
CHILD SAFE MANAGEMENT SYSTEM - CHILD SAFE CODE OF CONDUCT



PURPOSE

Wyndham City Council is committed to providing a child safe environment where children and young people have the right to feel safe and be safe, where their voices are heard about decisions that affect their lives. The Victorian Government introduced child safe standards which require a Child Safe code of conduct to establish clear expectations for appropriate behaviour in engaging with children. This code is referenced by and supports the Corporate Code of Conduct, it should be read in conjunction with that document.

Wyndham City Council expect and require all employees to demonstrate our values in the performance of their roles: Integrity, Community Focus, Respect, Commitment, Leadership and Teamwork. This code provides specific guidance for the performance of our daily endeavours when working with children.

In developing and implementing a Child Safe Code of Conduct Wyndham City Council, we are communicating our shared commitment to a culture where protecting children and young people from harm and abuse is embedded in the everyday thinking and practice of our leaders, staff, contractors and volunteers.

SCOPE

The Wyndham City Council Child Safe Code of Conduct applies to all people elected to, employed by, and working within Wyndham City Council. This includes Councillors, Advisory Committees, Staff (temporary and contracted) and Volunteers. It applies to a broad range of situations where interaction with children may occur.

All our people are responsible for the safety and wellbeing of children and young people who engage with the Wyndham City Council as described in our Child Safe Policy. They are expected to act in accordance with this code in all interactions with children under the age of 18 years. It is important that all people are aware that under the Reportable Conduct Policy allegations of misconduct involving children can be made even if the conduct occurred outside of work.



CODE OF CONDUCT

As people responsible for safeguarding the children we come into contact with, we must:

- Act in accordance with Wyndham City Council's Child Safe Policy and Reportable Conduct Policy at all times.
- Take all reasonable steps to protect children from abuse and harm.
- Provide a welcoming, inclusive and safe environment for children.
- Treat children respectfully, encourage them to communicate and participate, recognising them as valued members of our community.
- Model appropriate adult behaviour and work with children openly and transparently, demonstrating appropriate personal and professional boundaries when engaging with children in online and face to face environments.
- Promote the safety, participation and empowerment of vulnerable children, particularly Aboriginal children, children with disabilities, children of gender diversity and children with cultural and/or linguistically diverse backgrounds.
- Respect cultural, religious and political differences.
- Listen and respond to the views and concerns of children, particularly if they are disclosing abuse, harm or safety information relating to themselves or another child.
- Report child safety conduct of concern or any breaches of this Code of Conduct to a line manager¹ or the Wyndham City Council Child Safe Officer².
- Report allegations of child abuse or harm, including disclosures made by children to a line manager¹ or the Wyndham City Council Child Safe Officer². Those employed in occupations subject to mandatory reporting may also need to report to child protection authorities and Victoria Police.
- Maintain a current Working with Children Check if your role requires interacting with children (directly or indirectly) as part of your duties, as direct by the Working with Children Check Policy.
- Participate in training to ensure you know and meet the child safety requirements of your role.
- Respect the privacy of children and only disclose information necessary and in accordance with privacy legislation.
- If there is reason to believe that abuse or harm has occurred, act as quickly as possible to ensure the child(ren) are safe, **if you believe that the child's safety is in immediate danger contact 000.**

CODE OF CONDUCT

As people responsible for safeguarding the children we come into contact with, we must not:

- Engage in any activity that may put a child at risk of abuse or harm in any form including participating in any behaviour that would constitute abuse, harm, neglect, exploitation, harassment, discrimination or victimisation.
- Work with children while under the influence of alcohol or prohibited drugs; or where judgement may be impaired by prescription medication.
- Initiate unnecessary physical contact with children or exhibit behaviour which may be considered inappropriate.
- Engage in personal care activities which the child is able to do for themselves.
- Allow unnecessary unsupervised adult to child contact, which may put children at risk of abuse, or be perceived to do so.
- Discuss matters of a mature or adult nature in the presence of children or use inappropriate language in the presence of children.
- Show or provide children with access to images or material of a mature or adult nature.
- Share personal views on culture, disability, gender, ethnicity, language or race in the presence of children.
- Discriminate against any child, including because of culture, disability, gender, sexuality, ethnicity, language or race.
- Develop a relationship with a child which could be construed as favouritism or amount to 'grooming' behaviour, such as offering gifts or inappropriate attention.
- Have personal contact, including online contact, with children you work with for a purpose unrelated to Wyndham City Council activities, unless known and endorsed by a Child Safe Officer². Communicate directly with a child through personal or private contact channels (including by social media, email, instant messaging, chat rooms, gaming sites, texting etc), without parental or guardian consent.
- Engage with children online in a way that may be considered to be abusive or inappropriate, including the use of language or topics that are adult in nature (e.g. profane or sexualised) and behaviours that may constitute grooming.
- Ignore or disregard any suspected or disclosed child abuse or harm, including behaviour of concern by adults or other children.

¹ Wyndham City Council line managers who receive reports from staff will communicate that information confidentially to a Child Safe Officer regardless of whether they agree or share the belief that the alleged conduct has occurred.

² Wyndham City Council names holders of the role of Child Safe Officer within the Instrument of Authorisations & Appointments and on the Child Safe Management System WYNI page.