



---

# CHILD SAFETY POLICY AND PROCEDURE

14 FEBRUARY 2024

---

**CONTENTS**

---

**Child Safety Policy**

|    |   |    |
|----|---|----|
| 1  | Application .....   | 3  |
| 2  | Purpose .....   | 3  |
| 3  | Definitions.....  | 4  |
| 4  | Responsibilities .....  | 4  |
| 5  | Governance and culture .....  | 6  |
| 6  | Children and young people’s participation and empowerment.....      | 6  |
| 7  | Family and community involvement.....                               | 7  |
| 8  | Equality and diversity.....   | 7  |
| 9  | Staff and volunteer recruitment .....                               | 7  |
| 10 | Complaints and feedback .....                                       | 8  |
| 11 | Staff support and development.....                                  | 8  |
| 12 | Safe physical and online environments .....                         | 9  |
| 13 | Continuous improvement.....   | 9  |
| 14 | Identifying, repsonding to and reporting harm and risk of harm..... | 10 |
| 15 | Policy governance .....   | 12 |

**Child Safety Procedures**

|   |   |    |
|---|---|----|
| 1 | Disclosure of abuse at a weekend workshop.....                                  | 14 |
| 2 | Disclosure of abuse/concern about safety at a support group .....               | 16 |
| 3 | Disclosure of abuse during individual case management or network meeting .....  | 17 |
| 4 | Allegation of abuse perpetrated by a youth insearch employee or volunteer ..... | 18 |

**Appendix 1 - Mandatory Reporting**

---

# CHILD SAFETY POLICY

## 1 APPLICATION

---

This policy applies to all staff members, including: directors, managers and supervisors; temporary and permanent employees (whether full-time, part-time or casual); student placements, apprentices, contractors, sub-contractors and volunteers, collectively referred to in this policy as 'staff members'. As this is an organisational wide policy, references to 'we' or 'our' refer to all Youth Insearch staff and volunteers as stated above.

This policy is not limited to the workplace or work hours. This policy extends to all functions and places that are work related. For example, weekend workshops, work functions, work conferences, work Christmas parties and client functions.

This policy does not form part of any contract of employment or contract for service with Youth Insearch.

## 2 PURPOSE

---

Youth Insearch Foundation (Aust) Inc ('Youth Insearch') is committed to providing an environment where all children and young people have a right to feel safe, and to be safe at all times. Youth Insearch will not tolerate any abuse or neglect of children or young people involved with our program.

The purpose of this policy is to:

- Outline the Youth Insearch commitment to maintaining child and youth safe environments across our organisation.
- Document the key components and underlying principles of the Youth Insearch approach to promoting the safety and wellbeing of children and young people, in accordance with principles and standards of best practice, and our legal and regulatory responsibilities
- Ensure that our commitment to children and young people's safety and wellbeing is embedded within our organisational culture.
- Prevent any and all forms of child abuse within Youth Insearch.
- Ensure that all parties are aware of their responsibilities for identifying possible occasions of child abuse and for establishing controls and procedures for preventing such abuse and/or detecting such abuse when it occurs.
- Provide guidance to employees/volunteers/contractors as to action that should be taken where they suspect any abuse within or outside of the organisation.
- Ensure that any and all suspected abuse will be reported and fully investigated.

### 3 DEFINITIONS

---

The following are terms used in this policy and procedure:

| Term                           | Definition  |
|--------------------------------|---|
| <b>Mandatory Reporters</b>     | refers to all Youth Insearch staff, volunteers, and contractors.  |
| <b>Regional Manager</b>        | means the Senior Manager employed by Youth Insearch, whose responsibilities include the safe and effective delivery support to young people across their region. They are the most senior person on a Weekend Workshop. |
| <b>Team Leader</b>             | means the employed Youth Insearch staff member whose responsibility includes overseeing their regions Social Workers, Youth Workers and Peer Worker Trainees and programs in their region.                              |
| <b>Management</b>              | means the senior staff employed by Youth Insearch which includes Team Leaders, Regional Managers, General Manager or CEO.   |
| <b>Program Team Leader</b>     | means the approved young person at Youth Insearch who works within a volunteer capacity, is responsible for supporting the Regional Manager in the safe and effective delivery of the Weekend Workshop.                 |
| <b>Volunteer/Support Adult</b> | means the people who are approved by Youth Insearch to support young people in the region to attend Weekly Support Groups and Weekend Workshops.  |

### 4 RESPONSIBILITIES

---

#### Board of Directors responsibilities

The Board has ultimate responsibility for ensuring that appropriate and effective internal policies and practices are in place to prevent risk of harm to children and young people and to promote a culture of child and youth safety.

