when decisions involving them are made 	<p>Where appropriate consideration should always be given to consulting with children and young people, including when making decisions about their safety and wellbeing, the design of the service or other opportunities where their participation could add value, for example, including a young person on an interview panel. Contemplate setting up a Child and Young People Advisory Group or source ideas and access useful resources to increase participation of children and young people from peak bodies such as the Commission for Children & Young People, Advocate for Children and Young People etc. Refer to the Client Participation Resources which includes Practice Guidelines for Clients on Recruitment Panels and Practice Guidelines for setting up Client Advisory Councils among other useful resources.</p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Ensure eligible young people (15-19 yo) are invited to participate in the annual MA Youth Survey 	<p>Ensure all young people accessing the service are actively invited to participate in the Annual MA Youth Survey and support young people to complete survey if required. Annual Youth Survey</p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Ensure all assessments and decisions regarding the safety and wellbeing of children and young people are documented in their case notes in MA Connect and/or other system 	<p>For further guidance, review the case management and case notes sections of the Op Manual with staff. Support staff to undertake Legal Case Note Training by contacting the Legal Team to arrange this. Ensure staff are trained in the case notes feature of MA Connect, for support with this go to MA Connect Central.</p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Ensure all children over six years have access to and a discussion around the <i>Charter of Rights and Responsibilities Children and Young People and Mission Australia workers</i>. Where appropriate this is signed and the discussion documented 	<p>Locate the Charter of Rights and Responsibilities Children and Young People and Mission Australia Workers. Review section of the Op Manual on using this with staff. This discussion must be documented in the case notes in MA Connect or other system and/ or a signed copy of the Charter is placed on their file in MA Connect or other system.</p>

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Ensure the Personal Information Consent form or Consent to Services as a Mature Minor tool is completed with children and young people (where age and developmentally appropriate) and make certain it is discussed with their parents/carers where applicable and this is documented in case notes on MA Connect or other system 	<p>Source the Personal Information Consent Form. Obtain appropriate consent from clients. Add consent form and discussion of consent to case notes in MA Connect or other system.</p> <p>Where parents are not involved, an assessment of whether an individual child or young person (aged 12 -15) is able to give independent and informed consent as a mature minor has been completed with reference to The Children and Young People – Consent to Services as a Mature Minor Practice Guideline.</p>
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National Principle 3 – Family and community involvement

Key child and youth safe requirements	Guidance/link to relevant resource
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Ensure parents and carers are involved in case planning where relevant and participate in decisions affecting their children or young person 	<p>It is essential that families participate in decisions affecting their child and/or young people including when making decisions about their safety and wellbeing, the design of the service or other opportunities where their participation could add value. It is recommended that staff undertake case planning training where required.</p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Ensure the Keeping Children and Young People Safe at Mission Australia: Information for Families brochure is provided to all clients 	<p>Source a copy of The Keeping children and young people safe at Mission Australia: Information for families brochure. It is recommended that this brochure is included in welcome packs, discussed at appointments and after issuing this it is documented in MA Connect or other systems.</p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Ensure opportunities to involve local communities in MA events or programs are actively encouraged and the diverse needs of the local community are represented in responding to child safety & wellbeing matters 	<p>Develop active relationships with local community partners and community leaders and seek their participation in celebrating special days in the community. In addition, gather their input into child safety and wellbeing needs that may impact on the local community.</p>

National Principle 4 – Equity and diverse needs

Key child and youth safe requirements	Guidance/link to relevant resource
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Ensure that where appropriate families, children and communities are consulted in relation to cultural supports, accessibility requirements and gender considerations. 	<p>Review section in Ops Manual about Cultural Support with staff. Ensure staff identify and address cultural support, accessibility requirements and gender considerations where required and document this in the case plan and MA Connect or other system. Have a copy of the Reconciliation Action Plan accessible to staff so they can fulfill relevant obligations.</p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Ensure that child and youth friendly cultural support resources and guidance is sourced and provided. 	<p>Determine whether resources reflect cultural and linguistic needs of service clients. Develop/acquire culturally appropriate and linguistically diverse (in other languages) information for the service. Re-order resources where stock is low.</p> <p>Seek guidance from appropriate agencies such as SNAICC and FECCA where relevant. Ensure that there is access to interpreters for children, young people and their families where needed. Telephone Interpreter Service (TIS) https://www.tisnational.gov.au/</p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Ensure that key dates are celebrated and recognised. 	<p>Identify key days / dates relevant to your client group. Implement ways to recognise / celebrate these days / dates. Post activities on social media and Yammer to promote special occasions. A CYS Calendar of Events is available which highlights important dates. Email and ask for a copy: childsafeteam@missionaustralia.com.au</p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Ensure that children and young people who identify as LGBTQI+ are supported and provided with specialist support and information when required. 	<p>Identify opportunities for LGBTQI+ professional development for staff. Consider engaging the MA Pride in Diversity Reference Group for advice. Identify appropriate local LGBTQI+ specialist and peer led support services such as Rainbow Door or QSpace. Ensure the needs of the client are documented in MA Connect or other system.</p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Ensure that disclosures, complaints practices and processes are child-focused and inclusive and enable young people to raise concerns despite potential barriers they might face. 	<p>Utilise different tools in case management to allow young children or those with disability to discuss concerns such as with the use of drawings or play equipment to facilitate disclosures.</p>

