



Safeguarding Children and Young People Licensing Standards

Version 18, March 2024



Context

At the Y, we are committed to empowering all Children and Young People to feel safe and be safe, at the Y, in their families and in their communities. As such, we embed Safeguarding into everything that we do to make sure Children and Young People are kept at the front of our minds in all of our programs and services.

The following Safeguarding Children and Young People Licensing Standards ("the Standards") provide in depth detail regarding the minimum requirements of all Member Ys to manage risk to Children and Young People in order to sustain eligibility to hold a YMCA License.

The Standards have been co-designed with representatives of the collective Y Movement in Australia and are informed by insight into the

unique operational and legislative environments of all Member Ys throughout the country, as well as national and international best practice in this field.

The Standards are also informed by the Y's Safeguarding Framework and Policy and are grouped under the three Safeguarding Pillars of Culture, Operations and Environment.



Implementation Date

The "Implementation Date" listed to the right of each Standard is the date the Standard is in effect.

From this date, all Member Ys must ensure compliance with the Standard unless a short term exemption – with suitable alternative actions to address the risk to Children and Young People- has been approved by Y Australia.

Support

For further information or support to implement and maintain compliance with these Standards, please contact Y Australia by emailing licensing@the-y.org.au

Implementation Support and Training

To enable the implementation of these Standards, Y Safeguarding has developed a suite of training tailored to the following levels within the Movement.

Board Level (Including Presidents and Safeguarding Sponsors)

Executive Level (Including CEOs)

Safeguarding Leads

Sector Leads (E.G. Sport and Recreation, Children's Services, Youth, Education etc.)

To register interest for these sessions or for support in continuously improving your safeguarding culture and practices, please contact Y Safeguarding by emailing safe@the-y.org.au

Culture




We will create a safe culture nationally which empowers Children and Young People through effective leadership and governance.




**Implementation
Date**



1.1	Member Ys appoint a Board level Safeguarding Sponsor who will be responsible for providing strategic oversight and direction for Safeguarding within their Member Y.	1 October, 2021
1.2	Member Ys appoint a Safeguarding Sub-Committee (or equivalent) which meets at least 2 times per year and reports directly to the Board.	1 October, 2021
1.3	<p>Member Ys appoint and support a designated Safeguarding Lead to enable their Y People to fulfill their safeguarding responsibilities. The following must be embedded into the Safeguarding Leads' Position Descriptions:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> i. Minimum monthly engagement with Y Safeguarding. ii. Attendance at the minimum required amount of Meetings for the Safeguarding Consultative Group- as per the Group's Terms of Reference. iii. Commitment to the continuous improvement of the collective Safeguarding function of the Y Movement. <p>Member Ys must also ensure Y Safeguarding has the most up-to-date contact information for their Safeguarding Lead.</p>	1 October, 2021
1.4	Member Ys facilitate direct, open and candid communication between the operational Safeguarding Lead, the Board's Safeguarding Sponsor and the CEO.	1 October, 2021
1.5	Member Ys maintain safeguarding (including risks) as a standing item at all meetings including Board Meetings, Executive Meetings and Team Meetings.	1 October, 2021
1.6	Member Ys consider safeguarding opportunities and risks within their Corporate or Strategic Plan.	1 October, 2022
1.7	Member Ys annually develop and periodically review their Safeguarding Action Plan (SAP)- including risk- in consultation with Y Safeguarding and as informed by the safeguarding elements of their Corporate or Strategic Plans.	1 October, 2022
1.8	Member Ys develop, implement and continuously improve an appropriate system of risk oversight and control including an endorsed Risk Management Framework that adequately addresses risk to children and young people . Member Ys must also ensure a culture exists where risk management is seen as important and ensure that the Member Y's Senior Leadership Team and Board are informed of, and take strategic ownership of, all risks and opportunities.	1 October, 2022

