

CHILD SAFETY POLICY



Directorate:	Chief Executive Office
Responsible Manager:	CEO
Review Due:	2027
Adoption:	CEO
Date Adopted:	20/03/2024

Acknowledgement of Country

Central Goldfields Shire Council acknowledges and extends appreciation for the Dja Dja Wurrung People, the Traditional Owners of the land that we are on.

We pay our respects to leaders and Elder's past, present and emerging for they hold the memories, the traditions, the culture, and the hopes of all Dja Dja Wurrung People.

We express our gratitude in the sharing of this land, our sorrow for the personal, spiritual, and cultural costs of that sharing and our hope that we may walk forward together in harmony and in the spirit of healing.

1. Purpose

Child Safe Standards

All Victorian organisations who provide services or facilities for children are required by law to comply with the Child Safe Standards. The Child Safe Standards were developed after the Betrayal of Trust Inquiry, to prevent children from being abused within organisations and build on the 10 National Child Safe Standards.

This policy demonstrates Central Goldfields Shire Council's commitment to providing an organisational culture of child safety. The Policy aims to ensure that all members of council understand the role they will play in upholding the Child Safe Standards at an organisational level, as well as their personal responsibilities regarding protecting children and ensuring children are safe from harm.

Comprehensive Child Safety policies and procedures are vital for ensuring the safety of children engaging with Council operations across the community.

They reduce the risk of child abuse and enable proper responses to allegations of abuse; they reduce the risk of doubt and indecision, which can lead to inaction and tolerance of poor behaviour; they enable staff and volunteers to feel empowered to act in the best interests of children when they have safety concerns; and they give parents comfort and confidence in the kind of culture, environment and experience they can expect for their child when engaging with our organisation, our services and our facilities.

The Central Goldfields Shire Council is committed to creating and maintaining a child safe organisation where child safe practices are embedded in the everyday thinking and practice of all Councillors, employees, contractors, and volunteers. Across all Council functions and departments, we each have a role to play in keeping the children in our community safe.

This Policy provides information and guidance that requires all Councillors, employees, contractors, and volunteers commit to actively participate in upholding our child safe culture. It takes a village and Council has a key leadership role.

Connection with and obligations under MARAM – Victorian Governments Multi-Agency Risk Assessment and Management Framework

The MARAM framework provides guidance to organisations prescribed under regulations that have responsibilities in assessing and managing family violence risk as either a specialist service or primary service.

Under these regulations, CGSC is a prescribed organisation and as such must comply with MARAM's requirements as they relate to the Child Information Sharing Scheme (CISS) and the Family Violence information Sharing Scheme (FVISS),

At council Maternal Child Health, Kindergarten and Long day care are Information Sharing Entities under CISS and FVISS.

A link to the website with the list: [Who can share information under the information sharing and MARAM reforms is provided here | vic.gov.au \(www.vic.gov.au\)](https://www.vic.gov.au/who-can-share-information-under-the-information-sharing-and-maram-reforms)

The Child Information Sharing Scheme

The Child Information Sharing Scheme forms Part 6a of the Child Wellbeing and Safety Act 2005. and enables the sharing of information to promote the wellbeing or safety of a child or a group of children.

The Family Violence Information Sharing Scheme (FVISS)

FVISS enables authorised organisations and services to share information to facilitate assessment and management of family violence risk to children and adults.

Under the FVISS, CGSC employees when requesting information from other agencies, must complete a request Form. See Attachment 1

Find more information on the family violence information sharing scheme – click here:

<https://www.vic.gov.au/about-information-sharing-schemes-and-risk-management-framework>

2. Application and Scope

This policy applies to all people who conduct work for, or are connected to, the Central Goldfields Shire Council in a paid or unpaid capacity. This includes Councillors, Executive management, staff, volunteers, trainees, placement/work experience students, contractors, and consultants.

This policy applies to all organisational activities and events which involve, result in, or relate to contact with children.

