



# **CHILD SAFE POLICY**

Corporate Document

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## Child Safe Policy

### Purpose

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Mosman Council is committed to the safety, wellbeing, and inclusion of every child and young person involved in Council activities or on Council operated premises. This policy and the accompanying procedures seek to minimise risk, foster a culture of awareness and responsibility, and support a safe environment where children are valued, heard, and protected. In doing so, Council is guided by the NSW Child Safe Standards to embed child safety in all areas of its work.

As both a public authority and provider of child and youth facing services, Council has specific responsibilities under NSW legislation. These include:

- Screening staff and volunteers to ensure prohibited persons are not employed in roles involving contact with children.
- Training staff in identifying suspected abuse, notification procedures, and child safe practices.
- Protecting children and young people in its care from sexual, physical and emotional abuse, neglect, and improper conduct.
- Reporting any suspected abuse or neglect of children or young people presenting at Council services, facilities, or activities.
- Notifying the Office of the Children’s Guardian of any reportable allegation or conviction involving an employee, within required timeframes.
- Collaborating with other agencies, within agreed guidelines, to provide services for child protection and family support.

### Objectives

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This policy outlines:

- The standards and principles designed to minimise risks of harm.
- The expectations of Councillors, staff, volunteers, contractors and third parties in maintaining a child safe environment.
- The expectations for reporting, responding to and managing allegations or concerns of child abuse or neglect.

### Scope

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This policy defines what is required within the Council when delivering any activities, services and events that involve children. This includes:

- All Mosman Council officials including Councillors, and staff, including, employees (casual, permanent, temporary or contract), trainees, interns, work experience students, volunteers, and agency staff.
- External facilitators including consultants and service providers engaged by Council on a fee for service or invoice basis to deliver programs or activities for children.

### Definitions

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Definitions for this policy:

- **Staff:** Inclusive of employees (permanent, temporary or contract), trainees, interns, work experience students, volunteers, and agency staff.
- **Councillor:** any person elected or appointed to civic office, including the mayor.
- **Child or Young Person:** For the purposes of this policy, the term “child” or “children” refers to any person under the age of 18. While NSW legislation distinguishes between a child (under 16 years) and a young person (16–17 years), this policy uses “child” as a collective term for simplicity of understanding and consistency across all Council child safe practices.

- **Reportable Conduct:** Includes any allegation, conviction or concern that a relevant person (such as a Council employee, volunteer, or contractor in child-related work) has engaged in conduct amounting to harm or abuse as defined in detail within these definitions.
- **Mandatory Reporter:** Any person delivering services to children who is legally required to report suspected risk of significant harm to the NSW Department of Communities and Justice.
- **External Facilitators:** Individuals who are not employees of Mosman Council but are engaged by Council on a fee for service or invoice basis to deliver activities, programs, workshops or services involving children on behalf of Council.
- **Child-related work:** Work which involves direct contact by staff with children where that contact is a usual part of and more than incidental to the work. It may also include a worker who has access to confidential records or information about children. The direct contact may be physical, face to face and/or online.
- **Prohibited persons:** Someone who is not legally allowed to work or volunteer in child-related roles because they have been refused or do not hold a valid Working with Children Check clearance.
- **Harm or abuse:** The following definitions are informed by NSW child protection legislation and guidance, including the *Children and Young Persons (Care and Protection) Act 1998*, the *Children's Guardian Act 2019*, and advice from the NSW Office of the Children's Guardian and Department of Communities and Justice. These can mean a one off incident or a pattern of any of the following:
  - **Psychological abuse (also known as emotional abuse)**  
This includes bullying, threatening and abusive language, intimidation, shaming and name calling, ignoring and isolating a child, and exposure to domestic and family violence.
  - **Physical abuse**  
This includes physical punishment, such as pushing, shoving, punching, slapping and kicking, resulting in injury, burns, choking or bruising.
  - **Sexual abuse**  
This includes the sexual touching of a child, grooming, and production, distribution or possession of child abuse material.
  - **Grooming**  
This is a process where a person manipulates a child or group of children and sometimes those looking after them, including parents, carers, teachers and leaders. They do this to establish a position of 'trust' so they can then later sexually abuse the child.
  - **Misconduct**  
This is inappropriate behaviour that may not be as severe as abuse but could indicate that abuse is occurring and would often be in breach of an organisation's Child Safe Code of Conduct. This could include showing a child something inappropriate on a phone, having inappropriate conversations with a child or an adult sitting with a child on their lap.
  - **Neglect (Lack of appropriate care)**  
This includes not providing adequate and proper supervision, nourishment, clothing, shelter, education or medical care.

