

# Child Safe Policy

<b>Council Policy</b>	Policy No:	<b>OD018</b>
	Adopted by Council:	Nov 2022
	Review Date:	Nov 2024
	Version No:	002
Policy/Procedure Owner:	Manager Organisational Development	
Related Standards, Legislation, Policies and Procedures:	<p><u>Child Safe Standards</u></p> <p>Standard 1 – Organisations establish a culturally safe environment in which the diverse and unique identities and experiences of Aboriginal children and young people are respected and valued</p> <p>Standard 2 – Child safety and wellbeing is embedded in organisational leadership, governance and culture</p> <p>Standard 3 – Children and young people are empowered about their rights, participate in decisions affecting them and are taken seriously</p> <p>Standard 4 – Families and communities are informed, and involved in promoting child safety and wellbeing</p> <p>Standard 5 – Equity is upheld and diverse needs respected in policy and practice</p> <p>Standard 6 – People working with children and young people are suitable and supported to reflect child safety and wellbeing values in practice</p> <p>Standard 7 – Processes for complaints and concerns are child focused</p> <p>Standard 8 – Staff and volunteers are equipped with the knowledge, skills and awareness to keep children and young people safe through ongoing education and training</p> <p>Standard 9 – Physical and online environments promote safety and wellbeing while minimising the opportunity for children and young people to be harmed</p> <p>Standard 10 – Implementation of the Child Safe Standards is regularly reviewed and improved</p> <p>Standard 11 – Policies and procedures document how the organisation is safe for children and young people</p> <p>CS CHS 006 Child Safe Environment and Wellbeing  CS CHS 002 Inclusion &amp; Equity  PC 005 Recruitment &amp; Selection  PC 007 Volunteer Policy</p>	

External References:	<a href="#">Department of Families Fairness and Housing Victoria   Department of Families, Fairness and Housing (dffh.vic.gov.au)</a> <a href="#">Health.vic   health.vic.gov.au</a> <a href="https://ccyp.vic.gov.au/child-safe-standards/new-child-safe-standards-now-apply">https://ccyp.vic.gov.au/child-safe-standards/new-child-safe-standards-now-apply</a> <a href="https://www.snaicc.org.au/">https://www.snaicc.org.au/</a> <a href="https://childsafefhumanrights.gov.au/">https://childsafefhumanrights.gov.au/</a> <a href="https://www.legislation.vic.gov.au/in-force/acts/child-wellbeing-and-safety-act-2005/035">https://www.legislation.vic.gov.au/in-force/acts/child-wellbeing-and-safety-act-2005/035</a> <a href="#">Reportable Conduct Scheme administered by the Commission for Children and Young People (Vic)</a> <a href="#">Worker Screening Act 2020</a> <a href="#">Worker Screen Regulations 2021 (Vic)</a>
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## 1. PURPOSE

To ensure compliance with the Victoria Child Safe Standards by providing an organisational approach to preventing and responding to child abuse.

To ensure that a standard of excellence is achieved in all applications of the Child Safe Standards within the organisation.

## 2. STATEMENT OF COMMITMENT

This policy commits Moyne Shire Council to child safety through the following statements:

- Provides a safe environment for all children.
- Has zero tolerance for child abuse.
- Actively works to listen to, respect and empower children.
- Has reporting regimes and policy guidelines for staff designed to protect children from abuse.
- Will take allegations and concerns very seriously, respond to them consistently and in line with the organisation’s policies and procedures.
- is committed to promoting cultural safety for Aboriginal children, cultural safety for children from culturally and/or linguistically diverse backgrounds, and to providing a safe environment for children with a disability.

## 3. OUR CHILDREN

This policy is intended to empower children who are vital and active participants in our organisation. We involve them when making decisions,

especially about matters that directly affect them. We listen to their views and respect what they have to say. We promote diversity and tolerance in our organisation, and people from all walks of life and cultural backgrounds are welcome. In particular we:

- promote the cultural safety, participation and empowerment of Aboriginal children
- promote the cultural safety, participation and empowerment of children from culturally and/or linguistically diverse backgrounds
- ensure that children with a disability are safe and can participate equally.