3. Related Policies and Procedures

Child Safe Reporting Procedure
 Reportable Conduct procedure
 Child Safe Risk Management procedure
 Staff Code of Conduct
 Staff selection and recruitment Policy and Procedure
 Disciplinary Policy and Procedure
 Complaints Policy
 Central Goldfields Shire Council Enterprise Agreement

4. Definitions

Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander child - A child or young person who is of Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander descent who identifies, or whose family identifies them, as an Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander.

Abuse - means an act or series of acts which endanger a child's health, wellbeing and/or development. It includes physical abuse, sexual abuse, emotional abuse, cumulative harm, exposure to family violence, neglect, grooming or multi-dimensional harm.

CCYP - means The Commission for Children and Young People.

Child or children - means any child or young person up to the age of 18 years.

Children from culturally or linguistically diverse backgrounds - means a child or young person who:

- was born overseas in a non-English speaking country.
- are Australian born with at least one parent born from a non-English speaking country.
- are Australian born and have a strong affiliation to a cultural and linguistic heritage that is not Anglo Celtic
- Culturally and linguistically diverse is inclusive of people who identify with the deaf community.

Children with a disability - In relation to a child or young person, disability incorporates any physical, sensory, neurological disability, acquired brain injury or intellectual disability or developmental delay that affects a child's ability to undertake everyday activities at an age-appropriate level.

Child safe standards - refers to the Child Safe Standards outlined in the *Child Wellbeing and Safety Act 2005*.

- *Child Safe 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
- *Child Safe Standard 2* – Child safety and wellbeing is embedded in organisational leadership, governance, and culture
- *Child Safe Standard 3* – Children and young people are empowered about their rights, participate in decisions affecting them and are taken seriously
- *Child Safe Standard 4* – Families and communities are informed, and involved in promoting child safety and wellbeing
- *Child Safe Standard 5* – Equity is upheld, and diverse needs respected in policy and practice
- *Child Safe Standard 6* – People working with children and young people are suitable and supported to reflect child safety and wellbeing values in practice
- *Child Safe Standard 7* – Processes for complaints and concerns are child focused
- *Child Safe Standard 8* – 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 Standard 9* – Physical and online environments promote safety and wellbeing while minimising the opportunity for children and young people to be harmed
- *Child Safe Standard 10* – Implementation of the Child Safe Standards is regularly reviewed and improved
- *Child Safe Standard 11* – Policies and procedures document how the organisation is safe for children and young people

Cultural safety for Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander Children - means Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander children being given the opportunity to be connected to culture and provided with a safe, nurturing and positive environment where they comfortable with being themselves, expressing their culture, spirituality and belief systems; and are free from discrimination, challenge or denial of their identity.

Cultural safety for children from culturally and/or linguistically diverse backgrounds - means and environment which is spiritually, socially, and emotionally safe, as well as physically safe for children and young people; where there is no assault, challenge or denial of their culture or linguistic identity.

Duty of care - Duty of care is a common law concept that refers to the personal responsibility for the children in that person's care, including the responsibility to adequately protect those children from harm. It is usually expressed as a duty to take reasonable steps to protect children from injury or harm that is reasonably foreseeable.

Failure to disclose - As defined in the Crimes Act 1958 (Vic), a failure to act on the legal obligation upon all adults to report to Victoria Police where they form a reasonable belief that a sexual offence has been committed by an adult (18 years and over) against a child under the age of 16

Failure to protect - As defined in the Crimes Act 1958 (Vic), a person with power and authority who fails to protect a child from criminal sexual abuse, they know of the risk of abuse, and can reduce or remove the risk but fail to do so.

Grooming - Grooming is when a person engages in predatory conduct to prepare a child or young person for sexual activity later.

Grooming can include communicating or attempting to befriend or establish a relationship or other emotional connection with the child or their parent or carer.

Examples of grooming behaviour may include:

- giving gifts or special attention to a child or young person, or their parent or carer, making the child or young person feel special or indebted to an adult
- making close physical contact sexual, such as inappropriate tickling and wrestling or play fighting

- openly or pretending to accidentally expose the victim to nudity, sexual material, and sexual acts (this is classified as child sexual abuse but can also be a precursor to physical sexual assault)
- controlling a child or young person through threats, force or use of authority making the child or young person fearful to report unwanted behaviour.

