

CHILD SAFETY POLICY

JUNE 2024



CITY OF MELBOURNE

Acknowledgement of Traditional Owners

The City of Melbourne respectfully acknowledges the Traditional Owners of the land we govern, the Wurundjeri Woi-wurrung and Bunurong / Boon Wurrung peoples of the Kulin and pays respect to their Elders past and present.

We acknowledge and honour the unbroken spiritual, cultural and political connection they have maintained to this unique place for more than 2000 generations.

We accept the invitation in the Uluru Statement from the Heart and are committed to walking together to build a better future.

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June 2024

Disclaimer

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1. PURPOSE

The purpose of this policy is to set out the City of Melbourne's (CoM) commitment to being a Child Safe organisation and key information all CoM Councillors, employees, volunteers and contractors need to be aware of.

This policy provides strategic and operational guidance to all levels of CoM to keep children and young people safe, and outlines the responsibilities, procedures and practices that support the creation and maintenance of a child safe culture.

2. SCOPE

This policy applies to all CoM Councillors, employees, volunteers and work experience/ work placement students over the age of 18, irrespective of whether or not they are engaged in a child facing role.

CoM requires contracted organisations and agency staff to comply with the child safe legislation as part of their contractual agreements with CoM.

This policy applies in all CoM's facilities and without fail whenever children and young people are participating in CoM's activities, programs (physical or online), services and open spaces.



3. DEFINITIONS

Child ¹	Any child or young person aged under 18 years.
Child abuse and harm ¹	An act (or acts) which endanger a child's health, wellbeing and/or development. It includes: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Physical abuse • Sexual abuse • Sexual misconduct • Grooming • Emotional or psychological abuse and/or harm • Serious neglect • Family violence (against, with or in the presence of a child)
Child safe culture ¹	The culture in an organisation where children's safety and wellbeing is put first and embeds a commitment to child safety in every aspect of the organisation.
Commission for Children and Young People ²	An independent statutory body that promotes the improvement in policies and practices affecting the safety and wellbeing of Victorian children and young people. The Commission for Children and Young People is a regulator for the Child Safe Standards and is responsible for administering the Reportable Conduct Scheme.
Contractor ²	A third party business entity used by CoM to provide services directly to children and young people, or where the contract's activities will, or are likely to involve contact with children and young people that is a usual part of, and more than incidental, to the services. <p>Agency staff are recruited through an agency with their work duties determined by CoM. They are provided with training in CoM processes and procedures and have rights and protections not afforded to contractors.</p>
Cultural safety ¹	The positive recognition and celebration of cultures. Children and young people are empowered and enabled to contribute and feel safe to be themselves.
Empowerment ¹	Builds on the strength of children and young people allowing them to become more confident. It equips children and young people with skills and knowledge to make informed decisions and increase control of their lives.
Grooming ³	Manipulative and controlling behaviour used to build trust or normalise sexually harmful behaviour with a child under 16 years of age. Grooming can involve behaviour in person and activities on social media, email or phone.
Intersectionality ⁴	People may experience overlapping forms of discrimination or disadvantage based on attributes such as Aboriginality, age, disability, ethnicity, gender identity, race, religion and sexual orientation. The causes of disadvantage or discrimination do not exist independently, but intersect and overlap with gender inequality, magnifying the severity and frequency of the impacts while also raising barriers to support.
Incident ⁵	Any event of harm or abuse of a child/young person and includes incidents that could have caused harm or abuse to a child/young person.
Lessees and grant recipients	People, community groups, organisations who lease a CoM facility or receive funding through a grant program who have direct contact, including intermittent contact with children and young people.
Risk ¹	In the context of the Child Safe Standards, risk is actual or potential exposure to harm or abuse of a child/young person to occur in connection with Council.

1. Adapted from CCYP: A Guide to creating a child safe organisation
2. Adapted from MAV: Child Safe Standards MAV Practice and Resource Guide
3. Crimes Amendment Act: Department of Justice and Community Safety
4. Applying intersectionality: Gender Equality Commission
5. Australian Human Rights Commission: Child Safe Organisations

4. BACKGROUND

The Child Wellbeing and Safety Act (Vic) 2005 provides the overarching legislative framework for encouraging and supporting a shared commitment to child safety and wellbeing. The Act enables the Minister to create the Child Safe Standards and outlines the legislative obligations in reporting allegations of reportable conduct or misconduct that may involve reportable conduct by an entity's employees.

