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Child Safe Policy	1.0	June 2027
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Purpose

At Greater Hume Council we are committed to the safety of children and young people. We are committed to providing an environment which is safe for children and young people, and to ensuring that this is reflected in all aspects of our business operations.

This Child Safe Policy sets out the general principles that guide the management of child and young people's safety within our organisation.

We have developed this Policy to help our organisation to understand and manage children and young people, and to set a framework to ensure that we provide a safe environment for children and young people, and that we meet all of our objectives and comply with all of our legal and regulatory obligations in relation to these matters.

Greater Hume Council is committed to being a child safe organisation and embeds the 10 NSW and 11 Victorian Child Safe Standards. The Child Safe Standards recommended by the Royal Commission provide guidance for our Organisation to ensure our policies and procedures, strategies and attitudes, ensure children's safety is paramount and that we continue to improve our child safe culture and practices.

The 10 NSW Child Safe standards are:

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

The 11 Victorian Child Safe standards are:

- Standard 1 Organisations establish a culturally safe environment in which the diverse and unique identities and experiences of Aboriginal children and young people are respected and valued.
- Standard 2 Child safety and wellbeing is embedded in organisational leadership, governance and culture.
- Standard 3 Children and young people are empowered about their rights, participate in decisions affecting them and are taken seriously.
- Standard 4 Families and communities are informed and involved in promoting child safety and wellbeing.
- Standard 5 Equity is upheld and diverse needs respected in policy and practice.
- Standard 6 People working with children and young people are suitable and supported to reflect child safety and wellbeing values in practice.
- Standard 7 Processes for complaints and concerns are child-focused.
- Standard 8 Staff and volunteers are equipped with the knowledge, skills and awareness to keep children and young people safe through ongoing education and training.
- Standard 9 Physical and online environments promote safety and wellbeing while minimising the opportunity for children and young people to be harmed.
- Standard 10 Implementation of the Child Safe Standards is regularly reviewed and improved.
- Standard 11 Policies and procedures document how the organisation is safe for children and young people.

This policy and related policies, procedures and documents commit Greater Hume Council to:

- Have a legal and ethical responsibility to ensure our Council provides a safe and friendly environment where all children are respected, valued and encouraged to reach their full potential;
- Ensuring children's safety, wellbeing and rights is paramount, and we aim to take all practical steps to protect children from harm, ensuring healthy and safe environments;
- Our Organisation takes a 'zero' tolerance approach to child abuse and is committed to raise awareness of the importance of child safety in our environment and the community;
- Collaborate with children, young people and their families in organisational decision making and service provision to ensure children's voices are heard especially when decisions affect them.
- Establish how we prevent, identify, respond to and report any concerns relating to the safety and wellbeing of children, including physical, sexual and emotional abuse and neglect;
- Ensuring any person from within the Organisation who has allegations made against them shall be treated fairly. All enquires, investigations and decisions taken shall be just and fair, with the safety of any child concerned at the heart of the process.
- Establishing how employees, contractors, Family Day Care educators, Councilors, trainee's and volunteers are well informed about preventing, identifying, responding and reporting to the different ways children may express concerns, distress and disclose harm, as well as the process for responding to disclosures from children.

Scope

This policy applies to: any people who perform work for Greater Hume Council, including all our directors, managers, councillors, employees, contractors, subcontractors, employees of our contractors and subcontractors, apprentices, trainees, volunteers, interns, work experience students, labour hire employees and outworkers and any other people who perform work for or on behalf of our Council (Workers).

Greater Hume Council is committed to ensuring the safety and wellbeing of all Workers and visitors to our Organisation. However, this Policy specifically addresses our commitment to the safety and wellbeing of youths and children at our Organisation. Throughout this Policy, we use the terms "young people", "child" and "children" to refer generally to people under 18 years of age.

This policy applies to all activities in our Organisation which involve children, or which result in or relate to contact with children.

This policy is intended to help manage the safety and wellbeing of any children that come into contact with our Organisation, whether they are receiving services from us, are the children of someone who is receiving services from us, are the children of our Workers, or come into contact with us in any other way.

We require all Workers to sign a copy of this Policy to agree in writing that they accept and will act in accordance with this Policy.

It is important to note that while Greater Hume Council employees under the age of eighteen are defined as coworkers they are children, and we must ensure their safety and wellbeing.

