

Creating Role / Position Descriptions

Role/position descriptions describe the key duties and responsibilities of a role/position and provide an opportunity to communicate expectations that promote the safety of children and young people.

ROLE/POSITION DESCRIPTIONS COMMUNICATE:

- the core function(s) of the role
- the specific duties and responsibilities associated with the role
- accountability and reporting structures
- specific knowledge, experience, capability and/or skills
- if applicable – desirable or essential qualifications required for the position in relation to working with children and young people
- any specific requirements/skills in relation to working with Aboriginal children and young people, children and young people with a disability, and children from culturally and linguistically diverse (CALD) backgrounds
- the requirement of those working within a role to encourage participation and involve children and young people in decision-making about issues that affect them
- responsibilities in relation to safeguarding children and young people from abuse or neglect

SAMPLE ROLE DESCRIPTION STATEMENTS IN RELATION TO CHILD SAFETY

- Provide a safe environment in which children and young people are protected from harm.
- Be committed to safeguarding children and young people from all forms of abuse.
- Provide an environment that demonstrates a positive regard for children and young people and involves them as decision-makers in decisions that affect them.
- Promote positive and respectful relationships with children and young people.
- Ensure that children and young people are adequately supervised to ensure that they are protected from harm.
- Demonstrate an understanding of appropriate methods for guiding the behaviour of children and young people.
- Work sensitively with and respect the cultural safety of Aboriginal children, young people and their families.
- Demonstrate cultural awareness in relation to children and young people from CALD backgrounds and their families.
- Develop and maintain positive and respectful relationships with parents and carers to ensure effective communication about their children.

Role/position descriptions are equally important to paid and voluntary roles. They help to guide the selection and recruitment of persons who are best suited to work with children and young people.

Role/position descriptions provide clarity and direction and help to ensure that a person is working to meet the objectives of their role and working within defined boundaries.

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As children and young people may not always be able to discern 'appropriate' and 'inappropriate' behaviour due to their age, inexperience or level of maturity, it is important for organisations to define roles and set expectations which emphasise the safety of children and young people.

The role/position description forms the basis for identifying appropriate and inappropriate behaviour and is useful in managing the behaviour and performance of employees and volunteers. Where a member of the clergy, employee or volunteer is not meeting the expectations of their role, or is engaging in behaviour that falls outside the reasonable boundaries of their role, this can be managed through support, mentoring, training or disciplinary action.

INVOLVING CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE IN DEVELOPING ROLE/POSITION DESCRIPTIONS

When developing role/position descriptions, consider opportunities for children and young people to provide input to relevant criteria for child-related roles (NSW Commission for Children and Young People 2001).

For example, when developing a role/position description for a youth group leader, it may be helpful to ask young people attending the youth group about the requirements of the role, skills and qualities and incorporate this information into the role/position descriptions.

REFERENCE

NSW Commission for Children and Young People 2001, 'Sharing the stage', Taking Participation Seriously, tool kit.



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