



## 1.0 Purpose

The Child Safe Complaints Handling Policy (Policy) provides direction to Canterbury-Bankstown Council (Council) officials and other workers on how to engage with children who make a complaint related/specific to their safety, well-being, or welfare while attending a Council service, facility, or event.

This Policy aims to ensure that Council team members and other workers will treat complaints in a manner that provides a safe space where children feel valued, are taken seriously, and are involved in decision making. It reflects Council's commitment to the *National Principles for Child Safe Organisations* and the *NSW Child Safe Standards*.

## 2.0 Scope

This Policy applies to all Council officials, including Councillors, and other workers (contractors, students gaining work experience or volunteers).

In particular, the Policy applies to complaints received from, or on behalf of, a child regarding their safety, wellbeing, or welfare while attending a Council service, facility, or event.

This Policy is related to persons aged under 18 years.

## 3.0 Terms and Definitions

In this Policy the terms below have the following meanings:

Term	Definition
<b>Child</b>	A person aged under 18 years.
<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>Complaint</b>	An expression of dissatisfaction with Council's policies, procedures, employees, or quality of service, facility or event.
<b>Complaints Coordinator</b>	A person who has delegation to receive and address complaints on behalf of Council.
<b>Council official</b>	An individual who carries out public official functions or acts in the capacity of a public official, and includes Councillors, members of staff of a Council, administrators, Council committee members, conduct reviewers and Council delegates.
<b>Other Workers</b>	Contractors or subcontractors engaged through a third-party supplier; students gaining work experience or volunteers.
<b>Team Member</b>	A permanent or temporary term, full time or part time employee of Council. or a person appointed to a position with Council under a contract of employment.



## **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.

## **4.0 Policy Statement**

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Council is committed to embedding a child safe culture throughout its organisation. Council aims to ensure that all team members and other workers are confident handling complaints from children.

Council supports children's right to feel valued, be listened to, and taken seriously. It is the responsibility of all adults to uphold these rights.

Council aims to meet and maintain the *NSW Child Safe Standards* by providing a safe environment, empowering children and young people, educating team members about child protection responsibilities, and responding appropriately to child safety complaints.

This Policy is aligned to the *Safe and Strong* destination of the *CBCity 2036 Community Strategic Plan* and the *Child Friendly City Action Plan*.

## **5.0 Policy Criteria**

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Council is committed to the following principles to guide interactions between Council officials and children to:

- Teach children they have a right to be heard, listened to and believed
- Teach children to feel safe, valued, and taken seriously
- Encourage and support children to regularly contribute to decisions
- Actively seek the opinions of children and when doing so consider their age, development, maturity, understanding, abilities and how they communicate
- Minimise power imbalance and work proactively to empower children
- Recognise the importance of friendships and encourage support from their peers
- Recognise signs of harm and facilitate child-friendly ways for children to communicate and raise their concerns
- Be equipped with the knowledge, skills and awareness to keep children safe through continual education and training
- Follow Council's policies and procedures for receiving and responding to complaints and concerns
- Comply with legislative requirements on reporting (where relevant), and within Council's policy and procedure on internal and external reporting.

When engaging with children, Council aims to provide an environment where children:

- Can express their views and are provided opportunities to participate in decisions that affect their lives
- Feel safe and are supported to develop and sustain friendships
- Have access to child appropriate abuse prevention programs and information



And where:

- People working with children are suitable and supported
- Processes to respond to complaints of child abuse are child focused
- Supports are provided for children to have safe and happy experiences in our community, accessing our facilities and in the care of our services.

Where relevant, a complaint regarding a Council official will separately be reviewed in accordance with:

- Council's Code of Conduct and Child Safe Code of Conduct
- Child Safe Complaints Handling Procedure
- Mandatory Reporting Procedure
- Reportable Conduct Procedure.

## 6.0 Approval and Review

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### 6.1 Policy Owner

Manager Children Services

### 6.2 Authorisation

Adopted by Canterbury-Bankstown Council on [DD/MM/YYYY]. (Only indicate the original adoption date)

## 7.0 Related Documents

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### 7.1 Laws and Standards

- *Child Protection (Working with Children) Act 2012 (NSW)*
- *Children & Young Persons (Care and Protection) Act 1998 (NSW)*
- *National Principles for Child Safe Organisations*
- *The NSW Child Safe Standards*
- *United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child*

### 7.2 Policies and Procedures

- Child Friendly City Action Plan
- Child Safe Code of Conduct
- Child Safe Complaints Handling Procedure
- Child Safety and Well-being Policy
- Child Protection Mandatory Reporting Procedure
- Child Protection Reportable Conduct Procedure