

CHILD SAFE POLICY

Approval Body:	Council
Endorsement Date:	30 August 2022
Current Version:	3.0 <i>Policy documents change from time to time and it is recommended that you consult the electronic reference copy on the Intranet to ensure that you have the current version.</i>
Compulsory Review Cycle:	4 years
Review Date:	2026 <i>It is recognised that, from time to time, circumstances may change leading to the need for minor administrative changes to this document. Where an update does not materially alter this document, such a change may be made administratively.</i> <i>Examples include a change to the name of a Council department, a change to the name of a Federal or State Government department, and a minor update to legislation which does not have a material impact. However, any change or update which materially alters this document must be by resolution of ELT.</i>
Responsible Department:	Safer Communities
Relevant Legislation:	<i>Crimes Act 1958 (Vic), Worker Screening Act 2020, Local Government Act 1989, Children Youth and Families Act 2005, Commission for Children and Young People Act 2012, Child Wellbeing and Safety (Child Safe Standards Compliance and Enforcement) Amendment Act 2021, Disability Act 2006.</i>
Relevant Council Documents:	Accessibility Framework for Action 2018-2021, City of Casey Council Plan (2021-2025), Child, Youth and Family Strategic Service Plan (under development), Councillor Code of Conduct, Employee and Volunteer Code of Conduct, Gender Equality and Prevention of Violence Against Women 10-Year Strategic Plan, Health and Wellbeing Strategy 2021-25, Privacy Policy, Procurement Policy, Reconciliation Action Plan.
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1. Purpose and Intent

The City of Casey is committed to creating and maintaining a child safe organisation where protecting children and preventing and responding to child abuse is embedded in the everyday thinking and practice of all Councillors, employees, contractors and volunteers.

This Policy reflects Council's intention to be aspirational – not just compliant – in meeting the requirements of the Victorian Child Safe Standards. The City of Casey is uniquely positioned to be an industry leader that models good practice and processes in keeping children safe from harm or abuse.

This Policy provides information and guidance to all levels of our organisation and requires that all Councillors, employees, contractors and volunteers commit to an active creation, demonstration and maintenance of a child safe culture.

Council will do this in accordance with our City of Casey values being to dream big, empower each other and make our community proud. We Dream Big in setting an aspirational intention to become an industry leader in child safe practice; we Empower Each Other through clear reporting procedures and a culture of child safety; we Make our Community Proud by protecting children and families and being a leader in child safe practice within the region.

Council acknowledges that child safe practice would not be possible without the valued support of a number of key external stakeholders.

In 2015, the Victorian *Child, Wellbeing and Safety Act 2005* was amended to include the Child Safe Standards. The Victorian Child Safe Standards (the Standards) are a compulsory framework that support organisations that provide services to children to implement policies and procedures that prevent, respond to and report allegations of child abuse.

In 2021, further amendments were made to strengthen the regulatory framework by replacing the existing seven standards and introducing eleven new standards. Key changes include:

- the involvement of families and communities in an organisation's efforts to keep children and young people safe
- a greater focus on the safety of Aboriginal children and young people
- managing the risk of child abuse in online environments
- greater clarity on governance, systems and processes to keep children and young people safe.

The eleven Standards are:

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.
2. Child safety and wellbeing is embedded in organisational leadership, governance and culture.
3. Children and young people are empowered about their rights, participate in decisions affecting them and are taken seriously.
4. Families and communities are informed and involved in promoting child safety and wellbeing.
5. Equity is upheld and diverse needs respected in policy and practice.
6. People working with children and young people are suitable and supported to reflect child safety and wellbeing values in practice.
7. Processes for complaints and concerns are child focused.
8. Staff and volunteers are equipped with the knowledge, skills and awareness to keep children and young people safe through ongoing education and training.
9. Physical and online environments promote safety and wellbeing while minimising the opportunity for children and young people to be harmed.
10. Implementation of the Child Safe Standards is regularly reviewed and improved.
11. Policies and procedures document how the organisation is safe for children and young people.