Schedule 1 (47) in the Act identifies Councils as entities required to comply with the Act, the Child Safe Standards (S3.1) and the Reportable Conduct Scheme (Part 5A).

In June 2021, the Child Wellbeing and Safety (Child Safe Standards Compliance and Enforcement) Amendment Bill (Vic) was passed and updated the legislation for the Child Safe Standards. From 1 January 2023, the Commission for Children and Young People (CCYP) and other regulators have new powers to take action for non-compliance with the Standards such as the issuing of infringement notices for non-compliance.

4.1 The Child Safe Standards

The Child Safe Standards are in place to:

- a) Promote the safety of children and young people.
- b) Prevent harm and abuse to children and young people.
- c) Ensure effective processes are in place to respond to and report all allegations of child abuse and harm.
- d) Encourage children and young people to "have a say" on issues that are important to them or about decisions that affect their lives.

The Standards set out 50 minimum requirements and 104 compliance indicators that outline the actions and documents required to keep children and young people safe.

The Standards:

1. Organisations establish a culturally safe environment in which diverse and unique identities and experiences of Aboriginal children and young people are respected and valued.
2. Child safety and wellbeing is embedded in organisational leadership, governance and culture.
3. Children and young people are empowered about their rights, participate in decisions affecting them and are taken seriously.
4. Families and communities are informed and involved in promoting child safety and wellbeing.
5. Equity is upheld and diverse needs respected in policy and practice.
6. People working with children and young people are suitable and supported to reflect child safety and wellbeing values in practice.
7. Processes for complaints and concerns are child focussed.

8. Staff and volunteers are equipped with the knowledge, skills and awareness to keep children and young people safe through ongoing education and training.
9. Physical and online environments promote safety and wellbeing while minimising the opportunity for children and young people to be harmed.
10. Implementation of the Child Safe Standards is regularly reviewed and improved.
11. Policies and procedures document how the organisation is safe for children and young people.

Appendix 2 outlines CoM's key actions to implement each Child Safe Standard.

4.2 Reportable Conduct Scheme

The Reportable Conduct Scheme (Part 5A of the Act) provides the framework for improved organisational responses to allegations of child abuse and neglect committed by their workers and volunteers.

There are five types of reportable conduct:

1. Sexual offences against, with or in the presence of a child.
2. Sexual misconduct against, with or in the presence of a child.
3. Physical violence against, with or in the presence of a child.
4. Behaviour that causes significant emotional or psychological harm.
5. Significant neglect of a child.

The Reportable Conduct Scheme requires organisations to respond to allegations of child-related misconduct made against current employees, volunteers, some contractors (including individual contractors, employees and volunteers of labour hire agencies) and workplace students. It requires the organisation to report allegations to the CCYP as well as investigate the allegations with the CCYP overseeing the investigations.

The CCYP has the power to receive allegations and findings of reportable conduct, assess an organisation's systems to prevent, notify and investigate reportable conduct, provide oversight of workplace investigations, investigate allegations in some circumstances, refer findings to professional registration bodies and the Working with Children Check Unit, build the capacity of organisations to respond to allegations of abuse and report to Parliament on performance of the Scheme and trends. The Scheme does not replace or interfere with Police investigations.

Under specific advice from the CCYP to the Municipal Association of Victoria, the Reportable Conduct Scheme does not cover Councillors since they are not engaged directly by Council, rather they are elected by voters.

4.3 Mandatory Reporting

Under the Children, Youth and Families Act 2005, certain professionals and community members (mandatory reporters) are legally required to report a reasonable belief of child sexual or physical abuse to Child Protection authorities. At CoM, this is relevant to some employees which include Children's Services employees, Maternal and Child Health nurses and midwives.

4.4 Gender Equality Act

The Gender Equality Act 2020 requires CoM to conduct gender impact assessments on our policies, programs and services that impact on our communities including children and young people. The purpose of gender impact assessments is to: increase gender equality, create better and fairer outcomes for all people and ensure equal access to opportunities and resources.

When developing or updating policies, services and programs, all CoM employees must consider child safety measures in terms of gender and intersectionality, paying particular attention to assessing how the policy, program or service impacts on:

- Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children and young people.
- Children and young people from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds.
- Children and young people with a disability.
- LGBTIQ+ children and young people.
- Children and young people that are unable to live at home.