Groomers may rely on mobile phones, social media, and the internet to interact with children in inappropriate ways and will often ask the child to keep their relationship a secret. The grooming process may continue for months before the offender arranges a physical meeting. Grooming is defined in the *Crimes Act 1958 (Vic)*.

Maltreatment - refers to non-accidental behaviour towards another person, which is outside the norms of conduct and entails a substantial risk of causing physical or emotional harm. Behaviours may be intentional or unintentional and include acts of omission and commission. Specifically *abuse* refers to acts of commission while *neglect* refers to acts of omission. Note that in practice the terms child abuse and child neglect are used more frequently than the term child maltreatment.

Mandatory reporting - is the legislative requirement for selected classes of people to report suspected child abuse and neglect to government authorities. In Victoria, mandatory reporting is regulated by the *Children, Youth and Families Act 2005 (Vic)* ss. 162, 182, 184 (CYFA). In Council, the following professionals are required to report:

- CGSC Maternal Child Health, Kindergarten and Long Day Care employees

Reasonable grounds - refer to the need to have an objective basis for suspecting that a child may be at risk of abuse and neglect based on:

- firsthand observation of the child or family
- what the child, parent, or other person has disclosed
- what can reasonably be inferred based on observation, professional training and/or experience that causes the mandated reporter to believe the child has been abused or is likely to be abused or,
- signs of physical or sexual abuse leading to the belief that the child has been abused.

Reportable Conduct Scheme - The reportable conduct scheme:

- requires **some** organisations to respond to allegations of child abuse (and other child-related misconduct) made against their workers and volunteers, and to notify us of any allegations
- enables the Child and Young Persons Safety Commissioner to independently oversee those responses
- facilitates information sharing between organisations, their regulators, Victoria Police, the Department of Government Services' Working with Children Check and the Children and Young person's safety commission.
- For more information click here:

[CCYP | Reportable Conduct Scheme](#)

Significant Harm - refers to circumstances causing concern for the safety, welfare, and wellbeing a child or young person present to a significant extent. This means the harm, including potential harm, is sufficiently serious to warrant a response by a statutory authority irrespective of the family's consent.

What is significant is not minor or trivial and may reasonably be expected to produce a substantial and demonstrably adverse impact on the child's or young person's safety, welfare, or wellbeing. In the case of an unborn child, what is significant is not minor or trivial and may reasonably be expected to produce a substantial and demonstrably adverse impact on the child.

5. Policy

The Central Goldfields Shire Council firmly believes that children and young people have the right to be and feel safe and always protected, including when accessing services within their community.

This policy outlines the Central Goldfields Shire Council's commitment to child safety by creating and maintaining child safe environments and a culture of child safety across all areas of Council operations. Child safe environments are safe and friendly settings where children and young people are protected, and feel carefree of harm, safe, respected, valued, and encouraged to reach their full potential.

Council is dedicated in promoting cultural safety for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children, cultural safety for children from culturally and/or linguistically diverse (CALD) backgrounds and to providing a safe and inclusive environment for children living with a disability. Central Goldfields Shire Council takes every reasonable effort to accommodate the diversity of all children in implementing the *Child Safety Policy*.

Central Goldfields Shire Council takes a zero-tolerance approach to child abuse and are committed to raising awareness about the importance of child safety in our organisation and in the wider community.

Central Goldfields Shire Council Statement of Commitment to Child Safety.

We strive for all children to be safe, happy, and empowered. (thriving and realising potential?)

We support and respect the rights and abilities of all children.

We are committed to the safety, participation, and empowerment of all children.

We have zero tolerance of child abuse. all allegations and safety concerns will be treated very seriously, and our robust policies, procedures and risk assessment management provide consistency in how these are addressed.

We have legal, moral obligations and a duty of care, to contact authorities when we are concerned about a child's safety, which we follow rigorously.

Central Goldfields Shire Council is committed to preventing child abuse and identifying risks early and acting in removing and reducing these risks.

Central Goldfields Shire Council has human resources and recruitment practices to reduce the risk of child abuse by robust safety screening procedures for new and existing Councillors, staff, and volunteers.

