



WHITEHORSE

# Child Safety & Wellbeing Policy



## Acknowledgement of Country

We acknowledge the Wurundjeri Woi-Wurrung people of the Kulin Nation as the traditional owners of the land and we pay our respects to their Elders past, present and emerging. We also pay our respect to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islanders from communities.

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# 1. Introduction

Whitehorse City Council ('Council') is committed to ensuring the safety and wellbeing of children and young people in their care, those who participate in Council activities and/or programs, use Council facilities and those who enjoy the many outdoor play and community spaces the municipality offers.

Children should feel safe in regard to their:

- ③ Social and Physical Environment
- ③ Identity and Culture
- ③ Communication and/or Physical attributes
- ③ Accessibility (broadly)
- ③ Diversity of background and/or other influences
- ③ Online Environments

Furthermore, Council recognises that children and young people have exceptional insights into their own lives, needs and the world around them and it is their human right to be heard and have input to matters affecting their lives. The Child Safe Standards recognise that children and young people bring unique capabilities, experiences and views that can assist organisations to be child safe. Organisations can inadvertently disempower children and young people when they don't recognise these strengths and fail to seek, or shut down, their voices. In contrast, child safe organisations value and celebrate children and young people for who they are and the contributions they make. They also recognise that because of their age, children and young people can be disempowered and are therefore at greater risk of experiencing harm.

Empowerment and participation is particularly important for children and young people who are more likely to be misunderstood, marginalised or discriminated against. This includes children who are Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander, from newly-arrived communities, who identify as LGBTQIA+ or who have a disability. Creating organisations that are culturally safe, inclusive, welcoming and accessible benefits all children.

## 2. Purpose

The purpose of the Whitehorse Child Safety & Wellbeing Policy is to provide guidance and direction to enable Council personnel to provide a welcoming and safe environment for children and young people. It is also to ensure that all instances, allegations, disclosures and/or concerns of abuse or neglect (involving children and young people), are both accurately reported and effectively responded by Council and that children and young people have a voice in the community.

Responding to and reporting child abuse and neglect is one component of being a child safe organisation and is an important part of demonstrating compliance with the Child Safe Standards and the Reportable Conduct Scheme. Mandatory reporting is also required for a number of services auspiced by Council.

This policy outlines the mandatory responsibility of all Council personnel to report the abuse, neglect or ill-treatment of any child or young person caused by any person (staff, Councillor, volunteer or community member) that contravenes Council's policies and procedures, such as those outlined in Whitehorse City Council's Employee Code of Conduct, Volunteer Code of Conduct and the Councillor Code of Conduct.

Compliance with this policy will ensure that all incidents are reported and managed in a way that is responsive to the immediate circumstances of the incident, considers the rights of those involved, and wherever possible, risks of recurrence are minimised.

**This policy assists Council personnel to:**

- a) recognise the different types of abuse and neglect
- b) respond to the immediate needs of individuals involved in an incident (including personnel) and to guide responses to allegations and matters of concern, (including breaches of Council's and Councillor Codes of Conduct)
- c) follow Council's Child Safe Reporting Procedures (Appendix 2)
- d) uphold people's legal responsibilities when working with children and young people.

It also provides clarity for the City of Whitehorse community to understand what Council's commitment and policy stance is in regard to Child Safety.

### 3. Scope

The Child Safety & Wellbeing Policy applies to all Council Personnel and applies in all operational environments wherever children and/or young people are participating in Council activities, programs or facilities.

### 4. Policy

The City of Whitehorse is committed to the safety and well-being of children and, as such, is committed to creating and maintaining a child safe organisation. Council understands that child safety is everyone's responsibility and prides itself on being a child safe organisation with zero tolerance for harm towards children and young people.

Keeping children and young people safe is a shared legal and moral responsibility across Whitehorse City Council. Council's commitment will be enacted through the implementation and monitoring of the Child Safe Standards, as specified under the Child Wellbeing and Safety Amendment (Child Safe Standards) Act 2015. This policy together with the Child Safety Action Plan aim to address risks to child safety and to establish a safeguarding culture and practice for the children and young people using Council's activities, programs, services and/or facilities.

### Council's Expectations

Council recognises its legal and moral responsibilities to keep children and young people safe from harm; it promotes and encourages health and well-being outcomes, and supports their best

interests. Council creates environments where all children, including children with a disability, Aboriginal children, and children from cultural and linguistically diverse backgrounds, have a voice - they are listened to, their views are respected and they contribute to how we plan for, design and implement our services, programs, initiatives and activities.

## Training

All Council personnel will be required to undertake mandatory training in the Child Safe Standards, general child safety and in engagement with children and young people.

## Mandatory Reporting

Council personnel **must** respond to allegations of child-related misconduct made against all personnel (Councillors, employees, contractors and volunteers) and report any allegations to the Commission for Children and Young People (the Commission).

## Empowerment and engagement of children and young people

Empowerment and engagement are critical elements of creating an organisation that is safe for children and young people. Cultural safety and safety for children and young people with disabilities and/or a specific gender or sexual identity is an essential precursor to the empowerment and engagement.

Council personnel must contribute to:

- ③ developing an empowering culture
- ③ fostering appropriate relationships among children and young people, their peers and the adults in the organisation
- ③ building awareness, skills and knowledge to recognise unsafe situations and raise concerns
- ③ supporting meaningful, positive participation in the organisation
- ③ ensuring a balance of power between adults within the organisation and children and young people
- ③ ensuring children and young people are provided with knowledge, skills and confidence to recognise unsafe situations, speak up, raise concerns and influence the organisation.
- ③ helping children and young people to understand safety, what the organisation is doing to keep them safe, how they can raise ideas and concerns, and what will happen if they do
- ③ ensuring that Council's Community Engagement Policy is designed to include children and young people
- ③ facilitating opportunities for children and young people to be supported to build confidence in themselves, in adults and in organisations
  - 1. provide opportunities for children and young people to contribute ideas and provide feedback on Council activities and allowing them to play a part in the decision-making processes

2. building the confidence of children and young people to report concerns, ideas, critical feedback by reinforcing that their views and wishes will be taken seriously.

## Role Boundaries

Council personnel will not, of their own volition or at the request of a program or service user, act or engage in activities, or provide additional support or care outside the scope of their duties (as specified in their position description) when delivering a Council program or service. This includes but is not limited to:

- ③ Providing unauthorised transportation to a child or young person participating in a Council activity, program, service or facility unless it is specifically a requirement of the program (ie: L2P Program)
- ③ Providing a babysitting/nanny service to a child or young person participating in a Council activity, program, service or facility
- ③ Seeking contact with a child or young person, or former participants, outside Council activities, services, programs or facilities (for example, via social media) unless specifically related to Council business and known to the parent/guardian
- ③ Accepting an invitation to attend any private social function at the request of a child or young person who has participated, or is participating, in Council activities, services, programs or facilities including at the request of their family
- ③ Developing any 'special' relationships with a child or young person connected to Council's activities, services, programs or facilities that could be seen as favouritism (for example, offering gifts or special treatment for specific children)
- ③ Engaging in open discussions of a mature or adult nature in the presence of children (for example, personal social activities)

## Pre-existing Arrangements with Children and Young People

Council recognises that some personnel may have pre-existing arrangements with children and young people who access Council's activities, services, programs or facilities, and as such may, in some instances for a period of time need to, undertake babysitting/ nanny/ transport services and/or attend a function at the request of a child or young person, or their parent/guardian. To ensure the safety of children and young people, in these pre-existing cases Council personnel are required to disclose pre-existing relationships to their Manager and Council's Program Advisor Gender Equality & Child Safety.

