



CHILD SAFETY AND WELLBEING POLICY

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We respectfully acknowledge the Traditional Owners, the Wurundjeri People as the Custodians of this land. We also pay respects to all Aboriginal Community Elders, past and present, who have resided in the area and have been an integral part of the history of this region.

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1. Introduction

Yarra Ranges Council's Child Safety and Wellbeing Policy reinforces an ongoing commitment to a zero tolerance approach to child abuse and neglect. Essential ongoing measures will enable Council to be a stronger child safe organisation through increasing the capacity of the workforce and community, including families and children, to prevent and respond to the risks of child abuse.

Yarra Ranges Council recognises that its whole workforce and Councillors have a duty to keep children and young people safe and has developed a framework that complies with the Victorian Child Safe Standards¹ (see Appendix 1), to meet Council's legal and moral obligations. The components of this framework (see below) help to identify and manage the various risks and opportunities posed by and to different Council services/responsibilities, and aims to protect children from abuse and support their overall health and wellbeing.

In February 2018, the Council of Australian Governments (COAG) endorsed new National Principles for Child Safe Organisations which aim to embed a child-rights approach to building capacity and delivering safety and wellbeing for children and young people in organisations, families and communities.

Council's Child Safety & Wellbeing Policy includes a number of additions adapted from the ten National Principles that offer an opportunity to strengthen the reach and impact of child safe measures through inclusion of the following principles:-

- Children and young people are informed about their rights, participate in decisions affecting them, and are taken seriously
- Families and communities are informed and involved in promoting child safety and wellbeing: and
- Equity is upheld and diverse needs respected in policy and practice

Underpinning this policy are the rights that are outlined in the United Nations Conventions on the rights of the Child (CROC). CROC specifically recognises that children have a right to be protected from physical and mental harm and neglect and be able to enjoy the full range of human rights – civil, cultural, economic, political and social.

Yarra Ranges Council directly undertakes a broad range of activities and delivers a diverse suite of services and facilities for children, young people and their families. In addition Council leases its buildings to a range of organisations that use them to deliver services for children and young people, procures a range of services delivered by external agencies directly to residents or to support facilities and provides grants to a range of groups/ organisations to deliver programs/ activities and events.

Council's framework for action includes:-

- Child Safety & Wellbeing Policy and Statement of Commitment
- Child Safety and Wellbeing Management Plan
- Child Safety and Wellbeing Standards of Behaviour
- Organisational and Community Training
- Risk Audit and Mitigation Actions
- Child Safe Governance and Monitoring Procedures

¹ The Department of Health and Human Services have developed the Victorian Child Safe Standards that provide a comprehensive framework to protect children from abuse.

See [Link here](#)

2. Scope

This policy applies to all people employed directly by Yarra Ranges Council (YRC), whether full time, part time, casual or temporary. It also applies to people engaged as a contractor, agency staff, volunteers or workplace students.

For the purposes of this policy only, where the word “child” or “children” is used exclusively, this is inclusive of all children and young people under the age of 18.

Definitions

Abuse	Abuse is an act or acts which endanger a child or young person's health, wellbeing and/or development. This abuse and resulting harms can be from a single event or the cumulative effect of multiple traumatic events occurring over time. It includes: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Physical abuse • Sexual abuse • Emotional abuse • Exposure to family violence • Neglect • Grooming • Multi-dimensional harm
Child Safe Standards	The Victorian Government Department of Health and Human Services has identified seven areas (standards) that organisations need to consider to ensure that they have child safe practices, systems and cultures.
Child Safe Organisation	A Child Safe organisation is one that considers not just the risks of abuse but approaches to children and young people's safety and wellbeing holistically and complies with the Child Safe Standards
Children	Any child or young person under the age of 18
Young people	Refers to a child of an older age, generally around 10-18 years
Disclosure	When a child or young person tells someone that he/she/they feels unsafe or has been harmed. A disclosure can also be made by adults including parents and carers or any person in contact with the child or young person, where that person reveals that they believe a child or young person has been harmed or is likely to be harmed.
Duty of Care	Council has a duty of care to take reasonable steps to prevent the abuse of a child or young person while the child or young person is under Council's care or by an individual associated with Council.
Failure to Disclose	The 'failure to disclose' offence, introduced as part of the Crimes Amendment (Protection of Children) Act 2014, requires that any adult (aged 18 and over) who holds a reasonable belief that a sexual offence has been committed in Victoria by an adult against a child or young person must disclose that information to police.
Failure to Protect	The criminal offence for 'failing to protect' a child or young person imposes penalties for a 'person in authority' if they know of the risk of abuse, have the power or responsibility to reduce or remove the risk, but failed to do so.
Mandatory Reporting	In accordance with the Children Youth and Families Act 2005, the legal obligation of certain professionals (including medical practitioners, nurses, teachers, school principals, police officers) to report a child or young person in need of protection.

