



# **CHILD SAFE POLICY**

**Adopted by Council  
10 May 2023  
2023/072**

## **Purpose**

The purpose of this policy is to: -

- Demonstrate Council's commitment to the safety and welfare of children and young people
- Ensure Council is compliant with NSW child protection legislation
- Ensure Council provides a safe environment for children and young people whilst on Council premises and utilising Council services
- Promote the health, safety, welfare and well-being of children and young people

## **Policy Scope**

This policy informs Councillors, employees, contractors and volunteers of their obligations in keeping children safe.

## **Community Strategic Plan 2032**

The Child Safe Policy supports the delivery of Council's vibrant communities goal – "We want to create a safe, healthy and connected regional that encourages participation and creates a strong sense of pride in our community and each other's wellbeing."

## **Commitment to Child Safety**

Children and young people engage with Council in a variety of ways, be it accessing whole of community services such as our library, aquatic centres and sporting facilities, by participating in community events, or by enjoying our parks and open spaces.

Council is committed to our responsibility for keeping children and young people safe and ensuring they are respected and treated fairly.

## **Child Safe Standards**

The Children's Guardian Act 2019 embeds the following Child Safe Standards as the primary framework that guides child safe practice in organisations.

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| Standard 1  | Child safety is embedded in organisational leadership, governance and culture  |
| Standard 2  | Children participate in decisions affecting them and are taken seriously   |
| Standard 3  | Families and communities are informed and involved   |
| Standard 4  | Equity is upheld and diversity is taken into account   |
| Standard 5  | People working with children are suitable and supported  |
| Standard 6  | Processes to respond to complaints of child abuse are child focused  |
| Standard 7  | Staff are equipped with the knowledge, skills and awareness to keep children safe through continual education and training |
| Standard 8  | Physical and online environments minimise the opportunity for abuse to occur   |
| Standard 9  | Implementation of the Child Safe Standards is continuously reviewed and improved   |
| Standard 10 | Policies and procedures document how the organisation is child safe  |

## **Involving children in decision making**

Council supports the active engagement of children in our services, programs and events. Council will provide accessible opportunities and encourage children to take part in decisions that affect them now and in the future.

Wherever applicable, we will inform children and young people about what they can do if they feel unsafe.

## **Recruitment and Selection**

Council utilises a fit for purpose recruitment and selection process for all direct contact work with a child or young person where contact is a usual part of or more than incidental to the work as defined by the Child Protection (Working with Children) Act 2012. A current Working with Children Check (WWCC) is required for all child-related work.

The following positions have been identified as child related and will required the staff member or contractor to hold a current Working with Children Check: -

- All Lifeguards over 18 years of age
- Sport and Recreation Officer
- Economic Development Officers
- EA Community and Economic Development

## **Training and Induction**

Council will ensure that all Councillors, employees, volunteers and contractors understand Council's commitment to child safety and that everyone has a role to play in safeguarding children.

## **Reporting a Child Safety Concern or Complaint**

A reportable allegation is made where a child, young person or adult makes an allegation, based on a reasonable belief that a Councillor, employee, contractor, or volunteer of Narromine Shire Council has been, or allegedly been, involved in the abuse and neglect of a child or young person.

All reportable allegations of child abuse must be reported to Council's Child Protection Officer. Council must immediately take the appropriate steps to assess and minimise further risk of harm, as well as report the matter to the Office of the Children's Guardian.

## **Privacy and Confidentiality**

Council is committed to protecting an individual's right to privacy. All personal information considered during the process of reporting or investigation will be collected and managed in accordance with Council's Privacy Management Plan. Personal information will only be disclosed to another party if there is a legislative requirement for such disclosure.

## **Risk Management**

Council recognises the importance of a risk management approach to minimising the potential for child abuse or harm to occur.

Any complaints made against Councillors, employees, volunteers or contractors will be dealt with in accordance with relevant legislation, specifically the Children's Guardian Act 2019, which mandates a specific approach to handling and report complaints.

## **ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES**

**Council** – publicly commits to child safety and embeds a child safe culture.

**General Manager** – is responsible for ensuring that Council fulfils its responding and reporting obligations when an allegation of child abuse is made against a Councillor, employee, volunteer or contractor.

**Directors and Managers** – are responsible for ensuring compliance with this policy and that all employees, contractors and volunteers are informed, resourced and supported to understand their role in providing a child safe environment.

**Child Protection Officer** - Council's Public Officer has been appointed as the Child Protection Officer and their responsibility is to: -

- Provide ongoing support and response to concerns about the safety and wellbeing of children while engaged in services, programs or events delivered by Council.
- Notify the Office of the Children's Guardian (NSW) when an allegation (of which they are aware) of child abuse is made against a Councillor, employee, volunteer or contractor.

**Council Employees, Contractors and Volunteers** – shall adhere to the requirements of this policy and be able to demonstrate their awareness of their child safety responsibilities.

**All staff** should be aware that the appointment of a Child Protection Officer does not remove mandatory reporting obligations that other officers of Council may have under s27 of the Children and Young Persons (Care and Protection) Act 1998.

**Mandatory reporters** have a legal responsibility to report suspected risk of significant harm to the Department of Communities and Justice during the course of their work.

## **Definitions**

**Abuse** – means a sexual offence, sexual misconduct, assault, ill-treatment or behaviour causing significant emotional or psychological harm to the child.

**Child** – means a person who is under the age of 16 years.

**Child-Safe Organisation** – means an organisation in which child safety is embedded in planning, policy and practices and where the voices of children and young people are valued and actioned.

**Mandatory Reporters** – means people who deliver services, wholly or partly, to children as part of their paid or professional work.

**Neglect** – means a significant failure to provide adequate and proper food, supervision, nursing, clothing, medical aid or lodging for the child that causes or is likely to cause harm to the child.

**Risk of Significant Harm** – means a situation is sufficiently serious to warrant a response by a statutory authority irrespective of the family's consent. It is something that is not minor or trivial and may be reasonably expected to produce a substantial and demonstrably adverse impact on the child or young person's safety, welfare or wellbeing.

**Working with Children Check** – is a check that provides either clearance to work with children for five years, or a bar against working with children.

**Young Person** – means a person who is over the age of 16 years but under the age of 18 years.

**LEGISLATIVE REQUIREMENTS**

- Local Government Act 1993
- Privacy and Personal Information Protection Act 1998
- Children's Guardian Act 2019 and Regulation
- Children and Young Persons (Care and Protection) Act 1998 and Regulation
- Child Protection (Working with Children) Act 2012 and Regulation

**RELATED POLICIES**

- Code of Conduct
- Council's Privacy Management Plan
- Employment Policies and Procedures

<b>Version No</b>	<b>Created By</b>	<b>Adopted</b>	<b>Review Date</b>
1.0	Director Governance	10 May 2023 2023/072	4 years