

Council Policy

Child Safe Awareness



Legislation/local law requirements	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Working with Children (Criminal Record Checking) Act 2004</i> • <i>National Principles for Child Safe Organisations</i> • <i>Children and Community Services Act 2005</i>
Relevant Delegation	Nil
Related policy procedures and documents	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • City of Kwinana Reportable Conduct Scheme Policy • Recommendation 6.12 from the Royal Commission into Institutional Responses to Child Sexual Abuse

Introduction

The safety and wellbeing of children is a shared responsibility. The City of Kwinana (City) acknowledges that all children may be at risk of vulnerabilities and takes a position to educate, promote and embed appropriate child safe practices at all levels of the organisation will create an environment where all children thrive.

Purpose

The City aims to empower children and families by creating an environment that is child safe, culturally safe and takes a zero-tolerance approach to child abuse and harm.

Objective

The objective of the policy should be an overall statement of what the policy is designed to achieve.

Scope

This Policy applies to all individuals working on behalf of the City including employees, volunteers, contractors, and anyone else who undertakes work on behalf of the City, regardless of whether their work is related to children or young people.

Policy Provisions

Definitions

Term	Definition
Abuse	Abuse is 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.
Child/Children	Means 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 Organisation	<p>Is defined in the Royal Commission Final Report as one that:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • creates an environment where children's safety and wellbeing are at the centre of thought, values, and actions • 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>
Child Safe	For the purpose of this Policy, child safe means protecting the rights of children and young people to be safe by taking actions that can help prevent harm and abuse.
City	Means the City of Kwinana, local government.
Culturally Safe	An environment where individuals feel respected, valued, and able to express their cultural identity without fear of discrimination, judgment, or harm.
Employee	<p>An employee includes the following persons:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • An individual employed by the City; • Contractors engaged by the City; • An individual completing work experience or a traineeship; and • Volunteers engaged by the City
Harm	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.
Wellbeing	Wellbeing of children and young people includes the care, development, education, health and safety of children and young people.

Policy

The City will continue to identify and embed child safe practices and the National Child Safe Principles into its daily operations, including:

- acknowledging and celebrating children and young people to ensure their voices are heard, valued and reflected in decision making;
- develop and promote positive messaging to create environments where children feel safe and supported;
- encouraging local community groups, organisations and stakeholders to embed the National Child Safe Principles; and
- ensuring policies, processes and procedures align with the National Child Safe Principles.

National Child Safe Principles

The Australian Human Rights Commission has written the National Child Safe Organisation Principles, providing a framework to guide organisations in developing and embedding a child safe culture and practices across all levels in the organisation. This ensures organisations have the ability to identify risks and take action to ensure the safety and wellbeing of children and young people is prioritised.

The 10 National Child Safe Principles are:

1. Child safety and wellbeing is embedded in organisational leadership, governance and culture.
2. Children and young people are informed about their rights, participate in decisions affecting them and are taken seriously.
3. Families and communities are informed and involved in promoting child safety and wellbeing.
4. Equity is upheld and diverse needs respected in policy and practice.
5. People working with children and young people are suitable and supported to reflect child safety and wellbeing values in practice.
6. Processes to respond to complaints and concerns are child focused.
7. Staff and volunteers are equipped with the knowledge, skills and awareness to keep children and young people safe through ongoing education and training.
8. Physical and online environments promote safety and wellbeing while minimising the opportunity for children and young people to be harmed.
9. Implementation of the national child safe principles is regularly reviewed and improved.
10. Policies and procedures document how the organisation is safe for children and young people.

Governance and Compliance Oversight

The Child Safe Awareness Policy establishes our commitment to maintaining and advancing the safety, rights, and well-being of children and young people in Kwinana. This policy is reinforced by operating practices and guidelines, which are designed to enhance child safety across all areas of our operations.

In addition, the policy was developed to ensure compliance with our obligations under the Reportable Conduct Scheme. This means that any concerns or issues related to child safety are reported in a timely manner and addressed appropriately, supporting a culture of accountability and vigilance.

To uphold the Policy and the City's commitment to child safety, an Annual Child Safety Compliance report will be submitted to the Audit, Risk and Improvement Committee in quarter four of each financial year.

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Officers may amend this section without council approval.

Responsible Team	Community Services and Partnerships	
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