

Safeguarding Children and Young People Policy

Policy Reference No.	POL/284
File No.	HCC20/375
Strategic Objective	2.2: Strengthen community safety and respectful behaviour
Adopted by Council	27 July 2020 –
Re-Adopted	14 June 2022
Date Reviewed	June 2024
Responsible Officer	Manager, Family Youth and Children
Division	City Services and Living

SAFEGUARDING CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE POLICY

1. POLICY STATEMENT

- 1.1** Hume City Council has a zero-tolerance approach to child abuse and demonstrates a commitment to child safety from its leaders, staff, volunteers and contractors. The aim of the policy is to protect the children in our care and prevent abuse from occurring. It is welcoming of all children, young people and families irrespective of culture, background, ability, sexual orientation, gender identity, or sex/intersex status. A child safe environment takes a preventative, proactive and participatory stance on child protection issues.
- 1.2** Hume City Council is committed to ensuring the safety of children and young people. All children and young people who access services provided by Council (including anyone acting on behalf of HCC) have the right to feel and to be safe. The wellbeing of the children and young people in our care will always be our priority and we have a zero-tolerance approach to child abuse. We aim to create a child safe and child-friendly environments where children and young people feel safe and can fully participate.
- 1.3** Hume City Council is committed to the principles of cultural safety and inclusion of children and young people who are Aboriginal, from refugee or migrant backgrounds, who are same sex attracted or gender diverse, and/or have a disability, and we recognise that these principles support the safety of all children. A child safe environment takes a preventative, proactive and participatory stance on child protection issues. (Appendix A: Glossary of Terms and Legislative requirements)

2. PURPOSE

- 2.1** Hume City Council has zero-tolerance towards abuse and neglect of children and young people. We are committed to the rights of all children and young people to feel safe and be safe when participating in our organisations, activities, services and programs.
- 2.2** The purpose of this policy is to outline the responsibilities, procedures and practices required by all staff within Hume City Council in relation to keeping children and young people free from abuse and neglect.
- 2.3** This policy supports our international obligations under the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child, the Child Safe Standards recommended by the Royal Commission into Institutional Responses to Child Sexual Abuse and is aligned with the Australian Human Rights Commission National Principles for Child Safe Organisations.
- 2.4** As such, our policies and procedures reflect child safe legislation and promote best practice and care for the children and young people within our organisation.

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2.5 The Policy is underpinned by the 11 Victorian Child Safe Standards

2.5.1 Compliance with the eleven standards requires Council to create and maintain a child safe organisation by having:

- (i) 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;
- (ii) Standard 2: Child safety and wellbeing is embedded in organisational leadership, governance and culture;
- (iii) Standard 3: Children and young people are empowered about their rights, participate in decisions affecting them and are taken seriously;
- (iv) Standard 4: Families and communities are informed, and involved in promoting child safety and wellbeing;
- (v) Standard 5: Equity is upheld, and diverse needs respected in policy and practice
- (vi) Standard 6: People working with children and young people are suitable and supported to reflect child safety and wellbeing values in practice;
- (vii) Standard 7: Processes for complaints and concerns are child focused;
- (viii) 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;
- (ix) Standard 9: Physical and online environments promote safety and wellbeing while minimising the opportunity for children and young people to be harmed;
- (x) Standard 10: Implementation of the Child Safe Standards is regularly reviewed and improved; and
- (xi) Standard 11: Policies and procedures document how the organisation is safe for children and young people.

2.6 We take seriously our responsibility to deliver a variety of services that are caring, nurturing and safe. We are committed to acting in advancing the safety and wellbeing of children and young people and ensuring compliance with all requirements set out in this policy.

2.7 This policy is to be read in conjunction with the Safeguarding Children and Young People Code of Conduct. (Appendix B) In accordance with this policy, allegations of child abuse will be fully investigated within the organisation's legislative scope and handled with confidentiality and discretion, whilst taking the safety and best interest of the child into account.

