

The Y

Our Safeguarding Children and Young People

National Policy Framework

Edition 4

At the Y we believe every child and young person has the right to feel safe and be safe in every Y environment. This belief shapes how we lead, how we make decisions and how we show up every day. We hold ourselves to a higher standard, one where safety is embedded in our values, our behaviours and our expectations of one another. We choose courage over comfort, early action over silence, and accountability over reputation. Safeguarding at the Y is not something we do. It is who we are, and it is the standard by which we measure ourselves.

1. Our Commitment to Child Safety at the Y

At the Y, the safety and wellbeing of children and young people are our highest priority. Across all Y programs, services and environments, the safety, rights and best interests of children and young people are the paramount consideration. We are committed to creating environments where children and young people are safe, feel safe and can thrive.

Paramount consideration means that in all organisational decisions, governance oversight, operational practices, workforce actions, service delivery and responses that may affect children and young people, their safety, wellbeing and best interests are prioritised above all other considerations, including operational, commercial, reputational or financial factors. Where there is a conflict between a child or young person's safety and wellbeing and any other organisational consideration, the child or young person's safety and wellbeing must prevail. This includes protecting children and young people from physical, emotional, psychological, cultural and online harm.

Every child and young person has the right to feel safe, be safe, be heard, be respected and participate in environments free from harm, abuse, discrimination and racism. We have zero tolerance for child abuse, harm, racism, discrimination or behaviours that place children and young people at risk.

The Y recognises that harm can occur where unsafe organisational cultures, power imbalances, poor supervision, silencing of concerns or failures to act exist. Safeguarding therefore requires proactive leadership, accountability and continuous reflection across all levels of the organisation.

In all Y services, and wherever the Y engages with children and young people, safeguarding is a core governance, leadership and operational responsibility. Children, young people, families and communities place trust in us every day, and we have a clear responsibility to prevent harm, respond to concerns, and create environments where children and young people are safe and feel safe.

We are committed to creating environments that are safe, inclusive and culturally safe, where the diverse needs, identities and experiences of children and young people are recognised and respected, including for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children and young people. We know children and young people thrive when they are safe, seen, included and supported to grow.

2. Why Child Safety Matters

Our commitment to safeguarding is grounded in why child safety matters, for children and young people, for families and communities, and for the trust placed in the Y.

Child safety matters because every child and young person has the right to protection from harm and abuse, to develop to their full potential, and to have their best interests upheld, as recognised in the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child.

For children and young people, feeling safe and being safe supports a sense of belonging, encourages participation, and helps build confidence and healthy development. Child safe environments enable children and young people to build positive relationships, express their views, be heard and taken seriously, develop skills and grow in ways that respect their identity, culture and lived experience.

For the Y, child safety is central to the trust placed in us by children, families and communities. Safeguarding is how we uphold that trust through leadership, culture, systems and everyday practices that prevent harm and abuse, respond to concerns, and create places where children and young people feel safe and are safe.

The Y is committed to trauma-informed approaches that recognise the impact of trauma on children and young people and prioritise emotional safety, trust, empowerment and relational wellbeing.

3. Purpose and Role of this Policy Framework

3.1 Purpose

This document establishes the Y's shared national safeguarding commitment and mandatory minimum expectations. It is given effect through locally compliant safeguarding policies, procedures and systems that reflect applicable state and territory legislation and local governance and operating contexts. Local safeguarding policies, procedures and systems will necessarily include additional detail and prescriptive requirements that are not set out in this national framework.

In this Policy Framework:

- Safeguarding refers to the systems, culture and practices used to prevent harm and respond to concerns.
- Child safety refers to the lived experience of children and young people being safe and feeling safe.

3.2 Governing Nature, Role and Authority

This is a governing policy framework, not an operational procedure or stand-alone local compliance document. It is supported by the National Safe Behaviours Code of Conduct, mandatory safeguarding standards and locally compliant policies, procedures and systems that give effect to its requirements in practice. The framework is aligned to the National Principles for Child Safe Organisations and is intended to support consistent implementation of applicable state and territory child safe standards and related schemes across the Y. It sets the Y's mandatory minimum expectations for safeguarding, while Member Associations remain responsible for the operational controls, decision pathways and procedures needed to implement it in their local context.

The role of this Policy Framework is to:

- establish the Y's national safeguarding position and mandatory minimum expectations;
- define the mandatory safeguarding requirement areas to be addressed across the Y; and
- provide the governance framework within which safeguarding is implemented across the Y.

