

# Child Safe Code of Conduct

All Council personnel (i.e. employees, contractors, volunteers, students and Councillors) are required to meet the expectations of appropriate behaviour towards, and in the company of, children and young people as outlined in this Child Safe Code of Conduct (the Code) at all times while working for Council. Children are defined in this Code as anyone aged under 18 years old.

## Council personnel will:



- Be observant and alert to potential harm and take all reasonable steps to protect children from abuse.
  - Treat all children with respect, equity and dignity.
  - Listen to and treat the safety concerns of children seriously, particularly if they tell you that they or another child has been or is at risk of being abused.
  - Place the interests of any child being abused, or at risk of being abused, above the interests of the organisation or other individuals within it.
  - Provide welcoming, safe and accessible environments that protect children from violence, bullying, teasing, threatening behaviour, and discrimination.
  - Manage relationships and situations where a prior relationship exists with a child or family appropriately.
  - Uphold the rights and best interests of children in planning and decision-making.
  - Respect and promote the cultural safety of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children; culturally and/or linguistically diverse children; and the safety of children with a disability.
  - Demonstrate a zero-tolerance approach to racism and other forms of discrimination, and act on any incidents of this from either adults or other children and young people.
  - Be a positive role model by supporting children to learn protective behaviours, empowering children to speak up if they have concerns for their safety or wellbeing, and ensuring children are aware of their rights (including their cultural rights) and have access to this information.
  - Provide opportunities that reflect the diverse needs of children and empower them to fully participate in the community, including our services and programs.
  - Recognise children as active citizens, agents in their own lives and encourage them to 'have a say' on issues that directly affect them.
  - Adhere to risk prevention and management strategies and safe work practices (identified by and relevant to your work area) when interacting with children.
  - Complete relevant training and other professional development activities as required.
  - Treat all concerns or allegations of child abuse seriously and respond consistently with the procedures outlined in the Child Safety and Wellbeing Policy.
  - Ensure the immediate safety of a child if an allegation of abuse is made/abuse has occurred.
  - Report any breach of the Code of Conduct by a Council officer to your Supervisor (or next level Manager where the concern involves your Supervisor) immediately.
  - Adhere to appropriate 'safe touch' that is considered appropriate to your role, or where otherwise necessary (i.e. comforting a child in distress, administering first aid).
- Appropriate safe touch with a child must:**
- Be appropriate to the developmental needs of the child.
  - Be strictly in line with the types of child contact necessary to perform your duties.
  - Be open, non-secretive and culturally sensitive.
  - Be at the initiation or with the consent of the child.
- It is important to be attuned to the child's cues and what they are comfortable with. Where possible or age appropriate, seek consent first, e.g. ask a child in distress if it is ok to give them a hug; when performing first aid or duties of a personal nature tell the child where you need to touch them, why, and ask if it is ok.

## Council personnel will not:



- Show favouritism or preference to one child over others, e.g. by offering a child gifts or special treatment.
- Exhibit behaviours with children which may be construed as unnecessarily physical.
- Hit, physically assault, or engage in inappropriately rough play with a child.
- Speak to a child in an angry, intimidating or threatening manner.
- Engage in open discussions of a mature or adult nature with or in the presence of children.
- Condone or make self-disclosures about past or present participation in illegal or unsafe behaviours when speaking to or in the presence of a child.
- Smoke, take illicit drugs, or be affected by alcohol or other substances when in the workplace.
- Touch intimate areas or have any other physical contact with a child (i.e. kiss, hold, cuddle) not deemed to be appropriate to your role, or necessary safe touch.
- Do things of a personal nature (i.e. toileting or changing clothes) that you could not reasonably expect a child to do for themselves, unless performing personal care duties as part of your role, or in unavoidable situations (i.e. preventing an accident or administering first aid).
- Use inappropriate, discriminatory, harassing, abusive, sexually explicit, demeaning or culturally insensitive language when speaking to, or in the presence of a child.
- Discriminate against any child on the basis of age, gender, race, culture, religion, disability, vulnerability, sexuality or other protected attributes, OR express personal views on such attributes when speaking to or in the presence of a child.
- Purposefully establish or maintain a relationship with a child and/or their family outside of work for an inappropriate purpose.
- Solicit, conduct or accept requests from children and/or their families for private services (i.e. babysitting, non-authorized home visits, or private lessons) delivered outside of your work.
- Provide personal contact details (i.e. phone number, home address, email/social media addresses) to children and the parents of children you interact with at work.
- Use social media/online platforms to solicit or befriend a child or have online contact with a child that is not transparent to Council and part of an approved program or activity.
- Take, use or publish unauthorised images of children in Council's programs and activities.
- Use personal devices to take images of children.
- Ignore or disregard any suspected or disclosed child abuse.
- Put a child at risk of abuse or harm either through negligence or inaction.