

Policy

STATUTORY

CHILD SAFETY AND WELLBEING

Head of Power

- *Child Safe Organisations Act 2024 (Qld)*
- *Queensland Family and Child Commission Act 2014*
- *Working with Children (Risk Management and Screening) Act 2000 (the Act)*
- *Working with Children (Risk Management and Screening) Regulation 2020 (the Regulations)*
- *Child Protection Act 1999 (Qld) (the Child Protection Act)*
- *Criminal Code 1899 (Qld) (the Criminal Code)*
- *Information Privacy Act 2009 (Qld) (the IP Act)*
- *Public Records Act 2023 (Qld) (the Public Records Act)*
- *Local Government Regulation 2012*
- *Public Interest Disclosures Act 2010*
- *Human Rights Acts 2019 (Qld)*

Key Supporting Council Document

Lockyer Valley Regional Council Corporate Plan (2022-2027):

5.7 Compliant with relevant legislation

Definitions

<i>Blue Card System</i>	A key prevention and monitoring system of people working with children and young people in Queensland. The Blue Card System aims to minimise the risks of harm to children and young people by contributing to the creation of safe and supportive environments and is founded on the principle that all children have a fundamental right to be protected from harm.
<i>Breach (or Potential Breach)</i>	Any action or inaction by a Council worker that fails to comply with any part of the Child Safety and Wellbeing Policy.
<i>Child</i>	An individual who is under the age of 18 years.
<i>Child abuse</i>	There are four (4) types of child abuse¹: 1. Physical - Physical abuse happens when a child has been hurt or injured, and it is not an accident. Physical abuse does not always leave visible marks or injuries. Physical abuse can include: hitting, shaking, choking, smothering, throwing, burning, biting, poisoning, using physical restraints. 2. Sexual - Child sexual abuse happens when an adult, teenager or child uses their power or authority to involve a child in sexual activity. 3. Emotional - Emotional abuse happens when a child is treated in a way that negatively impacts their social, emotional or intellectual development. Emotional abuse can be caused by: rejection, name calling, teasing or bullying, yelling, criticism, isolation or locking a child up for extended periods, exposure to domestic and family violence. 4. Neglect – Neglect happens when a child's basic needs are not met, affecting their health and development. Basic needs include: food, housing and clean living conditions, health care, adequate clothing, personal hygiene, adequate supervision. Child abuse can be a single incident or several incidents that take place over time.
<i>Child harm</i>	Under section 9 of the <i>Child Protection Act 1999</i> (Qld): 1. Harm, to a child, is any detrimental effect of a significant nature on the child's physical, psychological or emotional wellbeing. 2. It is immaterial how the harm is caused. 3. Harm can be caused by— a) physical, psychological or emotional abuse or neglect; or b) sexual abuse or exploitation. 4. Harm can be caused by- a) a single act, omission or circumstance; or b) b) a series or combination of acts, omissions or circumstances.
<i>Child safe culture</i>	The culture in an organisation where the safety and wellbeing of children is put first and embeds a commitment to child safety in every aspect of the organisation.
<i>Child safe entity</i>	Schedule 1 of the <i>Child Safe Organisations Act 2024</i> (Qld) includes the following entities as 'Child safe entities':

- Accommodation or residential services (including, but not limited to, emergency accommodation, and camps or excursions that require overnight stays).
- Religious bodies (including, but not limited to, a chaplaincy service or children's recreation service, church services or youth groups).
- Early childhood education and care services.
- Child protection services.
- Providers of disability services under the *Disability Services Act 2006* (Qld) section 12 and NDIS service providers.
- Education services (including, but not limited to, private and state schools, TAFE, and other registered training organisations).
- Health services (including, but not limited to, entities that provide counselling or support services).
- Justice or detention services (including, but not limited to, entities that provide diversionary, interventionist or rehabilitation activities).
- Clubs and associations (including, but not limited to, the Scout Association of Australia, Girl Guides Association, Parent & Citizens Associations and sporting clubs).
- Cultural, sporting or recreational service providers (including, but not limited to, arts or performing arts programs, swimming schools).
- Coaching, tutoring or private teaching service providers.
- Entities that provide services or facilities specifically for children on a commercial basis (including, but not limited to, gyms, play facilities, photography services, entertainment or party services).
- Transport or transport-related services (including, but not limited to, driving schools and traffic controllers such as school crossing supervisors).
- Entities that provide community services for children (including, but not limited to, a neighbourhood centre funded by the State or a youth support service).
- Government entities.