3.3 Application Across the Y

This Policy Framework applies across all Member Associations. Across the Y, safeguarding is given effect through local policies, procedures and systems that meet or exceed the mandatory minimum expectations set out in this framework and comply with applicable legislation. Member Associations remain responsible for determining the operational controls, decision pathways and procedures required to implement those expectations locally.

Local policies, procedures and systems will reflect jurisdiction-specific legislation, regulatory requirements, sector obligations, operational settings, terminology, thresholds, timeframes and reporting pathways. This local variation is a necessary part of implementation and must not reduce the mandatory minimum expectations set by this framework.

Local policies, procedures and systems may appropriately reflect jurisdiction-specific language, including the use of 'child safety', where this best aligns with legislative, regulatory or operational context, while maintaining the intent and mandatory minimum expectations of this framework.

Where local law or regulation imposes a higher safeguarding requirement than this Policy Framework, that requirement must be met. Where the Y sets a higher safeguarding standard, that standard must also be met.

3.4 How this Framework is Used

This framework is intended to support efficient local policy development and implementation. Relevant sections can be adopted, embedded or adapted within existing or revised local policies, procedures and systems to reduce duplication and support efficient implementation.

Alignment with this framework is required, but exact replication is not. Existing local policies, procedures and systems can continue to operate where they give effect to the mandatory minimum expectations set out in this framework and comply with applicable legislation, local governance arrangements and operational requirements. Local implementation may and should vary where needed to reflect jurisdictional requirements, service settings and operational realities, provided the mandatory minimum expectations are maintained.

3.5 Expectations of Y People

For Y People, this Policy Framework sets out the minimum behaviours, responsibilities and actions required to:

- prevent harm;
- speak up early; and
- respond safely, lawfully and in the best interests of children and young people.

4. How the Y Safeguarding System Fits Together

The Y's safeguarding system reflects a shared national commitment and is implemented through Member Association governance, policies, procedures and systems. This framework sets the Y's national safeguarding commitment and mandatory minimum expectations, while Member Associations give effect to those expectations within their own legal, governance and operating contexts.

The relationship between the National Safeguarding Policy Framework, the National Safe Behaviours Code of Conduct and local policies, procedures and systems is illustrated below.

4.1 National Framework and Custodian

- **National Safeguarding Policy Framework (this document):**
Establishes the Y's shared national safeguarding commitment, mandatory minimum expectations and governance benchmark. The framework is aligned to the National Principles for Child Safe Organisations and is intended to support consistent implementation of applicable state and territory child safe standards and related schemes across the Y.
- **National Safe Behaviours Code of Conduct:**
Sets mandatory expected and prohibited behaviours for all Y People and supports a consistent child safe culture across the Y.

Together, these instruments establish the Y's safeguarding architecture across national governance and local implementation.

4.2 Local Implementation and Operational Leadership

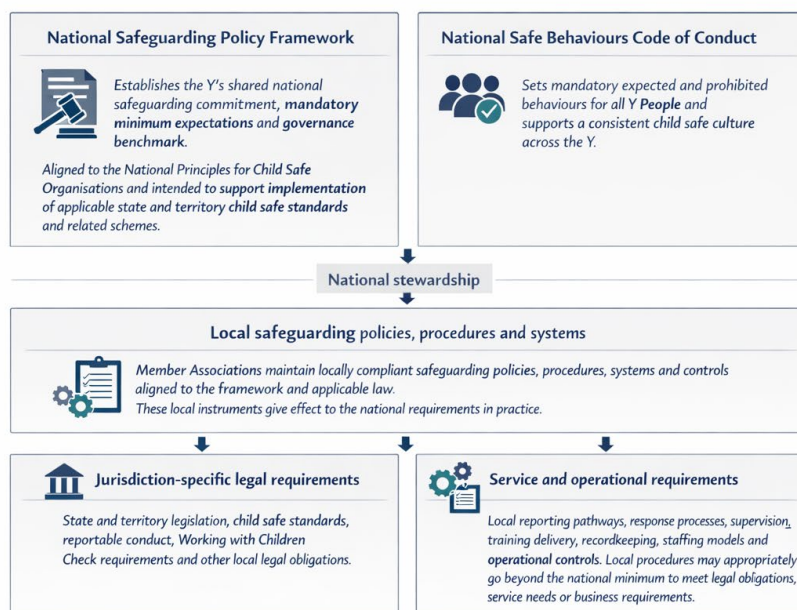
- **Local safeguarding policies, procedures and systems:**
Member Associations maintain locally compliant safeguarding policies, procedures, systems and controls aligned to this framework and applicable law. These local arrangements give effect to the national requirements in practice.
- **Local procedures and controls:**
These local arrangements set out jurisdiction-specific, service-specific and operational requirements, including reporting pathways, response processes, training delivery, supervision arrangements, recordkeeping and other controls needed to support child safe practice. They may appropriately go beyond the national minimum to meet legal obligations, service needs or operational requirements.

