

Child Safe Awareness

Introduction

This Shire of Toodyay (the Shire) is committed to supporting the safety and wellbeing of all children and young people, including protection from abuse.

Objective

To reduce the risk of harm and child sexual abuse in our communities by encouraging child safe environments.

Scope

The Shire has a leadership role in the community to support relevant organisations to be child safe and promote child safe practices.

Although the Shire is not legally responsible for providing oversight of compliance with child safe practices, it will take any reasonable steps to engage with persons who utilise Shire facilities to operate in alignment with the Child Safe Awareness policy.

This Policy applies to Workers, Elected Members and anyone else who undertakes work on behalf of the Shire, regardless of whether the work relates to children or young people. It also applies to occupants of Shire owned facilities and venues, including visitors, and contractors.

Definitions

Term	Definition
Abuse	An act, or a failure to act, towards or on behalf of a child that may result in harm. It can occur on one occasion or multiple occasions. Sometimes the impact of multiple events leads to harm that becomes cumulative in nature. Types of abuse include physical, emotional, and sexual abuse, and neglect.
Act	<i>Local Government Act 1995.</i>
CEO	Chief Executive Officer
Child/Children	A person under 18 years of age, and in the absence of positive evidence as to age, means a person who appears to be under 18 years of age.
Child Safe	Protecting the rights of children and young people to be safe by taking actions that can help prevent harm and abuse.
Child Safe Organisation	Is defined in the Royal Commission into Institutional Responses to Child Sexual Abuse Royal Final Report as one that: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> creates an environment where children's safety and wellbeing are at the centre of thought, values, and actions

Term	Definition
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • places emphasis on genuine engagement with and valuing of children and young people • creates conditions that reduce the likelihood of harm to children and young people • creates conditions that increase the likelihood of identifying any harm, and • responds to any concerns, disclosures, allegations, or suspicions of harm. <p>Note: in the context of local governments, this would involve referring concerns to the Department of Communities or WA Police to respond as appropriate.</p> <p>Implementation of the National Principles for Child Safe Organisations give effect to the above.</p>
Council	The local government, responsible for making decisions in formal meetings held under the auspices of Part 5 of the <i>Local Government Act 1995</i> and under the <i>Shire's Standing Orders Local Law 2008</i> .
Harm	In relation to a child, means any detrimental effect of a significant nature on the child's wellbeing, whether caused by a single act, omission or circumstance; or a series or combination of acts, omissions or circumstances.
Member	In relation to a council or committee, a Council Member in the Act; Elected Member; or Councillor; or a member of the committee.
Shire	the Shire of Toodyay.
Wellbeing	Includes the care, development, education, health and safety of children and young people.

Policy Statement

The Shire is committed to encouraging local organisations to create and maintain child safe environments and ensure that children are safe and empowered.

This Policy has been developed in response to recommendation 6.12 of the 'Royal Commission into Institutional Responses to Child Sexual Abuse' and recognises that the Shire is uniquely placed within the local community to demonstrate leadership by supporting organisations to be child safe and to take all reasonable steps to protect children and young people from harm and/or abuse. The Shire will promote the safety and wellbeing of children across the community.

Consistent with the 'National Principles for Child Safe Organisations' and the 'Commonwealth Child Safe Framework', this policy provides a framework that outlines the role of the Shire in supporting local organisations to be child safe through access to resources, awareness raising and sharing relevant information.

1. Policy Principles

- (a) The rights of children and young people are upheld.
- (b) Children and young people are respected, listened to, and informed about their rights.
- (c) Children and young people have the fundamental right to be safe and cared for.
- (d) Children and young people have the right to speak up, be heard and taken seriously without the threat of negative consequences.
- (e) The safety and best interests of children and young people are a primary consideration when making decisions that concern them.
- (f) Access to trusted and reliable information, including the National Principles for Child Safe Organisations, helps support organisations to understand what they must do to help reduce the risk of harm and abuse.
- (g) Communities are informed and involved in promoting the safety and wellbeing of children and young people, including protection from harm.
- (h) Collaboration with the community and our partners promotes the safety, participation and empowerment of all children and young people.

2. Policy Functions

The Shire will ensure the following functions of this policy are resourced and assigned to the relevant Shire Officers for implementation.

- (a) Developing a process to deliver child safe messages (for example at the Shire's venues, grounds and facilities or events).
- (b) Connecting local community groups, organisations, and stakeholders to child safe resources (including culturally safe and inclusive resources).

Reference Information

- [National Principles for Child Safe Organisations](#)
- [Commonwealth Child Safe Framework](#)
- [Workers Code of Conduct;](#)
- [Reportable Conduct Scheme Policy](#)
- [Government of Western Australia reference material:](#)
- [Guidelines for promoting child safe messages;](#)
- [Responding to Disclosure of Child Abuse and Neglect; and](#)
- [Guidelines for protecting children 2020](#)
- [National Principles for Child Safety Organisations](#)

- [Referral pathways for complaints, concerns and disclosure of abuse](#)

Legislation

- [Child Care Services Act 2007](#)
- [Children and Community Services Act 2004](#)
- [Civil Liability Act 2002](#)
- [Corruption, Crime and Misconduct Act 2003](#)
- [Equal Opportunity Act 1984](#)
- [Freedom of Information Act 1992](#)
- [Local Government Act 1995](#)
- [Parliamentary Commissioner Act 1971](#)
- [Public Interest Disclosure Act 2003r](#)
- [Public Sector Management Act 1994](#)
- [United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child \(CRC\)](#)
- [Work Health and Safety Act 2020](#)
- [Working with Children \(Criminal Record Checking\) Act 2004](#)

Review

This Policy will be reviewed every two years or upon the introduction of other relevant policy or legislation related to the safety and wellbeing of children and young people.

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