

2.17 CHILD SAFE AWARENESS

Responsible Directorate	Corporate Services
Responsible Service Area	People and Culture
Adopted	May 2024 C4.05.24
Procedure Ref	N/A

1. PURPOSE

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 of Mundaring is uniquely placed within the local community to demonstrate leadership by supporting organisations to be child safe and to protect children and young people from harm and/or abuse. The Shire will promote the safety and wellbeing of children across the community.

2. SCOPE

The safety and wellbeing of children is everyone's responsibility. This policy applies to all workers and anyone else who undertakes work on behalf of the Shire, regardless of their work related to children or young people.

It applies to occupants of Shire facilities and venues, including visitors, contractors and suppliers. This includes but is not limited to:

- kindergartens and playgroups
- community leases
- sports fields and facilities
- aquatic centres
- community spaces
- libraries
- art galleries
- parks and gardens
- Shire events
- youth services
- regulatory services
- property facilities
- waste and environment facilities and services.

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.

3. DEFINITIONS

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	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>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 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.
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.

worker

all employees, including managers, full-time, part-time, casual, temporary, or permanent employees, student placements, apprentices, trainees, contractors, sub-contractors, and volunteers.

4. POLICY

The Shire supports and values all children and young people and makes a commitment to support the safety and wellbeing of all children and young people, including protection from abuse. This policy is one of the ways the Shire demonstrates its commitment to being child safe and a zero-tolerance approach to child abuse.

This policy aims to reduce the risk of harm and child sexual abuse in our communities by encouraging child safe environments to be created and maintained. The Shire is committed to encouraging local organisations to be child safe and ensure children are safe and empowered.

Consistent with the [National Principles for Child Safe Organisations](#) and [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.

4.1. Policy Principles

- The rights of children and young people are upheld.
- Children and young people are respected, listened to, and informed about their rights.
- Children and young people have the fundamental right to be safe and cared for.
- Children and young people have the right to speak up, be heard and taken seriously without the threat of negative consequences.
- The safety and best interests of children and young people are a primary consideration when making decisions that concern them.
- 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.
- Communities are informed and involved in promoting the safety and wellbeing of children and young people including protection from harm.
- Collaboration with the community and our partners promotes the safety, participation and empowerment of all children and young people.

4.2. Policy Functions

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

- Developing a process to deliver child safe messages (for example at Shire venues, grounds and facilities or events).

- Connecting and supporting local community groups, organisations, and stakeholders to child safe resources (including culturally safe and inclusive resources).

4.3. Responsibilities

The Shire has a leadership role in our 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 this policy.

The Shire will determine which roles across the organisation will directly support the implementation of this policy.

5. RELATED 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 1997

Local Government Act 1995

National Principles for Child Safety Organisations

Parliamentary Commissioner Act 1971

Public Interest Disclosure Act 2003

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

6. RELATED DOCUMENTS

Nil