#### Chief Executive Officer responsibilities

The Chief Executive Officer is responsible for:

- ensuring that all staff and volunteers are aware of the relevant laws, organisational policies and procedures and the Organisations Code of Conduct.
- providing support for staff, volunteers and contractors in matters relating to child and youth safety.

### **General Manager, Program Operations responsibilities**

It is the responsibility of the Executive Team to ensure the safety and wellbeing of all staff and volunteers at Youth Insearch.

The General Manager, Program Operations is responsible for:

- monitoring changes in legislation; inclusive of relevant Government inquiries and recommendations, and National and State based standards in Child and Youth Safety.
- supported by the Executive Team for ensuring that all Child and Youth Safety policies and practices are aligned with the most up to date and relevant National and State requirements.
- ensuring that all Child and Youth Safety policies and practices are reviewed annually.

### **Line Management responsibilities**

All Line Managers are responsible for ensuring that:

- they promote child and youth safety at all times, including through regular supervision and support with their staff.
- their staff have attended mandatory child safety training required by Youth Insearch.
- document concerns regarding current or suspected risk of harm to a child or young person in accordance with Youth Insearch policies and practices, and that all legally mandated procedures are followed according to the relevant legislation.

### **Support Adults/Volunteers/Contractors responsibilities**

All Support Adults, Volunteers and Contractors are responsible for:

- child and youth safety and must familiarise themselves with the relevant laws, Code of Conduct, Youth Insearch policy and practices in relation to child and youth safety.
- Volunteers and contractors must immediately inform a Youth Insearch staff member if they have any concerns relating to current or suspected risk of harm of a child or young person engaged with Youth Insearch.

### **All Staff**

All staff must:

- understand and comply with this policy;
- observe all directions from Youth Insearch with regard to this policy;

## 5 GOVERNANCE AND CULTURE

---

Youth Insearch strives at all times to promote the safety, protection and wellbeing of children and young people.

Our staff and volunteers must demonstrate the practices, behaviour, and relationships consistent with our organisational values and the Youth Insearch Code of Conduct, Leader and Volunteer Code of Conduct, and all organisational policies and procedures, in all their interactions with children and young people who access our program.

These documents must be read, understood, and signed by staff when they commence employment or engagement with Youth Insearch and followed at all times during their employment or engagement.

Staff and Volunteers must actively discourage and immediately report to management any behaviour, which may be considered to be a breach of the Youth Insearch Child and Youth Safe Policy, Code of Conduct, organisational policies and procedures or values.

We must comply with our obligations under the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child, national, state and territory child protection legislation and other relevant laws, regulations, standards and quality frameworks, accreditation, licensing, and contractual obligations when working with children and young people, as they apply to our programs.

## 6 CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE'S PARTICIPATION AND EMPOWERMENT

---

Youth Insearch will ensure that:

- We promote a child and youth safe culture that is inclusive and prioritises the empowerment and participation of all children and young people, especially those with particular needs and vulnerabilities.
- Staff and volunteers must ensure that all children and young people who access our programs are aware of and understand their rights and responsibilities and are supported to exercise these rights and responsibilities.
- We value the voices of Lived and living Experience and commit to embedding the voices of young people via our State and National Program Councils into all aspects of program design and delivery, and to ensure that the rights and responsibilities of children and young people participating in our program are supported and upheld.
- Children and young people must be informed when they access our program about how their personal information will be managed and how their privacy rights will be respected. This includes informing the young person about our legal obligations to share information lawfully with other organisations, if their safety and wellbeing are at risk.
- Where social media is identified as an appropriate medium to facilitate participation and communication with young people, staff and volunteers must comply with respective policies to ensure it is safely and appropriately used.