In 2017, the *Child Wellbeing and Safety (Child Safe Standards Compliance and Enforcement) Amendment Act 2021* was amended to give power to the Commission for Children and Young People (CCYP) to oversee the Reportable Conduct Scheme (the Scheme). The Scheme began on 1 July 2017, with the City of Casey coming into the scope of the Scheme on 1 January 2018. The Scheme:

- requires organisations to respond to allegations of child abuse made against their workers and volunteers either within work or of outside work, and to notify the CCYP of any allegations

- enables the CCYP to independently oversee those responses
- facilitates information sharing between organisations, their regulators, Victoria Police and the Department of Justice and Community Safety, and regulates the Working with Children Check Unit and the CCYP¹.

In 2017, the City of Casey formed an internal Advisory Group led by the Child Safe Coordinator and sponsored by the Director Community Life. The Advisory Group includes members of the Casey Leadership Team (CLT). Members include (but are not limited to, as required):

- Manager Child, Youth and Family
- Manager Connected Communities
- Manager Safer Communities
- Manager Active Communities
- Manager Arts and Cultural Development
- Manager Governance
- Manager People and Culture.

The Advisory Group provides governance around the implementation of the Standards and the Scheme.

The Advisory Group meets quarterly to:

- review quarterly analysis of identified child safe incident reports, breaches of Child Safe Policy and procedures, internal investigations, and other serious incidents
- support the Child Safe Coordinator to implement the established Standards Action Plan and Scheme
- ensure the City of Casey is at the forefront of being a child safe organisation, and reinforcing that child safety is of paramount importance to Council
- remain aware of internal and external child safety issues, which may include quarterly reports that examine data, trends, and new and emerging risks
- advocate and educate the broader CLT on the Standards and encourage child safeguarding practices across all departments
- monitor the implementation of this Procedural Guide across departments
- develop processes and procedures to ensure that the Procedural Guide commitments are maintained and improved over time.

The role of the Advisory Group assists Council to identify ways to strengthen child safety in the organisation, and ensures the City of Casey leadership remain aware of the implementation of the Standards and Scheme.

2. Scope

This Policy applies to all Casey Councillors, employees, volunteers and work experience/work placement students, irrespective of whether or not they are engaged in a child facing role.

Council will require contracted organisations to comply with the child safe legislation as part of their contractual agreements with the City of Casey. Individuals who are employed by contracted organisations are not considered employees of the City of Casey under the Scheme. This means that contracted organisations are not in scope of the City of Casey's Scheme.

3. Definitions

Key term	Definition
Aboriginal Child	A child or young person up to the age of 18 years who is of Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander descent, identifies as Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander, and is accepted as Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander by an Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander community.
Abuse	Abuse is an act (or acts) which endangers a child's health, wellbeing and/or development. It can be a single event or a series of traumatic events. It includes: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Physical abuse

Key term	Definition
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Sexual abuse • Emotional and Psychological abuse • Cumulative harm • Exposure to family violence • Neglect • Grooming • Multi-dimensional harm • Cultural abuse
Council	means Casey City Council, being a body corporate constituted as a municipal Council under the Local Government Act 1989.
Councillors	The Council of the City of Casey comprises three Administrators appointed by the Minister for Local Government in adherence with the Local Government Act 2020. Administrators are appointed in place of elected Councillors to October 2024. All references to Councillors in this document equally refers to the Administrators.
Council officer	means the Chief Executive Officer and staff of Council appointed by the Chief Executive Officer.
Child or young person	means any child or young person 17 years or under.
Child facing role	<p>Employment where duties required include direct contact with children.</p> <p>Direct contact with children: Any access or contact with children and young people when a parent or guardian is not present and while the employee or volunteer is completing their normal duties. This includes face to face, physical, oral and electronic communication.</p> <p>The Casey definition of direct contact exceeds that of the Department of Justice and Community Safety to include work within any occupational field that has access or contact with children and young people when a parent or guardian is not present and the Councillor, employee or volunteer is completing their normal duties.</p> <p>Incidental contact: Where contact is rare, one off and when the parent or guardian is present.</p>
Child safe organisation	In the context of the Child Safe Standards, a child safe organisation is one that takes deliberate steps to protect children from abuse. This commitment to protecting children must be embedded in an organisation's culture and policies ² .
Children from culturally and/or linguistically diverse backgrounds	A child or young person who identifies as having particular cultural or linguistic affiliations by virtue of their place of birth, ancestry or ethnic origin, religion, preferred language or language spoken at home, or because of their parents' identification on a similar basis.
Children with a disability	Use of the term 'disability' is consistent with that in the <i>Disability Act 2006</i> . In relation to a child, the use of the word 'disability' incorporates

