

4.2 Child Safe Awareness Policy

Objective

To provide a clear demonstration of the commitment of the Shire of East Pilbara ("the Shire") to being child safe and taking a zero-tolerance approach to child abuse. This Council 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. .

Policy

The Shire commits to support the safety and wellbeing of all children and young people, including protection from abuse. This policy aims to reduce the risk of harm and incidence of 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.

This Child Safe Awareness policy has been developed in response to recommendation 6.12 of the *Royal Commission into Institutional Responses to Child Sexual Abuse* and recognises that Shire 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.

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.

The safety and wellbeing of children is everyone's responsibility. This Child Safe Awareness policy applies to all Council Members, employees, contractors, volunteers, trainees, work experience students, interns, 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.

Definitions

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 is defined in the Royal Commission Final Report as one that:

- 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; and
- creates conditions that increase the likelihood of identifying any harm, and responds to any

concerns, disclosures, allegations, or suspicions of harm.

Note: in the context of local governments, this would involve referring concerns to the Department of Communities or WA Police to respond as appropriate. Implementation of the National Principles for Child Safe Organisations gives effect to the above.

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 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 includes the care, development, education, health and safety of children and young people.

Young person/people refers to children under the age of 18 who may no longer identify as a child.

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.

Collaboration with the community and our partners promotes the safety, participation and empowerment of all children and young people.

Policy Functions

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

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

Responsibilities

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

The Shire will continue to use all best endeavours to engage with persons who utilise Shire facilities to operate in alignment with this Policy, and to mitigate risks associated with the wellbeing of children and young people.

The Chief Executive Officer may establish Organisational Directives to support the implementation of the Policy.

Authorisation Details

References:	<i>Child Care Services Act 2007</i> <i>Children and Community Services Act 2004</i> <i>Civil Liability Act 2002</i> <i>Corruption, Crime and Misconduct Act 2003</i> <i>Equal Opportunity Act 1984</i> <i>Freedom of Information Act 1997</i> <i>Local Government Act 1995</i> National Principles for Child Safety Organisations <i>Parliamentary Commissioner Act 1971</i> <i>Public Interest Disclosure Act 2003r</i> <i>Public Sector Management Act 1994</i> United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (CRC) <i>Work Health and Safety Act 2020</i> <i>Working with Children (Criminal Record Checking) Act 2004</i>		
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