

 <b>NORTHERN AREAS COUNCIL</b>	<b>SAFE ENVIRONMENT FOR CHILDREN &amp; VULNERABLE PEOPLE POLICY</b>	<b>Version No:</b>	4
		<b>Last Adopted:</b>	12 December 2023
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Type	Governance		
Category	Chief Executive Officer Unit		
Responsible Officer	Chief Executive Officer		
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Last Reviewed / Adopted	December 2027		
Minute Reference	Minute 11415		
Next review Date	December 2027 unless required earlier – i.e.: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• New / updated risks are identified which may require a change in the policy or procedures.</li> <li>• A critical incident where a child or young person has experienced harm through involvement with Council.</li> <li>• Concerns are raised by anyone involved in Council about child safety or welfare matters in Council.</li> <li>• Legislative changes/requirements.</li> </ul> Council will lodge a new child safe environments compliance statement each time this policy is updated.		
Applicable legislation	<i>Children and Young People (Safety) Act 2017 (SA)</i> <i>Children and Young People (Safety) Regulations 2017 (SA)</i> <i>Child Safety (Prohibited Persons) Act 2016 (SA)</i> <i>Child Safety (Prohibited Persons) Regulations 2019 (SA)</i> <i>Criminal Law Consolidation Act 1935</i>		
Related Documents	National Principles for Child Safe Environments Bullying, Harassment & Sexual Harassment Policy Behavioural Standards – Employees Policy Behavioural Standards – Council Members Policy Volunteer Policy Grievance Procedures		
Public Consultation	No		
File Reference	145.2.4		

## 1. INTRODUCTION AND RATIONALE

Northern Areas Council provides services, infrastructure, programs and facilities for all members of the community and visitors to use.

We are committed to the safety and wellbeing of children, young people and other vulnerable people who access our services. We support the rights of the child and vulnerable persons in the community and will act without hesitation to ensure a safe environment is maintained at all times.

We also support the rights and wellbeing of our staff and volunteers and encourage their active participation in building and maintaining a secure environment where all children, young people and other vulnerable people are valued.

This Policy has been developed to articulate Council's legislative responsibilities and also to ensure our services, programs and facilities are conducted, used and managed safely and provide safe environments for all users.

It also aims to ensure that Elected Members, employees, volunteers, trainees, work experience students and contractors / consultants providing services on behalf of Council are aware of their responsibilities and fulfil their legal obligations.

## 2. LEGAL OBLIGATIONS

- Child Safe Environments

Section 114(1) of the *Child Safety (Prohibited Persons) Act 2016* requires Councils and subsidiaries to have in place policies and procedures for ensuring:

- child safe environments for children and young people are established and maintained within the organisation; and
- mandatory reporting obligations (as set out in Chapter 5, Part 1 of the Act) are complied with.

The policies and procedures must comply with the National Principles for Child Safe Environments.

- Mandatory Reporting

Section 30(3) of the Safety Act prescribes mandated notifiers as any Council employee, contractor, volunteer or person undertaking educational or vocational training that provides health, welfare, education, sporting or recreational, child care or residential services wholly or partly for children and young people, being a person who:

- provides such services directly to children and young people; or
- holds a management position in the organisation the duties of which include direct responsibility for, or direct supervision of, the provision of those services to children and young people; AND
- mandated notifiers also include an officer or employee of a Council or subsidiary who holds a management position, the duties of which include

direct responsibility for, or direct supervision of, the provision of services to children.

Mandated notifiers must report any suspicion of a child being at risk to the Child Abuse Report Line (CARL) (telephone 24 hours a day, 7 days a week on 13 14 78). All serious concerns must be reported via the phone line, **not** via the online e-CARL portal (<https://my.families.sa.gov.au/IDMProv/landing.html>).

### 3. DEFINITIONS

**Child or young person** means a person under the age of 18.

**Harm** includes physical and psychological harm (whether caused by an act or omission) and includes such harm caused by sexual, physical, mental or emotional abuse or neglect.

**Prescribed position** is a position in which a person works with children or a position in which it is reasonably foreseeable that the person will work with children, including people who:

- provide a service or undertake an activity that is child-related work in the course of their employment;
- carry on a business in which an employee works with children (whether or not the person works with children); or
- are employed to provide preschool, primary or secondary education to a child (whether or not the person is a registered teacher).

