



WHITEHORSE

Child Safe Standards Action Plan

2022 - 2025



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Acknowledgement of Country

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

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Council's Child Safety Commitment Statement

As valued and respected members of our community, we encourage and support the participation and empowerment of all children and young people.

Children and young people have the right to be safe at all times and Council has a zero tolerance towards child abuse. Council recognises that the safety of our children and young people is a whole of community responsibility and is everyone's business.

Council's commitment to providing a safe environment for children and young people includes policies and systems, risk mitigation and ongoing education for all employees, contractors and volunteers in child safety.

Council is committed to:

1. Preventing child abuse occurring within our services, programs and facilities.
2. Creating an organisational culture of child safety.
3. Setting clear expectations of employees, volunteers and contractors to what is required to keep children safe.
4. Ensuring employees, volunteers and contractors are clear about their responsibilities when they suspect abuse of a child.
5. Ensuring all suspected abuse is reported and fully investigated.
6. Creating opportunities to include Aboriginal children, you people and their families, and that acknowledge and appreciate Aboriginal culture, connection to Country cultural safety.
7. Council pays particular attention to the needs of children and young people with disability, children and young people from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds, those who are unable to live at home, and LGBTIQ+ children and young people.

Background

In December 2019 the Royal Commission into Institutional Responses to Child Sexual Abuse highlighted the need for action to make organisations across Australia safe for children. Among the recommendations from the Royal Commission was the development of standards to ensure a nationally consistent approach to embedding child safe cultures within organisations that engage with children, and act as a vehicle to give effect to all Royal Commission's recommendations.

The new 11 Child Safe Standards now apply in Victoria, to better protect children and young people from abuse.

What the Standards aim to achieve

The Child Safe Standards aim to:

- Promote the safety of children
- Prevent child abuse
- Ensure organisations and businesses have effective processes in place to respond to and report all allegations of child abuse.

Child Safe Standards work by:

- Driving changes in organisational culture, embedding child safety in everyday thinking and practice
- Providing a minimum standard of child safety across all organisations
- Highlighting that we all have a role to keep children safe from abuse.

Child Safe Standards

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 and 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 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.

This Child Safety Action Plan will build on what Council already does to keep children and young people safe and will assist Council to be compliant with the new Standards. Child safety is a responsibility of the whole organisation.

STANDARD 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.

1	The Standard	Actions	Indicators of success	Responsibility	Due Date
1.1	A child's ability to express their culture and enjoy their cultural rights is encouraged and actively supported.	Council establishes a cultural safe framework dedicated to meaningful cultural safety or Aboriginal children.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> A culturally safe framework is developed. Council publically commits to cultural safety of Aboriginal children. This displayed on Councils webpage and intranet. 	Coordinator Community Strengthening	June 2024
1.2	Strategies are embedded within Council which equip all members to acknowledge and appreciate the strengths of Aboriginal culture and understand its importance to the wellbeing and safety of Aboriginal children and young people.	<p>The Child Safe Standards eLearn is developed and delivered.</p> <p>All leaders are responsible for modelling and championing appreciation for the strengths of Aboriginal culture and understanding its importance to the wellbeing and safety of Aboriginal children.</p> <p>Opportunities to learn and express appreciation of Aboriginal cultures and histories.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Child Safe Standards resources and eLearn are provided to guide and support staff to gain a better understanding of the importance of culture, wellbeing and safety of Aboriginal children. 100% completion rate of Councillors by March 2023 70% completion rate for all employees by April 2023 80% completion rate for all identified volunteers by April 2023 Re-occurrence for all employees and volunteers every 3 years in line with compliance suit re-occurrence requirements Re-occurrence of eLearn delivery to Councillors 	<p>Community Engagement & Development</p> <p>Development & Learning</p>	<p>Child Safe Standards eLearn updated by December 2022</p> <p>Child Safe Standards eLearn live for compliance training suite by January 2023</p>

