

Child Safety Policy

Council Policy



Owner	Elected Members		
Responsible Officer	Chief Executive Officer		
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1 Purpose

This policy aims to demonstrate Alice Springs Town Council's (Council) commitment towards child safety and wellbeing across all its activities, services, facilities and workplaces. It also provides guidance to Council workplace participants on their responsibilities in responding to child safety concerns, and supports compliance with legislative obligations.

2 Definitions

For the purpose of this policy, the following definitions apply:

Term	Definition
Adult	An individual who is at least 18 years of age.
Child or young person	A person under 18, or apparently under 18 where age cannot be proved.
Harm	Any significant detrimental effect, caused by any act, omission or circumstance, on a child's physical, psychological or emotional wellbeing or development, as per the <i>Care and Protection of Children Act 2007 (NT)</i> . It includes physical, psychological or emotional abuse or neglect, sexual abuse or other exploitation, and exposure to physical, domestic or family violence.
Mandatory reporting	The legal requirement to report a reasonable belief of harm which has been, is being, or may be committed.
Ochre Card	An official photo identification card, issued by SafeNT, proving that an individual holds a valid Working with Children Clearance in the Northern Territory.
Workplace participant	Refers to Elected Members, Council Committee representatives, the Chief Executive Officer, senior executive, employees, contractors and volunteers of Alice Springs Town Council.

3 Policy Statement

3.1 Principles

3.1.1 Council has zero tolerance for child abuse, neglect and exploitation.

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3.1.2 All children and young people involved in Council programs, events and services have the right to be safe, respected, and empowered to raise concerns.

3.1.3 Council is committed to upholding the National Principles for Child Safe Organisations and relevant United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child Principles.

3.1.4 Council expects all workplace participants to act in the best interests of children and young people and comply with child safety legislation and behavioural standards.

3.1.5 Council identifies and manages child safety risks in the planning and delivery of its programs, events, services and facilities.

3.1.6 Council is committed to providing culturally safe, inclusive and accessible environments for all children and young people, particularly those experiencing vulnerability, disadvantage or barriers to participation.

3.2 Child safety reporting at Council

3.2.1 Reporting child safety concerns

Council encourages and supports both workplace participants and community members to report any Council related child safety concerns, including those associated with Council facilities, programs, events and activities.

Community members can informally raise child safety concerns with a Council workplace participant. Formal complaints from community members are to be made and managed in accordance with Council's complaints framework. All complaints and concerns, including those made by a child or young person, or about a child or young person, will be taken seriously by Council and followed up appropriately.

Workplace participants must report any child safety incident, hazard or near miss through Council's incident reporting processes to ensure appropriate follow-up, record keeping and risk management. Workplace participants may raise concerns or make complaints about the conduct of other workplace participants in accordance with Council's Complaints and Grievance Policy.

3.2.2 Mandatory reporting requirements

If any person, including a Council workplace participant, reasonably believe a child or young person has been, or is likely to be, harmed or exploited they must make a mandatory report under section 26 of the *Care and Protection of Children Act 2007* (NT). Council will ensure that Council workplace participants understand and are supported to fulfil their mandatory reporting obligations. If a workplace participant makes a mandatory report or knows a mandatory report has been made by a community member, they must also complete a Council incident report.

If a child or young person is in immediate danger or requires urgent assistance at a Council facility, event or program, Council workplace participants are to call 000 and request police assistance.

3.2.3 Responding to child safety allegations against a Council workplace participant

If a child safety allegation is made against a Council workplace participant, Council will ensure all mandatory reporting obligations have been met. For Council employees and volunteers, Council will act in accordance with relevant legislation, policies and procedures, which may result in disciplinary action, including termination of employment or engagement for substantiated allegations and/or breaches of this policy or Code of Conduct – Team Members. Child safety allegations involving Elected Members may constitute a

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breach of the Member Code of Conduct; complaints can be made in accordance with the *Local Government Act 2019*.

3.3 Safety at Council facilities, programs and events

Council will conduct risk assessments to identify and assess child safety risks associated with its facilities, programs and events where relevant, and will implement appropriate controls to protect children from harm.

Council reserves the right to refuse entry to or direct a person to leave a Council facility where reasonably necessary to protect others, in accordance with the relevant conditions of entry.

Council maintains procedures for responding to lost, separated or unaccompanied children.

3.4 Employee recruitment and screening

3.4.1 Working with Children Clearance

A current Northern Territory Working with Children Clearance (WWCC) is an essential requirement of any position involving child-related work with Council.

Applicants must hold a current WWCC or provide evidence of a pending application before being considered for interview. Recruitment and screening requirements, including verification of mandatory licences, registrations and clearances, are managed in accordance with Council's Recruitment and Selection Policy. Prior to commencement, Council will verify the currency of the applicant's WWCC with SAFE NT.

Employees are responsible for obtaining and maintaining a current WWCC throughout their employment, including meeting renewal requirements. An employee whose WWCC expires, lapses or otherwise becomes invalid must not undertake child-related work until a current clearance is restored.

Council carries out criminal history checks as part of the recruitment process for all employees.