Prescribed positions may be held by employees, volunteers, contractors, persons undertaking educational / vocational training or Elected Members. Prescribed positions will require a Not Prohibited Working With Children Check.

### 4. APPLICATION OF THE POLICY

The Policy will apply from the date of endorsement to all employees, volunteers, Elected Members, students on placement, work experience students, contractors and consultants providing services wholly or partly to children, or who work with or near children. A schedule of roles and responsibilities is included as [Appendix 1](#).

The Policy will be communicated through Council's usual channels to all relevant stakeholders to ensure awareness and understanding of Council's Commitment to ensuring a safe environment. This will include Council Members, staff, volunteers, contractors, consultants, parents, carers, and children where relevant.

### 5. POLICY

Council recognises both its legislative and moral obligations and is committed to the safety and wellbeing of children and vulnerable people who access the services, programs and facilities provided by the Council.

The Council supports the rights of all community members and will work to ensure that a safe environment is provided and maintained at all times in respect to the programs, services and facilities we provide.

- We will respect and value children, young people and other vulnerable people through the actions we take.
- We will not tolerate any bullying, harassment or discriminatory practices.
- We will listen and act when concerns or ideas are raised by children, young people or their families.
- We will support our employees and volunteers who seek to maintain a safe environment for children and vulnerable people.

## 5.1 Risk Management Strategy

A risk assessment has been undertaken to identify and assess potential sources of harm and risk of harm to children and vulnerable people and also identify the controls in place to decrease the likelihood of those risks occurring. Refer [Appendix 2](#) for the assessment but in summary key areas of focus are:

***Managing risk of harm on our premises:*** Council operates offices, depots, transfer stations and a mobile library service. It is also owners of facilities including toilets, swimming pools, parks, recreation sites and playgrounds – with a mix of community groups, volunteers and employees maintaining and operating these sites. Council will seek to reduce the risks within these physical environments in a number of ways:

- Safety in design and security features in recreational areas such as playgrounds, reserves, skate parks, and places where young people gather. This may include lighting, access restrictions, building design etc as required and where possible.
- Quarantining areas where children could become isolated and out of sight of supervising adults.
- Where possible, restricting access to parks and playgrounds after dark and / or lighting venues.
- Other actions as listed below.

***Managing risk of harm within our programs:*** Council undertakes a number of programs and events – or is responsible for issuing permits for such events – and understands many of these are available for children and vulnerable people to access. Council will mitigate and manage risk of harm by ensuring:

- Opportunities for teacher/parental/carer participation
- Activities are matched to physical and intellectual capabilities of participants
- Ensuring appropriate authorisations for photography
- Limiting access to the Internet to only those programs that are supervised
- Ensuring adequate supervision – in terms of number, skills and WWCC clearance of supervisors.
- Policies are in place to guide staff and volunteers in relation to discipline and appropriate levels of contact.
- Limited opportunity for one-on-one, close and unsupervised contact between workers and volunteers and children, young people and other vulnerable people – with parental consent provided in advance if one-on-one unsupervised contact is to occur.

***Managing risk within our work environment:*** Council is a major employer in the region and employees may be in contact with children – either through a role specific to serving young clients (e.g. pool attendant, library officer etc) or through other roles where contact may occur (e.g. cleaners, playground

maintenance officers etc). Council will mitigate and manage risk of harm through, among other steps:

- Robust recruitments and selection processes
- Working with children checks
- Ongoing training and awareness

Refer to Sections 5.2 and 5.3 and [Appendix 2](#) for more information.

## 5.2 Codes of Conduct

All employees, volunteers, contractors, Elected Members and consultants will be required to comply with the Council-endorsed code of conduct ([Appendix 3](#)). This sets out standards of conduct when providing services to children.

The code of conduct is supported by Council's grievance procedure to address breaches of the code of conduct. For more information about these procedures, contact the Chief Executive Officer.