Central Goldfields Shire Council is committed to promoting cultural safety for Aboriginal children, cultural safety for children from culturally and/or linguistically diverse backgrounds and to providing a safe inclusive environment for children with a disability.

Central Goldfields Shire Council is committed to regularly training and educating our Councillors, staff, and volunteers on how to recognise, respond and refer child safety concerns.

We have specific policies and procedures in place that support our Councillors, staff, and volunteers to achieve these commitments.

The *Child Safety Policy* requires everybody within council to create and maintain a child safe organisation where children are safe and feel safe. Our policy framework incorporates Victoria's Child Safe Standards and Reportable Conduct Scheme.

Reportable Conduct Scheme

Child Safe Standards and the Reportable Conduct Scheme create distinct separate sets of responsibilities for organisations but have been designed to complement one another. Together, Child Safe Standards and the Reportable Conduct Scheme strengthen the capacity of organisations to prevent and respond properly to allegations of child abuse, and both apply to Council.

In 2017 the Child Wellbeing and Safety Act 2005 was amended to give power to the Commission for Children and Young People (the Commission) to oversee the Reportable Conduct Scheme. The Scheme requires organisations to respond to any allegations of child abuse made against their employees and volunteers, *either at work or outside of work*, and to notify the Commission of these allegations. The Scheme gives power to the Commission to independently oversee the organisations responses to those allegations and facilitates information sharing across organisations such as, Victoria Police and the Department of Fairness, Families and Housing (Child Protection).

The head of an organization must notify the Commission about any allegations of misconduct involving a child. Our *Reportable Conduct Procedure* Outlines Council's process for reporting under this scheme.

Reportable conduct applies to all Council employees, volunteers, students (over the age of 18) and contractors.

A reportable allegation is made where a person makes an allegation, based on a *reasonable belief* that an employee, volunteer or contractor has committed reportable conduct or misconduct that involves harm to a child.

Child Safety Officers

The Central Goldfields Shire Council has appointed several Child Safety Officers across the organisation, each Department Manager and the Manager People and Culture is a Child Safety Officer. This position carries responsibilities regarding compliance and record keeping as well as ensuring any reports of misconduct under this policy are given fair, robust and impartial oversight. A Child Safety Officer must be included in any investigation or disciplinary discussion held in relation to the *Child Safety Policy*, its related procedures, or the Child Safety component of the *Code of Conduct*.

Diversity and Inclusion

Central Goldfields Shire Council are committed to the safety of all children who access our services and facilities.

Aboriginal children, Torres Strait Islander children, children from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds and children with a disability may be more vulnerable than other children. These children are at greater risk of being harmed and may also find it more challenging to report abuse if it happens.

Across our services and facilities Council will ensure that children and young people have access to information, support and complaints processes that are culturally safe, accessible, and easy to understand. Council will provide training and support to employees and volunteers to build their understanding of children and young people's diverse circumstances and to ensure that the needs of vulnerable groups are met.

Council pays particular attention to the needs of children and young people living with a 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.

The Child Safe Standards specifically require organisations to create and maintain culturally safe environments for Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander children and young people. Organisations must meet this requirement regardless of whether they are aware of Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander children accessing their services or facilities. Council will be active in ensuring that the cultural safety of children is considered across all levels of council operations, this will include:

- committing to reconciliation through the development and implementation of a Reconciliation Action Plan.
- liaising with local elders and Indigenous groups to build our understanding and capacity to provide and promote cultural safety.
- performing an Acknowledgement of Country before meetings and gatherings and displaying an Acknowledgement of Country in print at Council venues and facilities.
- inviting local elders to perform a Welcome to Country at community events.
- ensuring the physical environment contains positive images of a range of cultures including Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander cultures, in terms of decoration, symbols and artwork to nurture a sense of identity.
- providing training and professional development to employees and volunteers to build cultural competence.
- providing, through our Code of Conduct, a zero-tolerance approach to racism and conversations which stereotype or victimise Aboriginal peoples; and
- providing safe inclusive spaces where Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander children and young people are empowered to express their culture.

Risk Management

Risk is present for children anytime they come into contact with any organisation, including Council. The Child Safe Standards require us to continually identify and assess these risks and take action to reduce or remove these risks where possible.

