



# Child Safety and Wellbeing Policy

---

<b>Policy Reference No.</b>	POL/284
<b>File No.</b>	HCC20/375
<b>Strategic Objective</b>	1.3. Promote a healthy, inclusive and respectful community that fosters community pride and safety.
<b>Adopted by Council</b>	June 2024
<b>Re-Adopted</b>	
<b>Date Reviewed</b>	June 2027
<b>Responsible Officer</b>	Manager Governance
<b>Division</b>	Finance & Governance

# Child Safety and Wellbeing Policy

## 1 Policy statement

At Hume City Council (Council) safeguarding children and young people is everyone's responsibility.

Everyone has the responsibility to be alert to and respond to risks of harm to children and young people, incidents of child abuse and neglect and to create and maintain a child safe culture. Staff will do this by following appropriate safeguarding practice and behaviour as set out in policy and procedural guidelines.

Council recognises that all children and young people have the fundamental right to develop, reach their full potential, and feel safe and supported in the community in which they live. Children and young people have the right to equitable access to services and supportive environments.

## 2 Commitment to Child Safety

Council is committed to keeping children and young people safe and protected. All children and young people who access services provided by Council have the right to be safe and feel safe.

The safety, well-being and interests of children and young people are paramount, and we have a zero-tolerance approach to child abuse. Council is committed to creating and maintaining a child safe organisation where children and young people are valued and protected from harm and abuse.

Council is welcoming of all children and young people and is committed to the principles of cultural safety and inclusion for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children, children with a refugee or migrant background, those who have a disability, those who are unable to live at home and those who identify as lesbian, gay, bisexual, trans, intersex, queer, gender diverse and asexual (LGBTIQA+). Council aims to create child safe and friendly environments where children and young people feel safe and can fully participate. Council actively listens to and supports children to be strong, confident, and self-determined citizens.

## 3 Purpose

- 3.1 Council has zero-tolerance approach towards child abuse and neglect and is committed to the rights of all children and young people to feel safe and be safe when participating in Council activities, services, and events.
- 3.2 This policy outlines the responsibilities of all Council staff to keep children and young people safe.
- 3.3 This policy reflects child safe legislation and promotes best practice for working with children and young people. Council is committed to acting in the best interests of children and young people and building a culture of child safety at all levels.
- 3.4 This policy is to be read in conjunction with the Safeguarding Children and Young People Code of Conduct to ensure that staff understand their responsibility in child safety and can meet their legislative obligations.
- 3.5 In accordance with this policy, allegations of child abuse and reportable conduct will be fully investigated within the organisation's legislative scope and handled with confidentiality and discretion, whilst ensuring that the best interests of children and young people are upheld.

Policy Reference No:	POL/284	Responsible Officer:	Manager Governance
Date of Re/Adoption:	June 2024	Division	Finance & Governance
Review Date:	June 2027		
Page 2 of 17			

# Child Safety and Wellbeing Policy

## 4 Scope

The Child Safety and Wellbeing Policy (Policy) applies to all staff in paid and unpaid capacities including, Councillors, employees, casual employees, students on placement, volunteers, contractors, and workers and volunteers provided by labour hire agencies, companies or other providers (staff).

The Policy applies irrespective of whether roles have direct contact with children and young people.

This Policy extends to all Council environments and all interactions with children and young people including but not limited to, Council facilities, activities, programs and services and open spaces in both physical and online environments.

It covers children and young people up to the age of 18 years.

This Policy has been developed to support Council's compliance with the eleven [Victorian Child Safe Standards](#), established under the Child Safety and Wellbeing Act 2005.

## 5 Responsibilities

The safety of children and young people is **everyone's** responsibility. Everybody has a duty of care to keep children and young people safe, regardless of their role.

