



Child Safe Code of Conduct





If there is immediate danger to a child urgently call the police 000

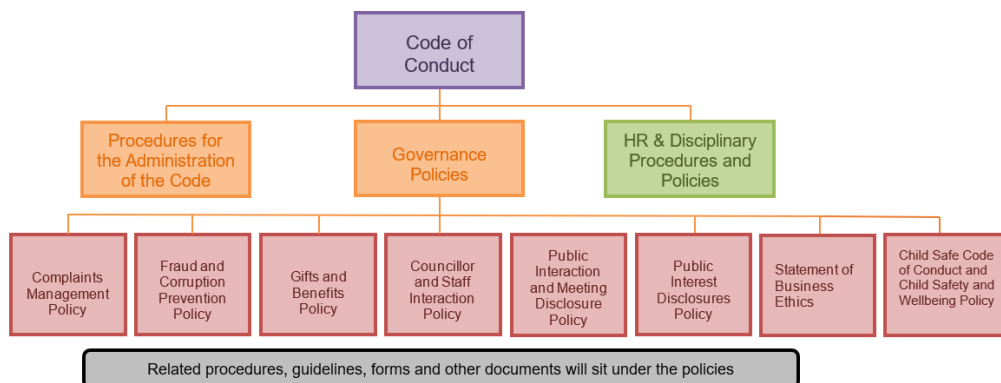
Introduction

Canterbury-Bankstown Council (Council) is committed to being a Child Safe Organisation and to leading and promoting child safety within the community. Council views children as individuals with rights and takes responsibility for upholding those rights. Council has zero tolerance for child abuse or neglect.

This Code of Conduct applies to all paid and unpaid staff (including volunteers, interns or trainees) of Council, who are responsible for the safety and wellbeing of children who engage with the Council. All paid and unpaid staff are expected to act in accordance with this Code of Conduct in their physical and online interactions with children under the age of 18 years.

Council demonstrates good governance through its rigorous and transparent decision-making processes, supplemented by the various Codes and policies that have been developed to guide its operations.

The Child Safe Code of Conduct supports Council's primary Code of Conduct by establishing clear expectations for appropriate behaviour, and governs how staff are required to behave and respond to children. It forms parts of Council's Code of Conduct Framework as the principal governance document on child safety and is an important part of Council's commitment to safety and the wellbeing of children.



Key Principles

This Code of Conduct supports the following key principles of Council:

- Leadership
- Selflessness
- Impartiality
- Accountability
- Openness
- Honesty
- Respect



Acceptable and Unacceptable Behaviours

All staff of Council are responsible for the safety and wellbeing of children who engage with Council. All staff are expected to act in accordance with this Child Safe Code of Conduct, Council's Code of Conduct, Council policies and relevant legislation.

Children, families and community members are encouraged to speak up if they have concerns about a child.

Council staff will:

- Treat all children with respect, and value their ideas and opinions;
- Welcome all children and their families and carers by promoting inclusion and cultural safety;
- Listen to children and respond to them appropriately, particularly if they communicate (verbally or non-verbally) that they do not feel safe or well;
- Adhere to all relevant Australian and NSW legislation and Council's child safe policies and procedures;
- Participate in all compulsory training;
- Raise concerns with management if risks to child safety are identified, including cultural, environmental and operational risks;
- Take all reasonable steps to protect children from abuse;
- Take a child seriously if they disclose abuse;
- Promptly report all suspected or disclosed abuse;
- Ensure breaches of this Code are reported immediately;
- Respect the privacy of children and their families by keeping all information about child protection concerns confidential;
- Uphold the rights of the child and always prioritise their needs; and
- Comply with the relevant legislation and the Council's policies and procedures on record keeping and information sharing.

Council staff must not:

- Condone or participate in illegal, unsafe or abusive behaviour towards children, including physical, sexual or psychological abuse, ill-treatment, neglect or grooming;
- Ignore or disregard any concerns, suspicions or disclosures of child abuse;
- Fail to report information in accordance with Council policies and procedures if it is known a child has been abused;
- Exaggerate or trivialise child abuse issues;
- Use hurtful, discriminatory or offensive behaviour or language with children;
- Fail to report information to police if it is known that a child has been abused;
- Engage in unwarranted and inappropriate touching involving a child;
- Persistently criticise and/or denigrate a child;
- Verbally assault a child or create a climate of fear;
- Offer children alcohol, cigarettes or other drugs;
- Show children pornographic images;
- Share details of sexual experiences with a child;
- Use sexual language or gestures in the presence of children; and



- Disclose personal or sensitive information about a child, including images of a child, unless the child and their parent or legal guardian consent, or unless required to do so by Council's policies and procedures for reporting concerns.

Council staff understand the following behaviours may be of concern (on their own, they may not constitute a breach of this Code of Conduct but together may indicate a pattern of behaviour that poses a risk to the safety of children):

- Babysitting, mentoring and/or tutoring a child out of work hours (without managerial approval for this kind of secondary employment);
- Showing favour to one child over another; and
- Being alone with a child when there is no professional reason for doing so.