For more information on gender impact assessment responsibilities, refer to: [Gender Impact Assessments \(sharepoint.com\)](#)

5. POLICY

5.1 Commitment to Child Safety

The City of Melbourne (CoM) is committed to being a child safe organisation and has zero tolerance for child abuse. All children and young people are valued members of our community and have the right to be and feel safe.

We are committed to embedding child safety into the everyday thinking and practice of all employees, agency staff, contractors and volunteers. We require all CoM employees, agency staff, volunteers and contractors to understand and act to prevent, detect, respond and report any suspicion of child abuse and maintain a culture of child safety. We have specific policies, procedures and training in place to achieve these commitments.

We embrace diversity, equity and inclusion. All children and young people, regardless of their age, gender identity, sexual orientation, race, religious beliefs, ability, family or social background, have equal rights to protection from abuse.

We acknowledge and respect the unique histories of all Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children, young people and their families. We have zero tolerance of racism and actively promote cultural respect, and support cultural safety.

We commit to creating environments where all children and young people have a voice. We acknowledge their right to 'have a say' about things that are important to them.

We commit to listening to and respecting their views, and ensuring they contribute to how we plan and design our services, programs, projects, facilities and public places.

We commit to paying particular attention to ensure accessible and culturally safe information and engagement opportunities for:

- Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children and young people.
- Children and young people from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds.
- Children and young people with a disability.
- LGBTIQ+ children and young people.
- Children and young people that are unable to live at home.

5.2 Human Resources and Recruitment

CoM has effective screening tools to assist the recruitment of suitable employees, contractors, agency staff and volunteers to minimise the risk of inappropriate individuals entering the organisation.

CoM's recruitment process includes a Child Safe Commitment Statement in all job advertisements, inclusion of child safe questions for pre-interview screening, interview and referee checks, and the requirement for a valid Working with Children Check before commencing.

CoM has systems in place to monitor the validity of Working with Children Checks across the organisation with an alert system that escalates an expired check.

All employees are required to complete the mandatory Child Safe online training on induction and every two years.

5.3 Code of Conduct

All CoM employees, volunteers, contractors (individual contractors and labour hire agency employees and volunteers) and workplace students (aged over 18) are responsible for ensuring the safety, participation, wellbeing and empowerment of children and young people whilst undertaking their roles.

They are required to act in accordance with the expected standards of behaviour when interacting with children and young people as outlined in the Employee Code of Conduct and the Volunteer Handbook.

Any breaches of the Code of Conduct will follow CoM's disciplinary policies and procedures.

Councillors are also required to act with the expected standards of behaviour when interacting with children and young people as outlined in the Councillor Code of Conduct.

5.4 Responding to Child Safety Concerns

As a child safe organisation, CoM complies with all relevant legislation. Allegations of child abuse and child safety concerns will be taken seriously and investigated fairly, thoroughly and appropriately and responded to promptly.

5.4.1 Legislative Requirements

CoM employees have obligations under the Crimes Act 1958 and Crimes Amendment (Grooming Act) 2014 that include:

1. **Failure to disclose child sexual abuse.** All adults in Victoria who form a 'reasonable belief' that an adult has committed a sexual offence against a child under 16 have a legal obligation to report that information to Police.
3. **Failure to protect a child from sexual abuse.** CoM employees in positions of authority will commit an offence if they know of a substantial risk of child sexual abuse and have the power or responsibility to reduce or remove the risk, but negligently fail to do so.
4. **Grooming offence.** It is an offence to target communication, including online communication, with a child under the age of 16 or their parents with the intent of committing child sexual abuse.

All CoM employees, volunteers, agency staff, contractors, students (over 18 years) on placement at CoM are legally required to report suspected cases of sexual abuse against a child under 16 years to Police.

5.4.2 Reporting

Anyone can report a child safety incident, including children, young people, families or other members of the community.

A reportable conduct allegation is made where a child, young person or adult makes an allegation, based on a reasonable belief, that a CoM employee, contractor (individual contractor or employees and volunteers of labour hire agencies) or volunteer has been involved in the harm or abuse of a child or young person.

All CoM employees, volunteers, agency staff and students on placement are required to report any suspicion of child abuse or inappropriate behaviour that may directly or indirectly impact on children.

The Child Safety Incident Reporting Process (Appendix 1) is to be followed to enable the Child Safe Coordinator to support the management of incidents as well as provide organisational oversight of incidents.

Contractors should report child safety concerns to their CoM contract manager who will report the incident through CoM's Child Safety Incident Reporting Process.