Risk assessment and Management plans must be developed by all departments where Council agents may have contact with children, share space with children or have access to children's records. These Risk Assessment and Management plans must be reviewed annually, shared within the team, and made available for any community members who request a copy.

Activities which occur as a one-off event or temporary activity must also have a Risk Assessment developed for the event. For example, Energy Breakthrough or a School holiday activity at the Art Gallery. Our *Child Safety Risk Management procedure* provides guidance and templates for these plans.

Recruitment

Unsuitable persons are less likely to apply for positions with organisations who have strong recruitment and screening processes. Council will ensure that our commitment to providing Child Safe environments is clear from the beginning of the recruitment process and is embedded through all stages of recruitment.

This will include:

- placing a statement of commitment to child safety in each job posting
- having a statement of commitment to child safety and a link to our *Child Safety Policy* and *Code of Conduct* prominently displayed on our website
- ensuring any candidate is to be interviewed in accordance with the *Recruitment and Selection Policy and Procedure*
- asking interview questions which determine the applicant's attitude and understanding of child safety, whether they be a paid employee or a volunteer
- thorough robust employee background and safety screening processes
- requiring Police and Working with Children checks for all employees and volunteers who will have contact with children

- referee checks which include questions about the applicant's suitability to work for a child safe organisation
- Providing each employee an induction process which includes familiarising them with the *Child Safety Policy* and *Code of Conduct*
- All staff will be required to undertake the mandatory e-learning module and the Child Safe Standard

Community Engagement

In upholding our commitment to child safety Council will be transparent and open in their implementation of the *Child Safety Policy*. The *Child Safety Policy*, *Code of Conduct* and related procedures will be available to view from the Council website and copies will be made available for members of the public upon request.

Families, children, and community members will be informed, and involved in promoting child safety and wellbeing. Council will ensure that families are involved in decisions affecting their child and will be given opportunities to contribute during the development and review of Council's *Child Safety Policy* and Procedures. Council will report, via their website, on the results of the scheduled policy review process as well as any findings of reviews which have resulted from complaints, concerns, or safety incidents.

Where services are offered to children and young people, Goldfields Shire Council will ensure that the children are given age-appropriate information about their rights and are included in any decision making which may affect them.

Record Keeping

Council is committed to protecting an individual's right to privacy. All personal information considered or recorded during the process of a report or investigation will be handled in accordance with Council's Privacy Policy.

The Central Goldfields Shire Council is committed to making and keeping full and accurate records about all child-related complaints or safety concerns. The Manager People and Culture will keep a register of all complaints, reports or allegations of abuse or misconduct. This record will be kept in accordance with the Public Records retentions schedule, for 100 years.

Records which may assist with the investigation of a complaint or safety concern will be identified and kept as part of the record of an investigation. Records will be kept even if an investigation does not substantiate a complaint.

Council will record and keep the outcome of any investigations, and the resolution of any complaints. This includes findings made, reasons for decisions and actions taken.

Records will be stored securely and kept by Council in accordance with the Public Records retention schedule, for one hundred years.

Staff and volunteer records will be maintained, which contain evidence of Child Safe recruiting procedures and appropriate Police and Working with Children Checks, along with records of all training related to Child Safety.

Breaches

The shire council will enforce this policy, *Code of Conduct*, and the related procedures.

Any breach or suspected breach of this policy, its related procedures, or the Code of Conduct will be addressed following our Disciplinary policy. Disciplinary outcomes could range from no action, verbal warning, to termination of employment.

All matters relating to breaches of these documents will be investigated by the Manger People and Culture or nominated representative and a Child Safety Officer from a different department to the respondent.

Any breach which meets the criteria of the reportable conduct scheme will be reported to the Commission for Children and Young People and referred to the Victorian Police if necessary.

6. Reporting a Child Safety concern or complaint

All councillors, staff, volunteers, and contractors have a responsibility under this policy to report any breach of this policy or our *Code of Conduct* to a Child Safety Officer as soon as possible.

