



AFP Child Safe Handbook



AFP

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AFP Child Safe Handbook



Commissioner's Message

As a Child Safe Organisation, child protection remains a priority for the Australian Federal Police (AFP) now and into the future. The AFP is dedicated to ensuring all AFP appointees (including volunteers) understand and follow the [National Principles for Child Safe Organisations](#) and the [Commonwealth Child Safe Framework](#) to ensure child safety and wellbeing are considered through our work at all levels of the organisation.

The *AFP Child Safe Handbook* has been developed to inform AFP appointees and volunteers of their responsibilities to ensure children and young people are kept safe from abuse, harm or neglect. Child safety and wellbeing must be at the forefront of considerations when developing and managing policies, programs and projects as well as in operational and investigative settings.

The Handbook recognises that it is everyone's responsibility to safeguard the wellbeing of children and young people, and as Commissioner I am proud that the AFP is a Child Safe Organisation.

Reece P Kershaw APM
COMMISSIONER
AUSTRALIAN FEDERAL POLICE
July 2023

Disclosure and classification

This document is classified **OFFICIAL** and is intended for **INTERNAL AFP USE**.

Compliance

The *AFP Child Safe Handbook* (Handbook) is part of the AFP's professional standards framework. The AFP Commissioner's Order on Professional Standards (CO2) outlines the expectations for appointees to adhere to the requirements of the framework. Inappropriate departures from the provisions of this Handbook may constitute a breach of AFP professional standards and be dealt with under Part V of the [Australian Federal Police Act 1979](#) (Cth).

This document is a Functional Governance Handbook as defined under s.4 of the AFP Commissioner's Order on Governance (CO1).

Further information about the *AFP Child Safe Handbook*, support documents and AFP Governance instruments documents can be obtained through childsafeprograms@afp.gov.au

Application

The *AFP Child Safe Handbook* applies to all appointees and volunteers who work for the AFP including contracted staff.

Contents

Commissioner's message	i
Introduction	2
AFP appointee and volunteer responsibilities	5
Child safe professional behaviours	6
Regular risk assessment and mitigation	8
Working safely with children and young people	10
Working with Children Checks	12
Training	14
Application to fund third parties including grants and procurement	15
Reporting suspicions of child abuse or harm	16
Mandatory reporting schemes	18
Case studies	20
AFP Psychological Services, SHIELD and wellbeing	22
Responding to complaints or disclosures about AFP appointees	24
Australian privacy principles	25
Further advice	25
Accountability and responsibility	26
Definitions	29
Related documents	32

Introduction

The *AFP Child Safe Handbook* sets out the AFP's approach to promoting the safety and wellbeing of children and young people while managing any risks to children and young people that may arise through the day-to-day work of the AFP.

The AFP has zero tolerance towards the abuse, injury, neglect and exploitation of children or young people. Children and young people can be among the most vulnerable people with whom the AFP engages.

The Handbook outlines the National Principles for Child Safe Organisations that inform the AFP's approach to becoming a Child Safe Organisation, as recommended by the [Royal Commission into Institutional Responses to Child Sexual Abuse](#) (Royal Commission).

The AFP Child Safe Handbook

In response to the 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.

AFP appointees and volunteers must consider children's rights and child safety requirements and obligations when developing and managing policies, programs and projects. The Handbook recognises that it is a corporate responsibility to safeguard the wellbeing of children and young people and that it is the responsibility of all AFP appointees and volunteers to safeguard children in conjunction with the AFP Commissioner's Order on Professional Standards (CO2) and the AFP Code of Conduct. The Handbook supports the domestic operational environment including Australia's international obligations under the [Convention on the Rights of the Child](#).

For the purpose of the Handbook, a child is defined as a person under 18 years of age. However, a young person is commonly defined as a person between 18 and 24 years of age ([Australian Institute of Health and Welfare](#), July 2020). The Australian Government [National Strategy for Young Australians](#) defines youth in general as 12 to 24 years of age.

National Principles for Child Safe Organisations

- 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.

AFP appointee responsibilities

The AFP Commissioner formally adopted the National Principles on 11 June 2020 and made a Statement of Commitment in support of the AFP being a child safe organisation.

