

RIGHTS OF YOUNG PEOPLE POLICY

PREAMBLE

All human beings have the right to a life that will let them achieve their full potential, yet young people face some of the greatest challenges to realising their rights. The Greens must ensure they have an upbringing that allows them to take their place as safe, healthy, productive and self-actualised members of their community. As the definition of “youth” varies by country, this policy generally refers to “young people”, which the United Nations uses for statistical purposes to refer to those aged 10-24. The Greens promote an expansive interpretation of this policy, providing rights to as large an age group as possible.

VISION

Young people must have a real voice in policy-making. Young people are leading the way in social and environmental movements across the globe, most notably the climate movement. Their voices, contributions, and rights must be fostered, supported, and empowered as the leaders and global citizens of tomorrow. We believe that young people are both the present and the future.

- Young people should be empowered to create a better society and overcome the challenges created by previous generations
- Young people should be represented, locally through globally, on decision-making bodies affecting their future
- Greens policies should emphasise prevention and early intervention to protect young people who are vulnerable or at risk of harm
- Investment in such policies today not only supports young people, but also reduce the personal, social and financial costs associated with policy failure

OBJECTIVE

All young people will have the right to participate, fully and actively, in community life and in the development and implementation of policies and decisions that affect them. The Greens will provide young people with equitable access to opportunities and resources. Young people will have the right to access quality services they need regardless of where they live or their socio-economic status. The Greens support the rights of young people and will recognise that –

- Young people have the inalienable right of independent existence. Young people are not the property of their parents or guardians, but are under their care and guidance
- Young people have the right to survival through the provision of adequate food, shelter comprehensive health care, and other basic inalienable rights
- Young people have the right to be protected from abuse, harmful drugs, violence, environmental hazards, neglect and exploitation
- Young people have the right to develop in a safe and nurturing environment
- Young people have the right to an education that is stimulating, relevant, engaging and that fosters their natural desire to learn, especially women and girls
- Parents, teachers and other allies play important roles in young people’s physical, social, mental and emotional development

- Young people have the right to represent themselves in and to their respective governments. This should include voting rights and encouragement to run for governing positions

ACTION PLAN

The Greens will create policies and institutions that encourage and support young people to participate in all aspects of life and policymaking, helping them to develop decision-making and leadership skills. This will be promoted by requiring that all schools implement initiatives that support students to understand democratic citizenship and the electoral process, and to take part in school and community decision-making. Therefore, the Greens will –

Coordination and Cooperation

- Improve coordination and cooperation on policies affecting young people between all levels of government
- Increase employment opportunities available to young people beyond 14 years of age
- Give young people the opportunity to express themselves in their own media, including television, radio, films and the Internet. Young people should also be given skills in analysing commercial media
- Ban coercive corporate advertising at educational institutions
- Provide additional resources to enable state and local governments to employ and involve more young workers more than 14 years of age in providing vital services such as housing, training, justice to young people and alcohol and drug treatment

Representation and Contribution

- Recognise and promote the diverse and positive contributions that young people make to their communities and to the political and cultural life of the country
- Require representation or a voice of young people on local and community boards, and their involvement in decision-making
- Ensure that teen parents have access to widespread and well-funded social support mechanisms
- Recognise and promote that young people have the right to represent themselves in and to their respective governments. This should include voting rights and encouragement to run for governing positions.
- Promote the involvement of young people in the development of policies that affect them
- Set the voting age at 16
- Set the age of eligibility to run for public office at 16

Health and Education

- Afford young people the opportunity to have input into the direction and pace of their own education, including input into the operation of their educational institutions
- Include comprehensive and evidence-based sex, sexuality, gender identity, physical health, mental health, and drug education in school curricula
- Integrate civics, human rights, environmental education, and conflict resolution in school curricula

- Support the values of diversity, multiculturalism, mutual respect, and other soft skills in school education
- Implement programs supporting young people’s skills to live independently, such as home economics, finances, and other “life skills”
- Improve access to mental health services for young people as an urgent priority
- Work towards providing free healthcare for all young people, including dental and mental healthcare
- Ensure that young people, in particular young women, have access to family planning services
- Ensure that schools and early childhood centres are inclusive and support the elimination of prejudice, racism, bullying, intimidation, and violence
- Encourage schools to partner with rainbow organisations of young people to reduce stigma, violence and suicide in young LGBTIQ+ communities
- Implement community programs to reduce stigma and discrimination generally, and especially regarding sex, sexuality and gender identity
- Provide access to appropriate rehabilitation programmes for young people with addiction issues
- Support for students by establishing a universal tertiary student allowance

Rights and Justice

- Reform the criminal justice system to require alternative mechanisms for young people, such as community service
- Set the age of criminal responsibility at no less than 16, and the minimum age for holding children in detention at no less than 18. The Greens do not support capital punishment in any circumstance.
- Require that no one under 18 be held in a police cell, or in a prison cell with adults. Separate child or juvenile cells should be provided.
- Ensure that all young people have the right to participate, fully and actively, in community life and in the development and implementation of policies and decisions that affect them
- Reduce and eliminate barriers for young people to access quality services based on their location or socio-economic status
- Provide services and programmes to address the needs of young people from diverse communities, including multicultural, LGBTIQ+, and other marginalized minorities.
- Ensure that young people have the means to express themselves to their community and at all levels of government, through the appropriate authorities
- Ensure access to government, social and private rental housing for young people that is secure, affordable and appropriate for those in transition from at-risk situations
- Implement and strictly enforce of laws banning child labour and child marriage

References:

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