



STUDENT EXCHANGE

Child Safety Policy

Statement of Commitment to Child Safety

Purpose of the Policy.

The purpose of this policy is to ensure that YFU Student Exchange and all associated employees and volunteers (including Host Families and Local Coordinators) follow our strict guidelines regarding child safety.

This policy ensures that we continually develop a zero-tolerance for child abuse and continually develop our child-safe culture.

Our Commitment.

YFU Student Exchange has zero tolerance for child* abuse and requires zero tolerance for child abuse from all adults involved in the organisation. This includes all staff and volunteers, including host families (parents and adult host siblings), local coordinators, and other volunteers.

**Child refers to all children under 18 who are involved in our organisation, including exchange students and host families' children.*

We want our exchange students to be safe, happy, and empowered. We support and respect all our students, staff, and volunteers. Staff and volunteers receive training to ensure they understand their obligation and can effectively identify and respond to any disclosure of abuse by a child or suspicion of abuse, including exposure to family violence or neglect, grooming, emotional, physical or sexual abuse.

Reporting Obligations.

All staff and volunteers associated with YFU Student Exchange (including host families) have a mandatory obligation to report any disclosure or suspicion of child abuse in line with the Reportable Conduct Scheme governed by the Children Guardian Act 2019.

Risk Reduction and Management

YFU Student Exchange is committed to preventing child abuse, identifying risks early, and reducing risks through our established child-safe systems, policies, and practices. YFU has robust training, resources, and recruitment practices for all staff and volunteers and is committed to regularly training and educating our staff and volunteers on reducing risks and reporting obligations.

We value diversity.



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We support and respect all our exchange students, children in our host families, staff, and volunteers. We are committed to the cultural safety of Aboriginal children and the cultural safety of our exchange students from culturally and/or linguistically diverse backgrounds.

We are committed to providing a safe environment for children regardless of race, ethnicity, culture, ability, religion, gender identity and/or sexual preferences, and those with disabilities.

We have specific policies, procedures, and training in place to support our board members, staff, and volunteers in achieving these commitments.

Our Exchange Students

This policy is intended to empower our exchange students and other children who are vital and active participants in our organisation. Children and young people are integral to our organisation, whether as part of host families, inbound exchange students, or outbound exchange students. We involve them when making decisions, especially about matters that directly affect them. We listen to their views and respect what they have to say.

We promote diversity and tolerance in our organisation, and people from all walks of life and cultural backgrounds are welcome.

YFU Student Exchange is committed to and active in the following:

- Promoting the cultural safety, participation and empowerment of Aboriginal children.
- Promoting the cultural safety, participation and empowerment of exchange students from culturally and/or linguistically diverse backgrounds, as well as young people who are unable to live at home and are lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender or intersex.
- Ensuring that any of our exchange students with a disability are safe and can participate equally.

Our board, staff and volunteers

This policy guides our board, staff and volunteers on how to behave with our exchange students or other children in our organisation.

All of our staff and volunteers must agree to abide by the YFU Student Exchange Code of Conduct, which specifies the standards of conduct required when working with all children.

All staff and volunteers, as well as children and their families, are given the opportunity to contribute to the development of the Code of Conduct.



Training and supervision

Training and education are important to ensure that everyone in our organisation understands that child safety is everyone's responsibility.

Our organisational culture aims for all staff and volunteers (in addition to exchange students, parents/carers and children in host families) to feel confident and comfortable in discussing any allegations of child abuse or child safety concerns. We train our staff and volunteers to identify, assess, and minimise risks of child abuse and to detect potential signs of any form of child abuse.

We also support our staff and volunteers through ongoing supervision to:

- Develop their skills to protect children from abuse.
- Promote the cultural safety of Aboriginal children.
- Promote the cultural safety of our exchange students from linguistically and/or diverse backgrounds.
- Ensure the safety of exchange students and other children with a disability.