Key term	Definition
	any physical, sensory, neurological disability, acquired brain injury or intellectual disability or developmental delay that affects a child's ability to undertake everyday activities. A disability can occur at any time in life. Children can be born with a disability or acquire a disability suddenly through an injury or illness. Some disabilities may be obvious while others are hidden ³ .
Child Safe Standards	In 2015, the <i>Child Wellbeing and Safety Act 2005</i> was amended to include Child Safe Standards. The Standards are designed to drive cultural change and embed practice of protecting children into the everyday thinking of an organisation ⁴ .
Contracted Organisation	Any type of business entity (which may include all their employees and sub-contractors) contracted by the City of Casey to provide a specific service or range of services in accordance with the contract terms and the defined scope of the contract.
Cultural safety of Aboriginal children	Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander children must be given the opportunity to be connected to culture and provided with a safe, nurturing and positive environment where they are comfortable with being themselves, actively encouraged to express their culture, their spirituality, belief systems and enjoy their cultural rights.
Cultural safety for children from culturally and/or linguistically diverse backgrounds	An environment which is spiritually, socially and emotionally safe, as well as physically safe for children; where there is no assault, challenge or denial of their cultural or linguistic identity, of who they are and what they need ² .
Duty of Care	The obligation of Council employees, contractors and volunteers to take reasonable steps to protect children in their care from the risks of injury that are reasonably foreseeable.
Employee	Directly employed individual, including but not limited to: agency appointments, and those staff on short and long term employment agreements.
Failure to Disclose	As defined in the <i>Crimes Act 1958 (Vic)</i> , a failure to act on the legal obligation upon all adults to report to Victoria Police where they form a reasonable belief that a sexual offence has been committed by an adult (18 years and over) against a child under the age of 16 (16 being the legal age of consent) ⁵ .
Failure to Protect	As defined in the <i>Crimes Act 1958 (Vic)</i> , a person with power and authority who fails to protect a child from criminal sexual abuse, they know of the risk of abuse, and are able to reduce or remove the risk but fail to do so ⁵ .
Grooming	As defined in the <i>Crimes Act 1958 (Vic)</i> , the act of communication, including online communication, with a child under the age of 16 or their parents with the intent of committing child sexual abuse. This includes predatory conduct undertaken to prepare a child for sexual abuse at a later time with the groomer (aged 18 years old or over) or another adult ⁵ .
Head of a Relevant Entity	As defined in the <i>Child Wellbeing and Safety Act 2005 (Vic)</i> ⁶ , a head of a relevant entity means –

Key term	Definition
	<p>(a) An individual who is primarily responsible for –</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> engaging and terminating the engagement of the relevant entity's employees; and managing the relevant entity's employees; or <p>(b) a person nominated by the relevant entity; or</p> <p>(c) a person or class of person prescribed to be a head of a relevant entity.</p>
Mandatory Reporting	<p>The legal obligation under the <i>Children Youth and Families Act 2005</i> of certain professionals to report when a child is in need of protection. Mandatory reporters include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Registered Medical Practitioners, e.g. General Practice Doctors Nurses and Maternal and Child Health Nurses (Midwives) Registered Teachers and Early Childhood Teachers Early Childhood Workers School Principals and School Counsellors Police Officers Registered Psychologists Youth Justice Workers Out of Home Care Workers (excluding voluntary foster and kinship carers) A person in religious ministry⁷.
Reasonable Belief	<p>A reasonable belief that a child or young person is in need of protection, or their safety and wellbeing is at risk, is formed:</p> <p>If a reasonable person in the same position would have formed the belief on the same grounds. It does not require proof.</p> <p>A 'reasonable belief' may be formed through disclosures, observations or other information of which a person has become aware.</p>