Children, young people, families or other members of the community can contact CoM through the complaints process or contact a CoM employee directly. The Child Safe Coordinator can provide support and advice on correct responses to ensure the safety of the child.

5.4.3 Support

Where appropriate, following a reported child safety concern, CoM will:

- Assist alleged victims and their families to access counselling and support services.
- Provide support to affected employees through the Employee Assistance Program.

5.4.4 Record Management and Information Sharing

CoM is committed to protect an individual's right to privacy. All information recorded in a child safety report and during a reportable conduct investigation will remain confidential and meet the requirements of CoM's Privacy Policy, Health Records Policy and Records Management Policy.

Relevant information may be shared to prioritise child safety, but an individual's personal information will not be shared to any external party without their consent unless there is a legislative requirement such as those within the Child Information Sharing Scheme and the Family Violence Information Sharing Scheme to promote the safety and wellbeing of children.

Risks to child safety that are identified in complaints, reports or allegations of abuse will be reviewed and incorporated into the relevant risk register.

6. RISK MANAGEMENT

All CoM employees are expected to proactively identify and manage the risk of harm or abuse to children and young people for all services, programs, projects, grants and contracts. This includes consideration of both physical and online environments.

Employees should use CoM's risk enterprise framework to identify, analyse and evaluate child safety risks. Child safety risks should be incorporated into operational risk registers to be monitored and reported at regular intervals.

Children and young people should be actively consulted and their advice acted upon when designing and developing facilities and public spaces to help identify and mitigate child safety risks.

When reporting child safety incidents, the business area manager should identify, implement and monitor risk mitigation strategies to try to prevent similar incidents from recurring.



7. RESPONSIBILITIES

Ensuring the safety and wellbeing of children and young people is everyone's responsibility. All employees, volunteers and agency staff have a role to play by keeping children and young people at the centre of all they do and every decision they make that may impact on children and young people.

The **Executive Leadership Team (ELT)** are responsible for:

- Leading, strengthening and modelling a culture of child safety and wellbeing.
- Providing leadership and strong governance to endorse organisational child safety policies.
- Providing organisational resources to ensure ongoing compliance with the Child Safe Standards.
- Oversee CoM's management of child safety incidents to ensure appropriate responses and service improvements to prevent future incidents.
- Maintaining strong child safe governance by ensuring child safety risks are identified and monitored, policies and processes are consistently implemented and children and young people are engaged.
- The CEO is responsible for meeting specific requirements under the Reportable Conduct Scheme including legislated timelines.

Directors (MLT) are responsible for:

- Leading, strengthening and modelling a culture of child safety and wellbeing.
- Overseeing and ensuring compliance with the Child Safe Standards in their branch.
- Ensuring child safety policies and procedures are implemented consistently in their branch, where relevant.
- Ensuring ongoing monitoring of child safety risks in the work of the branch.
- Supporting employees to identify and respond to child safety incidents.
- Ensuring child safety is embedded and monitored in the management of relevant contracts and grants with appropriate responses implemented for child safety breaches.
- Ensuring children and young people are engaged in the relevant work of their branch.
- Supporting employees involved in Reportable Conduct processes.

People Leaders are responsible for:

- Leading and modelling a culture of child safety and wellbeing.
- Ensuring child safe competencies are identified for relevant positions in the recruitment process and preferred / successful candidates meet these competencies.
- Ensuring the Child Safety Incident Reporting and WWCC Policies are implemented in relevant work areas and all employees have access to them.
- Ensuring employees have completed child safe training and an induction on child safety responsibilities.
- Supporting employees to identify and correctly respond to child safety incidents.
- Supporting employees to identify, manage and monitor child safety risks as part of contract and grant management.
- Managing appropriate breaches to the Child Safety Policy and procedures.
- Participating in Reportable Conduct reporting processes where required.
- Ensuring a workplace culture that supports a transparent, continually improving environment in relation to child safety.

People, Culture and Leadership are responsible for:

- Maintaining the WWCC Policy, overseeing the implementation and monitoring of WWCCs across CoM.
- Ensuring the child safe recruitment processes are implemented consistently across CoM.
- Ensuring all CoM employees and volunteers complete child safe training on induction and at regular intervals.
- Supporting the roll out of team specific child safe training.
- Overseeing Reportable Conduct allegations with the Child Safe Coordinator.
- Supporting People Managers with breaches of the Code of Conduct policy in relation to child safety.
- Leading investigations of Reportable Conduct allegations.