Note: Licensing standard 1.9 has been incorporated into this standard

Culture		<i>We will create a safe culture nationally which empowers Children and Young People through effective leadership and governance.</i>	Implementation Date
 Governance	1.10	Member Ys comply with legislative requirements relating to procurement activities, where applicable.	30 June, 2024
	1.11	Member Ys appoint a Safeguarding Sub-Committee (or equivalent) which meets at least 2 times per year and reports directly to the Board.	1 October, 2022
	1.12	Member Ys maintain compliance with all relevant Children and/or Young People related State, Territory and/or Commonwealth legislation and regulations- ensuring effective records management i.e. through the use of legislation registers and/or assurances plans; addressing all non- compliance in a timely manner.	1 October, 2022
 Leadership	1.13	Member Ys incorporate reference to the National Safeguarding Policy and/or safeguarding requirements in all position descriptions and performance management processes, including those in the Senior Leadership Team for all Y People who have commenced after 1 October 2022; these must include the requirement for appropriate executive level advocacy for the Safeguarding function and Lead within their Member Y.	1 October, 2023
 Leadership	1.14	Member Ys demonstrate active engagement with Children and Young People and involve them in relevant aspects of decision making that affects them and their safety at the Y (Including during planning and implementation.)	1 October, 2021
	1.15	Member Ys actively support participation in the Y Safeguarding Movement-wide safeguarding surveys.	1 October, 2022
	1.16	Member Ys ensure that all relevant Member Y-specific guidance is written in a child friendly and accessible way.	30 June, 2024
	1.17	Member Ys embed the Y 'Stay Safe, Tell Someone Program' (without modification)	1 October, 2021

Culture		<i>We will create a safe culture nationally which empowers Children and Young People through effective leadership and governance.</i>	Implementation Date
 <p>Values and behaviours</p>	1.18	Member Ys embed the Safe Behaviours into their Codes of Conduct and require all their Y People read, understand and agree to comply - including that they understand consequences of breaches.	1 October, 2021
	1.19	Member Ys publish their Board's commitment to safeguarding Children and Young People on the Member Y's external facing website.	1 October, 2021
	1.20	Member Ys require that all their Y People read, understand and sign the Movement Safeguarding Commitment Statement (without modification)	1 October, 2021
 <p>Values and behaviours</p>	1.21	Member Ys ensure that all new Y People must complete Y Safeguarding approved Safeguarding Induction Program within 1 week of their commencement with the Y and that this completion by all Y People is appropriately recorded using existing HR and learning management processes.	1 October, 2023
	1.22	Member Ys ensure all their Y People undertake the relevant training annually as per the National Training Model and that training is recorded appropriately.	30 June 2024
 <p>Continuous Improvement</p>	1.23	Member Ys ensure that Safeguarding Concerns, as well as the Member Y's response, are appropriately assessed for strengths and opportunities for improvement, as per the continuous improvement processes detailed in the National Safeguarding Guidance.	1 October, 2021
	1.24	Member Ys ensure that their safeguarding policies, procedures and guidance are regularly reviewed to ensure they remain fit-for-purpose and relevant to programs offered, their operating environment and any changes in law.	1 October, 2021

Operations

We will create safe operations to ensure Y People, parents/ carers and community have the right policies, processes and practices to keep Children and Young People safe.

Implementation Date



People

2.1	Member Ys ensure that the recruitment and retention of their Y People under 18 years of age is aligned to the National Safeguarding Guidance.	1 October, 2021
2.2	Member Ys ensure that advertisements for Y Positions include the National Safeguarding Statement.	Current
2.3	Member Ys ensure that position descriptions for all Y People who have commenced after 1 October 2022 include reference to the National Safeguarding Policy and/or mandatory safeguarding responsibilities- including mandatory reporting and reportable conduct requirements, where appropriate, as per the National Safeguarding Guidance. This includes requirements that all Y People understand that: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> i. safeguarding is everyone's responsibility; and ii. all Y People are empowered and required to, where appropriate, contribute to the development and implementation of safeguarding practices. 	Current
2.4	Member Ys ensure that employment and volunteer interviews are conducted face-to-face or online by video and include mandatory safeguarding questions as per the National Safeguarding Guidance.	Current
2.5	Member Ys ensure that a minimum of two professional references checks are completed for all onboarded Y People and include mandatory safeguarding questions as per the National Safeguarding Guidance. Professional Reference Checks will not be required for: Volunteers and/or Work Experience Students who are under 18 and continuously supervised whilst on shift or site.	Current
2.6	Member Ys ensure that approved proof of identity evidence is collected and recorded prior to commencement for all onboarded Y People.	Current
2.7	Member Ys ensure that a Working With Children Check (WWCC) or equivalent is received prior to commencement for all onboarded Y People if permitted to apply by the relevant state or territory law (including those under 18). <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Where law permits, evidence of application may be sufficient if the onboarded Y Person is supervised at all times, as per the Recruitment and Contractor Risk Matrix. 	Current
2.8	Member Ys ensure that a Police Check, obtained no earlier than 6 months prior, is obtained for each and all Y staff and volunteers, and is verified prior to their commencement as per National Safeguarding Guidance. A Police Check may not be required if: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Police Checks are integrated into the state or territory's Working with Children Check or equivalent and are updated in real time; and/or • The Y Person maintains a current NDIS Worker Clearance Check (required for all Risk Assessed roles as registered NDIS Provider). 	Current