## 5.3 Recruitment, Selection and Enhancing Performance

We will take all reasonable steps to ensure that we engage the most suitable and appropriate people to work with, and provide services to, children and young people – in line with our obligations under the *Child Safety (Prohibited Persons) Act 2016*.

### ***Recruitment & Selection – all roles***

Council will ensure that prior to a person being engaged or appointed to a position, whether as an employee or volunteer, an assessment of their National Police Clearance is conducted to ensure Council is made aware of any criminal convictions or disclosable court outcomes (as far as is practicable by law).

In cases where screening has identified a criminal record or that an applicant is unsuitable for employment, the information will be dealt with in a manner that reflects the principles of natural justice, confidentiality and relevant equal opportunity and aged care legislation.

### ***Recruitment & Selection – prescribed positions***

Steps to be taken before employing a person into a prescribed position will include (but not be limited to):

- Obtain the person's full name, address, date of birth and unique identifier;
- Verify they have a current WWCC in place via the DHS Screening Unit portal (i.e. completed within the preceding five years);
- Verify the person is not prohibited from working with children;
- Ensure interviews address legal requirements of working with children;
- Undertake appropriate referee and qualification checks;
- Undertake a full review of previous work undertaken with children;
- Provide the central assessment unit with the name, address, telephone number and email address of the business at which the person is to be employed – including specific Council sites;

- Provide the central assessment unit with the name and contact details of the person who verified the above information.

### **Working With Children Checks**

Council will verify that employees in prescribed positions have WWCCs monitored in line with the renewal timeframe – i.e. at least every five years.

Council staff will not have contact with children, unless they hold a relevant National Police Clearance and a valid WWCC.

Some exclusions may apply. In respect to Elected Members, volunteers, contractors and consultants the Council may, on occasion, enable these people to work with children if:

- They are to have less than seven days contact working with children in a calendar year, and;
- Only a minor or unknown level of contact is likely to occur with a child through the activity, and;
- It is impracticable to gain a WWCC prior to the contact taking place (other than for those in prescribed positions who must have a WWCC prior to engagement with children).

In the event Council becomes aware of a matter that would prohibit a person from working and interacting with children (criminal charges, child protection matters, misconduct or disciplinary matters), the information will be reported to the Human Services Screening Unit and the Child Abuse Report Line (CARL). Council needs to notify the Screening Unit of any assessable information and the Screening unit will make a determination as required by law.

### **Ongoing support**

Council will ensure that all staff and volunteers who work with children or who have access to the personal records of children have ongoing support and training to develop, enhance and maintain a child safe environment. This will ensure that everyone understands the importance of creating safe environments, wellbeing and protection for children and vulnerable people.

This will include through:

- Communication on the requirements of this Policy;
- Training on maintaining child safe environments.

All staff who have been identified as ‘mandated notifiers’, are required to complete relevant training in child safe environments and reporting risk of harm or neglect. Refresher training in a Safe Environments Course will occur at least every five (5) years.

## **5.4 Involvement in decision-making**

Council will promote the involvement of children and young people in service development planning where relevant, and inform them of their rights and how to access grievance procedures.

Council's Strategic Plan seeks to make Northern Areas a desirable place to live or visit and to promote stronger communities across our region. While Council no longer has a dedicated Youth Advisory Committee or strategy solely for young people it does see these strategic goals as inclusive of young people.

When reviewing its Strategic Plan or other relevant Council documents, every effort will be made to seek the views of children and young people. This will be coordinated through schools and surveys.

Council employees and volunteers will have a non-judgemental attitude to allow children, young people and other vulnerable people feel safe to raise ideas for the district, as well as complaints or concerns.

If a complaint is made, employees and volunteers will calmly explain the Council's grievance procedures and avenues for complaints in simple and clear language that is appropriate to the age and the language, literacy and numeracy skills of the person they are interacting with.

## **5.5 Responding to Suspected Harm and Neglect**

Council aims to ensure that children and young people are safe from harm and risk of harm and this includes ensuring appropriate reporting of suspected child sexual abuse and / or reasonable belief that a child or young person has been harmed or is at risk of harm.

Mandated notifiers in our organisation are workers who:

- Provide services to children and young people
- Hold a management position in the organisation the duties of which include direct responsibility for, or direct supervision of, the provision of those services to children and young people.

