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**POLICY TITLE CHILD SAFE STANDARDS POLICY**  
**POLICY NUMBER CPOL/GOV031**

## **ENBALING LEGISLATION**

Section 17 of the *Child Wellbeing and Safety Act 2005* enables the Minister to make Child Safe Standards. The standards make sure relevant entities, including Council, operate to:

- promote the safety of children; and
- prevent child abuse; and
- properly responds to allegations of child abuse.

### **1. PURPOSE**

The purpose of this policy is to document Councils commitment, as a child safe organisation, to put the best interests of children and young people first to ensure their safety and wellbeing.

This policy outlines the 11 Child Safe Standards that Council is required to meet and the expected outcomes of each standard.

### **2. SCOPE**

This policy applies to all Swan Hill Rural City Council (Council) Councillors, members of Council staff, volunteers, contractors, work experience students, and industry placement students.

### **3. BACKGROUND**

In 2016, in response to the findings and recommendations of the *Betrayal of Trust Inquiry (2013)*, the Victorian Government introduced the Child Safe Standards, to prevent child abuse and harm from happening in organisations. In 2017 the Victorian Government introduced the Reportable Conduct Scheme to improve organisations' responses to allegations of child abuse and misconduct, allegedly committed by workers or volunteers.

In 2022, Victoria's Child Safe Standards were reviewed and aligned with the National Principles for Child Safe Organisations (the National Principles), which were developed in response to the Commonwealth Government's 2017 *Royal Commission into Institutional Responses to Child Sexual Abuse*.

Together, Victoria's Child Safe Standards and the Reportable Conduct Scheme aim to protect children and young people from harm and abuse, while reflecting the National Principles.

Council's compliance with the Child Safe Standards is monitored by different regulatory authorities (co-regulators) depending on the service Council provides.

## 4. POLICY

In accordance with Standard 11, we will document how Council, as a child safe organisation, is committed to keeping children and young people safe, by making sure:

- Policies and procedures address all Child Safe Standards
- Policies and procedures are documented and easy to understand
- Best practice models and stakeholder consultation informs the development of policies and procedures
- Leaders champion and model compliance with policies and procedures
- Staff and volunteers understand and implement policies and procedures.

## 5. THE CHILD SAFE STANDARDS

The 11 Child Safe Standards, each expressed as an expected outcome, is shown below.

CHILD SAFE STANDARD	EXPECTED OUTCOME
1.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• 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.</li></ul>
2.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Child safety and wellbeing is embedded in organisational leadership, governance and culture.</li></ul>
3.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Children and young people are empowered about their rights, participate in decisions affecting them and are taken seriously.</li></ul>
4.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Families and communities are informed and involved in promoting child safety and wellbeing.</li></ul>
5.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Equity is upheld and diverse needs respected in policy and practice.</li></ul>
6.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• People working with children and young people are suitable and supported to reflect child safety and wellbeing values in practice.</li></ul>
7.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Processes for complaints and concerns are child focused.</li></ul>
8.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Staff and volunteers are equipped with the knowledge, skills and awareness to keep children and young people safe through ongoing education and training.</li></ul>
9.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Physical and online environments promote safety and wellbeing while minimising the opportunity for children and young people to be harmed.</li></ul>
10.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Implementation of the Child Safe Standards is regularly reviewed and improved.</li></ul>
11.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Policies and procedures document how the organisation is safe for children and young people.</li></ul>

## 6. SUPPORTING DOCUMENTS

POL/HUMAN604 Reporting Concern about Children or Young People  
PRO/STAFF141 Police Checks  
PRO/STAFF142 Working with Children Check  
POL/STAFF127 Employee Code of Conduct  
POL/CORP211 Privacy Policy  
POL/STAFF105 Equal Opportunity Employment  
POL/GOV018 Public Interest Disclosures  
POL/STAFF123 Serious Misconduct Negligence and Fraud  
CPOL/OHS901 Occupational Health and Safety  
POL/STAFF104 Disciplinary Policy  
POL/STAFF130 Termination of Employment  
POL/CORP214 Records Management Policy  
PRO/STAFF143 Reportable Conduct Scheme Procedure  
PRO/STAFF149 Key Roles and Responsibilities of Employees under Child Safe Standards Procedure  
CPOL/GOV025 Community Engagement Policy  
[Ministerial Statement of Expectations](#)  
[National Principles for Child Safe Organisations](#) (2019)

## 7. RELATED LEGISLATION

Education and Care Services National Law Act 2010  
Education and Care Services National Regulations 2011  
*Equal Opportunity Act 2010*  
*Occupational Health and Safety Act 2004*  
*Charter of Human Rights and Responsibilities Act 2006*  
*Children, Youth and Families Act 2005*  
*Commission for Children and Young People Act 2012*  
*Crimes Act 1958*  
*Privacy and Data Protection Act 2014*  
*Public Records Act 1973*  
*Social Services Regulation Act 2021*  
*Worker Screening Act 2020 (Vic)*  
*Limitations of Actions Act 1958*  
*Health Records Act 2001 (Vic)*  
Child Wellbeing and Safety Regulations 2017 (Vic)  
United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child  
*Local Government Act 2020*

## 8. DOCUMENT HISTORY

<b>Version Number</b>	<b>Issue Date</b>	<b>Description of Change</b>
1.0	September 2017	Replaced HUMAN615 – adopted 30/8/2016
1.1	June 2019	Review
1.2	September 2021	Review
2.0	November 2022	Major review – Standards increased to 11 and aligned to National Principles for Child Safe Organisations.
2.1	June 2025	Review
3.0	May 2026	Review – New co-regulators in the sector and reassigned policy as a governance policy.

**Signed: Stuart King**

**Mayor**

**Date: 19 May 2026**