

Policy

Child Safe Environment



Purpose

This policy affirms Foodbank SA & NT's strong commitment to the safety and wellbeing of children and young people and the development and provision of a child safe environment.

Foodbank SA & NT's operations do not meet the definition of child-related work under South Australia's Children and Young People (Safety) Act 2017 or the Northern Territory's Care and Protection of Children Act 2007 (applicable legislation). Nevertheless, the organisation will prepare, adopt and regularly review policies and procedures designed to ensure safe environments for children and young people are established and maintained in respect to services and activities undertaken.

Definitions

Child or young person – persons under 18 years of age.

Child-Related Work – work defined as such under the applicable legislation. Foodbank SA & NT employees and volunteers do not undertake child-related work as so defined.

Harm – Section 17 of South Australia's Children and Young People (Safety) Act 2017 defines 'harm' to mean physical or psychological harm (whether caused by an act or omission), including harm caused by sexual, physical, mental or emotional abuse or neglect.

Mandated Notifiers – persons who undertake a prescribed list of roles as set out in South Australia's Children and Young People (Safety) Act 2017. Foodbank SA & NT employees and volunteers do not meet the definition of mandated notifiers, however they are advised how to make a report if they are concerned for a child's welfare.

National Police Check (NPC) – a summary of an individual's offender history in Australia and a record of their criminal history relating to convictions, finding of guilt or pending court proceedings.

Student – a child or young person who engages with Foodbank SA & NT's Education Programs either onsite at their school or on Foodbank SA & NT premises.

Young Clients – persons under 18 years of age who shop in the Food Hubs with or without the supervision of an adult.

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Effective Date	26 Aug 2025	Functional Owner	Education Programs Manager
Previous Reviews	13 Apr 2023	Approved Authority	Chief Executive Officer
Next Review Date	26 Aug 2027	Reference Number	EDU-01

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Young Volunteers – children and young people who volunteer for Foodbank SA & NT, including:

- **Young Person Volunteer** – a child or young person who is engaged by Foodbank SA & NT to volunteer as an individual with no connection to an educational institution
- **Student Volunteer** – individual students or groups of students undertaking volunteering or work experience in connection to their primary or secondary educational institution.

Working with Children Check (WWCC) – is a check under the South Australian Child Safety (Prohibited Persons) Act 2016 and the Northern Territory's Care and Protection of Children (Screening) Regulations 2010 and is required by individuals undertaking child-related work as defined under the applicable legislation. Foodbank SA & NT employees and volunteers do not undertake child-related work as so defined and as such, are not required by law to hold a Working with Children Check.

Scope

This policy applies to all individuals working in the organisation, including:

- Employees
- Volunteers
- Contractors
- Interns and secondary and tertiary students on placement at Foodbank SA & NT.

This policy applies to activities that occur on and off Foodbank SA & NT sites, including when the above individuals are representing Foodbank SA & NT at schools.

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Commitment

1. Foodbank SA & NT acknowledges the importance of child safety and is committed to:
 - 1.1. Creating a safe environment for children and young people
 - 1.2. Treating children and young people with respect and dignity
 - 1.3. Listening to and understanding the needs of children and young people
 - 1.4. Recognising the diverse needs of children and young people
 - 1.5. Taking all reasonable steps to protect the children and young people who engage with the organisation.
2. Foodbank SA & NT is committed to providing a workplace free from bullying, harassment, discrimination and harm for all employees and volunteers, including Young Volunteers. Further information may be found in the Bullying, Harassment and Discrimination Policy.
3. Foodbank SA & NT encourages and respects the views of children and young people who volunteer with and access our services. The organisation will listen to and act upon any concerns that children, young people or their families raise.
4. Foodbank SA & NT employees and volunteers are issued with, are required to acknowledge and must act in accordance with the Child Safe Environments Policy.

