

MANAGEMENT PROCEDURE

Child Safe Standards Management Procedure	Document No:	MPR315.3.1
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1 PURPOSE

The purpose of this procedure is to inform all employees, volunteers and contractors engaged by the City of Greater Geelong (Council) as to their responsibilities and requirements to protect the safety and wellbeing of children and young people.

These procedures are supported by relevant legislation and reflect the requirements of the Victorian Child Safe Standards.

These procedures address Council requirements and staff responsibilities in relation to the following:

- Prevention of child abuse
- Detection/identification of suspected abuse
- Reporting requirements for suspected incidences of child abuse
- Investigation processes
- Privacy and confidentiality

Any staff member, volunteer or contractor who forms a reasonable belief that a sexual offence has been committed in Victoria by an adult against a child under 16 must disclose that information to police. Failure to disclose the information to police is a criminal offence, except in limited circumstances. The offence applies to all adults in Victoria, not just professionals who work with children.

2 SCOPE

This procedure applies to all employees and volunteers of the City of Greater Geelong and also applies to service providers, contractors, representatives and agents who act on behalf of the City of Greater Geelong.

3 REFERENCES.

- Contract Letter of Offer
- Local Government Act 1989
- Harassment & Bullying Prevention Policy
- Email and Internet Access Policy
- Unauthorised use of Software Policy
- Organisational Computer Usage Policy
- Protected Disclosure Act 2012

- Protected Disclosure Procedures
- Disciplinary Policy
- Telecommunications Policy
- Managing Diversity Policy
- OH&S Policy
- Performance Management Policy
- Working with children check guideline
- Charter of Human Rights and Responsibilities Act 2006
- Municipal Early Years Plan
- Municipal Youth Strategy
- Municipal Public Health and Wellbeing Strategy
- Community Safety Plan
- Karreenga Aboriginal Action Plan
- Disability Action Plan
- Swim, Sport and Leisure Services Policy
- Working With Children Act 2005
- Children, Youth and Families Act 2005
- Sex Offenders Register Act 2004
- Commission for Children and Young People Act 2012
- Child Safety and Wellbeing Act 2005
- Child Safe Standards Policy
- Code of Conduct

4 DEFINITIONS

- **Child / Young Person** – means every human being under eighteen (18) years of age.
- **Child Related Work** – has a specific definition as per the Working With Children legislation. ‘Work’ is child-related if contact with children is part of the duties (not incidental to the duties) and is within one or more of the occupational fields defined in the Act.
- **Child Abuse** – is an act by a parent, caregiver, other adult or older adolescent that endangers a child or young person’s physical or emotional development. Abuse can be a single incident, but often takes place over time. Abuse can happen in several different ways, and can be physical, emotional and /or sexual.

Refer to the definitions of Neglect, Emotional or Psychological abuse, or Sexual abuse in this policy for more information.

- **Child Safe Standards** – refer to a set of seven compulsory standards introduced by the Victorian government under the Child Safety and Wellbeing Act 2005 to protect children from harm. The standards are compulsory for all organisations providing services to children, and aim to drive cultural change in organisations so that protecting children from abuse is embedded in the everyday thinking and practices of leaders, staff and volunteers.
- **Contractor** – any external agent engaged by CoGG to provide goods or services to CoGG.
- **Code of Conduct** - outlines the standards of behaviour expected of people employed by or volunteering with the City of Greater Geelong.
- **Emotional and Psychological Abuse** – occurs when a child does not receive the appropriate love, affection or attention they need for healthy, emotional, psychological and social development. Such abuse may involve repeated threats to a child, constant criticism, teasing, ignoring, threatening, yelling, scape goating, ridicule and rejections or continual coldness. These behaviours continue to an extent that it results in significant damage to the child's physical, intellectual or emotional wellbeing and development.
- **Grooming offence** – a term used to describe what happens when a perpetrator of abuse builds a relationship and rapport with a child with a view to abusing them at some stage in the future. Grooming can also be used to describe the process that a perpetrator goes through when building rapport and a relationship with guardians of children, or people with the responsibility for the care of children and young people. Grooming can occur over any length of time, in a variety of settings where a relationship can be formed, such as leisure facilities, childcare, music, religious and sporting activities, internet chat rooms and social media or by SMS.

The grooming offence applies where a person over 18 years of age communicates, by words or conduct, online or face-to-face, with a child under the age of 16 years or with a person who has care supervision or authority for a child, with the intention of later sexual activity with a child.