			every 4 years at the commencement of new term.		
1.3	<p>Measures are adopted Council to ensure racism within Council is identified, confronted and not tolerated.</p> <p>Any instances of racism are addressed with appropriate consequences.</p>	<p>Council has a zero tolerance of racism and this is reflected in child safety policy, code of conduct and position descriptions.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Council's zero tolerance of racism is reflected in the Child Safety Policy, Code of Conduct and position descriptions. • All Council position descriptions outline Council expectations of staff and volunteer in regard to zero tolerance of racism. • Instances of racism are consistently identified and addressed with appropriate consequences. 	<p>People & Culture</p> <p>Community Engagement & Development</p>	<p>June 2023</p>
1.4	<p>Council actively supports-and facilitates participation and inclusion of Aboriginal children, young people and their families.</p>	<p>Cultural engagement resource is developed to guide cultural engagement practices</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Develop collaborative relationships with the local Aboriginal Elders to insure our cultural engagement practises support participation and inclusion or Aboriginal children. • Cultural engagement resource is developed. 	<p>Community Engagement & Development</p>	<p>June 2024</p>
1.5	<p>All of Councils-policies, procedures, systems and processes together create a culturally safe and inclusive environment and meet the needs of Aboriginal children, young people and their families.</p>	<p>Council's policies and procedures support the creation and maintenance of a culturally safe and inclusive environment</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Development and distribution of culturally safe posters. • Cultural safety engagement resource are developed. 	<p>Community Engagement & Development</p>	<p>June 2024</p>

STANDARD 2

Child safety and wellbeing is embedded in organisational leadership, governance and culture.

2	The Standard	Actions	Indicators of success	Responsibility	Due Date
2.1	Council makes a public commitment to child safety.	Council's commitment to child safety is available and on display on Councils website.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Councils Commitment to the Child Safe Standards is developed and displayed on Council's Child Safety intranet and corporate webpages. 	<p>Strategic Communications</p> <p>Customer Service in collaboration with the Community Engagement and Development</p>	December 2022
2.2	A child safe culture is championed and modelled at all levels of the organisation Council from the top down and bottom up.	Leaders, staff, volunteers, members and children in Council champion and model a child safe culture.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Councils Statement of Commitment to the Child Safe Standards is available on Council's Child Safety intranet and corporate webpages. Employees, Volunteers and Councillors complete online Child Safe Standards eLearn. 	<p>People & Culture</p> <p>Strategic Communications</p> <p>Executive Leadership Team</p> <p>Governance</p> <p>All leaders</p>	June 2023
2.3	Governance arrangements facilitate implementation of the Child Safety and Wellbeing Policy at all levels.	<p>The Child Safety and Wellbeing Policy sets out Councils expectations and practices in relation to each of the Standards.</p> <p>Governance arrangements mean senior leaders regularly review the organisation's performance in delivering the Child Safe Standards.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Undergo an annual best practise review of the Child Safety & Wellbeing Policy to review against Councils expectations and practises in relation to each of the Child Safe Standards. The Child Safety and Wellbeing Policy sets out Councils expectations and practices in relation 	Community Engagement and Development	February 2023

			<p>to each of The Child Safe Standards.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Senior leaders report on the performance of the Child Safe Standards. • Prepare and submit six monthly report and de-identified data analytics on child safety to the Executive Leadership Team. (December & June) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Report includes; potential reaches, number and nature of complaint, number of issues reported to the regulator, average time taken to respond to a child safety complaint/allegation and child safety training completion rates. 		
2.4	<p>A Code of Conduct provides guidelines for staff and volunteers on expected behavioural standards and responsibilities.</p>	<p>Review and update Council's Code of Conduct to include the expectations and responsibilities of staff and volunteers with children and promoting and maintaining child safety.</p> <p>Councils Code of Conduct sets out expectations regarding behaviour of Employees and Volunteers with children and in promoting and maintaining the Child Safe Standards.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Council's Code of Conduct is updated • The Code of Conduct is communicated to all staff and volunteers and leaders hold them to account to comply with it. 	People & Culture	June 2023

2.5	Risk management strategies focus on preventing, identifying and mitigating risks to children and young people.	Child Safe Standards risk management and mitigation tool focusing on preventing, identifying and mitigating risks to children and young people developed.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Child Safe Standards risk management and mitigation tools are developed and available on the intranet. • Communicate Council's risk management processes across Council. • Risk assessments are conducted by Officers when required. 	Community Development & Engagement Department	June 2023
2.6	Staff and volunteers understand their obligations on information sharing and recordkeeping.	Employees, Volunteers and Councillors take part in Child Safe Standards eLearn.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Completion rate of Employees, Volunteers and Councillors for the Child Safe Standards eLearn. • Employees, Volunteers and Councillors understand their obligations of information sharing and record keeping. 	Learning & Development Governance	April 2023

STANDARD 3

Children and young people are empowered and their rights, participate in decisions affecting them and are taken seriously.