4. Policy

The Child Safe Policy communicates Council's commitment to keeping children and young people safe. Council is in the unique position of being able to provide a framework for safety around one of our most vulnerable people groups: children. It is often said "it takes a village to raise a child". Council's infrastructure in many ways is that village, from school crossing supervisors to playgrounds within parks and gardens, to public spaces and community centres, to road maintenance teams and kindergartens. We all have a role to play in keeping Casey's children and young people safe from harm or abuse

4.1 Statement of Commitment to Child Safety

All children or young people who attend services, programs, and events delivered by, and spaces owned or managed by the City of Casey, have the right to feel and be safe. The wellbeing and safety of children and young people in our care will always be our priority.

Council has zero-tolerance of child abuse and is committed to creating and maintaining a child safe and child friendly organisation where all children are valued and protected from abuse, harm and neglect.

The City of Casey is committed to creating and maintaining a child safe organisation where protecting children from abuse, harm and neglect is embedded in the everyday thinking and practice of Council, its employees, contractors and volunteers

4.2 Children Have the Right to Speak and be Heard

The City of Casey ensures that children and young people are informed about their rights, including to safety, information and participation. Council engages children and young people in a meaningful, respectful and authentic way which is reflected through the Children and Young People Consultation Framework and follows the City of Casey's Community Engagement Policy. It will also be a consideration in the Child, Youth and Family Strategic Service Plan (under development) ⁸.

Council encourages the voice of children and young people in organisational planning, delivery of services, programs and events, procedures, and management of facilities. Our priority is to involve children and young people in opportunities to influence matters that affect them as active citizens in their community. This will be achieved by:

- providing children and young people with opportunities to voice their opinions, be taken seriously, be actively involved in shaping their community and participate in decisions that affect them
- enhancing the skills of City of Casey staff and local service providers to collaborate with children, young people and families in a respectful, ethical and genuine way
- empowering children, young people and families to maximise their potential as they participate and grow in the Casey community.

4.3 Diversity and Inclusion

Council is committed to creating an inclusive, safe and connected community for all children and young people. A top response in Casey's 2030 visioning engagement - *Shape Your City*⁹ - revealed residents wish to live in an 'inclusive and diverse' community.

Casey is a diverse municipality of communities, each with their own characteristics that should be factored into planning and service delivery, including:

- More than a third of residents speak a language other than English at home and one in seven has limited English skills.
- Almost a third of residents were born in non-English speaking countries and the vast majority of recent arrivals have been from non-English speaking countries.
- The municipality has the largest number of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander residents in the Southern region of Melbourne (1,941 people).
- One in twelve residents aged 0 to 24 years live with some form of disability (mild to profound).
- 5.6% of adult residents identify with LGBTIQ+ communities (no local data on young people).
- Two-thirds of residents have a religious affiliation.

Diversity and inclusion recognises and appreciates the differences between people and how they identify themselves. This includes a commitment that all children and young people feel valued, respected, with equitable access to opportunities and resources, and the ability to contribute to their community.

An inclusive approach recognises that children and young people have different needs, characteristics, and life experiences. No one child's experience is the same, and therefore stereotypes are to be avoided.

Through the City of Casey [Health and Wellbeing Strategy 2021-25](#), Council is embedding the following principles of inclusion:

- **Resilient, safe and connected places:** eliminating discrimination based on age, gender identity, sexuality, race, religious/faith beliefs, political beliefs, ethnicity, physical/intellectual/sensory ability and socio-economic status and building Casey as a truly safe place in which to belong.

