

MURRAY RIVER COUNCIL
COUNCIL POLICY

CHILD SAFE POLICY

POL-117.V#2



murray river
council

1. OBJECTIVE

This Child Safe Policy guides Murray River Council Officers and Officials on how to behave when interacting and engaging in direct contact with children in Murray River Council services, activities, functions and programs.

This Policy focuses on how we can build and maintain a child safe environment which is inclusive, transparent and promotes children's participation.

2. SCOPE

This policy applies to all Murray River Council Officers and Officials engaged in executing services and functions within Council.

3. POLICY STATEMENT

Murray River Council recognises the importance of the wellbeing of all children and young people and the significant lifelong impact that abuse can have on children and young people.

Children and young people are an important part of our society and it is essential that children are safe, while taking part in community life.

MRC policies, procedures and practices embed a child safe approach in their development, implementation, evaluation, monitoring and review.

This Policy aims to support the safe active participation of children in programs, activities and services we offer.

To ensure children are safe whilst participating in any Council programs, activities and services, the following measures are in force.

STATEMENT OF COMMITMENT:

Murray River Council is a Child and Young Person Safe Organisation

Children and young people are an important cohort in our community whose opinions will be sought and respectfully considered about matters that affect them.

Children and young people will have safe and happy experiences in our community when accessing Council facilities, programs, events and activities, or being in the care of our services.

The physical and online environments, Council offer to children and young people, will promote safety and wellbeing while minimising the opportunity for children and young people to be harmed.

A child and young person safe culture will be embedded in Council's governance, management and staff - as well as volunteers and contractors providing direct services to children.

Council Officers and Officials who routinely work directly or near children and young people are always vetted as suitable persons and receive appropriate training and support to keep children and young people safe and enhance their wellbeing.

Processes are in place to respond to complaints and concerns about the treatment of children and young people, be that in Council's service or witnessed by our service.

Murray River Council will promote child-safety and wellbeing in the community, in families and in the workplace.

Recruitment

Council will maintain a rigorous and consistent recruitment, screening and selection process. We ensure that we recruit competent and eligible Council Officials and Officers.

The recruitment and screening process is moderated to the position description and the individual's relative exposure to children and youth. This process of moderation assists in preventing unsuitable people from being recruited and can discourage them from applying.

Council will meet all legislative requirements to ensure that only eligible persons are employed and/or engaged in direct child-related services or activities.

Murray River Council's Officers and Officials who engage in direct contact with children or young people whilst undertaking activities on behalf of Council will be required to undertake a Police Check and associated NSW Working With Children's Check – with the return of satisfactory results.

All recruitment documentation is reviewed regularly and updated to reflect current legislation changes.

Complaints Management and Reporting

We provide a range of ways to enable children, their advocates or a member of the public to provide feedback or raise concerns. We listen to their views, respect what they say and involve them when we make decisions, especially about matters that will directly affect them.

Complaints and allegations against MRC Officers and Officials involving a child or young person will be handled in accordance with the NSW Children's Guardian Act 2019.

All allegations will be immediately reported to the Manager – Governance & Risk.

The Manager Risk & Governance will facilitate reporting of the matter to the Chief Executive Officer (CEO) so that the matter is appropriately reported to the relevant oversight agencies in accordance with Council policies and relevant NSW Government legislation and regulation.

Communication

We will maintain appropriate and timely communications with Murray River Council (MRC) Officers and Officials. Our child safe policies and procedures are discussed in these communications.

We implement robust induction sessions for all new staff, volunteers and students.

Young people and parents joining our Youth Engagement Program will receive:

- a copy of this Child Safe Policy;
- Youth Engagement Program Objectives;
- Responding to a Complaint received from a Vulnerable Person; and
- Assessing and Responding to a Reportable Allegation of a Child/Children receiving services and/or support within Murray River Council.

Training, Support and Supervision of Workers

We promote fairness, respect and consideration for all workers.

All workers have a more senior worker assigned to support and supervise their work.

All new workers will receive a copy of all Child Safe policies and procedures and a more senior staff worker will set up a meeting to discuss the policies and allow the new worker to ask questions and clarify their understanding.

All Murray River Council's Officers and Officials will be provided appropriate training to ensure that they understand MRC's commitment to the safety of children and young people, and that everyone has a role to play in protecting children and young people from abuse.

Child safe is a standing agenda item at meetings and workers are encouraged to ask questions and contribute to the continuous improvement of child safe policies, procedures and practices in the workplace.

4. RESPONSIBILITIES

The CEO, the Manager People, Well Being and Work Health & Safety along with Managers/Supervisors of staff and/or volunteers will be responsible for the adherence of this Policy.

5. EVALUATION AND REVIEW

This Policy will be reviewed every four (4) years by the Director Community & Economic Development

This Policy may be reviewed more frequently if there are significant changes to the legislation and best practice, or in the event a review of the management of Child safety concerns identifies systemic failings or practice issues that need to be addressed.