3. SCOPE

3.1 The Safeguarding Children and Young People Policy applies to all staff, including casual staff, Councillors, volunteers, contractors and student placements involved with Hume City Council.

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3.2 This policy applies in all our council facilities and without fail wherever children and young people are participating in Hume City Councils activities, programs, services and open spaces.

4. OBJECTIVE

4.1 Safeguarding children and young people is a shared responsibility at Hume. It is the responsibility of all at Hume City Council from Executive to employees, volunteers, student placements and contractors to:

4.1.1 protect children and young people from all forms of abuse and neglect;

4.1.2 be alert to incidents of child abuse and neglect occurring outside the scope of our operations and services that may have an impact on the children and young people to whom we provide a service; and

4.1.3 create and maintain a child safe culture that is understood, endorsed, and put into action by all the individuals who work for, volunteer, support or access our programs and services.

4.2 All staff within council, regardless of their role or level of responsibility, will act to protect children and young people from such harm by:

4.2.1 adopting appropriate safeguarding practice and behaviour set within our policy and procedural guidelines, when carrying out their roles;

4.2.2 report any abuse and neglect of which they become aware to our management and/or to external authorities responsible for child protection or to police;

4.2.3 report abuse regardless of whether that abuse is being perpetrated by staff within our organisation, or by those outside our organisation including those from the child's family, extended family, their family's extended network or strangers; and

4.2.4 Support the development of a safe and inclusive community, and promote respect for diverse values, abilities, beliefs, cultural practices and ways of living.

4.3 Council will ensure that the distribution of our services and resources is a transparent and socially inclusive process that delivers equitable outcomes.

4.4 As an organisation that promotes Child Safety, Council seeks to include the voices of children and young people in our organisational activities and actively seek to understand what makes them feel safe. Council recognises that all children and young people have the fundamental right to develop, reach their full potential, feel safe and supported in the community in which they live. Children and young people have the right to equitable access to services and supportive environments regardless of their gender identity, sexual orientation, race, ethnicity, religion or ability.

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5. POLICY IMPLEMENTATION

- 5.1** Hume City Council's Safeguarding Children and Young People's Policy is governed by the Senior Leadership Team. Child Safety is everyone's responsibility. The Team ensures robust systems are in place which support staff and service users to report safeguarding concerns and facilitate effective risk-based and informed decisions that ensure accountability to children and young people.
- 5.2** The Team is responsible for defining roles and responsibilities associated with providing oversight, management, and implementation of the Policy and associated tools in Council's commitment to safeguarding children and young people.
- 5.3** Risk management recognises the potential hazards to children and young people associated within Council's service delivery and considers online and physical or psychological environments, and any vulnerable or diverse circumstances of children or young people utilising our services.
- 5.4** Reporting processes, procedures and comprehensive support information is detailed in the **Child Safe Tool Kit** [Child Safe Toolkit 1.1.pdf](#). The Tool kit is updated with current operational guidelines and policy details and accessible to all council staff. The Policy and Tool Kit support staff in meeting all legislated mandatory reporting requirements and implications relating to their role.

6. LEGISLATIVE ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES

- 6.1** Protecting children is everyone's responsibility. All Council staff have a responsibility to understand their specific role to ensure that the wellbeing and safety of all children is at the forefront of all they do.
- 6.2** There are four Victorian Laws pertaining to child safety.
- (i) Failure to disclose child sexual abuse** law demands that all adults in Victoria who form a reasonable belief that a sexual offence against a child has been committed have a legal obligation to report the information to the police. Individuals who fail to comply with this obligation under the Crimes Act 1958 (VIC) may be subject to a penalty of three years imprisonment.
 - (ii) Failure to protect a child from sexual abuse** law applies to people within organisations who knew of a risk of child sexual abuse by someone in the organisation and had the authority to reduce or remove the risk but did not act to protect the child.
 - (iii) Grooming for sexual conduct with a child** offence occurs where an adult communicates by words, conduct, online or face to face, with a child or person who has care, supervision or authority for a child with the intention of facilitating the child's

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engagement in or involvement in a sexual offence (as per section 49B Crimes Act 1958).