3	The Standard	Actions	Indicators of success	Responsibility	Due Date
3.1	Children and young people have access to information about their rights and safety.	Council's Child Safe policies and procedures:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Number of times Child Safe resource are viewed on Council's corporate 	Strategic Communications	February 2025

		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> promote children's empowerment and participation embed support for the rights of children. <p>Information is designed and hosted on Councils Child Safety corporate webpage and intranet webpage about children's rights and safety.</p>	webpage and intranet webpage.	All Departments Community Engagement & Development	
3.2	The importance of friendships is recognised and support from peers is encouraged, to assist children and young people feel safe and be less isolated.	Council supports children to develop social connections with their peers, build skills in children to support their peers and challenge bullying or isolating behaviour between children.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Council explores opportunities to support children's social connections. 	All departments when working with children and young people	December 2023
3.3	Where relevant to the setting or context, children and young people are offered access to sexual abuse prevention programs and to relevant related information in an age-appropriate way.	Identify sexual abuse prevention resources and ensure an accessible and child friendly version is available in various languages.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Where relevant, Council provides information about where to access sexual abuse prevention programs and other relevant information to children in an age-appropriate and accessible manner. 	Community Engagement & Development Youth Services	June 2025
3.4	Staff, volunteers and Councillors are attune to the signs of harm and facilitate child-friendly ways for children and young people to express their views, participate in decision-making and raise their concerns.	<p>Employees, Volunteers and Councillors understand the organisation's complaints process and how to raise safety concerns for themselves, their friends or peers.</p> <p>Employees, Volunteers and Councillors are provided with information to help them understand, recognise and act on signs of child abuse or harm</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Completion rate of Employees, Volunteers and Councillors for the online Child Safe Standards eLearn. 	Learning & Development Governance	<p>Child Safe Standards eLearn updated by December 2022</p> <p>Child Safe Standards eLearn live for compliance training suite by January 2023</p>
3.5	Council has strategies in place to develop a culture that facilitates	Councils policies and procedures and eLearn:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Completion rate of Employees, Volunteers and 	All Staff	April 2023

	participation and is responsive to the input of children and young people.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • promote children’s empowerment and participation • embed support for the rights of children 	Councillors for the online Child Safe Standards eLearn.	Development and Learning Governance	
3.6	Council provides opportunities for children and young people to participate and have their contributions heard.	<p>Council’s Engagement Policy promotes children’s empowerment and participation where appropriate and where there are opportunities for children to express their views and participate in decisions that impact them.</p> <p>Practices at Council that disempower children are identified and action is taken to change them.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Councils Engagement Policy is updated to be reflective of children’s views. 	Community Development and Engagement Department	December 2024

STANDARD 4

Families and communities are informed and involved in promoting child safety and wellbeing.

4	The Standard	Actions	Indicators of success	Responsibility	Due Date
4.1	Families participate in decisions affecting their child.	<p>Resources are hosted on Councils Child Safety corporate webpage on how to speak up about their rights</p> <p>Families have an opportunity to have a voice in the way Council designs services and programs to insure the safety and wellbeing of their children is considered.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Resources hosted on Councils Child Safety corporate webpage. • Number of times resource is viewed • “Your Say Whitehorse” engagement opportunities capture the voices of families with children. 	<p>Community Development Engagement Department</p> <p>Family & Children Services</p>	September 2022
4.2	Council engages and openly communicates with families and the community about its child safe approach and relevant information is accessible.	Councils Child Safety corporate webpage hosts resources about our child safety approach.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Number of views on resource. 	Community Engagement & Development	May 2022

				Family & Children's Services	
4.3	Families and communities have a say in the development and review of the organisation's policies and practices.	Council's policies, procedures and resources are hosted on Councils Child Safety corporate webpage	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Opportunities are created for families and community members to provide feedback on the organisation's policies, procedures and practices including the organisation's approach to child safety and wellbeing via "Your Say Whitehorse" • Council takes the feedback and involvement of families and communities seriously and takes their views into account 	Community Engagement & Development	Ongoing
4.4	Families, carers and the community are informed about Council's operations and governance.	Council supports families and communities to take an active role in promoting and maintaining child safety and wellbeing by communicating Councils role in child safety and wellbeing within Council.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Council provides information about our governance and operations, how complaints are handled on Council Child Safety corporate webpage. 	Community Engagement & Development	Ongoing

STANDARD 5

Equity is upheld and diverse needs respected in policy and practice.