4.3 National Commitment and Local Leadership

Together, the National Safeguarding Policy Framework, the National Safe Behaviours Code of Conduct and local policies, procedures and systems express the Y's shared safeguarding commitment through national custodianship and local leadership. This structure supports a consistent national baseline while enabling Member Associations to implement safeguarding through locally compliant arrangements.

How the Y Safeguarding System Fits Together

Shared national commitment, minimum expectations, and local implementation



Together, these instruments express the Y's shared safeguarding commitment through national stewardship and local leadership.

5. Children's Rights and Child Safe Culture

This Policy Framework is grounded in the rights of children and young people as recognised in the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child, including the rights to safety, dignity, participation and protection. These rights are reflected in, and given effect through, Australian child safety, child protection and child safe organisation laws, standards and regulatory frameworks across Commonwealth, state and territory jurisdictions.

At the Y, safeguarding is inseparable from organisational culture. Child safe cultures are those where the safety and wellbeing of children and young people shape everyday decisions and interactions, where everyone understands their role and responsibilities, expected behaviours are clear, and practice consistently reflects policy. In these environments, diversity is respected, concerns are recognised early, taken seriously and acted on, and people are supported and expected to speak up.

Child safe cultures are actively created and sustained through leadership, supervision, training, reflection and accountability. They are evident when safeguarding is discussed openly, when questions and challenge are welcomed, and when learning from concerns, feedback and experience is used to strengthen practice.

We involve children and young people in age-appropriate and inclusive ways in the design, review and improvement of safeguarding approaches, information, complaint pathways and practices that affect them.

Silencing, minimising or failing to appropriately respond to safeguarding concerns is inconsistent with child safe culture and the Y's safeguarding expectations.

We recognise that children and young people experience safety differently, including in ways shaped by their identity, culture and lived experience. Their voices, experiences and perspectives are essential to shaping environments where they feel safe and are safe.

We listen to children and young people, learn from them, and ensure safeguarding is done with them, not simply for them.

6. Scope and Application

This Policy Framework applies to Y Australia, all Member Associations and entities, and all Y People, including Board Directors, employees, volunteers, contractors, consultants and students on placement.

It applies across all programs, services, activities, facilities, community settings and digital or online environments operated by or on behalf of the Y. This includes excursions, camps, residential or overnight programs, travel, transport, events, conferences, digital engagement and third-party venues used for Y activities.

Application and local implementation requirements are set out in Section 3.4 and apply to all Member Associations.

7. Safeguarding and Adults at Risk

This Policy Framework is primarily focused on safeguarding children and young people. This section explains how safeguarding principles inform practice where the Y engages with adults at risk.

The safeguarding principles set out in this Policy Framework will be applied to support safe, respectful and inclusive practice in relation to adults at risk. Where laws, regulations or regulatory frameworks apply differently to adults at risk, those requirements must be met.

This Policy Framework does not prescribe operational procedures for safeguarding adults at risk. Where Member Associations engage with adults at risk, they must determine when adult safeguarding principles are engaged and implement local policies and procedures that comply with applicable laws, regulatory frameworks and sector standards in their jurisdiction and service settings, while applying the safeguarding principles set out in this Policy Framework.

This section does not create additional legal obligations in relation to adults at risk but establishes safeguarding principles that inform local approaches.

8. National Safeguarding Requirement Areas

The safeguarding requirements below define the mandatory areas that must be addressed through local policies, procedures and systems. They do not prescribe how Member Associations must meet jurisdiction-specific legislative, regulatory or contractual requirements.

These areas establish the Y's mandatory minimum expectations for preventing harm, identifying concerns early and supporting timely, child-centred responses.

Member Associations remain responsible for determining the local methods, thresholds, timeframes, decision pathways and operational controls needed to implement these areas in accordance with applicable law.

