

CHAPTER 4

ADF CADETS YOUTH PROTECTION AND SAFETY

INTRODUCTION

2.4.1 Defence is committed to ensuring the health, protection and wellbeing of all youth who engage with Defence. Youth Protection and Safety plays an important role in creating a youth safe culture and an environment where people identify, consider and address risks to youth before and as they arise.

2.4.2 Defence's highest priority within the ADF Cadets program is the safety of youth and to ensure youth are safe from physical dangers, protected from abuse and feel respected.

2.4.3 Defence's Youth Protection and Safety policy is outlined in [Part 1](#).

POLICY INTENT

2.4.4 The intent of this policy is to provide specific guidance to ensure Service Cadet programs manage youth protection and youth safety in a manner consistent with the overarching youth safety principles and commitments articulated in the Defence Youth Engagement Statement, Defence Youth Engagement Policy and Safety Framework (DYSF), as defined in [Part 1](#).

POLICY

YOUTH PROTECTION ROLES, RESPONSIBILITIES AND ACCOUNTABILITIES

2.4.5 The youth protection requirements of the Commonwealth Child Safe Framework (CCSF) align closely with the elements of a safety management system. Hence, youth protection is managed as a specialist Safety Domain within the Defence Work Health and Safety Management System (WHSMS).

2.4.6 Chief of Personnel (CPERS) is responsible for the governance and assurance of the DYSF, which is a fusion of youth protection and youth safety:

- a. **Youth Protection.** Encompasses matters related to protecting all youth from child abuse, managing the risk of child abuse, providing support to a youth at risk of child abuse and responding to incidents or allegations of child abuse
- b. **Youth Safety.** Encompasses matters related to the physical safety of youth and adult volunteers when participating in ADF Cadets activities. This is managed through the application of the Defence Work Health and Safety (WHS) Framework, which is managed within Service WHS Systems and other Defence safety domains.

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2.4.7 CPERS is appointed the Accountable Officer and is the Safety Domain Owner for youth protection. CPERS is accountable to the Secretary and Chief of the Defence Force (CDF) for:

- a. providing enterprise-level youth protection policy, guidance and tools for implementation within Group/Service WHSMS
- b. ensuring, in conjunction with Group Heads and Service Chiefs, that adequate resources are provided for effective youth protection management
- c. providing youth protection governance and assurance that ensures Defence meets youth protection obligations.

2.4.8 Service Chiefs are accountable to the Secretary and CDF (through CPERS) for:

- a. extending application of the Service WHSMS and incident management systems, where practicable, to include youth protection management
- b. ensuring, in conjunction with CPERS, that adequate resources are provided for effective youth protection management.

2.4.9 Service commanders, managers and supervisors must:

- a. effectively manage youth protection in accordance with policy and guidance defined in the Defence Youth Engagement Policy, Part 1 and relevant Service youth protection guidance and directions
- b. ensure that ADF Cadets Adults and Youth are aware of their youth protection responsibilities, understand how to report an incident and comply with youth protection policies and directions.

YOUTH SAFETY ROLES, RESPONSIBILITIES AND ACCOUNTABILITIES

2.4.10 The Service Chiefs are appointed as the 'Officer' under the *Work, Health and Safety Act 2011* (WHS Act) for their respective cadet programs.

2.4.11 While ADF Cadets Adults and cadets are not employees of the Department of Defence for the purposes of the WHS Act, they are administered as 'workers' in accordance with section 7.

2.4.12 Service Cadet programs must implement management systems which are compliant with Commonwealth legislation and relevant Service WHS Systems.

2.4.13 Service commanders, managers and supervisors must:

- a. effectively manage youth related WHS in accordance with policy and guidance defined in Service WHS orders, instructions and publications

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- b. ensure that ADF Cadets Adults and Youth are aware of their WHS responsibilities and comply with policy and direction.

THE DEFENCE YOUTH SAFETY FRAMEWORK – A HOLISTIC APPROACH TO YOUTH PROTECTION AND YOUTH SAFETY

2.4.14 The DYSF is broader than a pure safety framework. It includes youth specific components which are designed to ensure young people are safe, protected and respected and to ensure ADF Cadets Adults have the skills, confidence and knowledge to safe guard youth within Defence.

