



## 1.0 Purpose

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This policy outlines Canterbury Bankstown Council's (Council) commitment to embedding a culture of safety for children throughout our organisation.

Council aims to meet and maintain the *National Principles for Child Safe Organisations* and the *NSW Child Safe Standards* by providing a safe environment, empowering children and young people, educating staff and the community about child protection responsibilities, and responding appropriately to child safety concerns. The principles and standards are complementary in addressing the necessary elements for child safe practices.

The policy outlines Council's expectations of its workers (paid and volunteer) when interacting and engaging with children. The policy focuses on how Council can build and maintain a child safe environment that is inclusive, transparent and promotes children's participation.

## 2.0 Scope

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The policy applies to all Council employees, Councillors, volunteers, students, trainees, contractors and consultants. In particular it applies to staff interacting with and/or working directly with children, to management staff responsible for those workers, and to staff in recruitment of those workers. It applies to all activities that involve, result in or relate to contact with children.

The policy impacts on all those aged under 18 years.

## 3.0 Terms and Definitions

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<b>Child</b>	A person aged under 18 years. Under child protection legislation, a child is defined as aged under 16 years for Mandatory Reporting, and as under 18 years for Reportable Conduct. A young person is defined as aged 16 and 17 years for Mandatory Reporting.
<b>Child related work</b>	Providing services for under 18s, where the work normally involves being face to face with children or where contact with children is more than incidental to their work. (As defined by the <i>Child Protection (Working with Children) Act 2012</i> ).
<b>Child Safe Organisation</b>	An organisation that consciously and systematically creates conditions that reduce the likelihood of harm to children; creates conditions that increase the likelihood of identifying and reporting harm to children; and responds appropriately to disclosures, allegations and suspicions of harm to children.
<b>Child Safety Officers</b>	Individuals within Council designated by the General Manager to manage reporting and investigation requirements in relation to mandatory reporting of children at significant risk of harm and reportable conduct of staff.
<b>Mandatory reporting</b>	The legal requirement for any person delivering a service to children or in management of a service for children to report concerns for a child at risk of significant harm.

**Reportable conduct**

A sexual offence with or in the presence of a child; Sexual misconduct with or in the presence of a child; Ill treatment of a child; An assault against a child; Neglect/failure to protect a child from abuse or harmful environments; and/or psychological harm.

**Well-being**

The state of doing well especially in relation to one's happiness or success. When children are safe they are most likely to succeed and be happy.

**Working with Children Check**

A clearance to work with children that is required of anyone involved in child related work.

## 4.0 Policy Statement

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Council is committed to the safety and well-being of children and expects all children who participate in its programs or engage in its activities will have a safe and happy experience.

Council is committed to the *National Principles for Child Safe Organisations*:

1. Child safety and well-being 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 well-being.
4. Equity is upheld and diverse needs respected in policy and practice.

Council is committed to the *NSW Child Safe Standards*:

1. Child safety is embedded in organisational leadership, governance and culture.
2. Children participate in decisions affecting them and are taken seriously.
3. Families and communities are informed and involved.
4. Equity is upheld and diverse needs are taken into account.
5. People working with children are suitable and supported.
6. Processes to respond to complaints of child abuse are child-focused.
7. Staff are equipped with the knowledge, skills and awareness to keep children safe through continual education and training.
8. Physical and online environments minimise the opportunity for abuse or other kinds of harm to occur.
9. Implementation of the Child Safe Standards is continuously reviewed and improved.
10. Policies and procedures document how the organisation is child safe.

## 5.0 Policy Principles

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This policy is aligned to the Safe and Strong destination of the *CBCity 2028 Community Strategic Plan* and to the *Child Friendly City Action Plan*.

The following principles represent Council's commitment and approach to the safety and well-being of children.



## Children's Participation:

- Council promotes children's safety and well-being in both physical and online environments.
- Staff are alert to children at possible risk of harm and follow the procedures for either mandatory reporting or reportable conduct.
- We involve children in decision making, especially about matters that will directly affect them. We listen to children, respect their opinions and take them seriously.

## Staff Recruitment:

- Council applies and maintains a rigorous recruitment, screening and selection process including relevant interview questioning, confirming Working with Children Check status, and thorough reference checking of all preferred applicants for roles that engage or work with children and young people.
- Staff will follow the Working with Children Check Policy & Procedure.
- Induction of new staff includes a focus on child protection and child safety and well-being.

## Complaints Management and Reporting:

- Council abides by all legislation related to managing complaints, reporting concerns for a child's safety and well-being, and reporting allegations of staff misconduct.
- Mandatory reporters use the childstory reporter website to determine risk of significant harm and to report when advised. Staff will follow the Child Protection Mandatory Reporting Procedure.
- All staff will report to their supervisor any concerns related to reportable conduct of staff or contractors. Staff will follow the Child Protection Reportable Conduct Procedure.

## Training, Support and Supervision of Workers:

- All staff working in Children's Services will undertake and achieve accredited training in "Identify and Respond to Children and Young People at Risk" and attend refresher training every two years or as needed.
- Other workers (aquatics, sports and recreation, libraries, youth workers) who interact with children and young people will receive relevant training in child protection.
- All other staff will receive information on keeping children safe, relevant to their role.

## Risk Management:

- Council adopts a risk management approach to the safety of children through the effective recruitment and training of staff; identifying and mitigating risks in the physical and online environments; developing action plans to deal with risks; encouraging and involving children in decision making; and ensuring children are informed of their rights and empowered to identify and report when they feel unsafe.

## Communication:

- This policy will be placed on Council's corporate website and promoted through a communications plan.
- This policy will be available in various forms, where possible, to cater for diverse language backgrounds or special needs.
- Council will keep staff and the community updated regarding child protection issues and responsibilities.

This policy refers to other Child Protection documents that give more detailed guidance on the processes and procedures that we are required to follow to ensure compliance with child protection legislation and the safety and well-being of children across all areas of our organisation.



## 6.0 Monitoring and Review

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### 6.1 Monitoring

The Manager Children's Services will monitor the implementation of the policy and identify any key milestones.

### 6.2 Review

Every two years or as legislation changes. First review due March 2023.

## 7.0 Approval

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### 7.1 Policy Owner

Manager Children's Services

### 7.2 Authorisation

Adopted by Canterbury-Bankstown Council on [INSERT DATE].

### 7.3 Modifications

Document any approved modifications including the date of adoption and a short description of the change.

Version	Date Issued	Notes	By

## 8.0 Related Documents

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### 8.1 Laws and Standards

- *United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child*
- *Children & Young Persons (Care and Protection) Act 1998*
- *Children Legislation Amendment (Wood Enquiry Recommendations) Act 2009*
- *Child Protection (Working with Children) Act 2012*
- *Children's Guardian Act 2019*
- *Education and Care Services National Law & Regulations*



- *Government Information (Public Access) Act 2009 NSW*
- *Local Government Act 1993 (NSW)*
- *Early Childhood Australia Code of Ethics*
- *Council Code of Conduct*

## 8.2 Policies, Procedures

- *Child Protection Mandatory Reporting Procedure*
- *Child Protection Reportable Conduct Procedure*
- *Working with Children Policy & Procedure*
- *Complaint Handling Policy*