The following roles within Council have been identified as mandated notifiers:

- Chief Executive Officer
- Manager Community & Growth
- Economic Development & Marketing Officer
- Governance Officer
- Library Manager and staff
- Swimming pool staff and volunteers

Mandated notifiers have a legal obligation to notify the Child Abuse Report Line (CARL) on 13 14 78 as soon as practicable if they have a reasonable belief that a child or young person is or may be at risk of harm. If the child or young person is at immediate risk, report to South Australia Police (SAPOL) on 000. In cases involving Aboriginal children and young people, support is provided by Yaitya Tirramangkotti - an Aboriginal team, via the CARL number.

Even if not a mandated reporter, any person can report harm or risk of harm to a child or young person. The individual who identifies the harm or risk of harm is encouraged to make the report to authorities and can request the support from another worker to do so if required.

Information about making appropriate reports of harm or risk of harm is available from the South Australian Department of Child Protection website: <https://www.childprotection.sa.gov.au/reporting-child-abuse>.

All adult workers (even if not a mandated notifier) have a legal obligation to report child sexual abuse to the police and to protect a child from sexual abuse. Failure to meet these obligations may be considered a criminal offence.

Following a report being made to CARL or SAPOL workers must make an internal report to management.  
We will be guided by the Department for Child Protection and/or SAPOL after a report has been made as to whether we can conduct an internal investigation.

If a worker is reported to CARL or SAPOL for causing harm or risk of harm to a child or young person, they will be removed from any role that involves working with any child or young person – and potentially stood down – until authorities have concluded their investigation.

Following a report to CARL or SAPOL we will support the child or young person by:

- Referring the child, young person or their family to other appropriate support services.
- Continuing to provide a service to the child, young person and their family and monitor their circumstances.

We will document all information received regarding the report and store this securely in a separate file.

Council will ensure that staff, volunteers, contractors and consultants providing services to and/or working with children are aware of and are trained, and appropriately supported to report any suspicion of harm or risk of harm (including abuse or neglect) on reasonable grounds.

## 6. FURTHER INFORMATION

This Policy will be available for inspection at the Council office, 94 Ayr Street, Jamestown (Ph. 8664 1139) during ordinary business hours and available to be downloaded, free of charge, from Council's internet site: [www.nacouncil.sa.gov.au](http://www.nacouncil.sa.gov.au)

Copies will be provided to interested parties upon request.  
Email: [admin@nacouncil.sa.gov.au](mailto:admin@nacouncil.sa.gov.au)

Date	Description
12 December 2007	First Adopted
July 2021	Reviewed
12 December 2023	Reviewed & Updated



## Appendix 1:

### Roles & Responsibilities

**Council is** responsible for development of the Child & Vulnerable People Safe Environment Policy and in conjunction with the Chief Executive Officer and/or delegate (as appropriate):

- Promoting protection of children and young people from harm;
- Responding promptly to advice received from the Chief Executive Officer or other sources concerning significant changes to relevant legislation and regulations; and
- Regularly reviewing the effectiveness of the Policy.

**Council Members** have individual responsibility for appropriate behaviour towards children and young people, and for compliance with the Policy.

**The Chief Executive Officer** is accountable to Council and responsible as follows.

- Ensuring the Policy is implemented, monitored, reported on and evaluated;
- Being aware of mandatory reporting requirements, procedures, and associated legal responsibilities;
- Ensuring significant changes to relevant legislation are brought to the attention of Council in a timely manner.

**Managers and supervisors** are accountable to the Chief Executive Officer as follows.

- Recruitment and selection in accordance with Council's human resources policies and procedures and requirements for working with children and young people;
- Effective implementation of the Policy, procedures and safe workplace practices;
- Being aware of and promoting acceptable behaviour when dealing with children and young people;
- Providing appropriate induction and on-going training as required in relation to the Policy;
- Establishing and maintaining supportive procedures for fulfilling mandatory notification requirements and ensure mandated notifiers understand their legal responsibilities;
- Reporting any reasonable suspicion of harm they have of a child to the Child Abuse Report Line (note: it is the mandated notifier's responsibility to report their suspicion, not their supervisor's or manager's);
- Supporting staff and responding to enquiries regarding suspicions of harm or related issues, maintaining appropriate records and ensuring records are securely stored;
- Maintaining confidentiality and fully cooperating with the Department for Child Protection (DCP), SAPOL and other relevant government agencies in their investigations of suspected harm of a child, young person or other vulnerable person if required;
- Report annually to the Chief Executive Officer on implementation, monitoring and review of the Policy and relevant services, programs, and workplace practices.