<i>Child Safety Services</i>	The Queensland Government agency for child protection and adoption services. Child Safety Services is dedicated to protecting children and young people from harm or who are at risk of harm, and whose parents cannot provide adequate care or protection for them.
<i>Contact Officer</i>	A person nominated under this policy to act as a central point of escalation for incidents, disclosures, suspicions and policy breaches relating to the safety of children and young people.
<i>Contractor</i>	A third-party business entity used by Council to provide services directly to children, or where the contract's activities will, or are likely to involve contact with children that is a usual part of, and more than incidental, to the services.
<i>Council</i>	Lockyer Valley Regional Council.
<i>Council employee</i>	A person employed by Council.
<i>Council worker</i>	A worker of Council is an individual who performs work of any kind for Council, and includes, for example, the following –

	• a Council employee, • a volunteer, • a contractor, subcontractor or consultant, • an individual supplied by a provider of labour hire services under the <i>Labour Hire Licencing Act 2017</i>, • an executive officer of the entity, or another person who is concerned with, or takes part in, the entity's management, other than a councillor of a local government; and • a trainee or person undertaking work experience for the entity.
<i>Councillors</i>	Councillor for Lockyer Valley Regional Council including the Mayor and Deputy Mayor.
<i>Cultural safety</i>	The positive recognition and celebration of cultures. Children are empowered and enabled to contribute and feel safe to be themselves.
<i>Disclosure</i>	A statement, complaint or information shared by a child or young person, a parent, a third party or a Council worker, relating to the harm or potential harm of a child or young person.
<i>Empowerment</i>	Builds on the strength of children and young people allowing them to become more confident. It equips children and young people with skills and knowledge to make informed decisions and increase control of their lives.
<i>Incident</i>	An event or instance resulting in the harm or near-harm of a child or young person.
<i>Labour hire staff</i>	Labour hire staff are recruited through an agency with their work duties determined by Council. They are provided with training in Council processes and procedures and have rights and protections not afforded to contractors.
<i>Parent</i>	A biological mother or father, adoptive mother or father, or legal guardian.
<i>Queensland Family and Child Commission</i>	An independent statutory body that promotes the improvement of policies and practices affecting the safety and wellbeing of Queensland children. The Queensland Family and Child Commission is a regulator for the Child Safe Standards and is responsible for administering the Reportable Conduct Scheme.
<i>Reportable conviction</i>	A reportable conviction of a Council employee or volunteer is a conviction for an offence committed by the Council employee or volunteer against a law of a State or Commonwealth that may involve reportable conduct. A conviction includes the following— • a finding of guilt, and the acceptance of a plea of guilty, by a court, whether or not a conviction is recorded; a spent conviction, or a conviction that has become spent under a law of another State or the Commonwealth.

<i>Risk</i>	In the context of the Child Safe Standards and Universal Principle, risk is actual or potential exposure to harm or abuse of a child/young person occurring in connection with Council.
<i>Supervisor</i>	Direct supervisor of a worker.
<i>Third party</i>	Third parties engaged by Council include contractors, agency staff (i.e. labour hire staff) and funded bodies (e.g. grant recipients).
<i>Working with Children Check</i>	In the context of Queensland, the Working with Children Check is administered by Blue Card Services. A Blue Card (or Exemption Card) is required to undertake paid or voluntary work in any child-related sector or organisation. The Blue Card system is regulated by two pieces of legislation: the <i>Working with Children (Risk Management and Screening) Act 2000</i> (the WWC Act) and the <i>Working with Children (Risk Management and Screening) Regulation 2020</i> .

Policy Objective

This policy provides a framework for Council's commitment to being a Child Safe Organisation and provides strategic guidance to all areas of Council. This policy outlines the responsibilities and practices that support a child safe culture at Council.

To outline Council's proactive and risk management approach to creating a safe and supportive environment for children and young people whilst accessing Council services.

Council proactively identifies, manages and minimises risks to children and young people whilst under Council care or on Council premises, and in connection with Council's services, programs, activities, events, online environments and work-related conduct, including where those risks involve Councillors, Council Workers, contractors, labour hire staff, volunteers, and lessees, hirers and user-organisations of Council-controlled entities.

Council meets legislative requirements of the *Child Safe Organisations Act 2024* (Qld). This policy is reviewed annually, and any subsequent updates will be approved by the Chief Executive Officer.

Content Warning

If you have suspicions or actual knowledge that child harm is occurring, contact the Queensland Police Service immediately on 000.

Please note that this policy contains content that may be triggering for some individuals. You may choose to contact Lifeline on 13 11 14 for any support on topics covered in this document.

Policy Statement

Council is committed to being a Child Safe Organisation in ensuring the safety and wellbeing of children, taking a proactive approach to protecting children from harm, and upholding children's rights to access culturally safe services.

Council is guided by the key priorities defined within the Lockyer Valley Regional Council's Corporate Plan (2022- 2027):

- **Lockyer Community**
 - Seek to understand community needs, resulting in partnerships that realise long term benefits for the community in a timely manner
- **Lockyer Leadership and Council**
 - Compliant with relevant legislation
 - Commit to open and accountable governance to ensure community confidence and trust in Council and our democratic values
 - Know and manage our risks
 - Continuously improve business processes and systems
 - Enhance Council's reputation as an employer of choice through values-based leadership, collaboration, engagement and trust

In addition to upholding the Corporate Plan principles outlined above, Council is committed to upholding the obligations within the *Human Rights Act 2019* (Qld) by giving proper consideration to the provisions of the Act when making decisions relevant to this policy.

