



Guidelines for Camps Involving Children and Young People

Background

Section 16 of *The Breaking The Silence Manual* is the policy on camping for PCNSW congregations when providing overnight activities that include accommodating groups of children/young people in any way other than with their carer. Section 16, however, does not apply to approved organisations within PCNSW or PYNSW, such as PY. Thus, it does not apply to camps run by PY. Nor does it apply to the situation where a single child/young person may be attending a church event, such as a weekend away, without their carer, although it may be used to provide guidance in that situation.

These guidelines help churches plan and implement camps for Children and Young People in line with Section 16.

How to use these Guidelines

These Guidelines are a guide to help you meet the requirements of S16 of the *Breaking The Silence Manual*, addressing Camping for Children and Young People. **These Guidelines should be used alongside S16 and do not replace familiarising yourself with it.** While the Conduct Protocol Unit makes every effort to align these Guidelines with S16, it is your responsibility to ensure that you meet the requirements of S16.

We recognise that each camp is unique, and thus, not every element of these Guidelines might apply. Camp organisers should use their discretion while being careful to abide by S16. The timings are suggested and considered 'best practice' to ensure a safe and successful camp.

Guiding Principles

When planning and running a camp for children and young people, ensure the following principles are kept in mind:¹

1. Sessions are responsible for compliance with *Breaking the Silence (BTS)* whenever a child/young person is accommodated in any way other than with their carer.
2. [The PCNSW Work Health and Safety Guidelines](#) should be referred to when planning and conducting a camp (especially the 'First Aid' and 'Youth Camp' requirements).
3. Promoting a safe environment for children/young people extends beyond matters like abuse to areas of preventing neglect, bullying, assault, grooming, crossing appropriate boundaries, sickness and injury.²

Definitions

A child refers to any person under 16 years of age and, in some instances, any person under 18 years of age. **Young person or Young People** refers to any person/s above 16 but under 18 years of age.

¹ Taken from [Breaking The Silence Manual](#) S16.2 – 16.4.

² The [Breaking The Silence \(BTS\) Manual covers many of these items in detail](#). For example, boundaries are covered in Section 7 of the [BTS Manual](#).



Recommended Resources

Here are key resources that will help with planning and running a safe camp:

- [PCNSW Youth Camp Safety Webinar with Rachel Norman \(PY\)](#) – An overview webinar for Camp Leaders discussing key elements of camp safety.³
- [Church and Youth Camp Safety Webinar with Hazel Nisbet \(PCNSW\)](#) – A webinar on Risk Assessments and Hazard Plans for youth and children’s Camps.⁴

Well Before the Camp

The Planning Process should begin well before the camp to ensure you can prepare well.

Recommended: Watch the Camping Webinars (in ‘Recommended Resources’, above).

Done?	Task	Notes	Owner	Due Date
	Watch the camping webinar #1 in the Useful resources section (above): PCNSW Youth Camp Safety Webinar with Rachel Norman (PY)	An overview webinar for Camp Leaders discussing key elements of camp safety. ⁵		
	Watch camping webinar #2 in the Useful Resources section (above): Church and Youth Camp Safety Webinar with Hazel Nisbet (PCNSW)	A webinar on Risk Assessments and Hazard Plans for youth and children’s Camps. ⁶		

³ If you’ve printed this form, you can access the webinar at https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=o4a4LclQ_jc

⁴ As per above, you can access the webinar at <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ywvKzXMBbMo>

⁵ If you’ve printed this form, you can access the webinar at https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=o4a4LclQ_jc

⁶ As per above, you can access the webinar at <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ywvKzXMBbMo>



1. Recruit Camp Convener/Director

Done?	Task	Notes	Owner	Due Date
	Recruit a Session-approved Camp Director who will oversee the planning and running of the camp.			
	Ensure they have a detailed job description covering their pre-camp, during-camp, and post-camp responsibilities.	You can download a job-description template from the Breaking the silence website: https://breakingthesilence.org.au/resources/ , and navigate to Job Descriptions → 'Job Description Template'.		