5	The Standard	Actions	Indicators of success	Responsibility	Due Date
5.1	Council including staff and volunteers, understands children and young people's diverse circumstances, and provides	Council develops online Child Safe Standards eLearn and resources that	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Completion rate of Employees, Volunteers and Councillors for the online 	Learning & Development	Child Safe Standards eLearn

	support to and responds to those who are vulnerable.	describe our commitment to equity and inclusion.	<p>Child Safe Standards eLearn.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Employees, Volunteers and Councillors understand the needs of children from diverse backgrounds. 	Governance	<p>updated by December 2022</p> <p>Child Safe Standards eLearn live for compliance training suite by January 2023</p>
5.2	Children and young people have access to information, support and complaints processes, in ways that are culturally safe, accessible and easy to understand.	<p>Information and resources are developed on how to lodge a complaint in a culturally safe and accessible way.</p> <p>Council Child Safety & Wellbeing Policy describes:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Councils commitment to equity and inclusion • Council recognition and respect of the diverse needs of all children • Council Child Safety & Wellbeing Policy and Child Safe Standards eLearn guides complaints process 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Resources and information are available to guide and support the complaints process in a culturally safe way. 	Community Engagement & Development	December 2023
5.3	Council pays particular attention to the needs of children and young people with disability, children and young people from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds, those who are unable to live at home, and lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender and intersex children and young people.	Council's policies, programs and services apply an intersectional lens.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Number of Gender Impact Assessment completed that identify intersectional lens 	All Directorates	June 2025
5.4	Council pays particular attention to the needs of Aboriginal children and young people and provides/promotes a culturally safe environment.	Cultural engagement resource is developed to guide cultural engagement practices	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Cultural safe framework is available. 	Community Engagement & Development	June 2024

STANDARD 6

People working with children and young people are suitable and supported to reflect child safety and wellbeing values in practice.

6	The Standard	Actions	Indicators of success	Responsibility	Due Date
6.1	Recruitment, including advertising, referee checks and staff and volunteer pre-employment screening, emphasise child safety and wellbeing.	<p>Employment advertising includes Council's commitment to child safety and wellbeing.</p> <p>Council's recruitment of staff and volunteers set clear expectations about the role's requirements, duties and responsibilities regarding child safety and wellbeing.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Child safety questions is included in the interview and application process. Position descriptions include Council's Statement of Commitment to the Child Safe Standards. Position descriptions set clear expectations about the role's requirements, duties and responsibilities regarding child safety and wellbeing. 	People & Culture	June 2023
6.2	Relevant staff and volunteers have current working with children checks or equivalent background checks.	Screening of all staff and volunteers who work with children have a valid working with children's check.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Pre-employment screening includes interviewing, referee checks, Working with Children Check and other registration or background checking 	People & Culture	Ongoing
6.3	All staff, volunteers and Councillors receive an appropriate induction and are aware of their responsibilities to children and young people, including record keeping, information sharing and reporting obligations.	<p>Child Safe Standards eLearn is developed.</p> <p>Employees, Volunteers and Councillors undertake the Child Safe Standards eLearn.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Employees, Volunteers and Councillors complete online Child Safe Standards eLearn. 	<p>Learning & Development</p> <p>Governance</p>	<p>Child Safe Standards eLearn updated by December 2022</p> <p>Child Safe Standards eLearn live for</p>

					compliance training suite by January 2023
6.4	Ongoing supervision and people management is focused on child safety and wellbeing.	Supervision and people management practices will support ongoing assessment of a person's suitability to work with children.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Supervision of people management through PDAP includes regular reviews to check whether staff are following Codes of Conduct and other child safe policies. 	People & Culture	Ongoing

STANDARD 7

Processes for complaints and concerns are child-focused.

