



8.0 CHILD SAFE AWARENESS POLICY

Distribution: Elected Members, All Employees, Contractors, Volunteers

Responsible Officer: Chief Executive Officer

Date Adopted: 19 July 2023 – Version 1 – Resolution 19070723-OM-666

Last Review: March 2024 – Version 2 – Resolution 032024 767

Purpose

The Shire of Goomalling supports and values all children and young people. The Shire of Goomalling makes a commitment to support the safety and wellbeing of all children and young people, including protection from abuse. This Child Safe Awareness policy is one of the ways the Shire of Goomalling demonstrates its commitment to being child safe and a zero-tolerance approach to child abuse.

This policy aims to reduce the risk of harm and child sexual abuse in our communities by encouraging child safe environments to be created and maintained. The Shire of Goomalling is committed to encouraging local organisations to be child safe and ensure children are safe and empowered.

This Child Safe Awareness policy has been developed in response to recommendation 6.12 of the Royal Commission into Institutional Responses to Child Sexual Abuse and recognises that the Shire of Goomalling is uniquely placed within the local community to demonstrate leadership by supporting organisations to be child safe and to protect children and young people from harm and/or abuse. The Shire of Goomalling will promote the safety and wellbeing of children across the community.

Consistent with the National Principles for Child Safe Organisations and Commonwealth Child Safe Framework, this policy provides a framework that outlines the role of the Shire of Goomalling in supporting local organisations to be child safe through access to resources, awareness raising and sharing relevant information.

Scope

The safety and wellbeing of children is everyone's responsibility. This Child Safe Awareness policy applies to all, employees, volunteers, trainees, work experience students, interns, and anyone else who undertakes work on behalf of the Shire of Goomalling, regardless of their work related to children or young people. It applies to occupants of the Shire of Goomalling's facilities and venues, including visitors, contractors and suppliers.



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Standard

Abuse	Abuse is an act, or failure to act towards or on behalf of a child may result in harm. It can occur on occasions. Sometimes the impact of multiple events leads to harm that becomes cumulative in nature. Types of abuse include physical, emotional and sexual abuse, and neglect.
Child/Children	Means a person under 18 years of age, and in the absence of positive evidence as to age, means a person who appears to be under 18 of age.
Child Safe Organisation	<p>is defined in the Royal Commission Final Report as one that:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • creates an environment where children’s safety and wellbeing are at the centre of thought, values, and actions; • places emphasis on genuine engagement with and valuing of children and young people • creates conditions that reduce the likelihood of identifying any harm; and • responds to any concerns, disclosures, allegations, or suspicions of harm. <p>Note: In the context of Local Governments, this would involve referring concerns to the Department of Communities or Police to respond as appropriate.</p> <p>Implementation of the National Principles for Child Safe Organisations’ give effect to the above.</p>
Child Safe	For the purpose of this policy, child safe means protecting the rights of children and young people to be safe by taking actions that can help prevent harm and abuse.
Harm	Harm, in relation to a child, means any detrimental effect of a significant nature on a child’s wellbeing, whether caused by a single act, omission or circumstances or a series or combination of acts, omissions or circumstances.
Wellbeing	Wellbeing of children and young people includes the care, development, education, health and safety of children and young people.

The rights of children and young people are upheld.

- Children and young people are respected, listened to, and informed about their rights.
- Children and young people have the fundamental right to be safe and cared for.
- Children and young people have the right to speak up, be heard and taken seriously without the threat of negative consequences.
- The safety and best interests of children and young people are a primary consideration when making decisions that concern them.



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- Access to trusted and reliable information, including the National Principles for Child Safe organisations, helps support organisations to understand what they must do to help reduce the risk of harm and abuse.
- Communities are informed and involved in promoting the safety and wellbeing of children and young people including protection from harm.
- Collaboration with the community and our partners promotes the safety, participation and empowerment of all children and young people.

Policy Functions

The Shire of Goomalling will ensure the following functions of this policy are resourced and assigned to the relevant officers for implementation.

- Developing a process to deliver child safe messages (for example at the Shire of Goomalling's venues, grounds and facilities or events).
- Connecting and supporting local community groups, organisations, and stakeholders to child safe resources (including culturally safe and inclusive resources).

Roles and Responsibilities

The Shire of Goomalling has a leadership role in our community to support relevant organisations to be child safe and promote child safe practices.

Although the Shire of Goomalling is not legally responsible for providing oversight of compliance with child safe practices, it will take any reasonable steps to engage with persons who utilise the Shire of Goomalling facilities to operate in alignment with the Child Safe Awareness policy.

Legislation

Local Government Act 1995

Local Government (Administration) Regulations 1996

Child Care Services Act 2007 and associated Regulations

Children and Community Services Act 2004 and associated Regulations

Civil Liability Act 2002 and associated Regulations

Corruption, Crime and Misconduct Act 2003 and associated Regulations

Equal Opportunity Act 1984 and associated Regulations

Freedom of Information Act 1992 and associated Regulations

Parliamentary Commissioner Act 1971 and associated Regulations

Public Interest Disclosure Act 2003 and associated Regulations

Public Sector Management Act 1994 and associated Regulations

Work Health and Safety Act 2020 and associated Regulations

Working with Children (Criminal Record Checking) Act 2004 and associated Regulations

Resource Documents

Strategic Community Plan

C1.4 Enhance open and interactive communication between Council and the community

C1.5 Develop a policy framework to guide Council's decision making

C1.6 Promote and support community member's participation in the Shire's governance

C2.2 Promote a culture of continuous improvement processes and resource sharing



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C2.7 Provide reporting processes in a transparent, accountable and timely manner

Employee Code of Conduct
Shire of Goomalling Record Keeping Plan
Working with Children Checks/Police Clearances
Procedures Manual

Local Law

Nil

Delegation

Not Applicable