The following are specific provisions for child-related roles within Council:

Council staff will:

- Welcome parents and carers to participate in decisions about their child and any other matters about their safety;
- Work within a team to ensure that the needs of the child (and their family) remain the paramount focus;
- Inform parents and carers if there are situations that need to be safely managed but are outside the boundaries of this Code of Conduct; and
- Report any conflicts of interest to the respective manager as soon as possible (such as a pre-existing relationship to a child outside of the Council).

Council staff must not:

- Deliberately prevent a child from forming friendships;
- Encourage communication with a child in a private setting;
- Be alone with a child unnecessarily*;
- Work with children while under the influence of alcohol or prohibited drugs; and
- Arrange personal contact, including online contact, with children they are working with for a purpose unrelated to the Council's activities.*

*If you are a Youth Volunteer and have concerns regarding meeting this criteria due to prior relationships, please discuss this immediately with your manager.

Council staff will identify and act on the following if they think this Code of Conduct has been breached by another person in the Council:

- Act to prioritise the best interests of children;
- Take actions promptly to ensure that children are safe;
- Promptly report any concerns to the respective manager, Council's Child Safety Officer, General Manager or another leader in the Council;
- Follow Council's policies and procedures for receiving and responding to complaints and concerns regarding child safety; and

Comply with the relevant legislation and Council policies and procedures.

Please note:



It is an offence if an adult in child-related work in an organisation knows of another adult there that poses a serious risk of abusing a child (under 18 years), and they have the power to reduce or remove the risk, and they negligently fail to do so.

All adults in NSW are required to report information to police if they know, believe or reasonably ought to know that a child (under 18 years) has been abused.



Terms and Definitions

Child for the purposes of this document a child is anyone under the age of 18.

Child-related role means a role which involves direct contact by the worker with a child or children where that contact is a usual part of and more than incidental to the work. It also includes a role that is likely to involve contact with a child in connection with at least one of the 20 legislated categories of child-related work, which include but are not limited to:

- Education and care and child-minding services;
- Clubs or other bodies providing programs and services for children; or
- Entertainment for children – includes sports, cultural or other entertainment venues used primarily by children and entertainment service for children.

It may also include a worker who has access to confidential records or information about children.

(Note: Child-related role does not include the work of team members who provide administrative, clerical or maintenance services, or other ancillary services, if the work does not ordinarily involve contact with children for extended periods.)

Domestic and family violence against a child or child's parent, carer or guardian is child abuse. It can involve physical violence or threats, verbal abuse, emotional abuse, psychological abuse, sexual abuse, financial abuse or social abuse.

Grooming is defined as behaviours that are intended to manipulate and control a child, their family and other support networks with the intent of gaining access to the child and obtaining their compliance and silence in order to avoid abuse being discovered. It does so by building trust and favouring some children over others in order to isolate and manipulate them. It may involve giving gifts, providing alcohol or other drugs, special attention, close physical contact or exposure to sexual content.

Neglect is the failure to provide the basic necessities of life, such as food, shelter, supervision, clothing and hygiene, as well as necessary medical care or education. This includes leaving a child alone in a car for any period of time, or leaving a child/young person alone anywhere for a certain period of time and under particular circumstances, providing no safe place to stay, withholding food, not providing necessary or recommended medical care or mental health care, and not enrolling a child in school or allowing habitual absences.

Physical abuse is a non-accidental injury inflicted on a child/young person. This includes children being deliberately shaken (babies), or hurt by excessive discipline. It can include welts, cuts, burns, fractures, dislocations, bruising, internal injuries, attempted strangulation and genital mutilation, as well as injuries caused during an incident of domestic violence.

Psychological harm occurs as a result of persistent, repetitive behaviours that have a negative impact on a child/young person's development, social needs, self-worth or self-esteem. This can involve punishing, demeaning and scapegoating. Psychological harm also



includes deliberate exposure to traumatic events, criminal or corrupting, severe parental/carer mental health or substance abuse, and chronic or severe domestic violence.

Sexual abuse involves assaulting, mistreating or exposing a child/young person to sexual activities with an adult, or older person. This includes a range of adult contact behaviours (e.g. touching in sexual manner, penetration or oral sex) and non-contact behaviours (e.g. Exposing self to child, exposing child to pornographic material or acts), and child prostitution.



Related legislation and documents

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 Policies and Procedures

- *Child Safety and Well-being Policy*
- *Child Protection Mandatory Reporting Procedure*
- *Child Protection Reportable Conduct Procedure*
- *Working with Children Policy & Procedure*
- *Complaints Management Policy*
- *Corporate Information Management (CIM) Policy*
- *Canterbury Bankstown Code of Conduct*
- *Children Unattended in the Library Procedure*