Any such relationships will cease by 31 December 2022. (This does not include private arrangements that staff may have with family or family friends but rather relationships that are built in the course of work.)

If a staff member or volunteer is required in an emergency to provide assistance to a child or young person which is beyond the expectations of that person's role, or beyond the scope of Council's usual programs or services, the staff or volunteer must immediately:

- ③ Advise their manager
- ③ Notify Council's Program Advisor Gender Equality & Child Safety and/or relevant Manager

- ③ Seek advice from management
- ③ Call 000 if the child or young person is in immediate danger

Council provides a broad range of initiatives including direct and indirect services to children and young people. It is acknowledged that Council personnel will at times need to apply common sense and good judgement when dealing with exceptional circumstances and/or critical instances involving children and/or young people.

## Language and tone of voice

Council personnel, in the presence of children and young people, will use language and a tone of voice which is age appropriate and:

- ③ Provides clear direction
- ③ Is reassuring
- ③ Is not discriminatory, racist or sexist
- ③ Is not derogatory, belittling or negative
- ③ Is not intended to threaten or frighten
- ③ Is not profane or sexual in nature

## Supervision

Council personnel are required to avoid one-to-one unsupervised situations with children and young people (“don’t be alone with a child”) to whom Council provides programs and services, and (where appropriate and possible) conduct all activities and/ or discussions with children and young people in view of other adult colleagues. Council acknowledges that this may not be possible in the provision of some services and programs such as Early Learning Services for young children and the Council endorsed VicRoads L2P Program.

Council Personnel responsible for supervising children and young people participating in Council programs or services must ensure that those children are not exposed to risks that pose a threat to their health, safety or welfare – this includes risks posed by other children and young people.

## Electronic and online communications

Council personnel are required to follow Council’s Publishing Policy, Brand and SubBrand Guidelines, and all other policies in relation to electronic communications and social media. All electronic communication between Council personnel and children and/ or young people must be authorised in writing by the child’s parent/carer and approved by the relevant Manager. A specific child/young person feedback mechanism will be developed on Council’s website to accommodate ad hoc queries, ideas and suggestions seeking a response from personnel.

Where a parent and/or guardian is not included in the communication (for example, direct messaging via social media/text messaging):

- ③ Restrict such communication to issues directly associated with delivering Council programs and services, such as advising that a scheduled event is cancelled etc



- ③ Ensure that this communication is via a channel which is visible and accessible to the manager or direct supervisor of that team

## Giving gifts

Council Personnel are prohibited from giving and receiving personal gifts to children and young people to whom Council provides programs and services. It is permissible however to give promotional, corporate, or recognition of service (student placement) gifts, for example a Council logo pin, library bag or drink bottle, to children or young people visiting Council as part of a school group visit. In this case each child or young person in the group should receive the same items.

## Photographs of children and young people

Images (photograph and film) of children and young people should only be taken for the purpose of promoting, documenting a child's progress (through services such as Maternal & Child Health) and publishing Council run programs, services and events. The following requirements must be met for all images of children and young people:

- ③ Prior permission to photograph or film the child or young person is granted by the parent or guardian of the child or young person via Council's Appearance Release form
- ③ The context is directly related to participation in or promotion of Council services or programs
- ③ The child or young person is appropriately dressed and posed
- ③ Any caption or text which accompanies an image is checked so that it does not identify a child or young person if such identification is potentially detrimental
- ③ Images are stored in compliance with Council's obligations, the Privacy & Data Protection Act 2014 and Council's Information Privacy Policy
- ③ Images where approved must only be taken on Council-provided devices, staff are not permitted to take any photos and/or recordings on their personal devices.

## Physical contact with children and young people

Any physical contact with children and young people must be in a manner which is safe and adheres to the Child Safe Standards and the age of the child. Physical contact must be appropriate to the delivery of Council services and programs and the age of the child. The consent of the child should always be requested prior to any contact. Council Personnel should not under any circumstances have any physical contact with children or young people participating in Council programs and services that:

- ③ Involves touching of genitals, buttocks, the breast area except what is required as part of delivering first aid, medical or allied health services (for example, Maternal and Child Health Nurses). If contact with these areas was required as part of delivering such services, it should be in the presence of another staff member, or parent/guardian of the child unless in an emergency situation as outlined above.
- ③ Would appear to a reasonable observer to have a sexual connotation
- ③ Intends to cause pain or distress to the child or young person
- ③ Is physical, for example, wrestling, horseplay, tickling or other roughhousing

- ③ Is unnecessary, for example, assisting with toileting when a child does not require assistance
- ③ Is initiated against the wishes of the child or young person, except if such contact may be necessary to prevent injury to the child or young person or to others, in which case:
  - » Physical restraint should be a last resort and only occur in an urgent or emergency situation, for example, when applying first aid or for the protection of another child
  - » All such incidents must be reported to the relevant manager as soon as possible, including any physical contact initiated by a child or young person that is sexual and/ or inappropriate

## Overnight stays and sleeping arrangements

Council will not support overnight stays or sleep outs involving children and young people without a thorough risk assessment and approval of the Program Advisor Gender Equality & Child Safety and the Director Community Services. For activities in Council occupied buildings such as Scouts/ Guides they will need to provide evidence of having a Child Safety & Wellbeing Policy in place and will be subject to compliance with all other required permits and permissions.

## Change room, group fitness room and consultation room arrangements

If Council Personnel are required to supervise children and young people in change rooms, group fitness rooms or consultation rooms, they should avoid:

- ③ One-to-one situations with a child or young person in a change rooms, group fitness rooms and consultation rooms
- ③ Using change rooms, group fitness rooms and consultation rooms to undress while children and young people are present.

Council Personnel should:

- ③ Ensure adequate supervision in group fitness rooms and consultation rooms when they are used
- ③ Provide the level of supervision required to prevent abuse by members of the public, adult service users, peer service users while also respecting a child or young person's privacy
- ③ Ensure via signage and other means that no mobile phones or cameras are permissible under any circumstances in change rooms, group fitness rooms and consultation rooms, or in other areas owned, managed or operated by Council

## Uniform or identity card/pass/badge

Council Personnel should at all times wear identification/uniform when delivering Council programs and services to children and young people.

## Transporting children

Children and young people are to be transported (in the back seat) only in circumstances that are directly related to the delivery of Council programs and services (for example, transporting a work

experience student to carry out work related duties), and only with the permission of the child or young person's parent/guardian.

## Protecting Children during Pandemics and Epidemics

Advocacy with other tiers of government, collaboration with other sectors, and child protection-specific programming are key priorities during a COVID-19 response.

## Consequences of breaching policy

All Council Personnel are expected to report instances, allegations or concerns in relation to abuse or neglect of a child or young person by personnel within our organisation or by others in the community, Failure to do so is considered a serious breach of this policy and may result in disciplinary action.

In addition to any internal proceedings and reporting, all incidents will be reported to the Commission for Children and Young People and any breaches of law will be reported to Victoria Police. If an allegation has been made against a member of Council staff, Councillor and/or Council Volunteer relating to inappropriate behaviour towards a child or young person outside of work, Council reserves the right to suspend that person during the investigation period.