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5. *Foodbank SA & NT takes the feedback of children, young people and their parents or guardians seriously and will address it in a child focussed, age-appropriate and culturally safe manner.*

Children's Participation and Supervision

6. *Individuals must be aged 14 years and over to volunteer with Foodbank SA & NT.*
7. *To minimise the risk to their safety and wellbeing, Young Volunteers aged between 14 and 18 may volunteer in storerooms and warehouses at any time and may volunteer in Food Hubs outside of opening hours.*
8. *All volunteers, including Young Volunteers, are supervised by a Foodbank SA & NT employee. For the avoidance of doubt, adult volunteers are not authorised to supervise Young Volunteers.*
9. *Foodbank SA & NT encourages individuals under the age of 14 to learn about food insecurity and engage with and support the organisation in age-appropriate ways including Food Drives, Fundraising, the Foodbank Superhero Program and Foodbank SA & NT Education Programs.*
10. *Foodbank SA & NT will obtain consent from a Young Person Volunteer's parent or guardian before engaging them as a Young Volunteer.*
11. *Student Volunteer opportunities will be conducted onsite and are subject to availability. Student Volunteer activities will occur on allocated days to help ensure child safety.*
12. *Student Volunteers assisting onsite must complete a Student Volunteer Form securing parent/guardian permission to volunteer. The form includes parental/guardian consent or otherwise for the taking and use of photographs.*
13. *Groups of Student Volunteers, including but not limited to school and Scouts groups, must complete a School Visit and Volunteering Registration Form. This form confirms parental/guardian permission has been secured for all children and young people attending the volunteer activity, including consent or otherwise for the taking and use of photographs.*
14. *If the number of Student Volunteers at a Foodbank SA & NT site exceeds six, parent/guardian or teacher/group leader supervision will be required.*
15. *Parent/guardian permission need only be provided once, unless Foodbank SA & NT considers the activity to be undertaken poses additional risks requiring further permission.*

Recruitment and Screening Practices

16. *Foodbank SA & NT will take all reasonable steps to ensure that it engages the most suitable and appropriate individuals to work with children and young people. The organisation will conduct interviews and referee checks for all employees and volunteers in accordance with the Recruitment and Selection Policy and Volunteer Recruitment and Selection Policy.*
17. *All employees, adult volunteers and Young Person Volunteers are required to provide Foodbank SA & NT with a satisfactory National Police Check before commencement.*

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18. Foodbank SA & NT employees and volunteers do not undertake child-related work as so defined by the applicable legislation and as such are not required by law to hold a Working with Children Check. Foodbank SA & NT acknowledges that employees in the following roles may supervise children and young people:
- Chief Executive Officer
 - Education Programs Team employees
 - Marketing and Fundraising Team employees
 - Reception employees
 - Food Hub Coordinators (or equivalent)
 - Food Hub Support Staff (or equivalent)
 - Warehouse Supervisors (or equivalent)
 - Volunteer Coordinator
- so, to support the safety and wellbeing of children and people, will be required by the organisation to obtain and maintain a valid Working with Children Check.
19. Foodbank SA & NT will notify, via section 19 report, the South Australian Department of Human Services Screening Unit if a person holding a Working with Children Check:
- 19.1. has new assessable information
 - 19.2. is prohibited from working with children in another State or Territory
 - 19.3. becomes a registrable offender under the Child Sex Offenders Registration Act 2006, or
 - 19.4. makes a disclosure to you under section 66 of the Child Sex Offenders Registration Act 2006.

Training and Support

20. Foodbank SA & NT will provide supervision, training and support to employees and volunteers regarding the importance of keeping children and young people safe.
21. All new employees and volunteers, including Young Volunteers, will participate in an induction and receive and acknowledge the organisation's Code of Conduct and Child Safe Environment Policy. They will receive updates on these policies as and when they are approved and issued.

Reporting and Responding to Harm or Suspected Harm

22. Foodbank SA & NT acknowledges that certain individuals are mandated notifiers. Foodbank SA & NT employees and volunteers do not meet the criteria of mandated notifiers under the applicable legislation. All employees and volunteers are informed that whilst not mandated notifiers, they can and should make a report when they suspect on reasonable grounds that a child or young person is, or may be, at risk of harm.
23. Staff and volunteers are reminded that a suspicion on reasonable grounds is sufficient to lodge a report – evidence is not required. Suspicion on reasonable grounds includes but is not limited to:
- 23.1. The child reports they are at risk of or have been harmed
 - 23.2. Observations of behaviour or injuries
 - 23.3. Child advises someone they know has been harmed (they may be referring to themselves).