- **Neglect** – is the persistent failure or deliberate denial to provide a child with the basic necessities of life. Such neglect includes failure to provide adequate food, clothing, shelter, supervision, water, medical attention or supervision for the appropriate physical or psychological development.
- **Physical Abuse** – occurs when a person subjects another to non-accidental acts of physical aggression. The abuse may inflict injury intentionally or inadvertently as a result of physical punishment or aggressive treatment. Physically abusive behaviour includes (but not limited to) shoving, hitting, slapping, shaking, throwing, punching, biting, burning and kicking. It also includes the provision of harmful substances such as drugs, alcohol or poison.
- **Reasonable** – In determining whether conduct or a conduct expectation is reasonable, all of the circumstances of the situation will be taken into account, including the City of Greater Geelong Values. Determining reasonableness

requires consideration of how a reasonable person would act in the same or similar situation.

- **Child Safe Culture** – the ongoing and genuine provision of organisational beliefs and processes that support City of Greater Geelong as a workplace and community facility where all people are able to engage freely without the threat or potential threat of physical or psychological harm.
- **Sexual Abuse** – a child is sexually abused when any person uses their authority over the child to involve the child in sexual activity. Child sexual abuse involves a wide range of sexual activity including fondling genitals, masturbation, vaginal or anal penetration by a finger, penis or any other object, voyeurism and exhibitionism.
- **Failure to protect offence** – This offence applies to people within organisations who knew of a risk of child sexual abuse by someone in the organisation and had the authority to reduce or remove the risk, but did not act to protect the child.
- **Failure to disclose offence** – Any adult who forms a reasonable belief that a sexual offence has been committed by an adult against a child under 16 years of age has an obligation to report that information to police. Failure to disclose the information to police is a criminal offence.
- **Incident** – any disclosure of abuse or harm to a child or young person; allegation, suspicion or observation of abuse or harm to a child or young person; or a breach of the Code of Conduct.

5 PROCEDURE DESCRIPTION

The City of Greater Geelong is committed to a child safe organisation and to promoting the child safe standards in all areas of work and volunteerism within the council.

This procedure outlines undertakings by the City of Greater Geelong in protecting and promoting the safety and well being of children and young people.

Individual business units within the City may have additional mandatory and/or operational requirements to ensure a child safe organisation.

6 PROCEDURES

6.1 Authorities & Responsibilities

This procedure applies to all staff, all volunteers and all contractors engaged by or working for the City of Greater Geelong.

All employees, volunteers and contractors are responsible under Victorian Legislation to report if they witness an incident, receive a disclosure or form a reasonable belief that a child has, or is at risk of being abused.

A reasonable belief can be based on observation, discussion, viewed or written material. There is no expectation or requirement for the individual making the report to undertake any further investigation.

Senior Management, Managers, Co-ordinators and front line managers:

The Child Safe Standards have particular responsibilities ascribed to 'persons in authority'. A person in authority is someone who, by reason of their position within a relevant organisation, has the power or responsibility to reduce or remove a substantial risk that a child under the age of 16 years, who is under their care, supervision or authority, may become the victim of sexual abuse committed by an adult associated with the organisation. People in authority usually have the ability to make management level decisions, such as assigning and directing work, ensuring compliance with the organisation's policies, and other operational arrangements.

- Have a clear understanding of the legislation in order to be able to provide any direction/advice if questioned.
- Provide resources to ensure all employees and volunteers are trained and understand all responsibilities for child safe.
- Facilitate child safe risk assessments of all work places and all work activities to identify any possible issues and introduce measures to reduce or eliminate the issues.
- Ensure the requirements of child safe standards and child abuse prevention is included within relevant risk management and operational business plans.

6.2 Code of Conduct

All City of Greater Geelong employees, volunteers, and contractors are responsible for promoting the safety and wellbeing of children and young people by:

- adhering to our Child Safe Policy
- taking all reasonable steps to protect children and young people from abuse, including those directly in our care and those we come into contact with.
- immediately reporting any concerns or reasonable suspicions to their supervisor or other person in authority, that a child may have been or is at risk of abuse.
- treating everyone with respect, including listening to and valuing their ideas and opinions
- welcoming all children and their families and carers and being inclusive
- respecting cultural, religious and political differences and acting in a culturally sensitive way
- modelling appropriate adult behaviour
- listening to children and responding to them appropriately
- reporting and acting on any breaches of these guidelines, complaints or concerns
- complying with our guidelines on physical contact with children

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not found.**

- working with children in an open and transparent way – other adults would always know about the work you are doing with children – ensure all working with children checks are current.
- respecting the privacy of children and their families/carers, and only disclosing information to people who have a need to know.

