Brighton Council

POLICY NAME: BRIGHTON COUNCIL YOUTH POLICY POLICY NO: 7.17

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DEFINITIONS

Brighton Youth Action Group (BYAG) – a Brighton Council supported youth action group for young people between the age of 12 and 17 years, that provides an active voice for young people from communities across the Brighton municipality and enables young people to influence and lead local action.

Child – a person under 18 years of age.

Community Creators – Council's asset-based youth development program that supports young people to identify strengths, build leadership and project skills, and create community led initiatives.

Bridgewater Youth Hub – a place-based, community-led initiative being developed with the Tasmanian Aboriginal Legal Service and partners for young people aged 12–25 years, with a focus on prevention, diversion, cultural safety and access to support.

Council – Brighton Council.

Youth initiative – any Council-led, Council-supported or partnered program, event, consultation, outreach activity, place or project involving young people, including BYAG, Community Creators, the Bridgewater Youth Hub, Youth Week activities, school-based engagement, school holiday activities, local events and place-based early-intervention initiatives.

Young person – generally a person aged 12–25 years; individual programs may adopt another age range where required by law, funding conditions, developmental suitability or program design.

PURPOSE

The purpose of this policy is to establish a clear, safe and consistent framework for Brighton Council's work with children and young people, including the Brighton Youth Action Group and Community Creators. It supports young people to have a genuine voice in decisions that affect them, to develop leadership and participation skills, and to contribute to positive community outcomes.

Council identifies the Brighton Youth Action Group as the active voice of young people in the local area. Community Creators is a youth-led program focused on voice, agency, belonging, leadership, communication and project management skills.

SCOPE

This policy applies to all Brighton Council staff, elected members, volunteers, contractors, service providers and partner organisations who plan, deliver, support, supervise or participate in Council activities involving children and young people. It applies to youth engagement, consultation, events, programs, projects, communications, transport, outreach, schools-based activities and community partnerships, including the Brighton Youth Action Group, Community Creators and other Council-supported youth initiatives.

POLICY

Brighton Council is committed to placing young people at the centre of community life by providing safe, inclusive and meaningful opportunities for participation, leadership, consultation and community action. Council will support young people through BYAG, Community Creators, the Bridgewater Youth Hub, Youth Week activities, school and school-holiday engagement, place-based prevention and early-intervention projects, and other initiatives developed with young people and community partners.

Link to Council Strategic Plan 2023-2033

This policy supports Council's strategic commitment to a thriving place with opportunities for all. Specifically but not limited to:

S1.1 Engage with and enable our community

S1.2 Build resilience and opportunities

S1.3 Ensure attractive local areas that provide social, recreational and economic opportunities.

S1.4 Encourage pride, local sense of identity and engaging activities

Implementation will align with the current Brighton Council Strategic Plan, Annual Plan and Community Engagement Strategy.

Recognition of Aboriginal Peoples, Culture and Heritage

Council recognises the Mumirimina people as the original custodians of the skies, land and water of kutalayna/Jordan River and respects the continuing custodianship of the palawa/pakana community. Youth initiatives will promote Aboriginal cultural safety, support self-determination and cultural connection, and seek meaningful participation by Aboriginal children, young people, families and organisations.

Roles and Responsibilities:

Council is responsible for governance, resourcing and oversight of youth engagement and child-safe practice. The Chief Executive Officer and relevant directors ensure appropriate systems, accountabilities and resources are in place. Managers ensure programs are planned, risk assessed, staffed, supervised, documented and reviewed. Staff, volunteers, contractors and service providers must comply with this policy, applicable legislation, Council procedures, codes of conduct, privacy requirements and child-safe reporting obligations. Young people will be supported to understand their rights, responsibilities, behavioural expectations and support pathways in age-appropriate ways.

Risk Considerations:

Key risks include harm to children or young people, inadequate supervision, unsafe physical or online environments, privacy breaches, inappropriate conduct or boundaries, exclusion from participation, transport and event risks, unmanaged disclosures or critical incidents, and failure to meet reporting obligations. Each initiative must use Council's risk management, safeguarding, incident, complaint and escalation processes.

Principles & Ethics:

Council's approach will be guided by youth voice and agency; safety and wellbeing; respect, dignity and inclusion; Aboriginal cultural safety; equity of access; strengths-based and asset-based practice; partnerships; transparency and accountability; and meaningful participation in decisions that affect young people. Council will uphold the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child, the Youth Ethics Framework for Tasmania and the Tasmanian Child and Youth Wellbeing Framework. In line with Asset Based Community Development principles, Council will start with the strengths, skills, relationships, lived experience, culture, care, local knowledge and aspirations that already exist among young people, families and communities.

