

City of Greater Geraldton Council Policy

4.17 CHILD SAFE AWARENESS

SUSTAINABILITY THEME

Leadership

OBJECTIVES

The City of Greater Geraldton (the City) is committed to creating a culture and environment where the safety and welfare of children is paramount. This shall be achieved through the commitment to implementing the Western Australia Government directive and National Principles for Child Safe Organisations across its operations.

POLICY STATEMENT

The City supports child safety and welfare within our community, and when accessing our facilities and in the care of our services, as such, the City is committed to the ongoing education of children, young people and families, staff, volunteers, contractors and key stakeholders about their rights, responsibilities and reporting processes relating to child safety and welfare.

This Child Safe Awareness policy applies to all, employees, volunteers, trainees, work experience students, interns, and anyone else who undertakes work on behalf of the City, regardless of their work related to children or young people. It applies to occupants of City facilities and venues, including visitors, contractors and suppliers and is supported by the City's Child Safety and Welfare Procedure.

The safety and wellbeing of children is everyone's responsibility.

POLICY DETAILS

The City 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 Child Safe Awareness policy is one of the ways the City 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 City 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 City in supporting local organisations to be child safe through access to resources, awareness raising and sharing relevant information.

The City's Child Safe Principles are:

- 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.

The City 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 the City 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).

KEY 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: 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
- creates conditions that increase the likelihood of identifying any harm, and
- responds to any concerns, disclosures, allegations, or suspicions of harm.

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

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.

ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES

The City plays a leadership role in our community to support relevant organisations to be child safe and promote child safe practices. Although the City 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 City facilities to operate in alignment with the Child Safe Awareness policy.

The City will determine which roles across the organisation will directly support the implementation of the Child Safe Awareness policy. This is further supported in the City's Child Safety and Welfare Procedure.

The Council are responsible for providing leadership for the good governance of Council by acting as a responsible partner in fostering and developing an organisational culture that has zero tolerance for child abuse. Council will advocate in the best interests of children, to create and sustain a community in which children are safe and protected from abuse.

The Chief Executive Officer and Directors are responsible for driving the culture of zero tolerance for child abuse and ensuring that the organisation has effective controls in place for child safety and welfare.

Managers, Facility Managers and Child Safety Officers shall ensure this policy and the Child Safety and Welfare procedure are followed.

All staff volunteers and contractors must familiarise themselves with the relevant laws, the City's Code of Conduct and all relevant policies and procedures in relation to child safety and comply with all requirements.

WORKPLACE INFORMATION

Employee Code of Conduct

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 (Screening) Act 2004

POLICY ADMINISTRATION

Directorate		Officer	Review Cycle	Next Due
Community and Culture		Director Community & Culture	Biennial	2025
Version	Decision Reference	Synopsis		
2.	CS070 31/10/2023	Policy Review		