Reasonable Belief ²	Factors contributing to reasonable belief may be: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • a child or young person states they or someone they know has been abused (noting that sometimes they may in fact be referring to themselves) • behaviour consistent with that of an abuse victim is observed • someone else has raised a suspicion of abuse but is unwilling to report it • observing suspicious behaviour.
Safeguarding children	The process through which an organisation sets out to ensure the safety and wellbeing of all children.
Workforce	Includes Council Employees (Permanent and Casual), Volunteers and Agency Staff engaged by Council

3. Yarra Ranges Culture and Leadership

Yarra Ranges Council is committed to promoting children and young people’s safety through all activity and is committed to implementing and working towards full compliance with the seven Victorian Child Safe Standards. Council also recognises and includes the National Child Safe Framework which strengthens the current existing legislative obligations. Council has a zero tolerance approach to the abuse of children and young people, actively promotes safety and is working towards reducing all factors that lead to risk of children and young people being harmed.

The Yarra Ranges Child Safe Standards Working Group oversees the Council-wide implementation of the Child Safe Standards and which reflects Council’s shared commitment to ensuring children and young people’s safety. This cross-department working group works collaboratively to inform our approach, support improvements and monitor shared actions. This working group also includes at least one young person under the age of 26 years.

The Working Group draws on best practice and research through connecting with other local governments, organisations and peak bodies and ensures accountability via assessments and periodically reporting to Council’s Executive Leadership and Risk & Audit Committee.

4. Statement of Commitment

Council recognises that the abuse of children and young people can have lifelong catastrophic consequences and must be actively prevented. Yarra Ranges Council has a zero tolerance approach to the abuse of children and young people, is committed to actively promoting safety and working towards reducing all factors that lead to risk of children and young people being harmed.

Council acknowledges that the abuse of children and young people is unfortunately relatively common and that every child and young person is at risk regardless of their background. Council commits to working with an inclusive and culturally appropriate approach for children and young people from Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander,

² For more information go to the Yarra Ranges Council Management Plan or [Section 162](#) of the Children, Youth And Families Act 2005

Culturally and Linguistically Diverse backgrounds and children with disabilities, who are known to be at greater risk.

Yarra Ranges Council will ensure the safety and wellbeing of children and young people by:

- Providing environments that are safe for all children and young people when delivering services.
- Embedding organisational processes that safeguard children and young people from abuse across all aspects of its operation.
- Responding appropriately when harm or the risk of harm is identified and linking to appropriate services that support children and young people, their parents, carers and families.
- Recognising diversity and working to promote the engagement and cultural safety of children and young people from Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander backgrounds, from Culturally and Linguistically Diverse backgrounds, children and young people with a disability, who are living in out of home care, and identify as lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender or intersex.
- Empowering and advocating for the best interests of children and young people.
- Listening to and taking seriously the voices of children and young people, families and communities.
- Educating Council's workforce participants, partners and the community about the safety of children and young people.

5. Child Safe Workforce

Council recognises that its workforce is highly diverse in terms of the range of roles undertaken and the levels of education, training and experience of staff and volunteers. Council is committed to enabling all workforce participants to ensure children and young people who receive Council services are protected from abuse and harm. Council also recognises that some roles require closer interaction or contact with children and young people, such as Maternal and Child Health nurses, early childhood educators and youth workers, and consequently require a more comprehensive level of awareness. The following framework details how Council will support all workforce participants to be able to protect children and young people.