## **7 FAMILY AND COMMUNITY INVOLVEMENT**

---

Staff and volunteers are to make this policy available and readily accessible to any young person, parent, carer, or other stakeholder to ensure a clear understanding of commitment to the safety and wellbeing of all children and young people who access our program.

Families and stakeholders are encouraged to provide feedback on all policies and processes related to child safety and wellbeing at Youth Insearch.

Families are encouraged to participate in decisions affecting their children, where it does not compromise safety or wellbeing of the young person.

Staff and volunteers are to engage with families and local communities, listen to their views regarding child and youth safe practices. The information shared will help to inform our practices and procedures.

## **8 EQUALITY AND DIVERSITY**

---

Staff and volunteers use inclusive and empowering language, taking into account language and literacy levels as well as cultural differences.

We value diversity and will not tolerate any discriminatory practices. We identify and address any barriers for young people that may limit their participation in our program.

We implement strategies that support us to engage young people with high or complex needs, and those who are at risk of coming into the child protection system.

Our child and youth safe policies and practices are culturally safe and promote the active participation of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children, young people and families as well as Culturally and Linguistically Diverse children, young people and families

Our child and youth safe policies and practices recognise the nuances of intersecting identities such as, but not limited to disability, gender identity, religion, class, race and ethnicity and we proactively seek to identify and remove barriers to engagement and participation at Youth Insearch.

## **9 STAFF AND VOLUNTEER RECRUITMENT**

---

Youth Insearch apply a rigorous recruitment, screening, and selection process in accordance with the Fair Work Act. We ensure that all staff are appropriately qualified, skilled, and experienced to competently and safely deliver the highest quality of service to young people.

Employment and volunteering positions at Youth Insearch clearly state our commitment as an organisation to child and youth safety and wellbeing.

We uphold a focus on the safety of children and young people throughout the recruitment, suitability, and screening process, throughout the identify and qualification verification process.

All prospective Youth Insearch employees and volunteers are subject to a formal background check. When applying for any position at Youth Insearch all staff must hold a valid Working with Children Check (WWCC) in their state of service delivery.

WWCC & Blue Card checks are verified by Youth Insearch for the state they work in and include a National Criminal History Check. For staff in QLD, the Blue Card must be linked in the Youth Insearch Blue Card account. For staff in NSW, the WWCC must be linked in the Youth Insearch Office of the Children’s Guardian account.

Youth Insearch has adopted the “No Card – No Start” mandate for all states in which it operates. All employees must have a verified WWCC for the state they work in and produce a Police Check that is no older than 3 months prior to commencing work with Youth Insearch. All volunteers, at minimum, must hold a valid volunteer WWCC for the state they work in.

When working with young people in NSW or VIC whilst residing in another state, the check holder must abide by state regulations, which allows interstate card holders to work with young people for up to 30 days in a calendar year.

## 10 COMPLAINTS AND FEEDBACK

---

Staff must provide information about the feedback and complaints process in an accessible format to young people when they access Youth Insearch. Where necessary, changes will be made to policy, procedure, or practice as a result of a complaint.

All complaints must be taken seriously and responded to promptly with procedural fairness. Records of complaints made to Youth Insearch will be obtained and kept according to regulatory requirements and standards.

Young people who access our program must be provided with information about other agencies or people that they can raise concerns with and who are able to support them or advocate on their behalf.

## 11 STAFF SUPPORT AND DEVELOPMENT

---

We build the capacity of our staff through professional development, supervision, and support to promote and maintain a child and youth safe organisation.

New employees and volunteers participate in an intensive induction and orientation process to child and youth safe policies and practices. Team Leaders and Regional Managers will ensure that all new employees and volunteers complete all the relevant mandatory training in child safe practices in accordance with organisational requirements.

Youth Insearch are committed to the provision of high-quality supervision practices for all staff including regular reviews of workplace performance, opportunities to share problems and observations and explore child and youth safe practices. Staff participate in bi-annual Striving for Excellence Plans, in addition to fortnightly supervision (or FTE equivalent) where managers are able to formally review staff contributions to organisational values, including the provision and promotion of child and youth safe practices.



## **12 SAFE PHYSICAL AND ONLINE ENVIRONMENTS**

---

Staff and volunteers are responsible for embedding a culture of risk management across the organisation.

