

CHILD SAFE POLICY

STRATEGIC POLICY

Responsible Department: Office of the General Manager

Responsible Section: Governance & Corporate Performance

Responsible Officer: Department Leader – Governance & Corporate Performance

Objective

To outline how Cabonne Council will meet its obligations and commitment to safeguard children's wellbeing and rights to reach their full potential, by adopting strategies and acting to put the interests of children first to keep them safe from harm.

Cabonne Council will achieve this by embedding the NSW Child Safe Standards into its organisational leadership, governance and culture, and practices across the Shire.

Policy

Statement of Commitment to Child Safety

Cabonne Council is committed to safeguarding all children's sense of wellbeing and rights to reach their full potential and to keeping children safe from harm and abuse.

We work to empower children to find their own voices and understand that children play an important role in creating vibrant, positive communities, and are our communities of the future.

We recognise that disrespect, harm and abuse can have long-lasting effects on healthy development, and that these can lead to serious lifelong consequences. Cabonne Council has zero tolerance of child abuse in our organisation.

We are working to embed the NSW Child Safe Standards into our organisational leadership, governance, and culture and by adopting strategies and acting to put the interests of children first and keep them safe from harm.

At Cabonne Council:

- We want children to be safe, resilient, happy and empowered.

- We want children to be connected to each other, community and culture.
- We respect and uphold children's right to privacy.
- We support and respect children of all ages, cultures, religions, education levels, children of diverse sexualities and genders and children with disability.
- We are committed to the cultural safety of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children, the cultural safety of children from culturally and/or linguistically diverse backgrounds, and to providing a safe environment for children with a disability.
- All allegations and safety concerns are treated seriously and consistently.
- We have legal obligations to contact authorities when we are worried about a child's safety.
- We are committed to preventing child abuse by identifying risks early and removing and reducing these risks.
- We are implementing robust human resources and recruitment processes to reduce the risk of child abuse.
- We work closely with our contracted service providers to ensure the services they are delivering on our behalf are child safe.
- We are committed to regularly training and educating our employees, volunteers, senior leaders and councillors on child abuse risks and obligations to prevent abuse and respond appropriately.
- We are committed to continually improving our child safeguarding policy and processes.

Responsibilities

Council:

It is the responsibility of the Council to publicly commit to child safety and embedding a child safe culture.

General Manager:

It is the responsibility of the General Manager to:

- a) Ensure appropriate systems, processes, policies, and procedures are in place to prevent, detect and respond to abuse of children and young people.
- b) To notify the NSW Office of the Children's Guardian when an allegation (of which they are aware) of child abuse is made against an employee, councillor, volunteer or contractor.

Deputy General Managers, Department Leaders, Coordinators:

It is the responsibility of the Deputy General Manager's, Department Leaders, and Coordinators to:

- a) Promote and ensure compliance with child protection legislation, policies and associated procedures.

- b) Report any allegations of child abuse to the General Manager, Leader – Safety, People & Culture, Department Leader – Community Services or Department Leader – Governance & Corporate Performance.
- c) Respect the rights of the parties involved.

Employees required to hold a NSW Working with Children Check:

It is the responsibility of Council employees who work directly with or supervise children or engage in child-related work to hold a NSW Working with Children Check. The employees must:

- a) Hold and maintain a current NSW Working with Children Check (and that it is renewed prior to expiry)
- b) Update their contact details with the NSW Office of the Children's Guardian within three (3) months of moving or changing their name.
- c) Immediately notify their Department Leader/Coordinator and the Safety, People and Culture department if they become a disqualified/barred person, or if the status of their NSW Working with Children Check changes.

Employees:

It is the responsibility of all Council employees to:

- a) Understand and comply with child protection legislation, policies and associated procedures.
- b) Notify their Department Leader/Coordinator and/or the Safety, People and Culture department immediately if they witness a child abuse incident, or someone discloses a situation of child abuse to them.

Safety, People and Culture Department:

It is the responsibility of the Safety, People and Culture department to:

- a) Review and update Council's child safe policies, procedures and other associated documentation to ensure compliance with relevant legislation and regulations.
- b) Administer processes to ensure all staff undertaking child-related work have a current NSW Working with Children Check application and clearance (as per list of positions endorsed by the Executive Leadership Team).
- c) Ensure systems and processes are being complied with for detecting and responding to reports of child safety concerns.
- d) Provide advice, training and support to all Council employees.
- e) Ensure recruitment, screening and selection processes are conducted in accordance with relevant child safety and protection legislation and Council's policies and procedures.
- f) Ensure accurate records are stored and maintained in line with relevant child safety and protection legislation.