Council understands that a failure to report incidents of abuse, neglect and harm of child or young person may be classed as a criminal offence under State law. Council Personnel are obligated to report as per Council's mandatory Child Safe reporting process any information relating to:

- ③ incidents, allegations, disclosures or reasonable concerns in relation to abuse or neglect of a child or young person, either by personnel within our organisation or by others
- ③ any breaches or actions of personnel within our organisation that contravene Council's policies and procedures, such as outlined in Council's Staff, Volunteer and Councillor Codes of Conduct.

Council is committed to ensuring privacy, confidentiality and natural justice. This policy prohibits all Council Personnel from discussing any concerns or allegations with unauthorised personnel within or outside the organisation. The Public Interest Disclosures Act 2012 will guide any situation whereby reporting of personnel has occurred.

All children and young people within/connected to the Council will be informed of our policy and are provided with unconditional support and mechanisms to feel empowered to speak up if they feel, hear or see something that does not feel right to them or makes them feel unsafe. They will be heard without judgement and their feedback or complaints are taken seriously, and responded to promptly and thoroughly.

## Working with Children Checks (WWCCs)

Designated staff, volunteers and contractors are required to have a current Working with Children Check (WWCC). These roles have been selected based on legislative requirements and Child Safe Standards risk assessment). They:

- ③ work/volunteer in services and programs that care for/educate/support children whether supervised or unsupervised (e.g. school crossing supervisors, youth services, maternal childhealth and immunisation nurses); or
- ③ are required to work with or visit a child based service (child care centre, kindergarten, school) on a regular basis (e.g. project architect for child related facility); or
- ③ are not engaged in work that is specifically child-related but do have direct contact with children (e.g. library, recreational and community facilities, home support where child family members may be present in the home environment, playground maintenance etc); and/or
- ③ may reasonably be expected to come into direct contact with children on a regular basis during the course of their work or whilst representing Council. This includes attendance at community events where children or families are participating.

Under Victoria Child Wellbeing and Safety Act 2015 (including the 2022 Amendment) it is an offence for an employer to knowingly engage a child-related worker who is required to hold a current Working with Children Clearance (or equivalent) and does not have one.

Under Victoria Child Wellbeing and Safety Act 2015 (including the 2022 Amendment) it is an offence for an employee, volunteer, contractor and where identified sub- contractors to engage in child related work when they do not have a current Working with Children Check. Penalties include imprisonment and/or fines. Councillors may choose to obtain a volunteer WWCC in view of their representational role. Personnel may also be exempt from holding a WWCC if they are a teacher with the Victorian Institute of Teaching or a Victorian or Australian Federal Police Officer.

## NOTE:

- ③ Regular contact with children refers to at least 'six' occasions per calendar year' as defined by CCYC.
- ③ Where new roles/employees are required to obtain a WWCC, Council will cover the cost of the first WWCC and then staff are required to maintain up- to-date certification at their own cost.
- ③ Employees commencing in roles that have traditionally required a WWCC will be required to have obtained a WWCC at the own expense prior to commencement

## Code of Conduct

Council has an Employee and Volunteer Code of Conduct that outlines the expectations and requirements for how Council employee and volunteers will behave that is in alignment with our values, and prioritises integrity in relationships to ensure positive outcomes for our community. In addition, some staff within the organisation are also required to adhere to professional Codes of Conduct and/or practice standards. Some professionals are also mandated to report physical and sexual abuse of children and young people e.g. Maternal and Child Health Nurses.

Councillors are also subject to a Code of Conduct that reflects their representational role.

## Responding to child safety concerns

The four steps that all personnel must follow regarding incidents, allegations, disclosures or reasonable concerns of abuse or neglect, or breaches of policy are:

1. Responding
2. Reporting
3. Sharing of Information
4. Supporting

## Responding

Immediate responses must mitigate further harm and ensure the safety of children/ young people, Council personnel and members of the public. Reduce the harm and risk to those impacted by the incident by:

- ③ Calling Emergency Services on 000 if required
- ③ Making the surroundings safe to prevent immediate recurrence of the incident, for example; removing potentially harmful person(s), increase supervision of children and young people, move uninvolved children and young people away from the incident, move to a safe place, alert others to risks that extend beyond the local environment, for example, other areas within Council Facilities
- ③ Provide immediate care and support to the child/young person and others involved in the incident by addressing; physical well-being e.g. providing first aid and emotional well-being (including psychological) e.g. arranging for coverage of duties and supervision; facilitating access to counselling via the Employee Assistance Program (EAP)

## Responding to a disclosure/allegation

When responding to a disclosure or allegation by a child or young person, staff or volunteers should respond by:

- ③ listening to the allegation or disclosure supportively and without dispute
- ③ clarifying the basic details, without seeking detailed information or asking suggestive/leading questions. This is guided by Council's Child Safe Incident Report
- ③ providing reassurance to the child or young person that they have done the right thing in telling you, are believed and that Council will take immediate action in response to the disclosure
- ③ explaining to the child or young person that other people may need to be told, in order to stop what has/is happening. Do not promise to keep information a secret
- ③ reporting the matter as per organisational policy requirements to the Program Advisor Gender Equality & Child Safety. Recording notes as early as possible to ensure all information is captured before completing our Child Safe Incident Report (staff).

In your response(s) you will need to consider the specific needs of the child or young person. Consider the unique qualities of a child including, for example, whether the child is Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander, has a disability, identifies as LGBTQI+ has a culturally and linguistically diverse background and/or is unable to live at home etc.

## Reporting

Once the immediate response to the situation has concluded, it is important to fulfil the internal and external reporting requirements. Council Personnel are required to report any reasonable concerns or instances of abuse or neglect (cases in which a child or young person has suffered, or is likely to suffer significant harm from abuse or neglect, immediately.

Child Information Sharing Scheme can also be used when appropriate.

[www.vic.gov.au](http://www.vic.gov.au) > [child-information-sharing-scheme](#)

It is not the role of Council personnel to identify or investigate an allegation / concern, however they must report each new instance of suspicion of harm and / or breach of policy as they become aware of it, and to seek advice from their Coordinator and/or Manager when they are unsure. Should an investigation be required then an external party to Council will be engaged to undertake an independent review.

Council personnel should follow the guidance document on the Child Safe Incident Report to complete the form accurately and to the best of their ability, this document will be available on Council's intranet and in hard copy. All reports must be documented fully, written factually and objectively. Clear and accurate reporting can assist to support any internal or external investigation which may transpire after an incident. Reports should be submitted formally to Council's Program Advisor Gender Equality & Child Safety via email.

## Contacts

Program Advisor Gender Equality & Child Safety	0403 267 413
Director Community Services	0479 181 506
Manager People & Culture	0479 199 224
Department of Fairness, Families and Housing	After hours Child Protection Emergency Service - 13 12 78 East Division Intake - 1300 360 391 Whitehorse Police 8851 1111
Victorian Commission for Children and Young People	1300 78 29 78

## Internal reporting requirements

The Child Safe Incident Report form is accessible to all staff via Council's intranet and in hard copy format at all Council sites. All child and young person safety incidents must be recorded on the Child Safe Incident Report form which is forwarded to the Program Advisor Gender Equality & Child Safety. The relevant Coordinator / Manager and Program Advisor Gender Equality & Child Safety

will also be notified. Where incidents relate to reportable conduct the information will also be forwarded to the Chief Executive Officer (CEO). All incidents are entered into the Incident Management System. A Child Safe Incident Report form should be completed as soon as possible following an incident. The Program Advisor Gender Equality & Child Safety can assist with this process.