Staff and volunteers must abide by program or activity-specific guidance outlined in risk management plans when undertaking specific practices involving young people within a local context.

Risk assessments for employee and volunteer positions, activities and events at our sites and other locations must be conducted in accordance with Youth Insearch Incident Management policies and procedures and Youth Insearch Policies and Procedures.

Staff and volunteers must complete induction and ongoing training on managing risks and creating safe environments to ensure the safety, suitability, and security of physical environments for young people in our program.

Staff are to be trained about expectations of online behaviour and how to identify and mitigate risks in the online environment. The online environment will be used in accordance with the Youth Insearch Code of Conduct and Youth Insearch Social Media Policy.

Staff and volunteers must adhere to the Youth Insearch Transportation Policy when transporting a young person.

Staff and volunteers must ensure the safety and wellbeing of young people working or volunteering at Youth Insearch and young people accompanying an adult to a Youth Insearch workplace event.

## **13 CONTINUOUS IMPROVEMENT**

---

Youth Insearch is committed to embedding and maintaining an organisation wide child and youth safe culture through a process of ongoing continuous improvement.

Youth Insearch commits to the implementation of an ongoing and regular cycle of assessment, including an annual review of policies and practices to ensure child and youth safe policies and practices are understood and embedded at all levels of the organisation. This includes mandatory annual re-training for all staff and volunteers.

Child safety processes and reporting procedures are reviewed after complaints are made to the organisation.

Incidents and complaints are reviewed to manage risks, identify patterns and systemic issues and to improve our child and youth safe policies and practices.

## 14 IDENTIFYING, RESPONDING TO AND REPORTING HARM AND RISK OF HARM

Youth Insearch is committed to embedding and maintaining an organisation wide child and youth safe culture through a process of ongoing continuous improvement.

Any staff or volunteer who has grounds to reasonably suspect harm or risk of harm to a child or young person must immediately consult their manager or a Youth Insearch staff member (for a volunteer) as Youth Insearch staff are considered mandatory reporters. If a decision is made to inform an authority (such as Child Safety and/or the Police) the Manager is responsible for ensuring that the process is carried out according to the relevant Statutory requirements (see Appendix C).

**Reportable disclosures include both current and historical abuse and must be done within 24-hours of the disclosure being made known.**

The duty to report is not dependant on confirmation or proof; it is based on reasonable suspicion. All disclosures from program participants are to be taken seriously, and all Youth Insearch staff to maintain a non-judgemental and supportive attitude.

If a disclosure is made and another service needs to be made aware of this (i.e. if the Program Participant is at a school and the school counsellor needs to be made aware of this), Youth Insearch staff members are required to still make a mandatory report, even if the other services does so as well.

Where there is a reasonable suspicion of child abuse, it is the requirement of all Youth Insearch staff to report this accordingly as outlined in the below procedure. Types of child abuse could include but not limited to the following:

| Type                       | Definition  | Indicators  |
|----------------------------|---|---|
| <b>Physical Abuse</b>      | The intentional use of force that results in bodily injury or physical harm to a child.               | Unexplained bruises, burns, fractures, or other injuries inconsistent with the given explanation.                       |
| <b>Psychological Abuse</b> | Harmful behaviour that undermines a child's emotional well-being, self-esteem, or social development. | Frequent belittling, rejection, humiliation, or threats; withdrawal or extreme emotional responses.                     |
| <b>Emotional Abuse</b>     | Withholding love, affection, or attention necessary for a child's emotional development.              | Persistent sadness, withdrawal, difficulty forming relationships.   |
| <b>Sexual Abuse</b>        | Involves any non-consensual sexual activity or exploitation of a child.                               | Inappropriate sexual knowledge or behaviour, unexplained physical injuries, fear, or avoidance of specific individuals. |