- **Connection across the life course:** building innovative and responsive models of service; and sustainable community places and spaces, with the needs of individuals across the life course in mind.
- **Community engagement and evidence-informed:** embracing the community voice and ensuring that any actions undertaken to make Casey a more inclusive place are informed by community consultation and supported by evidence at every stage.
- **Bold and progressive leadership and partnership driven:** recognising the shared responsibility and important leadership role we must play in making Casey a more inclusive place
- **Primary prevention and health equity:** reducing and ideally removing any barriers, physical or otherwise, placed on people who live, work, learn or visit the City of Casey.

The City of Casey recognises the increased vulnerabilities of particular groups of children and/or young people. We pay particular attention to the cultural safety of Aboriginal children and children from culturally and/or linguistically diverse backgrounds as well as the safety of children with a disability, children who identify as lesbian, gay, bisexual, trans and/or intersex and children who are unable to live at home¹⁰.

Council's Reconciliation Action Plan sets out the commitment that Council makes to build stronger relationships with the Aboriginal community, strengthening connections and partnerships that are underpinned by self-determination.

4.4 Employees, Contractors and Volunteers

The City of Casey has clear and well established behavioural expectations of all employees, contractors and volunteers who work or interact with children and/or young people. This includes appropriate behavioural expectations for working with all children including Aboriginal, culturally and/or linguistically diverse children, children with a disability, those who are unable to live at home, and lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender and intersex children and young people.

The Chief Executive Officer (CEO) as the head of relevant entity, as prescribed by the *Child Wellbeing and Safety Act 2005*, is responsible for appointing, directing and managing employees, contractors and volunteers.

4.4.1 Employee and Volunteer Code of Conduct

All employees or volunteers of the City of Casey are responsible for ensuring the safety, participation, wellbeing and empowerment of children and young people whilst undertaking their roles. All employees employed in accordance with the Casey City Council Enterprise Agreement, and volunteers engaged in a City of Casey program, advisory, consultative or reference group/committee are made aware of and must abide by Council's relevant Code of Conduct agreements.

4.4.2 Human Resources and Recruitment

The City of Casey has effective screening tools to assist the recruitment of suitable employees, contractors and volunteers to minimise the risk of inappropriate individuals entering the organisation.

Council's recruitment process includes the above statement of commitment to child safety in all job advertisements, inclusion of child safe questions for pre-interview screening, interview and referee checks, and the requirement for a valid Working with Children Check before commencing in a child facing role at the City of Casey.

Council complies with all relevant regulatory and legal requirements when recruiting staff to ensure its employees and customers are not placed under unreasonable risk.

4.4.3 Support and Training

The City of Casey is responsible for ensuring that appropriate behaviour with children and young people is clearly defined and expectations are accessible and understood by all employees, contractors and volunteers.

Council will appropriately inform, and/or provide training for Councillors, employees and volunteers on child safety, including the cultural safety of Aboriginal children, children from culturally and/or linguistically diverse backgrounds, children with a disability, those who are unable to live at home, and lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender and intersex children and young people.

All employees and volunteers are assigned compulsory online Child Safe Standards training to complete as part of their induction to Council and every two years thereafter. Child Protection and Mandatory Reporting Training will be completed by relevant employees as prescribed by the Department of Education and Training.

Further mandatory Child Safe Standards workshops are provided to employees and volunteers who are in child facing roles at the City of Casey. These workshops include training in abuse types, understanding the Child Safe Policy and Code of Conduct, disclosures, information sharing, record keeping and reporting obligations, and equipping employees and volunteers with the knowledge, skills and awareness to keep children and young people safe. These workshops ensure that employees and volunteers are attuned to signs of harm and can facilitate child-friendly ways for children and young people to express their views, participate in decision-making and raise their concerns.

Refresher Child Safe Standards workshops are implemented with employees and volunteers who are in a child facing role every two years or earlier if required by legislative changes. Ongoing supervision and support are also provided to employees and volunteers to increase their capacity to establish and maintain a culture of child safety.

Council ensures all employees and volunteers are aware of the established City of Casey Child Safe Reporting Process to ensure the implementation of child safe practices with children and young people across the organisation.

4.5 Reporting a Child Safety Concern

The City of Casey has committed to be a child safe organisation that complies with all relevant legislation, including both the Standards and the Scheme.

