



Defence Youth Safety Framework

Defence Youth Safety Code of Conduct Guide

Introduction

Effective youth safety risk management requires attention to all three key organisational elements - our culture, our people and the environment.

The focus of people risk management action is to ensure all adults who interact with young people under the age of 18:

- have been assessed as suitable to do so,
- understand the importance of youth safety,
- are aware of the Defence Youth Safety Framework (DYSF),
- are trained to minimise any risk of abuse or neglect, and
- agree to adhere to a Code of Conduct.

Codes of Conduct that articulate clear expectations of behaviour and boundaries for interaction are critical components of Defence Youth Safety Risk Management.

Purpose of the Guide

The Code of Conduct Guide provides direction on the minimum mandatory requirements for both adult and young persons youth safety codes of conduct. The guide can be used either to develop a new, or review an extant, code of conduct.

In addition to outlining expected standards of behaviour between adults and young people, and between young people and other young people, including online conduct, codes of conduct can be used to:

- inform potential workers about expectations of behaviour through inclusion in employment/engagement advertisements and subsequent contracts to ensure compliance;
- anchor youth safety training;
- inform parents/carers about what behaviour they can expect from the organisation's leadership, staff and volunteers; and
- support and inform organisational protocols and reporting procedures should breaches of the code be suspected or identified.

Minimum Mandatory Requirements

All Codes of Conduct **must**:

- Have two parts:
 - Part A – Behaviour Statement
 - Part B – Individual Declaration
- Be reviewed for usability and application at least annually

Guide Structure

For ease of use the Guide:

- is divided into two sections, one each for Adult Code of Conduct minimum mandatory requirements and Youth Code of Conduct minimum mandatory requirements
- has two Annexes:
 - Annex A – Example Adult Code of Conduct
 - Annex B – Example Youth Code of Conduct





Adult Code of Conduct – Minimum Mandatory Requirements

Part A

All adult codes of conduct must include a requirement for the adult to:

- conduct him/herself in a manner consistent with the Defence youth safety commitment statement;
- take all reasonable steps to ensure that young people are protected from any form of sexual, physical or psychological harm, or indecent and inappropriate conduct including sexual abuse or grooming for the intent of adult sexual gratification;
- report promptly all incidents, allegations or suspicions of any form of misconduct or abuse towards young people in accordance with relevant Defence and ADF Cadet Policies;
- ensure, whenever possible, that young people are not left alone with an adult;
- not sleep in close proximity to young people, UNLESS the Commander/Manager/Supervisor has provided approval and it is necessary and appropriate, having regard to the young people's safety and welfare;
- ensure that all interactions with young people are for the sole purpose of executing authorised activities or training outcomes both on and off duty;
- treat everyone with respect regardless of their age, gender, ability, race, cultural background, religious beliefs or sexual identity;
- not use or disclose personal information concerning a young person UNLESS it is required or authorised by law in circumstances, such as mandatory child reporting requirements, or where it is necessary and appropriate in order to respond to serious misconduct, or where it is necessary to lessen or prevent a serious threat to the health and safety of the youth; and
- obtain the informed consent of a young person and their parent/guardian in connection with the taking of imagery of the young person by photograph or film, and create only imagery that depicts the young person in an appropriate manner.

Part B

All adult code of conduct declarations must include the minimum statements below and must be signed by both the individual and an authorised adult witness:

1. I have read and acknowledge my understanding of the Defence Youth Safety Framework and (insert title) Code of Conduct. By signing the declaration, I acknowledge that I understand my personal responsibilities to abide by the Code at all times to protect myself and the young people with whom I come into contact through my work for or involvement with Defence.
2. By signing, I affirm that I will uphold the highest standards of moral and ethical behaviour and demonstrate the Defence values and will NOT be the perpetrator of any form of abuse or duress towards a young person.
3. I understand by signing that failure to comply with the Code of Conduct may result in, where applicable:
 - Administrative or disciplinary action under the Defence Force Discipline Act 1982 for Defence members;
 - Administrative or disciplinary action under the Public Service Act 1999 for Defence APS employees;
 - Cancellation of my acceptance or status as a volunteer, or the imposition of a sanction as a volunteer;
 - A report being made to the police and/or relevant child protection authority; and/or
 - Criminal or civil action being taken against me..





Youth Code of Conduct Minimum Mandatory Requirements

Part A

All youth codes of conduct are to include a requirement for the young person to:

- refrain from engagement or involvement in any form of inappropriate, indecent or harmful behaviour, including peer pressure, bullying (physical, emotional, verbal or sexual abuse and grooming behaviours) or forcing others to do something they do not want to do;
- refrain from any form of bullying behaviour, bad language, name calling, and racist or hurtful remarks, in person or through the use of technologies like chat-rooms, texting and social media;
- treat everyone with respect regardless of their age, gender, ability, race, cultural background, religious beliefs or sexual identity;
- report inappropriate behaviour or unsafe situations to an adult as soon as practicable; and
- behave appropriately and listen to all instructions from my commanders/ managers/ supervisors/ instructors.

