ACTION

Six steps for creating and embedding a Statement of Commitment to Child and Youth Safety

Creating a Statement of Commitment to Child and Youth Safety is an opportunity to think deeply about what it means for your organisation to be child and youth safe.

It must be more than 'words on a page'. It needs to be met with consistent action that creates an organisational culture of safety, transparency, and awareness.

Reflect on your child safe practices and values

Your statement should match your organisation's core values and the way you work. Ask yourself:

- How do we support children's right to feel safe?
- What do we do to prevent harm and abuse?
- How do we handle any concerns or reports of harm?
- How do we respect diversity and support Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children?
- Are our staff and volunteers ready and able to keep children safe?
- Does our vision and mission include children's safety?
- Do we have a zero-tolerance attitude to child abuse and harm?

Seek input from others

Involve people inside and outside your organisation to help create a meaningful statement. This could include:

- explaining clearly why this statement matters
- asking children and young people through surveys or fun activities
- getting ideas from staff, volunteers, and the community
- talking with your Board about their role in creating and supporting this statement.

Develop your Statement of Commitment

Using the feedback you have collected to draft your Statement. A strong Statement answers questions like:

- What will we do to keep children safe?
- What values guide us when it comes to child and youth safety?
- How will adults in our organisation uphold this commitment?
- How will this commitment be part of our plans, decisions, and daily work?
- How will we create a safe, welcoming place for Aboriginal children and young people?
- How will we show respect for truth-telling and Aboriginal self-determination?

Set actionable goals

Make sure your statement leads to real action by:

- Creating a clear way for people to report when the organisation isn't following the statement
- Setting measurable goals to show how the statement is put into practice
- Making sure leaders track how well child safety is supported by:
  - opening conversations about risks and acting when needed
  - checking policies and procedures are followed
  - addressing any harmful behaviour
  - sharing responsibility for a zero-tolerance approach
  - leading by example and listening to children's voices.

Communicate and embed your Statement of Commitment

Everyone in your organisation should know and support the statement. You can do this by:

- sharing it with children and young people so they know their safety matters
- displaying it on posters in common areas
- including it in induction materials for staff and volunteers, and asking them to acknowledge it
- discussing it in meetings and professional development
- recognising staff or volunteers who live the commitment
- publishing it on your website, newsletters, or social media
- using videos or training sessions to explain it
- running sessions to talk about how to bring the commitment to life.

Review it regularly

Don't let your statement just sit on a shelf. Keep it alive by:

- setting a date to review how it's working and find ways to improve
- inviting children, young people, and their families to be part of the review process
- checking after any incidents or feedback to see if changes are needed.