All AFP appointees and volunteers must consider it a professional responsibility to know what is in the best interests of children and young people as a primary consideration in all decisions made and actions taken in any operational and support environment. Supervisors must ensure their team members are aware of and comply with this Handbook.

AFP appointees include members of the executive and all AFP employees including sworn police officers, protective service officers, unsworn AFP employees, contractors, consultants and volunteers.

The AFP Child Safe Handbook is guided by the following principles:

- / recognise children's rights and interests
- / build and maintain a child safe culture and environment
- / ensure all AFP appointees and volunteers are aware of and comply with relevant requirements, and
- / provide support and protection to staff who report incidents under this instrument.

The AFP is committed to the Commonwealth Child Safe Framework by:

- / undertaking annual risk assessments to evaluate the risk of harm to children and young people and put in place strategies to manage those risks
- / establishing and updating training and compliance regimes to ensure all AFP appointees and volunteers are aware of, and comply with, child safety requirements
- / complying with relevant State, Territory and Commonwealth legislation including Working with Children or Working with Vulnerable People checks, mandatory reporting requirements and the adoption and implementation of the [National Principles for Child Safe Organisations](#).

The AFP will be assigning a Child Safe Champion to provide leadership and promote a child safe culture across the organisation. Child Safe Officers will be assigned to provide support, advice, expertise and awareness on child safety issues.

Contact details for the Child Safe Officers can be found on the [Commonwealth Child Safe Framework](#) page on the HUB

Child safe professional behaviours

AFP appointees and volunteers must treat all children and young people with respect by ensuring equity is upheld and diverse needs are respected. AFP appointees and volunteers must ensure they adhere to the following behaviours when performing work that involves children and young people, outside of operational protocols. AFP appointees and volunteers must understand the importance of the specific roles and duties they perform individually and collectively to ensure the wellbeing and safety of children and young people is at the forefront of all decisions made.

Child safety professional behaviours

- / Use language and behaviours that are appropriate, professional and culturally appropriate.
- / Wherever possible, ensure that another adult is present when working with or near children.
- / Create an environment that promotes and enables children's participation and is welcoming, culturally safe and inclusive for all children and their families.
- / Respect diversity in cultures and child rearing practices while keeping child safety paramount.
- / Promote the human rights, safety and wellbeing of all children and young people.

- / Take a preventative, proactive and participatory approach to child safety by valuing and empowering children to participate in decisions that affect them.
- / Foster a culture of openness that supports all persons to safely disclose risks of harm to children including providing internal reporting mechanisms.
- / 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.
- / Comply with all Australian legislation including Working with Children Checks as required by AFP appointees and volunteers for all purposes beyond AFP duties and mandatory reporting requirements.
- / Immediately report to your manager/supervisor any failure to comply with this Handbook in accordance with appropriate procedures.
- / Before photographing or filming a child or using children's images for non-investigational purposes always obtain informed consent from the child and parent or guardian. An explanation of how the photograph or film will be used must be provided.
- / Ensure media/images used for non-investigational purposes present children in a dignified and respectful manner. Do not reveal identifying information about a child when sending media/images electronically or publishing the material in any form. The only instance whereby identifying information can be used is when the imagery relates to a Missing Persons or Amber Alert requirement when a child goes missing.
- / Call **000** if a child is in immediate danger.

The AFP Diversity and Inclusion Strategy promotes the inclusion, respect and valuing of the inherent differences among AFP appointees and volunteers by developing, implementing and reviewing strategies designed to include, recruit and retain members with diverse backgrounds.

AFP supports the Malunggang Indigenous Officers Network (MION) which is a voluntary employee network established to provide support to First Nations members and provide advice to the AFP executive from a First Nations perspective.

Regular risk assessment and mitigation

Annual risk assessment

Child safety and wellbeing is embedded in organisational leadership, governance and culture (National Principle 1). The Handbook ensures consideration of child safety as part of all risk assessments.