- (iv) **Mandatory Reporting** describes the legal obligation of certain professionals to report to the Victorian Child Protection Service (Department Families, Fairness and Housing) if they form reasonable belief that a child has suffered , or is likely to suffer significant harm as a result of physical injury or sexual abuse or lack of parent capacity to protect the child from harm.

Section 182 (1) of the *Children, Youth and Families Act 2005* (as amended in 2011) lists the following people as mandated to report child abuse:

- Registered Medical Practitioner
- Registered Nurse
- Midwife
- Registered Psychologist
- Registered teacher/ educator/ early childhood worker
- School Principal
- School Counsellors
- Out of Home Care Workers
- Youth Justice workers
- The head of an organisation (CEO) as described under the Reportable Conduct Scheme

Role	Responsibility
CEO and Executive Leadership and Management Team	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Advocate and promote child rights, empowering and engaging children and young people in support of this Policy. • Ensure all staff understand their obligations in accordance with this Policy and any relevant policy and procedural documentation. • Ensure this Policy is implemented and adhered to amongst staff. • Ensure the development and implementation of required internal policy/ procedures and guidelines are in place to support safeguarding children and young people practices in accordance with the expectations of this Policy. • Ensure adequate resources are allocated to allow effective implementation of this Policy. • Ensure to fully support Staff with any decision to initiate action to protect a child from abuse and neglect. • Ensure appropriate supports, such as counselling and formal debriefing, are provided for any Staff involved in a matter relating to responding to a concern for the safety and wellbeing of a child or young person. • Proactively share resources and experience in the development of child safe initiatives as they are identified. • Develop opportunities for regular discussion and review at all levels to support a culture of continuous improvement and accountability of keeping children and young people safe from abuse and neglect.

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	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ensure that all staff are aware of the appropriate recruitment, screening and employment practice in relation to safeguarding children and young people.
Human Resources	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Provide information relating to the Child Safe policies and practices via training/induction material to new and existing staff. • Make child safety resources available to managers, team leaders and coordinators for dissemination. • Ensure that all employees complete the compulsory e-learning Child Safe Standards training. • Conduct recruitment practices, pre-employment screening and Police-Working with Children Check processes in line with Council's recruitment and selection guideline requirements for child related work. • Manage Council's disciplinary procedures. Oversee any investigations into suspected staff misconduct and provide advice in relation to disciplinary procedures as they apply to the Child Safe Standards and Child Safe Policy. • Support staff to build resilience and cope with child abuse incidences, for example through resilience training, Employee Assistance Program (EAP) counselling service. • Reflect a culture of child safety in all corporate training activities. • Support the Child Safety Officer with confidential staff matters.
All staff and volunteers	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ensure all staff have completed mandatory training • Planning staff tasks and delegation of work to staff with appropriate training as Working with Children checks. • Provide guidance to staff if there is ever any lack of understanding in relation to the commitments and expectations as set out in this Policy.
Child Safe Champions	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Act as a point of contact for child safety concerns or allegations of abuse external to Council, from a Council Officer undertaking their role within the Hume community. • Offer information, referral and/or support to the child, the parents/caregivers, the person who reports and the allegation. • Initiate internal processes to ensure the safety of the child, clarify the nature of the complaint and commence disciplinary process (if required). • Confirm relevant authorities have been notified i.e. Department of Health and Human Services (DHHS) Child