All Council staff and Councillors are responsible for:

- ③ ensuring the immediate response was sufficient and take any further action that is needed including ensuring an Child Safe Incident Report form is completed fully and logged on Council's risk management system;
- ③ working with the Program Advisor Gender Equality & Child Safety and notifying the relevant Manager where required
- ③ providing confirmation to the reporter that all required steps have been completed to manage the incident until it is closed off, whilst maintaining privacy and confidentiality obligations.
- ③ reporting critical incidents to the relevant Manager and following due process to ensure the child/young person is safe.
- ③ In the case of reportable conduct incidents, i.e. where the allegation meets the threshold for reporting to the Commission for Children and Young People, the Program Advisor Gender Equality & Child Safety and Director Community Services (DCS) will establish a Child Safe Standards (CSS) Group.

Council has external reporting requirements, including legal reporting obligations. All Reportable Conduct incidents that require external authority notification to the Commission for Children and Young People must be reported to the CEO.

## Support

Supporting the needs of those impacted by the incident should include considerations of cultural safety and wellbeing for:

- ③ the child/young person and their family (this includes any specific support needs for those who are an Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander; Culturally and Linguistically Diverse; person with a disability background; LGBTQI+, or a child or young person who is unable to live at home);
- ③ Council staff or volunteers and other children who witness and/or report the incident
- ③ any staff or volunteers, Councillor or contractor against whom a complaint is made, for example, offering access to the Employee Assistance Program (EAP)
- ③ other staff or volunteers, Councillor or contractor impacted by the incident

All other staff or volunteer, Councillor or contractor who are aware of the incident, please note that:

- ③ any allegation does not mean the person is guilty
- ③ the allegation will be properly investigated and will include the right to 'procedural fairness';
- ③ they are not to provide an opinion or judgement in relation to the investigation of the allegation.

## Records and documentation

All Child Safety Incident Report forms will be recorded on the Incident Reporting System and will be regularly reviewed by senior management to ensure the effectiveness of actions taken and to identify areas for improvement.

Council's Program Advisor Gender Equality & Child Safety will oversee the administration of completed Child Safe Incident Report forms and any other documentation relating to the allegation and subsequent action.

To prevent access by unauthorised persons, our organisation stores any documentation associated with an allegation of abuse or neglect of a child or young person and breaches of the policy by having:

- ③ hard-copy documentation stored in a locked filing cabinet (or similar)
- ③ electronic documentation stored in a locked-down folder within Council's HPCM system

Council will maintain and regularly monitor records of Incident Reports as part of our Incident Management processes to ensure that they are responded to effectively in accordance with this policy and that requirements for reporting to external authorities are complied with. These records will inform reviews of this policy.

## Communication and Training

Council will communicate the Child Safety & Wellbeing Policy and its requirements to children, young people and their families and Council personnel. Council ensures all new personnel are informed and supported to understand our Child Safe policies and procedures, paying particular attention to the practices detailed in this policy.

Copies of this policy and Code of Conduct are available on the intranet and in hardcopy in Council facilities, on the main web-site and available in a number of translations and in a child-friendly version. Council will also provide training and guidance relating to Child Safety.

## Evaluation

This document will be reviewed every three years, in consultation with the community. Some circumstances may trigger an early review, this includes but is not limited to legislative changes, organisational changes, incident outcomes and other matters deemed appropriate by the Executive Leadership Team and/or CEO.

## Dispute resolution process

Any dispute or grievance arising in relation to the Policy should be addressed in accordance with Council's Grievance Procedure or Dispute Resolution Clause in Council's Enterprise Agreement. In the first instance, an aggrieved employee is expected to raise their concerns with their manager.



## 5. Definitions

<b>Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Child</b>	A person under the age of 18 years who identifies as Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander Person
<b>Bullying</b>	<p>Bullying involves the inappropriate use of power by one or more persons over another less powerful person or group and is generally an act that is repeated over time. Bullying has been described by researchers as taking many forms which are often interrelated and include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>③ Verbal (name calling, put downs, threats);</li> <li>③ Physical (hitting, punching, kicking, scratching, tripping, spitting); Social (ignoring, excluding, ostracising, alienating); and/or</li> <li>③ Psychological (spreading rumours, stalking, dirty looks, hiding or damaging possessions).</li> </ul>
<b>Child or young person</b>	A person under the age of eighteen
<b>Child Safe Organisation</b>	An organisation that meets the child safe standards by proactively taking measures to protect children from abuse.
<b>Child Safe Standards</b>	The Child Safe Standards are designed to drive cultural change in organisations, so that protecting children from abuse is embedded in the everyday thinking and practice of leaders, employees and volunteers; provide a minimum standard of child safety across all organisations; and highlight the role all organisations have in keeping children safe from abuse.
<b>Child Safety</b>	In the context of the Child Safe Standards, child safety means measures to protect a child from abuse
<b>Emotional or psychological abuse</b>	Emotional or psychological abuse occurs when a child does not receive the love, affection or attention they need for healthy emotional, psychological and social development. Such abuse may involve repeated rejection or threats to a child. Constant criticism, teasing, ignoring, threatening, yelling, scapegoating, ridicule and rejection or continual coldness are all examples of emotional abuse. These behaviors continue to an extent that results in significant damage to the child or young person's intellectual or emotional wellbeing and development.

<p><b>Empowerment</b></p>	<p>Is about building up children and young people and changing the way organisations operate. It helps children and young people to have greater confidence and to seek out support when they need it.</p>
<p><b>Family violence</b></p>	<p>Family violence occurs when children are forced to live with violence between adults in their home. It is harmful to children. It can include witnessing violence or the consequences of violence. Family violence is defined as violence between members of a family or extended family or those fulfilling the role of family in a child or young person’s life.</p> <p>Exposure to family violence places children and young people at increased risk of physical injury and harm and has a significant impact on their wellbeing and development.</p>
<p><b>Grooming</b></p>	<p>Grooming is a term used to describe what happens when a perpetrator of abuse builds a relationship with a child with a view to abusing them at some stage.</p> <p>There is no set pattern in relation to the grooming of children. For some perpetrators, there will be a lengthy period of time before the abuse begins. The child may be given special attention and, what starts as an apparently normal display of affection, such as cuddling, can develop into sexual touching or masturbation and then into more serious sexual behaviour.</p> <p>Other perpetrators may draw a child in and abuse them relatively quickly. Some abusers do not groom children but abuse them without forming a relationship at all. Grooming can take place in any setting where a relationship is formed, such as leisure, music, sports and religious activities, or in internet chatrooms, in social media or by other technological channels.</p>
<p><b>Harm</b></p>	<p>Harm to a child, is any detrimental effect of psychological or emotional wellbeing. It is immaterial how the harm is caused. Harm can be caused by:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>③ Physical abuse</li> <li>③ psychological or emotional abuse or neglect;</li> <li>③ sexual abuse or exploitation;</li> <li>③ a single act, omission or circumstance; and</li> <li>③ a series or combination of acts, omissions or circumstances.</li> </ul>