| Type                                 | Definition  | Indicators   |
|--------------------------------------|---|--|
| <b>Neglect</b>                       | Failure to provide for a child's basic needs, including food, shelter, clothing, medical care, and supervision.                         | Persistent hunger, poor hygiene, untreated medical conditions, frequent absenteeism from school.                     |
| <b>Educational Neglect</b>           | Failure to provide a child with access to appropriate education or special education services as required by law.                       | Chronic truancy, lack of enrolment in school, failure to meet educational milestones.                                |
| <b>Medical Neglect</b>               | Failure to provide necessary medical or mental health treatment for a child's serious health conditions.                                | Untreated medical conditions, lack of necessary prescriptions or follow-up care.                                     |
| <b>Exploitation and or Grooming</b>  | Manipulating a child for personal gain, including forced labour, involvement in criminal activities, or sexual exploitation.            | Unexplained money or gifts, signs of coercion, involvement in criminal activities.                                   |
| <b>Abandonment</b>                   | Desertion of a child without appropriate care and support.  | Leaving a child alone without adequate supervision or support for an extended period.                                |
| <b>Exposure to Domestic Violence</b> | Witnessing or experiencing violence or threats of violence between adults in the household.   | Behavioural changes, anxiety, fearfulness, physical injuries.  |
| <b>Online Exploitation</b>           | Any form of child abuse facilitated through digital platforms, including grooming, cyberbullying, or distribution of explicit material. | Inappropriate online interactions, sudden changes in online behaviour, withdrawal from social activities.            |
| <b>Child Trafficking</b>             | The recruitment, transportation, transfer, harbouring, or receipt of a child for the purpose of exploitation.                           | Unexplained travel, sudden changes in living arrangements, signs of forced labour or commercial sexual exploitation. |

Staff and volunteers must ensure the best interests of children and young people are paramount when responding to and reporting concerns about their safety and wellbeing.

In situations where the supervisor or manager is suspected of involvement in the activity, or if the person having the suspicion does not believe that the matter is being appropriately addressed or dealt with, the matter should be reported to the next highest level of Management at Youth Insearch.

Supervisors and managers must report complaints of suspected harm or misconduct to the Executive Team and to any external regulatory body such as the police.

Records of reports about child safety that have been made to statutory authorities (including but not limited to Police, Child Safety) will be obtained and kept securely and in accordance with legislative obligations.

All staff are required to fully cooperate with any subsequent investigation by child protection authorities, law enforcement, or other relevant agencies.

## 15 POLICY GOVERNANCE

### Policy Enforcement

Staff members must comply with this policy and procedure at all times. Where an employee is reasonably suspected to be in breach of or having breached this policy, an employee will be given an opportunity to explain his or her actions. Breaches of this policy will be taken very seriously and may result in disciplinary action being taken; up to and including termination of employment or services.

### Review of Policy

Youth Insearch may unilaterally introduce, vary, remove, or replace this policy at any time. The Policy document must be reviewed on an annual basis and updated if required, to ensure standards remain current and continue to meet the requirements of Youth Insearch. In addition to the annual review cycle, the Policy must be able to evolve in order to meet changing internal and external requirements, which may include:

- changes to Youth Insearch Foundation business environment;
- changes to tolerance to risk or risk appetite;
- changes to legal and regulatory requirements;
- changes to contractual requirements; and
- changes to adapt to emerging risks and threats.

### Related documents

Staff members are encouraged to read this Policy in conjunction with other relevant Company documents, including:

| Ref | Title                                   | Version |
|-----|---|---------|
| 1   | Code of Conduct                         | 1.0     |
| 2   | Grievance Handling Policy               | 1.0     |
| 3   | Incident Reporting Policy and Procedure | 1.0     |
| 4   | Managing Performance and Conduct Policy | 1.0     |
| 5   | Whistleblower Policy                    | 1.0     |
| 6   | Workplace Health and Safety Policy      | 1.0     |

### Endorsement and approval

Unless otherwise noted, this policy is effective from the date of approval. This policy has been approved and endorsed by:

| Document details              |   |
|-------------------------------|---|
| <b>Name of document</b>       | Child Safety Policy   |
| <b>Version</b>                | 1.0   |
| <b>Author</b>                 | General Manager, Program Operations   |
| <b>Reviewed By</b>            | General Manager, Finance & Corporate Services<br>Information Systems & Compliance Manager |
| <b>Approved By</b>            | Chief Executive Officer   |
| <b>Date of Approval</b>       | 14 February 2024  |
| <b>Date of Effect</b>         | 14 February 2024  |
| <b>Assigned Review Period</b> | 12 Months   |
| <b>Date of Next Review</b>    | 14 February 2025  |

This policy is due for review by the date shown above, after which it may become invalid. Policy users must ensure that they consult the current valid version of the document.