2. Recruit The Speaker

Done?	Task	Notes	Owner	Due Date
	Recruit a speaker and negotiate the topic (usually a book of the Bible or a theme), ensuring they are aware of the age and stage of the campers.			

3. Select the Venue (S 16.5 and 16.9)

Done?	Task	Notes	Owner	Due Date
	Conduct a thorough risk assessment of proposed venues.	A risk assessment matrix and risk register can be used to assess risk and can be downloaded here . ⁷		
	Ensure separate accommodation for the different sexes.			

⁷ <https://breakingthesilence.org.au/wp-content/uploads/2023/09/BTS-2023-Template-Risk-Matrix-and-Register-Sep-2023.pdf>



	Ensure separate accommodations for leaders and campers.			
	Verify the venue's safety measures, including first aid, emergency exits, and staff qualifications.			
	Ensure there are separate toilets for campers and leaders. If not, develop a policy that ensures the requirements of S16.9 are adhered to.	If there is only one toilet per sex, then campers/leaders should go one at a time. You only need to consider other arrangements if there are safety issues with the location of the toilet.		
	Ensure privacy and safety in sleeping areas, particularly in shared spaces.			
	Consider access to amenities and the suitability of the venue for children with disabilities or special needs.			
	Confirm third-party activities are compliant with PCNSW safety standards.			

**Three Months Before the Camp****4. Recruit Camp Parents (S 16.5)**

Done?	Task	Notes	Owner	Due Date
	Recruit Session-approved Camp Parents (ideally a married couple or male/female leaders over age 25).			
	Provide Camp Parents with a detailed job description covering their pre-camp, during-camp, and post-camp responsibilities.	You can download a job-description template from the Breaking the silence website: https://breakingthesilence.org.au/resources/ , and navigate to Job Descriptions → 'Job Description Template'.		
	Encourage Camp Parents to pray for the upcoming camp.			

5. Recruit Camp Leaders (S 16.5)

Done?	Task	Notes	Owner	Due Date
	Recruit leaders, ensuring they meet BTS requirements (see BTS Manual Sections 15.7 (volunteers) and 15.8). Use relevant application forms from the BTS website.	Leader Application forms can be found on the BTS website at breakingthesilence.org.au/resources/getting-started/ . Select relevant forms from your State (NSW, ACT, TAS, or WA).		
	Confirm leader-to-camper ratios (review at section 7, below)	Refer to BTS Section 16.5		



	Obtain Session approval for leaders.			
	Provide leaders with job descriptions and expectations.	Sample Job Descriptions can be found at https://breakingthesilence.org.au/resources/		
	Ensure all leaders undergo necessary background checks and training if they haven't already.			
	Confirm leader availability for the entire duration of the camp, including pre-camp training session(s).	.		
	Organise training sessions for leaders covering roles and responsibilities.	Ensure all leaders can be trained and can demonstrate completion of relevant training.		

6. Train Camp Leaders (S 16.5)

Done?	Task	Notes	Owner	Due Date
	Let leaders know their specific duties on camp (if applicable).			
	Review the S16 BTS Camping policy with leaders, emphasising key responsibilities such as supervision, physical contact guidelines (S16.9), and incident reporting.	You could also review one or two of the webinars in the <i>Useful Resources</i> section above.		



	Conduct scenario-based training for handling emergencies, behavioural issues, and special needs.			
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7. Ensure Appropriate Supervision Ratios (S 16.5)

Done?	Task	Notes	Owner	Due Date
	Review the number of leaders required based on group size, venue, and special needs.	Ensure compliance with minimum ratios outlined in the BTS Manual policy (S16.5).		
	Adjust leader assignments based on the age group, gender, and specific needs of the campers.			
	Consider additional leaders for high-risk activities or for campers with special needs.	Check if the camping venue provides staff for high-risk activities.		

8. (If applicable) Book Transport to and From Camp (S16.6)

Done?	Task	Notes	Owner	Due Date
	Decide how campers will get to and from camp	Ensure that no leader is transporting a child/young person unaccompanied.		
	If required, book a bus to and from camp.	When it comes to transport, ensure the requirements of the PCNSW Work Health and Safety Guidelines under 'Youth Camps and Short Term Mission' are adhered to. Please also check the following with the Bus Company: <ul style="list-style-type: none">- That the driver will have an up-to-date WWCC⁸- For CTP insurance, in case of injury.		