5a. Corporate Code of Conduct

Council has a Code of Conduct which outlines the expectations and requirements for how all of Council's workforce will behave in relation to children and young people. In addition some sections of the workforce are also required to adhere to professional Codes of Conduct and/or practice standards³.

Council Corporate Code of Conduct ⁴	Applies to all staff and provides practical principles and guidelines to help make professional decisions.
Council's Child Safety and Wellbeing	Aligns with Corporate Code of Conduct

³ These include both professional standards for example the Nurse/Midwife Codes of Conducts (Australian Health Practitioner Regulation Agency) and legislated codes of conduct such as the Education and Care Services National Law Act (2010) and Regulations (2011)

⁴ [Council's Code of Conduct](#)

Standards of Behaviour	however specifically outlines appropriate behaviour by adults towards children and young people.
Professional Codes of Conduct	Industry standards that defines core professional values and standards which in turn guide decision making, actions and behaviour. See examples below.

5b. Child Safe Standards of Behaviour

In addition to Council's Code of Conduct, Child Safety and Wellbeing Standards of Behaviour have been developed for all areas of the workforce, which provide detailed guidance on appropriate behaviour and conduct when working with children and young people, their parents or carers and families.

While all workforce participants are required to comply, it does not replace any legislative or regulatory obligations or other professional or occupational codes of conduct specifically where workforce have direct contact or supervisory roles with children and young people.

These standards aim to protect children and young people and reduce any opportunities for abuse or harm to occur. It also helps the workforce by providing them with guidance on how to best support children and young people and how to avoid or better manage difficult situations.

Council's Child Safety and Wellbeing Standards of Behaviour aims to:

1. Promote children and young people's safety in Council.
2. Set expectations for the workforce regarding working with children and young people including details of acceptable and unacceptable behaviours.
3. Protect the workforce from potential accusations of inappropriate behaviour.

There are some underpinning principles for adult behaviour in undertaking work connected to children and young people such as:

- The adult/child relationship at all times should be professional and kept within the boundaries of the respective position description.
- An adult's response to a child or young person's behaviour or circumstance should be appropriate with their age and vulnerability and the adult's responsibility for the care, safety and welfare of the child or young person.
- As far as practicable, an adult should not be alone with a child or young person unless there is line of sight to other adults.
- An adult should not initiate or seek any contact with a child or young person outside of work.
- A child or young person's permission should be obtained before any necessary physical contact is made.

Please note [Appendix 1](#) provides the full list of the Council's standards of behaviour.

5c. Workforce Recruitment

Council will take all reasonable steps to employ skilled people to work with children and young people including:

- Understanding that when recruiting, Council has ethical as well as legislative obligations.
- Developing position descriptions and advertisements which clearly demonstrate Council's commitment to children and young people's safety and an awareness of social and legislative responsibilities.
- Encouraging applications from Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples, people from Culturally and/or Linguistically Diverse backgrounds and people with a disability.
- Ensuring Council's workforce who are engaged in child-related work, are required to hold a valid Working with Children Check, provide evidence of this check and link their Working with Child Check to Council as their employer.
- Undertaking reference checks and Police record checks, to ensure that Council recruits suitably qualified, skilled and experienced people. Police record checks are used for the purposes of recruitment and selection, whereby the information provided in the police check is assessed against the requirements of the position. Police checks are discarded after the recruitment process is complete.
- Police checks will be renewed every three or five years depending on the role.
- Retaining records (but not the actual criminal record) of an applicant's criminal history that affected the decision making process. This will involve giving the applicant an opportunity to provide further information and context, if during the recruitment process their records indicate a criminal history which may contravene the requirements of the position, Council's Code of Conduct, policies and procedures.

5d. Training and Supervision

Training and education is important to ensure that everyone in the organisation understands that children and young people's safety is everyone's responsibility.

Council's aim is for the entire workforce (in addition to parents/carers and children or young people) to feel confident and comfortable in discussing any allegations of child abuse or child safety concerns. Relevant workforce areas are trained to identify, assess, and minimise risks of abuse and to detect potential signs of abuse to children and young people.

