

THE CITY OF
GREATER GEELONG

CHILD SAFE STANDARDS MANAGEMENT POLICY

VERSION: 2

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Responsible Officer: Manager, Policy and Workplace
Relations

Authorising Officer: Director, Strategy, People &
Performance

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Introduction

PURPOSE

All people working under the auspice of The City of Greater Geelong (**The City**) are responsible for the care and protection of children and young people (being anybody under the age of 18), which includes the reporting of any concerns of child abuse. The Child Safe Standards Management Policy has been created to ensure all working for The City have a shared understanding of child safety and of their responsibilities in keeping children and young people safe from abuse.

SCOPE

This policy applies to all employees, volunteers, service providers, contractors, representatives, agents and others who act on behalf of The City. Councillors are not bound by the contents of this policy however are required to abide by the Councillor Code of Conduct which includes a commitment to child safety.

BACKGROUND

On 1 July 2022 eleven compulsory Victorian Child Safe Standards (**The Standards**) came into effect for all people working under the auspice of the City of Greater Geelong that provide services or facilities for children and young people or who employ children and young people. The Standards provide a framework for The City to develop policies, procedures and strategies that embed a culture of child safety in everyday thinking and practice and reduce the risk of child abuse being perpetrated by a person within The City's scope.

Definitions

The following definitions apply to this Policy:

Term	Definition
Act	The <i>Child Wellbeing and Safety Act 2005</i> (as amended from time to time).
Child or Children	A person (or persons) under 18 years of age.
Child Abuse	Has the same meaning given to that term in the Act.
Child Safe Standards Code of Conduct	The City's Child Safe Standards Code of Conduct which outlines the standards of behaviour required of all City Staff in relation with the safety and wellbeing of all Children.
Child Safe Advisor	The Child Safe Advisor appointed by the City as the person responsible for managing Reportable Conduct reports.
Child Safe Standards	The eleven compulsory standards made under section 17 of the Act to prevent child abuse and harm from happening in an organisation.
City Staff	Includes employees, volunteers and contractors.
Disability	Has the same meaning given to that term in the <i>Disability Act 2006</i> .
Incident	An occurrence of Child Abuse or harm to a Child or a breach of the Child Safe Standards Code of Conduct.
Reportable Conduct	Has the same meaning given to that term in the Act;
Report Conduct Scheme	The scheme set out in Part 5A of the Act;

Policy

COMMITMENT STATEMENT

The City is committed to being a child safe organisation and has zero tolerance for child abuse. We recognise our legal and moral responsibilities in keeping all children and young people safe from harm and promoting their best interests. We have specific policies, procedures and training in place to support City workers to achieve these commitments.

The Child Safe Standards, and how the City will achieve compliance with each of them, is as follows:

Child Safe Standard	Compliance Statement
Child Safe Standard 1 - <i>Establishing a culturally safe environment in which the diverse and unique identities and experiences of Aboriginal children and young people are respected and valued</i>	The City will take steps to create a culturally safe environment for Aboriginal Children. The City will meet this requirement regardless of whether or not we know that there are Aboriginal Children currently using our services or facilities.
Child Safe Standard 2 - <i>Child safety and wellbeing is embedded in the City's leadership, governance and culture</i>	The City places greater emphasis on information sharing, record keeping and governance arrangements to ensure the creation of a Child-safe culture at all levels at the City. The management of risks to Children will be embedded in our leadership, governance, practice and culture.
Child Safe Standard 3 - <i>Children and young people are empowered about their rights, participate in decisions affecting them and are taken seriously</i>	The City will have strategies in place to empower Children and promote their participation including (but not limited to): <ul style="list-style-type: none">• informing Children about their rights;• recognising the importance of friendships and encouraging support from peers to help Children feel safe and connected;• offering Children sexual abuse prevention programs where relevant; and• equipping the City's Staff to identify the signs of harm to children.
Child Safe Standard 4 – <i>Families and communities are informed, and involved in promoting child safety and wellbeing</i>	The City will inform and involve families and communities in complying with the Child Safe Standards. The City will ensure that it: <ul style="list-style-type: none">• seeks input from families and communities in decisions impacting Children;• involves families and communities in the development and review of our Child safe policies, procedures and practices;• communicates effectively with families and communities about how to raise Child safety concerns and how it operates; and