Role	Responsibility
<b>CEO</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Model and champion, a child safe culture</li> <li>As head of organisation, act in accordance with obligations of Reportable Conduct Scheme</li> </ul>
<b>Senior Leadership Team (SLT): CEO, Executive Leadership Team, Department Managers</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Model and champion, a child safe culture</li> <li>Advocate and promote the rights of children and young people, and empowering and engaging children and young people in support of this Policy.</li> <li>Ensure all staff understand their obligations in accordance with this Policy and any relevant policy and procedural documentation.</li> <li>Ensure this Policy is implemented and adhered to.</li> <li>Ensure the development and implementation of required policies, procedures and guidelines to support safeguarding children and young people in accordance with this Policy.</li> <li>Ensure adequate resources are allocated to allow effective implementation of this Policy.</li> <li>Support staff to initiate actions to protect a child from abuse and neglect.</li> <li>Ensure appropriate supports, such as counselling and formal debriefing, are provided for Staff involved in a matter relating to responding to a concern for the safety and wellbeing of a child or young person.</li> <li>Proactively share resources and experience in the development of child safe initiatives as they are identified.</li> <li>Develop opportunities for regular discussion and review at all levels to support a culture of continuous improvement and accountability of keeping children and young people safe from abuse and neglect.</li> <li>Ensure that all staff are aware of the appropriate recruitment, screening and employment practice in relation to safeguarding children and young people.</li> </ul>
<b>All staff</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Uphold Council's Statement of Commitment to child safety and act in accordance with Child Safeguarding and Wellbeing Policies and</li> </ul>

Policy Reference No:	POL/284	Responsible Officer:	Manager Governance
Date of Re/Adoption:	June 2024	Division	Finance & Governance
Review Date:	June 2027		

# Child Safety and Wellbeing Policy

	<p>procedures, including this Policy and Safeguarding Children and Young People Code of conduct.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Place the best interests of children and young people above the interests of the organisation or other individuals within it, subject to legislative obligations.</li> <li>• Take action to protect children and young people from risks of harm and all forms of child abuse and neglect. This also applies to any incidents, disclosures, suspicions, or breaches of the Code of Conduct that may be encountered within Council and whilst undertaking their role in the wider Hume community. Where a child is in immediate danger, call 000.</li> <li>• Report any child abuse or reportable conduct committed by staff within our organisation or by others in line with the Reportable Conduct Scheme.</li> <li>• Advocate and promote child rights, empowering and engaging children and young people in support of this Policy.</li> <li>• Ensure appropriate supervision of children and young people with consideration to their age, development and other vulnerabilities.</li> <li>• Complete the compulsory Child Safe Standards e-learning training module annually, within 30 days of it being allocated.</li> <li>• Complete other professional development as required and seek support from co-ordinator or manager if there is anything that required clarification.</li> <li>• Obtain and maintain a valid Working with Children Check throughout the duration of employment as required for their role. Ensure that Council is registered on their WWCC and ensure that People and Culture (P&amp;C) is aware of any exclusion notice immediately.</li> <li>• Support a culture of openness, continued improvement and accountability to children and young people by engaging in regular review and discussion of organisational policies and practices and providing feedback to support improvement.</li> <li>• Assist in creating and maintaining a child safe culture and a culture of inclusion and safety.</li> <li>• Seek guidance from a supervisor or manager if there is any lack of understanding in relation to and expectations set out in this Policy</li> </ul>
<p style="text-align: center;"><b>People &amp; Culture</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Provide information relating to the Child Safe policies and practices via training/induction material to new and existing staff.</li> <li>• Ensure that all employees complete the compulsory e-learning Child Safe Standards training.</li> <li>• Conduct recruitment practices, pre-employment screening and National Police and Working with Children Check processes in line with Council's recruitment and selection guideline requirements for child related work.</li> <li>• Manage Council's disciplinary procedures. Oversee any investigations into suspected staff misconduct and provide advice in relation to disciplinary procedures as they apply to the Child Safe Standards and Child Safe Policy.</li> <li>• Provide support when reporting child abuse, for example through resilience training, Employee Assistance Program (EAP) counselling service.</li> <li>• Reflect a culture of child safety in all corporate training activities.</li> <li>• Support the Project Officer – Child Safe Standards with confidential staff matters.</li> </ul>
<p style="text-align: center;"><b>Child Safe Team: Manager People and Culture, People and Culture Coordinator, Coordinator</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Act as a point of contact for child safety concerns or allegations of reportable conduct.</li> <li>• Offer information, referral and/or support to the child, the parents/caregivers, the person who reports the allegation.</li> </ul>

Policy Reference No:	POL/284	Responsible Officer:	Manager Governance
Date of Re/Adoption:	June 2024	Division	Finance & Governance
Review Date:	June 2027		