At Moyne Shire Council, a child's ability to express their culture and enjoy their cultural rights is encouraged and actively supported and measures are adopted by the organisation to ensure racism within the organisation is identified, confronted and not tolerated.

#### **4. INTRODUCTION**

Moyne Shire Council (MSC) is a Child Safe organisation and takes a zero tolerance approach to child abuse and will ensure that respectful attitudes, behaviors and beliefs are shaped within the culture of the organisation.

MSC is committed to the safety, participation and empowerment of all children within Council run services and events and families are encouraged to participate in decisions affecting their child.

MSC engages and openly communicates with families and the community about its child safe approach and relevant information is accessible and families, carers and the community are informed about the organisation's operations and governance.

Families are afforded the opportunity to have input in the development and review of the organisation's policies and practices. MSC aims to prevent child abuse through training and education, rigorous recruitment processes, and effective risk management procedures. MSC takes all allegations seriously and has practices in place to respond quickly and thoroughly.

MSC has a responsibility to report an allegation of abuse if there is belief on reasonable grounds that a child has been abused/is at risk of being abused.

## 5. SCOPE

This policy applies to everyone involved in the organisation. This includes senior executives, employees, volunteers, and students working in council services, as well as contractors and specialist staff engaged in activities within shire services.

Reportable conduct applies to the following people associated with Moyne Shire Council.

- Employees;
- Councillors;
- Volunteers and students;
- Contractors.

## 6. DEFINITIONS

**Child/young person:** In Victoria, under the Children Youth and Families Act 2005, a child or young person is a person under eighteen years of age.

**Child abuse:** An act by parents or caregivers that endangers a child or young person's physical or emotional health or development. This can be a single incident, but usually takes place over time.

**Aboriginal:** In respect to this document, the term Aboriginal is inclusive of all Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people.

**Risk management:** Processes to identify, assess, and take steps to minimise child abuse risks, which include risks posed by physical environments and online environments.

**Policy detail:** Moyne Shire is committed to the safety, participation and empowerment of all children within council run services and events.

MSC aims to prevent child abuse through training and education, rigorous recruitment processes, and effective risk management procedures. MSC take all allegations seriously and have practices in place to respond quickly and thoroughly.

MSC has a responsibility to report an allegation of abuse if there is **reasonable belief** on **reasonable grounds** that a child has been abused/is at risk of being abused.

## 7. TRAINING REQUIREMENTS

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

MSC trains staff and volunteers to identify, assess, and minimise risks of child abuse and to detect potential signs of child abuse and report through appropriate channels.

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

## 8. QUALITY RECORDS

Records are maintained for all allegations of abuse and safety concerns using the incident reporting system. All records are securely stored.

Record	Retention/Disposal Responsibility	Location
Children's program documentation	As per Public Records disposal schedule	Children's room administration office
Child Safe Standards	Manager Community Services	EDRMS

## 9. PROCEDURE

The safety and wellbeing of children is our primary concern. We are also fair and just to personnel. The decisions we make when recruiting, assessing incidents, and undertaking disciplinary action will always be thorough, transparent, and based on evidence.

We record all allegations of abuse and safety concerns using our incident reporting form, including investigation updates. All records are securely stored.

If an allegation of abuse or a safety concern is raised, we provide updates to children and families on progress and any actions we as an organisation take.

### Reportable Conduct Scheme

The Victorian *Commission for Children and Young people* (CCYP) has a reportable Conduct scheme to oversee allegations of child abuse and misconduct.

The CEO of the Moyne Shire Council being the head of the organisation must use the online form "Notify" to inform the Commission and update reportable

allegations through the Commission for Children and Young people Reportable Conduct Scheme webpage [www.ccyp.vic.gov.au](http://www.ccyp.vic.gov.au)

The scheme requires organisations to respond to allegations of child abuse and child related misconduct made against their workers and volunteers and to notify the Commission for Children and Young People of any allegations.

### **Timeframes for reporting**

Within three (3) business days of becoming aware of an allegation, the CEO must notify the Commission that a reportable allegation has been made against a responsible person.