8.1 Leadership, Governance and Child Safe Culture

Why this matters

Strong leadership, governance and culture are essential to preventing harm and embedding safeguarding as a shared organisational responsibility.

Requirements

- Boards and Executive Leaders must ensure that safeguarding is embedded in organisational governance, strategy, planning, risk management and decision-making.
- Boards and governing bodies must ensure oversight of safeguarding risks, incidents, complaints, compliance and continuous improvement actions.
- Boards and governing bodies must receive regular reporting on safeguarding risks, incidents, complaints, themes, assurance activities and continuous improvement actions.
- Safeguarding assurance mechanisms, including audits, reviews and risk monitoring processes, must be implemented to assess safeguarding effectiveness.
- Boards and executives must ensure safeguarding roles, responsibilities, delegations and reporting lines are clearly defined, documented and understood.

- Clear authority, capability and resources must be in place to support effective safeguarding.
- Leaders must model child safe behaviours and actively foster cultures of accountability, transparency, inclusion and speaking up.
- Partner organisations, contractors and third parties engaged by the Y must meet safeguarding expectations relevant to their role or service.

8.2 Children and Young People's Rights, Voice and Participation

Why this matters

Safeguarding is stronger when children and young people understand their rights, feel safe to speak up, and trust they will be heard and responded to.

Requirements

- Children and young people must be supported to understand their rights, recognise safe and unsafe behaviour, raise concerns, make complaints and seek help.
- Information about rights, safety and complaints processes must be age-appropriate, accessible and culturally responsive.
- Children and young people must be listened to, respected and supported to participate meaningfully in decisions that affect them in ways that are inclusive, age-appropriate and responsive to their needs.
- Complaint and feedback pathways must be child-friendly, accessible, culturally responsive and available in ways that reflect children and young people's age, communication needs, language, culture and context.
- Children and young people must be protected from victimisation, blame or negative consequences for raising concerns.
- Communication supports and reasonable adjustments must be provided to enable participation for children and young people with disability, neurodivergence or communication differences.
- Barriers to participation and speaking up, including disability, language, cultural or accessibility barriers, must be identified and reduced.
- Responses must prioritise dignity, wellbeing and best interests.

8.3 Families, Communities and Partnerships

Why this matters

Safeguarding is strengthened through trusted relationships, transparency and shared responsibility with families, communities and partners.

Requirements

- Families and communities must be engaged openly, respectfully and in culturally responsive and accessible ways.
- Safeguarding expectations, standards and processes must be clearly communicated.
- Families must be supported to raise concerns and participate in matters affecting the safety and wellbeing of children and young people.
- Families must be informed of concerns, incidents or actions affecting the safety or wellbeing of a child or young person, unless doing so would be unlawful, compromise an investigation, breach privacy or procedural fairness obligations, or place a child or young person at greater risk.
- Partnerships with community organisations, regulators and external agencies must support prevention, early intervention and effective response pathways.
- Safeguarding expectations must be embedded in contracts, partnership arrangements and third-party engagements involving contact with children and young people.

8.4 Equity, Inclusion and Cultural Safety

Why this matters

Children and young people experience safety differently. Safeguarding must recognise diversity, address inequality and respond to differing risks.

Requirements

- Cultural safety for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children and young people must be actively promoted, including respect for identity, family, community, culture, Country and connection.
- Safeguarding systems and practices must identify and reduce barriers to safety, participation and speaking up, including barriers related to disability, culture, language, racism, discrimination, trauma, gender, sexuality, neurodivergence or communication needs.
- Discrimination, exclusion, bullying, racism and other harmful behaviour must be actively prevented, identified and addressed.
- Reasonable adjustments, accessible information and communication supports must be provided to support inclusion and participation.

8.5 Recruitment, Screening and Workforce Suitability

Why this matters

Safe organisations depend on suitable, capable and supported people.

Requirements

- Best-practice recruitment, screening and suitability assessment processes must be applied.
- Recruitment and engagement processes for child-related roles must include appropriate role design, safeguarding-related interview questions, identity checks, referee checks, required working with children or vulnerable people screening, and assessment of suitability to work with children and young people.
- Relevant Working with Children Checks, registrations, police checks or equivalent screening requirements must be met, monitored and maintained in accordance with applicable law.
- People assessed as prohibited, unsuitable or presenting unacceptable risk must not be engaged in child-related roles.
- Safeguarding expectations, codes of conduct and safe behaviours must be clearly communicated at recruitment and reinforced at commencement.
- Ongoing suitability to work with children and young people must be monitored through supervision, performance processes and timely response to concerns about behaviour, boundaries or fitness for child-related work.
- Concerns about conduct, suitability or ongoing fitness for child-related work must be assessed and responded to appropriately.

