

7.16 Child Safe Awareness

Policy

The Shire of Dalwallinu supports and values all children and young people. The Shire of Dalwallinu make 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 Dalwallinu demonstrates its commitment to being child safe and a zero tolerance approach to child abuse.

The 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 Dalwallinu 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 Dalwallinu 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 Dalwallinu 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 Dalwallinu in supporting local organisations to be child safe through access to resources, awareness raising and sharing relevant information.

Objective

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 Dalwallinu, regardless of their work related to children or young people. It applies to occupants of the Shire of Dalwallinu’s facilities and venues, including visitors, contractors and suppliers.

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 eighteen (18) years of age, and in the absence of positive evidence as to age, means a person who appears to be under eighteen (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 engagements 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.

Policy Principles

- 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 Dalwallinu 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 the Shire of Dalwallinu 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).

Responsibilities

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

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

The Shire of Dalwallinu Chief Executive Officer will determine which roles across the organization will directly support the implementation of the Child Safe Awareness policy.

Person Responsible	Chief Executive Officer
History	New Policy September 2024 (M10297)