<p><b>Neglect</b></p>	<p>Neglect is the persistent failure or deliberate denial to provide the child with the basic necessities of life. Such neglect includes the failure to provide adequate food, clothing, shelter, adequate supervision, clean water, medical attention or supervision to the extent that is likely to be, significantly harmed. Categories of neglect include physical neglect, medical neglect, abandonment or desertion, emotional neglect and educational neglect. The issue of neglect must be considered within the context of resources reasonably available.</p>
<p><b>Participation</b></p>	<p>Is about giving children and young people opportunities to have their say and to inform decision-making.</p>
<p><b>Personnel</b></p>	<p>Whitehorse City Council Staff, Councillors, Volunteers, Agency Staff and Contractors engaged directly by Whitehorse City Council</p>
<p><b>Physical abuse</b></p>	<p>Physical abuse occurs when a person subjects a child to nonaccidental physically aggressive acts. The abuser may inflict an injury intentionally or inadvertently as a result of physical punishment or the aggressive treatment of a child. Physically abusive behavior includes (but is not limited to) shoving, hitting, slapping, shaking, throwing, punching, biting, burning, excessive and physically harmful over training, and kicking. It also includes giving children harmful substances such as drugs, alcohol or poison. Certain types of punishment, whilst not causing injury can also be considered physical abuse if they place a child are risk of being hurt.</p> <p>Physical abuse also includes threats to physically harm.</p>

## Physical Violence

Physical violence committed against, with or in the presence of a child can fall into two categories. Physical violence can be either:

- ③ actual physical violence - a worker or volunteer intentionally or recklessly uses physical force against, with, or in the presence of a child without a lawful reason, which has the ability to cause injury or harm to the child. Actual physical violence can include hitting, punching, kicking, pushing or throwing something that strikes a child or another person.
- ③ apprehended physical violence - a worker or volunteer intentionally or recklessly engages in conduct or behaviour against, with, or in the presence of a child that is capable of causing a child to think that physical force is about to be used against them or another person. This could include words, gestures or actions that cause a child to believe physical force is about to be used against them, regardless of whether or not the worker or volunteer actually intended that any physical force would be applied.

## Reasonable belief

A reportable allegation is made where a person makes an allegation, based on a reasonable belief, that a worker or volunteer has committed reportable conduct or misconduct that **may** involve reportable conduct. This includes where a reportable allegation is made against the head of the organisation. A reasonable belief is more than suspicion. There must be some objective basis for the belief. However, it is not the same as having proof and does not require certainty.

For example, a person is likely to have a reasonable belief if they:

- ③ observed the conduct themselves
- ③ heard directly from a child that the conduct occurred
- ③ received information from another credible source (including another witness).
- ③ Heads of entity do not need to agree with or share the belief that the alleged conduct has occurred. However, they do not need to notify the Commission
- ③ about the allegation if it is plainly wrong or has no basis at all in reality.

<p><b>Reasonable steps</b></p>	<p>Personnel may breach duty of care towards a child or young person if they fail to act in the way a reasonable or diligent professional would have acted in the same situation.</p> <p>In relation to suspected child abuse, reasonable steps may include (but are not necessarily limited to): acting on concerns and suspicions of abuse as soon as practicable, seeking appropriate advice or consulting with other professionals or agencies when the unsure of what steps to take, reporting the suspected child abuse to appropriate authorities such as Police or Child Protection, arranging counselling and/or other appropriate support for the child, providing ongoing support to the child and sharing information with other personnel who will also provide care and support.</p>
<p><b>Reportable Conduct</b></p>	<p>There are five types of 'reportable conduct' listed in the <i>Child Wellbeing and Safety Act 2005</i>:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>③ sexual offences (against, with or in the presence of, a child)</li> <li>③ sexual misconduct (against, with or in the presence of, a child)</li> <li>③ physical violence (against, with or in the presence of, a child)</li> <li>③ behaviour that causes significant emotional or psychological harm</li> <li>③ significant neglect.</li> </ul>
<p><b>Sexual abuse</b></p>	<p>Sexual abuse occurs when an adult or a person of authority (e.g. older) involves a child in any sexual activity. Perpetrators of sexual abuse take advantage of their power, authority or position over the child or young person for their own benefit. It can include making sexual comments to a child, engaging children to participate in sexual conversations over the internet or on social media, kissing, touching genitals or breasts, oral sex or intercourse with a child. Encouraging a child to view pornographic magazines, websites and videos is also sexual abuse. Engaging children to participate in sexual conversations over the internet is also considered sexual abuse.</p>

<p><b>Sexual exploitation</b></p>	<p>Sexual exploitation is a form of sexual abuse where offenders use their power, (physical, financial or emotional) over a child or young person, or a false identity, to sexually or emotionally abuse them. It often involves situations and relationships where children and young people receive something (food, accommodation, drugs, alcohol, cigarettes, affection, gifts, money etc.) in return for participating in sexual activities. Sexual exploitation can occur in person or online, and sometimes the child or young person may not even realise they are a victim.</p>
<p><b>Sexual Misconduct</b></p>	<p>‘Sexual misconduct’ captures a broader range of inappropriate behaviours of a sexual nature that are not necessarily criminal. Sexual misconduct refers to conduct that:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>③ amounts to misconduct</li> <li>③ is of a sexual nature, and</li> <li>③ occurred against, with, or in the presence of, a child.</li> </ul>
<p><b>Sexual Offences</b></p>	<p>In Victoria, it is an offence to engage in certain sexual behaviours against, with or in front of, a child. Many of these behaviours are reportable conduct under the Reportable Conduct Scheme. This includes:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>③ sexual assault</li> <li>③ indecent acts</li> <li>③ possession of child abuse material</li> <li>③ ‘grooming’ a child in order to commit a sexual offence.</li> </ul> <p>A full list of the relevant sexual offences is set out in clause 1 of Schedule 1 to the Sentencing Act 1991.</p> <p>NOTE: A worker or volunteer does not need to be charged with, or found guilty of, a sexual offence for their behaviour to be reportable conduct.</p>

## Significant Neglect

Significant neglect occurs when there is a significant, deliberate or reckless failure to meet the basic needs of a child in circumstances where the adult understood the needs of the child, or could have understood those needs if they had turned their mind to the question, and had the opportunity to meet those needs but failed to do so.

Examples of different types of neglect could include:

- ③ Supervisory neglect: This may occur when a person responsible for the care of a child is unable or unwilling to exercise adequate supervision or control of the child or young person, or fails to seek or comply with appropriate medical treatment.
- ③ Physical neglect: This may occur where there is the failure to meet a child's physical needs including the provision of adequate and appropriate food, clothing, shelter or physical hygiene needs.
- ③ Educational neglect: This may occur when there is a failure to ensure that a child's formal education needs are being met.
- ③ Emotional neglect: This may occur where there is a failure to provide adequate nurturing, affection encouragement and support to a child.

## 6. Responsibilities

### Chief Executive Officer (CEO)

- ③ Be aware of and undertake discreet responsibilities under the Act that cannot be delegated
- ③ Be notified of all reportable conduct child safe incident reports.
- ③ Meet specific obligations under the Reportable Conduct Scheme.
- ③ Receive reports of suspected incidents of child abuse from Councillors in line with the Child Safe Reporting Process.