Council's workforce will be appropriately supported by their Line Manager/ Supervisor to ensure that they understand Council's commitment to children and young people's safety and that everyone has a role to play in protecting them from abuse. This also includes checking that the workforce participant's behaviour towards children and young people is safe and appropriate (refer to Council's Code of Conduct and Child Safety and Wellbeing Standards of Behaviour to further understand appropriate behaviour).

Any inappropriate behaviour will be reported through appropriate internal channels, including Council Management and the People & Culture department. Inappropriate behaviour may be investigated as part of Council's Employee Management Policy and Procedure. Inappropriate behaviour must also be reported to the Department of

Health and Human Services and Victoria Police, depending on the severity and urgency of the matter.

Council will also ensure compliance with the Victorian Reportable Conduct Scheme⁵ and report all identified inappropriate behaviour as required by the Victorian Commission for Children and Young People.

5e. Fair Workforce procedures

The safety and wellbeing of children is Council's primary concern. Council is also committed to treating all employees fairly and justly. The decisions made when recruiting, assessing incidents, and undertaking any disciplinary action will always be thorough, transparent, and based on evidence.

Council records all allegations of abuse and safety concerns using an incident reporting form⁶, including investigation updates (where available). All records are securely stored in Council's electronic information management system. Some services are also mandated to record and store information regarding an incident in other databases/systems.

If an allegation of abuse or a concern regarding the safety of a child or young person is raised, Council will provide appropriate updates to children or young people and their parents or carers directly affected, on the progress and any actions which Council takes.

6. Responding to child safety concerns⁷

6a. Reporting Legislation

Council takes its legal responsibilities seriously, these include:

- **Failure to disclose:** Reporting sexual abuse of a child or young person is a community-wide responsibility. All adults in Victoria who have a reasonable belief that an adult has committed a sexual offence against a child under 16 have an obligation to report that information to the police.⁸
- **Failure to protect:** People of authority in Council will commit an offence if they know of a substantial risk of sexual abuse to a child or young person and have the power or responsibility to reduce or remove the risk, but negligently fail to do so.⁹
- **Reportable Conduct:** Requires some organisations (including Council) to respond to allegations of abuse (and other child-related misconduct) made against

⁵ <http://www.cyp.vic.gov.au/reportableconduct/index.htm>

⁶ See Safeguarding Children Management Plan

⁷ See Safeguarding Children Management Plan

⁸ A person will not commit this offence if they have a reasonable excuse for not disclosing the information, including a fear for their safety or where the information has already been disclosed. Further information about the failure to disclose offence is available on the [Department of Justice and Regulation website](#).

⁹ Further information about the failure to protect offence is available on the [Department of Justice and Regulation website](#)

their workers and volunteers, and to notify the Commission for Children and Young People of any allegations.¹⁰

- Any personnel who are **mandatory reporters** must comply with their duties and will be supported to do so.¹¹

6b. Reporting Obligations

Council has implemented a Child Safety and Wellbeing Management Plan to ensure that its workforce is able to respond appropriately to any child safety concern.

Practices and processes are in place to investigate all allegations thoroughly and quickly and Council will work with the relevant authorities and internal departments to ensure this occurs.

Council's workforce will continue to be trained to respond appropriately with allegations and disclosures.

All children and young people, their parents or carers, families and Council's workforce will know what to do and who to tell if they observe abuse or are a victim of abuse, and if they notice inappropriate behaviour.

Council's workforce has a responsibility to report an allegation of abuse if there is a reasonable belief that an incident took place (see information about failure to disclose above in section 6a).

If an adult is witnessing an incident or has a **reasonable belief** that an incident has occurred then they must take immediate action and report the incident (see Appendix 3 Universal Child Safe Reporting Process). Factors contributing to reasonable belief may be:

- A child or young person states they or someone they know has been abused (noting that sometimes they may in fact be referring to themselves).
- Behaviour consistent with that of an abuse victim is observed¹².
- Someone else has raised a suspicion of abuse but is unwilling to report it.
- Observing suspicious behaviour.