Child Safe Standard	Compliance Statement
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • take into account the diversity of families and act to reduce barriers to inclusion.
<p>Child Safe Standard 5 – Equity is upheld and diverse needs respected in policy and practice</p>	<p>The City will recognise and respond to diversity and understands that some Children are more vulnerable to abuse than others. To date, this has been expressed through three principles relating to the cultural safety of Aboriginal children, culturally and/or linguistically diverse children and the safety of children with disability. The City will focus on understanding Children’s diverse circumstances, and give attention to the needs of non-binary and gender diverse Children. This commitment links to the City obligations to establish a culturally safe environment in which the diverse and unique identities and experiences of Aboriginal children and young people are respected and valued (Child Safe Standard 1).</p>
<p>Child Safe Standard 6 – People working with children and young people are suitable and supported to reflect child safety and wellbeing values in practice</p>	<p>The City will have Child safety policies and procedures for recruitment and selection processes, screening, supervision, training, development, and performance monitoring of City Staff. City Staff will be made aware of their reporting procedures for Child safety issues. The City will inform City Staff about the City’s record keeping processes in relation to Child safety and wellbeing and information sharing and reporting obligations.</p>
<p>Child Safe Standard 7 – Processes for complaints and concerns are Child-focused</p>	<p>The City will have complaints processes that are Child-focused and can be understood by Children and their families, and City Staff. The City recognises its obligations to take complaints seriously and respond to them promptly and thoroughly, to co-operate with law enforcement, and to meet reporting, privacy and employment law obligations.</p>
<p>Child Safe Standard 8 – Staff and volunteers are equipped with the knowledge, skills and awareness to keep Children safe through ongoing education and training</p>	<p>The City recognises its obligations under the Child Safe Standards City to provide training and information for City Staff on building safe environments for Children . The City will train and support City Staff through ongoing education and training to recognise indicators of harm, and to respond effectively to child safety issues and concerns.</p>
<p>Child Safe Standard 9 – Physical and online environments promote safety and wellbeing while minimising the opportunity for children and young people to be harmed</p>	<p>The City will be mindful of the risks associated with both physical and online environments and to adopt measures to remove risks of Child Abuse. The City understands its obligations to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • consider online environments in addition to physical environments; • identify and mitigate risks in these environments without compromising a Child’s right to privacy, access to information, social connections and learning opportunities; • promote Child safety and wellbeing as well as minimising the opportunity for Children to be harmed; and • have policies and systems in place that ensure the safety of Children if the City contracts facilities and services from third parties.

Child Safe Standard	Compliance Statement
<p>Child Safe Standard 10 – <i>Implementation of the Child Safe Standards is regularly reviewed and improved</i></p>	<p>Review and continuous improvement are part of the City’s response to compliance with the Child Safe Standards. The City will continue to meet its obligations to consistently review and improve the embedding of the Child Safe Standards through:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • analysing complaints, concerns and safety Incidents to identify causes and systemic failures to inform continuous improvement; and • report on findings of relevant reviews of Child safe practices to City staff, the community, Children and their families.
<p>Child Safe Standard 11 – <i>Policies and procedures document how the organisation is safe for children and young people</i></p>	<p>The City acknowledges that the preparation of comprehensive policies and procedures to support implementation of Child safe practices is mandated by the Child Safe Standards. The City understands its obligations to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • ensure policies and procedures are easy to understand; • use stakeholder consultation and best practice models to inform the development of policies and procedures; and • ensure The City’s leaders champion and model compliance with policies and procedures.

WHAT PERSONS COVERED BY THIS POLICY MUST DO IF THEY HAVE A REASONABLE BELIEF THAT CHILD ABUSE HAS TAKEN PLACE:

City Staff must promptly report all suspected or disclosed Child Abuse or harm to their manager, people leader or the City’s Child Safe Advisor.

Managers and people leaders who receive a report of suspected or disclosed Child Abuse must refer the report to the City’s Child Safe Advisor.

The City’s Child Safe Advisor, in collaboration with other child safety experts, will determine if the report is Reportable Conduct.

If the suspected or disclosed Child Abuse report is considered to be Reportable Conduct, the City will report the Reportable Conduct to The Commission For Children and Young People (**CCYP**).

[NOTE: WHAT IS THE REPORTABLE CONDUCT SCHEME:

The Reportable Conduct Scheme is focussed on worker and volunteer conduct and how organisations investigate and respond to suspected child abuse. The Scheme aims to improve organisational responses to suspected child abuse and to facilitate the identification of individuals who pose a risk of harm to children, but do not have a criminal record. The Scheme applies to all organisations that are required to meet the Child Safe Standards and sets out specific obligations that The City must follow.

The Child Safe Standards and the Reportable Conduct Scheme create distinct sets of responsibilities for The City but have been designed to complement one another. Together, Child Safe Standards and the Reportable Conduct Scheme strengthen the capacity of The City to help prevent and respond properly to allegations of child abuse.]

Implementation of this Policy

RELEVANT CONTACT OFFICER

The Child Safe Advisor working in the Policy and Workplace Relations Team.

MONITORING AND REPORTING

Policy & Workplace Relations will monitor and be responsible for this policy.

ADVICE AND ASSISTANCE

Policy & Workplace Relations manages the provision of advice to The City regarding this policy.

RECORDS

The City must retain records associated with this policy and its implementation for at least the period shown below.

Record	Retention / Disposal Authority	Retention Period	Location
Investigation Records and Correspondence	Policy & Workplace Relations	Indefinite	ReX

REVIEW

The City should review and, if necessary, amend this policy within two years of the approval date.

References

Legislation

Child Wellbeing and Safety Act 2005 (Vic)

Other Documents

The City's Child Safe Standards Code of Conduct