# Child Safety and Wellbeing Policy

<p><b>Integrity Support, Project Officer Child Safe Standards</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Provide guidance to determine whether there is sufficient information to support a reasonable belief that the alleged conduct has occurred.</li> <li>• Initiate internal processes to ensure the safety of the child, clarify the nature of the complaint, support in the determination of reasonable belief and commence disciplinary process (if required).</li> <li>• Confirm relevant authorities have been notified i.e. Department of Health and Human Services (DHHS) Child Protection for all issues of abuse, Police for imminent risk and sexual abuse, and the CCYP for reports of allegations of child abuse and reportable conduct.</li> <li>• Engage the assistance of expert advice as required.</li> <li>• Retain the completed reporting according to Council's privacy policy and procedures.</li> </ul>
<p><b>Those responsible for mandatory reporting under the <i>Children, Youth and Families Act 2005</i></b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Act in accordance with Children, Youth and Families Act 2005 in relation to reporting child abuse.</li> </ul>
<p><b>Communications and Events</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Promote Council as an organisation that upholds the Child Safe Standards.</li> <li>• Ensure relevant events and public activities include messaging about Child Safe Standards and have procedures in place to mitigate the risk of harm to children and young people.</li> </ul>

## 6 Hume City Council Staff

### 6.1 Safeguarding Children and Young People Code of Conduct (SCYP Code of Conduct)

Council has a SCYP Code of Conduct outlining the expectations of staff which must be read in conjunction with this Policy.

Before working with children, staff must read, understand and agree to comply with the code of conduct.

### 6.2 Recruitment of staff

The safety of children and young people is at the centre of recruitment and screening. Council's statement of commitment is included in job advertisements.

For roles that have direct or indirect contact with children and young people a Working with Children Check (WWCC), police check, and comprehensive referee checks are required.

### 6.3 Support to staff

Council is committed to ensuring that all staff receive training to understand their responsibilities in relation to child safety. Training provided will be a combination of face-to-face and/ or online depending on the role.

Policy Reference No:	POL/284	Responsible Officer:	Manager Governance
Date of Re/Adoption:	June 2024	Division	Finance & Governance
Review Date:	June 2027		
Page 5 of 17			

# Child Safety and Wellbeing Policy

All staff are required to complete Child Safe Standards and Reportable Conduct training modules through the learning management system annually, within 30 days of it being allocated.

Child protection and mandatory reporting training through the Department of Education and Training must also be completed by relevant staff.

Staff have access to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Engagement - Building Aboriginal Cultural Competency training through the corporate training calendar.

Staff may also be required to engage in other prescribed training as the need is identified.

## 7 Policy

### 7.1 Children's Empowerment and Participation

Council seeks to ensure that children and young people are informed about their rights to safety and participation.

The voice of children and young people will be considered in all aspects of Council business including the provision of services, programs and activities. Children and young people should be seen as active citizens in their community. Council will do this by providing formal and informal opportunities for children and young people to have a say in decisions that affect them.

### 7.2 Families and Communities

Council recognises the important role of families and seeks to involve them in decisions that may affect their children.

Families are encouraged to provide feedback or raise concerns with Council as the need arises.

Council provides information to families and the community regarding child safe policies and practises by:

- Publishing this policy and (SCYP) Code of Conduct on Council's website
- Providing information about our approach to child safety to parents of children accessing Council's programs and services
- Providing families with information and support to report a concern, or allegation in a range of options which are provided in a number of community languages.

### 7.3 Diversity and Inclusion

Hume is an incredibly diverse municipality and Council is committed to creating an inclusive and safe environment for all in our community. Racism is not tolerated.

Council is welcoming of all children and young people and is committed to the principles of cultural safety and inclusion for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children, children with a refugee or migrant background, those who have a

Policy Reference No:	POL/284	Responsible Officer:	Manager Governance
Date of Re/Adoption:	June 2024	Division	Finance & Governance
Review Date:	June 2027		
Page 6 of 17			

# Child Safety and Wellbeing Policy

disability, those who are unable to live at home and those who identify as LGBTIQ+.

Council has a number of plans and frameworks including:

- Reconciliation Action Plan outlining the commitment to supporting and strengthening connections in Aboriginal communities and creating culturally safe environments for Aboriginal children and their families.
- The Multicultural Framework outlines the support of established migrant communities as well as newly arrived and emerging communities.
- Disability Action Plan outlining support to citizens with a disability.
- A range of resources, groups and services available to those to identify as LGBTIQ+.

## 7.4 Reporting and responding to child abuse allegations

All staff have a responsibility to report risks of harm to children and young people, child abuse and reportable conduct.

Council's processes to manage complaints and concerns are child focused. Reports will be treated seriously and responded to promptly and thoroughly, guided by the Reporting Child Abuse and Reportable Conduct Procedure.