3.4.2 Short-term exemptions

A short-term exemption is an exception to normal recruitment requirements and Council may apply for a short-term exemption only in exceptional circumstances where:

- the preferred applicant has lodged a WWCC application and provides evidence of that application
- the position requires an immediate commencement, and
- Council determines an exemption is operationally justified.

The exemption does not replace the expectation that applicants hold a current WWCC before seeking employment with Council.

If an exemption expires before a WWCC is issued, the employee must immediately cease child-related work until a current clearance has been granted.

3.4.3 Refused, suspended or cancelled clearance

An employee who does not hold, or is no longer eligible to hold, a current (WWCC) cannot perform the inherent requirements of a child-related position.

Where a WWCC is refused, suspended, or cancelled, Council will manage the matter in accordance with relevant legislation, industrial instruments and Council policies. This may result in disciplinary action, up to and including termination of employment.

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3.4.4 Employees under 18 years of age

Children and young people can work with Council.

Council will:

- ensure anyone aged 15 and over who is engaged in child-related work holds a valid Ochre Card
- delegate age-appropriate tasks, and never place a child or young person in sole charge of other children
- provide appropriate supervision by a suitably qualified and experienced adult, while remaining mindful of power imbalances with adult team members
- provide young workers a clear, accessible and age-appropriate way to raise child safety or workplace concerns, including about an adult
- engage children and young people in accordance with applicable legislation, industrial instruments, Council policies and any program-specific requirements.

3.5 Volunteers, contractors and external providers

Volunteers, contractors, subcontractors and external providers engaged to undertake child-related work on Council's behalf must meet the same child safety requirements as Council employees, including holding a current WWCC.

Volunteers, contractors and external providers must not undertake child-related work or be left in sole or unsupervised charge of children unless they hold a current WWCC.

Council's procurement documentation, contracts and terms and conditions require compliance with this policy and all applicable child safety legislation.

3.4.4 applies to volunteers under 18 years of age.

3.6 Work experience and student placements

Council may provide work experience or other workplace placements for school-aged students in accordance with relevant agreements and placement requirements.

Where a person under 18 years of age undertakes a placement with Council, appropriate arrangements will be in place for their induction, supervision, safety and wellbeing, having regard to their age, experience, the nature of the work and the risks associated with the placement.

Placement activities and supervision requirements will be assessed before the placement commences, with additional controls applied where the placement involves child-related work or other higher-risk activities.

A work experience placement does not, of itself, mean that Council employees supervising or working alongside the student are engaged in child-related employment or required to hold a WWCC. WWCC requirements will be determined having regard to the nature of the work and applicable legislation and placement requirements.

3.7 Media and photography

Council will ensure the collection and use of photographs, videos and other media involving children and young people is undertaken in accordance with child safe principles and consent requirements to avoid exposing children or young people to harm.

Council will take reasonable steps to identify and manage risks to children in online environments, including booking systems and virtual programs.

3.8 Education and training

To support a child safe culture, Council will ensure employees receive appropriate information and training on child safety, wellbeing and mandatory reporting obligations.

Training will be based on the level of child-related risk and exposure associated with the employee's role and work area. Additional role-specific training and refresher requirements may apply to employees who:

- regularly work or interact with children, or deliver services, activities or programs involving children
- supervise or manage employees under 18 years of age
- supervise students undertaking work experience or other placements with Council
- work in areas where the nature or frequency of interaction with children creates a higher child-safety risk.

The level, content and frequency of training will be determined through an assessment of organisational and role-specific needs and risks.

3.9 Records and privacy

Council will collect, use, store and dispose of records relating to children and young people in accordance with applicable privacy, records management and child safety requirements. Information relating to children and young people, including employees, volunteers, incident reports, screening clearances and CCTV footage, will be managed securely and only accessed by authorised persons for legitimate purposes.

4 Related Legislation and Documents

- *Care and Protection of Children Act 2007 (NT)*
- *Screening Regulations 2010 (NT)*
- *Domestic and Family Violence Act 2017 (NT)*
- *Information Act 2002 (NT)*
- *Local Government Act 2019*
- National Principles for Child Safe Organisations (2018)
- United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (UNCRC)
- Alice Springs (Aquatic and Leisure Centre) and (Public Library) By-laws
- Code of Conduct – Team Members
- Member Code of Conduct
- Respectful Workplace & Psychosocial Risk Policy
- Sexual and Sex-based Harassment Policy
- Employment Grievance Policy
- Recruitment and Selection Policy
- Complaints and Grievance Policy

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5 Communication and Training

Will this policy be communicated through consultation to teams?	Yes
Where will this policy be available?	Council Website and Intranet
Will training needs arise from this policy? If yes, who will be responsible.	Yes, Director CD

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Appendix One – National Principles for Child Safe Organisations

No.	Principle
1	Child safety and wellbeing is embedded in leadership, governance and culture.
2	Children are informed of their rights, participate in decisions affecting them, and are taken seriously.
3	Families and communities are informed and involved.
4	Equity is upheld and diverse needs are respected.
5	People working with children are suitable and supported.
6	Processes to respond to complaints and concerns are child-focused.
7	Staff and volunteers are equipped to keep children safe through ongoing training.
8	Physical and online environments promote safety and minimise the opportunity for harm.
9	Implementation of the Principles is regularly reviewed and improved.
10	Policies and procedures document how the organisation is child safe.