

Interacting with children and young people

Council prides itself on being a child safe organisation and has zero tolerance for child abuse. Council adheres to the Victorian Child Safe Standards and related legislation including Failure to Disclose, Failure to Protect and Grooming offenses. Any allegation or incident of abuse will be treated very seriously and consistently with child protection legislation, regulations and guidelines and in accordance with Council policy and procedures.

As Councillors we will maintain the highest standards of professional conduct in our attitude, behaviour and interactions with children and young people. As leaders, Councillors we will uphold the rights and best interest of the child and take these matters into account in all decision making.

In doing so, we will:

- Take all reasonable steps to protect children from harm.
- Set clear boundaries about appropriate behaviour with children and young people.
- Report any allegations of child abuse or child safety concerns to the relevant authorities including Police and Child Protection.
- Promote the cultural safety, participation and empowerment of Aboriginal children, culturally and linguistically diverse children and children with a disability.
- Encourage and empower children and young people to participate in decision making processes.
- Treat children and young people with respect and value their ideas and opinions.
- Ensure children and young people are aware of their rights, including their rights to respect, fairness and safety.
- Uphold the rights and best interest of the child and take these matters into account in all decision making.

We will not:

- Exhibit behaviours with children which may be construed as unnecessarily physical.
- Show or share sexually suggestive material to a child in any form such as e-mail, text, movie, sound, or picture file.
- Hold, kiss, cuddle or touch a child in an age/culturally inappropriate manner or, in a manner considered inappropriate by reason of the nature of the occasion/program/activity/event, except for appropriate touch (for example to comfort distress).
- Cultivate online and social media 'friendships' with children and young people without parental/guardian permission.
- Take unauthorized photos, movies or recordings of a child.
- Publish unauthorized photos, movies or recordings of a child or young person, including online, without the consent of the child (where they are old enough to give it) as well as their parental/guardian consent.
- Use inappropriate language in the presence of children/young people.
- Express personal views on culture, ethnicity or sexuality in the presence of children.
- Discriminate against any child because of culture, race, ethnicity or disability.
- Ignore or disregard any suspected or disclosed child abuse.