## **Our commitment to child safety**

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The Australian Human Rights Commission defines a child safe organisation as one that creates a culture, adopts strategies, and takes actions that promote child wellbeing and prevent harm to children and young people.

Mosman Council commits that:

- Every child and young person has the right to be safe and protected from all forms of harm.

## Child Safe Policy

- Children’s voices are valued. Genuine engagement with children, families and communities underpins our approach.
- We continuously review and improve our practices to foster a culture of awareness and accountability.
- We recognise that keeping children safe is everyone’s responsibility and requires collaboration across Council, families, and the community.
- We adopt the National Child Safe Standards:
  - Standard 1 - Child safety is embedded in organisation leadership, governance and culture
  - Standard 2 – Children participate in decisions affecting them and are taken seriously
  - Standard 3 – Families and communities are informed and involved
  - Standard 4 – Equity is upheld and diverse needs are taken into account
  - Standard 5 – People working with children are suitable and supported
  - Standard 6 – Processes to respond to complaints of child abuse are child focused
  - Standard 7 – Staff are equipped with the knowledge, skills and awareness to keep children safe through continual education and training
  - Standard 8 – Physical and online environments minimise the opportunity for abuse to occur
  - Standard 9 – Implementation of the Child Safe Standards is continuously reviewed
  - Standard 10 – Policies and procedures document how the organisation is child safe

## Vulnerable Groups

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Mosman Council is committed to equity and inclusion. Additional safeguards will be put in place for children and young people who may face greater risks of harm due to personal circumstances or barriers.

This includes but is not limited to those affected by:

- disability
- mental ill health
- cognitive impairment
- chronic illness or medical needs
- cultural or language barriers
- experiences of trauma, discrimination or disadvantage

## Child Safe responsibilities

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Everyone within our organisation, and those connected to Council, has a responsibility to uphold the specific requirements of their role in ensuring the safety of children. The following table summarises the key responsibilities for Councillors, staff and external facilitators:

Responsibility	Councillors	Staff	External Facilitators
Read, understand, and commit to upholding the Mosman Council Child Safe Code of Conduct.	X	X	X
Complete all child safe induction training as required.	X	X	
Complete all child safe ongoing training as required.	X	X	

Meet requirements across all other Council child safe policies and procedures, including child safe recruitment practices and risk management.	X	X	
Report any breaches, concerns, disclosures, allegations or incidents of harm promptly in accordance with internal and external reporting procedures and obligations.	X	X	X
Participate in child related risk assessments where required.		X	
Provide feedback on child safe practices.		X	

## **Child Safety in Practice**

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### **Child Safety Committee**

The Mosman Council Child Safety Committee champions and embeds a child safe culture across all Council activities, in line with the National Child Safe Standards. Bringing together cross-departmental expertise, the Committee provides advice, oversight and coordination to ensure Council's policies, procedures and practices support compliance, continuous improvement, and an environment of openness, transparency and empowerment for every child and young person engaging with Council.

### **Staff and Recruitment**

Council ensures all child-related roles include defined child safety requirements and that recruitment and screening practices prevent prohibited persons from working with children or young people.

### **Induction and Training**

Council provides mandatory induction and ongoing training so that staff understand the National Child Safe Standards, definitions of abuse, professional boundaries, online safety, and reporting responsibilities.

### **Working with Children**

Council requires safe supervision practices, including appropriate safeguards when staff are solely responsible for children, and any exceptions must be formally approved by the staff member's Manager.