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	<p>Protection for all issues of abuse, Police for imminent risk and sexual abuse, and the CCYP for reports of allegations of child abuse and misconduct towards children.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Engage the assistance of expert advice as required. Retain the completed reporting according to Council's privacy policy and procedures.
<p>Those responsible for mandatory reporting under the <i>Children, Youth and Families Act 2005</i></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Act in accordance with Children, Youth and Families Act 2005 in relation to reporting child abuse.
<p>All Councillors, Employees, Volunteers and Contractors</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Receive and act on reports of child safety concerns or allegations of abuse within and external to Council, provide support to the staff involved, maintain confidentiality as far as practicable and forward the concerns to the Child Safety Officer. Advocate and promote child rights, empowering and engaging children and young people in support of this Policy. Complete the compulsory Child Safe Standards e-learning training module within 30 days of it being allocated. Conduct work according to the requirements of the Safeguarding Children and Young People Policy, Child Safe Reporting Procedure and Safe Guarding Children and Young People Code of Conduct. Report all concerns regarding child safety or harm. This applies to any incidents, disclosures, suspicions or breaches of the HCC Code of Conduct that may be encountered within Council and whilst undertaking their role in the wider Hume community. Understand the legislation and legal obligations to report. Obtain and maintain a valid Working with Children Check as required for their role. Where a child is in immediate danger, call 000. Maintain a full understanding of the commitments and expectations of this Policy, as well as all other policy relevant to safeguarding children and young people. Ensure compliance with this Policy, fully implementing and adhering to the commitments and expectations To undertake any induction and training anticipated in this Policy, in relation to policy and procedures relevant to safeguarding children and young people. To support a culture of openness, continued improvement and accountability to children and young people by

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	<p>engaging in regular review and discussion of organisational policies and practices and providing feedback to support improvement</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • To seek guidance from a supervisor or manager if there is ever any lack of understanding in relation to the commitments and expectations as set out in this Policy. • To adopt appropriate safeguarding practice and behaviour • To take action to protect children and young people from all forms of abuse and neglect. • To report any abuse committed by staff within our organisation or by others. • To assist in creating and maintaining a child safe culture and a culture of inclusion and safety.
Communications and Events	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Promote Hume City Council as an organisation that upholds the Child Safe Standards. • Ensure relevant events and public activities include messaging about Child Safe Standards and have procedures in place to mitigate risk of predatory behaviour and increase child safety

7. RELATED DOCUMENTS

7.1 This policy shall be read in conjunction with the following Legislation, Council policies and procedures:

- Child Wellbeing and Safety Act 2005
- Children Youth and Families Act 2005
- Equal Opportunity Act 2010
- Hume City Council Enterprise Agreement No.8 2022-2025
- Hume Council Employee Handbook
- Council's Staff Conflict of Interest Policy
- Council's Disciplinary Policy Corporate Uniform Policy Council's Information
- Privacy and Health Records Policy
- Council's EEO Policy Occupational Health and Safety Policy
- Policy for the Use of the Internet
- Procedure for Use of E-mail
- Code of Conduct for Councillors
- Council's Smoke Free Workplace Policy
- Hume City Council Social Justice Charter 2007.
- Privacy and Data Protection Act 2014 (Vic)
- Health Records Act 2001 Equal Opportunity Act 2010 (Vic) Occupational Health & Safety Act 2004
- The Charter of Human Rights and Responsibilities 2006 (Vic)

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- Hume Council Code of Conduct
- Hume City Council Safeguarding Children and Young people Code of Conduct
- Hume Child Safe Tool kit and supporting documents
- Hume City Council Child Safety and Child Protection Incident Report
- Hume City Council Disciplinary Procedure
- Equal Opportunity and Respect in the Workplace Policy

8. POLICY COMPLIANCE

- 8.1 In 2015, the Victorian Government removed all limitation periods that apply to civil actions for damages founded on child abuse by amending the Limitations of Actions Act 1958. This means that Victorian public sector offices cannot destroy any records which are likely to be needed for civil action legal proceedings, for at least the life of the child and possibly longer. Affected records will be managed and retained in accordance with Public Record Office Victoria (PROV) standards and with Council's *Records Management Policy* POL/CORP214.
- 8.2 The Child Safe Standards are governed by the Child Wellbeing and Safety Act 2005 (the Child Wellbeing and Safety Amendment (Child Safe Standards) Bill 2015 amended the Child Safety and Wellbeing Act 2005) and the Children, Youth and Families Act 2005. Any non-compliance with the Child Safe Standards may lead to a penalty or imprisonment as prescribed within these Acts.
- 8.3 The Child Safe Standards and Reportable Conduct Scheme outlines the process to disclose, and report suspected or alleged cases of child abuse. Disclosure is required in circumstances in which a reasonable belief exists that a sexual offence has been committed against a child. Failure to report or protect a child from abuse is a criminal offence.
- 8.4 Where a breach in policy is identified, Council will respond without delay. A breach in policy will result in disciplinary action, up to and including, termination of engagement with Council. Serious breaches of this policy and related procedure may be reported to Police and/or other authorities.