### Document change log

This document change log serves as a chronological record documenting any revisions, updates, or modifications made to this Policy, including details such as the date of change, the nature of the modification, and the individuals responsible for the alterations.

| Version | Change Description | Date | Reviewed By | Approved By |
|---------|--------------------|------|-------------|-------------|
|         |                    |      |             |             |

# CHILD SAFETY PROCEDURE

## 1 DISCLOSURE OF ABUSE AT A WEEKEND WORKSHOP

---

### **Participant disclosure during a Weekend Workshop**

It is the responsibility of the **Program Team Leader** and **Regional Manager** to record all disclosures/concerns made during a session. The **Regional Manager** is the first escalation point during the weekend workshop. The second point of escalation is the **General Manager, Program Operations**.

Any disclosure or concern about current or suspected risk of harm relating to a workshop participant must be immediately brought to the **Program Team Leader**. The **Program Team Leader** will then consult with the **Regional Manager**. The **Program Team Leader** will inform the alleged victim's **support adult/staff member** (unless the allegation involves them), where the child or young person will be supported to have a discussion on current risk with their **Support Adult** and the **Program Team Leader**.

When a disclosure is made by a young person, **Program Team Leader** and/or **Regional Manager** and/or **Social Workers** to gather information without asking probing or investigative questions about the suspected harm to the child. This can be done with support from their line manager. All disclosures from participants are to be taken seriously, and all Youth Insearch staff to maintain a non-judgemental and supportive attitude.

The **Program Team Leader** and **Regional Manager** will discuss/assess the disclosure or allegation in the context of level of risk to the young person when leaving the workshop; What reporting is required by Youth Insearch; and what support and follow-up will be required following the program. Where possible, the child or young person is to be involved in all aspects of the reporting process.

Where this is an immediate risk to the young persons safety (e.g., perpetrator in the home), the decision for the Program Participant to return to their normal environment will be guided by the advice of Child Protection and/or Police. Guided by the **Regional Manager**, it will be their determination as to whether they or the **Program Team Leader** make the call to the relevant State Reporting Agency and/or Police. Where there is an imminent threat to the young person, Youth Insearch must take direction from either the relevant state-based Child Protection service or Police based on the report made.

In situations where staff are unable to make a report via the telephone to the relevant state-based child protection service or Police, Youth Insearch staff member is to present at the nearest Police station with the young person to make the report in person and seek direction on next steps. In instances where there is no immediate threat to harm, online or telephone reporting to the relevant State Reporting Agency and/or Police maybe appropriate.

It is the **Regional Managers** responsibility to ensure that all documentation (incident report and case notes) is uploaded onto Salesforce (including witness statements) by COB Monday following the Weekend Workshop according to Youth Insearch documentation policy and practices. It is the **Regional Managers** responsibility to assign follow up to the **Program Staff** (Contact owner) and ensure the incident is seen through to closure.

**Allegation of suspected abuse by another participant during a Weekend Workshop**

The alleged offender is separated from others with their **Support Person/Program Staff** and Youth Leader. (There needs to be two people present with the alleged offender, discussion about allegations should not happen at this point, rather, support should be given to the alleged offender).

The person who alleges the abuse is separated from the others with their **Support Person/Program Staff** and **Program Coordinator**.

The **Program Team Leader** leads the response and is supported by the **Regional Manager, Support Adult** and/or **Program Staff (Social Worker and Peer Worker)**. When a disclosure is made by a Program Participant, Program Staff member is to gather information without asking probing or investigative questions about the suspected harm to the child. If appropriate, this can be done with support from their line manager. All disclosures from Program Participants are to be taken seriously, and all Youth Insearch staff to maintain a non-judgemental and supportive attitude.

The **Program Team Leader or Regional Manager** will contact the Police and report the alleged assault.

The **Program Team Leader or Regional Manager** with the **Support Adult** and /or **Program Staff** contact the parent or guardian of the alleged victim and alleged offender.