Assistant Commissioners and equivalents are responsible for commissioning and approving their respective command risk assessment and treatment plans. These risk assessments and treatment plans must be reviewed every 12 months and include considerations as prescribed under the AFP Risk Management Framework or as otherwise directed by Commander Human Exploitation to:

- / identify and assess risks related to child safety and put in place strategies to manage identified risks in reference to the AFP National Guideline on risk management
- / ensure that, to the extent that it is reasonably practicable to do so, consultation is undertaken with AFP appointees and volunteers that engage with children when undertaking the processes of assessment of risk including controls and treatments
- / provide the details of the risk assessment, controls and treatments to the relevant Assistant Commissioner (including consultation if any) within 14 days of completion or other AFP requirements. Ensure implementation of the identified risk controls and treatments in accordance with deadlines, if any
- / inform the relevant Assistant Commissioner if a risk control has not been, or is not able to be implemented, and identify modifications to the risk assessment, and
- / ensure that AFP appointees and volunteers under your responsibility are informed and given directions as to risk controls and treatments that require action by them and monitor to ensure compliance with such requirements.

Other responsibilities

Assistant Commissioners and equivalents are responsible for ensuring Commanders or Superintendents and equivalents assess and control risk and modify the risk assessment as necessary to respond to any change in the risk or control. All AFP appointees and volunteers must comply with all requirements or directions given to them by their manager for the implementation of risk controls and treatments.

All AFP appointees and volunteers are responsible for utilising controls and treatments required to manage risk on an ongoing basis in reference to the AFP Risk Management Policy.

AFP appointees and volunteers must consider child safety risks when developing their own risk assessment and treatment plans alongside other risk management and engagement activities. All AFP appointees and volunteers should outline any risks with the purpose of reducing or avoiding risk.

Managers and supervisors must take reasonable action to address any failure by AFP appointees and volunteers to comply with the requirements of a risk assessment or associated direction.

Working safely with children and young people

AFP recruitment and staff management practices have been updated to ensure that AFP appointees and volunteers working with children and young people are suitable and supported to reflect child safety and wellbeing values in practice (National Principle 5).

Assessment of current roles

Superintendents or equivalents must ensure AFP appointees and volunteers within their area of responsibility, who may have direct or indirect engagement with children, are appropriately trained in working with children. Further information concerning Working with Children Checks are included on page 12 of the Handbook.

Superintendents and equivalents must undertake an annual review, or as otherwise directed by Assistant Commissioner or equivalent, to assess each role in their teams to determine if it is a role that involves working with children and young people.

Creating new positions

When creating a new position that undertakes child-related work or has incidental contact with children or young people, selection processes for the proposed position must be initiated by the relevant business area including consultation with the relevant Superintendent or equivalent. The business area is responsible for determining the level of engagement the new position may have with children or young people.

Considerations must include:

- / how much contact with children will the position involve?
- / if the candidate will be working directly with children?
- / if the position places AFP appointees and volunteers in contact with children, including children in the community or contact via phone, letter, email and/or social media?
- / if the position is mainly office based, involve travel to other remote offices or in small communities? Will this mean AFP appointees and volunteers will have contact with children?
- / if the position involves working with children with disabilities or particularly vulnerable children in complex situations? Are particular skills and experience required for this role?
- / if the position involves working in an unsupervised environment, or requires overnight care of children?

Working with Children Checks

Exemption and immunity

AFP, special members, PSOs and unsworn professional staff

Under State and Territory legislation, police officers (including AFP members and special members) are exempt from requiring a working with children check (WWCC). In addition [section 12 of the Australian Federal Police Act 1979](#) (AFP Act) provides an immunity to AFP employees (which includes members, PSOs and professional staff) while performing their AFP duties (including any AFP duties that involve working with children and irrespective of geographical location). The immunity does not apply to contractors or volunteers who may still be required to obtain WWCCs as part of their role with the AFP.

Identifying Working with Children Check requirements

Contractors and Volunteers

An assessment must be conducted by the relevant supervisor of the relevant AFP business areas to assess whether a position requires direct or indirect engagement with children in the first instance, as part of the engagement of a contractor or a volunteer.

If deemed necessary by the assessment, a contractor and/or volunteer will be required to obtain a WWCC as part of their engagement process and prior to undertaking AFP duties.

The section 12 immunity does not apply to non-AFP work. AFP appointees who require a WWCC for non-AFP work (e.g. youth sports coaching), will still need to adhere to the relevant State or Territory WWCC requirements as necessary.