Council takes all allegations of child abuse seriously and will investigate all allegations in a procedurally fair way complying with natural justice principles.

4.5.1 Legislative Requirements

The City of Casey has implemented processes and training to ensure all Councillors, employees and volunteers are aware of both their own, and the organisation's legal obligations in relation to the reporting of child abuse. This includes an understanding of the following legislation:

- Failure to disclose
- Failure to protect
- Mandatory reporting
- Grooming.

4.5.2 Internal Response Team

The City of Casey has established an Internal Response Team with the following objectives:

- To ensure that reportable conduct incidents and staff who report any incidents and organisational obligations in relation to reporting are managed effectively, efficiently and in compliance with all legislative obligations.
- To ensure the City of Casey is at the forefront of being a child safe organisation and reinforcing that child safety is of paramount importance to the City of Casey.
- To manage and maintain a robust governance framework.
- To be focused on the total management and compliance of reported incidents relating to child safety.

In fulfilling these objectives, the Internal Response Team will action findings from child safety reviews or investigations and facilitate changes to relevant Council policies and procedures where appropriate

4.5.3 Reporting

All incidents or allegations of child abuse should be reported to the Internal Response Team. Allegations or incidents can be reported by anyone: child, young person, parent, carer, Councillor, employee, volunteer, contractor or others in the community.

A reportable conduct allegation is made where a child, young person or adult makes an allegation, based on a reasonable belief, that a Councillor, employee, contractor or volunteer of the City of Casey has been involved in the harm or abuse of a child or young person.

The City of Casey Child Safe Reporting Process outlines that if children, young people, families, Councillors, employees, contractors or volunteers have concerns regarding the organisation's leadership in relation to child safety, they can report these concerns under the Scheme.

Under the Scheme, reports can be made on the conduct of Councillors, employees, contractors or volunteers to the Internal Response Team.

Children, young people or adults can make first contact with the City of Casey's Customer Service team, requesting to speak with a member of the Internal Response Team or by emailing childsafe@casey.vic.gov.au.



CHILD SAFE REPORTING PROCESS

WHO CAN REPORT?

Anyone can report – child, young person, parent, carer, Councillor, employee, volunteer, contractor or others in the community.

WHAT TO REPORT?

Any concern or complaint, in regard to:

- The conduct of a child or young person at a City of Casey service, program or event.
- General concerns about the safety of a group of children or young people at City of Casey service, program or event.
- A City of Casey service, program or event.
- The way a prior concern was handled.

- Any allegation of abuse, harm or neglect of a child or young person by an employee, Councillor, contractor or volunteer.
- Disclosures of abuse, harm or neglect made by a child/young person who attends a Council service, program or event.

Before making a Report in regard to abuse, harm or neglect, it is important you have formed a reasonable belief.

A person forms a 'reasonable belief' that a child is in need of protection, or their safety or wellbeing is at risk when:

1. A reasonable person in the same position would have formed the belief on the same grounds. It does not require proof.
2. The belief is formed through disclosures, observations or other information of which you have become aware.

WHO TO REPORT TO AND HOW?

If a child is in immediate danger call the Police on 000 (Triple Zero)

For immediate concerns and to report abuse, harm or neglect:

Contact the Police and/or the Department of Health and Human Services (Child Protection) Southern on **1300 655 795** / (after hours) **13 12 78**

For a concern or complaint in regard to a City of Casey service, program or event:

The City of Casey's Complaints Handling Policy will be followed. This can be found at casey.vic.gov.au

For a complaint or allegation concerning abuse, harm or neglect of a child/young person (17 years of age and under) by a City of Casey employee, Councillor, contractor or volunteer:

Contact the Internal Response Team.
Email childsafecasey.vic.gov.au or call **9705 5200** and ask to speak to a member of the Internal Response Team

WHAT HAPPENS NEXT?