The alleged offender is to be sent home immediately and provided with Individual Case Management support by Youth Insearch following the Weekend Workshop. Safety Plan (refer to Managing Risk to Self or Others Policy and Procedure) to be completed if required. Alleged offender will be unable to participate in Weekend Workshops or Weekly Support Groups until the investigation is complete by Police (provided conviction or charge is not recorded). Where a conviction is recorded, they will be ineligible to attend Weekend Workshops or Weekly Support Groups.

Alleged offender to be 'suspended' and 'banned' on Salesforce with a note referring to incident report until this has been resolved.

The **Regional Manager** completes an Incident Report directly onto Salesforce and assigns follow up tasks to the Program Staff. All witness forms are to be completed and uploaded by COB on the Monday after the workshop.

**Program Staff** conduct follow up, offering support and/or referral for counselling following the program.

It is the **Regional Managers** responsibility to assign follow up to the **Program Staff** (Contact owner) and ensure the incident is seen through to closure.

## **2 DISCLOSURE OF ABUSE/CONCERN ABOUT SAFETY AT A SUPPORT GROUP**

---

The person receiving the disclosure or safety concern is required to notify the **Program Staff** at the support group, or **Regional Manager**.

The escalation point is the **Team Leader**, or where there is not a Team Leader employed within the region, it is the **Regional Manager**.

The **Program Staff Member** meets the Program Participant immediately after support group to determine the level of risk to the Program Participant in leaving the support group. When a disclosure is made by a Program Participant, **Program Staff member** is to gather information without asking probing or investigative questions in regard to the suspected child abuse. If appropriate, this can be done with support from their line manager. All disclosures from Program Participants are to be taken seriously, and all Youth Insearch staff to maintain a non-judgemental and supportive attitude.

Where this is an immediate risk to the young person's safety (i.e. perpetrator in the home), the decision for the Program Participant to return to their normal environment will be guided by the advice of Child Protection and/or Police. Under the direction of the **Team Leader** and/or **Regional Manager, Program Staff Member** make the call to the relevant State Reporting Agency and/or Police.

In situations where staff are unable to make a report via the telephone to the relevant state-based child protection service or Police, Youth Insearch staff member is to present at the nearest Police station with the young person to make the report in person and seek direction on next steps.

If the young person is *not* at immediate risk, a report to the State Reporting Agency and/or Police must be made **within 24 hours** of the support group. Online or telephone reporting to the relevant State Reporting Agency and/or Police maybe appropriate.

An incident report about the disclosure must be completed in Salesforce **within 24 hours** of the support group.

The **Regional Manager** is responsible for ensuring that all reporting has complied with this policy and the reporting requirements for each State.

It is the **Regional Managers** responsibility to assign follow up to the **Program Staff** (Contact owner) and ensure the incident is seen through to closure.



### 3 DISCLOSURE OF ABUSE DURING INDIVIDUAL CASE MANAGEMENT OR NETWORK MEETING

---

If a disclosure or safety concern occurs during an individual session or network meeting the **Program Staff Member** should gather information without asking probing or investigative questions. The purpose of questioning is to obtain information about the level of risk to the young person leaving the session. If this is a Peer Worker Trainee, matter to immediately be escalated to the regions **Social Worker, Team Leader, or Regional Manager**.

If the staff member feels that the Program Participant is not safe to leave or go home, they are to contact the State Reporting Agency or the Police while the young person is present. In situations where staff are unable to make a report via the telephone to the relevant state-based child protection service or Police, Youth Insearch staff member is to present at the nearest Police station with the young person to make the report in person and seek direction on next steps.

If they feel the young person is safe to leave, a report must be made **within 24 hours** and the staff member's manager must be notified. Online or telephone reporting to the relevant State Reporting Agency and/or Police maybe appropriate.

An incident report about the disclosure must be completed in Salesforce **within 24 hours** of the meeting.

The **Regional Manager** is responsible for ensuring that all reporting has complied with this policy and the reporting requirements for each State.

It is the **Regional Managers** responsibility to assign follow up to the **Program Staff** (Contact owner) and ensure the incident is seen through to closure.

#### **4 ALLEGATION OF ABUSE PERPETRATED BY A YOUTH INSEARCH EMPLOYEE OR VOLUNTEER**

---

If it is alleged that any staff member, volunteer, or contractor has committed an offence and/or breached the organisation's Child and Youth Safety Policy the person may be stood down (with pay where applicable) while the matter is clarified.