YOUTH VOICE, PARTICIPATION AND BRIGHTON INITIATIVES

Council will provide regular and practical opportunities for young people to be heard, influence decisions and lead local projects.

Brighton Youth Action Group (BYAG):

BYAG is a key youth advisory and action mechanism representing young people from across the municipality. Council will support BYAG to identify priorities, advise on Council and community matters, design and deliver activities, and report back to young people and community overall about how their input has influenced decisions.

Community Creators:

Community Creators will use an Asset Based Community Development approach to help young people identify personal and community strengths, build relationships, develop leadership and project-management skills, work with community champions and create practical local projects.

Bridgewater Youth Hub & Place-Based Initiatives:

Council will support co-design and partnership development of the Bridgewater Youth Hub as a community-led space for young people aged 12–25 years, including a strong focus on Aboriginal cultural representation, prevention, diversion and connections to services. Council may also support place-based youth justice prevention, early-intervention, community safety, creative, sporting, employment, volunteering and wellbeing initiatives where these align with community priorities and Council responsibilities.

Other Youth Engagement:

Youth Week activities, school and school-holiday programs, consultations, events, detached or outreach engagement and partnership projects will be planned with young people wherever practicable. Council will involve young people early, provide feedback about how their input was used and address barriers including transport, cost, accessibility, confidence, safety, culture and communication.

SAFETY & PROTECTION MEASURES

Duty of Care & Child-Safe Practice:

Council will prioritise the safety and wellbeing of children and young people and align youth engagement with Tasmania's Child and Youth Safe Organisations Framework. Planning must include risk assessment, appropriate supervision, safe venues, emergency procedures, incident reporting, child-focused complaints pathways, online safeguards and referral arrangements. Workers must maintain professional boundaries and respond promptly to concerns.

Consent, Privacy and Communication:

Council will collect, use, store and disclose personal information only for lawful and necessary purposes. Consent must be obtained where required for participation, photography, recording, promotion, transport, excursions, referrals and information sharing. Communications must be respectful, transparent, age-appropriate, use approved Council channels and comply with professional boundaries and Council policy.

Reportable Conduct, Disclosures and Crisis Response:

Concerns about harm, abuse, neglect, reportable conduct or a young person's immediate safety must be acted on without delay under Tasmanian law and Council procedures, including the Brighton Council Safeguarding Children and Young People Policy. Workers must listen, avoid investigating beyond clarifying immediate safety, explain the limits of confidentiality, record facts accurately, notify the appropriate Council officer and make any required external report. In an emergency, contact emergency services. Council workers provide initial support and referral but do not act as specialist mental-health practitioners unless appropriately qualified and authorised.

Supervision, Transport and Activities:

Supervision levels, worker suitability, Working with Vulnerable People requirements, transport arrangements, venue amenities, visiting providers and activity-specific controls must be determined through documented risk assessment, relevant law, participant needs and Council procedures. A worker must not use a personal vehicle to transport a young person unless specifically authorised under Council procedure.

Personal Relationships and Professional Boundaries:

Staff, volunteers, contractors and service providers must maintain professional, respectful and transparent relationships with children and young people. They must not pursue or enter into an inappropriate, exploitative or coercive personal relationship with a young person participating in a Council activity, and must avoid favouritism, secrecy, dependency, gifts of significant value, private or unauthorised contact, and conduct that could reasonably be misunderstood.

Existing family, social, cultural, mentoring or other personal connections that may create an actual, potential or perceived conflict of interest must be declared to the responsible manager and managed through documented safeguards. Contact must occur for legitimate program purposes, use approved Council communication channels and comply with Council codes of conduct, safeguarding requirements and reporting procedures.

Detached Youth Work:

Detached youth work is youth engagement undertaken in public places and community settings where young people choose to gather, rather than at a fixed Council venue. Detached youth work must be purposeful, voluntary, strengths-based and planned through a documented risk assessment that addresses location, timing, staffing, communication, visibility, transport, environmental hazards, community context, emergency response and referral pathways.

Workers must operate in pairs unless an approved risk assessment authorises another arrangement, carry Council identification, maintain agreed check-in and escalation procedures, record significant contacts and incidents, and respect a young person's right not to engage. Detached youth work must not involve enforcement, surveillance or transporting a young person in a personal vehicle unless specifically authorised under Council procedure.