Monitoring

A WWCC policy is recommended or suggested for AFP appointees and volunteers ensuring AFP appointees and volunteers comply with associated state and territory WWCC requirements. Compliance sits with the third-party provider such as the independent or school sporting team or association to request the WWCC for the AFP appointee/volunteer.

Maintenance

Where an AFP appointee or volunteer has obtained a WWCC as recommended or suggested by the third party provider for any reason beyond the scope of AFP duties, for example youth sports coaching, and the AFP appointee or volunteer fails to maintain the check, including cancellation or suspension of the check, the AFP appointee or volunteer must notify the AFP as soon as practicable. The relevant AFP appointee or volunteer is required to provide reasoning for the cancelled or suspended WWCC in writing as soon as possible to their supervisor and submit a [Change of Circumstances](#) form to Personnel Security Vetting.

Training

Induction training

AFP appointees and volunteers undertake awareness training on the Framework including the National Principles. The AFP Induction Program incorporates this training and is delivered online, typically conducted within the first few weeks of commencement with the AFP.

All staff training

The AFP provides ongoing training to all AFP appointees and volunteers in relation to the Framework, the National Principles and this Handbook through various means of communication.

AFP sworn members are encouraged to undertake training in child safety practices to ensure children and young people are safe from abuse, harm or neglect.

The AFP has developed an online module which addresses child safe responsibilities in the AFP and is available on iAspire.

In addition, ACT Policing has regular training days that facilitate opportunities to provide updates on policies and procedures. These will be utilised to train officers that have not received the prescribed induction training.

Training for staff who undertake child-related work

AFP appointees and volunteers who undertake child related work, in addition to complying with the above, should familiarise themselves with the Handbook.

All sworn appointees and volunteers undertaking child related work, should familiarise themselves with the Better Practice Guide on Evidence in Chief (EIC) interviewing Young People or Vulnerable Witnesses and complete the AFP Interviewing Vulnerable Witnesses Program.

Application to fund third parties including grants and procurement

In order to process the acquisition of goods and/or services including a grant or procurement, AFP appointees and volunteers must consider child safety issues.

Grants

Where AFP grants are provided for services directly to children or that involve contact with children, staff should use the child safety clause for the [Commonwealth Standard Grant Agreement](#). For additional information concerning templates and child safety clauses, please contact grants@afp.gov.au

Procurements

The prescribed Commonwealth guidelines for procurement includes AFP appointee and volunteer responsibilities regarding child safety clauses to be included in contracts for services directly to children or services that involve contact with children. AFP appointees and volunteers must contact the [Central Procurement Services Team](#) for further details regarding these clauses.

Reporting child abuse or harm

Having a strong culture of reporting suspected child abuse or harm is essential to having a child safe culture. AFP appointees and volunteers must comply with Commonwealth legislation, including mandatory reporting obligations of the state or territory where they are working (further details are provided below) in addition to adhering to the AFP's Integrity Framework.

AFP appointees and volunteers are required to maintain the highest level of professional standards both in their official and private capacity. The professional standards of the AFP are the responsibility of all AFP appointees and volunteers. Failure to comply with this Handbook may ultimately result in employment suitability review or possible termination of employment or contract.

Commonwealth failure to report and failure to protect offences

The failure to protect a child at risk of child sexual abuse offences and/or failure to report child sexual abuse by a Commonwealth Officer (which include all AFP appointees or personnel) is an offence under section 273B.4 and 273B.5 of Schedule to the Criminal Code Act 1995 (Cth)

It is recommended that AFP appointees and volunteers familiarise themselves with the legislation.

The term 'Commonwealth officer' is defined broadly in the legislation to include employees, contractors, subcontractors, persons hired under a labour hire agreement, who work for, or on behalf of, the Commonwealth including members or special members of the Australian Defence Force and AFP, amongst others.

Failure to report a child sexual abuse offence

It is an offence for a Commonwealth officer who exercises care or supervision over a child, who knows of information that would lead a reasonable person to believe or suspect that a person has or will engage in conduct that constitutes a child sexual abuse offence, and they fail to disclose that information as soon as practicable to state or territory police or the AFP.