If a staff member, volunteer, or contractor becomes aware of an allegation made against them relating to reportable conduct or a conviction, they must advise the **General Manager, Program Operations** who will advise the **CEO**. The **General Manager, Program Operations** must record details of the allegation.

The alleged offender will be immediately suspended from the program and access to Salesforce (all Program and client related documentation) will be blocked. The **General Manager, Program Operations** will be responsible for blocking them. The alleged offender is to have no involvement with Youth Insearch activities involving children or young people until the child safety investigation has been finalised.

**The CEO** is to provide information and make report to the Child Safety Commission within 3-days of being made aware of the allegations. Direction to be taken depending on the nature of the allegation as to whether Youth Insearch undertake a concurrent investigation of the staff member/volunteer alongside Police.

All investigations will be undertaken as per the Youth Insearch grievance policy and procedure.

Youth Insearch will maintain regular communication during the external investigation process in relation to any changes in the accused situation regarding involvement in Youth Insearch activities.

# APPENDIX 1 – MANDATORY REPORTING

Mandatory reporting legislation generally contains lists of particular occupations that are mandated to report cases of suspected child abuse and neglect.

The groups of people mandated to report range from persons in a limited number of occupations (QLD) to a more extensive list (VIC and WA), to a very extensive list (ACT, NSW, SA, and Tas.), through to every adult (NT).

The occupations most commonly named as mandated reporters **are those who deal frequently with children in the course of their work: teachers, early childhood education and care practitioners, doctors, nurses, and police. This includes Youth Insearch Staff, Volunteers and Contractors.**

Legislation includes, but is not limited to:

- **Federal Family Law Act 1975** (Cth)
- **NSW Children and Young Persons (Care and Protection) Act 1998**
- **QLD Child Protection Act 1999**
- **VIC Children, Youth and Families Act 2005**

For ALL suspected criminal offences, such as serious physical assault, sexual assault, and disclosures of historical sexual abuse the **POLICE** must be contacted. The non-urgent number is **131 444**. This is the same number for every State.

**If you are in immediate danger or it's an emergency call 000.**

| State | How to make a report  | Who is a child? |
|-------|---|-----------------|
| NSW   | Child Protection Helpline <b>13 21 11</b><br><a href="#">Mandatory Reporter Guide (MRG)</a>   | Under 16 years  |
| QLD   | Child Safety<br><a href="#">Child Protection Guide (CPG)</a><br>Child safety Services Enquiries Unit <b>1800 811 810</b><br><a href="#">Regional Intake Services</a><br>After hours and on weekends: Child Safety After Hours Centre<br><b>1800 177 135</b> | Under 18 years  |

| State | How to make a report                                 | Who is a child? |
|-------|--|-----------------|
| VIC   | <a href="#">DFFH Child Protection Intake Service</a> | Under 17 years  |

*During Business Hours:*

**North Division Intake 1300 664 977**

(Banyule, Buloke, Darebin, Campaspe, Central Goldfield, Gannawarra, Greater Bendigo, Hume, Loddon, Macedon Ranges, Mildura, Moreland, Mount Alexander, Nillumbik, Swan Hill, Whittlesea, Yarra).

**South Division Intake 1300 655 795**

(Bass Coast, Baw Baw, Bayside, Cardinia, Casey, East Gippsland, Frankston, Glen Eira, Greater Dandenong, Kingston, Latrobe, Mornington Peninsula, Port Phillip, South Gippsland, Stonnington, Wellington).

**East Division Intake 1300 360 391**

(Alpine, Benalla, Boroondara, Greater Shepparton, Indigo, Knox, Manningham, Mansfield, Maroondah, Mitchell, Moira, Monash, Murrindindi, Strathbogie, Towong, Wangaratta, Whitehorse, Wodonga, Yarra Ranges).

**West Division Intake 1800 075 599**

(Brimbank, Hobsons Bay, Maribyrnong, Melbourne, Melton, Moonee Valley, Wyndham). (Rural and Regional Only)

*After Hours Child Protection Emergency Service: 13 12 78*