Designated Child Safe Officers have been identified and trained to support the workforce with compliance to this Policy and guide, monitor and review the above processes.

¹⁰ Further information about Reportable Conduct is available on the [Commission for Children and Young People website](#)

¹¹ Mandatory reporters (doctors, nurses, midwives, teachers (including early childhood teachers), principals and police) must report to child protection if they believe on reasonable grounds that a child is in need of protection from physical injury or sexual abuse. See the Department of Health and Human Services website for information about [how to make a report to child protection](#)

¹² For example behaviour, please refer to Critical Actions Section of Yarra Ranges Council Safeguarding Children Management Plan.

6c. Privacy Legislation

All personal information considered or recorded will respect the privacy of the individuals involved, whether they be Council's workforce, parents or carers, families and children or young people themselves, unless there is a risk to someone's safety. In accordance to the Commonwealth Privacy and Health Records Act, Council has safeguards and practices in place to ensure any personal information is protected. Everyone is entitled to know how this information is recorded, what will be done with it, and who will have access to it.

6d. Timely and Appropriate Support Services

In addition to ensuring any disclosures or concerns for a child or young person's safety are reported to relevant authorities, where appropriate and in consultation with these authorities, Council will provide information, advice and referral to support services for children and young people who have experienced abuse, and their parents or carers and families (e.g. Counselling).

On the occasion that Council workforce participants have contact with individuals who have experienced abuse, efforts will be made to ensure that workforce participant also receives information and advice or referral to appropriate support services.

7. Risk Management

Risk management strategies will be in place to identify, assess and take steps to minimise risks of abuse to children and young people, which include risks posed by physical and online environments.

In Victoria, organisations are required to protect children and young people when a risk is identified. In addition to general occupational health and safety risks, Council will proactively manage risks related to abuse of children and young people.

8. Child Safe Procurement, Contracts and Community Grants

Council works with suppliers, non-government organisations and community groups that access or use buildings with children or young people present and/or deliver services for or with children and young people, their parents/carers and families, through lease agreements, procurement contracts, grant agreements and partnership agreements.

Council will use appropriate processes to ensure that staff, businesses and organisations that are engaged or funded by Council to deliver services are appropriately compliant with Child Safe standards and practices.

9. Child, Family and Community Participation

Council acknowledges the importance of empowering children and young people to be active participants in their programs and services, through seeking and taking their voices seriously. Council also strives to hear children and young people's voices as active community members, by involving them and their parents or carers and families when making relevant decisions, especially about matters that directly affect them.

Yarra Ranges Council recognises and embraces its role as a leader in promoting children and young people's participation but also in ensuring the whole community

understands risks of abuse and has the skills and knowledge to keep children and young people safe.

This role involves modelling good child safety practice through Council's public work (e.g. policies, events and programs), supporting children and young people's safety in other organisations through providing advice, training and resources, as well as disseminating information to the broader community and inviting their involvement in conversations around children and young people's safety.

10. Equity and Inclusion - Respecting diverse needs

Council will promote diversity and inclusion. People from diverse life and cultural backgrounds are welcomed and respected.

Council has a strong focus on ensuring that equity is upheld and the diverse needs of all children and young people are respected in policy and practice. Underpinning organisational workforce are attitudes and actions that are responsive to the diverse backgrounds of children and young people and actively support the provision of inclusive and culturally safe information, service processes and support.

The organisation pays particular attention to the needs of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children, children with disability, children from Culturally and Linguistically Diverse backgrounds, those living in out of home care, and lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender and intersex children and young people.

11. Monitoring and Review

An ongoing cross organisation Child Safe Standards governance group is in place to oversee the continued implementation, monitoring and review of this Child Safety and Wellbeing Policy, Management Plan and related processes.

This group is also responsible for the review of all relevant developments in legislation, regulation or guidance involving children and young people's safety and wellbeing. The group monitors relevant organisational data and trends relating to the reporting and investigation of abuse or misconduct, and ensures compliance with the Reportable Conduct Scheme administered by the Victorian Commission for Children and Young People.

Accountability and transparency of the ongoing work of this governance group will occur through periodic reports to Council's Risk and Audit Committee and Executive Leadership Team.

