

Policy P109 Child Safe Awareness

Responsible Business Unit/s	Community, Culture and Recreation; Library Services
Responsible Officer	Manager Community, Culture and Recreation; Manager Library Services
Affected Business Unit/s	Community, Culture and Recreation; Library Services

Background

This Child Safe Awareness Policy is focused on the external facing and public role of Western Australian local governments in providing child safe awareness and information for their district and supporting their local communities.

The Policy was developed in response to Recommendation 6.12 from the Royal Commission into Institutional Responses to Child Sexual Abuse and the Royal Commissions recognition of the important role of local governments in community development and community safety, particularly roles that impact on child safety. The Royal Commission identified the opportunity to integrate their direct responsibilities to children and young people within their wider role in the community.

Policy Statement

The City of South Perth supports and values all children and young people. The City makes a commitment to support the safety and wellbeing of all children and young people, including protection from abuse. This Child Safe Awareness policy is one of the ways the City demonstrates its commitment to being child safe and a zero-tolerance approach to child abuse.

This Policy aims to reduce the risk of harm and child sexual abuse in our communities by encouraging child safe environments to be created and maintained. The City is committed to encouraging local organisations to be child safe and ensure children are safe and empowered.

This Child Safe Awareness Policy has been developed in response to Recommendation 6.12 of the *Royal Commission into Institutional Responses to Child Sexual Abuse* and recognises that the City is uniquely placed within the local community to demonstrate leadership by supporting organisations to be child safe and to protect children and young people from harm and/or abuse. The City will promote the safety and wellbeing of children across the community.

Consistent with the [National Principles for Child Safe Organisations](#) and [Commonwealth Child Safe Framework](#), this policy provides a framework that outlines the role of the City in supporting local organisations to be child safe through access to resources, awareness raising and sharing relevant information.

Policy Scope

The safety and wellbeing of children is everyone's responsibility. This Child Safe Awareness Policy applies to all employees, volunteers, trainees, work experience students, interns, and anyone else who undertakes work on behalf of the City, regardless of their work related to children or young people. It applies to occupants of City facilities and venues, including visitors, contractors and suppliers.

Definitions

Abuse: Abuse is an act, or a failure to act, towards or on behalf of a child that may result in harm. It can occur on one occasion or multiple occasions. Sometimes the impact of multiple events leads to harm that becomes cumulative in nature. Types of abuse include physical, emotional and sexual abuse, and neglect.

Child/Children: Means a person under 18 years of age, and in the absence of positive evidence as to age, means a person who appears to be under 18 years of age.

Child Safe Organisation: is defined in the Royal Commission Final Report as one that:

- creates an environment where children's safety and wellbeing are at the centre of thought, values, and actions
- places emphasis on genuine engagement with and valuing of children and young people
- creates conditions that reduce the likelihood of harm to children and young people
- creates conditions that increase the likelihood of identifying any harm, and
- responds to any concerns, disclosures, allegations, or suspicions of harm.

Note: in the context of local governments, this would involve referring concerns to the Department of Communities or WA Police to respond as appropriate.

Implementation of the National Principles for Child Safe Organisations give effect to the above.

Child safe: For the purpose of this policy, child safe means protecting the rights of children and young people to be safe by taking actions that can help prevent harm and abuse.

Harm: Harm, in relation to a child, means any detrimental effect of a significant nature on the child's wellbeing, whether caused by a single act, omission or circumstance; or a series or combination of acts, omissions or circumstances.

Wellbeing: Wellbeing of children and young people includes the care, development, education, health and safety of children and young people.

Policy Principles

- The rights of children and young people are upheld.
- Children and young people are respected, listened to, and informed about their rights.
- Children and young people have the fundamental right to be safe and cared for.
- Children and young people have the right to speak up, be heard and taken seriously without the threat of negative consequences.
- The safety and best interests of children and young people are a primary consideration when making decisions that concern them.

- Access to trusted and reliable information, including the National Principles for Child Safe Organisations, helps support organisations to understand what they must do to help reduce the risk of harm and abuse.
- Communities are informed and involved in promoting the safety and wellbeing of children and young people including protection from harm.
- Collaboration with the community and our partners promotes the safety, participation and empowerment of all children and young people.

Policy Functions

The City of South Perth will ensure the following functions of this policy are resourced and assigned to the relevant officers for implementation:

- Developing a process to deliver child safe messages (for example at City venues, grounds and facilities or events).
- Connecting and supporting local community groups, organisations, and stakeholders to child safe resources (including culturally safe and inclusive resources).

Responsibilities

The City of South Perth has a leadership role in our community to support relevant organisations to be child safe and promote child safe practices. Although the City is not legally responsible for providing oversight of compliance with child safe practices, it will take any reasonable steps to engage with persons who utilise City facilities to operate in alignment with the Child Safe Awareness policy. The City will determine which roles across the organisation will directly support the implementation of the Child Safe Awareness policy.

Related Legislation

- *Child Care Services Act 2007*
- *Children and Community Services Act 2004*
- *Civil Liability Act 2002*
- *Corruption, Crime and Misconduct Act 2003*
- *Equal Opportunity Act 1984*
- *Freedom of Information Act 1997*
- *Local Government Act 1995*
- *National Principles for Child Safety Organisations*
- *Parliamentary Commissioner Act 1971*
- *Public Interest Disclosure Act 2003*
- *Public Sector Management Act 1994*
- *United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (CRC)*
- *Work Health and Safety Act 2020*
- *Working with Children (Criminal Record Checking) Act 2004*

Other Relevant Policies / Key Documents

- P103 Stakeholder Engagement
- P105 Cultural Services and Activities
- P106 Use of City Reserves and facilities
- P117 Library Services and Programs
- P624 Media Communications
- P674 Management of Corporate Records

- P695 Risk Management
- M644 Responsible Use of Information Technology
- M646 Volunteer Procedures
- Community Safety and Crime Prevention Plan
- Employee Code of Conduct
- Strategic and Operational Risk Plans