<ul style="list-style-type: none">○ Ensure that the physical environment is made positive, safe, welcome and inclusive for all including displaying culturally appropriate symbols and objects.	<p>Identify the most suitable way to consult local Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander groups for your service for example, the Local Aboriginal Reference Group, local Aboriginal Elders and/or other appropriate local Aboriginal groups. Display the Aboriginal & Torres Strait Islander flags and display an Acknowledgement of Country to traditional owners of land. Identify other barriers to accessibility and make changes where possible. Advise your line manager about any problems with the physical environment, especially regarding safety or accessibility. Source decorations and / or artwork to display which reflects the diverse needs of the clients and is also child and youth friendly.</p>
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National Principle 5 – People working with children are suitable & supported

Key child and youth safe requirements	Guidance/link to relevant resource
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Ensure that when recruiting staff to work directly with children and young people that: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ the position description template with the Child & Youth Safe KRA is used ○ candidates are asked at least two questions from the Child & Youth Safe Question bank in the MA Interview Guide template ○ the Talent Attraction Business Partner advises the hiring manager that the WWCC/WWVP check is verified prior to offer 	<p>Source a copy of the position description template with the Child & Youth Safe KRA and the Child & Youth Safe Question bank in the MA Interview Guide template. Ensure hiring managers are aware of need to consult Talent Attraction team about these documents. Working with children(WWC)/vulnerable people (WWVP) checks (sharepoint.com) has further information. WWCC/WWVP Guidelines are also available by request to help determine if a staff member requires a Check. Ask your HR Business Partner or contact the Child & Youth Safe team on: childsafeteam@missionaustralia.com.au</p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Ensure that new staff have completed their service induction within 3 months of commencement, and this has been documented including the completion of the online modules for Keeping Children & Young People Safe at MA and Behavioural Standards for Keeping Children & Young People Safe Policy 	<p>Arrange outstanding inductions for staff. Check LMS records to confirm staff have completed relevant CYS modules.</p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Ensure that any students or vocational placements or volunteers who work directly with children and young people: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ are interviewed using at least two child & youth safe questions to assess suitability ○ have their WWCC/WWVP check verified prior to engagement ○ are provided with supervision at least monthly and the records kept on the supervisee’s file ○ have their completion of service induction completed within required timeframes and been documented 	<p>Review recruitment interview processes for service. Arrange outstanding supervisions for staff according to MA Supervision Policy. Schedule staff file audits on a regular basis. Refer to the MA Volunteer Handbook and the MA Student Placement Welcome Handbook. Arrange outstanding inductions for staff.</p>

National Principle 6 – Child focused complaints systems

Key child and youth safe requirements	Guidance/link to relevant resource
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Ensure that when children and young people make complaints they are: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Responded to within 10 days ○ Documented in MA Connect or the complaints register 	<p>Update MA Connect and service Complaints Register where applicable. Ensure staff understand the requirement to record complaints. For further information on MA Connect go to MA Connect Central. Review the Complaints, Compliments and Feedback Policy.</p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Ensure all policies and procedures regarding allegations against staff members towards children and young people are understood and followed. 	<p>In a staff meeting review the MA Behavioural Standards for Keeping Children and Young People Safe Policy & the MA Responding to Concerns or Allegations of Misconduct toward Children & Young People Policy and Procedure. Consider professional learning opportunities by contacting the National Child & Youth Safe Lead.</p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Ensure children and young people are informed of the complaints process and the TELL US posters and postcards are always available and on display. 	<p>Display posters and postcards appropriately. Provide receptacle for postcards to be returned.</p> <p>Re-order postcards and posters where stock is low.</p>