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24. Reports are to be made to:
- South Australia – Child Abuse Report Line (CARL) on 13 14 78
 - Northern Territory – Care Services on 1800 700 250
- If the child or young person is at immediate risk, the matter should be reported to the South Australia or Northern Territory Police on 000.*
25. *Although permission is not required to make a report, Foodbank SA & NT employees and volunteers are required to notify either the Education Programs Manager and/or Chief Executive Officer after they have made a report.*

Supporting Children, Young People and their Families

26. *Foodbank SA & NT recognises that even when a notification is made, the organisation may still have a role in supporting the child or young person. Support may include but is not limited to:*
- 26.1. *Referring the child, young person or their family to other appropriate services, and / or*
 - 26.2. *Displaying information about services that can assist children and their families in areas accessed by children and their families.*

Reporting and Responding to Feedback

27. *When visiting Foodbank SA & NT sites and/or volunteering, Students and Young Volunteers will receive an age-appropriate induction and be advised what actions they can take if they feel unsafe at any time.*
28. *Foodbank SA & NT welcomes feedback from children and young people who visit or volunteer and their parents or guardians. Feedback, both positive and constructive, is an essential part of helping Foodbank SA & NT continuously improve its quality of service and engagement with young people.*
29. *Foodbank SA & NT takes all complaints and concerns seriously and will:*
- 29.1. *Actively encourage children and young people to speak up about their concerns, whether the behaviour is happening to them or someone else*
 - 29.2. *Acknowledge and listen to the feedback and make a record of it*
 - 29.3. *Investigate and address feedback promptly, sensitively, fairly, in a cultural, age-appropriate and child focussed manner and in accordance with the principles of procedural fairness*
 - 29.4. *Where appropriate, encourage discussion of concerns openly with the relevant employees and volunteers to resolve the feedback*
 - 29.5. *Respond to the feedback with an outcome*
 - 29.6. *Clearly document and securely store decisions and actions taken in response to feedback*
 - 29.7. *Communicate the outcome of investigations to the feedback and ensure that any recommended improvements or changes are implemented effectively.*
30. *Children, young people, parents or guardians can provide feedback by:*
- *phone (08) 8351 1136*
 - *post at PO Box 40, Edwardstown SA 5039*
 - *email:*

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- Students and Student Volunteers – to the Education Programs Manager at schools@foodbanksa.org.au and/or the Chief Executive Officer at gregp@foodbanksa.org.au
- Young Person Volunteers – to the Volunteer Coordinator at office.volunteer@foodbanksa.org.au and/or the Chief Executive Officer at gregp@foodbanksa.org.au.

31. Feedback relating to the conduct of employees or volunteers will be managed in accordance with relevant policies and procedures including but not limited to the Grievance and Dispute Resolution Policy and the Performance Management Policy.

Risk Management

32. To help maintain a safe environment for children and young people, Foodbank SA & NT will review its risks regularly and implements strategies to eliminate, minimise and manage these risks in accordance with the Risk Management Policy. Foodbank SA & NT has the following policies, procedures and initiatives in place:
- 32.1. Risk Assessment – Child Safe Environment
 - 32.2. Student Volunteer Form
 - 32.3. School Visit and Volunteering Form
 - 32.4. Induction and ongoing training
 - 32.5. Your Story (online Food Hub feedback form).
33. Evaluation of these strategies and the development of additional strategies to eliminate, minimise and control risks to children and young people occur as part of our ongoing risk management process.
34. A Risk Assessment will be carried out prior to activities where young people will be volunteering, excluding normal daily operations of a Food Hub or Warehouse.

Communication

35. Foodbank SA & NT's Child Safe Environment Policy is available to employees, volunteers, schools, children and young people and their families on the Foodbank SA & NT website and is distributed to employees and volunteers periodically.
36. Foodbank SA & NT's Child Safe Environment Policy will be provided upon request by emailing schools@foodbanksa.org.au or calling (08) 8351 1136. Parents and guardians will be asked to identify if they have read the Child Safe Environment Policy when consenting to their child volunteering at Foodbank SA & NT.

Policy Review

37. Foodbank SA & NT will, at a minimum, review the Child Safe Environment Policy and related documentation once every 5 years as required by the South Australian Children and Young People (Safety) Act 2017.

