



Reportable Conduct Scheme

Policy Number	
Responsible Department	Youth and Community Development
Adoption Resolution Number	TBC
Adoption Date	TBC
Review Date & Resolution	TBC

Preamble

The Shire of Halls Creek is committed to ensuring the safety and well-being of children engaging with its services. Our community holds a collective responsibility to safeguard children from harm and foster an environment where they can thrive.

In alignment with the Reportable Conduct Scheme established by the Office of the Ombudsman Western Australia, this policy aims to provide a framework for responding to allegations of reportable conduct involving children under the care and engagement of the Shire of Halls Creek.

Objectives

The objective of this policy is to establish clear guidelines and processes for identifying, reporting, and responding to conduct that may be considered reportable under the Reportable Conduct Scheme. The Shire of Halls Creek aims to create a safe environment for children, ensuring that all concerns are addressed promptly and thoroughly, while also providing support to those involved in such matters.

Definitions

Reportable Conduct: Any conduct of a person that, in the course of their work, home or activity involving children, is alleged to be abusive or detrimental to a child's safety or well-being. This includes, but is not limited to, physical abuse, sexual abuse, neglect, and psychological harm.

Child: Any person under the age of 18 years who is receiving a service from the Shire of Halls Creek.

Employee: An individual employed by the Shire of Halls Creek, including full-time, part-time, casual staff, volunteers, and contractors.

Concern: Any suspicion or allegation related to the conduct of an individual towards a child that could fall under the category of reportable conduct.

Policy

The Shire of Halls Creek endorses the principles of the Reportable Conduct Scheme below.

1. **Protection of Children:** The welfare and safety of children is paramount in all activities and operations conducted by the Shire of Halls Creek.
2. **Mandatory Reporting:** Employees are required to report any concerns regarding potential reportable conduct to designated authorities promptly.
3. **Investigation Obligations:** The Shire of Halls Creek will undertake the necessary due diligence around reportable conduct, ensuring that such investigations are conducted fairly and sensitively.

4. *Confidentiality*: All reports and investigations will be handled confidentially to protect the privacy of all parties involved, in compliance with relevant legislation.
5. *Training and Awareness*: The Shire will provide appropriate training and mentoring to employees regarding their responsibilities under the Reportable Conduct Scheme and ensure ongoing awareness of child safety matters.

Process

1. Reporting Concerns

Employees who become aware of any concerns regarding reportable conduct must report the matter to their immediate supervisor or the designated officer within 24 hours. Reports can also be made anonymously if the employee feels it necessary.

2. Investigation

Upon receiving a report, the designated officer will assess the information and determine if further investigation is warranted. If an investigation is to be conducted, it will follow procedural fairness, ensuring all parties are heard and treated with respect. Investigations will be conducted within a timely manner, with a focus on minimising distress to the child involved.

3. Reporting to Ombudsman

The Shire of Halls Creek is obligated to report specific incidents to the Ombudsman, and this will be conducted in accordance with the guidelines set out by the Reportable Conduct Scheme.

4. Support Services

Options for support services will be made available for children and families affected by allegations or investigations of reportable conduct.

Implementation

This policy applies to all employees and representatives of the Shire of Halls Creek.

Training Programs

Relevant training will be developed and implemented for all staff to ensure understanding of the policy and their obligations under the Reportable Conduct Scheme.

Review and Evaluation

The policy will be reviewed biannually to ensure it remains effective and compliant with current legislation and best practices.

Communication

The policy will be communicated to all employees and made available to the community to raise awareness regarding the importance of child safety and reporting mechanisms.

Statutory Environment

This policy is governed by the *Children and Community Services Act 2004* (WA) and the associated Reportable Conduct Scheme established by the Office of the Ombudsman, which mandates compliance for organisations engaging with children.

Roles and Responsibilities

Council Members

Ensure the availability and adherence to this policy across all levels of the Shire.

CEO/Management

Responsible for overseeing the implementation of this policy and ensuring that all employees understand their roles in reporting conduct.

Employees

Required to report any instances of reportable conduct and participate in training sessions regarding this policy.

Designated Officers

Appointed individual within the Shire will provide support and guidance on matters of child safety and reportable conduct.

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