Failure to protect a child at risk of a child sexual abuse offence

It is essential the Commonwealth takes all reasonable steps to protect children within its care, supervision or authority from sexual abuse. As such, it is also an offence for a Commonwealth officer to negligently fail to reduce or remove the risk of a child under their care, supervision or authority from being sexually abused, if it is part of their actual or effective responsibilities as a Commonwealth officer to reduce or remove that risk.

This offence is primarily designed to prevent child sexual abuse from occurring. Reporting a suspected perpetrator to police or relevant government agency may be one of the steps that could be taken to protect a child, but it may not sufficiently reduce or remove the risk in the particular situation.

In such circumstances, more immediate steps and interventions may be required to mitigate the risk. For example, a Commonwealth officer may decide that reasonable steps to protect a child require them to suspend a suspected person from all duties that involve direct contact with children or any unsupervised interactions with children.

Mandatory reporting

Mandatory reporting is a legislative requirement for people to report suspected child abuse and neglect to government authorities.

Guidance on state and territory mandatory reporting schemes, and other state and territory reporting requirements are included on pages 16-21 of the Handbook.

Mandatory reporting schemes

If you believe a child is in immediate danger or there is another emergency please phone **000**.

Australian Capital Territory	<p>communityservices.act.gov.au/children-and-families/child-and-youth-protection/keeping-children-and-young-people-safe</p> <p>Child and Youth Protection Services childprotection@act.gov.au</p> <p>1300 556 729</p>
New South Wales	<p>NSW Department of Community and Justice online mandatory reporting portal reporter.childstory.nsw.gov.au/s/</p> <p>Mandatory Reporters Guide for submitting a risk of significant harm (ROSH) report reporter.childstory.nsw.gov.au/s/mrg</p> <p>Child Protection Helpline for Mandatory Reporters: 132 111</p>
Northern Territory	<p>nt.gov.au/law/crime/report-child-abuse</p> <p>You can report suspected child abuse to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> / Police on 131 444 or the local police station / the child abuse hotline on 1800 700 250 / Crime Stoppers on 1800 333 000.
Queensland	<p>cyjma.qld.gov.au/contact-us/department-contacts/child-family-contacts/child-safety-service-centres/regional-intake-services</p> <p>If you have a reason to suspect a child in Queensland is experiencing harm, or is at risk of experiencing harm or being neglected, contact Child Safety Services and talk to someone about your concerns:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> / During normal business hours – contact the Regional Intake Services. / After hours and on weekends – contact the Child Safety After Hours Service Centre on 1800 177 135 The service operates 24-hours a day, 7-days a week.

South Australia	<p>childprotection.sa.gov.au/reporting-child-abuse/report-child-abuse-or-neglect</p> <p>To report a suspected case of child abuse or neglect call the Child Abuse Report Line (CARL): 13 14 78</p>
Tasmania	<p>health.tas.gov.au/publications/reporting-child-safety-concerns-fact-sheet</p> <p>If you have concerns for the safety or welfare of a child, call the Advice and Referral Line on 1800 000 123.</p>
Victoria	<p>providers.dhhs.vic.gov.au/mandatory-reporting</p> <p>To make a report, contact the child protection intake service covering the local government area where the child normally resides. Telephone during business hours Monday to Friday.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> / North Division: 1300 598 521 / South Division: 1300 555 526 / East Division: 1300 360 452 / West Division: 1300 360 462
Western Australia	<p>mandatoryreporting.dcp.wa.gov.au/Pages/Home.aspx</p> <p>Anyone who is concerned that a child is suffering any form of abuse or neglect within the Metro area should report their concerns to the Department of Communities, Child Protection and Family Support through the Central Intake Team on 1800 273 889.</p> <p>Anyone who is concerned that a child is suffering any form of abuse or neglect within the Country area should report their concerns to the Department through a local District Office.</p>

CASE STUDIES

When should I report the abuse of a child?

You are a **sworn member of the AFP**. You are attending a search warrant where the suspect is believed to have committed fraud. During the search warrant you identify a child and suspect the child is at risk of harm, abuse and/or neglect. **You approach the child and notice bruising on their legs and arms and the child tells you they have been hit by a family member.**

As this is not a child sexual abuse scenario, section 273B.4 of the Criminal Code Act does not apply. However, the relevant Territory legislation provides you may ensure the safety of the child by removing them from harm. You are also required to report the suspected child abuse and neglect to government authorities in accordance with the mandatory reporting requirements included in the Handbook. You will also need to complete police reporting requirements.