Reportable conduct investigations are outsourced to an independent investigator as per recommendations of the Royal Commission into Institutional Responses to Child Sexual Abuse (Royal Commission).

Staff are expected to cooperate with child safety investigations conducted internally or externally, including but not limited to investigations conducted by an independent investigator, Victoria Police and the Department of Families, Fairness and Housing (DFFH).

### 7.4.1 Child Safe Committee

The Child Safe Committee (Committee) will have oversight of all child safe reports. The committee is made up of:

- Manager People & Culture
- Project Officer – Child Safe Standards
- Coordinator People & Partnerships
- Coordinator Integrity Support

The committee can take reports from children, young people, families, and members of the community, and can provide guidance and support to Council staff in relation to issues of child abuse and reportable conduct.

### 7.4.2 Types of reports

There are two types of incidents or allegations that must be reported:

- **Child abuse or neglect:** Includes the risk of harm from physical, emotional, sexual, grooming, neglect or family violence. This type of allegation must also be reported to the relevant statutory authority i.e., Victoria Police or Child Protection.

Policy Reference No:	POL/284	Responsible Officer:	Manager Governance
Date of Re/Adoption:	June 2024	Division	Finance & Governance
Review Date:	June 2027		

# Child Safety and Wellbeing Policy

- **Reportable Conduct:** This type of allegation occurs when the abuse or misconduct is perpetrated by a Hume City council Councillor, staff, volunteer, or contractor. Under the Reportable Conduct Scheme, this must be reported to the Commission for Children and Young People (CCYP) and Victoria Police.

All staff have a responsibility to report child abuse, neglect and reportable conduct. Even if they are unsure, or do not have all of the required information, if there is a reasonable belief that abuse or neglect is occurring, it must be reported.

The committee can help staff to determine if there is reasonable belief, which is more than a suspicion. Some objective basis for the belief must exist, however this is not the same as having proof and does not require certainty. Reasonable belief is likely to be formed if the person reporting the alleged conduct:

- has observed the conduct
- has heard information directly from a child that the conduct has occurred
- has received information from another source (including another witness)

Incidents and allegations can be reported by anyone, including children and young people, parents, community members, as well as Council staff.

Staff are to report all incidents or allegations through Elumina, as well as the relevant statutory authority. The child safe committee can support staff through this process. For further information consult the Reporting Child Abuse and Reportable Conduct Procedure.

## 7.5 Privacy, Record keeping and Information Sharing

All personal information collected and recorded in relation to a report and investigation will be handled in accordance with Council's [Privacy Policy](#).

The best interests of the child or young person is the paramount consideration when making decisions in relation to privacy.

Under the Child Information Sharing Scheme and the Family Violence Information Sharing Scheme Policy, there are prescribed Council staff that are legally required to share information to ensure the safety and wellbeing of children and young people.

## 7.6 Risk Management

All risks to the safety and wellbeing of children and young people are taken seriously. Council will work to identify, remove or reduce risks in line with risk management framework.

## 7.7 Third Party Operators

There are contractual agreements with third parties that hire, access, or use buildings where children and young people are present, or that deliver services to children, young people and families.

Policy Reference No:	POL/284	Responsible Officer:	Manager Governance
Date of Re/Adoption:	June 2024	Division	Finance & Governance
Review Date:	June 2027		



# Child Safety and Wellbeing Policy

The requirement to comply with child safety obligations will be included in contracts based on the level of engagement with and risk to children and young people.

## 8 Breaches of policy and code of conduct

Council will enforce this policy, the SCYP Code of Conduct and any related child safety and wellbeing policies. Potential breaches will be investigated and managed in accordance with Council's Disciplinary Policy.

## 9 Related Documents

This policy should be read in conjunction with the following:

### Council Policies and Procedures

- Child Information Sharing Scheme (CISS) and Family Violence Information Sharing Scheme (FVISS) Policy
- Councillor Code of Conduct
- Disciplinary Policy
- EEO Policy
- Employee Code of Conduct
- Employee Handbook
- Hume City Council Enterprise Agreement (as applicable)
- Privacy Policy
- Safeguarding Children and Young People Code of Conduct
- Social Justice Charter 2021
- Staff Conflict of Interest Policy
- Use of Council's Internet, Email, and Electronic Communications Policy
- Work Health and Safety Policy

### Legislation

- Child Wellbeing and Safety Act 2005
- Children Youth and Families Act 2005
- Equal Opportunity Act 2010
- Equal Opportunity Act 2010 (Vic)
- Health Records Act 2001
- Occupational Health & Safety Act 2004
- Policy for the Use of the Internet Privacy and Data Protection Act 2014 (Vic)
- The Charter of Human Rights and Responsibilities 2006 (Vic)