New employees and volunteers will be supervised regularly to ensure they understand our organisation's commitment to child safety and that everyone has a role to play in protecting children from abuse. They will also be checked to ensure that their behaviour towards children is safe and appropriate (please refer to our code of conduct to understand appropriate behaviour further).

Any inappropriate behaviour will be reported through appropriate channels, including the relevant State, Federal or National Agencies and Police.

Recruitment of staff and volunteers, including host families

YFU Student Exchange takes all reasonable steps to employ skilled people to work with children. All job advertisements and position descriptions clearly demonstrate our commitment to child safety and awareness of our social and legislative responsibilities. Our organisation understands that we have ethical and legislative obligations when recruiting staff and volunteers.

- We encourage applications from Aboriginal peoples, people from culturally and/or linguistically diverse backgrounds, and people with disabilities.
- All people engaged in child-related work, including volunteers, are required to hold the relevant Working with Children Check for their State



or Territory and provide proof of this. (A Criminal Record Check forms part of this process.) In New Zealand, Police Vetting Checks are undertaken.

- We carry out reference checks on all our host families, staff, and volunteers and police record checks to ensure that we are recruiting the right people. Police record checks are used only for recruitment purposes and discarded after completing the recruitment process. We do retain our own records (but not the actual criminal record) if an applicant's criminal history affects our decision-making process. If a person's records indicate a criminal history during the recruitment process, the person will be given the opportunity to provide further information and context.
- We conduct screening of any and all publicly available online presence of applicants, including social media.

Fair procedures for personnel

Our primary concern is the safety and well-being of children. We are also fair and just to personnel. Our decisions regarding recruiting, assessing incidents, and undertaking disciplinary action will always be thorough, transparent, and based on evidence.

We record all allegations of abuse and safety concerns using our incident reporting form, including investigation updates. All records are securely stored.

If an allegation of abuse or a safety concern is raised, we update our exchange students, overseas partner organisations, and families on progress and any actions we take as an organisation.

Privacy

All personal information considered or recorded will respect the privacy of the individuals involved, whether they be staff, volunteers, parents, exchange students or children, unless there is a risk to someone's safety. We have safeguards and practices in place to ensure that any personal information is protected. Everyone is entitled to know how this information is recorded, what will be done with it, and who will have access to it in accordance with the YFU Student Exchange Privacy Policy.

Legislative responsibilities

Our organisation takes our legal responsibilities and status as mandatory reporters seriously. Every issue, concern, allegation, or disclosure relating to child abuse must be reported to the Child Protection Helpline (NSW) or relevant state helpline (as outlined in the YFU Student Exchange Reporting Guidelines and Response Procedures), no matter how small or improbable it may seem.



All staff and volunteers associated with YFU Student Exchange (including host families) have a mandatory obligation to report any disclosure or suspicion of child abuse to the Department of Child Protection and Police. Furthermore, all staff and volunteers must be aware that failing to disclose abuse can be a criminal offence and will not be tolerated.

All adults associated with YFU Student Exchange must follow the relevant reporting legislations outlined in Reporting Guidelines and Response Procedures.

If a student needs to relocate from their current host family home or school or have any significant changes made to their program, YFU Student Exchange must notify the relevant state/territory registration authorities within 5 working days.

Risk management

Organisations are required to protect children when a risk is identified. In addition to general occupational health and safety risks, we proactively manage risks of abuse to our children.

We minimise physical risks to all children involved in the service by visiting the home that they will live in and ensuring that it meets our standards. For our Outbound students, this is delegated to our YFU partner. We advise our students on safe online practices for online environments as part of our orientation processes.

Reviewing this policy

- The policy is to be reviewed annually and updated as needed.
- The YFU Student Exchange National Director and Board Chair will read the policy and check that all legislation is relevant and current.
- If any changes have been made throughout the year, they should be reflected in the policy.
- The policy will be reviewed following any child safety-related incidents and amended to reflect findings.

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