Definitions

Code of Conduct	Together with a code of ethics, the code of conduct helps guide interactions between management, educators and staff, as well as informing the service decision-making processes relating to professional standards
Disclosure	The process where a child or young person conveys or attempts to convey that they are being or have been abused.
Child (ren)	A person under the age of 18.
Mandatory reporter	A person who is required to report known and suspected cases of child abuse and neglect to a nominated government department or agency.
Mandatory reporting	The legislative requirement for selected classes of people to report suspected cases of child abuse and neglect.
Child Safe Standards	Reflect ten NSW child safe standards and eleven Victorian child safe standards recommended by the Royal Commission into Institutional Responses to Child Sexual Abuse and are the vehicle for giving recommendations relating to the standards.
Reportable conduct	Certain organisations or entities have legal obligations under Reportable Conduct Schemes to notify and investigate certain allegations of abuse involving a child, when the allegation is against someone they employ, engage or contract in circumstances outlined in the legislation.
Rights of the Child	Human rights belonging to all children, as specified in the United Nations Convention of the Rights of the Child.
Wellbeing	Sound wellbeing results from the satisfaction of basic needs. It includes happiness and satisfaction, effective social functioning and the dispositions of optimism, openness, curiosity, and resilience.

Working with Children	A notice, certificate or other document granted to, or with respect to a person under a working with children law. The person has been assessed as suitable to work with children; there has been no information that if the person worked with children the person would pose a risk to the children; or the person is not prohibited from attempting to obtain, undertake or remain in child-related employment.
Child Protection	All adults have a responsibility to report to the Police if they suspect or believe a child is being harmed. It is a response to a high-risk situation.
Child Safe	Taking steps to prevent children from being harmed or abused.
Child safe organisation	An organisation that systematically: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • creates conditions to reduce the likelihood of children being harmed; • creates conditions that increase the likelihood of identifying and reporting harm; • responds appropriately to disclosure, allegations and suspicions of harm.
Child Safety Risk Management Plan	Child Safety Risk Management Plan is to identify, analyse and plan to control risks of child abuse and harm within the organisation. Greater Hume Council are currently developing a Child Safety Organisation Risk Management Plan
Children with vulnerabilities	Children who may be exposed to greater risk due to their experience, ability, location or background. They may include Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children; children from culturally and linguistically diverse (CALD) backgrounds; children with disability; the very young; those who have experienced prior trauma; those who have gender differences, or who are lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, and children who live in remote areas.
Contractor/ Sole Trader	A third party contracted to provide goods, services or programs on behalf of Greater Hume Council. Contractors are not employed by Greater Hume Council.
People Leader	An employee who is responsible for, oversees and/or regulates the work of others, including and not limited to, Team Leaders, Supervisors, Centre Directors, Coordinators and all levels of management.
Reportable Conduct	Includes the following conduct; <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • a sexual offence with or in the presence of a child, • sexual misconduct with, or in the presence of a child, • ill-treatment of a child, • neglect of a child, • an assault against a child, • behaviour that causes significant emotional or psychological harm to a child, • any offence under section 43B (failure to protect) or 316A (failure to report) of the Crimes Act 1900, whether or not with the consent of the child.
Nominated Supervisor	In the absence of the Approved Provider, the Nominated Supervisor will act as the person with responsibility for the day to day management of the approved service and will ensure • Ensuring that the service is operated in compliance with the National Law, the National Regulations and the National Quality Standard. • Assisting with communication between the Approved Provider and the regulatory authority.
Worker	Includes, but is not limited to, any employee, volunteer (whether engaged by Council or a third party), contractor (labour hire, contracted service provider or otherwise), subcontractor, consultant, work experience student, Councillor or board member working with, for or on behalf of Council.
Approved Provider	Legal entity with ultimate legal responsibility for a childcare services. This may be a company, partnership or an individual

Policy Content

Child Safe Environment and Culture

A child safe organisation is one that creates a culture, adopts strategies and takes action to promote child wellbeing and prevent harm to children and young people.

A child safe organisation consciously and systematically:

- Creates an environment where children's safety and wellbeing is 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.
- Responds to any concerns, disclosures, allegations or suspicions of harm.

Source: Definition of a child safe organisation – [Child safe organisation](#)

Greater Hume Council safeguards a Child Safe Environment by;

- Valuing the important role parents, caregivers and the community play in fostering a child safe culture and engages them in promoting and upholding the rights of children and young people.
- Providing environments that ensures children, young people and their families feel valued and respected and enables us to improve the quality of our service.
- Striving to create an environment where children and young people's diverse needs and circumstances are recognised and all children feel safe, welcome and included.
- Collaborating with children, young people and their families in organisational decision making and service provision to ensure children's voices are heard especially when decisions affect them.
- Ensuring children and young people know how to seek help and can recognise safe environments.
- Ensuring children and young people learn about their rights, including to safety, information, to be listened to and to have their views respected.