Policy Reference No:	POL/284	Responsible Officer:	Manager Governance
Date of Re/Adoption:	June 2024	Division	Finance & Governance
Review Date:	June 2027		
Page 9 of 17			

# Child Safety and Wellbeing Policy

## APPENDIX A

### Definitions

Key Term	Definition
Child or Young Person	A person under the age of eighteen years.
Child Safe Organisation	A child safe organisation is one that takes deliberate steps to protect children from abuse and is embedded in an organisation's culture and policies.
Child Safety	A range of timely and appropriate measures to protect a child from abuse.
Child Information Sharing Scheme (CISS)	<p>The Child Information Sharing Scheme (CISS) allows authorised organisations to share information to support child wellbeing or safety.</p> <p>This ensures that professionals working with children, young people and families can gain a complete view of the children and young people they work with, making it easier to identify wellbeing or safety needs earlier, and to act on them sooner. This will allow children to receive the best support possible across services.</p> <p>Information can only be shared under the Child Information Sharing Scheme by professionals at authorised organisations, known as Information Sharing Entities (ISEs). These include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• schools</li> <li>• kindergartens</li> <li>• long day care</li> <li>• out of school hours care (OSHC)</li> <li>• child protection</li> <li>• youth justice</li> <li>• maternal and child health</li> <li>• public hospitals</li> <li>• Victoria Police.</li> </ul>
Commission for Children and Young People (CCYP)	<p>An independent statutory body that promotes improvement in policies and practices affecting the safety and wellbeing of Victorian children and young people.</p> <p>CCYP ensures the rights of all children and young people are recognised, respected, and defended through:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• independent scrutiny and oversight of services for children and young people, particularly those in the out-of-home- care, child protection</li> <li>• youth justice systems advocacy</li> <li>• supporting and regulating organisations that work with children and young people to prevent abuse and make sure these organisations have child safe practices.</li> </ul>
Contracted Organisations	Any type of business entity (which may include all their employees and subcontractors) contracted by Hume City Council to provide services in accordance with the contract terms.
Contractor or Consultant	An individual engaged to provide goods, and or services or works on behalf of Council.
Cultural safety of Aboriginal Children	Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander children are given the opportunity to be connected to culture and provided with a safe, nurturing and positive environment where they are comfortable with being themselves, expressing their culture, their spirituality and belief systems. It is more than just the absence of racism or discrimination, and more than cultural awareness and sensitivity. It includes identification of practices that may lead to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children feeling unsafe.
Cultural safety for children from	A child or young person who identifies as having particular cultural or linguistic affiliations by virtue of their place of birth, ancestry or ethnic origin,

Policy Reference No:	POL/284	Responsible Officer:	Manager Governance
Date of Re/Adoption:	June 2024	Division	Finance & Governance
Review Date:	June 2027		

## Child Safety and Wellbeing Policy

culturally and linguistically diverse children	<p>religion, preferred language or language spoken at home or because of their parent's identification on a similar basis.</p> <p>An environment which is spiritually, socially, emotionally and physically safe for children; where there is no assault, challenge or denial of their cultural or linguistic identity, of who they are and what they need. It includes seeking identification of practices that may lead to children from CALD backgrounds feeling unsafe.</p>
Duty of Care	The obligation of Council employees, contractors and volunteers to take reasonable steps to protect children in their care from the risks of injury, abuse and harm that are reasonably foreseeable.
Family Violence Information Sharing Scheme (FVISS)	<p>The Family Violence Information Sharing Scheme (FVISS) supports effective assessment and management of family violence risk. Under the Scheme, Information Sharing Entities (ISE) can share information related to assessing or managing family violence risk. The Scheme supports ISEs to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• keep perpetrators in view and accountable</li> <li>• promote the safety of victim survivors of family violence</li> </ul> <p>The Scheme doesn't interfere with existing information sharing legislation, like privacy or child protection legislation.</p> <p>Changes have also been made to Victorian privacy legislation so information can be shared to reduce or prevent a serious threat to someone's life, health, safety or welfare.</p> <p>There are a broad number of ISEs, some include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• All statutory authorities</li> <li>• Kindergartens</li> <li>• Long day care</li> <li>• Schools and educational providers</li> <li>• Maternal Child and Health Nurses</li> </ul>
Mandatory Reporting	<p>Particular professionals have the legal obligation of to report to Child Protection if they form reasonable belief that a child has suffered or is likely to suffer significant harm as a result of physical injury or sexual abuse or lack of parent capacity to protect the child from harm. This includes:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Registered Medical Practitioner</li> <li>• Registered Nurse</li> <li>• Midwife</li> <li>• Registered Psychologist</li> <li>• Registered teacher/ educator/ early childhood worker</li> <li>• School Principal</li> <li>• School Counsellors</li> <li>• Out of Home Care Workers</li> <li>• Youth Justice workers</li> <li>• The head of an organisation (CEO) as described under the Reportable Conduct Scheme</li> </ul>
Online Environment	Anywhere online that allows digital communication, including but not limited to, social networks, text messages and messaging apps, email and private messaging, online chats, comments on live streaming sites and voice chat in games.
Reasonable Belief	Reasonable belief is more than a suspicion. Some objective basis for the belief must exist, however this is not the same as having proof and does not require certainty. Reasonable belief is likely to be formed if a person has observed the conduct, has heard information directly from a child that the conduct has occurred or has received information from another source (including another witness)