You are an **unsworn member (or professional member of the AFP)** facilitating a forum with children in attendance which you are supervising throughout the day. You have a reason to suspect a child participating in the forum is at risk of becoming a victim of sexual exploitation. **As a facilitator of the forum, the child has approached you and divulged to you that they have been the victim of sexual abuse within their own home.**

As a 'Commonwealth officer' defined in the Criminal Code as an employee who works for the Commonwealth and who has supervision of the children during the forum, you are required to complete internal reporting requirements of the suspected child sexual abuse in accordance with section 273B.5 and to government authorities as per the mandatory reporting requirements included in the Handbook.

CASE STUDY 3

As an **off duty sworn member of the AFP in Sydney**, you are walking past a childcare centre and observe a child crying and cowering in a corner whilst an adult is yelling at them.

You are not obligated to report the suspected child abuse and neglect as the child is **not** in your care, supervision or authority and you do not have state community policing responsibilities however it would be expected, as a member of the AFP who upholds the values of the organisation, you would make a report to government authorities in the relevant state or territory.

Internal reporting

AFP appointees and volunteers 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. Further details are included on pages 16-21 of the Handbook.

The only exception to internal reporting requirements concerns an incident of alleged child sexual abuse in relation to an AFP appointee's child or a child in their care. Under these circumstances, the relevant AFP appointee is required to submit an Integrity Report only if the matter progresses to court. Following the outcome of the court matter, an additional Integrity Report is required to be submitted confirming the matter is finalised. Upon submitting an integrity report, the relevant AFP member can nominate whether the Integrity Report can be forwarded directly to their supervisor in the first instance (or not).

AFP Psychological Services, SHIELD and wellbeing

The AFP acknowledges the inherent risk of harm and injury associated with duties its members perform. Recognising and acknowledging this risk is the first step towards protecting the health and wellbeing of AFP appointees.

Through SHIELD Psychological Services, the AFP is committed to supporting a resilient and skilled workforce, equipped to respond to operational demands and priorities. SHIELD Social Workers, Psychologists and Mental Health Nurses deliver specialist care, as well as health and wellbeing education to AFP employees, and advice to the AFP Executive.

Building on the Police Health Model, SHIELD ensures health and wellbeing services are provided in each command across the country to help AFP employees perform at their best.

The name SHIELD reflects the AFP's intent to protect the health and wellbeing of all AFP employees. This recognises the effect past, current and future work has and will continue to have on our workforce and their families.

SHIELD provides a dedicated team of clinicians and health professionals including doctors, nurses, exercise physiologists, physiotherapists, mental health clinicians, rehab case managers, health and fitness advisors, as well as the Welfare Officer Network.

The [AFP Circle of Support brochure](#) found on the HUB lists the support services available to AFP appointees and their families.

A healthy workforce can help to withstand the daily stressors and threats of working in a dynamic, first responder environment.

The SHIELD Health Education Framework (HEF) reference tool brings together a wealth of information to support AFP appointees including information on educational opportunities provided by the AFP to meet health and wellbeing goals. See how the HEF can assist you and your teams.

The SHIELD teams are available to provide health related advice through the hotline 02 5127 2222, or you can email the SHIELD team in your regional command.

Canberra: SHIELD_CBR@afp.gov.au

Western Command: SHIELD_WC@afp.gov.au

Central Command: SHIELD_CC@afp.gov.au

Eastern Command: SHIELD_EC@afp.gov.au

Southern Command: SHIELD_SC@afp.gov.au

Northern Command: SHIELD_NC@afp.gov.au

Further information about SHIELD including frequently asked questions are available on the AFP Hub.

Responding to complaints or disclosures about AFP appointees

AFP appointees and volunteers are required at all times to comply with The AFP Commissioner's Order on Professional Standards (CO2) which includes compliance with the AFP Core Values and AFP Code of Conduct.