Within 30 calendar days, the CEO must provide certain detailed information about the allegations without a reasonable excuse. It is a criminal offence to fail to comply with the three (3) day and 30 day notification obligations without a reasonable excuse

### **Roles and responsibilities**

Under new criminal legislation, it is a requirement of all Moyne Shire employees, volunteers, and contractors to report suspected cases of child sexual abuse to Police.

Specific roles and responsibilities are:

#### ***Councillors***

Ensure Child Safe policies and procedures are implemented and reviewed regularly.

#### ***Chief Executive Officer***

Ensure child safety is a focus within the organisation by demonstrating strong leadership in child safe practices.

Ensure an organisational culture of respect is maintained in relation to Child Safety and Cultural Safety by planning organisational resources and requirements.

Ensure the creation of a culturally safe environment for Aboriginal people, people from culturally/linguistically diverse backgrounds, and for people with disabilities.

#### ***Executive Management Team***

Ensure Child Safe policies and procedures are implemented and reviewed regularly.

#### ***Full Management Team***

Ensure Child Safe policies and procedures are circulated and understood.  
Ensure all employees have Child Safe training.

Ensure induction processes include clear guidelines for compliance with organisational Child Safe policies and Code of Conduct.

Ensure a workplace culture of respect in relation to child safety and child cultural safety.

### ***People & Culture***

Maintain robust recruitment practices in line with Child Safe policies and related policies such as Police Checks and Working with Children Checks.

Ensure all inductees understand their responsibilities in relation to Child Safe Standards.

Ensure that all job descriptions contain statements about our commitment to Child Safe Standards, and make explicit reference to legislative checks.

Moyne Shire Council's Code of Conduct will include expected behaviours in relation to working with children and be signed by all employees, volunteers, and students.

Outline explicit guidelines for reporting and dealing with breaches of the Code of Conduct.

Decisions made when recruiting, assessing incidents and undertaking disciplinary action will always be thorough, transparent and based on evidence.

### ***Community Services Department***

Determine the processes for providing Child Safe training.

Early Years Coordinator will provide advice and support to all employees who need to make a report about suspected abuse.

Maintain networks with Child First and Health Alliances within Moyne Shire.

Ensure all enquiries and reports are dealt with in accordance with organisational procedure.

Maintain networks with Koorie Education Support officers, Koori Pre School Support Officers, and other relevant cultural bodies.

Maintain networks, relevant support bodies, and specialist staff.

### **Early Childhood Educators**

Curriculum development to be based upon the principles of empowering children to participate fully in their environment.

Create a culturally safe environment by creating opportunities for the voices of Aboriginal children and children from culturally/linguistically diverse backgrounds to be heard.

Ensuring a safe environment and strong inclusive practices for children of all abilities, and specialists support for children with disabilities.

Ensuring all staff understand and comply with the Child Safe Policy and Child Safe Reporting Policy and procedures including CS CHS 006 Child Safe Environment and Wellbeing.

Engaging with relevant cultural and educational networks and support services.

Ensuring all staff practice strong supervision of children at all times.

### **Employees, volunteers and students**

Maintain an understanding of the legislation and rights and responsibilities.

Participate in training and education programs.

In consultation with the People & Culture Department ensure all valid registrations, police checks, Working With Children Checks (WWCC), and details of professional development and training are maintained and available to the organisation.

Report any breaches of Code of Conduct.

Report any indictments/convictions that may impact on individual's employment/engagement.

### **Contractors**

Contribute to the safety and protection of children.

Understand and adhere to legislative responsibilities and requirements.

Work within the Organisation's culture of respect for Child Safety and Cultural Safety.

## **10. REVIEW**

This policy will be reviewed every two years and following significant incidents if they occur. We will ensure that families and children have the opportunity to contribute. Where possible we do our best to work with local Aboriginal communities, culturally and/or linguistically diverse communities and people with a disability.

The organisation regularly reviews, evaluates and improves child safe practices.

Complaints, concerns and safety incidents are analysed to identify causes and systemic failures to inform continuous improvement. The organisation reports



on the findings of relevant reviews to staff and volunteers, community and families and children and young people.

Version Number	Details of change
OD018 version 2	The policy has been reviewed to reflect and incorporate a new set of Child Safe Standards released by the Victorian Government.
OD001 version 3	