All City of Greater Geelong employees and volunteers **MUST NOT:**

- seek to use children in any way to meet the needs of adults
- ignore or disregard, suspicions or disclosures of child abuse or substantial risks to children of being abused
- use prejudice, oppressive behaviour or language with children
- engage in 'grooming' or other persuasive and/or predatory behaviours with children (either directly or online).
- engage in rough physical games with children
- discriminate on the basis of age, gender, race, culture, vulnerability or sexuality
- initiate unnecessary physical contact with children or do things of a personal nature that children can do for themselves, such as toileting or changing clothes
- develop "special" relationships with specific children or show favouritism through the provision of gifts or inappropriate attention
- exchange personal contact details such as phone number, social networking site or email addresses with children except as required in the official capacity of work within Council.
- have unauthorised contact with children and young people directly, on line or by phone except as required in the official capacity of work within Council.

6.3 Valuing diversity

We value diversity and do not tolerate any discriminatory practices. We promote the cultural safety, participation and empowerment of Aboriginal children and their families from culturally and/or linguistically diverse backgrounds and their families.

We support all children and young people who recognise as lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender and intersexual.

We welcome children with a disability and their families and act to promote their participation. We seek appropriate staff and volunteers from diverse cultural backgrounds.

6.4 Reporting a child safety concern :

- All employees and volunteers must act if they form a reasonable or substantial suspicion/ belief that a child has, or is at risk of being abused.
- If a child is at immediate risk of harm you must ensure their safety by **calling 000 for urgent medical and/or police assistance** and report the concern to your supervisor or other person in authority. A Child Safe Standards Reporting Form should be completed (either

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on-line or hand copy) and passed to People and Organisation Development for action.

- If you suspect on reasonable grounds that a child is suffering abuse or neglect staff should contact Police on 000. A Child Safe Standards Reporting Form should be completed (either on-line or hand copy) and passed to People and Organisation Development for action.
- Assistance will be given in completing the Child Safe Standards Reporting Form by your Supervisor or People and Organisation Development if required.
- Completion of the Child Safe Standards Reporting Form should be completed in an objective manner clearly stating the suspicion/reasonable belief and with as much supporting evidence or detail as possible.

Employee, volunteer or contractor reporting a concern with the action of an employee or volunteer – the report should be made immediately to People and Organisation Development. The Child Safe Standards Reporting Form should be completed as soon as possible.

A member of the public reporting a concern with the action of an employee or volunteer – the report should be made immediately to People and Organisation Development. The Child Safe Standards Reporting Form should be completed as soon as possible.

Employee, volunteer or contractor reporting a concern with the action of a contractor or lessee – contact the police immediately on 000. The Child Safe Standards Reporting Form should be completed as soon as possible.

Employee, volunteer or contractor reporting a member of public- contact the police on 000 immediately and complete a Child Safe Standards Reporting Form to be forward to People and Organisation Development.

Staff subject to mandatory reporting requirements in accordance with Section 182 (1) of the Children, Youth and Families Act 2005 (and as amended) must make a report to DHHS Child Protection as soon as practicable if they form a belief on reasonable grounds that:

- the child has suffered or is likely to suffer, significant harm as a result of physical injury and the child's parents have not protected, or are unlikely to protect, the child from harm of that type, **AND / OR**
- the child has suffered or is likely to suffer, significant harm as a result of sexual abuse and the child's parents have not protected, or are unlikely to protect, the child from harm of that type, **AND**

the reasonable belief is formed in the course of practising their profession or carrying out the duties of their office, position or employment.6.5 Responding to a report of a concern of child abuse –

- All reports of a concern will be taken seriously and will be investigated thoroughly while aiming to maintaining the

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confidentiality of all parties by People and Organisation Development.

- Natural justice will be preserved. All people and children involved in the report will be given a fair opportunity to respond to issues raised and to present their views.
- A review of the report will be undertaken as part of a continuous improvement process.
- Depending on the outcome the Police or Child Protection may be contacted to undertake a criminal investigation.
- The Council will provide Police or Child Protection with all relevant information requested as per current arrangements.

Employee, volunteer or contractor reporting a concern with the action of an employee or volunteer

The investigation will be undertaken by People and Organisation Development.

A member of the public reporting a concern with the action of an employee or volunteer

The investigation will be undertaken by People and Organisation Development.

Employee, volunteer or contractor reporting a concern with the action of a contractor or lessee

The Child Safe Standards Reporting Form is to be completed and filed with People and Organisation Development. Procurement and Leasing will review the report and meet with the organisation concerned to discuss the report and any actions required to ensure the Child Safe Standards are supported. This may include, but not limited to, cancellation of the contract or agreement.