6. LEGISLATION, ASSOCIATED DOCUMENTS AND DEFINITIONS

Legislation

- › Advocate for Children and Young People Act 2014 No 29 (NSW)
- › Aged Care Act 1997 No 112 (Cth)
- › Anti-Discrimination Act 1977 No 48 (NSW)
- › Child Protection (Working with Children) Act 2012 No 51 (NSW)
- › Child Protection (Working with Children) Regulation 2013 No 156 (NSW)
- › Children and Young Persons (Care and Protection) Act 1998 No 157 (NSW)
- › Children (Education and Care Services National Law Application) Act 2010 No 104 (NSW)
- › Children's Guardian Act 2019 No 25 (NSW)
- › Crimes Act 1900 No 40 (NSW)
- › Disability Discrimination Act 1992 No 135 (Cth)
- › Disability Inclusion Act 2014 No 41 (NSW)
- › Disability Services Act 1986 No 129 (Cth)
- › Health Records and Information Privacy Act 2002 No 71 (NSW)
- › Local Government Act 1993 No 30 (NSW)
- › Mental Health Act 2007 No 8 (NSW)
- › National Redress Scheme for Institutional Child Sexual Abuse Act 2018 No 45 (Cth)
- › Privacy and Personal Information Protection Act 1998 No 113 (NSW)
- › Privacy Act 1988 No 119 (Cth)
- › Sex Discrimination Act 1984 No 4 (Cth)
- › State Records Act 1998 No 17 (NSW)
- › Work Health and Safety Act 2011(NSW)

Associated Documents

- › IPC - Information Protection Principles and Health Privacy Principles
- › IPC - Privacy Code of Practice for Local Government
- › CSA/OCG - Child Safe Standards (CTH & NSW)
- › CSA/OCG - Child Safe Principles.(CTH & NSW)
- › United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child
- › MRC Policy - Workplace Discrimination and Harassment Policy (POL-503)
- › MRC Policy - Recruitment & Selection Policy (POL-502)
- › MRC Policy - Customer Feedback & Complaints Management Policy (POL-211)

- › MRC Policy - Code of Conduct Policy (POL-100)
- › MRC Policy - Risk Management Policy (POL-200)
- › MRC Policy - Community Engagement Policy (POL-104)
- › MRC Policy - Code of Conduct (Vulnerable Persons and Children) Policy (POL-705)
- › MRC Policy - Police Check and Working with Children Check Policy (POL-701)
- › MRC Policy - MRC Community Services Volunteering Policy (POL-700)
- › MRC Policy - Work Health and Safety Policy (POL-506)
- › MRC Policy - Staff Performance Management/Disciplinary Policy (POL-507)
- › MRC Plan - Disability Inclusion Action Plan
- › MRC Plan - Work Health and Safety Management System
- › MRC Plan - Risk Management Framework
- › MRC CS Procedure - Responding to a Complaint received from a Vulnerable Person (CHSP180)
- › MRC CS Procedure - Staff Induction Process – Youth Engagement Program (CHSP-184)
- › MRC CS Procedure - Staff and Volunteer Induction Process (CHSP-176)
- › MRC CS Procedure - Assessing and Responding to a Reportable Allegation of a Child receiving services and /or supported within Murray River Council (CHSP-101)
- › MRC CS Form - Information Manual for Staff, Sub-Subcontractors & Volunteers (CHSPFORM-039)
- › MRC CS Form - Confidentiality Agreement / CS Information Manual and Policies & Procedures Agreement (CHSPFORM-038)
- › MRC CS Form - Youth Engagement Program Objectives (CHSPFORM-030)
- › MRC CS Form - Application to Work with Council as a Volunteer (CHSPFORM-012)

Definitions

CEO	Chief Executive Officer of Murray River Council
CSA/OCG	Child Safe Australia (including NSW Office of the Children's Guardian)
Child/children or Young person/ people	Is inclusive of any person under 18 years of age, including the unborn child
Child safe	Activity/s or task/s undertaken by MRC executed within the parameters of the National Child Safe Standards, which align directly with the National Child Safe Principles.
Council Official	Includes <ul style="list-style-type: none"> › Councillors, › members of staff of Council, › administrators, › Council committee members, › conduct reviewers and › delegates of Council.
Council Officer	An officer is defined as being one of the following: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> › An employee, or › A contractor or subcontractor, or › An employee of a contractor or subcontractor, or › An employee of a labour hire company who has been assigned to work in the person's business or undertaking, or

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> › An outworker, or › An apprentice or trainee, or › A student gaining work experience, or › A volunteer
Direct contact	Direct physical or face to face or phone contact, including virtual contact online via social or other virtual media
Employees	Any person engaged in work for Murray River Council in any of the following capacities:- full-time, part-time, casual, temporary and fixed term
Subcontractors	An organisation or entity contracted to provide goods, services or programs involving direct contact with children or young people.
Volunteer (or Students)	Any person engaged in a voluntary capacity, or who is undertaking practical training as part of a vocational or educational course or for work experience

7. DOCUMENT CONTROL

Version No.	Details	Date	CM9 Reference	Resolution No:
1	Initial Issue – This policy was known as the Community Services Child Safe Policy (POL-703) and was adopted by the then General Manager.	3 June 2019 to 28 Sept 2021	VF/19/798 & CTL/19/74	Not required
2	Reformatted, renumbered and changes made in line with the current legislation and the Children's Guardian Act 2019. This is now a Council Policy (POL-117)	28 Sept 2021 to	VF/19/798 & CTL/19/74	120921

Council reserves the right to review, vary or revoke this policy at any time
This Policy is scheduled for review in June 2025

NOTE:

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