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Implementation Date

2.9	Member Ys use the Recruitment Vetting Register Template or Y Australia approved alternative to ensure compliance with vetting requirements for each on-boarded Y Person.	1 October, 2021
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2.10	Member Ys ensure that International Police Checks for all Y staff and volunteers that have lived internationally for at least 6 consecutive months within the past 5 years are verified before their commencement, as per National Safeguarding Guidance.	Current
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Should there be circumstances where an International Police check is impracticable or unfeasible in the above circumstances, then an exemption must be sought and accompanied by an employee declaration.

International Police Checks may not be required if:

1. A recent International Police Check (for all countries in which the candidate has lived) was completed within the last year, during a successful Australian visa application process and a verified (and translated, if required) copy of the outcomes has been provided to the Member Y.
2. The relevant candidate/s (on a case by case basis) cannot provide the required check/s as:
 - a. They have currently or previously obtained status as a refugee for settlement in Australia;
 - b. The relevant country does not participate in such a process or provide such a check; or
 - c. Subject to prior approval being obtained, there are special circumstances that make it not possible to obtain such a check.

A candidate may commence work with the Y, prior to obtaining all relevant International Police Checks, if:

- They have obtained- and provided to the relevant Member Y- evidence of a completed NationalPolice Check (as per Standards 2.8 and 2.11) and Working With Children Check –or equivalent (as perStandards 2.7 and 2.11);
- They have provided evidence that an application has been submitted for each requiredInternational Police Check;
- They have provided evidence of the expected processing time for the relevant International PoliceChecks (such as a confirmation email or screenshot of the confirmation web page);
- They will be supervised at all times whilst on site or shift; and
- Their employment is conditions upon the results of each/all International Police Checks

Operations

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Implementation Date

2.11	Member Ys develop tailored and personalised risk management strategies for all adverse outcomes and delays in the processing of WWCCs and Police Checks.	Current
2.12	Member Ys apply the Recruitment and Contractor Matrix for all their contractors and emergency/ relief staff – including those recruited through a third party agency.	Current (Risk Matrix has been updated.)
2.13	Subject to being able to comply with applicable Federal, Stat and/or Territory-specific laws, Member Ys ensure that all their employment contracts and onboarding documents or their equivalent for all Y People who have commenced after 1 October 2022 inform these Y People that their information may be shared with Y Safeguarding and Y Australia if they are involved in any safeguarding concern or incident.	30 June, 2024
2.14	Member Ys integrate safeguarding responsibilities in supervision, annual appraisals and performance management processes for all their Y People.	1 October, 2022
2.15	Member Ys ensure that all applicable local or national contracts (including hire agreements and partnerships with Schools) are inclusive of safeguarding requirements- including Safe Behaviours.	30 June, 2024



Policies

2.16	Member Ys develop tailored and personalised risk management strategies for all adverse outcomes and delays in the processing of WWCCs and Police Checks.	Current
2.17	Member Ys publish the Movement Safeguarding Policy (including Child friendly versions) on their Member Y's Website (without modification).	1 October, 2021
2.18	Member Ys adopt all applicable Movement child-friendly policies and procedures (and commit to providing feedback to Y Safeguarding regarding opportunities and barriers to implementation for their Member Y as these are developed.)	11 October, 2021