7	The Standard	Actions	Indicators of success	Responsibility	Due Date
7.1	Council has an accessible, child focused complaint handling policy which clearly outlines the roles and responsibilities of leadership, Councillors, staff and volunteers, as well as approaches to dealing with different types of complaints, breaches of relevant policies and/or the Code of Conduct including obligations to act and report.	Whitehorse Complaints and Feedback Policy is reviewed and is in line with the Child Safe Standards.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The complaint handling policy: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> includes information on how adults and children can make a complaint and how Council will respond to and investigate complaints in a prompt and thorough way The Complaint Handling Policy is available on Council's intranet and resources clearly explain the process to make a complaint and how Council 	Community Engagement & Development Corporate Services	June 2024

			<p>will respond and investigate complaints.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> The Complaint Handling policy is available as a Councillor's portal item. 		
7.2	<p>Effective complaint handling processes are understood by children, young people, families, staff and volunteers, and are culturally safe.</p>	<p>The Child Safety Incident Report is accessible on Councils corporate website, is easy to read and is easy to understand, culturally safe, accessible and child-focused.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Employees, Volunteers and Councillors have completed Council's Child Safe Standards eLearn. Child Safety Incident Reporting is consistent with the Child Safety & Wellbeing Policy. 	<p>Learning & Development</p> <p>Community Engagement & Development Department</p> <p>Governance</p> <p>All staff</p>	<p>Child Safe Standards eLearn updated by December 2022</p> <p>Child Safe Standards eLearn live for compliance training suite by January 2023</p>
7.3	<p>Complaints are taken seriously, and responded to promptly and thoroughly.</p>	<p>Employees, Volunteers and Councillors undertake the Child Safe Standards eLearn and understand their reporting requirements.</p> <p>Child Safety Incident Reporting information is available on the Child Safety corporate webpage and intranet webpage.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Complaints are responded to in a timely manner and in line with the Child Safe Standards and the Child Safety & Wellbeing Policy. Prepare and submit six monthly report and de-identified data analytics on child safety to the Executive Leadership Team. (December & June) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Report includes; potential reaches, number and nature of complaint, number of issues reported to the regulator, 	<p>Community Engagement & Development</p> <p>Governance</p>	<p>Ongoing</p>

			<p>average time taken to respond to a child safety complaint/allegation and child safety training completion rates.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Completion rate of Child Safe Standards eLearn for Employees, Volunteers and Councillors. 		
7.4	<p>Council has policies and procedures in place that address the reporting of complaints and concerns to relevant the authorities, whether or not the law requires reporting and co-operates with law enforcement.</p>	<p>Information about how to make a complaint available and accessible on the Child Safety intranet webpage.</p> <p>Councils reporting process is clearly communicated and available on the Child Safety corporate webpage.</p> <p>Currency of information is aligned to the current legislative requirements.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A clear child safety reporting process is available on the Child Safety intranet webpage. • The Child Safe Standards and Council's Child Safety & Wellbeing Policy is available on the Child Safety corporate webpage and intranet webpage to guide the reporting process. 	<p>Community Engagement & Development</p> <p>Learning & Development</p> <p>All Staff</p>	<p>June 2024</p>
7.5	<p>Reporting, privacy and employment law obligations are met.</p>	<p>Policies and procedures guide reporting privacy employment and law obligations.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Child Safe Standards eLearn provides Employees, Volunteers and Councillors information on reporting privacy employment obligations. • Resources are available for Employees, Volunteers and Councillors outlining when complaints should be reported to authorities. 	<p>Community Engagement & Development</p> <p>Learning & Development</p> <p>Governance</p> <p>All staff</p>	<p>Child Safe Standards eLearn updated by December 2022</p> <p>Child Safe Standards eLearn live for compliance training suite by January 2023</p>

STANDARD 8

Staff and volunteers are equipped with knowledge, skills and awareness to keep children and young people safe through ongoing education and training.

