



Behavioural Standards for Keeping Children Safe

Adopted: XX.XX.XXXX

TRIM 226027.2020



Purpose

The overarching purpose of the Behavioural Standards for Keeping Children Safe (Standards) are to provide guidance to Liverpool City Council (Council) staff on how to behave when working or engaging with children. Council acknowledges that not all staff work directly with children and young people. These Standards apply to those occasions when staff are interacting with or are in the presence of children and young people (either in person or online).

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

These Standards is to be read in conjunction with the Child Safe Policy.

The Behavioural Standards for Keeping Children Safe is to:

- Establish a common understanding of the behaviour standards expected of all Council staff towards children and young people;
- Outline appropriate behavioural standards for all Council staff, and to establish clear expectations for appropriate behaviour with children for keeping them and staff safe;
- Ensure a safe and healthy workplace for Council staff where all reasonable steps are taken to minimise the risk of false or exaggerated allegations being raised;
- List behaviours that are acceptable and those that are unacceptable;
- Provide clear guidelines and professional boundaries, ethical behaviour and appropriate and inappropriate relationships;
- Provide staff with the tools and knowledge regarding what is acceptable and what is not; and
- Promote accountability for staff behaviour in keeping children safe and protecting them from harm.

The Behavioural Standards for Keeping Children Safe applies to all Council staff including:

- Elected members of Council;
- Executive Management;
- Paid and unpaid staff;
- Volunteers;
- Contractors;
- Sub-contractors;
- Visitors;
- Apprentices, trainees, work experience students; and
- Anyone who performs work for, or on behalf of Council.

Where relevant, all staff are required to do:

- 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 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 Child Safe Policy and Behavioural Standards;
- Always promote the safety and wellbeing of children;
- Report all instances of suspicious behaviour based on reasonable belief that abuse may have occurred (reports of suspicious behaviour can be lodged without evidence provided reasonable belief exists);
- Actively promote each child's voice and participation and encourage staff members to respond ethically to children's insights and recommendations for change;
- Treat children with respect, regardless of their race, colour, sex, language, religion, political or other opinion, national, ethnic or social origin, property, 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 a minimum of one other adult is present when working in the proximity of children;
- Immediately report concerns or allegations of child abuse and exploitation in accordance with Council's Child Safe Policy and Behavioural Standards and any relevant legislative reporting requirements, including mandatory reporters.
- Immediately disclose all charges, convictions and outcomes of an offence, which occurred before or occurs during your engagement with Council, in relation to child exploitation or abuse;
- Obtain child and parents/guardians' written consent before photographing or filming a child, and wherever possible, use the Council Image Release Form;
- Before photographing or filming a child, assess and endeavour to comply with local traditions or restrictions for creating or reproducing personal images;
- Ensure photographs, films, videos and DVDs present children in a dignified and respectful manner and not in a vulnerable or submissive manner. Children should be adequately clothed and not in poses that could be seen as sexually suggestive;

- Ensure images are honest representations of the context and the facts;
- Ensure the file labels, meta data or text descriptions do not reveal identifying information about a child when sending images electronically or publishing images in any form;
- Refer to: “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.

Staff are not to engage in any of the following behaviours, at all times:

- 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 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’ a child, including sharing personal information, providing gifts or money, sharing secrets, favouritism or any special treatment.

Council is responsible to identify and respond effectively to any concerns about the safety and wellbeing of children. Council staff are required to:

- Identify and report to a manager immediately any matter that may compromise staff ability to work with children;
- Report to a manager even if the concern is minor and the information or observations are incomplete and uncertain;
- Respond to concerns about the behaviour of another worker and report those concerns in accordance with any relevant legislation and other related Council procedures and internal or external reporting; and
- Recognise the potential risk of harm to a child or young person and take all reasonable steps to respond in accordance with any relevant legislation and support children by connecting them with relevant support services.

AUTHORISED BY

Council (Chief Executive Officer)

EFFECTIVE FROM

XX.XX.XXXX

DEPARTMENT RESPONSIBLE

City Community and Culture (Community Development and Planning)

REVIEW DATE

This document will be reviewed every year, or as required by any changes in legislation or operational requirements including minor amendments.

CONSULTATION

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

- City Community and Culture
- Office of the Chief Executive Officer
- City Corporate
- City Infrastructure and Environment
- City Economy and Growth; and
- City Presentation.

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
- Child Protection Policy, Cumberland City Council; and
- Child and Youth Safe Policy, Mission Australia.

Statement of Commitment for Council staff

As a Council employee 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 Child Safety Officer, the Chief Executive Officer or another 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 on reporting (where relevant), and within Council's policy and procedure 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 employment with Liverpool City 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 employment with Council, legal action, and or criminal investigation and prosecution.

Signature

Full Name

Date