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APPENDIX A

GLOSSARY OF TERMS AND LEGISLATIVE REQUIREMENTS

Key Term	Definition
Child or Young person	A person under the age of eighteen years.
Child Safety	A range of timely and appropriate measures to protect a child from abuse.
Child Safe Organisation	A child safe organisation is one that takes deliberate steps to protect children from abuse and is embedded in an organisation's culture and policies.
Staff	All who work for the organisation whether in a paid or unpaid capacity, including; employees, casual employees, , Contractors, Students, partner organisations.
Volunteer	An unpaid person who has been engaged by Hume City Council to perform activities that support Council's community building objectives e.g. committee involvement, support of community events, festivals, programs and facilities.
Contractor or Consultant	An individual engaged to provide goods, and or services or works on behalf of Council.
Contracted Organisations	Any type of business entity (which may include all their employees and subcontractors) contracted by Hume City Council to provide services in accordance with the contract terms.
Duty of Care	The obligation of Council employees, contractors and volunteers to take reasonable steps to protect children in their care from the risks of injury, abuse and harm that are reasonably foreseeable.
Critical Incident	An actual or alleged event or situation that creates a significant risk of harm to the physical or mental health, safety or wellbeing of an individual.
Cultural Safety of Aboriginal Children	Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander children are given the opportunity to be connected to culture and provided with a safe, nurturing and positive environment where they are comfortable with being themselves, expressing their culture, their spirituality and belief systems. It is more than just the absence of racism or discrimination, and more than cultural awareness and sensitivity. It includes identification of practices that may lead to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children feeling unsafe.

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Cultural safety for children from culturally and/or linguistically diverse backgrounds	<p>A child or young person who identifies as having particular cultural or linguistic affiliations by virtue of their place of birth, ancestry or ethnic origin, religion, preferred language or language spoken at home or because of their parent's identification on a similar basis.</p> <p>An environment which is spiritually, socially, emotionally and physically safe for children; where there is no assault, challenge or denial of their cultural or linguistic identity, of who they are and what they need. It includes seeking identification of practices that may lead to children from CALD backgrounds feeling unsafe.</p>
Risk management	<p>In the context of creating safe environments for children and young people, risk management consists of assessing and taking steps to minimise the risks of harm to children and young people because of the action of an employee, volunteer, contractor or another child or young person. Risk management includes planning the work of the organisation to reduce or minimise situations where children and young people may be abused.</p>
Failure to Disclose	<p>A failure to act on the legal obligation upon all adults to report to Victoria Police where they form a reasonable belief that a sexual offence has been committed by an adult (18 years and over) against a child under the age of 16 (16 being the legal age of consent).</p> <p>Failure to Disclose is a criminal offence. A person found guilty is subject to a custodial sentence.</p>
Failure to Protect	<p>The offence provides that a person who by reason of the position he or she occupies within a relevant organisation, has the power or responsibility to reduce or remove a substantial risk that a relevant child will become the victim of a sexual offence committed by a person of or over the age of 18 years who is associated with the relevant organisation; and knows that there is a substantial risk that the person will commit a sexual offence against a relevant child – must not negligently fail to reduce or remove that risk.</p> <p>Failure to Protect is a criminal offence. A person found guilty is subject to a custodial sentence.</p>
Grooming Legislation	<p>The act of communication, including online communication, with a child under the age of 16 (or their parents or person who has care, supervision or authority of the child) with the intent of committing child sexual abuse. This includes predatory conduct undertaken to prepare a child for sexual abuse at a later time with the groomer (aged 18 years old or over) or another adult.</p> <p>Grooming is a criminal offence. A person found guilty of grooming is subject to a custodial sentence.</p>