Adult Volunteers:

Adult volunteers involved in youth initiatives must be recruited, screened, inducted, supervised and supported in accordance with Council's Volunteer Policy and safeguarding requirements.

Before commencing, volunteers must have any required Registration to Work with Vulnerable People, understand their role description, code of conduct, professional boundaries, confidentiality, complaints and incident processes, and know how to report a safety concern or disclosure. Volunteers must not be given sole responsibility for program governance, specialist support or high-risk decisions unless appropriately qualified and expressly authorised. Council will maintain appropriate records and review volunteer suitability and performance.

Guest Speakers:

Guest speakers must be selected for a clear program purpose and their suitability, content and any conflicts of interest must be considered before engagement. Council must brief speakers on participant needs, cultural safety, accessibility, child-safe expectations, privacy, respectful language, approved content, time limits and boundaries on promotion, fundraising, political advocacy, recruitment or collection of personal information.

A Council worker must remain responsible for the session and provide appropriate supervision. Content that may be sensitive or distressing must be identified in advance, with informed consent, support options and referral pathways provided where

appropriate. Concerns or incidents arising during a presentation must be managed under Council procedures.

Services Providers and Partner Organisations:

External service providers and partner organisations involved in Council youth initiatives must be engaged through an appropriate agreement that defines scope, responsibilities, qualifications, insurance, supervision, information handling, safeguarding, incident reporting, complaints, evaluation and termination arrangements. Council must undertake proportionate due diligence, including checking required registrations, licences, experience and child-safe systems. Providers must comply with applicable law and Council requirements, promptly report safety concerns and incidents, and obtain approval before collecting, using or disclosing participant information, images or recordings. Council retains responsibility for monitoring contracted or partnered activity and responding where standards are not met.

Access and Equal Opportunity:

Council will make youth initiatives welcoming, inclusive and accessible to young people from diverse backgrounds, abilities, cultures, communities and circumstances. Council will actively consider the needs of Aboriginal young people, young people with disability, young carers, culturally and linguistically diverse young people, LGBTQIA+ young people, young people experiencing financial hardship and young people disengaged from education, employment or community life. Bullying, harassment, discrimination, racism and exclusion will not be tolerated in Council-supported activities.

IMPLEMENTATION & REVIEW

The Community Development and Engagement function will coordinate implementation with relevant Council teams and partners. Initiative plans will identify intended outcomes, responsibilities, resources, risk controls, participation methods and evaluation measures. Evaluation will consider reach, inclusion, safety, cultural safety, youth leadership, skills, connection, local asset use, community benefit and whether young people can see the results of their contribution.

Council will work with young people, families, schools, services, community organisations, Aboriginal organisations, State Government agencies, local networks, clubs, volunteers and businesses. This policy will be reviewed at least every four years, or earlier following significant legislative, organisational or program change, a serious incident, or evidence that the policy is not operating effectively. BYAG and other participating young people will be offered a meaningful role in review.

LEGISLATION & REFERENCES

Local Government Act 1993 (Tas)

Child and Youth Safe Organisations Act 2023 (Tas); Child and Youth Safe Organisations Framework, including the Tasmanian Child and Youth Safe Standards, Universal Principle for Aboriginal Cultural Safety and Reportable Conduct Scheme

Children, Young Persons and Their Families Act 1997 (Tas); Personal Information Protection Act 2004 (Tas); Anti-Discrimination Act 1998 (Tas)

Work Health and Safety Act 2012 (Tas)

Registration to Work with Vulnerable People Act 2013 (Tas); Privacy Act 1988 (Cth)

United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child.

Local Government (Code of Conduct) Order 2024

RELATED BRIGHTON COUNCIL POLICIES, STRATEGIES AND DOCUMENTS

Brighton Council Strategic Plan 2023-2033

Safeguarding Children & Young People (Policy 7.12)

Safeguarding Children & Young People – Allegations & Complaints Handling (Policy 7.12)

Privacy (Policy AP 06)

Records Management (Policy AP 23)

Volunteer (Policy 7.13)

Volunteer Registration Form (Policy 7.13)

Social Media and Communication Devices (Policy 7.3)

Staff Code of Conduct (Policy HR14)

Discipline (Policy HR28)

Risk Management (Policy AP04)

ADMINISTRATIVE DETAILS

Policy compiled:	October 2026
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