AFP appointees and volunteers and their supervisors must record any non-compliance and formally report the matter where integrity or organisational risks might subsequently arise to PRS-IntegrityReports@afp.gov.au as soon as possible. The obligation to submit an [Integrity Report](#) is in addition to any declarations made as a part of a security vetting process or security triage team as per the AFP National Guideline on integrity reporting.

Managers and supervisors should ensure welfare services are recommended to AFP appointees and volunteers who may require counselling or psychological support.

Where a member of the public wishes to make a complaint or to provide information to AFP personnel that may raise a conduct issue concerning an AFP member, the receiving AFP appointees and volunteers must report these details in accordance with the AFP National Guideline on complaint management and resolution of grievances as soon as possible.

Australian Privacy Principles

Under [Section 15 of the Privacy Act 1998](#), and in accordance with the AFP National Guideline on privacy and AFP Information Management Handbook, AFP appointees and volunteers must be aware of their obligations arising from the Australian Privacy Principles (APPs), the role of the AFP Privacy Officer and how the AFP manages privacy complaints.

AFP appointees and volunteers should also refer to the [Australian Privacy Principles guidelines](#) and [Australian Privacy Principles quick reference tool](#). Refer to the [Office of the Australian Information Commissioner](#) website for more detailed information about APP compliance obligations.

All AFP appointees and volunteers must observe the law and maintain the professional standards of the AFP as indicated in the AFP National Guideline on complaint management and resolution of grievances.

Further advice

Enquiries about the content of the Handbook should be referred to the [Child Safe Programs Team](#).

Accountability and responsibility

The safety, welfare and wellbeing of children is the responsibility of all AFP appointees who have contact with children as part of their work.

KEY RESPONSIBILITIES

Commissioner / Provide high-level leadership to promote the AFP as a Child Safe Organisation.
/ Adhere to all responsibilities listed for Senior Executives.

Senior Executive / Provide leadership in promoting a child safe culture across the AFP.
/ Demonstrate understanding and commitment to the Handbook.
/ Ensure risk assessment and risk mitigation strategies associated with children and young people within your business area are undertaken annually or when your business area functions change or new functions are gained.
/ For business areas that have staff that work with children, consider appointing child safety officers within the command.

Commander Human Exploitation / Handbook owner.
/ Ensure compliance with the Framework.
/ Oversee the implementation and annual review of the AFP's implementation of the Framework.

Superintendent or equivalent / Ensure team members are aware of the Handbook and of their responsibilities and obligations to be child safe and assist members to meet these requirements.
/ Identify positions under your control that work with children, have contact with children, provide funding to services for children or develop policies impacting upon children and ensure appropriate child safe requirements are implemented.
/ Support team members to undertake mandatory training and child safe training relevant to their role.
/ Provide immediate feedback and take immediate action when an employee may not be meeting their obligations to be child safe.
/ Ensure the annual risk assessment and risk mitigation process identifies, assesses and manages risks associated with engagement with children and young people and the risk assessment and risk mitigation is repeated when business area functions change.
/ Awareness of the AFP Working with Children Check (WWCC) policy as recommended or suggested for AFP appointees and volunteers. AFP appointees and volunteers must comply directly with associated state and territory WWCC requirements, noting compliance sits with the third-party provider such as the school sporting team or association to request the WWCC for the AFP appointee/volunteer.

Do you know your Child Safe terms?

DEFINITIONS

AFP appointees

- / Comply with all requirements of the Handbook in the course of your work and any work related functions (e.g. work events where children may be present).
- / Comply with applicable Commonwealth, State and Territory legislation.
- / Adherence to the AFP National Guideline on integrity reporting and appropriately submit an Integrity Report to Professional Standards.
- / Any breaches related to the code of conduct must be reported in accordance with the AFP National Guideline on complaint management and resolution of grievances.
- / AFP personnel who require a Working with Children or Vulnerable Persons Check for purposes beyond their AFP duties must comply with the relevant legislative requirements.
- / Consider child safety in design of program and policy that impacts upon children.
- / Consider and manage child safety requirements when procuring contracts and grants.

Child Safe Programs team

- / Implement the Commonwealth Child Safe Framework.
- / Maintain the Child Safe Handbook.
- / Maintain ongoing training requirements of the Framework and Handbook.