12. References and Related documents

<p>Legislation</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Charter of Human Rights and Responsibilities Act 2006 • Child Wellbeing and Safety Act 2005 • Children, Youth and Families Act 2005 (as amended 2014) • Commission for Children and Young People Act 2012 • Commonwealth Privacy Act 1988 • Crimes Act 1958 <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Crimes Amendment (Failure to Protect and Failure to Disclose 2014) - Crimes Amendment (Grooming) Bill 2013 • Education and Care Services National Law Act (2010) and Regulations (2011) • Equal Opportunity Act 2010 • Family Law Act 1975 • Privacy & Data Protection Act 2014 • Public Records Act 1973 • Victorian Working with Children Act 2005 and Amendment 2014
<p>Policies and/or Procedures (Council and Internal)</p>	<p>Child Safety and Wellbeing Management Plan Child Safe Standards Working Group</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Implementation Action Plan • Terms of Reference <p>Child Safety and Wellbeing Policy (Sherbrooke Family and Children’s Centre) Employee Performance Management Policy & Procedure Yarra Ranges Council Diversity and Inclusion Policy Equal Opportunity Policy and Procedures Risk Audit and Mitigation Actions Child Safety Training Needs Analysis</p>
<p>Standards / Other References</p>	<p>Victorian Child Safe Standards National Principles for Child Safe Organisations United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child Australian Health Practitioner Regulation Agency Victorian Institute of Teaching MCH DET Service Guidelines Nursing and Midwifery Board of Australia (NMBA) Code of Conduct and Practice Standards. Early Childhood Australia – Code of Ethics</p>

Appendix 1 Child Safe Standards of Behaviour

Acceptable behaviours

In addition to Council's Code of Conduct, Child Safe Standards of Behaviour have been developed for all areas of the workforce that provide detailed guidance on appropriate behaviour and conduct when working with children, young people and their families.

While all workforce participants are required to comply, it does not replace any legislative or regulatory obligations or other professional or occupational codes of conduct specifically where workforce have direct contact or supervisory roles with children or young people.

These standards aim to protect children and young people and reduce any opportunities for abuse or harm to occur. It also helps the workforce by providing them with guidance on how to best support children and young people and how to avoid or better manage difficult situations.

Council's Child Safe Standards of Behaviour aim to:-

1. Promote children and young people's safety in Council.
2. Set expectations for the workforce on how to behave with children and young people including details of acceptable and unacceptable behaviours
3. Protect the workforce from potential accusations of inappropriate behaviour.

There are some underpinning principles for adult behaviour in undertaking work with children and young people, such as:

- The adult/child relationship at all times should be professional and kept within the boundaries of the respective position description.
- An adult's response to a child or young person's behaviour or circumstance should be appropriate with their age and vulnerability and the adult's level of responsibility for the care, safety and welfare of the child or young person.
- As far as practicable, an adult should not be alone with a child or young person unless there is line of sight to other adults.
- An adult should not initiate or seek any contact with a child or young person outside of the work or volunteer setting.

Council's workforce is responsible for supporting the safety of children and young people by:

- Adhering to Council's Child Safety & Wellbeing Policy, Standards of Behaviour and Management Plan.
- Taking all reasonable steps to protect children and young people from abuse.
- Treating everyone with respect.
- Listening and responding to the views and concerns of children and young people, particularly if they are telling you that they or another child or young person has been abused or that they are worried about their safety/the safety of another child or young person.
- Ensuring as far as practicable, that adults are not alone with a child or young person.

- Ensuring that communication with children and young people online, including via social media channels and academic collaboration spaces (e.g. Google Docs or virtual classrooms) is done from a shared Council log-in not a personal account.
- No information (contact details, photographic portrait, online handle name) of a child or young person is to be shared with community groups, or other Council departments without their or their/parents or carer's expressed consent.
- Reporting any allegations of abuse or safety concerns regarding children and young people.
- Understanding and complying with all reporting obligations as they relate to mandatory reporting and reporting under the Crimes Act 1958.
- If an allegation of abuse towards a child or young person is made, ensuring as quickly as possible that the child(ren) or young person(s) are safe and have access to appropriate support services.
- Reporting any charges, committals for trial or convictions in relation to a sexual offence, or certain allegations or concerns about a workforce member.
- Workforce participants who have direct care responsibility must disclose any social relationship (including online) that develops with children or their families that are only known through their engagement/employment within Council.
- Workforce participants who have a direct care responsibility must disclose (before it occurs) any paid or unpaid transaction that is planned with a child, young person or their family outside of the Council work setting.

