



## **JUNEE SHIRE COUNCIL**

# **CHILD SAFE CODE OF CONDUCT**

**ADOPTED: 15 AUGUST 2024**  
**MINUTE NO: 08.07.24**

**\*\* If there is an immediate danger to a child phone triple zero (000) \*\***

## **Junee Shire Council Child Safety Commitment Statement**

*We believe children have the right to be respected, empowered and safe. We are committed to our responsibilities in keeping them safe and listening to their views.*

### **Introduction**

This Child Safe Code of Conduct (the “Code”) applies to all employees of Council, Councillors, volunteers, and other stakeholders (collectively referred to as ‘worker’) engaged in delivering Council services.

The Code establishes expectations for the behaviour of adults when interacting with children. Adherence to these standards is essential to prevent harm and ensure the safety of children. Child abuse occurs in various forms, including physical, sexual and psychological abuse, as well as ill-treatment and neglect.

### **Acceptable and Unacceptable behaviours**

The Code identifies positive child safe behaviours that Council encourages all adults to support. It also identifies behaviours that we consider unacceptable. Engaging in unacceptable behaviour is a breach of this Code and may result in managerial or disciplinary action in accordance with the Disciplinary Procedures of the Local Government (State) Award.

Some examples of concerning behaviours are also provided below. These are behaviours that on their own may not constitute a breach of the Code but together may indicate a pattern of behaviour that poses a risk to the safety of children.

#### **Council workers will:**

- Treat all children with respect.
- Welcome all children and their families and carers by being inclusive.
- Listen to children and respond to them appropriately.
- Adhere to all relevant Australian and NSW legislation and our child safe policies and procedures.
- Participate in compulsory training.
- Raise concerns with management if risks to child safety are identified, including cultural, environmental and operational risks.
- Take all reasonable steps to protect children from abuse.
- Respect the privacy of children and their families by keeping all information about child protection concerns confidential.
- Take a child seriously if they disclose harm or abuse.
- Ensure breaches of this Code are reported immediately.
- Uphold the rights of the child and always priorities their needs.

**Council workers must not:**

- Condone or participate in illegal, unsafe, or abusive behaviour towards children, including physical, sexual or psychological abuse, ill-treatment, neglect or grooming.
- Ignore or disregard any concerns, suspicions, or disclosures of child abuse.
- Exaggerate or trivialise child abuse issues.
- Use hurtful, discriminatory, or offensive behaviour or language with children.
- Fail to report information to police if I know a child has been abused.
- Engage in unwarranted and inappropriate touching involving a child.
- Persistently criticise and/or denigrate a child.
- Deliberately prevent a child from forming friendships.
- Verbally assault a child or create a climate of fear.
- Offer children and young people alcohol, cigarettes, or other drugs.
- Show children pornographic images.
- Encourage a child to communicate in a private setting.
- Share details of sexual experiences with a child.
- Photograph or video a child or young person without the consent of the child and their parent/s or guardians.
- Use sexual or inappropriate language or gestures in the presence of children.

**Council workers understand the following types of behaviours may be of concern:**

- Being alone with a child when there is no professional reason for doing so.
- Showing favour to one child over another.
- Babysitting, mentoring and/or tutoring a child out of work hours (without managerial approval for this kind of secondary employment).

**The following are specific provisions for child-related roles within Council:****Council workers will:**

- Welcome parents and carers to participate in decisions about their child and any other relevant matters concerning their child's safety.
- Work within a team to ensure that the needs of the child (and their family) remain the paramount focus.
- Inform parents and carers if there are situations that need to be safely managed but are outside the boundaries of this Code of Conduct.
- Report any conflicts of interest to Council's Child Protection Officer, or their Director as soon as possible (such as a pre-existing relationship with a child outside of the Council).

**Council workers must not:**

- Deliberately prevent a child from forming friendships.
- Encourage communication with a child in a private setting.
- Be alone with a child unnecessarily.
- Work with children while under the influence of alcohol or prohibited drugs.
- Arrange personal contact, including online contact, with children they are working with for a purpose unrelated to the Council's activities.

## **Code Breach Consequences**

Council workers will identify and take appropriate action if they suspect that another individual within the Council has breached this Code.