National Principle 7 – Staff & volunteer training & development

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Ensure that child and youth safe policies, procedures and practices are: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ a standing agenda item in monthly team meetings ○ discussed in monthly management meetings 	<p>Add “Child and Youth Safety” to team meeting agendas. Allocate responsibility to individual staff members for leading discussion of child and youth safe practice topics at team meetings. Ensure all discussions are minuted and actions are followed up. Utilise the MA CYS National Principles for Child Safe Organisations Factsheets and access the CYS toolbox of case studies to work through in a team meeting. Contact the Child & Youth Safe team for a copy of these resources: childsafeteam@missionaustralia.com.au</p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Ensure that discussions on child & youth safety are held within professional supervision sessions for all staff. 	<p>Include child and youth safe practice as a discussion item in regular supervision meetings. Document discussion in the supervisee’s file.</p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Ensure that staff learning and development requirements in relation to child and youth safe practice (including responding to risk of harm and managing allegations of misconduct by staff towards children & young people) are discussed and included in staff’s annual Individual Development Plan. 	<p>Include staff learning and development needs about child and youth safe practice in annual Individual Development Plans. Refer to the National CYS Professional Development Framework to identify specific requirements. Access the CYS Training & Resource Guide for external training options. Speak with the Child & Youth Safe team for further information about these resources: childsafeteam@missionaustralia.com.au</p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Ensure training registers are kept reflecting what professional development sessions individual staff have attended. 	<p>Use the CFCS – Training and Professional Development Register to record all training that isn’t LMS training on this register. CFCS - Training and Professional Development Register (Non LMS).xlsx (sharepoint.com)</p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Ensure staff engage with updates regarding child youth safe practice by: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ following the child youth safe policy hub on the MA SharePoint site ○ becoming a member of the Child & Youth Safe Yammer team page ○ reading the quarterly Child & Youth Safe team newsletter ○ celebrating National Child Protection Week 	<p>Link to the Yammer Child & Youth Safe team page Yammer - Child & Youth Safe and request membership. Link to the Child & Youth Safe policy hub and follow the page Child & Youth Safe (sharepoint.com). The quarterly Child & Youth Safe newsletter will be published on the Yammer page. Create local initiatives to celebrate National Child Protection Week in September each year using the resources available through NAPCAN National Child Protection Week - NAPCAN.</p>

National Principle 8 – Online & physical environments

Key child and youth safe requirements	Guidance/link to relevant resource
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Ensure that when engaging contractors the Child and Youth Safe Protocols for Contractors is followed and signed 	<p>Allocate a MA employee to supervise the contractor to ensure contractors are not left on their own with children or young people and document this action. Verify the contractor’s WWCC/WWVP (if the contractor was required to have a WWCC/WWVP as they are working directly with children and young people accessing your service). <i>Source the Child and Youth Safe Protocols for Contractors.</i> Review contractor management processes in the service. Ensure staff are aware of the requirements for induction and supervision of contractors on sites where children and young people are present.</p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Ensure if you manage an event or organised an activity, that you: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ complete the associated risk assessment ○ implement any required risk management strategies, and ○ document the assessment and actions 	<p>Review and implement processes for managing an event with reference to the MA Practice Guideline Keeping Children and Young People Safe at Mission Australia Events and Activities.</p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Ensure if your service provides a crèche for parents/carers that you complete and keep a risk assessment on file prior to any new block of care 	<p>Complete a Risk Assessment Form – Children in the Workplace . Review and implement guidelines for providing a crèche with reference to the MA Practice Guideline Providing Care for Children of Clients in the Workplace.</p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Ensure if children or young people are accessing electronic equipment while on site at your program or service that appropriate measures are put in place to ensure their online safety (eg appropriate supervision, firewalls and filters in place etc) 	<p>Create opportunities to have discussions with children, young people and their families about online risks to their safety. Access resources from the e-Safety Commissioner on online grooming, cyber bullying and sexting and make available to children, young people and their families as applicable. Report any online abuse to the e-Safety Commissioner if issues arise. Refer to the MA Practice Guidelines on the Child & Youth Safe policy hub to assist with sexting and online pornography incidents. Child & Youth Safe (sharepoint.com)</p>