Unacceptable behaviours

Council's workforce must not:

- Ignore or disregard any suspected or disclosed child abuse.
- Develop any 'special' relationships with children or young people that could be seen as favouritism (for example, the offering of gifts or special treatment for specific children or young people).
- Personally give a gift (unless it is from Council) or accept a significant or valuable gift from child or young person, their parent, carer or family members (See Council's Corporate Code of Conduct).
- Exhibit behaviours with children and young people which may be construed as unnecessarily physical (for example inappropriate sitting on laps). See physical contact below.
- Put children or young people at risk of abuse (for example, by locking doors, or posting information about them online).
- Initiate unnecessary physical contact with children or young people, or do things of a personal nature that they can do for themselves, such as toileting or changing clothes.
- Engage in open discussions of a mature or adult nature in the presence of children (e.g. personal social activities) or via online forums shared with children and young people
- Use inappropriate language in the presence of children and young people.

- Express personal views on appearance, gender, cultures, religion, race, or sexuality in the presence of children and young people.
- Discriminate against any child or young person, including because of age, gender, race, religion, culture, vulnerability, appearance, sexuality, ethnicity or disability.
- Through the opportunity presented by a role with Council, instigate a personal relationship with a child or young person or their family members outside of work (with the intention of grooming). This includes any kind of personal communication online such as via social media. (See Council's Social Media Policy Clause 4.2)
- Photograph or video a child or young person without the consent of their parent or carer.
- Work with children and young people whilst under the influence of alcohol or illegal drugs.
- Invite any other adults into online platforms where collaboration with children and young people is occurring (e.g. online classrooms or closed forums).
- Communicate with children and young people online using a personal account.

Physical Contact

As a general rule Council's workforce must avoid physical contact with children and young people.

Physical contact in the following situations is not permitted:

- Without permission from the child or young person.
- Without another staff member or parent/carer present.
- Any sexual (private areas of body) or sexualized contact.
- Any unnecessary and/or repeated contact that does not relate to the needs of the child or young person.

There will be situations¹³ that are acceptable as part of fulfilling legitimate work purposes and it is acceptable (if possible through permission) for the child/young person/parent/carer and also Council workforce participant.

¹³ Roles where it is acceptable to have physical contact with a child include Maternal and Child Health, and Early Childhood Educators.

Appendix 2 Victorian Child Safe Standards

This policy demonstrates the commitment of the organisation; its Councillors and workforce to children and young people's safety and details Council's approach to creating a child safe organisation that is consistent with the Child Safe Standards:

1. Strategies to embed an organisational culture of child safety, including through effective leadership arrangements
2. A child safe policy or statement of commitment to child safety
3. A code of conduct that establishes clear expectations for appropriate behaviour with children
4. Screening, supervision, training and other human resources practices that reduce the risk of child abuse by new and existing personnel
5. Processes for responding to and reporting suspected child abuse
6. Strategies to identify and reduce or remove risks of child abuse
7. Strategies to promote the participation and empowerment of children

This policy shall be read and implemented in conjunction with Council's associated practices and procedures to guide the workforce on requirements to meet Child Safe Standards.