8	The Standard	Actions	Indicators of success	Responsibility	Due Date
8.1	Staff and volunteers are equipped with the knowledge, skills and awareness to keep children and young people safe through ongoing education and training.	Child Safe Standards eLearn is provided to Employees, Volunteers and Councillors and includes the Child Safety & Wellbeing Policy. eLearn is provided at both induction and scheduled annual training.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Employee Compliance Training Policy updated to include the Child Safe Standards eLearn. A Child Safe Standards learning plan is implemented and monitored. Child Safe Standards eLearn is completed by Employees, Volunteers and Councillors on the Child Safety & Wellbeing Policy on induction and regular intervals. Child Safe Standards eLearn is championed by the leadership team through Councils internal communication processes. Employees, Volunteers and Councillors are effectively trained on Councils Child Safety & Wellbeing Policy. 	Learning & Development, Executive Leadership Team Governance	January 2023 and ongoing
8.2	Staff and volunteers receive training and information to recognise indicators of	Child Safe Standards eLearn is developed for Employees, Volunteers	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Training materials for Employees, Volunteers and 	Community Development	Child Safe Standards

	child harm including harm caused by other children and young people.	and Councillors to assist in identifying indicators of child abuse and harm, including where caused by other children	<p>Councillors provide guidance about:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ identifying indicators of child abuse and harm, including where caused by other children <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Child Safe Standards eLearn register records completion of training by Employees, Volunteers and Councillors. 	<p>Engagement Department</p> <p>Learning & Development</p> <p>Governance</p>	<p>eLearn updated by December 2022</p> <p>Child Safe Standards eLearn live for compliance training suite by January 2023</p>
8.3	Staff and volunteers receive training and information to respond effectively to issues of child safety and wellbeing and are able to support colleagues who disclose harm.	Child Safe Standards eLearn is developed for Employees, Volunteers and Councillors to be able to respond effectively to issues of child safety and support colleagues who disclose harm.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Child Safe Standards eLearn includes responsibilities for responding to issues of child safety including internal and external reporting requirements, notifying families and carers and managing risks to children. • Employees, Volunteers and Councillors are effectively trained on: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Issues of child safety and wellbeing and are able to support colleagues who disclose harm. • Councils Child Safety Incident Report provides opportunities for this information to be captured. • Child Safe Standards eLearn register records completion of learning by 	<p>Learning & Development</p> <p>Community Engagement & Development Department</p> <p>Governance</p> <p>All staff</p>	<p>January 2023 and then ongoing</p>

			Employees, Volunteers and Councillors.		
8.4	Staff and volunteers receive training and information about how to build culturally safe environments for children and young people.	<p>Guidance materials (such as policies, procedures, guidelines, information sheets and posters) available to staff and volunteers and provide guidance about:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> how to create culturally safe environments in the organisation. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Cultural safe resources are hosted on Councils Child Safety corporate webpage and internal intranet webpage. Guidance material available on Council's internal intranet webpage that includes information on creating a culturally safe environment. 	<p>People & Culture in collaboration with Community Engagement and Development</p> <p>All staff and volunteers</p>	June 2024

STANDARD 9

Physical and online environments promote safety and wellbeing while minimising the opportunity for children and young people to be harmed

9	The Standard	Actions	Indicators of success	Responsibility	Due Date
9.1	Staff and volunteers identify and mitigate risks in online and physical environments without compromising a child's right to privacy, access to information, social connections and learning opportunities.	Explore opportunities to enhance online child safety.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Report provided on ways we can improve online child safety. Council's corporate webpage provides resources about online safety for children, young people and families. 	<p>Information Technology</p> <p>Community Engagement & Development</p>	<p>June 2023</p> <p>January 2023</p>
9.2	The online environment is used in accordance with Council's Code of Conduct and child safety and wellbeing policy and practices.	The Code of Conduct and Child Safety & Wellbeing Policy identifies how Council will keep children safe in physical and online environments, with specific reference to higher-risk activities.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Code of Conduct and Child Safety & Wellbeing Policy are regularly reviewed to keep them up-to-date and include lessons from complaints, concerns and safety incidents. 	<p>Community Engagement & Development</p> <p>People & Culture</p>	June 2023