⁸ While they need to have WWCC, if there is another BTS Trained Camp Leader on the bus, the bus driver doesn't need to be BTS Trained.



	Be sure to put transport arrangements into the registration form (see below)			
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9. (If applicable) Book Activities

Done?	Task	Notes	Owner	Due Date
	Decide what activities will be done that need to be booked ahead of time	If needed, do a risk assessment on those activities. You can download a Risk Assessment from the BTS Website here . ⁹ You can also download a Youth Camp Hazard Analysis Template here . ¹⁰		
	If required, book those activities.			
	Be sure to put this into the registration form (see Section 17, below)			

10. (If applicable) Recruit Camp Cooks

Done?	Task	Notes	Owner	Due Date
	Decide how campers will be fed on camp.			
	If required, recruit cooks for camp.	Decide what training cooks need to do. Suggest the NSW Health's free online Food Handler Basics Training . ¹¹		

⁹ <https://breakingthesilence.org.au/wp-content/uploads/2023/09/BTS-2023-Template-Risk-Matrix-and-Register-Sep-2023.pdf>

¹⁰ <https://pcnsw.org.au/wp-content/uploads/2022/02/Youth-Camp-Hazard-Analysis-Template-Oct-2021.docx>

¹¹ <https://www.foodauthority.nsw.gov.au/training/food-handler-basics-training>



	Be sure to put allergies and dietary requirements into the registration form (see Section 17 of these Guidelines below)			
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11. Design Timetable for Camp

Done?	Task	Notes	Owner	Due Date
	Decide on activities that will need to go into the timetable. Be sure to consider breaks, number of talks, free time, activities, arrival time, pack-up time, etc.	An example Camp Timetable can be found in this booklet here . ¹² The timetable is also an excellent opportunity to go through risk assessments for the site and free time. Look at site boundaries (or camp boundaries), and think through what campers can do with their free time and how they will be protected and cared for during this time. The timetable and intervals between scheduled activities help ensure camper safety through regular opportunities to check in on campers, so consider that when planning length and frequency of breaks as well as rules for free time.		
	Compose a draft Camp Timetable.			
	Put Camp Timetable into Booklet.			

¹² Thanks to Southern Cross Presbyterian Church for providing an example of a camp booklet: <https://tinyurl.com/examplecampbooklet>

**12. Design Camp Booklet**

Done?	Task	Notes	Owner	Due Date
	Design Camp Booklets	You can download an example of a camp booklet here . ¹³ Include such things as a timetable, space for making notes for Bible talks, study questions, camp rules and something that lets kids know who to go to with questions or for help (very simplified org chart - could just be the camp convener).		

13. (If applicable) Misc Camp Tasks

Done?	Task	Notes	Owner	Due Date
	Organise T-shirts/hoodies etc for camp			
	Organise Camp Photographer			
	Organise Camp First Aid Officer			
	Organise Music for camp			
	Organise any special equipment for the camp.			
	Design a runsheet for each session within the camp	Include such things as MC, Bible reader, Title of talk, Songs, PowerPoint, Special activity (e.g. speaker challenge), Game, Bible passage etc.		
	Design slideshows for each session within the camp			

¹³ <https://tinyurl.com/examplecampbooklet>



14. Assess Diverse Needs (S 16.5)

Done?	Task	Notes	Owner	Due Date
	Review the number of leaders required based on group size, venue, and special needs.	Ensure compliance with minimum ratios outlined in the policy (S16.5).		
	Plan for accommodation and support as needed.			
	Consult with parents/carers of children with diverse needs to understand their requirements.			
	Brief leaders on how to support children and young people with diverse needs, including those with hidden needs (e.g., neurodiversity, mental health issues).			
	Arrange for any necessary medical support or equipment for children with disabilities.			

