

ACC Policies

Child Safety Policy

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Purpose

The Australian Cadet Corps is committed to the safety and wellbeing of all youth involved in our events and activities. The purpose of this policy is to:

- Outline our statement of commitment to child safety,
- Ensure our members are aware of their rights and responsibilities in keeping children and young people safe,
- Minimise the risk of abuse and misconduct within our organisation,
- Provide a safe environment for children and young people to develop leadership and personal skills.

Scope

- This Child Safe Policy applies to all adults involved in Australian Cadet Corps events and activities, including our leaders, officers, volunteers and parents / guardians regardless of whether they hold a position of responsibility or not. This policy applies to physical and online environments that are related to the Australian Cadet Corps regardless of being at or away from our premises, including camps and outings.

Responsibilities

- Child Safety is everyone's responsibility. All adults involved in Australian Cadet Corps events and activities must contribute to the culture of safety and protection of children and young people.
- Adult members must comply with the Code of Conduct and follow their legal obligations with respect to the reporting of child abuse.
- Any member who becomes aware of child safety incidents or concerns are strongly encouraged to raise these with any Commanding Officer or the National Engagement Commander.
- Members and the public can also report concerns via the ACC Report Concern Form at <https://cadets.org.au/contact/>.
- All Commanding Officers are responsible for keeping up to date with the latest child safety standards by regularly engaging in training provided within the Australian Cadet Corps.
- The National Engagement Commander is responsible for maintaining a culture of child safety within the Australian Cadet Corps, and making recommendations to the Committee with respect to child safety issues.
- The Committee and National Leadership Team are fully committed to ensuring the safety, wellbeing, and protection of children and vulnerable individuals. We uphold our responsibilities under the Reportable Conduct Scheme and maintain a zero-tolerance approach to any form of abuse or misconduct from its adult members.

- The Committee and National Leadership Team are responsible for continually reviewing child safety policies, allowing open discussion about child safety issues and implementing best practices regarding child safety principles.

Definitions

- *Child*: A person under the age of 14.
- *Young Person*: A person aged 14 to under 18.
- *Youth Member*: A child or young person who is an ACC member.
- *Child Abuse*: Any act, omission, or circumstance causing or likely to cause harm to a child or young person's physical, psychological, or emotional wellbeing. Includes physical abuse, emotional or psychological abuse, sexual abuse, grooming, and neglect.
- *Physical abuse* occurs when a person subjects a child or young person to non-accidental physically aggressive acts, which may cause injury intentionally or inadvertently. Examples include shoving, hitting, slapping, shaking, throwing, biting, burning, and harmful physical training.
- *Emotional or psychological abuse* includes rejection, constant criticism, teasing, threatening, scapegoating, and emotional neglect. It may also involve harmful coaching practices.
- *Sexual abuse* occurs when a person in authority engages a child or young person in sexual activity, including inappropriate touching, exposure to pornography, or engaging in sexual conversations.
- *Sexual exploitation* involves forcing or involving a child in unlawful or non-consensual sexual activity that is recorded or distributed.
- *Neglect* is the persistent failure to meet a child's basic physical, emotional, medical, or educational needs. This includes abandonment or failure to provide adequate care or supervision.

Statement of Commitment

- The Australian Cadet Corps has zero tolerance for child abuse and neglect of any kind. We are committed to being a child safe organisation with a culture of accountability, responsibility and leadership regarding child safety.
- We are committed to the wellbeing and empowerment of all youth involved in our events and activities by clearly documenting our expectations and the responsibilities of all adult leaders, officers and volunteers.
- We are committed to promoting equity and respecting diversity by considering the needs of all youth participants and responding effectively to those with additional vulnerabilities. We support all youth within the capability of the organisation, including anyone with disabilities, additional needs, LGBTQI+ youth, and youth from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds.
- We are committed to ensuring we have appropriate adult members and leaders by having appropriate screening measures to minimise the likelihood of recruiting adults who are unsuitable to work with children.
- We are committed to training our officers in child safe practices by providing ongoing education and development for child safe behaviour and responding to child abuse allegations.
- We are committed to maintaining a safe and supportive child safe environment by involving youth members and their families in communication about our practices, our expectations of adult members and youth rights. We have processes for encouraging two-way communication with youth and their families, and actively seek their feedback.
- We are committed to responding to allegations of child abuse and neglect by ensuring all adult members understand their responsibilities in handling child abuse complaints and their obligations of when and how to report abuse and neglect to law enforcement and external agencies.
- We are committed to staying a child safe organisation by continually reviewing and improving our policies, procedures and practices to keep our youth safe from abuse and neglect.