Child Safe Contact Officers:

Council's Leader – Safety, People & Culture and Department Leader – Governance & Corporate Performance and Department Leader – Community Services are appointed as Council's Child Safe Contact Officer's and are responsible for:

- Providing ongoing support and response to concerns about safety, welfare and well-being of children and young people while engaged in services, programs or events delivered by Council.
- To notify the NSW Office of the Children's Guardian when an allegation (of which they are aware) of child abuse is made against a Council employee or contracted service provider.

Definitions

Term	Definition
Allegation	Includes an allegation that involves behaviour that is reportable conduct, as well as behaviour that is exempt from notification to the NSW Office of the Children's Guardian, but which is required to be investigated by Council.
Child	A person who is under the age of 16 years.
Child Abuse	Child abuse or neglect shall mean the following: <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Physical abuse• Lack of supervision• Lack of physical shelter/environment• Inadequate medical care• Inadequate access to education• Sexual abuse• Psychological harm• Relinquishing care• Parent/carer substance abuse• Parent/carer mental health• Parent/carer domestic violence• Risks to an unborn child.
Child-Related Work	Work (including voluntary work) is: <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Providing services for under 18 year olds.• Where the work normally involves being face-to-face with children or young people;• Where contact with children is more than incidental to the work.

Child Safe Standards	<p>Standard 1: Child safety is embedded in organisations leadership, governance and culture;</p> <p>Standard 2: Children participate in decisions affecting them and are taken seriously;</p> <p>Standard 3: Families and communities are informed and involved;</p> <p>Standard 4: Equity is upheld, and diverse needs are taken into account;</p> <p>Standard 5: People working with children are suitable and supported;</p> <p>Standard 6: Processes to respond to complaints of child abuse are child focused;</p> <p>Standard 7: Staff are equipped with the knowledge, skills and awareness to keep children safe through continual education and training;</p> <p>Standard 8: Physical and online environments minimise the opportunity for abuse to occur;</p> <p>Standard 9: Implementation of the Child Safe Standards is continuously reviewed and improved;</p> <p>Standard 10: Policies and procedures document how the organisation is child safe.</p>
Contracted Service Provider	An organisation or entity contracted to provide goods, services or programs involving child-related work on behalf of, or in conjunction with, Council where that entity has been engaged as a result of informal or formal procurement processes such as a Request for Quotations (RFQs), Request for Tenders (RFTs), Expressions of Interests (EOIs), and one-off or standing purchase orders.
Council Employee	<p>Any person engaged in work for Council in any of the following capacities:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Full time, part time, casual, temporary, fixed-term employees; • Apprentices and trainees; • Labour hire employees; • Work experience students; • Volunteers; and • For the purposes of this policy, Councillors.

References – Legislative

- *Children’s Guardian Act 2019*
- *Child Protection (Working with Children) Act 2012*
- *Child Protection (Working with Children) Regulation 2013*
- *Children and Young Persons (Care and Protection) Act 1998*
- *Children and Young Persons (Care and Protection) Regulation 2012*
- *Children and Young Persons (Care and Protection) (Child Employment) Regulation 2015*
- *Crimes Act 1900*

- *Disability Inclusion Act 2014*
- *Anti-Discrimination Act 2012*
- *United Nations Convention of the Rights of the Child*
- *NSW Child Safe Standards*

References – Related Documents

- Cabonne Council – Code of Conduct Policy
- Cabonne Council – Child Safe Code of Conduct Policy
- Cabonne Council – Child Safe Policy (Operational)
- Cabonne Council – Child Safe Reporting Policy (Operational)
- Cabonne Council - Child Safe Guidelines
- Cabonne Council – Complaints and Allegations Records Form
- WWCC position requirements
- OCG – Reporting Obligations and Processes
- OCG – Child Safe Recruitment and the Working with Children Check Handbook
- OCG – A Guide to the Child Safe Standards
- OCG – Risk Management and the Child Safe Standards Part 1: Responding to Risk
- OCG – Risk Management and the Child Safe Standards Part 2: Identifying Risk

History

Minute Number	Summary of Changes	New Version Date
23/10/09	New Policy to comply with NSW Child Safe Standards	24/10/2023