**15. Develop and Communicate Camper Behaviour and Expectations (S 16.7)**

Done?	Task	Notes	Owner	Due Date
	Develop a set of camp rules and expectations as per S16.7	Include specific guidelines on dress code, device use, and behaviour.		
	Put these expectations onto the camp flyer/rego form, which will be sent to parents/carers/campers before the camp.			
	Prepare a briefing session for campers on the first day to reinforce behaviour expectations.	Base this on the BTS Camper Statement – see the BTS Website here for primary-aged campers ¹⁴ , and here for high school aged campers ¹⁵ .		

16. Develop the Mobile Phone Policy for Camp (S 16.11)

Done?	Task	Notes	Owner	Due Date
	Decide whether there will be a no-phone policy on camp or whether phones will be allowed on camp and what the rules will be for use.			
	If you decide on a 'no phone' policy, put this into the registration form.			
	If phones will be allowed, ensure registration form contains the relevant parts of S16.11 for children/young people.			

¹⁴ Primary Aged Camp Statement: <https://breakingthesilence.org.au/wp-content/uploads/2023/11/BTS-2023-Other-BTS-Camping-Statement-Primary-Years-Nov-2023.pdf>

¹⁵ Highschool Aged Camp Statement: <https://breakingthesilence.org.au/wp-content/uploads/2023/11/BTS-2023-Other-BTS-Camping-Statement-Primary-Years-Nov-2023.pdf>



	Inform the leaders of S16.11 requirements for taking photos/videos.			
	Develop the mobile phone photo/video policy for campers, according to S16.11	<p>This states:</p> <p>'Children/young people should be aware that consent should always be sought before taking or sharing a photo or video</p> <p>Consent is ongoing. If someone changes their mind, consent can be retracted.</p> <p>For these reasons, children/young people should be discouraged from taking photos or videos and uploading media (including themselves but especially others).'</p>		
	Review the list of campers whose photos/videos are not to be published in any content.	While such campers may be photographed/filmed, they must not be published.		

**17. Communicate with Carers (S16.8)**

Done ?	Task	Notes	Owner	Due Date
	Design a registration form to collect the information from S16.8.	You can download a registration template from the BTS website Resources page: https://breakingthesilence.org.au/resources/ , and go to the 'Templates' section, then click on 'Child Registration Form'.		
	On (or alongside) the registration form, provide detailed information to parents/carers and campers as per the requirements of S16.8, including: <ol style="list-style-type: none">1) BTS Camping Statement for Primary-Aged Students¹⁶2) BTS Camping Statement for Highschool Students¹⁷3) Who to speak to about personal safety; questions about camp; making a complaint4) Mobile phone use5) Full details of the camp			
	Collect information <i>from</i> parents/carers as per S16.8, including: <ol style="list-style-type: none">1) Contact details of campers2) Emergency Contact for each camper	Ensure the Emergency contact can get to the camp if needed.		

¹⁶ Primary Aged Camp Statement: <https://breakingthesilence.org.au/wp-content/uploads/2023/11/BTS-2023-Other-BTS-Camping-Statement-Primary-Years-Nov-2023.pdf>

¹⁷ Highschool Aged Camp Statement: <https://breakingthesilence.org.au/wp-content/uploads/2023/11/BTS-2023-Other-BTS-Camping-Statement-Primary-Years-Nov-2023.pdf>



	<ul style="list-style-type: none">3) Dietary Requirements4) Medical information (e.g. Allergies)5) Mental health question: any mental health concerns leaders should be aware of.6) Who can collect the camper from camp7) Permission to obtain medical treatment in an emergency8) Permission to give over-the-counter medication in a non-emergency (e.g. Panadol, administer sunscreen).9) Consent regarding the use of any images			
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One Month Before the Camp

18. Emergency Contact and Medical Information (S 16.8)

Done?	Task	Notes	Owner	Due Date
	Prepare a medical management plan for campers with specific health needs (e.g., allergies, asthma).			
	Confirm the availability of first aid resources and personnel at the venue.			
	Ensure a system is in place for securely storing and accessing medical information/medication during the camp.			