### **Use of Images and Online Communication**

Photos or videos of children need written consent, a clear purpose, and secure storage. Staff must not use personal devices. All online contact with young people must use shared Council accounts that can be overseen by more than one staff member.

### **Physical Contact and Gifts**

Council maintains professional boundaries, ensuring that physical contact is minimal and purposeful, and that strict controls apply to the giving and receiving of gifts involving children or young people.

### **External Facilitators**

Council requires all external facilitators working with children or young people to read, understand and agree to the Mosman Council Child Safe Code of Conduct. Facilitators must uphold the same standards as Council staff and follow Council's reporting procedures if any concerns arise. A valid Working with Children Check may be required, where the facilitator is not directly supervised by Council staff who hold current clearances.

### **Engaging children, families and communities**

## Child Safe Policy

Mosman Council values children's voices and actively involves families and communities in shaping safe and inclusive practices.

- All child related policies and procedures are easily accessible and understandable. They are published on our website and available offline for those who access our services and events, including children, parents, carers and community members.
- Children, parents and carers from diverse backgrounds and circumstances are encouraged to provide feedback on our child related policies and procedures.
- We provide opportunities for children and young people to provide feedback to our Councillors, Executive Team or committee on what makes them feel safe, supported and included.

## Reporting Requirements

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Timely and appropriate reporting is critical to safeguarding children and ensuring our responsibilities are met under child safety laws and policies.

1. **Immediate Risk:** If a child is in imminent danger, call 000.
2. **Mandatory Reporting:** All staff designated as Mandatory Reporters must use the NSW Mandatory Reporter Guide and report concerns to Department of Communities and Justice.
3. **Internal Reporting:** Report all suspected or alleged harm to the Manager Community Services and People & Culture within 24 hours of becoming aware.
4. **Reportable Conduct:** The General Manager must notify the Office of the Children's Guardian within 7 days and oversees investigations, providing interim updates if finalised after 30 days.

## Record Keeping

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All child safety documents including Working with Children Check registers and incident reports are maintained in Council's secure Content Management system in line with the State Records Act 1998, the GIPA Act 2009, and privacy legislation.

## Employee Assistance Program (EAP)

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Staff may access EAP for emotional support related to child safety matters.

## Publication, Communication and Engagement

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Mosman Council makes its Child Safe Policy easy to find and understand. The policy is published on the Council website, included in staff inductions, and available at facilities where children and young people take part in activities. Key messages are shared through newsletters, social media and noticeboards, and the policy can be provided in other formats or languages where appropriate. Staff, children, families and community members are encouraged to share their views and provide feedback to help strengthen Council's child safe practices.

## Related Information/Glossary

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### Legislation:

- Children's Guardian Act 2019 (NSW Child Safe Scheme)
- Child Protection (Working with Children) Act 2012 & Regulation 2013
- Children and Young Persons (Care and Protection) Act 1998
- Privacy Act 1988 and Privacy and Personal Information Protection Act 1998
- Crimes Act 1900; Crimes (Domestic and Personal Violence) Act 2007
- Education and Care Services National Law and Regulations
- Government Information (Public Access) Act 2009 (GIPA Act)

## **Related Council Documents**

The documents listed below form part of Council's Child Safe Framework and support the implementation of this policy. Additional procedures, guidelines and tools may be developed or updated over time to strengthen child safe practice.

Child Safe Code of Conduct  
Child Safety Reporting & Investigation Procedure  
Consent Policy (in development)  
Child Safe Working Group Terms of Reference  
Child Safety Training Framework  
Third Party Agreement Templates  
Departmental Procedures  
Child Safety Risk Management Plan (to be confirmed as stand-alone or embedded)

## **Review**

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This policy will be reviewed every four years unless otherwise directed by the Executive team or following any legislative change.

## **Contact**

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Enquiries should be directed to the Manager Community Services

## **Amendments**

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<b>Date</b>	<b>Amendment</b>	<b>Reference</b>