8.6 Training, Knowledge and Confidence

Why this matters

Prevention depends on people having the knowledge, skills and confidence to recognise concerns and act early.

Requirements

- Regular safeguarding induction and refresher training must be provided to Y People.
- Training must be appropriate to role, level of contact with children and young people, authority, risk and responsibility.
- Training must equip Y People to recognise indicators of harm, abuse, neglect, grooming, exploitation, peer-to-peer harm and unsafe organisational practice, and to report, escalate and respond safely.
- Leaders and managers must be equipped to supervise safeguarding practice, respond to concerns, manage conflicts of interest and support a speak-up culture.
- Expected behaviours, professional boundaries and reporting obligations in this framework and the National Safe Behaviours Code of Conduct must be clearly understood.
- Speaking up, seeking advice and escalating concerns must be encouraged and supported.

- Additional, role-specific safeguarding training must be provided based on role, risk and responsibility.

8.7 Reporting, Response and Safeguarding Concerns

Why this matters

Timely, fair and child-centred responses are essential to protecting children and young people and maintaining trust.

Requirements

- Reporting processes must be accessible, child-focused and support children and young people to raise concerns safely.
- Concerns, reports, suspicions, allegations, disclosures and breaches of expected behaviour must be taken seriously and responded to promptly, safely, lawfully and in a child-centred way.
- Immediate safety and wellbeing must be prioritised in line with paramount consideration.
- The protection of children and young people must take priority over reputational considerations.
- Responses must be timely, child-centred, trauma-informed and procedurally fair.
- All statutory reporting and notification obligations must be met in accordance with applicable law and local procedures.
- No internal assessment, approval process or reporting line may prevent or delay a person from making a report to external authorities where required or reasonably suspected.
- Accurate records of concerns, actions and outcomes must be maintained.
- Children and young people affected by concerns or incidents, including peer-to-peer harm, must be supported in ways that are responsive to their safety, wellbeing and rights.
- Responses to peer-to-peer harm, including bullying, harassment, harmful sexual behaviour, coercion, discrimination and abuse, must be developmentally informed, proportionate and prioritise the safety, wellbeing and rights of all children involved.
- Alternative escalation pathways must be available where concerns involve leadership, conflicts of interest or failures to appropriately respond.
- Nothing in this Policy Framework requires or permits internal notification to Y Australia or any other Y body to delay, replace or take priority over required reports to police, child protection authorities, regulators or other statutory bodies.

Prevention and risk management of peer-on-peer harm are addressed in Section 8.8.

8.8 Physical, Digital and Online Safety

Why this matters

Children and young people must be safe wherever and however the Y engages with them.

Risk management and safe environments

- Risks must be identified, assessed and managed across physical, digital and online environments.
- Programs and activities must be safe, age-appropriate and designed to minimise opportunities for harm.
- Adequate supervision, staffing ratios, boundaries and safe practices must be maintained.

Professional conduct and authorised interactions

- Professional boundaries must be maintained at all times.
- One-to-one interactions, transport or contact outside approved Y activities must only occur where authorised within the Member Association's local policies and procedures and subject to appropriate safeguards. The authorisation process, safeguards and controls must be determined through the Member Association's local procedures.

Digital and online safety

- Engagement with children and young people must occur only through systems, devices and platforms authorised by the Member Association and appropriate to the service context, consistent with this Policy Framework, local procedures and applicable law. Authorisation arrangements, access controls and usage expectations must be determined through the Member Association's local policies and procedures.
- Use of personal devices and private communication channels for engagement with children and young people must be restricted or prohibited unless expressly authorised within the Member Association's local policies and procedures, permitted by law, and supported by appropriate safeguards.
- Use of images, video and other content involving children and young people must reflect their rights to dignity, privacy, safety and participation. Consent and authorisation requirements must be met in line with law and policy, but consent alone is not sufficient. Decisions about capturing, using, storing or sharing imagery must be guided by the child or young person's best interests and take account of dignity, safety, identification risk, context, voice and any risk of harm, exploitation, stigma or misuse.
- Personal information and digital content involving children and young people must be protected, accessed, used, stored, shared and deleted in ways that uphold privacy, dignity, safety and applicable legal obligations.
- Clear pathways to raise online safety concerns must be available.
- Digital content involving children and young people must be captured, used, stored, accessed, shared and deleted in ways that reduce identification, misuse, exploitation and unauthorised distribution.
- Safeguarding approaches must consider emerging digital risks, including social media misuse, artificial intelligence, livestreaming, image-based abuse, unauthorised recording or distribution, and inappropriate online communication.