- Act to prioritise the best interests of children.
- Take actions promptly to ensure that children are safe.
- Promptly report any concerns to Council's Child Protection Officer, the General Manager, or a Director of Council.
- Follow Council's policies and procedures for receiving and responding to complaints and concerns regarding child safety.
- Comply with the relevant legislation and Council policies and procedures.

Some breaches of this Code may need to be reported to the NSW Police, the Department of Communities and Justice and the Office of the Children's Guardian. Complaints and allegations concerning the welfare, wellbeing and safety of children shall be managed in a confidential manner.

Workers who breach the Code may also be subject to disciplinary action. This can include increased supervision, appointment to an alternative role, suspension or termination from the organisation.

**PLEASE NOTE:** An adult in child-related role in the organisation will commit an offence if they know another adult poses a serious risk of abusing a child (under 18 years), and they have the power to reduce or remove the risk and they negligently fail to do so. All adults in NSW are required to report information to police if they know, believe or reasonably ought to know that a child (under 18 years) has been abused.

## **Terms and Definitions**

**Child** refers to a person who is under the age of 18 years.

**Child Protection Officer** is Council's Executive Services Officer.

**Child-related role** means a role which involves direct contact by the worker with a child or children where that contact is a usual part of and more than incidental to the work. It also includes work that is likely to involve contact with a child in connection with at least one of the 20 legislated categories of child-related work, which include:

- Education and care and child-minding services.
- Mentoring and counselling services for children
- Clubs or other bodies providing programs and services for children.
- Entertainment for children - includes sporting, cultural or other entertainment venues used primarily by children and entertainment services for children.
- Transport services for children – including school bus services and taxi services for children with a disability.

**Domestic and family violence** against a child or child's parent, carer or guardian is child abuse. It can involve physical violence or threats, verbal abuse, emotional abuse, psychological abuse, sexual abuse, financial abuse or social abuse.

**Grooming** is defined as behaviours that are intended to manipulate and control a child, their family and other support networks with the intent of gaining access to the child and obtaining their compliance and silence to avoid abuse being discovered. It does so by building trust and favouring some children over others to isolate and manipulate them. It may involve giving gifts, providing alcohol or other drugs, special attention, close physical contact or exposure to sexual content.

**Neglect** a term used to refer to a pattern characterised when a parent or caregiver cannot regularly provide a child or young person the basic requirements for this or her growth and development such as food, clothing, shelter, medical and dental care, adequate supervision and adequate parenting and care.

**Physical abuse** is a non-accidental injury inflicted on a child/young person. This includes children being deliberately shaken (babies) or hurt by excessive discipline. It can include welts, cuts, burns, fractures, dislocations, bruising, internal injuries, attempted strangulation and genital mutilation, as well as injuries caused during an incident of domestic violence.

**Psychological harm** occurs because of persistent, repetitive behaviours that have a negative impact on a child/young person's development, social needs, self-worth, or self-esteem. This can involve punishing, demeaning, and scapegoating. Psychological harm also includes deliberate exposure to traumatic events, criminal or corrupting, severe parental/carer mental health or substance abuse, and chronic or severe domestic violence.

**Sexual abuse** involves assaulting, mistreating, or exposing a child/young person to sexual activities with an adult, or older person. This includes a range of adult contact behaviours (eg. touching in sexual manner, penetration or oral sex) and non-contact behaviours (eg. Exposing self to child, exposing child to pornographic material or acts) and child prostitution.

## **Review**

This policy may be reviewed at any time or as required in the event of legislative changes. Unless otherwise required, the policy will be reviewed at least once during a term of Council.

**CONTROLLED DOCUMENT INFORMATION****Authorisation Details:**

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**Appendices:**

<b>Annexure</b>	<b>Description</b>

**Document History:**

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1		First version.	Executive Services Officer Jessica Wood

**Related Document Information, Standards and References:**

<b>Related Legislation</b>	Child Protection (Working with Children) Act 2012 Child Protection (Working with Children) Regulation 2013 Children and Young Persons (Care and Protection) Act 1998 Criminal Legislation Amendment (Child Sexual Abuse) Act 2018 Civil Liability Amendment (Organisation Child Abuse Liability) Act 2018 Children’s Guardian Act 2019 NSW Child Safe Standards National Redress Scheme for Institutional Child Sexual Abuse Act 2018 Privacy and Personal Information Protection Act 1998 Local Government Act 1993 United Nations Convention of the Rights of the Child
<b>Related Policies</b>	Child Safe Policy
<b>Other References</b>	