



## **JUNEE SHIRE COUNCIL**

# **CHILD SAFE POLICY**

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

## **1. PURPOSE**

Junee Shire Council is committed to providing and maintaining a child-safe environment that supports the well-being of all children and young people. This Child Safe Policy, along with the Child Safe Code of Conduct, outlines our commitment and the responsibilities of all employees of Council, Councillors, volunteers and other stakeholders engaged in delivering Council services.

These measures are designed to prevent abuse and promote the safety, welfare and well-being of children who interact with our services.

## **2. SCOPE**

This policy is applicable to everyone engaged in Council activities, including:

- Employees of Council.
- Councillors.
- Volunteers.
- Other stakeholders engaged in delivering Council services.

Collectively referred to as 'worker'.

## **3. POLICY STATEMENT**

The policy encompasses all activities within the organisation that involve, result in, or relate to contact with children. Council is committed to being a child safe organisation, by embedding the NSW Child Safe Standards into our leadership, governance and organisational culture.

## **4. CHILD SAFE STANDARDS**

Council supports and adopts the ten child safe standards identified by the Royal Commission into Institutional Responses into Child Sexual Abuse. The ten standards will be progressively adopted and implemented across Council's policies, procedures and practices.

The ten Child Safe Standards are:

1. Child safety is embedded in institutional leadership, governance, and culture.
2. Children participate in decisions affecting them and are taken seriously.
3. Families and communities are informed and involved.
4. Equity is upheld, and diverse needs are taken into account.
5. People working with children are suitable and supported.
6. Processes to respond to complaints of child abuse are child focused.
7. Staff are equipped with the knowledge, skills, and awareness to keep children safe through continual education and training.
8. Physical and online environments minimise the opportunity for abuse to occur.
9. Implementation of the Child Safe Standards is continuously reviewed and improved.
10. Policies and procedures document how the organisation is child safe.

## 5. CHILD SAFE CULTURE

Council supports the active participation of children in our services, programs and events.

Council's Child Safe Code of Conduct establishes a clear set of rules and expectations for behaviour that is in line with Council's child safe culture and values. Having clear rules and expectations of expected behaviours with children helps to prevent child abuse and encourages reporting.

Whenever applicable, we inform children about that they can do if they feel unsafe.

## 6. RECRUITMENT

Junee Shire Council will ensure that the recruitment process includes procedures in accordance with the *Child Protection (Working with Children) Act 2012*, the *Child Protection (Working with Children) Regulation 2013* and the *Children and Young Persons (Care and Protection) Act 1998*.

Council employs fit for purpose recruitment and selection processes including a Working with Children Check, Police check and reference checks for child-related roles.

Hiring and recruitment staff, together with relevant Directors and Managers are responsible for:

- Ensuring working with children checks have been carried out for designated roles before hiring a prospective employee.
- Emphasising children's safety throughout the recruitment process, including advertising, screening and reference checks.
- Including a clear explanation of the employee's child safety responsibilities, mandatory reporting obligations and procedures during the induction process.
- Not continue to employ, in a child-related role, a person that has been identified as disqualified from the Working with Children Check.

## 7. TRAINING REQUIREMENTS

Training and induction are important to ensure the understand that the safety of children is the responsibility of everyone. All workers will be provided with appropriate training to ensure that they understand Council's commitment to child safety and that everyone has a role to play in safeguarding children.

## 8. COMPLAINTS MANAGEMENT AND REPORTING

All workers, must comply with legal requirements and adopted procedures and report known, suspected or alleged child abuse, misconduct, or inappropriate behaviour immediately to the Child Protection Officer. The Child Protection Officer, with the assistance of the Risk Manager, will then assess the situation using the Mandatory Report Guide (MRG) and report the matter to the relevant oversight agency in accordance with the Council's reporting obligations.

## DEFINITIONS

**Abuse:** A term that is used to describe different types of harm or maltreatment. In this document it refers to types of harm or maltreatment that children may experience.

**Allegation:** A reportable allegation is that an employee has engaged in conduct that may be reportable.

**Child / Children:** A person who is under 18 years of age.

**Child Protection Officer:** 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 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.

**Child Safe Organisation:** An organisation in which child safety is embedded in planning, policy, and practices and where the voices of children are valued and actioned.

**DCJ:** The NSW Department of Communities and Justice. DCJ is the NSW Government agency responsible for the care and protection of children.

**Mandatory Reporters:** People who deliver services, wholly or partly, to children as part of their paid or professional work. This is regulated by the Children and Young Persons/Care and Protection) Act 1998.

**MRG:** Mandatory Reporter Guide. The MRG is a decision-making tool to assist Mandatory Reporters to help determine how the suspected risk of significant harm of a child is reported.

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

**Reportable Conduct:** The Children's Guardian Act 2019 defines reportable conduct as:

- A sexual offence.
- Sexual misconduct.
- Ill-treatment of a child.
- Neglect of a child.
- An assault against a child.

- An offence under S43B (failure to protect) or a 316A (failure to report) of the Crimes Act 1900, and
- Behaviour that causes significant emotional or psychological harm to a child.

**Risk of Significant Harm:** Concern/s about a child that is sufficiently serious to warrant a response by a statutory authority irrespective of a family's consent. It is something that is not minor or trivial and that may be reasonably expected to produce a substantial and demonstrably adverse impact on the child safety, welfare or wellbeing. In addition, it can result from a single act or omission or an accumulation of these. Risks of significant harm is the NSW threshold to report child protection concerns to DCJ via the Child Protection Helpline.

## 9. LEGISLATIVE REQUIREMENTS

- 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

## 10. 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:

Annexure	Description

### Document History:

Version	Version start date and minute no.	Description	Author
1		First version.	Director Corporate and Community Development Lloyd Hart

### 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 Code of Conduct Policy
<b>Other References</b>	