



This initiative is part of the WA Government's action to create a Safer WA for Children by implementing the recommendations from the Royal Commission into Institutional Responses to Child Sexual Abuse.

Child Safe Awareness Policy

Template for local government

May 2023



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Background

This Child Safe Awareness policy template is focused on the external facing and public role of Western Australian local governments in providing child safe awareness and information for their district and supporting their local communities.

The template was developed in response to Recommendation 6.12 from the Royal Commission into Institutional Responses to Child Sexual Abuse and the Royal Commissions recognition of the significant role of local governments in community development and community safety, particularly roles that impact on child safety. The Royal Commission identified the opportunity to integrate their direct responsibilities to children and young people within their wider role in the community.

Instructions

This policy template can be used as a guide to develop a Child Safe Awareness Policy that is suited to your organisation.

Three sections of the template have been agreed broadly by local governments and should remain unchanged to provide a state-wide approach and to ensure consistency with the recommendations of the Royal Commission into Institutional Responses to Child Sexual Abuse (Royal Commission). The following sections are in ‘blue’ boxes and should not be changed:

- policy definitions
- policy principles; and
- policy functions

Local governments should adapt the remaining sections of the policy template to suit their local contexts, particularly the sections on scope, roles and responsibilities and related legislation. Instructions and examples for implementing the policy have been included in ‘blue’ text.

Local governments are strongly encouraged to develop an operational document to accompany the policy template which outlines the responsibilities for local government roles in implementing the Policy Functions. Please note that the State Government are producing the materials to be used in completing the Policy Functions including the child safe messages and a list of child safe resources to be provided to local government community groups and organisations.

Please note there are also companion resources available to support the implementation of your local government’s Child Safe Awareness policy. These can be found [online](#).

Template

Policy Statement

[Local Government] supports and values all children and young people. [Local Government] makes 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 [Local Government] demonstrates its commitment to being child safe and a zero-tolerance approach to child abuse.

This 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. [Local Government] 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 [Local Government] 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. [Local Government] 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 [Local Government] in supporting local organisations to be child safe through access to resources, awareness raising and sharing relevant information.

Scope

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 [Local Government], regardless of their work related to children or young people. It applies to occupants of [Local Government] facilities and venues, including visitors, contractors, and suppliers.

Please do not change wording of this section

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

Please do not change wording of this section. (Please add in any additional principles that may apply).

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.

Please do not change wording of this section

Policy Functions

[Local Government] 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 [Local Government] 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

[Local Government] has a leadership role in our community to support relevant organisations to be child safe and promote child safe practices.

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

[Local Government] will determine which roles across the organisation will directly support the implementation of the Child Safe Awareness policy.

Related [Local Government] Policies

Include here a list of any local government policies that are relevant to this policy or could be impacted by this policy, for example:

- Aboriginal / First Nations / Cultural Policy
- Child Safety Policy
- Employee Code of Conduct
- Corporate Communications Policy
- Community Signage Policy
- Employee Complaints Management Policy
- Engagement Policy
- Information Technology Policy
- Record Keeping Policy
- Strategic Community Plan
- Strategic and Operational Risk Plans
- Volunteer Policy
- Working with Children Checks Policy
- Youth Policy

Related Legislation and Policy

Include here a list of any legislation or policy frameworks that inform local government requirements, for example:

- *Child Care Services Act 2007*
- *Children and Community Services Act 2004*
- *Civil Liability Act 2002*
- *Corruption, Crime and Misconduct Act 2003*
- *Equal Opportunity Act 1984*

- *Freedom of Information Act 1997*
- *Local Government Act 1995*
- *National Principles for Child Safety Organisations*
- *Parliamentary Commissioner Act 1971*
- *Public Interest Disclosure Act 2003r*
- *Public Sector Management Act 1994*
- *United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (CRC)*
- *Work Health and Safety Act 2020*
- *Working with Children (Criminal Record Checking) Act 2004*

Review

This policy will be reviewed every two years or upon the introduction of other relevant policy or legislation related to the safety and wellbeing of children and young people.

Approval

Date:

Version	Date