National Principle 9 – Ongoing review & continuous improvement

Key child and youth safe requirements	Guidance/link to relevant resource
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Ensure that feedback on improvements, needs of staff and updates to child safe practice is shared with networks, the CYS Clinical & Care Committee, the Child and Youth Safe Lead and Advocate as required 	<p>Set up a local process with your team for identifying new items for inclusion in National CYS Work Plan. Communicate any items for inclusion to National Child and Youth Safe Lead. The Child & Youth Safe team can be contacted on childsafeteam@missionaustralia.com.au.</p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Ensure that if any external accreditation process is required for your service or program that information on child & youth safe practice is included where required and that the National Child & Youth Safe Lead is invited to review the submission and participates as appropriate 	<p>Contact your Practice Quality Business Partner who can assist in coordination of accreditation processes on practicequality@missionaustralia.com.au.</p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Ensure that child & youth specific services partake in the annual Quality Assurance Framework Child & Youth Checklist and action any requirements as an outcome of the process and in accordance with these Evidentiary Guidelines 	<p>For any changes to the Evidentiary Guidelines for National Principles for Child Safe Organisations or general child & youth safe support, speak with the National Child & Youth Safe Lead or contact your Practice Quality Business Partner who manages the Quality Assurance Framework on practicequality@missionaustralia.com.au.</p>

National Principle 10 – Child safe policies and procedures

Key child and youth safe requirements	Guidance/link to relevant resource
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Ensure that all child safe policies and procedures found on the Child & Youth Safe Internal Policy Hub are read and understood by all staff 	<p>All policies and procedures are available on the Child & Youth Safe page of the Internal Policy Hub Child & Youth Safe (sharepoint.com). Reference the National CYS Professional Development Framework to determine how regularly staff need to be trained in responding to risk of harm and managing allegations of misconduct by staff towards children and young people.</p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Ensure that where there is a risk of harm concern identified, the worker reports the concern to a manager and a decision is made whether the concern warrants external reporting to the child protection authority and reporting obligations are fulfilled 	<p>Refer to the MA Recognising and Responding to Risk of Harm – Children & Young People Policy and Procedure. Where a child or young person disclosed abuse or neglect, staff should document what the child or young person said using their exact words as much as possible and as soon as possible after the disclosure and refer to the MA Managing a disclosure or abuse or neglect by a child or young person – Practice Guideline. Also consider seeking the advice of the National Child & Youth Safe Lead for further support when complex concerns arise.</p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Ensure that when there is a risk of harm concern that requires reporting to the child protection authority that this is recorded in Riskware and on the MA Connect ROH Tab (or other client system where relevant) 	<p>Refer to the MA Recognising and Responding to Risk of Harm – Children & Young People Policy and Procedure. Instructions for how to record in Riskware and MA Connect are available on SharePoint Riskware (sharepoint.com) and MA Connect Central - Home (sharepoint.com) Refer to the Enterprise Incident Management Policy and Procedures for further information Risk & Incident Management (sharepoint.com).</p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Ensure staff are familiar with the content within the Behavioural Standards for Keeping Children & Young People Safe Policy and adhere to professional behaviour at all times 	<p>The MA Behavioural Standards for Keeping Children and Young People Safe Policy clearly outlines professional standards of behaviour expected of all employees. Take time in team meetings to review this policy regularly by considering scenarios that may occur which could create challenges for staff and develop strategies to address any concerns.</p>

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Ensure staff are aware of their obligations to record and escalate any concerns or allegations of misconduct or reportable conduct towards children and young people to their manager immediately and that appropriate escalation occurs to respond 	<p>Refer to the MA Responding to Concerns or Allegations of Misconduct toward Children & Young People Policy and Procedure. Always seek advice from the National Child & Youth Safe Lead in response to any concerns regarding allegations against employees towards children and young people.</p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Ensure that any concerns regarding allegations of inappropriate worker conduct towards children and young people that meet the threshold for an Operational Incident (medium, high or critical) are recorded in Riskware 	<p>Refer to the MA Responding to Concerns or Allegations of Misconduct toward Children & Young People Policy and Procedure. Refer to the Enterprise Incident Management Policy and Procedures for further information. Risk & Incident Management (sharepoint.com)</p>

Optional Progress Checklist Tool

Key child and youth safe requirements	Site check	Follow up required?	Assistance from CYS Team?
	Y/N or any notes	Specify	Y/N send to CYS team
National Principle 1 – Leadership, Governance & Culture			
National Principle 2 – Children & Young People’s rights and participation			
National Principle 3 – Family & Community involvement			
National Principle 4 – Equity & diverse needs			
National Principle 5 – People working with children are suitable & supported			
National Principle 6 – Child focused complaints systems			
National Principle 7 – Staff and volunteer training & development			
National Principle 8 – Online & physical environments			
National Principle 9 – Ongoing review & continuous improvement			
National Principle 10 – Child safe policies and procedures			