Procedures

2.19	Member Ys implement and continuously improve their Member Y-specific Safeguarding Procedure (or equivalent); these must include appropriately explained roles and responsibilities for all Y People involved in the concerns management process as well as adequate information for any Child or Young Person who submits a complaint or concern- as per the National Safeguarding Guidance.	1 October, 2021
2.20	Member Ys promote Y Safeguarding (as well as the local Safeguarding Lead) to all Y People- including contact details using the Y Safeguarding email template and encourage engagement with the Safeguarding Lead and Y Safeguarding when unsure of how to implement the National Safeguarding Guidance.	1 October, 2021

Operations




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Implementation Date



Concerns and Complaints

2.21	Member Ys implement appropriate complaints procedures- including the National Principles- as per the National Safeguarding Guidance.	1 October, 2023
2.22	Member Ys communicate all complaints data to Y Safeguarding quarterly as per the National Safeguarding Guidance.	1 October, 2023
2.23	Member Ys communicate all safeguarding concerns data including breaches in safeguarding related legislation- to Y Safeguarding quarterly as per the National Safeguarding Guidance.	Current
2.24	Member Ys maintain records relating to safeguarding concerns for a minimum of 45 years, as per the National Safeguarding Guidance.	Current

Environment	<i>We will create safe environments at the Y and in communities which empower Children and Young People to thrive.</i>	Implementation Date
 eSafety	3.1 Member Ys require that all their Y People read, understand and agree to their responsibilities within the eCommitment.	1 October, 2021
 Physical	3.2 Member Ys periodically consult and engage directly with their front line Y People to seek insight into safeguarding risks relevant to them - to inform the ongoing Safeguarding Risk Model.	1 October, 2022
 Families and Communities	3.3 Member Ys provide Families and Caregivers with key safeguarding information, including policies, operations, expected behaviours of Families, complaints and reporting processes.	1 October, 2021
Families and Communities	3.4 Member Ys support Families and Caregivers, where appropriate, to participate in decisions that affect their Child or Young Person.	1 October, 2021
	3.5 Member Ys demonstrate active engagement with Families and Caregivers and involve them in relevant aspects of applicable decision making as per the National Safeguarding Guidance - this includes, where practicable, decisions that relate to the Member Y's safeguarding practice, larger policies and procedures framework as well as operations and governance.	30 June, 2024
	3.6 Member Ys actively support participation in the Y Safeguarding Movement-wide parents and community safeguarding surveys.	30 June, 2024
	3.7 Member Ys, where appropriate, actively advocate for and/or participate in community activities and/or campaigns which promote community-wide awareness of the rights of Children and Young People as per the National Safeguarding Guidance. Member Ys also educate and inform the community regarding child abuse prevention as per the National Safeguarding Guidance.	1 October, 2023

Environment

We will create safe environments at the Y and in communities which empower Children and Young People to thrive.

Implementation Date



Diversity

3.8	Member Ys actively anticipate the diverse circumstances and backgrounds of Children and Young People, and effectively support those who are vulnerable, including (but not limited to) those who identify as culturally and linguistically diverse (CALD), LGBTIQ +, First Nations, unable to live at home and/or living with a disability. This must also be reflected within, and enabled by, the Member Y's policies, procedures and guidance.	30 June, 2024 for all new policies, procedures or practices 1 October, 2023 for all existing policies, procedures and practices
3.9	Member Ys ensure that applicable Y People are given appropriate tools and resources, such as relevant cultural sensitivity training, to enable tailored servicing for their local demographics (including CALD, LGBTIQ+, First Nations, those unable to live at home and those living with a disability).	30 June, 2024
3.10	Member Ys ensure that all Member Y-specific policies, procedures and guidance are written in an inclusive manner tailored to their local demographics (including, but not limited to, CALD, LGBTIQ+, First Nations, those unable to live at home and those living with a disability).	30 June, 2024

Roles and Responsibilities

In alignment with the Movement's Safeguarding Policy, everyone has a role to play in keeping Children and Young People safe. Our Y People are expected to undertake the responsibilities as set out below:

National Council of the Ys of Australia	The development and endorsement of the Safeguarding Policy, ownership and oversight of compliance to the Standards.
Y Safeguarding	An independent entity owned by Member Y's, Y Safeguarding provides subject matter expertise and ongoing support for all Y People to understand and undertake their responsibilities under the Safeguarding Policy and the Standards.
Member Ys	Implementation of the Safeguarding Policy, Safeguarding Framework and the Standards, whilst ensuring localised policies, codes of conduct and procedures support compliance to the Policy and Standards.
Boards of Directors	Provide collective ownership, strategic support and guidance of Safeguarding initiatives to ensure that their Y People and their Member Y empower Children and Young People to feel safe and be safe.
Board Safeguarding Sponsor	Ensure adequate resources and support is made available to enable their Y People to effectively deliver upon the Y's Safeguarding Strategy and Standards, and act as the advocate for safeguarding initiatives and the Safeguarding Lead in their Member Y.
CEOs	Ensure adequate resources and support, as determined by the Member Y Board, is made available to enable their Y People to effectively deliver upon the Y's Safeguarding Strategy and comply with the Standards.
Safeguarding Consultative Group	Coordinate and share best practice opportunities, data and learnings to continuously improve the Y's approach to Safeguarding Children and Young People. Speak up as any gaps arise in the Safeguarding Policy and Standards due to operational or legislative change.
Safeguarding Leads	To provide operational Safeguarding leadership to the Member Y to embed the Y's Safeguarding Framework, the Safeguarding Policy, these Standards and relevant Safeguarding law.
Y People	Commit to create safe cultures, operations and environments for all Children and Young People. Speak up when they see something, hear something or feel something that worries or concerns them.

Definitions

Board Safeguarding Sponsor - Board Safeguarding Sponsors champion and advocate for safeguarding programs and initiatives at the Board level when collectively determining Member Y-wide strategy. In collaboration with the Operational Safeguarding Lead, the Board Sponsor takes ownership of the success of the safeguarding function in their Y.

Business Continuity Plans - The plans to be employed at times where the Member Y Association's ability to continue delivering its services and programs has severely declined or is at risk. These plans details how to avoid these situations and what to do if such a situation is currently occurring. Safeguarding risks must be included in these plans.

Child - any person under the age of 12. Under the Safeguarding Policy and Standards, this includes all Children regardless of whether they are enrolled in our programs or not.

Codes of Conduct - Expected behaviours for all Y People working or volunteering with or for the Y in Australia.

Complaints analysis - Each Member Y must provide quarterly complaints data to Y Safeguarding for national analysis. As with concerns data analysis, this informs the development of resources, training and programs to address key areas of improvement as identified within the complaints process.

Complaints Procedure - The process used to fairly and appropriately respond to all complaints submitted by Children, Young People, Y People, Families or Members of the Community. These must include clear roles and responsibilities and information for anyone who has submitted a complaint.

Continuous Improvement - the process of using previous lessons learnt and identified gaps/ vulnerabilities to inform and guide future actions. Member Ys must review safeguarding concerns and their response to them to continuously improve their safeguarding practice.

Crisis Communication Plan - The Plan to be employed at times of heightened reputational or operational risk for each Member Y - usually indicating who must address these risks and who may engage with partners and the public on behalf of the Member Y. Safeguarding must be considered in the development of these plans.

eCommitment - Developed by the Y Safeguarding, this document details what Y People will and won't do when using online platforms and social media to engage with participants.

Executive level advocacy - support and advocacy provided to the safeguarding function and Safeguarding Lead at the Senior Executive or Group Management Level within each Member Y. Often, this is provided by the Executive or Group Manager under whom the safeguarding function operates- however this can also be provided by any and all executives.

Member Y - An entity that is a party to a current valid YMCA License Agreement.

National Risk Dashboards - Developed by the Y Safeguarding, these provide insight into the national risk profile of the Y Movement in Australia with specific reference to areas requiring immediate collective response.

National Safeguarding Risk Model - The minimum requirements for Member Ys' safeguarding risk approaches that allow for national comparison between Member Ys. In turn, this collective approach enables the identification of nationally consistent areas of vulnerability.

National Safeguarding Training Model - The resource developed by Y Safeguarding to categorise the safeguarding training requirements for all Y People, determined by their level within the organisation and the amount of direct engagement they have with Children and Young People.

National Safeguarding Guidance - Developed by Y Safeguarding, the National Safeguarding Guidance is a one-stop-shop to support all Y People to understand their safeguarding responsibilities as well as best practice integration of safeguarding in their daily roles. Participants - Children, Young People or adults who are enrolled in or attend one of the Y's programs or services.

Position Description - (or alternatives) provide guidance on the expected roles and responsibilities of each individual role within the Member Y. These must reflect relevant safeguarding responsibilities.