19. Incident Reporting (S 16.10, 11, 12)

Done?	Task	Notes	Owner	Due Date
	Prepare an incident reporting and response plan.			
	Brief all leaders on how to handle incidents and disclosures during the camp. See Section 11 of the BTS Manual, especially S11.2.	Ensure leaders know how to document incidents and disclosures from campers, including time, date, and event details.		
	Establish a clear communication protocol for reporting incidents to the CPU and other authorities. See Section 12 of the BTS Manual, especially 12.7.			



Two Weeks Before the Camp

20. Final Pre-Camp Team Meeting (S 16.8)

Done?	Task	Notes	Owner	Due Date
	Hold a final meeting to review roles, responsibilities, and final details.			
	Ensure all leaders are fully briefed on their duties.			
	Review the camp schedule, emergency procedures, and incident reporting protocol.			
	Confirm that all necessary resources, forms, and equipment are prepared and ready.			
	Pray as a team for the success and safety of the camp.			



During Camp

21. Running the Camp

Done?	Task	Notes	Owner	Due Date
	On arrival: Setup Campsite	Setup Registration Table (nametags, booklets, etc). Setup Rosters (if applicable) Setup Activities (if applicable)		
	Gather leaders together and review the plan for the camp	Review things such as: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Camp Timetable • Camp responsibilities • Procedures in the event of an emergency • Procedure in the event of a person needing to go to hospital/doctor • Procedure in the event of 'Notifiable Circumstance'. • Mobile phone use policy • Photography/Video policy • People who aren't meant to have their photos taken. Pray together.		
	Register Campers as they arrive.	Provide people with nametags/booklets/information on sleeping arrangements (recording the details of who was in what cabin for long-term record storage) Take and record medication. If applicable, take mobile phone and house until end of camp.		



	Gather Campers together and make announcements.	Announce the child protection matters on camp: who to contact. Introduce the various leaders to the camp, including leaders, camp parents, and First aid officer(s) Read out the compulsory BTS Camp Statement to the campers: 1) BTS Camping Statement for Primary-Aged Students ¹⁸ 2) BTS Camping Statement for Highschool Students . ¹⁹		
	Camp leaders to meet together regularly (e.g. daily)	Meeting of camp executive (convener/camp parents/section leaders) to discuss what has happened on camp so far and what's coming up.		
	During first meal	Announce orderlies, and explain what needs to be done.		
	Lights-out procedure.	Ensure no unauthorised devices are in use in rooms / that everyone is remaining in their room;		
	Start of day procedure	Ensure everyone who is meant to be there is still at camp.		
	Hand out medication	During breakfast or other meals as per instructions.		
	Get feedback from participants during the final session	Ensure campers can fill out a form and hand it in for feedback.		

¹⁸ Primary Aged Camp Statement: <https://breakingthesilence.org.au/wp-content/uploads/2023/11/BTS-2023-Other-BTS-Camping-Statement-Primary-Years-Nov-2023.pdf>

¹⁹ Highschool Aged Camp Statement: <https://breakingthesilence.org.au/wp-content/uploads/2023/11/BTS-2023-Other-BTS-Camping-Statement-Primary-Years-Nov-2023.pdf>



	End of Camp	Ensure there is a sign-out process for campers once they are collected by their parents/carers. This indicates care has been handed back to the parents/carers.		
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Two Weeks AFTER the Camp

22. Follow Up Actions

Done?	Task	Notes	Owner	Due Date
	Conduct a post-camp debriefing session with all leaders.			
	Review any incidents and submit reports as necessary.			
	If necessary, follow up with parents/carers on any issues that arose during the camp.			
	Send thank-you notes to leaders, Camp Parents, and other volunteers.			

23. Processing Feedback

Done?	Task	Notes	Owner	Due Date
	Gather feedback on what worked well and what didn't.	Get feedback from leaders, camp parents, campers, and parents.		
	Consider creating a report summarising the camp's successes and areas for improvement.			
	Document lessons learned and share with future camp organisers.	Use this information to improve planning for future camps.		



Version Control

Date	Owner	Action
3 rd March 2025	Training and Resource Manager	Published v1.0