**Mandated Notifiers** have legal obligations to notify the DCP if they suspect, on reasonable grounds, that a child or young person is or may be at risk of harm and the suspicion is formed in the course of their paid or voluntary work or in carrying out official duties.

#### **Other staff, volunteers, contractors and consultants (who are not mandated notifiers)**

All Council staff, volunteers, contractors and consultants providing services on behalf of Council have a role to play in providing a safe environment for children, young people and other vulnerable people, and for complying with the Policy.

Council strongly encourages and will sensitively support any staff member, volunteer, contractor or consultant to report any suspicion they have of incidents of harm of a child or young person.

In these cases, incidents of harm of a child or young person are to be reported to the relevant program manager who will, in consultation with the Chief Executive Officer, determine the appropriate action to be taken and where appropriate report to the relevant Government authorities.

### **Third Party Responsibility**

- Contractors/Consultations
- Licensees
- Lease of Council premises/facilities
- Hire of Council facility - conditions/agreements

Council will include a clause in contracts of engagement, leases and relevant hire agreements, stipulating the requirement for compliance with Council's Policy and requiring evidence contractors have appropriate Working With Children Checks in place when required. This applies to all contractors including organisations, sole traders and partnerships. Evidence of WWCCs will be verified in the DHS Screening Unit portal.

Councils must:

- Disclose the Policy;
- Attach a copy of the Policy to the contract, lease or hire agreement, or provide access to an electronic version of the Policy;
- Reserve within the clause a right to update the Policy;
- Insert within the clause an obligation to comply with the Policy; and
- Insert within the clause an obligation to notify Council of instances of non-compliance with the Policy if the third party meets the "prescribed position" test.

## Appendix 2:

### Risk Management – Child Safe Environment

Council seeks to ensure children and young people are safe at all Council owned and/or operated facilities. Through a risk management approach – guided by Council's overall risk management framework – Council seeks to mitigate risk to children, young people and other vulnerable people and to empower employees to take appropriate action if they see a potential risk.

Through training, induction, assessments and communication of the relevant Policy, procedures and requirements, Council will ensure high levels of awareness of, and active participation in managing, these risks.

The following risks associated with safe environments for children have been assessed using Council's risk management framework. These risks will be kept under review as part of Council's ongoing risk reviews.

Risk ID	Risk Details Risk Description	Inherent Risk Rating (i.e. no controls in place)			Existing Controls	Current Risk Rating (i.e. controls in place)		
		Likelihood	Consequence	Inherent Risk Rating		Likelihood	Consequence	Current Risk Rating
CS1	<b>Lack of accountability / leadership commitment to a child safe environment</b>	Possible	Moderate	High	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Policy / procedures communicated – prior to and after adoption by Council – to all employees.</li> <li>Leadership accountabilities clear in Policy.</li> <li>Position descriptions include accountability for following Council policies and procedures.</li> <li>Annual performance review and planning process to ensure accountabilities being met.</li> <li>Hiring managers awareness of WWCC requirements.</li> <li>Leadership team responsible for risk reviews.</li> <li>Child safe training for relevant staff.</li> </ul>	Rare	Minor	Low
CS2	<b>Employment of someone who has committed harm against a child or young person</b>	Possible	Moderate	High	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Relevant position descriptions include reference to WWCC requirements.</li> <li>Police checks part of recruitment process.</li> <li>WWCC checks part of recruitment process for relevant roles.</li> <li>Referee checks in place.</li> <li>Grievance / complaints procedures in place.</li> <li>Behavioural standards in place and part of induction process.</li> <li>Child Safe policies / procedures review required as part of induction.</li> <li>Probationary period in place for all roles.</li> </ul>	Rare	Moderate	Medium