Contract and Grant Managers are responsible for:

- Ensuring all relevant third-party operators and grant recipients are provided with a copy of CoM's Child Safety Commitment Statement.
- Ensuring contracts, agreements, licenses and grants contain child safety and WWCC requirements where relevant.
- Regularly and actively monitoring compliance with child safety requirements in contracts, agreements, licenses and grants.

The **Child Safe Coordinator** is responsible for:

- Leading the implementation of the Child Safe Standards and the Reportable Conduct Scheme including the development of systems and processes to ensure organisational compliance.
- Promoting a child safety and wellbeing culture across CoM.
- Supporting employees to complete the Child Safety Incident Reporting Process and oversee Child Safety incidents across CoM.
- Providing reports on child safety data trends.
- Providing guidance, information and training to teams supporting them to embed child safety in their work.
- Increasing the understanding of Child Safe obligations across CoM.
- Providing advice and support to People Managers and employees about what to do if they are concerned for a child's safety and effective service responses.
- Implementing and supporting continuous child safe improvement processes.
- Supporting investigations of Reportable Conduct allegations.

CoM employees and volunteers are responsible for:

- Understanding and complying with your roles and responsibilities in keeping children and young people safe.
- Participating in training and education in relation to child safety as required.
- Obtaining and maintaining a valid WWCC as required for your role.
- Reporting any concerns about the safety and wellbeing of a child or young person.
- Providing environments for children and young people where they feel safe, empowered and can participate.
- Behaving safely and appropriately with children and young people.
- Engaging children and young people in the planning and design of relevant work.

Ongoing review and updates to this policy is the responsibility of the Child Safe Coordinator.

8. REFERENCES

There are a number of international and state policies that align with and guide child safety work. CoM's child safety work, including the development of our policies and procedures are consistent with the following policies:

The United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child. Children have a right to be protected from physical and mental harm and neglect. They have the right to enjoy the full range of human rights, including civil, cultural, economic, political and social rights. CoM recognises the importance of human rights for all people including children and young people.

The Charter of Human Rights and Responsibilities Act 2006 (Vic). The Charter outlines the basic human rights of all people in Victoria and states that every child has the right to protection as is in their best interest. The Charter requires local governments to act consistently with the Charter and consider relevant rights when making decisions.

The United Nations Sustainable Development Goals. The Goals are a call to action to end poverty, protect the planet, ensure peace and prosperity and end discrimination against women and girls. Goal 16 Peace, Justice and Strong Institutions aims to end abuse, exploitation, trafficking and violence against children. CoM has embedded the Sustainable Development Goals in the Council Plan 2020-24 with work underway to plan and prioritise investments, report and benchmark work towards realising the goals.

8.1 Related policies and procedures

- Child Safety Incident Reporting Policy
- Child Safety Incident Reporting Process
- Councillor Code of Conduct
- Customer Complaint Policy
- Employee Code of Conduct
- Enterprise Risk Framework
- Health Records Policy
- Images of Children Collection and Use
- Privacy Policy
- Records Management Policy
- Recruitment Policy and Procedure
- Reportable Conduct Investigation Procedure
- Social Media Policy
- Volunteer Handbook
- Working with Children Check Policy

8.2 Related Legislation and Regulations

- Crimes Act (1958)
- Child Wellbeing and Safety Act (2005)
- Children, Youth and Families Act (2005)
- Commission for Children and Young People Act (2012)
- Family Violence Protection Act (2008)
- Gender Equality Act (2020)
- Health Records Act (2001)
- Privacy and Data Protection Act (2014)
- Worker Screening Act (2020)

9. APPENDIX 1: CHILD SAFETY INCIDENT REPORTING PROCESS

1

WHO CAN REPORT?

Employees, agency staff, students, or volunteers

Child or young person

Parent or Carer

Community member

2

WHAT TO REPORT?

Any child safety concerns or complaints, including:

- Disclosure of abuse or harm.
- Allegation, suspicion or observation of abuse or harm.
- General concerns about the safety of children or young people.
- Child safety complaints against a CoM employee, councillor, contractor, or volunteer.
- On-line or physical safety issues that could increase the likelihood of abuse occurring.

CALL 000 IF A CHILD IS IN IMMEDIATE DANGER

3

HOW TO REPORT?

Employees, agency staff, students or volunteers:

- Fill in the Child Safety report form (on CoMWeb) as soon as possible.
- Notify and send the form to the Child Safe Coordinator in the Governance branch.
- Notify your People Leader.