### Program Advisor Gender Equality & Child Safety

- ③ Provide strategic advice and organisational support with regard to child safety
- ③ Support the notification of child safety concerns or allegations to relevant authorities.
- ③ Assist alleged victims and their families to access counselling and support services
- ③ Provide guidance and support to affected Councillors, Council staff, volunteers

<b>Director Community Services</b>	③ Executive of Project Working Group and owner of the Child Safety & Wellbeing Policy
<b>Executive Leadership Team</b>	③ Receive notification of child safe incident reports when they are made by a staff member of their Directorate
<b>Manager People &amp; Culture</b>	③ Responsible for managing all industrial related issues and supporting the HR processes including external investigations.
<b>Council staff, volunteers and contractors</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>③ Be aware of, and understand their obligations under the relevant legislation, Code of Conduct and Council’s policies and procedures in relation to child safety and wellbeing.</li> <li>③ Designated staff and volunteers to have WWCCs, noting staff who have regular contact with children – ie: at least six occasions per calendar year’.</li> <li>③ Provide an environment where children and young people feel safe, empowered and can participate.</li> <li>③ Participate in training/education in relation to identifying, preventing and reporting child abuse; and additional training for those with particular responsibilities for children.</li> <li>③ Report all concerns and reasonable beliefs in relation to a child or young person being abused or at risk of being abused to the relevant Coordinator/Manager.</li> <li>③ All Council staff, volunteers or contractors are required to report child abuse whether it has or is, suspected to have taken place in the home, community or a Council service.</li> </ul>



## Managers / Coordinators

- ③ Coordinators/Managers will receive a notification of child safe incident reports when made by a staff member in their department. Review and receipt documentation, maintain confidential records and participate in investigation processes if and when required
- ③ Promote regular discussion on child safety as being everyone's responsibility
- ③ Managers are also responsible for managing Child Safety Incidents in accordance with the policy and associated processes.
- ③ Ensure all of Council has access to and are aware of their obligations under the relevant legislation, Codes of Conduct and Child Safe policies and procedures
- ③ Take reasonable steps to identify any potential risks to child safety and wellbeing within their department and that these risks are removed or minimised.
- ③ Ensure risks are monitored and reviewed within operational risk registers, with control frameworks also reviewed
- ③ Ensure that all Council staff, volunteers and contractors receive and undertake regular training/education in relation to identifying, preventing and reporting child abuse
- ③ Receive and refer any child safety concerns to Council's Program Advisor Gender Equality & Child Safety and/or the relevant authority depending on the urgency of the issue
- ③ Act to protect a child or young person and initiate internal processes for reporting and/or investigation of allegations, including disciplinary processes if required.
- ③ Ensure that confidentiality and privacy of all personal information is maintained in line with relevant Council legislation, policies and procedures.

## 7. Related Policies & Legislation

In developing the Child Safety & Wellbeing Policy, the following legislative frameworks are relevant:

- ③ United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child
- ③ National Framework for Protecting Australia's Children
- ③ Australian Human Rights Commission National Principles for Child Safe Organisations
- ③ Victoria Child Wellbeing and Safety Act 2015 (including the 2022 Amendment and Child Safe Standards)

- ③ Victorian Reportable Conduct Scheme
- ③ Children, Youth and Families Act 2005 (Vic) (including reporting to Child Protection)
- ③ Crimes Act 1958 (Vic) (including Failure to Protect and Failure to Disclose offences)
- ③ Wrongs Act 1958 (Vic) (including Part XIII – Organisational liability for child abuse) ③ Public Interest Disclosures Act 2012
- ③ Privacy and Data Protection Act 2014
- ③ Health Records Act 2001
- ③ Child Information Scheme – Part 6A Child Wellbeing and Safety Act 2005 Council’s related

### Policies and Plans:

- ③ Whitehorse Employee Code of Conduct
- ③ Councillor Code of Conduct
- ③ Whitehorse Volunteer Code of Conduct
- ③ Whitehorse Recruitment Policy
- ③ Whitehorse Early Learning Childhood Services Child Safe Environment Policy ③ Council Plan
- ③ Public Health and Wellbeing Plan
- ③ Whitehorse Drug and Alcohol Policy
- ③ Whitehorse Privacy Policy
- ③ Whitehorse Community Engagement Policy
- ③ Reconciliation Policy
- ③ Disability Access Policy
- ③ Community Engagement Policy
- ③ Volunteer Policy
- ③ Disciplinary Policy (to be developed)

## 8. Review

**Responsible Manager:** Director Community Services Date

**Adopted:** April 2022

**Date of Next Review:** March 2025

This policy has been reviewed for Human Rights Charter compliance.

## 9. Appendices

As attached.

# Appendix 1: Whitehorse City Council child safe policy

## Legislative Requirements

### Child Safe Standards

The Child Safe Standards were developed in response to the 2013 Victorian Parliamentary Inquiry into the Handling of Child Abuse by Religious and Other NonGovernment Organisations (the Betrayal of Trust Inquiry). They were introduced via an amendment to the Child Safety and Wellbeing Act 2005, and from January 2017, all Victorian Organisations that provide services to children are required to comply with the Standards.

In July 2021, a new set of Standards were legislated and came into force on 1 July 2022:

- 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

Although all children are vulnerable, some children face additional vulnerabilities, for example, Aboriginal children, children from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds, children with disabilities and children with diverse gender or sexual identities. Consequently, in applying each Standard, organisations must embed the four following key principles by promoting the:

- a) cultural safety of Aboriginal Children;
- b) cultural safety of children from culturally and/or linguistically diverse backgrounds;
- c) safety of children with a disability;
- d) safety of children with a specific gender or sexual identity.

The Standards help build a child safe culture within an organisation and ensure that organisations are accountable for the safety of children using their services and facilities or participating in their programs and initiatives. Compliance with the Standards is regulated and monitored by the Commission for Children and Young People.

## Mandatory Reporting

Mandatory reporting refers to the legal requirement of certain professional groups to report a reasonable belief of child abuse to child protection authorities.

In Victoria, under the *Children, Youth and Families Act 2005*, mandatory reporters must make a report to child protection authorities, if in the course of practicing their profession or carrying out duties of their office, position or employment, they form a belief on reasonable grounds that a child is in need of protection from physical injury or sexual abuse. In Council, this will be relevant for some staff, which include but are not limited to nurses, youth workers and early childhood workers. For a complete list, refer to <https://providers.dhhs.vic.gov.au/mandatory-reporting>

It is a criminal offence for mandated personnel to fail to report abuse where they have a reasonable belief that abuse has, or is likely to, occur.

## Failure to Protect

In Victoria, failure to protect is an offence where; personnel believe there is a significant risk of harm to children (under the age of 18) by other personnel or a person in the community and:

- ③ they fail to report to someone of a higher authority; or
- ③ they are in a position of authority to remove or reduce that risk and they fail to do so.

Failure to protect may result in legal implications, including imprisonment.

## Failure to Report

In Victoria, failure to report is an offence where; personnel have witnessed or have been confided in with regard to a significant risk of harm to children (under the age of 18) by other personnel in the organisation or a member of the community and:

- ③ they fail to make a formal report and follow due process.

Failure to report may also result in legal implications, including imprisonment.

## The Reportable Conduct Scheme (the Scheme)

The Scheme requires organisations to respond to allegations of child-related misconduct made against workers (employees and contractors) and volunteers and report any allegations to the Commission for Children and Young People (the Commission). There are five types of reportable conduct:

- a) Sexual offences committed against, with or in the presence of a child
- b) Sexual misconduct committed against, with or in the presence of a child

- c) Physical violence against, with or in the presence of a child
- d) Any behaviour that causes significant emotional or psychological harm to a child) Significant neglect of a child.

The Commission has the power to receive allegations and findings of reportable conduct, assess an organisation's systems to prevent, notify and investigate reportable conduct, provide oversight of workplace investigations, investigate allegations in some circumstances, refer findings to professional registration bodies and the Working with Children Check Unit, build the capacity of organisations to respond to allegations of abuse and report to Parliament on performance of the scheme and trends.

## Role of the Reportable Conduct Commission

Provide independent review and oversight

The Scheme does not replace or interfere with Police investigations. Organisations covered by the Reportable Conduct Scheme should contact the Commission for clarification and guidance, and to talk through any issues of concern.