If a councillor, staff member, volunteer or contractor becomes aware or suspects that a child has experienced or is experiencing abuse or grooming **from within our organisation**, they must follow the *Child Safety Reporting procedure* to notify a Child Safety Officer as soon as possible. Additional reporting under the Reportable Conduct Scheme and/or reporting to Victoria Police may also be required, the Child Safety Officer will support this process.

If a councillor, staff member, volunteer or contractor becomes aware or suspects that a child has experienced or is experiencing abuse **outside of our organisation**, they must follow the *Child Safety Reporting procedure* to notify Child Protection and/or Victoria Police as soon as possible. A child safety officer will be available to support this process.

If at any time you become aware or suspect that any child under the age of 16 has been sexually abused or groomed by an adult, you are required by law to report this to the Victorian police.

Reporting processes are outlined in our *Child Safety Reporting Procedure*. Some departments will utilise alternate procedures that meet additional requirements, where they are already subject to more stringent processes, for example Mandatory Reporting, as part of their roles.

At any time, an employee can contact the child safety officer for a consultation and discussions related to child safety or concerns involving a young person.

If at any time you feel a child is at immediate risk of harm, contact the police on 000.

7. Roles and Responsibilities

Person/s responsible	Roles and Responsibilities
<p>All employees and volunteers</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Agree to abide by the Council Code of Conduct which specifies the standards of conduct required when working with or around children. • Understand and uphold Council's commitment to the Child Safe Standards, their role to play in protecting children from abuse, and ensuring that their behaviour towards children is safe and appropriate. • Ensure that their WWCC is always current and valid. • Ensure that their NPC is always current and valid. • Complete the compulsory employee Induction training on commencement of employment. • Report all concerns regarding child safety or harm to a Child Safety Officer • Be aware of and participate, where appropriate, in the annual review of Child Safety Risk Assessment and Management Plans. • Where a child is in immediate danger, call 000. • Ensure they know how to report an incident or concern and understand the legal implications of failure to disclose or protect a child. • Undertake additional training related to the Child Safe Standards, Reportable Conduct Scheme and council policies as required.

Person/s responsible	Roles and Responsibilities
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Immediately report any criminal or child safety including family violence proceedings that have been brought about related to them to their supervisor. • Act to protect the privacy for all parties involved in any complaint or reporting procedure. • Comply with the Police, the Commission for Children and Young People and any other involved agencies in relation to a complaint, allegation, or investigation.
Managers and Supervisors	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Demonstrate commitment to the safety of children by modelling and embedding 'top-down' practices and attitudes which prioritise child safety and create workplace culture in which every employee and volunteer is empowered to protect children. • Include Child Safety as a regular agenda item for staff meetings. • Ensure each employee completes an induction process which includes the Child Safe Policy and Code of Conduct and information regarding how to contact the Child Safety Officers. • Strictly enforcing the <i>Child Safety Policy</i> and <i>Code of Conduct</i> among employees. • As appropriate for their department, act to ensure children and young people are informed about all their rights, including to safety, information, and participation. • Where relevant to the setting or context, ensure children and young people are offered access to sexual abuse prevention programs and to relevant related information in an age-appropriate way. • Where relevant to the setting or context, ensure that children and young people have access to information, support and complaints processes in ways that are culturally safe, accessible, and easy to understand. • Keeping and maintaining a register of Working with Children Checks where required for their department and ensuring systems are in place to arrange for their timely renewal. Working with Children Checks should also be reviewed every 6 months to ensure they have remained valid. • Keeping and maintaining a register of child safe training completed by employees and using this register to ensure training is completed annually. • Completing Risk Assessment and Management Plans annually, or as required, and sharing these with their teams. • Act to protect the privacy for all parties involved in any complaint or reporting procedure. • Comply with the Police, the Commission for Children and Young People and any other involved agencies in relation to a complaint, allegation, or investigation. • Following a child safety concern, act to assist alleged victims and their families to access counselling and support services. • Participate in Council led investigations and manage consequential disciplinary outcomes.
People and Culture	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Provide information (including <i>Code of Conduct</i>) relating to the Child Safe Standards and Policy via training / induction material and make this available to managers and team leaders for distribution. • Manage, in partnership with the Governance Officer and Child Safety Committee, Council's <i>Child Safety Policy</i>, to ensure it is reviewed according to its review schedule and is updated to reflect any changes in law or the Victorian Child Safe Standards. • Manage Council's disciplinary procedures as they apply to the Child Safe Standards, <i>Child Safety Policy</i>, <i>Code of Conduct</i>, and related procedures. • Support the application of relevant recruitment and pre-employment screening processes to select appropriate staff to work with children.