Peer-on-peer harm

- Risks of harm between children and young people, including bullying, harassment, discrimination, harmful sexual behaviour, coercion, image-based abuse and online abuse, must be actively identified, prevented and addressed in ways that prioritise safety, wellbeing, dignity and the rights of all children involved.

8.9 Continuous Improvement, Monitoring and Assurance

Why this matters

Safeguarding requires ongoing attention, learning and improvement to remain effective.

Requirements

- Safeguarding risks, incidents, complaints, themes, practice quality and compliance must be monitored and used to strengthen child safe practice.
- Review and improvement must be informed by feedback from children and young people, families, communities and Y People in ways that are safe, inclusive and appropriate.
- Safeguarding data, themes and trends must be analysed to identify learning and inform improvement.
- Assurance activities must include self-assessment, audit, monitoring, reporting and governance oversight.
- Emerging risks, legislative changes and sector developments must inform continuous improvement.
- Periodic independent safeguarding reviews or external audits must be undertaken to assess safeguarding effectiveness and support continuous improvement.

Safeguarding maturity is demonstrated not by the absence of incidents, but by how organisations learn, respond and improve.

8.10 Policies, Procedures, Accessibility and Local Implementation

Why this matters

Clear, accessible policies, procedures and supporting materials support consistent practice and accountability.

Requirements

- Clear, accessible and locally compliant safeguarding or child safety policies, procedures, standards and supporting resources must be maintained and reviewed.
- This Policy Framework is supported by the National Safe Behaviours Code of Conduct, which sets expected and prohibited behaviours, and by local procedures and guidance that support implementation in practice.

- Member Associations must maintain local procedures and, where used locally, policy settings aligned to this framework and applicable law.
- Local procedures must address the operational controls, decision pathways and authorisations needed to implement these areas in the Member Association's services and jurisdictions, in accordance with applicable law.
- Safeguarding information must be made available in formats that are appropriate for Y People, children and young people, families and communities. Public-facing safeguarding information must also be available so children, young people, families and communities can understand the Y's safeguarding commitment, expected behaviours and complaint pathways. This may include child-friendly, youth-friendly, family-facing, accessible and culturally responsive versions.

9. Legislative and Jurisdictional Alignment

This framework aligns with the National Principles for Child Safe Organisations and supports implementation of relevant Commonwealth, state and territory legal and regulatory requirements. It does not replace jurisdiction-specific obligations.

This includes relevant Commonwealth laws relating to child protection, privacy, online safety and criminal conduct.

Member Associations remain responsible for maintaining locally compliant policies, procedures, systems and controls that give effect to this framework and meet applicable legislative and regulatory requirements.

Where requirements differ across jurisdictions or between this framework and local law, the higher standard must be met.

National safeguarding standards, guidance or other implementation resources may also be developed in consultation with Member Associations where beneficial to support interpretation, capability and consistent implementation across the Y. These supports do not replace Member Association responsibility for local procedures, systems and implementation.

This includes child safe standards and related schemes such as:

- Victoria: Child Safe Standards and Reportable Conduct Scheme
- New South Wales: Child Safe Scheme and Reportable Conduct Scheme
- Australian Capital Territory: Child Safe Standards Scheme and Reportable Conduct Scheme
- Tasmania: Child and Youth Safe Organisations Act 2023
- Queensland: Child Safe Organisations Act 2024 (phased)
- South Australia: Child Safe Environments requirements
- Western Australia: National Principles implementation and Reportable Conduct Scheme

- Northern Territory: Working with Children Clearance Notice and child protection legislation

10. Roles and Responsibilities

Safeguarding is a shared responsibility across the Y, with clear accountability at national, association and individual levels.

