

	<b>Working with Children Code Of Conduct</b>	
	<b>Version Adoption by Council:</b> 27 January 2021 <b>Resolution Number:</b> 21/016 <b>Current Version:</b> D18/12921	
	<b>Administered by:</b> General Manager Development and Community	<b>Last Review Date:</b> 2019 <b>Next Review Date:</b> 2023
<b>Document No:</b> D21/2572	<b>Strategic Outcome</b> 4.1.1.3 Support community safety	

## 1. Objective

- 1.1. Council is committed to ensuring that children and young people are treated with sensitivity, respect, fairness and dignity within a welcoming and supportive environment that is free from all types of abuse and inappropriate behaviour.
- 1.2. This Code of Conduct has been drafted in accordance with section 114 of the South Australian's Children and Young People (Safety) Act 2017 and Council's Child Safe Environment Policy.

## 2. Scope

- 2.1 This Policy applies to all staff, elected members, volunteers, children, young people, parents and carers who access Council services. All employees, volunteers, contractors, consultants and any other persons engaged to provide any service wholly or partly to children on behalf of Council are required to comply with this Code of Conduct, as well as children, young people, parents, and carers who access Council services.
- 2.2 The standards in this Code of Conduct are consistent with those established by the Department for Child Development and international human rights principles as enshrined within the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child.
- 2.3 This Code of Conduct does not cover every situation – however, the values, ethics and standards it sets are a reference point to help make decisions relating to situations not referred to in this Code of Conduct.
- 2.4 This Code of Conduct sets out the minimum standards of behaviour expected during any interactions with children and young people in accessing Council services.
- 2.5 Council's Safe Environment Contact Officer can be contacted for further information relating to the application of this Code of Conduct or Child Safe Environments Policy.

### 3. Definitions

**Child or young person** means a person under the age of 18.

**Council** means Adelaide Plains Council.

**DCP** is Department of Child Protection.

**Employee** is all full time, part time and casual employees employed by Council.

**Harm** includes physical and psychological harm caused by sexual, physical, mental or emotional abuse caused by neglect.

**Mandatory reporting obligation** is the legislated requirement to report specific suspicions or incidents of abuse or neglect on vulnerable persons.

**Prescribed position** is a position in which a person works with children, including people who:

- provide a service or undertake an activity that is child related work in the course of their employment;
- carry on a business in which an employee works with children (whether or not the person works with children).

Prescribed positions may be held by employees, volunteers, contractors, persons undertaking educational/vocational training or elected members.

**Safe Environment Contact Officer** is the Manager Library and Community.

**Volunteer** is a person who is acting on a voluntary basis (irrespective of whether the person receives out-of-pocket expenses); (as defined in the *Work Health Safety Act 2012*).

**Vulnerable people** refers to those who may be at risk of abuse or exploitation due to their dependency on others or experiences of disadvantage, and could include people with a disability, the frail aged, people from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds, refugees and those living in poverty.

### 4. Policy Statement

#### 4.1 Supportive Behaviours

4.1.1 Staff, volunteers and those who access Council services must at all times:

- treat children and young people with dignity, respect, sensitivity, fairness and equity;
- ensure children and young people are protected from any form of harm or discrimination;
- ensure the environment is safe for children and young people – this includes protection from violence, bullying, teasing, threatening and sexist or racist remarks.

4.1.2 Role model positive behaviours:

- encourage children and young people to participate in decision making processes;
- give constructive feedback to children and young people; and

**Note:** Electronic version in Content Manager is the controlled version. Printed copies are considered uncontrolled.

- ensures children and young people are aware of their rights, including their rights to respect, fairness and safety.

4.1.3 Staff and volunteers must be aware of their mandatory notification responsibilities and inform the Child Abuse Report Line (13 14 78) or report online at <https://www.childprotection.sa.gov.au/reporting-child-abuse> if they form a suspicion of abuse or neglect; or discuss their concern with their supervisor or manager; and where relevant, explain the commitment to maintaining confidentiality, including situations that would require the sharing of information, for example mandatory notification responsibilities.