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Responsibilities

38. All Foodbank SA & NT leaders will:
- 38.1. *Champion the rights of children and young people*
 - 38.2. *Provide strong leadership to promote inclusive and welcoming environments for children and young people*
 - 38.3. *Prioritise and take actions to ensure the safety and wellbeing of children and young people*
 - 38.4. *Promote accountability regarding the maintenance of a child safe environment amongst employees and volunteers*
 - 38.5. *Ensure training and resources are available to support employees and volunteers to understand their obligations under the Child Safe Environment Policy and applicable legislation.*
39. All Foodbank SA & NT employees and volunteers will take responsibility for promoting and protecting the safety and wellbeing of children and young people by:
- 39.1. *Adhering to the organisation's Child Safe Environment Policy at all times and taking all reasonable steps to ensure the safety and protection of children and young people*
 - 39.2. *Treating everyone (this includes employees, volunteers, students, children, young people and parents) including those of different race, ethnicity, gender, gender identity, sexual orientation, age, social class, physical ability or attributes and religious beliefs with respect and honesty and ensure equity is upheld*
 - 39.3. *Being a positive role model to children and young people in all conduct with them*
 - 39.4. *Setting clear boundaries about appropriate behaviour between yourself and the children and young people in our organisation – boundaries help everyone to understand their roles*
 - 39.5. *Only communicating with children and young people using Foodbank SA & NT devices, phones and email addresses*
 - 39.6. *Not connecting with Students or Young Person Volunteers on social media*
 - 39.7. *Listening and responding appropriately to the views and concerns of children and young people*
 - 39.8. *Being alert to bullying behaviours and responding promptly and appropriately*
 - 39.9. *Ensuring another adult is always present or in sight when conducting one to one tours, instruction or other activity*
 - 39.10. *Being alert to children and young people who are, or may be at risk of harm, and reporting this quickly to the Child Abuse Report Line (13 14 78) or Care Services*
 - 39.11. *Responding quickly, fairly and transparently to any complaints made by a child, young person or their parent/guardian*
 - 39.12. *Encouraging children and young people to 'have a say' on issues that are important to them*
 - 39.13. *Meeting the requirements of the related legislation*
 - 39.14. *Not developing any 'special' relationships with children and young people that could be seen as favouritism such as the offering of gifts or special treatment*
 - 39.15. *Not doing things of a personal nature that a child or young person can do for themselves, such as toileting or changing clothes*
 - 39.16. *Not discriminating against any child or young person because of age, gender, cultural background, religion, vulnerability or sexuality*
 - 39.17. *Not transporting Students or Young Volunteers in either their own or a Foodbank SA & NT vehicle without a parent or other adult guardian present*

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39.18. Reporting to the Chief Executive Officer and/or Education Programs Manager if they have a reasonable suspicion that an employee or volunteer has breached this Policy.

Related Legislation

Children and Young People (Safety) Act 2017 (South Australia)
Child Safety (Prohibited Persons) Act 2016 (South Australia)
Child Safety (Prohibited Persons) Regulations 2019 (South Australia)
Care and Protection of Children Act 2007 (Northern Territory)
Care and Protection of Children (Screening) Regulations 2010 (Northern Territory)

Related Documents

Australian Human Rights Commission, Child Safe Organisations, National Principles
<https://childsafe.humanrights.gov.au/national-principles>
Bullying, Harassment and Discrimination Policy
Code of Conduct
Government of South Australia, Department of Child Protection, Report abuse or neglect
<https://www.childprotection.sa.gov.au/reporting-child-abuse/report-child-abuse-or-neglect>
Government of South Australia, Department of Human Services, Child Safe Environments
<https://dhs.sa.gov.au/services/community-and-family-services/child-safe-environments>
Government of South Australia, Department of Human Services, Working with Children Checks
<https://screening.sa.gov.au/home>
Grievance and Dispute Resolution Policy
National Principles for Child Safe Organisations
Performance Management Policy
Recruitment and Selection Policy
Risk Assessment – Child Safe Environments
Student Volunteer Form
School Visit and Volunteering Form
Volunteer Recruitment and Selection Policy

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Acknowledgement

I, _____ (print full name), acknowledge that I have received and read a copy of this Child Safe Environment Policy and understand that this document describes the ethical standards of conduct and behavioural expectations of me as an employee, volunteer, or contractor of Foodbank SA & NT.

Employee / Volunteer / Contractor:

Sign _____ Date: ____/____/____

Print Name: _____

The original signed copy of this page of the Child Safe Environments Policy must be forwarded to the Human Resources Manager (for employees) or to the Volunteer Coordinator (for volunteers) and be scanned to the individual's personnel file.

All Site Coordinators must ensure that all new employees / volunteers / contractors have signed the online or hard copy within 1 week of commencement of employment or volunteering.