Person/s responsible	Roles and Responsibilities
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Keeping employee records, which include details of Working with Children Checks (when required), National Police Checks and International Police Checks where applicable • Promote a culture of child safety across the organisation. • Circulate a Child Safe update to all members of council every six months, which refreshes expectations under the <i>Code of Conduct</i> and outlines the reporting procedure, including contact details of Child Safety Officers. • Include a statement of our commitment to child safety in all job postings. • Immediately act to remove any identified or alleged risk to children. • Ensure that any allegations or concerns are recorded, investigated, and responded to in line with Council's legal requirements and policies and procedures. • Ensure support is provided, including access to external services, for employees who have made a report or complaint, or have been the subject of a report of complaint. • Act to protect the privacy for all parties involved in any complaint or reporting procedure within the requirements of the law. • Comply with the Police, the Commission for Children and Young People and any other involved agencies in relation to a complaint, allegation, or investigation. • Keeping employee records, which include details of Working with Children Checks (when required) and police checks. • Keeping and maintaining a register of Working with Children Checks where required for their department and ensuring systems are in place to arrange for their timely renewal. Working with Children Checks should also be reviewed every 6 months to ensure they have remained valid.

8. Review

This Policy must be reviewed:

- within 12 months from initial implementation, utilising the Implementation and Action Plan tool.
- every 3 years thereafter, utilising the Implementation and Action Plan tool; and
- following any occurrence or allegation of child abuse by anyone involved with the Central Goldfields Shire Council in a paid or unpaid capacity, a review shall be conducted to assess whether the organisation's child safety and safeguarding policies or procedures require modification to better protect the children under the organisation's care.

POLICY REVIEWED BY	EMT, Child Safe Working Group		
POLICY REVIEWED	20/03/2024	NEXT REVIEW DATE	February 2025

9. Human Rights Statement

It is considered that this policy does not impact negatively on any rights identified in the Charter of Human Rights and Responsibilities Act (2006). Central Goldfields Shire Council is committed to consultation and cooperation between management and employees.

10. Relevant Legislation and Guidelines

Charter of Human Rights and Responsibilities Act 2006

Children Legislation Amendment Reportable Conduct Act 2017

Children, Youth and Families Act 2005

Child Wellbeing and Safety Act 2005

Commission for Children and Young People Act 2012

Crimes Act 1958

Disability Act 2006

Family Violence Protection Act 2008

Privacy and Data Protection Act 2014

Working with Children Act 2005

Family Violence and Child Information Sharing Schemes (FVISS and CISS)

Request Form

The Department of Health and Human Services is a prescribed Information Sharing Entity (ISE) under Part 5A of the Family Violence Protection Act 2008 and Part 6A of the Child Wellbeing and Safety Act 2005. Please complete this form to make a request for information under the Family Violence and/or Child Information Sharing Schemes.

Details of requestor			
Request date		Requestor name	
Name of organisation		Specific program area	
Scheme	Choose an item.		
Is your program a prescribed information sharing entity?			
Choose an item.			

Purpose of information sharing request

****ATTENTION**** If you have concerns regarding risk or potential risk to a child or adult victim survivor, please contact Child Protection Intake or Victoria Police. Sending an information request to the Department of Health and Human Services does not constitute making a report to Child Protection.

