



# Burwood

Inc.1874

## **DRAFT CHILD SAFETY AND WELLBEING POLICY**

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## Purpose

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This Policy has been developed in alignment with state and federal legislation and outlines Council's requirements to minimise risk to children and young people and ensure their safety and wellbeing across all areas of the organisation's work.

It also informs Councillors, staff and volunteers of Burwood Council about their obligations to act to protect the rights of children and young people and the important role they play in ensuring their safety and wellbeing.

## Scope

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This Policy applies to all Council activities and facilities which involve contact with children and young people, including but not limited to:

- Community events
- Community programs
- Community engagement activities
- Burwood Library and Community Hub
- Enfield Aquatic Centre
- Public facilities, including parks and reserves
- Hireable community spaces
- Attendance at external facilities, such as schools and childcare centres
- Visiting private residences
- Internships, traineeships, work experience and volunteer programs.

This Policy applies to all Council Officials.

## Definitions

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**Child** - A person aged under 18 years. Note: Under child protection legislation a child is defined as aged under 16 years for Mandatory Reporting purposes and as aged under 18 years for Reportable Conduct (see below for more information).

**Child-Related Positions** - Positions involving work with children and/or young people where the work normally involves being face to face or where contact is more than incidental.

**Council Officials** - Councillors, employees, volunteers, consultants and contractors.

**Mandatory Reporting** - The legal requirement for any person delivering a service to children or young people, or in management of a service for children or young people, to report concerns for a child at risk of significant harm.

**Reportable Conduct** - Any offensive behaviour or misconduct committed against, with or in the presence of a child or young person, including the following:

- A sexual offence against, with or in the presence of a child
- Sexual misconduct against, with or in the presence of a child
- Ill treatment of a child
- An assault against a child
- Neglect or failure to protect a child from abuse or harmful environments
- Inflicting psychological harm on a child.

**Wellbeing** - A sense of happiness or success.

**Working with Children Check** - An official clearance to work with children and young people provided by the NSW Office of the Children's Guardian in relation to anyone in a position classified as one involving in child-related work.

**Young Person** - A person that is 16 or 17 years of age.

## **Policy Statement**

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Burwood Council is proud to be a child safe organisation and shares the understanding that children's safety is a universal responsibility. The Child Safety and Wellbeing Policy demonstrates Council's commitment to the safety and wellbeing of children and young people in the Burwood Local Government Area. The policy reflects a culture of shared responsibility for child safety and will help to ensure that every person who works for or with Council is aware of their responsibilities for promoting and upholding child safety.

## **Policy Requirements**

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Burwood Council is committed to being a child safe organisation by embedding the 10 Child Safe Standards into organisational leadership, governance, culture and practices as outlined below.

### **1. A commitment to child safety and wellbeing**

Through the adoption of this Policy, Council will embed the Child Safe Standards across all relevant Council processes, including but not limited to the following:

- All child-related positions include working with children requirements and a current Working with Children Check (WWCC) is in place for each Council Officer occupying a child-related position.
- Recruitment documentation is regularly reviewed to ensure it includes child safe requirements, such as WWCCs for all identified positions.
- Induction of new staff and volunteers includes information about Council's child safety and wellbeing approach.
- Ongoing training with a key focus on front line staff.
- Using a risk management approach in which staff are required to identify and mitigate risks to ensure children's safety and wellbeing whilst attending Council events, programs, services, activities and facilities.
- Development of a four-year Child Safe Action Plan for the organisation that will involve the ongoing development of internal tools, systems and processes to ensure Council remains focussed on child safety and wellbeing.
- Ongoing public campaigns following the adoption of Council's Policy Statement to formalise the focus on keeping children safe and making relevant information available to the community.

### **2. Taking child participation seriously**

Council regularly consults with children and young people. This practice will continue and be reviewed to maintain a best practice approach at all times.

In addition, children and young people have access to information about their rights through publicly available and actively promoted information and resources on Council's website and at Council facilities.

### **3. Involving families and communities**

This Policy and Council's Policy Statement is to be readily accessible via the Council website and be placed on display in public places and facilities to communicate Council's commitment to child safety and wellbeing.

As much as possible, information will be provided in child-friendly language and will be translated into community languages. Council will continue to utilise a range of methods and channels to ensure the purpose of the Policy and its requirements are effectively communicated to the community.

### **4. Respecting equity and diversity**

Council is committed to the principles of equity and creating opportunities for all community members regardless of age, race, gender, ethnicity or disability to participate in community and civic life.

### **5. Ensuring that staff are suitable and supported**

Council applies and maintains a rigorous recruitment, screening and selection process for all child-related positions. This includes thorough reference checking and confirmation of WWCC status for all preferred applicants for roles that engage or work with children and young people. Council will review its list of positions deemed to be child-related as required.

All staff across the organisation will receive ongoing training aligned with the Child Safety and Wellbeing Policy and related processes and procedures.

### **6. Child focused complaint systems**

With children's safety being a prime focus, Council staff are trained to identify, respond to and report on all concerns and complaints relating to children.

All child-related complaints about Council Officers will be determined via the 'Complaints Against Council Officers Process' outlined in the Complaints Management Policy. The Internal Ombudsman or NSW Ombudsman is responsible for dealing with serious or difficult complaints which have been escalated to them.

Staff observations of reportable conduct by a member of the public against a child or young person, will be reported to the police or other appropriate authority.

Council will continually review and refine its complaints handling process for all community members, including children and young people.

### **7. Staff knowledge, skills and awareness**

Staff and volunteers are equipped with the knowledge, skills and awareness to keep children and young people safe through ongoing education and training.

All Councillors, staff and volunteers will be trained in the Policy requirements and relevant procedures and training will be ongoing and relevant to their roles. Council Officials will be made aware that keeping children safe is everyone's responsibility and ongoing initiatives will be delivered to make the Burwood Local Government Area a safe and welcoming place for children and young people.

### **8. Safe physical and online environments**

Council's risk assessment processes help determine where child safety risks may arise and ensure measures are put in place to eliminate or minimise these risks.

All staff are appropriately trained to identify and minimise risks and report on any concerns.

## **9. Review of child safe policies and practices**

Implementation of the National Principles for Child Safe Organisations is regularly reviewed and improved. Council reviews policies every two to four years, or sooner if legislation changes or other forces generate the need for more frequent review.

Council's Child Safe Action Plan will be reviewed and implemented on an annual basis over the next four years to ensure Council remains a child safe organisation.

## **10. Documenting policies and procedures**

Council's child-related positions have a clear, well developed framework and ongoing appropriate training so that staff and volunteers know their roles and responsibilities and have the capability to maintain safety for children and young people.

Council will identify child safety and wellbeing 'champions' across the organisation who will take the lead in coordinating policy development and implementation of related procedures and actions.

### **Related Information/Glossary**

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Related legislation:

- *Children's Guardian Child Safe Scheme 2021*
- *United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child*
- *Children & Young Persons (Care and Protection) Act 1998*
- *Children Legislation Amendment (Wood Enquiry Recommendations) Act 2009*
- *Child Protection (Working with Children) Act 2012*
- *Children's Guardian Act 2019*
- *Government Information (Public Access) Act 2009*
- *Local Government Act 1993 (NSW)*

Related Council policies and plans:

- Code of Conduct
- Complaints Management Policy
- Children in the Library Policy
- Community Strategic Plan, Delivery Program and Operational Plan
- Community Engagement Strategy

### **Review**

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Date of next review is two years from the date of adoption by Council.

### **Contact**

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Coordinator Community Development – (02) 9911 9941.