9.3	Risk management plans to consider risks posed by Council settings, activities, and the physical environment.	Risk management plans are developed to consider the risk posed by the setting, activities and physical environment.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Risk management plans list the actions Council will take to prevent or reduce each identified risk of child abuse and harm. • Tools are used and regularly reviewed and implemented using learnings from reports. 	Community Safety Team	December 2023
9.4	Third parties engaging with Council are aware of their legislative and compliance requirements relating to child safety.	Council's procurement policies about engaging third-party contractors set out processes to protect children from risks of child abuse and harm, such as requiring compliance with the organisation's Code of Conduct and Child Safety and Wellbeing Policy.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • When negotiating contracts with third parties, contracts include terms that allow the organisation to take action if the third party does not meet expected child safety and wellbeing standards. • When third-party contractors are engaged, action is taken by the organisation to assess whether, and the extent to which, the engagement of third-party contractors poses risks of child abuse and harm. 	Procurement / Property / Contract Managers	June 2025

STANDARD 10

Implementation of the Child Safe Standards is regularly reviewed and improved

10	The Standard	Actions	Indicators of success	Responsibility	Due Date
10.1	Council regularly reviews, evaluates and improves child safe practices.	Council's Child Safe Standards Action Plan and Child Safety & Wellbeing Policy have a regular review period indicated in the documents.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Councils Child Safe Standards Action Plan and Child Safety & Wellbeing 	Community Development & Engagement	July 2023 and Ongoing

			Policy are regularly reviewed in accordance to their review/evaluation requirements.		
10.2	Complaints, concerns and safety incidents are analysed to identify causes and systemic failures to inform continuous improvement.	De-identified records are kept of complaints, concerns, allegations and actions taken to respond.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Complaints, concerns, safety incidents or significant breaches of policy (such as the Code of Conduct) are examined to understand what caused the problem and whether there are any flaws in the organisation's policies, procedures and practices that contributed to the problem. Where flaws or failings are identified, improvements are made to prevent the problem from happening again. Prepare and submit six monthly report and de-identified data analytics on child safety to the Executive Leadership Team. (December & June) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Report includes; potential reaches, number and nature of complaint, number of issues reported to the regulator, average time taken to respond to a child safety complaint/allegation and child safety training completion rates. 	<p>Community Engagement & Development</p> <p>People & Culture</p> <p>Executive Leadership Team</p>	December 2023
10.3	Council reports on the findings of relevant reviews to staff and volunteers,	Reports document any child safety reviews and findings.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Child Safety review findings and actions are shared with Employees, Volunteers, 	Community Engagement & Development	Ongoing

	community and families and children and young people.		<p>children, families and communities.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Prepare and submit six monthly report and de-identified data analytics on child safety to the Executive Leadership Team. (December & June) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Report includes; potential reaches, number and nature of complaint, number of issues reported to the regulator, average time taken to respond to a child safety complaint/allegation and child safety training completion rates. 		
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STANDARD 11

Policies and procedures document how the organisation is safe for children and young people

11	The Standard	Actions	Indicators of success	Responsibility	Due Date
11.1	Policies and procedures address all Child Safe Standards.	Councils Child Safety & Wellbeing Policy sets out Councils expectations, practices and approach in relation to each of the Child Safe Standards.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Council's policies and procedures cover all the Child Safe Standards and address the risks to the safety of children that are specific to Council. 	Community Engagement and Development	March 2023

11.2	Council's policies and procedures are documented and easy to understand.	Council's Child safety policies and procedures are easy to understand and can be accessed easily.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Council's Child Safety & Wellbeing Policy and Child Safe Standards Action Plan are accessible on the Child Safety intranet webpage. 	Community Engagement & Development	June 2023
11.3	Best practice models and stakeholder consultation informs the development of policies and procedures.	<p>Contact Information available on Corporate Child Safety webpage for community to contact Council.</p> <p>Internal contact information for the Community Development Officer – Gender Equality & Child Safety available on Child Safety intranet page for employees.</p> <p>Community Consultation completed on Council's Child Safety & Wellbeing Policy and Child Safety Action Plan.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Council contact information is available on the Child Safety corporate webpage and intranet page. • Community consultation undertaken for the development of the Child Safety & Wellbeing Policy and Child Safety Action Plan 	Community Engagement & Development	December 2022
11.4	Leaders both champion and model in practice compliance with policies and procedures.	All leaders at Council champion and model compliance against child safety standards, policies and procedures.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Leaders champion the Child Safe Standards Action Plan. 	All staff	March 2024
11.5	Staff, volunteers and Councillors understand and implement policies and procedures.	<p>Review, develop and/or acquire, and make accessible, Council's child safety training and resources for staff and volunteers.</p> <p>Child Safe Standards eLearn is developed and implemented.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Number of Employees, Volunteers and Councillors that have completed the Child Safe Standards eLearn. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ 100% completion rate of Councillors by March 2023 ○ 70% completion rate for all employees by April 2023 ○ 80% completion rate for all identified volunteers by April 2023 ○ Re-occurrence for all employees and volunteers every 3 years in line with compliance suite re-occurrence requirements ○ Re-occurrence of eLearn delivery to Councillors every 4 years at the 	<p>Learning & Development</p> <p>Governance</p> <p>All staff</p>	<p>Child Safe Standards eLearn updated by December 2022</p> <p>Child Safe Standards eLearn live for compliance training suite by January 2023</p>

