



AFP CHILD SAFE HANDBOOK

Quick Reference Guide

The *AFP Child Safe Handbook* outlines the AFP's approach to promoting the safety and wellbeing of children and young people and managing risk to children and young people arising through the day-to-day work of the AFP.

The purpose of the Handbook is to inform all AFP personnel including members of the executive, sworn police officers, unsworn AFP employees, contractors, consultants and volunteers of their obligations in relation to the safety and wellbeing of children and young people. Further details are included on [page 2](#) of the Handbook.

Commonwealth Child Safe Framework

In response to the Royal Commission into Institutional Responses to Child Sexual Abuse (Royal Commission), the Australian Government introduced the Commonwealth Child Safe Framework (the Framework) as a whole-of-government policy that sets minimum standards for creating and embedding a child safe culture and practice in Commonwealth entities.

The Framework mandates the requirement to provide an environment in which children and young people are safe, protected and respected, and where staff have the skills, confidence and knowledge to safeguard children. Further details are included on [page 2-4](#) of the Handbook.

National Principles for Child Safe Organisations

Under the Commonwealth Child Safe Framework, Commonwealth entities must ensure:

- 1** Child safety and wellbeing is embedded in organisational leadership, governance and culture.
- 2** Children and young people are informed about their rights, participate in decisions affecting them and are taken seriously.
- 3** Families and communities are informed and involved in promoting child safety and wellbeing.
- 4** Equity is upheld and diverse needs respected in policy and practice.
- 5** People working with children and young people are suitable and supported to reflect child safety and wellbeing values in practice.
- 6** Processes to respond to complaints and concerns are child focused.
- 7** Staff and volunteers are equipped with the knowledge, skills and awareness to keep children and young people safe through ongoing education and training.
- 8** Physical and online environments promote safety and wellbeing while minimising the opportunity for children and young people to be harmed.
- 9** Implementation of the national child safe principles is regularly reviewed and improved.
- 10** Policies and procedures document how the organisation is safe for children and young people.

Further details are included on [page 3](#) of the Handbook.

Child safe professional behaviours

AFP personnel must treat all children and young people with respect by ensuring equity is upheld and diverse needs are respected. AFP personnel must ensure they adhere to the following behaviours when performing work that involves children and young people outside of operational protocols.

- Professionally introduce yourself and show your ID to children and their parent or guardian.
- Use language and behaviours that are appropriate, professional and culturally appropriate.
- Listen and respond to the views and concerns of children, particularly if they communicate (verbally or non-verbally) that they do not feel safe and well.
- Promote the human rights, safety and wellbeing of all children in the AFP.
- Create an environment that promotes and enables children's participation and is welcoming, culturally safe and inclusive for all children and their families.
- Wherever possible, ensure another adult is present when working with or near children.
- Comply with all Australian legislation including Working with Children Checks and mandatory reporting requirements.

Further information is included on [page 5](#) of the Handbook.

Working with Children Checks maintenance and monitoring

AFP sworn members, AFP special members, Protective Service Officers and unsworn staff do not require a WWCC to undertake AFP duties. An assessment must be conducted by the Superintendent or Coordinator of the relevant business area to assess whether a position requires direct or indirect engagement with children in the first instance prior to recruiting contractors or volunteers.

Further details are included on [pages 8–9](#) of the Handbook.

Mandatory reporting

Mandatory reporting is a legislative requirement for people to report suspected child abuse and neglect to government authorities. State and territory mandatory reporting schemes provide prescriptive guidance on who constitutes a mandated reporter and how they must fulfil their obligations. Guidance on state and territory mandatory reporting schemes, and other state and territory reporting requirements are included on [pages 12–14](#) of the Handbook.

Internal reporting

AFP personnel who have reported child abuse to authorities must also report the matter to their manager or supervisor. This requirement is in addition to and not in place of legal requirements for mandatory reporting and must occur immediately following the reporting to authorities. It is the responsibility of all AFP personnel to ensure they understand their responsibilities under the AFP National Guideline on Integrity Reporting. Further details are included on [page 15](#) of the Handbook.

Further advice

Enquiries about the content of the Handbook should be referred to the **Commander ACCCE and Human Exploitation** or the **[Child Safe Programs Team](#)**.

