

Governance & Compliance

Child Protection Policy

Objective

The Shire of Koorda (**“the Shire”**) is committed to promoting and protecting the interests and safety of children. We have zero tolerance for child abuse.

The Shire is thereby committed to complying with the Child Safe Standards introduced by the West Australian Government, which set out the compulsory minimum standards for organisations that provide services for children and young people (or are used by children and young people), to help protect them from harm.

Everyone working at the Shire is responsible for the care and protection of children and reporting information about child abuse.

The Shire will achieve the objective by:

1. ensuring that all staff, contractors and volunteers engaged by the Shire are aware of the organisation’s commitment to creating and maintaining a child safe environment that meets the Standards;
2. facilitating the prevention of child abuse within the Shire
3. establishing the framework for an organisational culture of child safety
4. outlining the responsibilities that various parties have for identifying possible occasions for child abuse, for establishing controls and procedures for preventing abuse, and for detecting abuse when it occurs
5. providing guidance to staff, volunteers and contractors as to action that should be taken where they suspect any abuse within or outside of the organisation.
6. providing a clear statement to staff, volunteers and contractors forbidding any such abuse
7. providing assurance that all suspected abuse will be reported and fully investigated.

Any person who believes a child is at immediate risk of abuse must contact the police (telephone 000).

Policy

This policy applies to all staff, contractors and volunteers and to the broad range of situations where interaction with children and young people may occur in the delivery of the Shire’s services.

As stated, the Shire is committed to promoting and protecting the best interests of children involved in its programs, and to providing a child-safe and child-friendly environment for all children and young people who engage with the Shire.

The Shire is committed to complying with the Child Safe Standards introduced by the West Australian Government, which set out the compulsory minimum standards for organisations that provide services for children and young people (or are used by children and young people), to help protect them from harm.

All children, regardless of their gender, race, religious beliefs, age, disability, sexual orientation, or family or social background, have equal rights to protection from abuse. The Shire has zero tolerance for child abuse.

Everyone working at the Shire is responsible for the care and protection of the children within our care and reporting information about suspected child abuse.

Child protection is a shared responsibility between the Shire and all staff, contractors, volunteers, associates, and members of the Shire of Koorda community.

The Shire will:

- consider the opinions of children and use their opinions to develop child protection policies.
- support and respect all children, staff contractors and volunteers.
- commit to the cultural safety of children.
- recognise the additional vulnerability of children with a disability or involved in home care or the justice system.

Approach to Child Safety

In continuing to implement and promote a child-safe system of work, the Shire will:

- Develop an environment in which children feel listened to and valued, and in which their concerns are acted upon, including encouraging and allowing children to participate in decisions important to them.
- Consult with staff and other appropriate parties, including families and children.
- Assess and manage the risk of abuse to children who interact with the Shire, including through recruitment practices and online.
- Take a proactive approach to child safety, including fostering a culture of openness that encourages all staff to report any concerns of child safety and supports them in this process.
- Report suspected abuse, neglect or mistreatment promptly to the appropriate authority, whether or not the law requires reporting.
- Ensure children know the options available to them if they are concerned or feeling unsafe, and foster an environment where children are safe to raise such concerns.
- Recruit staff who are suitable to work with children and provide high quality training, supervision and professional development to staff.
- Have policies, procedures and supports in place to reflect these commitments, and review these regularly.

Related Documents (Legislation/Local Law/Policy/Procedure/Delegation)

Parliamentary Commissioner Amendment (Reportable Conduct) Act 2022

Children and Community Services Act 2004

Child Safety Child Protection Procedures (Shire of Koorda)

Child Safety Code of Conduct (Shire of Koorda)

Review History

Review Due: April 2024

Date	Council Resolution	Description of review/amendment
22/05/2024	RES: 050524	Adoption of Policy