

# Child Safe Code of Conduct for Employees and Volunteers



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## 1. Purpose

Mid Murray Council is committed to the safe practices relating to children and young people. The Children and Young People (Safety) Act 2017 requires Council to have in place policies and procedures to establish and maintain safe environments for children and young people.

- 1.1 This Code of Conduct aims to ensure that all relevant Council employees, volunteers, consultants and contractors undertaking work on behalf of Council are aware of their expected behaviours when interacting with children and young people.

## 2. Definitions

- 2.1 **Child or Young Person** means a person under the age of 18.
- 2.2 **Council** means Mid Murray council.
- 2.3 **DCP** means Department of Child Protection.
- 2.4 **Employee** includes all full time, part time and casual employees employed by Council.
- 2.5 **Harm** includes physical and psychological harm caused by sexual, physical, mental or emotional abuse or neglect.
- 2.6 **Mandatory reporting obligation** is the legislated requirement to report specific suspicions or incidents of harm or risk of harm.
- 2.7 **Prescribed position** is a position in which a person works with children or young people, including people who:
  - Provide a service or undertake an activity that is child related work in the course of their employment;
  - carry out a business in which an employee works with children or young people;
  - Prescribed positions may be held by employees, volunteers, contractors, or elected members.

- 2.8 **Child Safe Environment Officer** is the Human Resources Officer.
- 2.9 **Volunteer** is a person who is acting on a voluntary basis (irrespective of whether the person receives out of pocket expenses); (as defined by the Work Health Safety Act 2012).

## 3. Policy

### 3.1 Purpose

- 3.1.1 This Code of Conduct applies to all elected members, employees, volunteers, contractors, consultants and any other person engaged to provide services wholly or partly to children or young people on behalf of Council as well as Children, young people, parents, legal guardians and carers who access Council services.
- 3.1.2 This Code of Conduct does not cover every situation – however, the values, ethics and standards it sets are a reference point to help make decisions relating to situations not referred to in this Code of Conduct.
- 3.1.3 This Code of Conduct sets out the minimum standards of behaviour expected during any interactions with children and young people accessing Council services.
- 3.1.4 Council's Child Safe Environments Officer can be contacted for further information relating to the application of this Code of Conduct or Child Safe Environments Policy.

### 3.2 Code of Conduct

- 3.2.1 All Council elected members, employees, volunteers, consultants and contractors undertaking work on behalf of Council must:
- Act in accordance with Council's child safe policies and procedures at all times, taking all reasonable steps to ensure the safety and protection of children and young people;
  - Treat all children and young people with dignity, respect, sensitivity, fairness and equity;
  - Ensure children and young people are protected from any form of harm or discrimination;
  - Ensure the environment is safe for children and young people – this includes protection from violence, bullying, teasing, threatening and sexist or racist remarks;
  - Encourage children and young people to participate in decision making processes;
  - Ensure children and young people are aware of their rights, including their rights to respect, fairness and safety;
  - Be a positive role model to children and young people, in all conduct with them;
  - Demonstrate appropriate personal and professional boundaries;
  - Ensure another adult is present or within sight when conducting any one on one activities;
  - Consider and respect the diverse backgrounds and needs of children and young people;
  - Listen and respond appropriately to the views and concerns of children and young people;
  - Create a safe, welcoming and inclusive environment that promotes and enables participation of children and young people;
  - Identify and mitigate risks to children and young people's safety and wellbeing as required by Council's risk assessment and management;
  - Respond to any concerns or complaints of harm or risk of harm promptly and in line with the Child Safe Environments Policy and Procedure;
  - Report all suspected or disclosed harm or risk of harm as required by Mid Murray Council's Child Safe Policy and procedure on internal and external reporting;

- Comply with child safety legislation and Mid Murray Council's policies and procedures on record keeping and information sharing;
- Be aware of mandatory notification responsibilities and inform the Child Abuse Report Line (CARL) 13 14 78 or report online at <https://www.childprotection.sa.gov.au/reporting-child-abuse> if you form a suspicion of harm or risk of harm.

3.2.2 All Council elected members, employees, volunteers, consultants and contractors undertaking work on behalf of Council must NOT:

- Engage in any unlawful activity with or in relation to a child or young person;
- Engage in any activity that is likely to physically, sexually or emotionally harm a child or young person;
- Engage in rough physical games or tickle games with children or young people;
- Hit or physically assault a child or young person;
- Arrange personal contact, including online contact, with children or young people, for a purpose unrelated to Council's activities;
- Do things of a personal nature that a child or young person can do independently such as changing clothes;
- Disclose personal or sensitive information about a child or young person including images, unless the child or young person and their parent or legal guardian consent or unless required to do so by law or Council's policy and procedure on reporting;
- Develop relationships with children or young people that could be seen as favouritism such as the offering of gifts or special treatment;
- Use inappropriate language in the presence of children or young people;
- Discriminate against any child or young person because of age, gender, cultural background, religion, vulnerability or sexuality;
- Work with children or young people while under the influence of alcohol or prohibited drugs;
- Ignore or disregard any suspected or disclosed harm or risk of harm.

3.2.3 If any Council elected member, employee, volunteer, consultant or contractor undertaking work on behalf of Council believe this Code of Conduct has been breached, by another person in Council, that person must:

- Act to prioritise the best interests of the child or young person;
- Promptly take actions to ensure that the child or young person is safe;
- Report any concerns to their manager, Child Safe Environments Officer, the Chief Executive Officer or another manager at Mid Murray Council;
- Follow Council's policies and procedures for receiving and responding to complaints and concerns.

### 3.3 Code of Conduct Agreement

I agree to abide by this Code of Conduct during my employment or contract with Council and I understand that breaches of this Code of Conduct may lead to disciplinary action or termination of my employment/contract.

Full Name.....

Signature..... Date.....

### 3.4 Communication

All staff are to be notified of this Code of Conduct and kept informed of any updates and/or changes.

## 4. Policy Responsibility

The Director of Development and Community is responsible for ensuring the proper operation of this Policy.

## 5. Availability/Accessibility

- 5.1 This Policy and Council's Fees and Charges Register are available to be downloaded free of charge from Council's website: [www.mid-murray.sa.gov.au](http://www.mid-murray.sa.gov.au).
- 5.2 This Policy is available for inspection at Council's principal office during ordinary business hours. Hard copies, for a fee, in accordance with Council's schedule of Fees and Charges, can be provided upon request.

## 6. Legislative Framework / Other References

- 6.1 *Local Government Act 1999 (SA)*
- 6.2 *Children & Young People (Safety) Act 2017 (SA)*
- 6.3 *Children & Young People (Safety) Regulations 2017 (SA)*
- 6.4 *Child Safety (Prohibited Persons) Act 2016 (SA)*
- 6.5 *Child Safety (Prohibited Persons) Regulations 2019 (SA)*
- 6.6 *The National Principles for Child Safe Organisations (Australian Human Rights Commission)*
- 6.7 *Child Safe Environments Policy*
- 6.8 *Child Safe Risk Management Plan*
- 6.9 *Elected Members Code of Conduct*
- 6.10 *Employee Code of Conduct*
- 6.11 *Volunteer Code of Conduct*
- 6.12 *Complaints Policy*
- 6.13 *Records Management Policy*

## 7. Document History

This Code of Conduct shall be reviewed at least every five (5) years in line with the National Principles.

Version	Adopted	Minute	Description of Change
1	20 June 2023	C06-23/015	Adopted