The Internal Response Team, Department Manager, Supervisor or employee will:

1. Offer support to the person who reports and the employee, Councillor, contractor or volunteer subject of the complaint or allegation.
2. Initiate internal processes to ensure the safety of all children/young people including the alleged victim, clarify the nature of the complaint and commence disciplinary process and investigation (if required).
3. Determine, in accordance with legal requirements and duty of care, whether the matter should/must be reported to Police, Child Protection and/or the Commission for Children and Young People and make a report as soon as possible if required.

OUTCOME

Investigation completed

Relevant employee, Councillor, contractor, volunteer, parent/s, carer/s and child/young person notified of outcome of investigation.

If necessary, disciplinary action will be taken with relevant employee, Councillor, contractor or volunteer.

Policies and procedures reviewed and updated where necessary.

4.5.4 Support

Where appropriate, following a reported child safety concern, Council will:

- assist alleged victims and their families to access counselling and support services.
- provide support to affected staff through Council's Employee Assistance Program.

4.6 Privacy, Record Keeping and Incident Monitoring

Council is committed to protecting an individual's right to privacy. All personal information considered or recorded during the process of a report or investigation will be handled in accordance with Council's Privacy Policy. Council is committed to best practice when keeping and maintaining confidential records of child abuse allegations or reports. Records will be retained in keeping with the recommendations from the Public Records Office Victoria.

Risks to child safety that are identified in complaints, reports or allegations of abuse will be reviewed and incorporated into the relevant risk register.

4.7 Risk Management

Council's risk management approach is to minimise the potential for abuse, harm or neglect to occur to children and/or young people. Council uses this approach to inform policies, procedures and activity/events planning. Council has a Risk Management Policy and Framework (a 'how to' guide for staff to manage risk). Council maintains a risk register including the identified risks of child abuse within the City of Casey.

The following elements are included in Council's approach to risk management:

- All existing and new activities and facilities must be assessed for risks of child abuse including:
 - environmental risks (e.g. areas that might obscure a line of sight)
 - vulnerability risks (e.g. activities that may foster personal relationships between staff/volunteers and children who have an increased risk of being exploited, such as children who are highly vulnerable and dependent on the employees/volunteer for their needs).
- All identified risks of child abuse are actively reduced by designing and implementing appropriate preventative measures (risk assessment corrective action plans).
- Risk assessment corrective action plans are documented for all existing and new activities and facilities.
- Employees, contractors and volunteers are made aware of their responsibility for identifying risks of child abuse and their obligation to work with management on reducing those risks.
- Families and children are made aware of how to report on identified risks of child abuse.
- Risk assessment corrective action plans are living documents that are updated as required, referred to regularly, and reviewed periodically.

The Internal Response Team will undertake assessments of activities and amenities that are considered higher risk and how these are to be mitigated. Council departments will include the Standards as a consideration in their operational activities and relevant policies.

5. References

- ¹ Commission for Children and Young People, Reportable Conduct Scheme, available at <https://ccyp.vic.gov.au/reportable-conduct-scheme/about-the-reportable-conduct-scheme>
- ² Commission for Children and Young People, *A Guide for Creating a Child Safe Organisation*, available at <https://ccyp.vic.gov.au/>
- ³ Department of Human Services, *Disability Act 2006*, available at <https://providers.dhhs.vic.gov.au/disability-act-2006-service-providers>
- ⁴ Commission for Children and Young People, *Child Safe Standards*, available at <https://ccyp.vic.gov.au/>
- ⁵ *Crimes Act 1958 (Vic)*, available at <https://www.legislation.vic.gov.au/in-force/acts/crimes-act-1958/294>
- ⁶ *Child Wellbeing and Safety Act 2005 (Vic)*
- ⁷ *Child Youth and Families Act 2005*, available at, <https://www.legislation.vic.gov.au/in-force/acts/children-youth-and-families-act-2005/121>
- ⁸ City of Casey, Child, Youth and Family Strategic Service Plan (under development)
- ⁹ In 2020, the City of Casey, conducted a community engagement, '*Shape Your City*', which was used to develop key strategic documents, including the City of Casey *Long Term Community Vision 2031* and draft Council Plan.
- ¹⁰ Commission for Children and Young People, *Child Safe Policy*, available at, <https://ccyp.vic.gov.au/>