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Online environment	Anywhere online that allows digital communication, such as: social networks, text messages and messaging apps, email and private messaging, online chats, comments on live streaming sites and voice chat in games.
Reasonable Belief or Belief on reasonable grounds	<p>A reasonable belief or a belief on reasonable grounds is not the same as having proof but is more than mere rumour or speculation. A reasonable belief is formed if a reasonable person in the same position would have formed the belief on the same grounds. A person forms a reasonable belief that a child needs protection, or their safety or wellbeing is at risk, when:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • They are more likely to accept rather than reject their suspicion; and • The belief is formed through disclosures, observations or other information of which they have become aware. <p>To form a reasonable belief or a belief on reasonable grounds, you should consider and objectively assess all the relevant facts, such as the source of the allegation and how it was communicated, the nature of, and details of, the allegation, and whether there are any other related matters known regarding the alleged perpetrator.</p>
Victorian Child Safe Standards	<p>In 2015, the Child Wellbeing and Safety Act 2005 was amended to include Child Safe Standards. The standards are designed to drive cultural change and embed practice of protecting children into the everyday thinking of an organisation.</p> <p>There are seven Victorian Child Safe Standards currently however as of July 2022 Victorian organisations will be required to comply with eleven Standards.</p>
Commission for Children and Young People (CCYP)	<p>An independent statutory body that promotes improvement in policies and practices affecting the safety and wellbeing of Victorian children and young people.</p> <p>CCYP ensures the rights of all children and young people are recognised, respected and defended through:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • independent scrutiny and oversight of services for children and young people, particularly those in the out-of-home- care, child protection • youth justice systems advocacy • supporting and regulating organisations that work with children and young people to prevent abuse and make sure these organisations have child safe practices.
Reportable Conduct Scheme	The Victorian Reportable Conduct Scheme seeks to improve organisations' responses to allegations of child abuse and neglect by their workers and volunteers. The Scheme is designed to ensure that the CCYP will be aware

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	<p>of every allegation of misconduct involving children in relevant organisations that exercise care, supervision and authority over children.</p> <p>This includes:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • supporting and guiding organisations that receive allegations in order to promote fair, effective, timely and appropriate responses; and • independently overseeing, monitoring and making appropriate recommendations to improve organisational responses.
National Principles for Child Safe Organisations (National Principles)	<p>The National Principles are designed to build capacity and deliver child safety and wellbeing in organisations, families and communities and prevent future harm. The Principles have been endorsed by all Commonwealth, state and territory governments.</p> <p>https://chidsafe.humanrights.gov.au/national-principles</p>
The Royal Commission into Institutional Responses to Child Sexual Abuse (Royal Commission).	<p>An independent inquiry established in 2013 by the Australian Government to examine and report upon responses by institutions to instances and allegations of child sexual abuse in educational institutions, religious groups, sporting organisations, state institutions and youth organisations. The findings provide recommendations to the Government on how to improve laws, policies, structures and practices to prevent such harm from re-occurring.</p> <p>https://www.childabuseroyalcommission.gov.au/</p>
United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child	<p>Is an international agreement setting out the civil, political, economic, social and cultural rights of every child, regardless of their race, religion or abilities.</p> <p>https://www.ohchr.org/en/professionalinterest/pages/crc.aspx</p>

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SAFEGUARDING CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE CODE OF CONDUCT

Statement of Commitment

Hume City Council has a zero tolerance for child abuse. Council will actively listen to and support children to be strong, confident and self-determined citizens. Council will provide a safe working environment that values child safety, diversity and inclusion for all children aged 0 – 18 and adheres to the Victorian Child Safe Standards and related legislation.