CS3	<b>Inappropriate behaviour by employee at a Council work site or facility – including pools, library, playgrounds etc</b>	Possible	Major	Extreme	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Grievance / complaints and disciplinary procedures in place.</li> <li>Behavioural standards in place and communicated.</li> <li>Child Safe policies and procedures communicated.</li> <li>Child safe training for relevant staff.</li> </ul>	Rare	Moderate	Medium
CS4	<b>Inappropriate behaviour by others at a Council work site or facility – including pools, library, playgrounds etc</b>	Possible	Major	High	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Policy / procedures communicated so staff can identify and report as required.</li> <li>Lifeguards trained and hold WWCC.</li> <li>Library staff trained and hold WWCC.</li> <li>Where feasible ensuring lighting, access restrictions, building design etc do not allow for children to be isolated.</li> <li>Playgrounds maintained to ensure minimal hiding spaces.</li> <li>Pools require children under 10 to be supervised</li> <li>Surveillance in place at number of sites and well signposted</li> </ul>	Rare	Moderate	Medium
CS5	<b>Inappropriate behaviour at a Council-owned venue that is leased / hired to a third party</b>	Unlikely	Moderate	Medium	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Leases include requirements for compliance with all legislation and Council policies</li> <li>Permits, where relevant, require compliance with all legislation and Council policies</li> <li>Restrictions in place on hiring of venues</li> </ul>	Rare	Minor	Low
CS6	<b>Inappropriate behaviour at a Council run event or activity</b>	Possible	Major	High	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Child Safe policies and procedures communicated.</li> <li>Child safe training for relevant staff, including mandatory reporting requirements.</li> <li>Opportunities provided for teacher/guardian participation.</li> <li>Ensuring appropriate authorisations for photography.</li> <li>Adequate supervision – in terms of number, skills and WWCC clearance of supervisors - provided.</li> </ul>	Rare	Moderate	Medium
CS7	<b>Child or young person photographed or filmed at a Council venue / event without appropriate permissions</b>	Possible	Minor	Medium	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Council photography permission forms in place.</li> <li>Conditions of Use at pools stipulate no unauthorised photography.</li> </ul>	Unlikely	Minor	Low

CS8	<b>Unsupervised / lost child or young person at Council work site or facility</b>	Possible	Minor	Medium	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Child Safe policies and procedures communicated.</li> <li>Child safe training for relevant staff.</li> </ul>	Rare	Minor	Low
CS9	<b>Council neglects to adequately consider voice of young people in Council decision making</b>	Unlikely	Minor	Low	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Young people engaged in development of Council's strategic plan.</li> <li>Engagement of schools in planning for child / youth activities or facilities.</li> </ul>	Rare	Minor	Low

## Appendix 3:

### Code of Conduct – Working With Children / Child Safe

Council is committed to ensuring that children and young people are treated with sensitivity, respect, fairness and dignity within a welcoming and supportive environment that is free from all types of abuse and inappropriate behaviour.

This Code of Conduct has been drafted in accordance with section 114 of the South Australian *Children and Young People (Safety) Act 2017* and Northern Area Council's *Safe Environment for Children & Vulnerable People Policy*.

This Code applies to all employees, Council Members, volunteers, children, young people, parents and carers who access our services. All employees, volunteers, contractors, consultants and any other persons engaged to provide any service wholly or partly to children on behalf of Council are required to comply with this Code of Conduct, as well as children, young people, parents and carers who access Council services.

The standards in this Code of Conduct are consistent with those established by the Department of Human Services and international human rights principles as enshrined within the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child.

This Code of Conduct does not cover every situation. However, the values, ethics and standards it sets are a reference point to help make decisions relating to situations not referred to in this Code of Conduct. It sets out the minimum standards of behaviour expected during any interactions with children and young people in accessing Council services.

Council's Chief Executive Officer can be contacted for further information relating to the application of this Code of Conduct or the Policy.

#### **Supportive Behaviours:**

Staff, contractors, consultants, volunteers, Elected Members and those who access Council services must at all times:

- Treat children and young people with dignity, respect, sensitivity, fairness and equity
- Ensure children and young people are protected from any form of harm or discrimination
- Ensure the environment is safe for children and young people – this includes protection from violence, bullying, teasing, threatening and sexist or racist remarks.