Appendix 3 National Principles for Child Safe Organisations

1. Child safety and wellbeing is embedded in organisational leadership, governance and culture
2. Children and young people are informed about their rights, participate in decisions affecting them, and are taken seriously
3. Families and communities are informed and involved in promoting child safety and wellbeing
4. Equity is upheld and diverse needs respected in policy and practice
5. People working with children and young people are suitable and supported to reflect child safety and wellbeing values in practice
6. Processes for complaints and concerns are child focused
7. Staff and volunteers are equipped with the knowledge, skills and awareness to keep children and young people safe through ongoing education and training
8. Physical and online environments promote safety and wellbeing, while minimising the opportunity for children and young people to be harmed
9. Implementation of the National Child Safe Principles is regularly reviewed and improved
10. Policies and procedures document how the organisation is safe for children and young people

Appendix 4 Key Roles and Responsibilities

When acting on behalf of Yarra Ranges Council all workforce participants have a responsibility to understand their important and specific role, individually and collectively, to ensure that the wellbeing and safety of all children is at the forefront of all they do and every decision they make. Key roles and responsibilities have been outlined for the purpose of clarity and understanding as follows:

Key Role	Key Responsibilities
All Workforce participants	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Complete the compulsory Induction training on commencement of employment with Yarra Ranges Council. • Conduct work according to the requirements of the Child Safety & Wellbeing Policy, Standards of Behaviour and Management Plan. • Report all concerns regarding children and young people's safety or harm to an appropriate supervisor/line manager. • Be aware of and participate in the Reportable Conduct Scheme, which identifies and monitors workplace Child Safe risks and investigations. • Where a child or young person is in immediate danger call 000. • Workforce participants with direct care or supervisory responsibilities for children and young people must: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • disclose (before it occurs) any paid or unpaid transaction that is planned with a child or young person, their carers or family outside of the Council work setting • disclose any relationship (including online) that develops with children or young people, their carers or family members that are only known through their engagement/employment within Council.
Designated Child Safety Officers	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Provide guidance to the organisation on child safety concerns, especially supervisors/line managers. • Should staff have a 'reasonable belief' that a child or young person is being abused, support/advice is provided on the correct procedures for reporting to authorities, including DHHS Child Protection and/or the Police for imminent risk. • Work with People and Culture (as the first point of call), should there be an allegation of abuse within Council. • Provide advice on appropriate specialist services or further sources of information. • Support the implementation of the Child Safety and Wellbeing Policy, Management Plan and Implementation Action Plan.

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Research and disseminate information and updates regarding Child Safe Standards to People & Culture and all workforce participants (where applicable) • Provide support for reporting staff members in situations where safety is a concern due to the nature of the report.
Managers, Executive Officers & Co-ordinators	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Receive reports of safety concerns or allegations of abuse against children and young people within Council and support staff to follow correct procedures. • Decide, in accordance with legal requirements and duty of care, whether the matter should/must be reported to the police or Child Protection and make report as soon as possible if required. • Offer support to the child or young person, their carers and family, the person who reports and the accused staff member or volunteer. • Offer support where safety is a concern for any staff member during a reporting process. • Initiate internal processes to ensure the safety of the child or young person, clarify the nature of the complaint and commence disciplinary process (if required). • Discuss and if appropriate approve outside of work paid/unpaid transactions and personal relationships of workforce participants. (See Standards of Behaviour) • Be responsible for supporting the requirements under the Reportable Conduct Scheme, which identifies and monitors workplace Child Safe risks and investigations. • Ensure teams that are directly supervising or interacting with children and young people remain up to date and well versed in Child Safety training and reporting requirements.
Recruitment Managers	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ensure workforce participants have access to and are aware of the Child Safety & Wellbeing Policy and procedures. • Ensure that new workforce participants complete compulsory induction on commencement with Council. • Conduct recruitment practices in line with Council's recruitment and selection guideline requirements for child-related work. • Ensure position descriptions accurately reflect employment conditions/requirements
People and Culture	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Provide information (including Standards of Behaviour) relating to the Child Safety and Wellbeing Policy via training/induction material and make available to managers, team leaders and coordinators for

	<p>dissemination.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Manage Council's investigation and disciplinary procedures as they apply to the Child Safe & Wellbeing Policy, the Reportable Conduct Scheme and in line with Council's Employee Performance Management Policy & Procedure.• Apply relevant recruitment and pre-employment screening processes to select appropriate workforce participants to work with children and young people.• Offer support to any staff member who may be triggered by training/induction material due to personal experience as a child or young person.
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Appendix 5 Universal Child Safe Reporting Process

