

## **TFS State Competitions – Instructions for the supervision of children**

### **1. Our priorities**

When making decisions about the care and supervision of children, our priorities are:

- 1) That our children are safe and cared for while have rewarding experiences
- 2) That we meet our legislative obligations in relation to registration for working with children, child protection, and health and safety
- 3) That our interactions with children are supportive of TFS Values

**NOTE 1:** A child is any person under 18 years of age (but does not include a 17 year old member who is registered as a TFS *Active Under-Age Firefighter*)

### **2. General Guidelines**

The advice TFS has received from the Department of Justice is that overnight and general supervision this should be by:

- a parent or close relative;
- a person registered under the *Registration to Work with Vulnerable People Act 2013*; or
- a person who has been given consent in writing by the parents/guardians of the child to care for the child during the period of the event.

In addition, TFS expects that any adult who is responsible for the supervision and care of children as part of any TFS activity must:

- be able to have respectful and age-appropriate interactions with children;
- must not be alone with a child at any time, and
- must not be under the influence of alcohol or any other drug.

**NOTE 2:** Where a person has been given consent in writing by a parent/guardian to care for his/her child/ren then the brigade must keep a copy of this letter.

### **3. Specific guidelines**

#### **a) Travel to and from the competitions**

While travelling, children can be:

- in pairs or small groups being supervised by *Junior and Cadet Coordinators* and/or *Brigade Officers* and/or *Brigade Members* (all of whom must have current Working with Children registration). No adult should be alone with a child at any time;
- with their own parents/guardians; or
- with a person who has been given consent in writing by the parent/s of the child to care for the child while travelling. Wherever possible no adult should be alone with a child at any time.

Every effort should be made to meet these requirements. If after considering all options it is not possible to meet these requirements then a risk assessment of possible alternatives should be made and discussed with your District Officer.

**b) General supervision during the daytime running of the events and before the children go to 'secure' accommodation:**

During this time, children can be:

- in teams or groups being supervised by *Junior and Cadet Coordinators, Team Trainers* and/or *Brigade Officers* (all of whom must have current Working with Children registration);
- with their own parents/guardians; or
- with a person who has been given consent in writing by the parents/guardians of the child to care for the child during the period of the event.

There may be *incidental* contact with other members present as long as effective direct supervision is being provided registered *Junior and Cadet Coordinators, Team Trainers, and/or Brigade Officers*.

**c) Overnight in 'secure' accommodation**

During this time, children can be:

- i. in teams or groups away from other adults and being directly supervised by *Junior and Cadet Coordinators* and/or *Brigade Officers* (all of whom have current Working with Children registration);
- ii. with their own parents/guardians; or
- iii. with a person who has been given consent in writing by the parents/guardians of the child to care for the child during this time.

In relation to option (i), all reasonable efforts should be made to avoid any other person over 15 years of age having contact with the children during this time.

In relation to option (ii), as long as at least one parent/guardian is present then they have their normal discretion as to who their own children (but not any other child) may have contact with. The same applies to Option (iii) as these persons are authorised to act on behalf of the child's parents/Guardians.

**4. Responsibilities of members supervising children**

Supervising adults will meet their Duty of Care responsibilities including:

- Ensuring that all Juniors/Cadet members are not exposed to or placed in situations where they may experience physical, physiological or emotional harm.
- Taking responsibility for the overall behaviour, safety and supervision for all TFS Junior/Cadet members involved in the event
- Encouraging and supporting other Junior/Cadet Coordinators to maintain a Duty of Care.
- Maintaining confidentiality about sensitive information that may result during interactions with Junior/Cadet members.
- Taking appropriate action in an emergency situation.

For more information go to the *J&C Toolkit* and *TFS J&C Policy* available at:

<https://www.fire.tas.gov.au/Show?pagelid=displayDoc&docId=000097>