Supervision

- Any youth member in the care of the Australian Cadet Corps must be under the supervision of at least 2 adult members, one of which must be the same gender as the youth member.
- When youth members are dropped off by parents or guardians into the care of the Australian Cadet Corps, care must be taken that an adult member must be present during the drop off and likewise,

must visually confirm they are picked up by an approved parent, guardian or other responsible person.

- Adult members must never travel alone in a vehicle with a single youth member unless they are from the same family.

Behaviour

All adult members of the Australian Cadet Corps must behave in a manner that complies with the Code of Conduct, Australian Cadet Corps Manual and all other policies, handbooks and orders in force from time to time. These policies outline expectations in relation to (but not limited to):

- online and social media communication,
- appropriate conversations with youth members,
- restrictions on pornography, alcohol, cigarettes and drugs,
- physical contact with youth members,
- overnight accommodation, changing and showering

All adult members must:

- Maintain professional boundaries,
- Avoid over-familiarity, private contact, or special treatment,
- Avoid inappropriate language or humour,
- Follow the Code of Conduct and all ACC policies,
- Use approved communication channels that include parents or group settings.

Reporting and Responding

- The Australian Cadet Corps promotes and encourages anyone to report concerns about child safety.
- All adult members must identify, report and respond to any allegation, disclosure or concern regarding child abuse or neglect by following the procedures outlined in the Complaint and Grievance Handbook under the part titled Child Safe Procedures.
- If you believe a child is at immediate risk of serious harm or in a life-threatening situation, **contact police immediately by calling 000.**
- **All concerns and disclosures must be reported using the Report a Concern Form** available at <https://cadets.org.au/contact/>.

Optional resources related to reporting are:

- Officers can also consult the NSW Mandatory Reporter Guide at <https://reporter.childstory.nsw.gov.au/s/mrg> to help decide on the appropriate action.
- The Child Protection Helpline is also available at 132 111.

During a disclosure of child abuse, Officers must:

- Listen carefully,
- Control verbal and facial expressions,
- Reassure them that they are believed and that they have done the right thing by speaking up,
- Acknowledge that it is hard to talk sometimes,
- Reassure them that they are not to blame,
- Tell them what you will do next and that you want to protect them and will need to tell someone else who will be able to help,
- Let them know that you are there to support them and they can trust you,
- Make written notes about the disclosure and report it as soon as possible.

During a disclosure of child abuse, Officers must NOT:

- Express anger about the alleged abuser,
- Tell the alleged abuser about the disclosure,

- Pressure the child into giving more information than they freely want to say,
- Make promises they cannot keep, such as promising not to tell anyone.

Related Documents

- Code of Conduct
- ACC Manual
- Grievance and Complaint Policy
- Camps and Outings Handbook

Relevant Laws and Standards

- Children's Guardian Act 2019
- Child Protection (Working with Children) Act 2012
- Child Protection (Working with Children) Regulation 2013
- Children and Young Persons (Care and Protection) Act 1998
- United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child
- Child Safe Standards

Publication

- This policy is published here, on the resource portal and is available to all members.
- This policy is also contained in training material for adult members undertaking officer leadership training

Review

- This policy is reviewed annually by the ACC Administration Department.

Retrieved from 'http://resources.cadets.org.au/index.php?title=POL-1-1&oldid=1635'