#### 4.2 Safe and protective work practices

4.2.1 Staff and volunteers must adopt safe and protective work practices.

4.2.2 Staff and volunteers must be aware of potential situations and actions when working with children or young people that may be misinterpreted or misconstrued, and adopt safe work practices where possible work in an open and visible environment when with children and young people;

- dress appropriately – for staff and volunteers in accordance with Council’s Uniform Policy;
- adopt a calm and non-judgemental attitude to allow young people to feel safe to raise complaints or concerns
- where necessary, explain grievance procedures and avenues for complaint in simple and clear language that is appropriate to the age of the child or young person.

#### 4.3 Unacceptable Behaviours include the following:

- any form of discrimination against a child or young person on the basis of ethnicity, culture, religion, gender, sexuality or any other grounds;
- hitting or physically assaulting a child or young person;
- using language that is offensive, abusive or otherwise inappropriate;
- showing preferential treatment to a child or young person over others;
- shout, yell or speak to a child or young person in an angry, intimidating or threatening manner;
- engaging in rough physical play with children or young people;
- unnecessary physical contact with children or young people;
- condone or participate in illegal or unsafe behaviours when working with children or young people;
- make inappropriate self-disclosures relating to any participation (past or present) in illegal or unsafe behaviours;
- initiating or engaging in ‘friendship’ relationships with a child or young person;
- it is not acceptable to make arrangements to socialise outside the work environment with children and young people;
- it is not acceptable to take children or young people to your home or on outings that do not fall within professional duties or that have not been authorised by parents or guardians;
- acting in a manner that is sexually inappropriate – this includes verbal, physical and implied behaviours;
- initiating or developing a physical/sexual ‘relationship’ with a child or young person;

- Initiating or developing any relationship that could be deemed as exploitative or abusive with a child or young person.

Failure to report disclosures of abuse or suspicions of abuse to the relevant supervisor and/or Families SA Child Abuse Report Line.

#### 4.4 Breaches of Policy/Disciplinary Action

- 4.4.1 All staff and volunteers have a responsibility for promoting and supporting these values and standards of behaviour.
- 4.4.2 When a staff member or volunteer is found to have acted outside of this Child Safe Code of Conduct, they will be subject to disciplinary action commensurate with the seriousness of their actions. This disciplinary action may take the form of a warning, counselling or termination of their employment.
- 4.4.3 Breaches of this Code of Conduct will be investigated on a case by case basis and in accordance with the Council's Staff Performance Management Policy.

#### 4.5 Reporting – if you have a concern

- 4.5.1 All staff, contractors, volunteers and those accessing Council services have a role in supporting this Code of Conduct by raising their concerns with the relevant Team Leader, Manager or General Manager.
- 4.5.2 Any questions of compliance raised by Council Members, other staff or the community regarding this Code will be considered by the relevant General Manager or the Chief Executive Officer.
- 4.5.3 If staff have any difficulties or questions regarding this Child Safe Code of Conduct, they should discuss these with their Team Leader, Manager, General Manager or Safe Environment Contact Officer.

### 5. Related Documents

Assessing and Handling Working with Children and Criminal History Information Policy

Code of Conduct for Council Employees

Code of Conduct for Council Members

Code of Conduct for Volunteers

Safe Environment for Children Policy

Volunteer Management Policy

Working with Children Code of Conduct

### 6. Records Management

All documents relating to this Policy will be registered in Council's Record Management System and remain confidential where identified.

## **7. Document Review**

This Policy will be reviewed every two years to ensure legislative compliance with the DHS Principles of Good Practice and effective maintenance of a safe environment as well as that it continues to meet the requirements of Council and its activities and programs.

## **8. References**

*Local Government Act 1999 (SA)*

*Child Safety (Prohibited Persons) Act 2016 (SA)*

*Child Safety (Prohibited Persons) Regulations 2019 (SA)*

*Children and Young People (Safety) Act 2017 (SA)*

*Children and Young People (Safety) Regulations 2017 (SA)*

*DHS Principles of Good Practice*

## **9. Further Information**

Members of the public may inspect this Policy free of charge on Council's website at [www.apc.sa.gov.au](http://www.apc.sa.gov.au) or at Council's Principal Office at:

2a Wasleys Road, Mallala SA 5502

A copy of this Policy may be obtained on payment of a fee.

Any queries in relation to this Policy must be made in writing to [info@apc.sa.gov.au](mailto:info@apc.sa.gov.au) to the Attention of General Manager – Development and Community.