2.4.15 Youth protection and youth safety are both managed within a safety management system and, as such, share common features and responsibilities. Service Cadet programs are responsible for the implementation of youth protection and youth safety systems that:

- a. Prioritise and promote youth protection and safety risk management appropriate to the ADF Cadets, for example, that consider the age, maturity, understanding, behaviour and ability of cadets to make good decisions
- b. Promote a youth safe culture. Inculcate a youth protection and safety culture that ensures all adults involved in ADF Cadets activities demonstrate their commitment to youth protection and safety through their agreement to undertake their responsibilities in accordance with the **Guide 2: Defence Youth Safe Code of Conduct**.
- c. Ensure the suitability of all adults for engagement with youth. All adults involved in ADF Cadets activities, including Defence Approved Helpers (DAH), must complete the mandated screening actions in accordance with Section 2, Chapter 2, Management of ADF Cadets Adults, prior to their acceptance as a volunteer
- d. Provide appropriate training. Ensure all ADF Cadets Adults and Youth complete youth safety training appropriate to their role and responsibilities
- e. Seek wide engagement. Encourage proactive engagement with parents, guardians and other responsible third parties involved in the protection of young people
- f. Promote shared ownership. Ensure the involvement of cadets, parents and adult volunteers in creating and maintaining a youth safe environment
- g. Promote a healthy reporting culture. Ensure Youth and ADF Cadets Adults including DAH, Defence personnel, families and the wider community know what to do if they have concerns about youth protection and safety in the ADF Cadets context and are aware of the process for reporting ADF Cadets youth protection and safety events/incidents

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- h. Plan and deliver activities that are safe for youth
- i. Seek continuous improvement. Ensure the effective reporting, investigation and management of all breaches of the policies, relevant codes of conduct, youth protection and safety events/incidents in accordance with [Part 1, Section 3, Chapter 3](#) and **Guide 8: Defence Youth Protection Event or Incident Management** to ensure the timely and accurate capture of data to inform continuous improvement.

RISK MANAGEMENT

2.4.16 Defence has a duty of care to ensure the health, protection and wellbeing of youth. Hazards and risks to the health, protection and wellbeing of youth are to be eliminated or minimised so far as reasonably practicable.

2.4.17 The purpose of youth protection and youth safety risk management is to identify potential risks to youth health, protection and wellbeing and to implement action to minimise those risks. In assessing risks to youth, consideration must be given to the expectations of volunteers and the developmental stage(s) and behavioural nature of cadets. Specific hazards to be considered include the risks associated with the protection of youth from the unacceptable behaviour of adults and other youth.

2.4.18 **Context-specific Risk Management.** Commanders, managers and supervisors must ensure that all youth protection and WHS risks, specific to the context in which youth are engaged, are identified and managed in accordance with CPERS's Youth Protection Domain and Service WHSMS risk management policies, applying the following direction:

- a. **Annual Risk Assessment.** Youth protection and youth safety risk assessments must be undertaken and reviewed annually to assess all context-specific youth protection and youth safety risks
- b. **Task/Activity Risk Assessment.** Risks to youth protection and safety must be considered and effectively managed as part of any deliberate and/or immediate risk assessment for a task/activity
- c. **Risk Control Implementation and Maintenance.** All reasonably practicable youth protection and WHS risk controls must be documented in orders, instructions and publications as appropriate, implemented and effectively maintained (see [Part 1, Section 1, Chapter 2](#))
- d. **Risk Control Awareness.** All personnel, including youth, must be made aware of youth protection risk controls (see [Part 1, Section 3, Chapter 1](#))
- e. **Risk Registers.** Reserve and Cadet Support Division (RCSD) will monitor, analyse and report on matters relating to youth protection and safety at an enterprise level. Director General Australian Navy Cadets (DGANC), the

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Commander Australian Army Cadets (COMD AAC) and the Director General Cadets - Air Force (DGCADETS-AF) are to ensure all Service program specific youth protection and safety hazards, risks and issues are included in the Service program level WHS hazard, risk or issues registers which should be reviewed annually.

2.4.19 Joint Cadet Activities. A lead Cadet Service, as agreed between DGANC, COMD AAC or DG CADETS AF, has responsibility for the development of the activity risk management plans and conduct of a Joint Cadet Activity. Each Cadet Service participating in the activity is to countersign the plans. The lead Cadet Service requirements will take precedence where there is an inconsistency in requirements. Other Cadet Services attending a Joint Cadet Activity can produce their own specific risk management plan to supplement the management of their Service specific cadets but such plans are not to lessen the value of the risk management plans of the nominated lead Cadet Service.

YOUTH PROTECTION EVENT/INCIDENT WORK HEALTH AND SAFETY INVESTIGATION

2.4.20 Thorough event/incident investigation and subsequent review and monitoring assist in improving safety through identifying new risks and enabling improvements to eliminate or minimise the recurrence of the event. Youth protection event/incident and WHS investigations are to be conducted in accordance with [Part 1, Section 3, Chapter 3](#) and **Guide 8: Defence Youth Protection Event or Incident Management** and relevant Defence and/or Group/Service WHS and incident management policy.

PRIVACY

2.4.21 Privacy matters relevant to this policy are to be managed in accordance with [Part 1 Section 1 Chapter 2](#) and the [Defence Privacy Policy](#).

Accountable Officer: Chief of Personnel

Policy Owner: Head Reserve and Cadet Support Division