Our commitment to the safety of children and young people

Our Organisation is committed to being a child safe organisation and embeds this into our policies and procedures, strategies and attitudes, ensure children's safety is paramount and that we continue to improve our child safe culture and practices.

- We are committed to the safety of children and young people.
- We are committed to providing an environment which is safe for children and youths, and to ensuring that this is reflected in all aspects of our business operations.
- We value and respect children and young people and welcome them regardless of their abilities, age, sex, gender, or social economic or cultural background.
- Bullying and harassment will not be tolerated at Greater Hume Council
- Safeguarding children from harm and abuse is an essential responsibility for our Organisation. We are committed to ensuring that any child who comes into contact with our Organisation or services is properly safeguarded. Every person under this policy must ensure that they play an active role in ensuring that children are properly safeguarded.

- We believe that no child or young person should experience abuse or harm and we are committed to the protection of children and young people. This policy is intended to provide guidance and overarching principles to those who represent us as volunteers or staff, to guide our approach to child protection and safeguarding.
- It is our intention that a child safe culture should be embedded in all levels of our Organisation, including but not limited to our leadership and governance as well as amongst all of our other Workers.
- When dealing with concerns about a child's safety or wellbeing, we are guided by a consideration of what is in the best interests of the child.

Greater Hume Council is committed to;

- ensuring our Workers have the knowledge, skills and awareness to keep children safe
- ensuring any of our Workers who work with children have the necessary skills, attributes, experience and qualifications to uphold this Policy and provide the support and supervision that children require
- ensuring that any children who come into contact with our Organisation and who have concerns about their safety or need assistance know where to go and who to talk to
- ensuring that any children who come into contact with our Organisation and who have concerns about their safety feel comfortable seeking assistance
- maintaining the safety and security of any of our facilities or environments which may be accessed by children (including any online facilities or environments, websites or platforms)
- promoting a workplace which values diversity and inclusion
- where appropriate, involve children and their families in decisions that affect them
- promotes a culture of child safety at all levels in our Organisation
- taking any allegations or complaints in relation to child safety seriously, and respond promptly and appropriately
- reporting any allegations or concerns to relevant authorities whenever appropriate or necessary

Our Commitment to Supporting the Diverse and Unique Identities of Children and Young People

Greater Hume Council are committed to providing a culturally safe environment in which the diverse and unique identities and experiences of Aboriginal children and young people are respected and valued. We actively encourage and support children's abilities to express their culture and exercise their cultural rights.

Our Workers must encourage and support children to freely express their culture and enjoy their cultural right and must actively support and facilitate the participation and inclusion of Aboriginal children and their families within our Organisation.

Our leadership has a responsibility to help everyone involved with our Organisation to acknowledge and appreciate the strengths of Aboriginal culture and to understand its importance to the wellbeing and safety of Aboriginal children and young people

Racism is strictly prohibited within our Organisation. If racism occurs, we will respond in an appropriate time and manner.

All of our policies, procedures, systems, and processes work together to create a culturally safe and inclusive environment that meets the needs of Aboriginal children, young people, and their families.

Continuous Improvement

Greater Hume Council are committed to continuously improving our approach to implementing a child safe organisation. We regularly review our child safe policies and practices so that we can continue to improve them. In particular, we do the following:

- we will regularly review and monitor the effectiveness of our child safe policies and procedures and invite children, staff members, families and communities to contribute to their development
- any updates or revisions will be communicated to all stake holders
- our Child Safe policy will be reviewed on an annual basis
- complaints and feedback are lodged and taken into account when reviewing our policies
- child safety is imbedded in all strategic documents and all quality improvement plans
- we will review and update all training and development programs to be in line with regulations and best practice to ensure child safety.

Managing Risks

Greater Hume Council are dedicated to minimising risks of harm to children and young people. Our risk mitigation strategies will include;

- risk assessment plans will cover child specific risks for all services, events and programs
- Working with Children Checks (WWCC) will be verified and updated regularly
- all policies, documents and procedures are reviewed regularly
- collaborate with relevant organisations to ensure our standards are adequate and reflect best practices
- all workers will be informed, resourced and supported to carry out their responsibility to providing a child safe environment
- through our robust recruitment processes will engage the most suitable people to work with children and young people.

Duty of Care

Our workers have a legal obligation to take reasonable care for their own safety and the safety of children and others with who they interact during their engagement with Council.

Our Workers must uphold our Organisation's values in accordance with this Policy.

