



CHILD SAFE FRAMEWORK

JUNE 2022

Introduction

The National Principles for Child Safe Organisations commissioned by the Australian Government outlines ten elements that are fundamental to making an organisation safe for children and young people. These principles provide a consistent approach to creating child safe environments and culture within organisations.

Currently, the National Principles are not mandatory. However, organisations that implement them will be demonstrating their leadership and commitment to child safety and wellbeing.

The New South Wales (NSW) Government accepted the National Principles and subsequently the NSW Office of the Children’s Guardian developed the NSW Child Safe Standards and has responsibility for oversight of the Child Safe Standards (Standards).

The primary aim of the Standards is to improve the way organisations, including Local Government, provide services for children and young people. The Standards are additional to existing Child Protection requirements in NSW.



Statement of Commitment

At Willoughby City Council, we are committed to being a Child and Youth Safe organisation. Our objective is to have children and young people that participate in our programs and activities; access our facilities and spaces, have safe and happy experiences.

We support and respect our children, young people, their families and workers.

We have a zero tolerance stance to child abuse; any allegations and safety concerns will be treated seriously and consistently with our policies and procedures.

We are committed to the safety of all children and young people; and will provide a safe environment for children and young people of all ages, cultural and linguistic backgrounds and all abilities.



Child Safe Framework



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CHILD SAFE STANDARD 1	INDICATORS THAT THIS STANDARD IS UPHELD
<p>Child Safety is embedded in institutional leadership, governance and culture.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Council can demonstrate that there are publicly available and current documents such as a child safety and wellbeing policy, practice guidance; information sharing protocols; staff and volunteer codes of conduct and risk management strategies. • Council makes a public commitment to child/youth safety, promoting a child/youth safe culture across the organisation. • The organisational leadership models and regularly reinforces attitudes and behaviours that value children and young people and a commitment to child safety, child wellbeing and cultural safety. This commitment is clear in policies and practice, performance agreements, with staff and volunteer review processes in place. • Staff, volunteers, children and young people have a sound knowledge of children’s rights, including their rights to feel safe and be heard, and the accountabilities that accompany these rights. • Policies focus on how to build and maintain child/youth safe environments that are inclusive, transparent and promote the participation of children. • Child safety is a regular item for discussion at governance meetings and staff meetings. • Risk management strategies are developed and implemented to identify, prevent and lower the risk of harm to children/young people. • The staff Code of Conduct sets clear behavioural expectations and standards for staff when interacting with children/young people.

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CHILD SAFE STANDARD 2	INDICATORS THAT THIS STANDARD IS UPHELD
Children participate in decisions affecting them and are taken seriously.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Staff and volunteers have a good understanding of children and young people’s developmental needs.• Children and young people participate in decision-making in the organisation, including in relation to safety issues and risk identification.• Council has programs and resources to educate children and young people on their rights including their right to safety and right to be listened to.• Children and young people are informed regarding their rights and responsibilities in age appropriate and culturally appropriate ways.• Children and young people are supported to express their views, through participation in the decision making process.• Positive role modelling is actively encouraged with staff in the child and youth environments.• Staff are trained to observe for signs of harms and facilitate child/youth friendly ways to communicate with children and young people regarding concerns of risk of harm.• The Child Safe Policy is updated; and reviewed regularly.• Child safe information (including the Child Safe Policy and Code of Conduct) is provided to all staff.

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CHILD SAFE STANDARD 3	INDICATORS THAT THIS STANDARD IS UPHELD
<p>Families and communities are informed and involved.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Council is responsive to the needs of families and communities. • Council has clear and accessible information for families and communities regarding our operations and policies, including a child safety and wellbeing policy, Code of Conduct, record keeping practices and complaints and investigation processes. • Council seeks feedback from families and communities on issues of child safety and wellbeing and incorporates this into our policies and practices. • Council engages with and supports approaches that build cultural safety through partnerships and respectful relationships. • Clear and accessible information for families and communities regarding operations and policies, are available on Council’s website. • Children, young people and families are provided with opportunities to provide feedback on programs, activities and strategies. • Open communication is encouraged with children, young people and families in our community settings/facilities. • Children, young people and families are informed on operations and governance processes, enabling the opportunity for open and two-way feedback.