If the incident involves a CoM employee, agency staff, student or volunteer, contact the Child Safe Coordinator and PCL immediately.

Child, young person, parent, carer or community member:

- Make a verbal report to a Council Officer
- Call 9658 9658
- Write a letter and send to GPO Box 1603, Melbourne 3001
- Report online: **services.melbourne.vic.gov.au/report/general**
- Make a meeting.

4

WHAT HAPPENS NEXT?

The incident will be investigated. Support will be provided to child and family.

Risk controls may be suggested to prevent recurrent incidents.

Policies and procedures reviewed and updated where necessary.

For incidents involving employees, agency staff, students or volunteers, reports to Police and regulatory bodies will be determined.

Disciplinary processes and investigation may be commenced.

10. APPENDIX 2: IMPLEMENTATION OF THE CHILD SAFE STANDARDS

CoM is undertaking the following key actions to ensure each of the Child Safe Standards is embedded within Council.

Cultural Safety for Aboriginal children

Child Safe Standard 1: Organisations establish a culturally safe environment in which the diverse and unique identities and experiences of Aboriginal children and young people are respected and valued.

CoM will support this standard through carrying out activities including:

- Develop and implement a Stretch Reconciliation Action Plan 2024-2027.
- Implement the Aboriginal Community Engagement Protocol.
- Engage the local Traditional Owners: the Wurundjeri Woi-wurrung or the Bunurong Boon Wurrung to deliver Welcome to Country at events depending on which Country the event is located.
- Acknowledge the Traditional Owners in Council strategic documents, Council meetings, email signatures as per the Acknowledgement of Country and Traditional Owner Protocols.
- Celebrate NAIDOC week and acknowledge significant events including National Sorry Day, National Reconciliation Week and the National Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Children's Day.
- Implement the Major Initiatives relating to Aboriginal Melbourne as outlined in the Council Plan 2021-2025.
- Provide training for employees on improving and strengthening Aboriginal cultural awareness and knowledge of Aboriginal history.
- Provide opportunities for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children and young people to share their cultural identity, express their culture and enjoy their cultural rights.
- Consult with Aboriginal communities and organisations including children and young people in the development of strategies, projects and facilities including opportunities to promote Aboriginal knowledge, culture and practices.
- Seek feedback on Council services, programs and facilities from Aboriginal children, young people and their families.
- Take a zero-tolerance approach to racism and act on any incidents of racism or other forms of discrimination promptly and effectively.

A commitment to child safety and wellbeing

Child Safe Standard 2: Child safety and wellbeing is embedded in organisational leadership, governance and culture.

CoM will support this standard through carrying out activities including:

- Publicly display CoM's Commitment to Child Safety (or a shorter version of it) via:
 - Council websites (internal and external).
 - All council job advertisements.
 - All CoM employee and volunteer position descriptions.
 - CoM facilities.
 - Relevant CoM promotional materials.
- Set out CoM's expectations and practices in relation to child safety and wellbeing in the Child Safety Policy.
- Set out CoM's expectations regarding behaviour of employees and volunteers with children and young people in the Employee Code of Conduct including consequences in relation to breaches of the code.
- Require all employees, including volunteers, to comply with their Child Safety and Wellbeing obligations and responsibilities under the relevant legislation and the Child Safety Policy. These include: reporting, record keeping and information sharing requirements.
- Distribute the Child Safety Policy to all employees.
- Publicly display the Child Safety Policy on CoM's website.
- Require employees to monitor and provide reports for evidence of compliance against the Child Safe Standards.
- Maintain the executive leadership team's oversight and monitoring of CoM's compliance with the Child Safe Standards and Reportable Conduct Scheme.

Taking child participation and empowerment seriously

Child Safe Standard 3: Children and young people are empowered about their rights, participate in decisions affecting them and are taken seriously.

CoM will support this standard through carrying out activities including:

- Provide publicly available information about how children and young people can raise child safety complaints about Council, and how those concerns will be responded to and investigated. The information will be provided in plain and child appropriate languages.
- Implement programs that promote meaningful engagement between Council and children of all ages, abilities and backgrounds.
- Provide accessible information for children and young people of all ages, abilities and backgrounds on how Council makes decisions.
- Seek and act upon feedback from children and young people about the Council services they're engaged with.
- Build the capacity of employees to provide best practice engagement strategies to engage with children and young people.
- Engage with children, young people and their families in the development and implementation of relevant council services, spaces, projects, strategies and plans ensuring their needs and aspirations are effectively addressed.
- Build the capacity of employees to record feedback from children and young people in meaningful ways and use the feedback to improve decision making around strategies, programs or projects.
- Provide professional development opportunities for employees and volunteers to improve their understanding of child abuse and harm and correct reporting procedures.
- Encourage children and young people engaged with Council services to develop peer friendships.

