



Child Safe Policy

Policy Number	CD1
Responsible Department	Youth and Community Development
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Preamble

The Shire of Halls Creek is committed to ensuring a safe and supportive environment for children and young people. Adopting the National Principles for Child Safe Organisations is integral to promoting their wellbeing and preventing harm. This Policy outlines the Council's commitment to implementing these principles within our services and community initiatives.

Objectives

The objectives of this policy are to:

1. promote the national principles of child safety within the Shire of Halls Creek.
2. establish a framework that facilitates the ongoing development and maintenance of a child-safe culture across all Council services and activities.
3. ensure compliance with relevant legislative and regulatory requirements pertaining to child safety.

Definitions

Child: Any individual under the age of 18 years.

Child Safe Organisation: An organisation that demonstrates commitment to creating and maintaining a safe environment for children.

National Principles for Child Safe Organisations: A set of principles designed to guide organisations in creating a safe and supportive environment for children and young people.

Policy

The Shire of Halls Creek adopts the following National Principles for Child Safe Organisations:

1. Child safety and wellbeing is embedded in organisational leadership, governance, and culture. The Council will ensure that child safety and wellbeing is fundamental to its operations and policies.
2. Children and young people are aware of their rights, are empowered to participate in decisions affecting them, and have a say in matters that affect them.
3. The Council will provide children with accessible information regarding their rights and opportunities for participation.
4. Children and young people are safe and feel safe in their interactions with organisations.
5. The Council will establish a safe environment where children feel secure and supported.

6. The views of children and young people are taken seriously and their voices are heard in matters that affect them.
7. The Council will facilitate mechanisms for children and young people to express their opinions.
8. Families and communities are informed and involved in promoting child safety and wellbeing.
9. The Council will work collaboratively with families and the community to promote awareness and education regarding child safety.
10. Equity is upheld and diverse backgrounds are respected, including culture, identity, and ability.
11. The Council will ensure that its services and policies are inclusive and responsive to the needs of all children.
12. People working with children and young people are suitable and supported to reflect child safety and wellbeing values in their practice.
13. The Council will implement rigorous recruitment and training processes to ensure the suitability of staff and volunteers.
14. Child safety and wellbeing practices are continually reviewed and improved. The Council will regularly assess its policies and practices to ensure ongoing improvement in child safety.
15. Policies and procedures document how the organisation is child safe.
16. The Council will develop and maintain clear policies and procedures that outline child safety practices.
17. Concerns for children's safety and wellbeing are identified, responded to, and reported.
18. The Council will implement procedures for reporting and addressing concerns regarding child safety.

Process

1. Assessment
 - Conduct an initial review of current practices and policies against the National Principles.
2. Planning
 - Develop an action plan to address gaps in child safety practices.
3. Training
 - Implement training programs for staff and volunteers on child safety principles, rights of children, and reporting procedures.
4. Engagement
 - Involve children, families, and the community in discussions around child safety.
5. Monitoring and Review
 - Establish mechanisms for ongoing monitoring and review of child safety practices.

Implementation

The Shire of Halls Creek will implement this policy through:

1. staff training programs;
2. community engagement initiatives;
3. regular audits of child safety practices; and
4. development of accompanying child safety-specific policies and procedures.

Statutory Environment

This policy adheres to the relevant Western Australian legislation, including:

- *Children and Community Services Act 2004* (WA)
- *Working with Children (Criminal Record Checking) Act 2004* (WA)
- The National Framework for Protecting Australia's Children 2009-2020

Roles and Responsibilities

Council Members: Uphold and promote child safety principles in decision-making.

Chief Executive Officer: Ensure implementation and compliance with this policy across all departments.

All Staff: Adhere to the codes of conduct and participate in training to foster a child-safe culture.

Community Stakeholders: Engage with the Shire to enhance community knowledge and actions surrounding child safety.