Policy Reference No:	POL/284	Responsible Officer:	Manager Governance
Date of Re/Adoption:	June 2024	Division	Finance & Governance
Review Date:	June 2027		
Page 11 of 17			

# Child Safety and Wellbeing Policy

Reportable Conduct Scheme	<p>The Victorian Reportable Conduct Scheme seeks to improve organisations' responses to allegations of child abuse and neglect by their workers and volunteers. The Scheme is designed to ensure that the CCYP will be aware of every allegation of misconduct involving children in relevant organisations that exercise care, supervision and authority over children.</p> <p>This includes:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• supporting and guiding organisations that receive allegations in order to promote fair, effective, timely and appropriate responses.</li> <li>• independently overseeing, monitoring and making appropriate recommendations to improve organisational responses.</li> </ul>
Risk Management	<p>In the context of creating safe environments for children and young people, risk management consists of assessing and taking steps to minimise the risks of harm to children and young people because of the action of an employee, volunteer, contractor or another child or young person. Risk management includes planning the work of the organisation to reduce or minimise situations where children and young people may be abused.</p>
Staff	<p>All who work for the organisation whether in a paid or unpaid capacity, including; Councillors, employees, casual employees, students on placement, volunteers, contractors, and agency staff.</p>
The Royal Commission into Institutional Responses to Child Sexual Abuse	<p>An independent inquiry established in 2013 by the Australian Government to examine and report upon responses by institutions to instances and allegations of child sexual abuse in educational institutions, religious groups, sporting organisations, state institutions and youth organisations. The findings provide recommendations to the Government on how to improve laws, policies, structures and practices to prevent such harm from re-occurring.</p> <p><a href="https://www.childabuseroyalcommission.gov.au/">https://www.childabuseroyalcommission.gov.au/</a></p>
Victorian Child Safe Standards	<p>The Standards set out minimum requirements and outline the actions organisations must take to keep children and young people safe.</p> <p>They provide guidance for organisations to ensure that policies and procedures are in place to protect children and young people from harm, promote their participation and wellbeing and to respond to reports of abuse or misconduct.</p>
Volunteer	<p>An unpaid person who has been engaged by Hume City Council to perform activities that support Council's community building objectives e.g. committee involvement, support of community events, festivals, programs and facilities.</p>

Policy Reference No:	POL/284	Responsible Officer:	Manager Governance
Date of Re/Adoption:	June 2024	Division	Finance & Governance
Review Date:	June 2027		
Page 12 of 17			

# Child Safety and Wellbeing Policy

## APPENDIX B

### SAFEGUARDING CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE (SCYP) CODE OF CONDUCT

#### Introduction

At Hume City Council (Council) safeguarding children and young people is everyone's responsibility.

Everyone has the responsibility to be alert to and respond to risks of harm to children and young people, incidents of child abuse and neglect and to create and maintain a child safe culture. Staff will do this by following appropriate safeguarding practice and behaviour as set out in policy and procedural guidelines.

Council recognises that all children and young people have the fundamental right to develop, reach their full potential, feel safe and supported in the community in which they live. Children and young people have the right to equitable access to services and supportive environments.

Council requires that Councillors, staff, volunteers and contractors understand and follow child safe principles and expectations for appropriate behaviour towards, and in the company of children and young people at all times.