I am requesting this information:
<p>Family Violence Information Sharing Scheme (FVISS)</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> for a family violence assessment purpose (for a Risk Assessment Entity to assess risk)</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> for a family violence protection purpose (to manage risk, including ongoing risk assessment)</p> <p>Child Information Sharing Scheme (CISS)</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> to make a decision, assessment, or plan relating to the wellbeing and/or safety of a child or group of children</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> to provide a service relating to the wellbeing and/or safety of a child or group of children</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> to manage risk to a child or group of children</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> to initiate or conduct an investigation relating to the wellbeing and/or safety of a child or group of children</p> <p>Please tick all boxes that apply. If you are requesting under BOTH schemes, you must identify a relevant purpose under EACH scheme.</p>

Subject of request	Choose an item.					
First name		Surname		Alias		
Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander	Choose an item.	DOB				
Family member and/or or third-party details						
CISS	FVISS	First name	Surname	DOB	Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander	Information shared regarding (for office use only)
Choose an item.	Choose an item.				Choose an item.	<input type="checkbox"/>
Choose an item.	Choose an item.				Choose an item.	<input type="checkbox"/>
Choose an item.	Choose an item.				Choose an item.	<input type="checkbox"/>
Choose an item.	Choose an item.				Choose an item.	<input type="checkbox"/>

*To determine whether you are prescribed to request information, please check online at [Information Sharing and MARAM implementation](#), or contact 1800 549 646.

What specific information are you seeking?
How will this information assist you in your assessment, decision making, and/or other activities?

Working collaboratively with children and family members

The views of children, parents/family members, and/or third party (**who are not perpetrators or alleged perpetrators**) **MUST** be sought, unless inappropriate to do so.

Obtaining the views of perpetrators and alleged perpetrators is not required and may increase risk to victim survivors.

Considering the above, what are the views of the relevant subjects of your request?
If you did not inform or seek the views of the relevant subjects of your request, which of the following reasons apply?
<input type="checkbox"/> It was not considered safe to do so. <input type="checkbox"/> It was not considered reasonable to do so. <input type="checkbox"/> It was not considered appropriate to do so.
Please explain your rationale.

Consent requirements under FVISS

Consent is only required from a FVISS adult victim survivor or a FVISS adult third party where no children are involved **AND** there is no serious threat* to life, health, safety, or welfare.

***If you have concerns regarding serious threat/risk to a child or adult victim survivor, please contact Child Protection Intake or Victoria Police.**

If consent is required from an adult victim survivor or adult third party, please record the consent details below.

Please email your completed form to info.exchange@dhhs.vic.gov.au. Include the initials of the subject of your request in the email subject line.

Please notify us as soon as possible if, after making a request, you no longer require the information.

For further information about the schemes and the Multi-Agency Risk Assessment and Management Framework (MARAM), see [Information Sharing Schemes and MARAM](#).

Information Sharing Team Response Form

The following section is completed by the Information Sharing Team

The Information Sharing Team is not a client facing service and provides historical Child Protection information to prescribed information sharing entities on closed cases. There is no current Child Protection involvement, as such we do not consider it appropriate, safe, or reasonable to seek and consider the views of the child and/or relevant family members regarding the disclosure of the information.

Please note that clients and their families are not always contacted when Child Protection receive a report and may not be aware of the information provided below.

Please also consider if a report to Child Protection is required to manage risk to a child or children.

Purpose of information sharing

In response to a request under CISS FVISS

Proactively shared under CISS FVISS

Did the information request meet scheme threshold?

YES NO

If **no**, please explain.

Clarifying information required?

YES NO

Date Clarifying Information Sought

Date Clarifying Information Received

Details of Clarified Information Received

Information shared

Based on the information provided by the prescribed Information Sharing Entity, I form the belief that the information provided for the specified purpose is required for the performance of the Secretary's responsibility to promote the prevention of abuse and neglect of children and is necessary to assist the requestor to establish **and/or** manage family violence **and/or** promote the wellbeing or safety of a child or group of children.

I confirm a search of the Child Protection electronic client file system using the details provided indicates **[child/ children's name]** is/are not currently known to Child Protection. A summary of relevant Child Protection information has been provided below.

The information contained within this report is a summary of historical information held within a source database and may not be exhaustive, up to date, or free from errors or omissions.

Information authorised and shared by: The Department of Health and Human Services, Information Sharing Team

Name:

Date:

26 March 2024

The information contained in this document is sensitive and confidential and is intended for the prescribed organisation making the request. Please consider and assess the risk to a child or adult victim survivor prior to sharing this information.