AFP appointee

- Deputy Commissioner, AFP employee, special member or special protective service officer and including a person:
- / engaged under s.35 of the *Australian Federal Police Act 1979* (Cth) (the Act) as a consultant or contractor to perform services for the AFP and determined by the Commissioner under s 35(2) of the AFP Act to be an AFP appointee
 - / engaged overseas under s 69A of the AFP Act to perform duties overseas as an employee of the AFP or
 - / seconded to the AFP to perform its functions under a section 69D agreement.
 - / (see Section 4 of the AFP Act)

Agency *also* (Australian Government agency)

Includes all Australian Government non-corporate Commonwealth entities, corporate Commonwealth entities or companies under the Public Governance Performance and Accountability Act 2013 (Cth) and where applicable, State and Territory government agencies.

Australian Privacy Principles (APPs)

Contained in Schedule 1 of the *Privacy Act 1988* (Cth), the APPs regulate the handling of personal information by Australian Government agencies and some private sector organisations.

Business area

A part of the AFP which is managed by a Commander/Manager (SES Band 1).

Child-related work Being engaged in:

- / work with, or for, a child where contact (physical, face-to-face, verbal, written or electronic contact) would reasonably be expected as a normal part of the work and is not incidental to the work,
- / work with domestic and international partners to prevent, detect, investigate and disrupt online child sexual exploitation, and sexual abuse of children offshore,
- / identifying, locating and removing children from harm, or
- / work that requires a Working with Children Check for all purposes beyond AFP duties in the state or territory jurisdiction in which the work is being undertaken.

Harm For the purposes of this Handbook it is intended that staff should take a broad interpretation of the word 'harm'. A child may be harmed or at risk of harm if any of the following has occurred or is likely to occur:

- / the child appears to be abandoned, the parents are dead or incapacitated and no other person is caring properly for the child
- / the child has suffered physical abuse or non-accidental or unexplained injury
- / the child has suffered sexual abuse or grooming
- / the child has suffered emotional or psychological abuse and ill treatment impacting upon their wellbeing
- / the child has suffered significant neglect meaning their basic necessities of life are not being met
- / the child is in a situation exposing them to significant family violence impacting upon their wellbeing.

Please refer to the Australian Institute of Family Studies for further information about child abuse and neglect:
aifs.gov.au/cfca/publications/what-child-abuse-and-neglect

Supervisors Anyone who has another person under their control or supervision in the workplace.

Operational use Use for operational purposes, e.g. related to an operation, investigation or incident. This can be overt, discreet or covert official online activities, which are covered by the AFP National Guideline for official online investigation activities.

Personal information The *Privacy Act 1988* (Cth), outlines 'information or an opinion about an identified individual, or an individual who is reasonably identifiable, whether the information or opinion is true or not, and whether the information or opinion is recorded in a material form or not.'

Risk management All AFP appointees must comply with the AFP National Guideline on risk management.

Related documents

Relevant legislation and policies for AFP appointees include:

Legislation

[Australian Public Service Commission Code of Conduct](#) (Cth)

[Public Governance, Performance and Accountability Bill 2013](#)

[Archives Act 1983](#) (Cth)

[Australian Federal Police Act 1979](#) (Cth)

[Australian Federal Police Regulations 1979](#) (Cth)

[Law Enforcement Integrity Commissioner Act 2006](#) (Cth)

[Australian Federal Police Categories of Conduct Determination 2013](#) (Cth)

AFP Governance Instruments

AFP Commissioner's Order on Professional Standards (CO2)

AFP Commissioner's Order on Security (CO9)

AFP National Guideline on risk management

AFP National Guideline on complaint management and resolution of grievances

AFP National Guideline on public interest disclosure

AFP National Guideline on procurement and contracting

Grant agreements with organisations involved in child-related work

AFP National Guideline on Information Management

AFP National Guideline on integrity reporting

AFP National Guideline on personnel security

External References

[Royal Commission into Institutional Responses to Child Sexual Abuse](#)

[Final Report into the Royal Commission into Institutional Responses to
Child Sexual Abuse](#)

[National Principles for Child Safe Organisations](#)

[Commonwealth Child Safe Framework](#)

[Mandatory reporting of child abuse and neglect](#)

[If a child tells you about abuse](#)

[Responding to people and young people's disclosures of abuse](#)

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