

## **Keeping Young People Safe - Our Commitment**

All children and young people have a right to feel safe, and to be safe at all times.

AIEF is committed to the [National Principles for Child Safe Organisations](#): to creating environments where the safety and wellbeing of children and young people is at the centre of our thoughts, values and actions. We are building an organisational culture where children and young people, families, communities and everyone who works with us feels safe and confident to have a say and raise any concerns.

We respect and value the rights of all children and young people, and support them to reach their full potential. We recognise that particular consideration needs to be paid to the cultural safety of Indigenous children and young people whom we work with. We also acknowledge the particular needs of children and young people arising from their cultural and linguistic background, sexuality, gender diversity, disability, or as a result of domestic and family violence or other trauma.

Safeguarding children and young people we engage with is the responsibility of all AIEF team members, including the Board, Executive Committee, team members, contractors, students and volunteers across the whole organisation.

The rationale for AIEF's existence is to empower Indigenous families to make key decisions affecting their own family, including how and where their children are educated. Consistent with the principle of self-determination, AIEF responds to self-generated demand from Indigenous families and provides co-funding for those families who choose a school themselves, initiate the enrolment application process and financially contribute to the school fees. In this way, AIEF's Scholarship Program model is a co-funding model.

Each Partner School's Indigenous education program is run and led autonomously by the school itself, and they enrol Indigenous students through a variety of different programs, organisations and funding arrangements. This approach to Indigenous education is what we call a 'parent and school-led' model. AIEF's role is to empower Indigenous families to make key decisions affecting their own family including how and where their children are educated. AIEF's scholarship funding is then paid directly to the school and under the delivery of AIEF Scholarship Program AIEF deals directly with Partner Schools and does not engage directly with Indigenous students in delivery of the AIEF Scholarship Program in secondary schools. In this context, the involvement of the children and their parents occurs at the school level, and all aspects of what takes place within the school is the responsibility of the school in direct collaboration with families.

Where AIEF does have direct contact with students is through the AIEF Pathways Program; to assist students make a successful transition to employment or further studies when they complete their education. In the context of its program delivery model, AIEF will:

- Drive a culture of child safety at all levels of the organisation.
- Take all allegations or disclosures of abuse or neglect seriously, respond appropriately, and take actions where required. The safety of children and young people we are responsible for will be our primary consideration.
- Empower children, young people, families and communities to participate in decisions which affect their lives.
- Value diversity and promote inclusive practices.

- Employ and engage only people who are suitable to work with children and young people and provide high quality supervision and support.
- Ensure children and young people who feel unsafe, or wish to raise a concern know who to talk with and feel comfortable to do so.
- Ensure our team members are equipped with the knowledge, skills and awareness to keep children safe.
- Embed the National Principles for Child Safe Organisations within our quality assurance practices by undertaking regular reviews of policy and procedures that reflect how our organisation is child safe.

Our commitment to child safety is also reflected in AIEF's:

- Child Protection Reporting Procedure
- AIEF Ethics and Code of Conduct
- How We Work Policy
- Rules of Engagement with Students, Alumni and School Staff Policy
- Transporting Alumni Policy
- Stakeholder Feedback and Complaints Policy
- AIEF Programs Complaints Handling Procedure

The Chief Operating Officer oversees our compliance with the National Principles for Child Safe Organisations at AIEF (email: [info@aief.com.au](mailto:info@aief.com.au) and phone: (02) 8373 8000).

### **Listening to children and young people**

We believe involving children, young people and their families as users of our services and as part of the community helps us ensure what we do is relevant to them. Involving children and young people is much more than just asking them for their ideas and views. It's about informing them of their rights, listening to them, taking them seriously and acting on their suggestions. It also encourages them to participate in decisions that affect their lives.

We welcome the voices of children and young people and their families in providing feedback about our services and the behaviour of our team members and volunteers. We value and welcome this feedback as it assists us to address issues and improve. We encourage children and young people to tell us if you are worried or unhappy; to help us to ensure your safety and the safety of your peers. You can contact us [here](#).