Council acknowledges the cultural safety, participation and empowerment of all children; especially children from Aboriginal or culturally and/or linguistically diverse backgrounds and those with a disability. All allegations of abuse and safety concerns received by Council will be acted upon in accordance with relevant policies and procedures.

Council requires that Councillors, employees, volunteers and contractors understand and follow child safe principles and expectations for appropriate behaviour towards, and in the company of children at all times. The Code of Conduct applies to all Council officers, including employees, contractors, students on placement and volunteers aged 16 years and over. It includes sexual misconduct, committed against, with or in the presence of, a child, physical violence committed against, with or in the presence of, a child, any behaviour that causes significant emotional or psychological harm to a child or significant neglect of a child.

Purpose

The Child Safety Code of Conduct:

- Sets clear expectations about behaviour towards and in the presence of children.
- Clearly defines acceptable and unacceptable behaviour in the presence of children.
- Supports staff to identify and raise behavioural / conduct issues with confidence and support.
- You should read these Practice and Behaviour Guidelines in conjunction with:
 - the specific requirements of your role as defined in your 'position description' statement
 - our relevant policy and procedure documents, including our:
 - 'Safeguarding Children and Young People' Policy

Safeguarding Children and Young People Code of Conduct	Approved By: ELT	Approval Date: May 2022
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- all applicable laws, including in relation to privacy, confidentiality, information sharing and record keeping
- general community expectations in relation to appropriate behaviour between adults and children.

Related policy and other documents

- Crimes Act 1958
- Child Wellbeing and Safety Act 2005
- Children Youth and Families Act 2005
- Equal Opportunity Act 2010 Hume City Council Enterprise Agreement No.8 2022-2025
- Hume Council Employee Handbook
- Council's Staff Conflict of Interest Policy
- Council's Disciplinary Policy Corporate Uniform Policy Council's Information Privacy and Health Records Policy
- Council's EEO Policy Occupational Health and Safety Policy
- Policy for the Use of the Internet
- Procedure for Use of E-mail
- Code of Conduct for Councillors
- Council's Smoke Free Workplace Policy
- Hume City Council Social Justice Charter 2007.
- Privacy and Data Protection Act 2014 (Vic)
- Health Records Act 2001 Equal Opportunity Act 2010 (Vic) Occupational Health & Safety Act 2004
- The Charter of Human Rights and Responsibilities 2006 (Vic)
- Hume Council Safeguarding Children and Young People Policy (2022)



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- Hume City Council Child Safety and Child Protection Incident Report
- Hume City Council Disciplinary Procedure
- Equal Opportunity and Respect in the Workplace Policy
- Hume Child Safe Tool kit and supporting documents

Standards and Obligations

This Safeguarding Children and Young People Code of Conduct (Code) must be read in conjunction with Council's Safeguarding Children and Young People Policy which outlines Council's legislative and moral obligation to ensure that children and young people involved in Council programs and services are safe from harm and abuse.

Breaches of this Code may result in disciplinary action, which depending on the type of misconduct, may include suspension while matters are investigated, and/or dismissal. In addition to any internal proceedings and reporting, all incidents will be reported to the Commission for Children and Young People and any breaches of law will be reported to the police.

Staff will, wherever possible, encourage children to provide input into, and participate in all relevant organisational activities, especially in relation to issues that are important and relevant to them, and will ensure that children and young people participating in Council programs or services are aware of Council's expectation in relation to acceptable behaviour so that a positive experience can be provided for all participants.

It is important for all staff to know the expectations around keeping children safe. The policy can be found on HQ under Child Safety.

On reading this Code of Conduct you are required to sign and acknowledge that you have read and understood your obligations.

The Code may not cover all situations and a staff member who is uncertain about a role or responsibility surrounding a particular circumstance should contact their manager or the Human Resources Department for clarification

Staff will:

- uphold the rights of children (**any person under the age of 18 years**) who come into contact with the council and make sure they are heard on matters relevant to their safety.