These obligations are based on the role and responsibilities of the worker and may include, but are not limited to, the following:

- remaining alert and aware of possible safeguarding risks to children
- guarding children against harmful environments with appropriate actions, such as adequate supervision or ensuring safe environments.
- taking positive steps to maintain the safety and wellbeing of children engaging with our Organisation
- reporting concerns expeditiously and appropriately, in line with child protection procedures
- understanding the duty to report specific concerns (and understanding how this interplays with confidentiality)
- challenging any inappropriate or harmful behaviour of any other adult and reporting this accordingly
- acting appropriately in the presence of children
- not taking any inappropriate risks.

Duty of care to children applies during all activities and functions conducted or arranged by Council where children are in the care of workers.

Physical Contact

Workers must not engage in inappropriate physical contact with children, or act in ways that may cause a child to reasonably fear that unjustified force will be used against them.

Examples of inappropriate physical contact include, but are not limited to:

- harming a child either physically or emotionally
- exposing a child to behaviour which may cause physical or emotional harm
- restraining a child, unless this is part of an approved behaviour management plan

In some instances workers may use reasonable physical contact for exercising appropriate control over a child include and may include but not limited to:

- Disarming a child who is at risk of harming themselves or another person
- Separating children who are fighting
- Reasonable use of physical force for the protection of self or others

Reporting

All reports will be handled in accordance with the relevant legislation, which mandates a specific approach to the handling and reporting of complaints about staff involving a child or young person.

Council's workers will be trained to respond appropriately to complaints, allegations and disclosures. All children, young people, families, and Council workers will know what to do and who to tell if they observe abuse or are a victim of abuse, and if they witness suspected reportable conduct.

Accessible information for workers, families, community members, children and young people to report child safe concerns will be provided.

We acknowledge that some of our workers are deemed mandatory reporters and are required by law to report suspected child abuse and neglect to government authorities law.

All nominated supervisors will be aware of their reporting responsibilities to regulatory authorities as per Education and Care Services National Regulations (2011 SI 653)

Links to Policy

- Child Protection Policy
- Code of Conduct Policy
- Participation of Volunteers and Students
- Emergency Evacuations
- Excursions
- Incident, Injury, Trauma and Illness
- Water Safety Policy
- Sun Protection
- Complaints Handling Policy
- Councillor Induction and Training Policy
- Customer Service Policy
- Gathering Information Policy
- Media and Communications Policy
- Playground Inspection and Maintenance Policy
- Records Management
- Recruitment and Selection Policy
- Risk Management Policy
- Sporting and Recreation Use Policy
- Stakeholders Engagement Policy
- Volunteer Policy

Links to Procedure

- Providing a Child Safe Environment Procedure

Links to Forms

References

- Childsafe.humanrights.gov.au
- Office of the Children's Guardian
- Child Safe Organisations
- United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child
- Royal Commission into Institutional Responses to Child Sexual Abuse - Final Report (2017)
- Royal Commission into Institutional Responses to Child Sexual Abuse - Final Report Recommendations
- Royal Commission into Institutional Responses to Child Sexual Abuse - A brief guide to the Final Report
- Working With Children Checks Report (2015)
- Criminal Justice Report (2015)
- A guide to the Child Safe Standards
- Risk management and the Child Safe Standards Part 2: Identifying risk
- Identifying reportable allegations – Fact Sheet 1

Responsibility

Insert Content

Document Author

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Relevant Legislation, Regulations and Standards

NSW Child Protection (Working with Children) Act 2012
NSW Child Protection (Working with Children) Regulation 2013
NSW Children and Young Persons (Care and Protection) Act 1998
NSW Children's Guardian Act 2019
Civil Liability Act 2002
Crimes Act 1900
Local Government Act 1993
National Redress Scheme for Institutional Child Sexual Abuse Act 2018 (Cth).
NSW Child Safe Standards
NSW Children (Education and Care Services National Law Application) Act 2010
Privacy and Personal Information Protection Act 1998
Privacy Act 1998 (Cth.)
State Records Act 1998
United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (1990)
NSW Child Safe Standards
NSW Disability Inclusion Act 2014
Victorian Child Safe Standards
National Quality Framework
Local Government (State) Award

Associated Records

- Code of Conduct (to be reviewed)
- Recruitment and Selection (in development)
- Identifying, Responding to and Reporting Child Safe Concerns (to be developed)
- Reporting a Child Safe Allegation about any workers Guidelines/flowchart (to be developed)
- Child Safe Learning Training (to be development)
- Child Safety Risk Management (to be developed)
- Confidentiality & Records Management (to be reviewed)
- Bullying and Harassment Policy (to be developed)
- Children's Services Child Protection Policy and associated procedures (review/update)
- Complaints handing Policy (to be reviewed)
- Greater Hume Council Child Safe Commitment Statement (in draft)