

SHIRE OF MANJIMUP CHILD SAFE AWARENESS POLICY

Policy Statement & Background

The Shire of Manjimup supports and values all children and young people. Shire of Manjimup makes a commitment to support the safety and wellbeing of all children and young people, including protection from abuse. This Child Safe Awareness policy is one of the ways the Shire of Manjimup demonstrates its commitment to being child safe and a zero-tolerance approach to child abuse.

This policy aims to reduce the risk of harm and child sexual abuse in our communities by encouraging child safe environments to be created and maintained. The Shire of Manjimup is committed to encouraging local organisations to be child safe and ensure children are safe and empowered.

This Child Safe Awareness policy has been developed in response to recommendation 6.12 of the *Royal Commission into Institutional Responses to Child Sexual Abuse* and recognises that the Shire of Manjimup is uniquely placed within the local community to demonstrate leadership by supporting organisations to be child safe and to protect children and young people from harm and/or abuse. The Shire of Manjimup will promote the safety and wellbeing of children across the community.

Consistent with the National Principles for Child Safe Organisations and Commonwealth Child Safe Framework, this policy provides a framework that outlines the role of the Shire of Manjimup in supporting local organisations to be child safe through access to resources, awareness raising and sharing relevant information.

Policy Measures / Principles

This Policy aims to ensure that:

- The rights of children and young people are upheld.
- Children and young people are respected, listened to, and informed about their rights.
- Children and young people have the fundamental right to be safe and cared for.
- Children and young people have the right to speak up, be heard and taken seriously without the threat of negative consequences.
- The safety and best interests of children and young people are a primary consideration when making decisions that concern them.
- Access to trusted and reliable information, including the National Principles for Child Safe Organisations, helps support organisations to understand what they must do to help reduce the risk of harm and abuse.
- Communities are informed and involved in promoting the safety and wellbeing of children and young people including protection from harm.
- Collaboration with the community and our partners promotes the safety, participation and empowerment of all children and young people.

Policy Functions

The Shire of Manjimup will ensure the following functions of this policy are resourced and assigned to the relevant officers for implementation.

- Developing a process to deliver child safe messages (for example at Shire of Manjimup venues, grounds and facilities or events).
- Connecting and supporting local community groups, organisations, and stakeholders to child safe resources (including culturally safe and inclusive resources).

Area of Application and Responsibility

The safety and wellbeing of children is everyone's responsibility. This Child Safe Awareness policy applies to all, employees, volunteers, trainees, work experience students, interns, and anyone else who undertakes work on behalf of the Shire of Manjimup, regardless of their work related to children or young people. It applies to occupants of Shire of Manjimup facilities and venues, including visitors, contractors and suppliers.

The Shire of Manjimup has a leadership role in our community to support relevant organisations to be child safe and promote child safe practices.

Although the Shire of Manjimup is not legally responsible for providing oversight of compliance with child safe practices, it will take any reasonable steps to engage with persons who utilise Shire of Manjimup facilities to operate in alignment with the Child Safe Awareness policy.

The Shire of Manjimup will determine which roles across the organisation will directly support the implementation of the Child Safe Awareness policy.

Glossary of Terms & Definitions

Abuse: Abuse is an act, or a failure to act, towards or on behalf of a child that may result in harm. It can occur on one occasion or multiple occasions. Sometimes the impact of multiple events leads to harm that becomes cumulative in nature. Types of abuse include physical, emotional and sexual abuse, and neglect.

Child/Children: Means a person under 18 years of age, and in the absence of positive evidence as to age, means a person who appears to be under 18 years of age.

Child Safe Organisation: is defined in the Royal Commission Final Report as one that:

- creates an environment where children's safety and wellbeing are at the centre of thought, values, and actions

- places emphasis on genuine engagement with and valuing of children and young people
- creates conditions that reduce the likelihood of harm to children and young people
- creates conditions that increase the likelihood of identifying any harm, and
- responds to any concerns, disclosures, allegations, or suspicions of harm. Note: in the context of local governments, this would involve referring concerns to the Department of Communities or WA Police to respond as appropriate.

Implementation of the National Principles for Child Safe Organisations give effect to the above.

Child safe: For the purpose of this policy, child safe means protecting the rights of children and young people to be safe by taking actions that can help prevent harm and abuse.

Harm: Harm, in relation to a child, means any detrimental effect of a significant nature on the child's wellbeing, whether caused by a single act, omission or circumstance; or a series or combination of acts, omissions or circumstances.

Wellbeing: Wellbeing of children and young people includes the care, development, education, health and safety of children and young people.

Related Shire of Manjimup Policies & Key Documents

All Shire of Manjimup Policies and Key Documents should consider this Policy and the implementation of organisational wide Child Safe Practices and at the next review date. Existing Policies that may be impacted by this policy, are:

- Employee and Councillor Code of Conduct
- Complaints System Policy and Complaints Against Councillors and the CEO
- Information and Communication Technology Systems Acceptable Use
- Closed Circuit Television Policy
- Records Management Policy
- Strategic Community Plan

- Risk Management Policy
- Volunteer Policy
- Working with Children Checks Process
- Youth Policy
- Access and Inclusion Policy
- Support for staff who make Public Interest Disclosures
- Work Health and Safety Policy
- Banner Poles
- Naming of Shire Assets, Tree Plantings, Memorials and Plaques
- Community Bus
- Health and Wellbeing
- Visual Message Signs
- Temporary Sign Approval – Advertising of Community Events and Public Information

Related Legislation

The following legislation and policy frameworks respond to matters pertaining to this policy and Child Safety as a whole:

- *Child Care Services Act 2007*
- *Children and Community Services Act 2004*
- *Civil Liability Act 2002*
- *Corruption, Crime and Misconduct Act 2003*
- *Equal Opportunity Act 1984*
- *Freedom of Information Act 1997*
- *Local Government Act 1995*
- *National Principles for Child Safety Organisations*
- *Parliamentary Commissioner Act 1971*
- *Public Interest Disclosure Act 2003r*
- *Public Sector Management Act 1994*
- *United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (CRC)*



SHIRE OF MANJIMUP

3. COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT

3.11 CHILD SAFETY

3.11.1 Child Safe Awareness Policy

- *Work Health and Safety Act 2020*
- *Working with Children (Criminal Record Checking) Act 2004*

Policy Resources

Please note there are also companion resources available to support the implementation of this Child Safe Awareness policy. These can be found at the Department of Local Government, Sport and Cultural Industries (DLGSC):

<https://staging.dlgsc.wa.gov.au/departments/publications/publication/resources-for-child-safe-organisations>

The DLGSC Child Safeguarding Implementation Unit can be contacted by email childsafeguarding@dlgsc.wa.gov.au to further assist with policy implementation and support.

Administration

The Community Services Directorate is responsible for the management and administration of the Child Safe Awareness Policy.

Adoption and Date Due for Revision

ADOPTED 12 December 2024
NEXT DUE FOR REVIEW December 2026

The Administration of this Policy is by Community Services Directorate