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CHILD SAFE STANDARD 4	INDICATORS THAT THIS STANDARD IS UPHELD
<p>Equity is upheld, and diverse needs are taken into account.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • We value and respect children and young people’s identities and cultures; and understand their developmental needs and their strengths and capacities. • Council responds appropriately and in a timely manner to children and young people with diverse circumstances; and responds effectively to those with additional vulnerabilities. • Council ensures that children, young people and families have access to information, support and complaint processes. • Council ensures that staff are able to respond to children, young people and families from Culturally and Linguistically Diverse backgrounds.
CHILD SAFE STANDARD 5	INDICATORS THAT THIS STANDARD IS UPHELD
<p>People working with children are suitable and supported.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Council ensures that staff undertaking recruitment and selection processes are appropriately trained and that they adhere to Council’s Recruitment and Selection Guidelines and processes. • Council ensures that our advertising and recruitment processes emphasise child safety. • Council ensures that staff that are to be considered for Child Related Employment undertake Working with Children Checks prior to being offered employment. • Council ensures that all staff receive an induction that includes information on child safety responsibilities (including reporting obligations).

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CHILD SAFE STANDARD 6	INDICATORS THAT THIS STANDARD IS UPHELD
<p>Processes to respond to complaints of child sexual abuse are child focused.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Council ensures that any complaints or allegations involving a child or young person made against staff, elected members, contractors and sub-contractors, work experience participants, volunteers, students on placement, facility hirers and leasees will be handled in accordance with the relevant legislation. • Children, young people and families are provided with information on our complaints handling system. • Children, young people and families are reassured that complaints are taken seriously and that they will be responded to. • Complaints are confidential and council meet its obligations in relations to reporting, privacy and employment obligations. • Policy and operational requirements are reviewed annually for responding and reporting suspected child abuse.
CHILD SAFE STANDARD 7	INDICATORS THAT THIS STANDARD IS UPHELD
<p>Staff are equipped with the knowledge, skills and awareness to keep children safe through continual education and training.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Staff have access to training and professional development opportunities to increase their knowledge and understanding on strategies that keep children in our community safe. • Staff are provided with training, to enable them to identify indicators for children at risk of harm. • Staff are aware of Council's Code of Conduct, including our child safe practices. • Staff are supported to develop practical skills in protecting children and responding to disclosures.

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CHILD SAFE STANDARD 8	INDICATORS THAT THIS STANDARD IS UPHELD
<p>Physical and online environments minimise the opportunity for abuse.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Council provides safe and supportive environments for children and young people. • Children and young people are supported to identify and report unsafe situations and inappropriate behaviours to staff. • Staff promote safe interactions for children and young people in their changing day-to-day interactions within Council settings and services. • Risk management strategies are developed for children and young people utilising technology in our services and facilities. • Staff utilise the online environment in accordance with Council’s Code of Conduct.
CHILD SAFE STANDARD 9	INDICATORS THAT THIS STANDARD IS UPHELD
<p>Implementation of the Child Safe Standards is continuously reviewed and improved.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Child Safe Standards are reviewed on an annual basis across the whole organisation. • Policies and Procedures reviews are undertaken on a regular basis.

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CHILD SAFE STANDARD 10	INDICATORS THAT THIS STANDARD IS UPHELD
<p>Policies and procedures document how the institution is child safe.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• The child safe standards support existing child safety requirements for individuals and organisations such as the Working with Children Check, the Reportable Conduct Scheme and requirements to report information to police and to the Department of Communities and Justice.• Council regularly reviews existing operational Policies and Procedures, to promote child safety across the organisation.• Policies and procedures are accessible and easy to understand.• Staff undertake training as required, to understand and implement the policies and procedures.• Staff are supported to understand, model and champion compliance with organisational policies and procedures.• A Child Safe Policy and Statement of Commitment to Child Safety is updated/developed approved by Council leaders.• Child safe information is provided to, and understood by, staff, children and parents - for example, through promotion on the Council's website, prominent locations, forums and induction activities. Council maintains a clear process on how to raise a Child Safety concern or make a complaint.



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