Involving families and communities

Child Safe Standard 4: Families and communities are informed and involved in promoting child safety and wellbeing.

CoM will support this standard through carrying out activities including:

- Publicly display our Child Safety Policy, complaints procedure and Child Safety Incident Reporting Process on CoM's website to communicate our child safety practices and procedures to families and communities.
- Improve content on CoM's website and use social media to support families and communities to more easily access information about services, activities and topics of interest for children and families.
- Regularly seek feedback from families on Council programs, services and facilities.
- When responding to and investigating Child Safety incidents, CoM will keep children and families informed of the investigation where appropriate and safe. The safety of children will be prioritised throughout the process.

Respecting equity and diversity

Child Safe Standard 5: Equity is upheld and diverse needs respected in policy and practice.

CoM will support this standard through carrying out activities including:

- Embed equity and inclusion in CoM's Organisational Commitment to Child Safety.
- Support the development and provision of LGBTIQ+ specific programs to children and young people to improve wellbeing.
- Provide culturally safe and accessible information on CoM's programs and services in translated materials that are presented in digital, verbal and hard copy formats.
- Engage with diverse communities including children, young people and families, at Capital City cultural events to promote CoM services and programs. Obtain feedback at these events on how CoM can improve inclusion of diverse children and families in services, programs and facilities.
- Embed the inclusion of children and young people through the delivery of the Inclusive Melbourne Strategy.
- Recognise and respect the diverse needs of all children and support children and their families to identify their needs through consultations and feedback.
- Ensure access to information, support and complaints processes is culturally safe, age appropriate, easy to understand and in a variety of written, pictorial and verbal formats.
- Support staff to uphold equity for all children and young people. Work to prevent child abuse and harm resulting from discrimination based on disability, race, ethnicity, religion, sex, intersex status, gender identity or sexual orientation.
- Provide training on diversity, inclusion and cultural safety with a focus on children and young people for relevant employees.

Ensuring that staff are suitable and supported

Child Safe Standard 6: People working with children and young people are suitable and supported to reflect child safety and wellbeing values in practice.

CoM will support this standard through carrying out activities including:

- Ensure recruitment practices are in line with requirements under the Child Safe Standards.
- Ensure CoM's Commitment to Child Safety (or shorter version) is included in all job advertisements, employee and volunteer position descriptions as well as in relevant contracts and funding agreements.
- Ensure position descriptions for child facing and management roles include child safe responsibilities and competencies.
- Ensure appropriate child safety checks and screening is undertaken as part of recruitment including: referee checks, Working with Children and Police Checks prior to the offer of any position.
- Ensure employees and volunteers have a current and valid Working with Children Check as outlined in the Working with Children Check Policy upon commencement and during their employment or volunteering at Council.
- Ensure new employees and volunteers have access to and are aware of the Child Safety Policy as part of their induction.
- Ensure that new employees and volunteers are provided with child safety training on identifying, preventing and reporting child abuse and harm as part of their induction and as part of mandatory training requirements every two years.
- Provide advice to employees on child safety matters and reporting requirements.
- As required, undertake performance management and disciplinary procedures as they apply to the Child Safety Policy.

Child focused complaints systems

Child Safe Standard 7: Processes for complaints and concerns are child focused.

CoM will support this standard through carrying out activities including:

- Provide information on CoM's Child Safety Complaints and Reporting Processes on our website, on request and on enrolment and engagement in relevant Council services ensuring the information provided is accessible and easy to understand.
- Set out CoM's child safety reporting obligations and procedures in the Child Safety Policy and in the Child Safety Incident Reporting Policy.
- Provide accessible, easy to understand and age-appropriate public information on how to raise a child safety complaint about Council, and how those concerns will be responded to and investigated in a range of languages and formats as needed.
- Provide a range of ways people can make a complaint about CoM employees or volunteers through Council and/or external authorities.
- Provide support to those making a complaint and those involved in the complaint process.
- Provide information on CoM's obligations with and approach to record keeping and information sharing requirements in the Child Safety Policy and on CoM's website.
- Outline the roles and responsibilities of employees in responding to and reporting on child safety concerns and complaints in the Complaints Policy and the Child Safety Incident Reporting Policy and Process.
- Update the CoM Customer Complaints Handling Policy to include child specific complaints and support employees to respond appropriately.

