

Behavioural Standards for Keeping Children Safe

Responsible Officer	Manager People and Performance
Department	Office of the Chief Operating Officer
Date adopted/endorsed	16 January 2024
Resolution number (if applicable)	23/323OC
Next review due	January 2025
TRIM reference	23/114585

Purpose

Kiama Municipal Council is committed to supporting the rights of children and young people and is committed to their care, protection and contribution to our community.

The overarching purpose of the Behavioural Standards for Keeping Children Safe (the Standards) is to:

- establish a common understanding of the behaviour expected of all workers toward children and young people.
- provide guidance to Kiama Municipal Council (Council) employees and other workers about required behaviours when working or engaging with children.
- embed behaviours and practices that reflect Council's commitment to creating Child Safe environments.
- create a safe and healthy workplace where all reasonable steps are taken to minimise the risk of false or exaggerated concerns or allegations.

Scope

These standards apply to all employees and other workers of Kiama Municipal Council including:

- elected members of Council;
- executive management;
- employees;
- volunteers;
- contractors and sub-contractors;
- apprentices, trainees, work experience students; and
- anyone who performs work for, or on behalf of Council, regardless of whether or not they are paid.

Council acknowledges that not all employees work directly with children and young people. These Standards apply to occasions when staff interact with, or are in the presence of, children and young people, either in person or online.

For the purposes of these Standards the terms “child,” “children,” “young persons” and “young people” apply to anyone under the age of 18.

These Standards should be read in conjunction with Council’s Child Safe Policy.

The aims of the Behavioural Standards for Keeping Children Safe are to:

- define expected behavioural standards and to establish clear expectations for appropriate behaviour with children for keeping them and staff safe;
- create a safe and healthy workplace where all reasonable steps are taken to minimise the risk of false or exaggerated allegations;
- determine acceptable and unacceptable behaviours;
- guide decision making and encourage reflection on behaviours and their potential impact on children and young people.
- provide clear guidelines and professional boundaries, ethical behaviour and appropriate and inappropriate relationships;
- promote appropriate accountability, throughout Council for keeping children safe and free from harm.

Child Safe Officers

Council will designate certain roles as Child Safe Officers to:

- provide support and advice within their work area to enable complaints/allegations to be lodged and investigated appropriately and in a timely fashion; and
- represent their work area in the development and implementation of Child Safe initiatives within the organisation.

Where relevant, employees and other workers are required to:

- act in accordance with Council’s Child Safe Policy and these Standards at all times;
- treat all children with respect and dignity;
- promote the rights, safety, and wellbeing of all children;
- involve children and young people meaningfully in decisions about policies, activities and processes that concern them;
- respond to any concerns or complaints of child harm or abuse promptly and in line with Council’s policies and procedures;
- comply with the Children’s Guardian’s Act 2019, and Council’s policies and procedures on record keeping and information sharing;
- use positive and affirming language with and about children;
- promote participation, safety, and empowerment of all children;
- report any breaches of the Child Safe Policy and Behavioural Standards;

- report all instances of suspicious behaviour where they have reasonable belief that abuse may have occurred. Noting that reports of suspicious behaviour can be lodged without evidence provided reasonable belief exists;
- actively promote each child's voice and participation and encourage others to do the same;
- treat children with respect, regardless of their race, colour, sex, language, religion, political or other opinion, national, ethnic, or social origin, disability, birth, or other status;
- be a positive role model and mentor for children;
- maintain privacy and confidentiality of all information regarding children;
- ensure that at least one other adult is present when they are working in the proximity of children;
- immediately report concerns or allegations of child abuse and exploitation to the Governance Coordinator and in accordance with Council's Child Safe Policy and Behavioural Standards and relevant legislative requirements including mandatory reporters.
- immediately disclose all charges, convictions, and outcomes of offences relating to children and young people that occurred during their engagement with Council;
- disclose during the recruitment and selection process any charges, convictions and outcomes of offences relating to children that occurred prior to their engagement with Council
- obtain written consent from the child's parents/guardians before photographing or filming a child;
- assess and endeavour to comply with local traditions or restrictions for creating or reproducing personal images before photographing or filming a child;
- ensure images present children in a dignified and respectful manner;
- ensure, at all times, file labels, meta data or text descriptions do not identify or lead to the identification of a child;
- comply with "Council: Use and Storage of Children's Images Guidelines;" and
- seek advice from Council's Child Safety Officer/s before engaging with children to discuss any planned activities or programs and to seek feedback regarding planned child safety measures.

Employees and other workers must not:

- engage in any activities that are potentially harmful to children, including those that might lead to sexual, physical, emotional and/or psychological harm to children;
- use language or behaviour towards children that is inappropriate, harassing, abusive, sexually provocative, demeaning or culturally inappropriate;
- share inappropriate images, videos or links with children;
- show favour towards any child and should treat all children equally and fairly;
- touch or show affection, such as hugging children; and

- act in any way that could be construed as ‘grooming’ including sharing personal information, providing gifts or money, sharing secrets, favouritism, or any special treatment.

Employees and other workers must:

- immediately report to a manager any matter that may compromise their ability to safely or legally work with children;
- report concerns about the behaviour of others in accordance with relevant legislation and related policies and procedures of Council; and
- recognise the potential risk of harm to a child or young person and take all reasonable steps to respond in accordance with relevant legislation and policies and procedures of Council, where appropriate also connecting them with relevant support services.

Consultation

The Behavioural Standards for Keeping Children Safe is developed by and, in consultation with the Child Safe Working Group comprised of the following representatives:

- Chief Executive Officer
- Chief Operating Officer
- Manager Community Hubs
- Manager People and Performance
- Manager Library and Cultural Hubs
- Leisure Centre Manager
- Organisational Development Lead
- Human Resources Coordinator
- Risk Management Coordinator
- Governance Coordinator
- Communication and Engagement Coordinator

Additional consultation was available to the community via the Council website, Administration Centre, Leisure Centre, Libraries and SENTRAL.

References

- The Royal Commission into Institutional Responses to Child Sexual Abuse (2017)
- Children’s Guardian Act 2019
- Child Safe Standards, The NSW Office of the Children’s Guardian
- The National Principles for Child Safe Organisations

Variation and review

Council reserves the right to review, vary or revoke these standards.

Review history

Date reviewed	Date adopted / endorsed	Brief detail of amendments
	16 January 2024	New Policy Standards

Related forms/Documents

- Kiama Municipal Council Child Safe Policy
- Kiama Municipal Council Complaints Handling Policy
- Kiama Municipal Council Complaints and Allegations Record Form

Authorisation

Name: By Council Minute 23/323OC from the 21 November 2023 meeting

Date: 16 January 2024

Statement of Commitment by Employees and Other Workers

- In my role with Kiama Council, I will act to safeguard the best interests of children as set out in the Policy and Standards;
- take actions promptly to ensure that children are safe;
- report any concerns immediately to my manager, Council’s Governance Coordinator, the Chief Executive Officer or another member of the Leadership Team manager or people leader in Council;
- follow Council’s policies and procedures for receiving and responding to complaints and concerns; and
- comply with legislative requirements for reporting, where relevant, and within Council’s Policy on internal and external reporting

I have read and understood Council’s Child Safe Policy and the Behavioural Standards for Keeping Children Safe and I agree to abide by both documents during my engagement with Kiama Municipal Council. I understand that breaches of Council’s Child Safe Policy and Behavioural Standard for Keeping Children Safe may lead to disciplinary action or termination of my role with Council, legal action, and or criminal investigation and prosecution.

Signature
Full Name
Date