Part B

All youth code of conduct declarations must include the minimum statements below and must be signed by both the young person and their parent or guardian (unless prior parental / guardian consent has been provided e.g. parental consent to enlist in the ADF):

1. I have read the (insert title) Code of Conduct and understand my personal responsibilities to follow the Code at all times.
2. By signing the declaration I understand that any breach of the Code or other misbehaviour will be addressed by the immediate supervising staff and will be reported to the lead supervising staff.
3. I understand by signing with my parent/guardian that my parent/guardian may be notified of any incident or supervisor concerns, especially if my personal safety and wellbeing is at risk.
4. I understand that persistent misbehaviour will result in my removal from current Defence Youth Activity and possible exclusion from future Defence Youth Activities.





Annex A: Example Adult Code of Conduct

Behaviour Statement

I _____ (name) agree to abide by the following Code of Conduct which is the minimum standard of behaviour expected of me in addition to the General Code of Conduct.

1. I will conduct myself in a manner consistent with the Defence youth safety commitment statement.
2. I will take all reasonable steps to ensure, that youth are protected from any form of, sexual, physical or psychological harm, or indecent and inappropriate conduct. This includes sexual abuse or grooming for the intent of adult sexual gratification.
3. I will promptly report all incidents, allegations or suspicions of any form of misconduct or abuse towards youth in accordance with relevant Defence and ADF Cadet Policies.
4. I will ensure, whenever possible, that youth are not left alone with an adult – a situation that could expose the young person to unnecessary risk of harm.
5. I will not sleep in close proximity to young people, UNLESS the Commander/Manager/Supervisor has provided approval and it is necessary and appropriate, having regard to the young people's safety and welfare.
6. I will ensure that all interactions with youth are for the sole purpose of executing authorised activities or training outcomes both on and off duty.
7. I will treat everyone with respect regardless of their age, gender, ability, race, cultural background, religious beliefs or sexual identity.
8. I will only use or disclose personal information concerning a young person when required or authorised by law, such as in accordance with mandatory child reporting requirements, where it is necessary and appropriate in order to respond to serious misconduct, or where it is necessary to lessen or prevent a serious threat to the health and safety of the youth.
9. I will obtain the informed consent of a young person and their parent/guardian in connection with the taking of imagery of the young person, and create only imagery that depicts the young person in an appropriate manner.
10. I will take all reasonably practicable steps to safeguard any young person in immediate danger.
11. I will be professional at all times and not abuse my position of power and authority towards young people.
12. I will NOT condone or participate in any youth related activity which is illegal, inappropriate, unsafe or abusive.

Declaration

1. I have read and acknowledge my understanding of the Defence Youth Safety Framework and (insert title) Code of Conduct. By signing the declaration, I acknowledge that I understand my personal responsibilities to abide by the Code at all times to protect myself and the young people with whom I come into contact through my work for or involvement with Defence.
2. By signing, I affirm that I will uphold the highest standards of moral and ethical behaviour demonstrate the Defence values and will NOT be the perpetrator of any form of abuse or duress towards a young person.
3. I understand by signing, that failure to comply with the Code of Conduct may result in, where applicable:
 - ▶ Administrative or disciplinary action under the Defence Force Discipline Act 1982 for Defence members;
 - ▶ Administrative or disciplinary action under the Public Service Act 1999 for Defence APS employees;
 - ▶ Cancellation of by acceptance or status as a volunteer, or the imposition of a sanction as a volunteer; and/or
 - ▶ Criminal or civil actions being taken against me.





Annex B: Example Youth Code of Conduct

Behaviour Statement

I _____ (name) agree to abide by the following General Code of Conduct which is the minimum standard of behaviour expected of me.

1. I will not engage or be involved in any form of inappropriate, indecent or harmful behaviour, including peer pressure, bullying (physical, emotional, verbal or sexual abuse and grooming behaviours) or forcing others to do something they do not want to do.
2. I will refrain from any form of bullying behaviour, bad language, name calling, and racist or hurtful remarks, in person or through the use of technologies like chat-rooms, texting and social media.
3. I will report inappropriate behaviour or unsafe situations to an adult as soon as practicable.
4. I will treat everyone with respect regardless of their age, gender, ability, race, cultural background, religious beliefs or sexual identity.
5. I will behave appropriately and listen to all instructions from my commanders/managers/supervisors/instructors.
6. I will be honest and act with integrity and will give everyone a fair go.
7. I will be supportive to my peers and other team members and offer help when required.
8. I will behave appropriately, listen attentively and abide by the rules. I will respect decisions of the chain of command.
9. I will give my best effort at all times and give everyone equal opportunity to participate.
10. I will follow all Australian Defence Force and Cadet Force policies, instructions, directives, standing orders, and procedures where it applies.

Declaration

1. I have read the (insert title) Code of Conduct and understand my personal responsibilities to follow the guidelines at all times.
2. By signing the declaration I understand that breach of the Code of conduct or other misbehaviour will be addressed by the immediate supervising staff and will be reported to the lead supervising staff.
3. I understand by signing with my parent/guardian that my parent/guardian may be notified of any incident or supervisor concerns, especially if my personal safety and wellbeing is at risk.
4. I understand that persistent misbehaviour will result in my removal from current Defence Youth Activity and possible exclusion from future Defence Youth Activities.