Employee, volunteer or contractor reporting a member of public:

The Child Safe Standards Reporting Form is to be completed and filed with People and Organisation Development. No further action will be undertaken unless requested by police or child protection

6.6 Review and implementation of findings:

A report will be presented to the Executive Leadership Team every six months summarising:

- the number of reports by department
- classification of reports
- review outcomes
- action taken by department
- identifying trends or issues and proposed action

6.7 Recruitment of staff and volunteers

The City of Greater Geelong applies the best practice standards in the recruitment and screening of all staff and volunteers. Working with

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Children Checks will be required for all positions mandated by the Working With Children Act 2005 as well position designated by the Executive Leadership Team. Police Checks may also be undertaken to ensure the safety of all young people and children. Our commitment to Child Safety and our screening requirements will be included in all relevant advertising.

All Positions Descriptions will be reviewed and updated in line with any changes to the Working With Children Act 2005 as well as any updates identified by the City to ensure the safety of children in all aspects of council work and influence. All position descriptions and procurement specifications are to include a statement reflecting Council's commitment to children's safety and reference to related policy and code of conduct statements.

The interview and selection process will reflect the City's diligence in employing the best qualified and trained staff and volunteers for the role. Reference checking will specific address child safety requirements and identify any potential risks or concerns.

Working with Children Check and /or Police Checks will be required for all employees and volunteers where there is direct contact with children (routine and/or incidental) through their role and/or performance of their responsibilities – both. card. These cards are required to be presented prior to employment/work and at the yearly corporate performance appraisal.

If at any time an employee, volunteer or contractor breach the requirements to maintain the Working With Children Check card the employee, volunteers and contractors direct supervisor must be advised.

6.8 Training, development and supervision

Training and education is important to ensure that all employees and volunteers understands that child safety is everyone's responsibility including Council management of child safety throughout the organisation. All employees and volunteers need to feel confident and comfortable in identifying, assessing, and minimising risks of child abuse and to detect potential signs of child abuse.

We also support our staff and volunteers through ongoing supervision to: develop their skills to protect children from abuse; promote the cultural safety of Aboriginal children, the cultural safety of children from linguistically and/or diverse backgrounds, and the safety of children with a disability.

New employees and volunteers will be familiarised with Council's Child Safety Code of Conduct and related policies and procedures as part of the induction and 'on-boarding process, prior to their commencement. Staff and volunteers will also be supervised regularly to ensure appropriate requirements are maintained.

Compulsory refresher training will be provided annually to all staff and volunteers.

Individual departments will provide additional role specific training as required around particular operational measures and requirements.

6.9 Risk Management

We recognise the importance of a risk management approach to minimising the potential for child abuse or harm to occur and use this to inform our policy, procedures and activity planning. In addition to general occupational health and safety risks, we proactively manage risks of harm/abuse to children.

Regular review of all operations and procedures will be undertaken by each department to ensure all risks are being identified and managed.

Implementation of Child Safe Standards and measures to prevent and address issues of child abuse will be included in all Department Risk Management Plans and reviewed annually.

6.10 Support services

The Council provides a number of internal resource to support employees and volunteers. These include:

- Contact Officers
- Employee Assistance Program – EAP
- People and Organisational Development Business Partners
- Supervisors, Co-ordinators and Managers

7.0 CHILD SAFE STANDARDS AND CONTRACTORS

The Child Safe Standards applies to contractors, lessees and service providers engaged by the City of Greater Geelong. Council's Procurement Guidelines and tender specifications will specifically reference Council's commitment to children's safety and Child Safe Standards.

It is the Contractors/lessees responsibility to ensure the bona fides of their staff and any sub-contractors that they may engage, and all requirements within the Child Safe Standards are met including, but not limited to, Working With Children Checks, Police Checks and implementation of the Child Safe Standards. The City will provide guidance to contractors undertaking this process.

Contractors will be required by the Child Safety and Wellbeing Act 2005 to comply with the City's Child Safe Reporting process.

8.0 REGULAR REVIEW

This policy will be reviewed every two years and following significant incidents, if they occur.

9.0 QUALITY RECORDS

Quality Records shall be retained for at least the period shown below.

Record	Retention/Disposal Responsibility	Retention Period	Location
Child Safe Standards Reporting Form	Human Resources		
Child Safe Standards Report Register	Human Resources		
Findings Report to ELT	Human Resources		
CSS Training Register	Human resources		
CSS Contractor Compliance Register	Human Resources		
WWCC Register	Human Resources		

10.0 ATTACHMENTS

- Child Safe Reporting Form
- Child Safe Reporting Flow Chart