- **Y Australia** is the custodian of the national safeguarding framework, including this document and the National Safe Behaviours Code of Conduct, and supports a shared national safeguarding position, mandatory minimum expectations and assurance approach across the Y. In consultation with Member Associations, Y Australia may also develop national safeguarding standards, guidance, examples, tools or implementation resources, where agreed as beneficial, to support interpretation, capability and shared assurance across the Y. These supports do not replace Member Association responsibility for local procedures, systems and implementation.
- **Member Associations** are responsible for local governance, legal compliance and implementation of this framework through local policies, procedures, systems and controls that reflect their jurisdictional, service and operational context while maintaining the mandatory minimum expectations.
- **Boards and Directors** must provide oversight of safeguarding governance, risk, culture, compliance and continuous improvement.
- **CEOs and Executives** must ensure leadership, systems, capability and resources are in place to support effective safeguarding.
- **Leaders and Managers** must embed safeguarding into operations, supervision and local practice.
- **All Y People** must act safely, uphold expected behaviours, complete training and speak up about concerns.

11. Review of this Policy Framework

This Policy Framework will be formally reviewed at least every three years, or earlier where required due to legislative change, emerging risk, organisational learning or opportunities for improvement.

The review process will be informed by children and young people, families, communities, Member Associations and relevant stakeholders, in ways that are safe, meaningful, inclusive and appropriate to age and context.

12. Glossary of Terms

Child / Young Person: A person under 18 years of age.

Safeguarding: The leadership, culture, systems and practices used to prevent harm, uphold rights, reduce risk, respond to concerns and create environments in which children and young people are safe, feel safe, are heard and can participate.

Harm: Any action, omission, behaviour, circumstance or environment that has caused, is causing, or is likely to cause physical, emotional, psychological, developmental, cultural or social harm to a child or young person. Harm may be a single incident or occur over time, and includes exposure to unsafe, inappropriate or harmful situations.

Abuse: A form of harm involving the misuse of power, trust or authority that causes, or is likely to cause, harm to a child or young person. Abuse can include physical abuse, sexual abuse, emotional or psychological abuse, neglect, grooming, exploitation, exposure to family violence, or other behaviour that seriously impacts a child or young person's safety or wellbeing.

Child Safe: An approach that prioritises the safety, rights, wellbeing and participation of children and young people, and takes active steps to prevent harm and abuse and respond appropriately to concerns.

Cultural Safety: An environment where a child or young person feels safe, respected and included in their identity, culture and community, and where their experience of safety is recognised and valued.

Zero Tolerance: Refers to the Y's position on risk to children and unacceptable behaviours;

Y People: includes employees, volunteers, contractors or subcontractors, labour hire employees, apprentices or trainees and volunteers involved with the activities of the Y. It also includes Y Board members and any person serving the Y on a committee or in an advisory capacity.

Adults at Risk: Adults who may experience increased vulnerability due to disability, age, dependency, trauma or power imbalance.

Grooming: Refers to intentional behaviours used to build trust, manipulate, control or create an emotional connection with a child or young person, their family, carers or an organisation, for the purpose of facilitating abuse, exploitation or harm. Grooming can occur in person or online, may involve sexual or non-sexual behaviours, and can occur even if abuse does not ultimately take place.

Trauma-Informed Practice: Is an approach that recognises the prevalence and impact of trauma on children and young people and seeks to create environments that promote emotional and physical safety, trust, choice, empowerment and connection. It involves understanding how trauma may affect behaviour and wellbeing, responding in ways that avoid re-traumatisation, and supporting recovery through respectful, consistent and supportive relationships.

Child-Centred Practice: Is an approach that places the rights, safety, wellbeing, voice and best interests of children and young people at the centre of decision-making and practice. It recognises children and young people as individuals with unique needs, strengths and experiences, supports their meaningful participation, and ensures that organisational decisions prioritise their safety and wellbeing.

Psychological Safety: Refers to an environment in which people feel safe to speak up, ask questions, raise concerns, report issues or mistakes, and challenge practices without fear of punishment, humiliation, retaliation or exclusion. Psychological safety supports learning, accountability and early identification of risk, and is essential to effective safeguarding cultures.

Reportable Conduct: Refers to certain types of alleged behaviour by a worker, volunteer or other person in a position of authority that may pose a risk of harm to a child or young person and must be reported, investigated and managed in accordance with applicable legislation. Reportable conduct may include sexual offences, sexual misconduct, physical violence, behaviour causing significant emotional or psychological harm, or significant neglect, as defined under relevant jurisdictional schemes.