



POLICY DOCUMENT

17.63.7

Policy Name	CHILD SAFE ENVIRONMENTS
Policy No	17.63.7
Reviewed By	Louise Mrdjen Manager Library Services
CEO Authorisation	Rob Donaldson CEO
Review Details	Date Adopted: 1 st June 2015 Date Reviewed: 8 May 2015 Next Review Date: ELECTION 2018

1. INTRODUCTION AND RATIONALE

Council is committed to the safety and wellbeing of children, young people and other vulnerable people who access its services. Council supports the rights of the child and vulnerable persons in the community and will act without hesitation to ensure a safe environment is maintained at all times. Council also supports the rights and wellbeing of its staff and volunteers and encourages their active participation in building and maintaining a secure environment for all children.

2. PURPOSE OF THIS POLICY

This Policy:

- Aims to ensure that all Council Members, managers, employees, volunteers, contractors and consultants are aware of their duty of care responsibilities for the protection, safety and wellbeing of children at all times.
- Complies with Council's obligations under the Children's Protection Act 1993, including:
 - Section 8B-8D Child Safe Environments and criminal history assessments for people working with children; and
 - Section 11 – Mandatory reporting.

3. DEFINITIONS

The Children's Protection Act 1993 (SA) states that child abuse and neglect (or harm) in relation to a child means:

- Sexual abuse; or Physical or
- emotional abuse, or neglect to the extent that:
 - The child has suffered, or is likely to suffer, physical or psychological injury detrimental to the child's wellbeing; or
 - The child's physical and psychological development is in jeopardy.

Child means a person under the age of 18.

Criminal history screening involves obtaining information about relevant potential employees, volunteers, contractors or consultants on the basis that the information is deemed relevant to working in a child-related area. The information gathered may include details concerning previous

employment and relevant experience; verification of qualifications and professional registration; criminal history information, reference checks and work history reports.

Mandatory reporting obligations means a mandated notifier (any person providing services solely or partly to children including staff, volunteers, contractors or consultants) must report any suspicion of abuse or neglect of a child to the Department for Families and Communities Child Abuse Report Line on 13 14 78.

Prescribed position is one that requires or involves prescribed functions as follows:

- Regular contact with children or working in close proximity to children on a regular basis where that contact is not directly supervised at all times.
 - Close proximity means in reasonable unaided visual sight that is physically being within eyeshot.
 - Regular contact includes multiple instances of contact of limited duration (attendance at a weekly program) or fewer, extended and intense periods of contact which may be away from the children's usual environment.
- Supervision or management of above positions; and
- Access to records relating to children.

A prescribed position may also include one that involves provision of service to the aged or other vulnerable people.

4. RESPONSIBILITY AND REVIEW

This policy applies to all Council Members, employees, students on placement, work experience students, relevant volunteers, contractors and consultants providing services wholly or partly to children, or who work with children and other vulnerable persons. Managers of Council programs and services that are provided through a prescribed position, will communicate the Child Safe Environment Policy to all relevant audiences to ensure awareness and understanding of Council's commitment to safe environments.

5. COUNCIL'S COMMITMENT

Council's commitment to providing a child safe environment includes:

- Being proactive in ensuring a safe environment for all participants of services and programs
- Identifying and assessing potential sources of harm through Council's risk management strategies
- Increasing awareness within the organisation about ensuring a safe environment
- Providing ongoing training and support to Council members, staff, volunteers and others involved in service delivery of council services to fulfil their duty of care
- Fulfilling mandatory reporting obligations and managing complaints and issues effectively and promptly
- Operating in a spirit of cooperation and consultation with other relevant agencies in matters concerning protection of children and vulnerable people from abuse.
- Developing, monitoring, evaluating and reviewing risk management strategies to minimise harm to children and other vulnerable people.
- Responding to suspected abuse or neglect – relevant staff, volunteers, contractors and consultants providing services to children/vulnerable people will be trained in mandatory reporting.
- Recruitment, selection and enhancing performance through screening of all people involved in provision of services and programs to children according to Recruitment & Selection Policy 12.63.2 and Volunteer Management Policy 12.16.34

6. REVIEW

This policy shall be reviewed by the City of Port Lincoln within twelve months after the conclusion of each periodic election, or on significant change to legislation or aspects included within this policy.

7. REFERENCES

- Children’s Protection Act 1993
- Children’s Protection Regulations 2010
- Families SA Protecting Children – Standards & Guidelines <http://www.families.sa.gov.au/pages/protectingchildren/ProtectingChildrenOverview/>

- Related Policies
 - Code of Conduct for Council Employees 12.63.12
 - Code of Conduct for Elected Members 9.63.3
 - Recruitment and Selection 12.63.2
 - Library Services Management policy 17.63.8
 - Volunteer Management Policy 12.16.34

- Related Procedures
 - Dealing with Police/Criminal History Reports Showing Convictions PROC191