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- provide a welcoming, inclusive and safe environment that supports and values the ideas and opinions of children and treats them with respect regardless of their race, colour, gender identity, sex, sexual orientation, language, religion, political or other opinion, national, ethnic or social origin, culture, property, disability or other status
- actively promote and consider the cultural safety and inclusion of all children
- empower children by providing an environment where they can actively participate and 'have a say', especially on issues that are important to them
- listen and respond to the views and concerns of children, including where it relates to concerns that they feel unsafe
- abide by the council's commitment and obligation to be a child safe organisation
- identify and mitigate risks to the safety and wellbeing of children
- take all reasonable steps to protect children from abuse
- challenge unacceptable behaviour and report all allegations or suspicions of abuse to through HQ Child Safety Reporting portal or contact Hume's Child Safe Officer
- report any concerns, allegations, disclosures or observations of child abuse in line with Hume's policies and processes, Mandatory Reporting and Reportable Conduct reporting requirements
- report all child safety concerns through HQ Child Safety Reporting portal or contact Hume's Child Safe Officer
- work with children in an open and transparent way. For example, by ensuring that where appropriate, interactions with children can be observed by other adults
- respect the privacy of children and their families and only disclose information to people in accordance with legislation
- observe professional boundaries with children at all times
- disclose any information of charges, convictions of abuse and all other offence history in accordance with the councils Criminal Record Check policy.

Staff will not:

- act or engage in activities or provide additional support or care outside the confines of their duties (as specified in their position description) when delivering a Council program or service.
- condone or participate in behaviour that is illegal, unsafe or abusive to children
- ignore or disregard any concerns, suspicions, or disclosures of child abuse.

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- exaggerate or trivialise allegations or issues relating to child abuse or the safety and wellbeing of children
- discriminate against children based on their age, gender identity, sex, race, cultural or sexual orientation.
- develop inappropriate relationships with children, including relationships that show favouritism.
- display violent or inappropriate behaviour towards a children
- initiate unnecessary physical contact with children or exhibit behaviours with children which may be construed as inappropriate
- put children at risk of abuse (for example, by allowing unnecessary one-adult/one-child encounters to occur)
- conduct a sexual relationship with a child or indulge in any form of sexual contact with a child
- engage in open discussions of a mature nature in the presence of children
- use inappropriate, offensive, harassing, abusive, sexually provocative, demeaning, culturally inappropriate or discriminatory language when speaking with, or in the presence of, a child
- discriminate against any child, because of age, gender, race, culture, vulnerability, sexuality, ethnicity or disability
- use any computer, mobile phone, or video and digital camera to exploit or harass children or expose them to offensive or sexualised content.
- exchange personal contact details with a child such as phone number, social networking sites or email address, unless authorised by a direct Manager.
- have unauthorised contact with a child or their family outside of the council including online, on social media or by phone.
- use, possess or be under the influence of illegal drugs

Consequences of breaching the Safeguarding Children and Young People Code of Conduct

All staff of the council who breach this Code of Conduct may be subject to disciplinary procedures in accordance with the relevant industrial instrument and/or relevant terms of engagement.

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Hume has zero tolerance for child abuse and will take all allegations of reportable conduct and safety concerns very seriously, ensuring such conduct is dealt with in accordance with council policies, procedures, and the law.

Breach of the Code of Conduct

All staff are obliged to report any breaches of this Code of Conduct to their manager or appropriate person. In instances where a reportable allegation has been made, the matter will be managed in accordance with the department’s Reportable Conduct Policy and may be subject to referral to Victoria Police.

If a staff member thinks that this Code of Conduct has been breached by another staff member, they will:

- act in the best interest of the child or young person
- act promptly to ensure that the child or young person is safe
- promptly follow Hume City Councils reporting procedures.

I have read and understood this Safeguarding Children and Young People Code of Conduct.

I understand the importance of keeping children safe and my obligations to speak up if I have a concern.

If you have any questions, please don’t hesitate to speak to a member of the Child Safe Working group or visit the Child Safe page on HQ.

Name	
Signature	
Date	
Role	



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