

Under 18s Safety Policy

1. Purpose

This policy outlines PICAC's commitment to providing a safe, supportive, and inclusive environment for all learners under the age of 18. It ensures compliance with relevant child safety legislation and the Standards for RTOs 2025, particularly in relation to learner wellbeing, protection from harm, and safe and inclusive learning environments.

The purpose of this policy is to:

- Define PICAC's approach to identifying, preventing, and responding to child safety risks.
- Ensure the safety, rights, and wellbeing of people under 18 are prioritized in all learning and operational environments.
- Guide staff, volunteers, contractors and stakeholders in upholding child safety obligations and responsibilities.
- Provide clear procedures for reporting and responding to safety concerns.

2. Scope

This policy applies to all learners under 18 and the people who support their training whether they are PICAC staff, trainers, contractors, or third parties. It covers every setting where training happens, from classrooms and workshops to online platforms and events. PICAC is committed to following the same child safety standards, endorsing, and implementing similar policies, embedding safety practices across their training and assessment operations, and nominating a shared Under 18s Safety Officer (HR Manager). The aim is simple: to keep young people safe, wherever, and however they learn with us.

3. Standards Referenced

Standards for RTOs 2025:

Outcome Standards 2025

- Standard 4.3(d) – When RTO offers training or assessment to VET students under 18, it identifies and manages risks to their safety and wellbeing by considering the training content and delivery modes, and by complying with the National Principles for Child Safe Organizations.

Compliance Standards 2025: NA

4. Policy Statement

PICAC is committed to safeguarding the rights, safety, and wellbeing of all learners under 18.

- Provides a safe, inclusive, and supportive environment for all learners under 18.
- Aligns with relevant child protection legislation and the Standards for RTOs 2025.
- Maintains a zero-tolerance approach to child abuse or harm.
- Prioritizes safety and wellbeing of learners under 18 in all areas of operations.
- Outlines principles, responsibilities, and procedures for preventing and responding to safety concerns.
- Commits to continuous improvement, cultural safety, and respectful engagement with young people and families.

5. Annual Review and Stakeholder Engagement

PICAC will review this policy annually and seek input from:

- Persons under 18
- Parents and carers
- Staff and volunteers
- Employers and training partners

This ensures the policy remains relevant, compliant, and effective.

6. Commitment to Persons Under 18

PICAC commits to providing a safe, inclusive, and supportive training environment. Learners under 18, whether enrolled with PICAC, are prioritized in all decision-making. Safety, respect, and dignity underpin every interaction.

7. Rights to Safety and Participation

PICAC actively supports the participation of people under 18 in decisions affecting them. This includes:

- Listening to and acting upon their concerns.
- Educating learners on their rights and available support.
- Providing multiple channels to raise feedback (verbal or written) confidentially.

8. Valuing Diversity and Cultural Safety

PICAC ensures inclusive practices by:

- Promoting cultural safety for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander learners.
- Supporting learners from culturally and linguistically diverse (CALD) backgrounds.
- Welcoming learners with disability and facilitating full participation.
- Recruiting diverse staff and trainers to reflect and support all communities.

9. Recruiting Staff, Contractors, and Volunteers

In compliance with state and national child protection legislation, PICAC ensures:

- Working with Children Checks (or state equivalent) for relevant roles.
- Rigorous recruitment, screening, and reference checking.
- Inclusion of child safety requirements in job descriptions and advertisements.
- Adherence to national child safety principles.
- A centralized register within the HR department and tracks currency of documentation.
- Collaboration with affiliated RTOs in shared child safety responsibilities, including the nomination of a shared Under 18s Safety Officer (HR Manager).

10. Supporting Staff and Volunteers

PICAC equips all personnel to uphold child safety standards by:

- Induction training on legislative obligations and PICAC's Code of Conduct.
- Ongoing professional development related to child safety and learner wellbeing.
- Regular supervision, performance reviews, and support.
- Centralized organizational records

11. Reporting Under 18 Safety Concerns or Complaints

The Under 18s Safety Officer (HR Manager) is authorised by the CEO to:

- Receive and respond to concerns raised by staff, learners, volunteers, or parents.
- Investigate allegations in line with internal procedures and privacy legislation.
- Take protective action, including removal of the learner from unsafe settings.
- Escalate serious concerns to police or relevant child protection authorities. Serious concerns include, but are not limited to, physical or sexual abuse, neglect, emotional abuse, exploitation, grooming, trafficking, or any incident placing a learner at immediate risk of harm. These align with mandatory reporting requirements under relevant child protection legislation.

All incidents are documented using PICAC's Under 18 Incident Report and managed according to Flow Charts 43 and 51.

12. Risk Management Approach

PICAC uses a structured risk management framework to identify, assess and mitigate risks to learners under 18. This includes:

- Integration into PICAC’s broader WHS and operational risk assessments.
- Specific controls related to supervision, facility access, excursions, and digital safety.
- Monitoring and improvement through audits and feedback.

13. Supporting Processes

Process Name	Purpose
PRO_RTOManagement_V1	Processes and Procedures
FC43_LearnerSafety_V2.2	Shows the process for ensuring and managing learner safety.

14. Supporting Documents

Document ID	Name
Young Persons Safety Handbook (TBD)	Young Persons Safety Handbook
FORM_Under18IncidentReport_V2.2	Under 18 Incident Report Form

15. Version Control

Version	Date	Changes
1.0	28/07/2017	Initial policy approved by PICAC Board of Directors
1.1	29/08/2018	Reviewed; updated ‘Supporting Processes’ and ‘Supporting Forms and Documents’
2.0	03/06/2024	Comprehensive review
2.1	26/05/2025	Aligned with Standards for RTOs 2025; added Purpose, Scope, and Policy Statement
2.2	1/9/2025	The logo has been updated to include PICAC, STC, CEPUTEC, and FIT.
2.3	13/01/2026	The SRTO 2015 reference has been removed.

16. Summary of Changes:

Category	Change Type	Summary
Structure	New sections added	Added Purpose, Scope, Policy Statement, and Version History.
Standards	Updated reference	Now aligned with Standard 4.3(d) of RTO Standards 2025.
Scope	Expanded detail	Covers all delivery modes and partner RTOs.
Language	Clearer and inclusive	More youth-friendly and zero-tolerance on harm.
Cultural Safety	Stronger focus	Highlights safety for Aboriginal, CALD, and disabled learners.
Staff Support	More detail	Clearer on induction, training, and responsibilities.
Reporting	Improved process	Clear role of Safety Officer and privacy protections.
Risk Management	Integrated approach	Linked to WHS with specific examples like excursions and digital safety.
Stakeholder Input	Stronger engagement	Annual reviews now include learners, families, and staff.
Docs & Tools	Updated references	Supporting forms and flowcharts reviewed and listed.