Staff knowledge, skills and awareness

Child Safe Standard 8: Staff and volunteers are equipped with the knowledge, skills and awareness to keep children and young people safe through ongoing education and training.

CoM will support this standard through carrying out activities including:

- Ensure that all employees and volunteers are provided access to the Child Safety Policy to inform them of CoM's expectations, practices, procedures and their own child safety responsibilities.
- Ensure employees and volunteers complete the mandatory professional development every two years on the identification, responding to and reporting of child abuse and child safety incidents.
- Provide regular reports to the Executive Leadership Team on the completion of Child Safety training by employees and volunteers.
- Provide education and support to employees on child safety risk identification and monitoring.
- Review training requirements for child facing and relevant contract management roles to improve child safe competencies including the development of a child safe competencies professional development framework.
- Provide advice to employees on child safety matters and reporting requirements.
- Provide support to employees impacted by child safety incidents through the Employee Assistance Program or other organisations if appropriate.

Safe physical and online environments

Child Safe Standard 9: Physical and online environments promote safety and wellbeing while minimising the opportunity for children and young people to be harmed.

CoM will support this standard through carrying out activities including:

- Ensure CoM's risk assessment and management processes and plans address child safety risks and are aligned to CoM's Child Safety Policy and Risk Enterprise Governance Framework.
- Ensure child safety risks are included and monitored in the operational risk registers for business areas.
- Ensure services, programs and events, either physical or online, where children and young people are present have risk plans that include child safety risk mitigation strategies. The plans are shared with staff and volunteers participating in the service, program and event to ensure the risks are effectively mitigated and monitored.
- Ensure the development of new facilities consider child safety risks and mitigation strategies are implemented.
- Review child safety incidents to identify organisational risks and potential mitigation strategies.
- Regularly analyse data on complaints, concerns or significant breaches of policy to identify causes or systemic weaknesses and report on findings.
- Regularly report on child safety matters to the Executive Leadership Team.
- Provide information and education to employees on identifying indicators of child abuse and harm including where caused by other children.
- Regularly report on the completion of child safety training by employees and volunteers to the Executive Leadership Team.
- Regularly monitor the status of Working with Children Checks.
- Ensure that child safety expectations and responsibilities are included and regularly monitored in contracts, grants and funding agreements with organisations and community groups who have contact with children and young people.
- Review and update the Child Safety Policy and associated child safe policies and procedures every two years and following any significant incident.

Review of child safe policies and practices

Child Safe Standard 10: Implementation of the Child Safe Standards is regularly reviewed and improved.

CoM will support this standard through carrying out activities including:

- Review and update the Child Safety Policy and associated policies and procedures every two years or following significant incidents.
- Review compliance with the Child Safe Standards annually.
- Seek feedback from children, young people and their families using a range of inclusive engagement strategies when reviewing policies and procedures.
- Analyse data every six months or as required on complaints, concerns, incidents or significant breaches of policy to identify causes or systemic weaknesses and report on findings.
- Regularly report on findings of relevant child safety reviews to employees, volunteers and the broader community.
- Communicate updates and changes to the Child Safety Policy and associated policies and procedures to employees and volunteers.

Documenting policies and procedures

Child Safe Standard 11: Policies and procedures document how the organisation is safe for children and young people.

CoM will support this standard through carrying out activities including:

- Set out CoM's expectations, practices and approach in relation to implementing the Child Safe Standards in the Child Safety Policy.
- Set out expectations for behaviour and responsibilities in relation to child safety in the Employee Code of Conduct.
- Ensure CoM's risk assessment and management processes and plans address child safety risks.
- Outline how CoM will respond to internal and external reporting obligations in the Reportable Conduct Procedure and the Child Safe Incident Reporting Policy and Process.
- Ensure CoM's recruitment, human resources, volunteering and complaints handling policies have a clear child safety focus.
- Outline CoM's expectations regarding procurement, grants and funding agreements in the Child Safety Policy.
- Ensure CoM's child safe documentation is informed by stakeholder consultation.

How to contact us

Online:

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Business hours, Monday to Friday
(Public holidays excluded)

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