- ③ Telephone: 8601 5281
- ③ Email: [contact@ccyp.vic.gov.au](mailto:contact@ccyp.vic.gov.au)

Further information is also available on the Commission for Children and Young People's website at [www.ccyp.vic.gov.au](http://www.ccyp.vic.gov.au)

## Useful Resources

<http://www.humanrightscommission.vic.gov.au>

[www.multicultural.vic.gov.au/about-us/office-ofmulticultural-affairs-and-citizenship](http://www.multicultural.vic.gov.au/about-us/office-ofmulticultural-affairs-and-citizenship)

[www.cmy.net.au](http://www.cmy.net.au)

<http://fecca.org.au> <https://aifs.gov.au>

<http://www.earlychildhoodaustralia.org>.

[au/nqsplp/wp-](http://www.nqsplp/wp-)

[content/uploads/2012/05/EYLFPLP\\_E-](http://content/uploads/2012/05/EYLFPLP_E-)

[Newsletter No7.pdf](#)

<http://servicedelivery.dss.gov.au/2012/03/05/nationalcultural-competency-tool-ncct-formental-healthservices>

<https://ccyp.vic.gov.au/assets/resources/tipsheet-safety-children>

[http://www.lawfoundation.net.au/ljf/site/templates/Grants Reports/\\$file/SCU Safe At School Final 2014.pdf](http://www.lawfoundation.net.au/ljf/site/templates/Grants%20Reports/$file/SCU%20Safe%20At%20School%20Final%202014.pdf) <http://www.reconciliationvic.org.au>

<http://www.dpc.vic.gov.au/index.php/aboriginal-affairs/aboriginalaffairs-policy/aboriginal-inclusion> <https://antar.org.au>

<https://www.vic.gov.au> › child-information-sharing-scheme

## Appendix 2: Key indicators of abuse

Abuse category	Physical indicators	Behavioural indicators
Physical	<p>Unexplained:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>③ Cuts Abrasions, Bruising or Swelling</li> <li>③ Burns, scalds, cigarette burns, rope burns or marks on arms, legs, neck or torso</li> <li>③ Fractures, strains or sprains and/or dislocation of limbs</li> <li>③ Recurrent Injuries</li> <li>③ Mouth, Teeth or Dental injuries</li> <li>③ Ear or Eye injuries</li> <li>③ Sickness/nausea</li> <li>③ covering themselves with clothes inappropriate to weather conditions</li> <li>③ Bite Marks</li> </ul> <p>Disclosure of physical violence or threats of physical violence</p>	<p>Avoidance and/or fear of a particular person or staff member</p> <p>Sleep disturbances</p> <p>Sudden or Marked Changes in:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>③ behaviour and/or demeanour (eg: mood swings, uncharacteristic aggression)</li> <li>③ daily routine</li> <li>③ appetite</li> </ul> <p>Unusual passivity and/or withdrawal</p> <p>Self-harm and/or suicide attempts</p> <p>Inappropriate explanations of how injuries occurred</p> <p>Excessive compliance to staff</p> <p>Rough handling of others and/or objects</p>
Sexual	<p>Direct or indirect disclosure of abuse or assault</p> <p>Trauma to breasts, buttocks, lower abdomen, thighs or genitalia Difficulty walking or sitting down</p> <p>Pain, itching, bleeding and/or discharge in genital and/or anal area; bruising.</p> <p>Self-harm, abuse, suicide attempts</p> <p>Torn, stained or blood- stained underwear or bedclothes</p> <p>Sexually transmitted diseases, pregnancy</p> <p>Unexplained money or gifts</p> <p>Recurrent pain on passing urine or faeces</p>	<p>Sleep disturbances</p> <p>Inappropriate or unusual sexual behaviour or knowledge Sudden or Marked changes in:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>③ eating patterns</li> <li>③ social patterns</li> <li>③ behaviour or temperament (ie: anxiety attacks, panic attacks, clinical depression, refusal to attend usual places e.g. work, school, respite, going to bed fully clothed, excessive compliance to staff, inappropriate or excessive masturbation)</li> </ul>

Abuse category	Physical indicators	Behavioural indicators
Psychological	<p>Speech disorders</p> <p>Delay in physical development, failure to thrive</p> <p>Injuries sustained from self-harm or abuse and/or suicide attempts</p> <p>Anxiety attacks</p>	<p>Self-Harm and or self-abusive behaviours</p> <p>Challenging or aggressive behaviour</p> <p>Excessive compliance to staff</p> <p>Very low self-esteem or feelings of worthlessness Clinical depression</p> <p>Marked decline in interpersonal/social skills</p> <p>Extreme attention seeking behaviour</p>
Neglect	<p>Physical wasting or at unhealthy weight levels</p> <p>Poor dental and/or hygiene health</p> <p>Recurrent wear of same, ill-fitting and/or dirty clothes or clothes not suitably for weather conditions</p> <p>Food is consistently poor quality, insufficient, inedible and/or unappetising</p> <p>Persistent illnesses without appropriate medical treatment</p> <p>Persistent infestations such as scabies or headlice</p> <p>Disclosure of being left alone for long periods of time that are inappropriate to age or maturity</p>	<p>Constant tiredness</p> <p>Persistent hunger</p> <p>Unexpected poor skills - social and/or interpersonal, communication and others</p> <p>Consistent failure to attend appointments, events, activities</p> <p>Persistently denied opportunities to socialise with others in the community</p> <p>excessively clingy or fearful</p>



## Family Violence

Eating and sleeping difficulties  
Concentration problems  
Inability to play constructively  
Clinginess  
Defiant behaviour, temper tantrums, rebellious and aggressive behaviour  
Physical abuse of others  
Cruelty to pets and/or other animals  
Avoidance of peers  
Academic failure, drop out of school  
Delinquency and/or offending  
Substance abuse  
Eating disorders  
Depression, suicide ideation and/or attempts

Fearfulness numbing Increased arousal  
Adjustment problems Developmental delay  
Physical complaints  
Overly compliant behaviour Withdrawal, loss of interest in social activities  
Self-harm  
Poor school performance  
Use of controlling behaviours  
Distrust of adults  
Violent behaviours, violence toward a parent/care giver particularly mother)  
Early pregnancy

# Appendix 3: Child safe standards reporting process

During the course of your work or volunteering you may observe, hear or be informed about suspected child abuse (sexual, physical, emotional, psychological, neglect or grooming). **Note: Immediate danger and risk is any direct concerns for any physical harm or sexual abuse to a child.**

<b>Who can report?</b>	<b>Employee or Volunteer</b>	<b>Child</b>	<b>Parent or Bystander</b>
<b>What to report?</b>	Any child safety concerns, including: <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• disclosure of abuse or harm</li><li>• allegation, suspicion or observation</li><li>• breach of Code of Conduct</li><li>• environmental safety issues.</li></ul>		
<b>How?</b>	<b>Call 000 if a child is in immediate danger</b> Use choice of: face to face verbal report, written report, letter, email, phone conversation, meeting as soon as possible		
<b>Who to?</b>	Community Development Officer – Gender Equality & Child Safety, Relevant Manager, Manager People & Culture or CEO if complaint is to be made against a senior officer		
<b>What happens next?</b>	The Community Development Officer – Gender Equality & Child Safety, CEO, Manager or Supervisor will: <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• offer support to the child, the parents, the person who reports and the accused staff member or volunteer</li><li>• initiate internal processes to ensure the safety of the child, clarify the nature of the complaint and commence disciplinary process (if required)</li></ul> decide, in accordance with legal requirements and duty of care, whether the matter should/must be reported to the police or Child Protection and make report as soon as possible if required.		
<b>Outcome</b>	Investigation; outcome decided; relevant staff, volunteers, parents and child notified of outcome of investigation; policies, procedures updated where necessary.		

