

Governance & Compliance

Child Protection – Code of Conduct

Responsibilities

The Shire of Koorda (**“the Shire”**) is committed to promoting and protecting the interests and safety of children. We have zero tolerance for child abuse.

Any person who believes a child is at immediate risk of abuse must contact the police (telephone 000).

Staff, volunteers and contractors at the Shire are required to abide by the Child Safety Code of Conduct.

The Shire recognises, respects and promotes its responsibilities to keep children safe from abuse, and commits to ensuring the safety of children as a first priority. The Shire will not tolerate child abuse or discriminatory practices.

Child Safety Code of Conduct

The Child Safety Code of Conduct aims to protect children and reduce opportunities for child abuse or harm to occur. It is intended to complement the Shire’s other related policies and procedures.

The Child Safety Code of Conduct applies to the broad range of situations where interaction with children and young people may occur in the delivery of the Shire’s services, including through digital technology and social media.

The Shire’s CEO is:

- responsible for the overall welfare and wellbeing of staff and volunteers
- accountable for managing and maintaining a duty of care towards staff and volunteers
- the Shire’s Child Safety Officer (unless delegated in writing) and will provide information and support to all staff, volunteers, children, young people and their carers regarding child protection matters relating to the Shire.

All people involved in the care of children on behalf of the Shire, including staff, volunteers and contractors, will:

- work towards achieving the aims and purposes of the organisation
- be responsible for relevant administration of programs and activities in their area
- maintain a duty of care towards others involved in these programs and activities
- take all reasonable steps to protect children from abuse and harm
- establish and maintain a child-safe environment for children and young people in the course of their work
- be fair, considerate and honest in their dealings with others
- work with children in an open and transparent way
- treat children and young people with respect and value their ideas and opinions
- encourage children to participate in matters important to them
- act as positive role models in their conduct with children and young people and model appropriate adult behaviour
- listen to children and respond to their needs appropriately
- be professional in their actions
- maintain strict impartiality
- comply with specific organisational guidelines on physical contact with children
- respect the privacy of children and their families, teachers and carers, and disclose information about them only to people who have a need to know

- operate within the policies and guidelines of the Shire, including adhering to the Child Safe Policy, at all times
- report any allegations of child abuse
- contact the police if a child is at immediate risk of abuse (phone 000).

Staff, volunteers and contractors shall work to prevent discrimination and actively promote the participation and inclusion of all children, recognising in particular:

- Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children and young people
- children from culturally and/or linguistically diverse backgrounds
- children with a disability
- children in and out of home care and the youth justice system.

Staff, volunteers and contractors shall not:

- shame, humiliate, oppress, belittle or degrade children or young people
- unlawfully discriminate against any child or young person, including because of age, gender, race, culture, vulnerability, sexuality, ethnicity or disability
- seek to use children in any way to meet the needs of adults
- ignore or disregard any concerns, suspicions or disclosure of child abuse or harm
- engage in any activity with a child or young person that is likely to physically or emotionally harm them
- initiate unnecessary physical contact with a child or young person, or do things of a personal nature for them that they can do for themselves; e.g. toileting or changing clothes
- be alone with a child or young person unnecessarily and for more than a very short time
- develop a “special” relationship with a specific child or young person for their own needs
- show favouritism through the provision of gifts or inappropriate attention
- arrange contact, including online contact, with children or young people outside of the organisation’s programs and activities
- have unauthorised contact with children and young people in person, online or by phone
- photograph or video a child or young person without the consent of the child and their parents or guardians
- work with children or young people while under the influence of alcohol or illegal drugs
- engage in open discussions of a mature or adult nature in the presence of children
- use inappropriate language or behaviour, including discriminatory or oppressive language or behaviour, in the presence of children
- do anything in contravention of the organisation’s policies, procedures or this Code of Conduct.

Consequences of Breaching the Child Safety Code of Conduct

A breach of the Child Safety Code of Conduct by a Shire a staff member, contractor or volunteer may result in disciplinary action being taken against them in accordance with the Shire policy, including and up to termination of employment or cessation of engagement with the organisation.

In addition to any action that may be taken according to the Shire’s disciplinary policy, matters that indicate potential criminal conduct may be reported to police for investigation.

Related Documents (Legislation/Local Law/Policy/Procedure/Delegation)

Parliamentary Commissioner Amendment (Reportable Conduct) Act 2022

State Records Act 2000

Children and Community Services Act 2004

Child Safety Protection Policy (Shire of Koorda)

Child Safety Protection Procedures (Shire of Koorda)

Review

Every two years, and following every reportable incident, a review shall be conducted to assess whether the Shire's Child Safety Code of Conduct requires modification.

Next Due: April 2026

Date	Council Resolution	Description of review/amendment
22/05/2023	RES: 050524	Adoption of Code of Conduct