#### Statement of Commitment

Council is committed to keeping children and young people safe and protected. All children and young people and who access services provided by Council have the right to be safe and feel safe.

The safety, well-being and interests of children and young people are paramount, and we have a zero-tolerance approach to child abuse. Council is committed to creating and maintaining a child safe organisation where children and young people are valued and protected from harm and abuse.

Council is welcoming of all children and young people and is committed to the principles of cultural safety and inclusion for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children and young people, children and young people with a refugee or migrant background, those who have a disability, those who are unable to live at home and those who identify as lesbian, gay, bisexual, trans, intersex, queer, gender diverse and asexual (LGBTIQA+). Council aims to create child safe and friendly environments where children and young people feel safe and can fully participate. Council actively listens to and supports children and young people to be strong, confident, and self-determined citizens.

#### Purpose

The SCYP Code of Conduct:

- Sets clear expectations about how staff must and must not behave towards and in the presence of children and young people, in both physical and online environments.
- Supports staff to identify and report potential behavioural and conduct issues against children and young people.
- Must be read in conjunction with:

Policy Reference No:	POL/284	Responsible Officer:	Manager Governance
Date of Re/Adoption:	June 2024	Division	Finance & Governance
Review Date:	June 2027		

# Child Safety and Wellbeing Policy

- The specific requirements of your role as defined in your position description.
- The Child Safety and Wellbeing Policy.
- All applicable laws, including in relation to privacy, confidentiality, information sharing and record keeping.

## Scope

The SCYP Code of Conduct applies to all staff in paid and unpaid capacities including Councillors, employees, casual employees, students on placement, volunteers, contractors, and workers and volunteers provided by labour hire agencies, companies or other providers (staff).

It includes sexual misconduct or physical violence, committed against, with or in the presence of, a child, any behaviour that causes significant emotional or psychological harm to a child or neglect of a child, in both the physical and online environments.

It covers children and young people up to the age of 18 years.

It does not cover all situations and staff who are uncertain about their role or responsibility in a particular situation must contact their manager, the Project Officer-Child Safe Standards or Manager People and Culture for advice.

## Standards and Obligations

Staff will ensure that children and young people participating in Council programs or services are aware of Council's expectations in relation to acceptable behaviour towards them.

### I will:

- Uphold Council's Statement of Commitment to child safety at all times and act in accordance with Council's Child Safeguarding and Wellbeing Policies and procedures, including this Code, the Policy and any related procedures.
- Ensure appropriate supervision of children and young people with consideration to their age, development and other vulnerabilities.  
Place the best interests of children and young people above the interests of the organisation or other individuals within it, subject to legislative obligations.
- Uphold the rights of children and young people who come into contact with Council and empower them by providing an environment where they can actively participate and have a say, especially on issues that are important to them.
- Listen and respond to the views of children and young people, especially when they have concerns about their safety.
- Provide a welcoming, inclusive and safe environment that supports and values the ideas and opinions of children and young people and treats them with respect regardless of their race, colour, gender identity, sex, sexual orientation, religion, political or other opinion, national, ethnic or social origin, culture, disability or other status.
- Have zero tolerance of racism and will act on any racist incidents that arise.
- Actively promote the safety, participation, empowerment, cultural safety and inclusion of all children and young people, in particular Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children and young people, children and young people from culturally and

Policy Reference No:	POL/284	Responsible Officer:	Manager Governance
Date of Re/Adoption:	June 2024	Division	Finance & Governance
Review Date:	June 2027		

## Child Safety and Wellbeing Policy

linguistically diverse communities, those with a disability, those who cannot live at home and those who identify as LGBTQTI+.

- Identify and mitigate risks to the safety and wellbeing of children and young people.
- Take all reasonable steps to protect children and young people from risk of harm from child abuse or reportable conduct.
- Report any concerns, allegations, disclosures or observations of risk of harm of child abuse or reportable conduct in line with Council’s policies, procedures, Mandatory Reporting and Reportable Conduct requirements.
- Work with children and young people in an open and transparent way.
- Respect the privacy of children and young people and their families and only disclose information to people in accordance with legislation.
- Comply with legislation and Council policy and procedures in relation to record keeping and information sharing.
- Observe professional boundaries with children and young people at all times.
- Complete relevant training and professional development as required and communicate any deficits in knowledge or understanding to my supervisor.
- Obtain and maintain a valid WWCC throughout my employment (dependent on role), ensure that Hume City Council is registered on my WWCC, and ensure People and Culture is made aware of any exclusion notice immediately.
- Notify supervisor immediately if a complaint or allegation regarding child safety has been made against me, including if these allegations are outside the ordinary course of employment with Council.