Recruitment and Contractor Matrix - Developed by Y Safeguarding, this Matrix supports all Y People to determine the level of risk to Children and Young People posed by contractors or emergency staff. This Matrix also details the minimum vetting requirements and controls for each category.

Recruitment Vetting Register Template - Y Safeguarding has developed a template register to keep track of relevant vetting information for all Y People, to be used by any Member Y that does not currently employ an appropriate method of records management for all police checks, ID checks and Working with Children Checks (or equivalents).

Safe Behaviours - A national document that outlines the behavioural expectations of all Y People when working with Children and Young People. The Safe Behaviours are embedded into each Member Y Association's local Code or Standard of Conduct.

Safeguarding - All actions taken to monitor and manage risks to Children and Young People whilst supporting their wellbeing and development. At the Y, Safeguarding also encompasses all programs, initiatives and resources that are designed to protect Children and Young People, as well as Y People.

Safeguarding Action Plan - Informed by each Member Y Association's Strategic/Corporate Plan and Risk Management Plan, this includes key deliverables for the Member Y in relation to safeguarding and risk to Children and Young People for the coming year. These are developed annually in collaboration with Y Safeguarding.

Safeguarding Commitment Statement - The Y is committed to empowering Children and Young People to feel safe and be safe at the Y, in their families and in their communities. This statement reminds all applicants for employment or volunteering at the Y that we take safeguarding Children and Young People very seriously and that appropriate controls and processes have been implemented to ensure that any risks are addressed promptly.

Safeguarding concern - all Y People are expected to tell someone whenever they see something, hear something or feel something that worries or concerns them. At the Y, a Y Person does not have to witness something for it to be taken seriously- a reasonable belief, in line with legislation, equally meets the threshold for reporting within the Y.

Safeguarding Framework and Pillars - The Y has developed the Framework to support Y People to understand where they fit in the larger strategic goal of keeping Children and Young People safe. The Framework focuses on the three Pillars of culture, operations and environment.

Safeguarding Induction Program - the benchmark training program to ensure that all Y People understand their safeguarding responsibilities when they commence work or volunteering for the Y.

Safeguarding Lead (or Operational Safeguarding Lead) - Management-level operational driver of safeguarding initiatives, programs, resources and training directly tailored to their Member Y. Safeguarding Leads provide support to all Y People in their Member Y to understand their responsibilities in empowering and keeping Children and Young People Safe.

Safeguarding Children and Young People Licensing Standards ("Standards") - licensing obligations that detail the Safeguarding requirements and responsibilities of a Member Y. Each Member Y must comply with the YMCA Licensing Standards in existence at the time.

Safeguarding Policy - The Movement's Safeguarding Policy details the shared behaviours expected of all Y People and Member Y. This Policy sets a benchmark for the integration of safeguarding responsibilities in everything that we do at the Y.

Safeguarding Procedure - Each Member Y has a Safeguarding Procedure (or equivalent) that supports Y People to fairly and appropriately manage disclosures and safeguarding concerns. These must include roles and responsibilities for all Y People involved in this process as well as appropriate information, in plain English, for any and all Children and/or Young People who have reported a concern.

Safeguarding Strategy - The Y's Safeguarding Strategy has been developed so that all Y People share the responsibility for keeping Children and Young People safe and incorporates our Safeguarding Vision and Safeguarding Framework.

Safeguarding Sub-Committee - This committee provides subject matter expertise and advice to the Member Y Association's Board on all relevant safeguarding programs and initiatives.

The Y Movement - The Y Movement in Australia is a federation of licensed Member Y. Each Member Y is a member of the National Council of YMCAs of Australia.

Y People - YMCA People include all YMCA Board Directors, staff and volunteers (this includes school, university and TAFE students on placement or work experience with Member Ys).

Young Person - any person between the ages of 13 and 18 inclusive. Under the Safeguarding Policy and Standards, this includes all Young People regardless of whether they are enrolled in our programs or not. (Note: Member Y may include 19 year olds within this definition- for example: students in vocational schools who may be continuing their studies after their 18th Birthday.)

Y Safeguarding - the Movement's enabling service that supports all Y People to increase their knowledge, skills and capabilities in safeguarding Children and Young People.