Role model positive behaviours, for example:

- Encourage children and young people to participate in decision making processes;
- Give constructive feedback to children and young people; and
- Ensure children and young people are aware of their rights, including their rights to respect, fairness and safety.

Staff, contractors, consultants, volunteers and Elected Members with mandatory notification responsibilities must be aware of their duty to report to the Child Abuse Report Line (13 14 78) if they form a suspicion that a child or young person is at risk; or discuss their concern with their supervisor or manager; and where relevant, explain the commitment to maintaining confidentiality, including situations that would require the sharing of information, for example mandatory notification responsibilities.

## **Safe and protective work practices**

Staff and volunteers must adopt safe and protective work practices.

Staff and volunteers must be aware of potential situations and actions when working with children or young people that may be misinterpreted or misconstrued, and adopt safe work practices. For example:

- Where possible work in an open and visible environment when with children and young people;
- Dress appropriately;
- Secure parental/guardian consent for excursions or to obtain medical treatment for children and young people under 18 years if the need arises;
- Adopt a calm and non-judgmental attitude to allow young people to feel safe to raise complaints or concerns; and
- Where necessary, explain grievance procedures and avenues for complaint in simple and clear language that is appropriate to the age of the child or young person.

## **Unacceptable Behaviours include the following:**

- Any form of discrimination against a child or young person based on ethnicity, culture, religion, gender, sexuality or on any other grounds;
- Hitting or physically assaulting a child or young person;
- Using language that is offensive, abusive or otherwise inappropriate;
- Showing preferential treatment to one child or young person over others;
- Shout, yell or speak to a child or young person in an angry, intimidating or threatening manner;
- Engaging in rough physical play with children or young people;
- Unnecessary physical contact with children or young people. For example, giving a child or young person a hug may be culturally inappropriate or it may be frightening or offensive to the child or young person;
- Condone or participate in illegal or unsafe behaviours when working with children or young people;
- Make inappropriate self-disclosures relating to any participation (past or present) in illegal or unsafe behaviours. For example, past drug use should not be disclosed to or discussed with children or young people;
- Initiating or engaging in 'friendship' relationships with a child or young person. For example, it is not OK to make arrangements to socialise outside the work environment. Remember, children and young people are clients not friends;
- Taking children or young people to your home or on outings that do not fall within professional duties or that have not been authorised by parents or guardians;
- Acting in a manner that is sexually inappropriate – this includes verbal, physical and implied behaviours;
- Initiating or developing a physical/sexual 'relationship' with a child or young person;
- Initiating or developing any relationship that could be deemed or perceived as exploitative or abusive with a child or young person;

- Failure to report disclosures, or suspicions, of harm (including harm, risk of harm or neglect) to the relevant supervisor and/or the Child Abuse Report Line (CARL) on 13 14 78.

### **Breaches of Policy / Disciplinary Action**

All staff and volunteers, contractors, consultants and Elected Members have a responsibility for promoting and supporting these values and standards of behaviour.

Where a staff member, volunteer, contractor, consultant, or Elected Member is found to have acted outside of this Child Safe Code of Conduct, they will be subject to disciplinary action commensurate with the seriousness of their actions. For staff or volunteers, this disciplinary action may take the form of a warning, counselling or termination of their employment. For other categories, Council will take appropriate action relevant to that category.

Breaches of this Code of Conduct will be investigated on a case-by-case basis and in accordance with the Council's Human Resource Management policies and disciplinary procedures. Where required, Council will advise the DHS Screening Unit of any assessable information in relation to an employee or volunteer.

### **Reporting – if you have a concern**

All staff, contractors, consultants, volunteers, Elected Members and those accessing Council services have a role in supporting this Code of Conduct by raising their concerns with the relevant Team Leader or Manager. Any questions of compliance raised by Council Members, other staff or the community regarding the Code will be considered by the relevant Manager or the Chief Executive Officer.

If you have any difficulties or questions regarding this Child Safe Code of Conduct, you should discuss these with the Manager or Chief Executive Officer.