			commencement of new term.		
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Review

This document will be reviewed in conjunction with the Child Safety & Wellbeing Policy 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.

Document Control:

Responsible Manager: Manager Community Engagement & Development Department

Adopted: 15 November 2022

Date of Next Review: November 2025

Date	Reviewed By:	Summary of Changes:	Version No:
17/5/22	Initial document creation		1.0
15/11/22	Community Development Officer – Gender Equality & Child Safety Officer	Continuous improvement review– major changes to comply with legislation	1.1

Definitions

Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Child	A person under the age of 18 years who identifies as Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander Person
Bullying	<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"> ③ Verbal (name calling, put downs, threats); ③ Physical (hitting, punching, kicking, scratching, tripping, spitting); Social (ignoring, excluding, ostracising, alienating); and/or ③ Psychological (spreading rumours, stalking, dirty looks, hiding or damaging possessions).
Child or young person	A person under the age of eighteen

Child Safe Organisation	An organisation that meets the child safe standards by proactively taking measures to protect children from abuse.
Child Safe Standards	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.
Child Safety	In the context of the Child Safe Standards, child safety means measures to protect a child from abuse
Emotional or psychological abuse	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.
Empowerment	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.
Family violence	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. 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>Grooming</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>Harm</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"> ③ Physical abuse ③ psychological or emotional abuse or neglect; ③ sexual abuse or exploitation; ③ a single act, omission or circumstance; and ③ a series or combination of acts, omissions or circumstances.
<p>Neglect</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>Participation</p>	<p>Is about giving children and young people opportunities to have their say and to inform decision-making.</p>
<p>Personnel</p>	<p>Whitehorse City Council Employees, Councillors, Volunteers, Agency Staff and Contractors engaged directly by Whitehorse City Council</p>

<p>Physical abuse</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 at risk of being hurt.</p> <p>Physical abuse also includes threats to physically harm.</p>
<p>Physical Violence</p>	<p>Physical violence committed against, with or in the presence of a child can fall into two categories. Physical violence can be either:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> 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.
<p>Reasonable belief</p>	<p>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 <i>may</i> involve reportable conduct. This includes where a reportable allegation is made against the head of the organisation.</p> <p>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.</p> <p>For example, a person is likely to have a reasonable belief if they:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> 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>Reasonable steps</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>
Reportable Conduct	<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"> ③ sexual offences (against, with or in the presence of, a child) ③ sexual misconduct (against, with or in the presence of, a child) ③ physical violence (against, with or in the presence of, a child) ③ behaviour that causes significant emotional or psychological harm ③ significant neglect.
Sexual abuse	<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>
Sexual exploitation	<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>
Sexual Misconduct	<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"> ③ amounts to misconduct ③ is of a sexual nature, and ③ occurred against, with, or in the presence of, a child.
Sexual Offences	<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"> ③ sexual assault ③ indecent acts

③ possession of child abuse material

③ 'grooming' a child in order to commit a sexual offence.

A full list of the relevant sexual offences is set out in clause 1 of Schedule 1 to the Sentencing Act 1991.

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.

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.



ACKNOWLEDGEMENT OF COUNTRY

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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Telephone: 9262 6333

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(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
Website: www.whitehorse.vic.gov.au

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

Box Hill Town Hall Service Centre
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Shop 275
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