## Contacts:

**Program Advisor Gender Equality & Child Safety: Maddie Lythgo**  
Mobile: 0403 267 413

**Chief Executive Officer: Simon McMillan**  
Phone: 9262 6301  
Mobile: 0413 586 171

**Department of East Division Intake Fairness, Families and Housing A Child Protection Emergency Service**  
Phone: 1300 360 391

**Manager People & Culture: Natasha Ralston**  
Mobile: 0479 199 224

**Whitehorse Police**  
Phone: 8851 1111  
Phone: 13 12 78

# Child Safe Incident Report Form

The City of Whitehorse is committed to being a child safe organisation and has zero tolerance for child abuse. Thank you for speaking up. We now need to collect further details to help report the allegation.

Responding to child abuse can be distressing, support is available via the Employee Assistance Program at any time on insert number.

If a child is in immediate danger, or the incident relates to child sexual or physical abuse, you must call 000 and inform the Community Development Officer – Gender Equality & Child Safety

## Complete this form if:

- You are concerned, see, hear or reasonably believe a child is in danger and in need of protection.
- You have raised your concerns with your Manager and the Program Advisor Gender Equality & Child Safety.

## What next?

- Council will then make a report to the relevant authorities. If the matter relates to reportable conduct, Council will assess the allegation.
- If the allegation is deemed reportable conduct our CEO is notified.
- Our CEO or delegated Officer notifies the Commission for Children and Young People within three business days.
- The allegation is investigated and a report is prepared for the Commission for Children and Young People within 30 business days.

**Please save this form and ensure full access to the following: you, your People & Culture Business Partner, secondary consult person if accessed, Program Advisor Gender Equality & Child Safety, Coordinator and/or Manager and Director.**

**This form must be used to record details of any:**

- Incidents, allegations, disclosures or reasonable concerns in relation to abuse or neglect of a child or young person, either by personnel within our organisation or by others
- Breaches or actions of other personnel within our organisation that contravene our policies and procedures, such as outlined in our Code of Conduct and Child Safe Policy.

## Incident Details

Name:

Program:

Date of incident:

Location incident occurred:

Person making report:

Role and relationship to child:

Type of incident (tick all that apply):

- Suspicion or allegation of abuse or neglect of child/young person Suspicion of potential harm to a child/young person
- A critical incident as defined in the Incident Management policy
- Breaches of Code of Conduct
- Breach of Child Safe or reporting policy
- Potential abuse by or criminal matters involving an employee

**Details of the child / young person affected by the incident (if known):**

## Child(s) Details

**A separate Incident Report Form should be completed for each child**

**Child(s) details:**

Full name:

Date of birth:

Gender:

Any accessibility, communication, medical or culture requirements?

Parent/caregiver name:

Parent/caregiver contact phone number:

Parent/caregiver address:

Any parent/caregiver accessibility, communication, medical or culture requirements?

## Details of other persons involved

### Other children and young people

Were there other children and young people present? (Please circle) Yes No

If yes, please provide their details below:

Name:

Has a separate incident report form been completed for this child/young person? Yes No

If no, please provide a reason as to why:

## Alleged perpetrator(s) details

Name if known:

Connection with the child if known:

Any other relevant factors:

## Witness Details

Were there any other witnesses to the incident? Yes No

If yes, please provide their details below:

Full name:

Involvement as witness:

Contact phone number:

Any accessibility, communication, medical or culture requirements?

Details of incident:

## Action undertaken (if any and by whom)

To ensure the safety of child/young person:

To address the support needs of the child / young person and their family:

To address the support needs of the alleged perpetrator:

To address the support needs of other personnel involved: [Click here to enter text.](#)

Other children/young people involved:

Any others involved?

## Internal

Are you a City of Whitehorse

- Staff member,
- Volunteer
- Contractor
- Member of the public

Position / title:

Full name:

Contact details of reporter:

Date and time of report:

## External Organisations Contacted

External organisation contacted in regards to incident (tick all that apply):

- Victoria Police
- Child protection
- Ambulance
- Doctor
- Family/caregiver
- Reportable Conduct Authority Working With Children Check Authority Orange Door

Other:

### External Advice Received

#### Police

Date:

Time:

Name of person notified:

Position:

Department / region:

Contact detail/s:

Advice provided:

Engagement Number:

#### Child Protection authorities

Date:

Time:

Name of person notified

Position:

Department / region:

Contact detail/s:

Advice provided:

Engagement Number:

#### Reportable Conduct authorities

Date:

Time:

Name of person notified:

Position:

Department / region:

Contact detail/s:

Advice provided:

Engagement Number:

## Parent / caregiver

Has the **parent/care giver** been informed of the incident (please tick):

- Yes  
 No

(If appropriate) has the **parent/care giver** been informed the authorities being notified (please tick):

- Yes  
 No

If yes, please provide relevant details of conversations (e.g. information provided, reactions, concerns and admissions):

If no, please explain why:

## Please provide details of which manager/s or other personnel have been informed of the incident

Full name:

Position / title:

Date and time informed:

Full name:

Position / title:  
informed:

Date and time

**Additional comments / including other reporting bodies, (e.g., ACF, ACECQA, Education authorities, Case Worker)**

## Acknowledgment

### Acknowledgement of form completion

I have completed this form to the best of my knowledge and ability

Name:

Position:

Signed: \_\_\_\_\_

Date:

### Program Advisor Gender Equality & Child Safety

I have checked that all sections of this form are complete

Name:

Position:

Signed: \_\_\_\_\_

Date:



The City of Whitehorse acknowledges and respects the privacy of all its employees, volunteers, contractors and patrons. The information being collected is for the purposes of obtaining details of and assessing the incident in question. Information disclosed on this form may be passed on to the appropriate authorities, as required. By signing this form, you have consented to this information being collected, used and disclosed for the purposes it intended. You have the right to access and alter personal information concerning yourself in accordance with the Commonwealth Privacy Act (amended 2001) and the City of Whitehorse Privacy Statement.



## ACKNOWLEDGEMENT OF COUNTRY

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Whitehorse City Council acknowledges the Wurundjeri Woi-Wurrung people of the Kulin Nation as the traditional owners of the land. We pay our respects to their Elders past, present and emerging

## CONTACTING COUNCIL

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Postal Address: Whitehorse City Council  
Locked Bag 2  
Nunawading Delivery Centre 3131

ABN 39 549 568 822

Telephone: 9262 6333

NRS: 133 677 then quote 9262 6333  
(Service for deaf or hearing impaired people)

TIS: 131 450  
(Telephone Interpreter Service. Call and ask to be connected to Whitehorse City Council)

Email: [customer.service@whitehorse.vic.gov.au](mailto:customer.service@whitehorse.vic.gov.au)  
Website: [www.whitehorse.vic.gov.au](http://www.whitehorse.vic.gov.au)

Service Centres: Whitehorse Civic Centre  
379–399 Whitehorse Road, Nunawading 3131

Box Hill Town Hall Service Centre  
Box Hill Town Hall  
1022 Whitehorse Road, Box Hill 3128

Forest Hill Service Centre  
Shop 275  
Forest Hill Chase Shopping Centre  
Canterbury Road, Forest Hill 3131