**I will not:**

- Engage in unlawful, unsafe or abusive activity towards, against or in the presence of a child or young person or threaten to engage in such conflict.
- Engage in any form of child abuse or harm against a child or place a child at risk of harm.
- Engage in any conduct against, with or in the presence of children and young people, which constitutes reportable conduct under the Reportable Conduct Scheme including sexual offences, sexual misconduct, physical violence, behaviour that causes significant emotional or psychological harm or significant neglect.
- Engage in racist behaviour.
- Be alone with a child or young person unless required to perform my role.
- Engage in activities or provide additional support or care outside the scope of my duties (as specified in my position description), including activities of a personal nature.
- Ignore, disregard exaggerate or trivialise concerns, suspicions, or disclosures of risk of harm of child abuse or reportable conduct.
- Develop inappropriate relationships with children and young people, including relationships that show favouritism.
- Engage in unnecessary physical contact with children and young people or exhibit behaviours with children and young people which may be construed as inappropriate.
- Engage in any form of sexual activity with a child or young person.
- Engage in open discussions of a mature nature in the presence of children and young people.

Policy Reference No:	POL/284	Responsible Officer:	Manager Governance
Date of Re/Adoption:	June 2024	Division	Finance & Governance
Review Date:	June 2027		
Page 15 of 17			

# Child Safety and Wellbeing Policy

- Use inappropriate, offensive, harassing, abusive, sexually provocative, demeaning, culturally inappropriate, racist or discriminatory language when speaking with, or in the presence of a child or young person.
- Discriminate against any child or young person including based on their identification as Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander, being culturally and linguistically diverse, disability status, inability to live at home or LGBTQI+ status.
- Engage in any practice which attempts to change or suppress a child or young person's sexual orientation or gender identity.
- Use any computer, mobile phone, or video and digital camera, or software applications to exploit or harass children and young people or expose them to offensive or sexualised content.
- Exchange personal contact details with a child or young person such as phone number, social networking sites or email address, unless authorised by a direct Manager.
- Have unauthorised contact with a child, young person or their family outside of the council including online, on social media or by phone.
- Use, possess or be under the influence of illegal drugs while responsible for children and young people.

## Breach of the SCYP Code of Conduct

Council has zero tolerance for child abuse and will take all allegations of reportable conduct seriously. Staff who breach the SCYP Code of Conduct may be subject to disciplinary procedures in accordance with Child Safety and Wellbeing Policy, Reporting Child Abuse and Reportable Conduct Procedure, Council's Disciplinary Policy and/or relevant terms of engagement.

Staff are obliged to report any breaches of the SCYP Code of Conduct and reportable conduct allegations to their manager, Manager People & Culture or Project Officer – Child Safe Standards.

Staff are also obliged to report and self-disclose information regarding themselves including being questioned, charged or convicted of a criminal offence which relates to children or young people, being named as a respondent on a Family Violence or Personal Safety Intervention Order where children are named as protected persons or being subject to reportable allegations or employment action within any other organisation.

In instances where a reportable conduct allegation has been made, the matter will be managed in accordance with Council's Reporting Child Abuse and Reportable Conduct Procedure and may be subject to referral to Victoria Police.

If a staff member thinks that the SCYP Code of Conduct has been breached by another staff member, they will:

- act in the best interest of the child or young person.
- act promptly to ensure that the child or young person is safe.
- promptly follow Council's reporting procedures.
- 

## Declaration

I have read, understood and agree to comply with this Safeguarding Children and Young People Code of Conduct.

Policy Reference No:	POL/284	Responsible Officer:	Manager Governance
Date of Re/Adoption:	June 2024	Division	Finance & Governance
Review Date:	June 2027		
Page 16 of 17			



# Child Safety and Wellbeing Policy

I understand the importance of keeping children and young people safe and my obligations to report a concern.

Name	
Signature	
Date	
Role	

If you have any questions, further information is contained in the Child Safety page on HQ. You can also speak to your supervisor, the Project Officer – Child Safe Standards or the Manager People and Culture.

<b>Policy Reference No:</b>	POL/284	<b>Responsible Officer:</b>	Manager Governance
<b>Date of Re/Adoption:</b>	June 2024	<b>Division</b>	Finance & Governance
<b>Review Date:</b>	June 2027		
Page 17 of 17			