Council has a zero-tolerance approach to child harm and demonstrates a commitment to child safety in compliance with Queensland's Child Safe Standards, Universal Principle and Reportable Conduct Scheme as prescribed by the *Child Safe Organisations Act 2024* (Qld).

Scope

This policy applies to all Councillors and Council Workers (including volunteers), and their conduct both within and outside of work performed for Council, irrespective of whether they work with or have direct contact with children.

A Council Worker for the purposes of this policy includes, but is not limited to, employees, volunteers, work experience/placement students, trainees, labour hire staff, and contractors (including subcontractors).

Lessees, hirers and user-organisations of Council-controlled entities (including, but not limited to, Council-owned community halls, sports complexes, showgrounds and aquatic centres) are required to comply with Council's commitment to being a Child Safe Organisation alongside any requirements under their own organisations, where applicable.

It is noted that organisations (including community volunteer and non-for-profit organisations) who assist Council with the delivery of activities, services, or events, and are also defined as a 'child safe entity' under Schedule 1 of the *Child Safe Organisations Act 2024* (Qld) (the Act), will have their own legislative requirements under the Act.

Queensland Child Safe Standards and Universal Principle

Council is required by law to demonstrate compliance with the ten (10) Child Safe Standards and Universal Principle to protect children. The Standards and Universal Principle are built on children's rights and provide a clear framework for keeping children safe.

Under legislation, Council must provide an environment that promotes and upholds the right to cultural safety of children who are Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander persons, known as the Universal Principle. The Universal Principle must be included in how Council applies the Standards.

The ten (10) Queensland Child Safe Standards are:

Standard	Definition
1. Leadership and culture	Child safety and wellbeing is embedded in the entity's organisational leadership, governance and culture.
2. Voice of children	Children are informed about their rights, participate in decisions affecting them and are taken seriously.
3. Family and community	Families and communities are informed and involved in promoting child safety and wellbeing.
4. Equity and diversity	Equity is upheld and diverse needs respected in policy and practice.
5. People	People working with children are suitable and supported to reflect child safety and wellbeing values in practice.
6. Complaints management	Processes to respond to complaints and concerns are child focused.
7. Knowledge and skills	Staff and volunteers of the entity are equipped with the knowledge, skills and awareness to keep children safe through ongoing education and training.
8. Physical and online environments	Physical and online environments promote safety and wellbeing and minimise the opportunity for children to be harmed.
9. Continuous improvement	Implementation of the child safe standards is regularly reviewed and improved.
10. Policy and procedures	Policies and procedures document how the entity is safe for children.

Child Safe Commitment Statement

At Lockyer Valley Regional Council (LVRC), we believe every child has the right to be safe, feel safe, and be included in decisions relating to them.

We have zero tolerance for child abuse, neglect and harm.

We are committed to implementing and embedding Queensland's [10 Child Safe Standards](#) across our organisation and to continuously improving our approach to child safety. This commitment applies to councillors, employees, contractors, volunteers and third parties when delivering Council services, programs, activities or events or engaging with children in Council spaces and activities.

We will keep children safe by:

- creating and maintaining physical and online environments across our services, facilities, programs and events that prioritise the safety, wellbeing and inclusion of children and young people and minimise the opportunity for children to be harmed
- providing a safe, inclusive and supportive environment for all children and young people, including Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children (the Universal Principle) and those from culturally diverse backgrounds or who have disabilities
- empowering children to speak up about any concerns if they feel unsafe and making sure they know who to approach
- listening to children and young people and providing them with an opportunity to participate in decisions that affect them
- partnering with families and community to inform and promote child safety and wellbeing in practice.

As a child safe organisation, we will:

- update our policies and procedures to align with the Child Safe Standards
- build child safety knowledge, skills and compliance into our recruitment and induction processes
- ensure our staff, volunteers, contractors and relevant third parties are educated about their child safety obligations so they can prevent, identify and respond effectively to child safety concerns and complaints
- encourage feedback from children, families, community, staff, volunteers, contractors and relevant third parties to continuously improve our child safe policies, procedures and practices.

We encourage everyone to speak up if they have concerns about child safety. We will respond promptly and appropriately to any concerns or complaints reported to Council in line with legislative and policy obligations. We acknowledge our mandatory reporting obligations under the Reportable Conduct Scheme to ensure independent oversight of allegations.

Display of statement

Council will publicly display our Child Safe Commitment Statement (or a shorter adaptation of it) via:

- All Council websites
- All Council employee position descriptions
- All Council volunteer task descriptions
- Relevant Council promotional material
- Council's Customer Service areas including libraries.

Child Safety Incident Reporting

If you have concerns about a child or family, referrals may be made to [Family and Child Connect](#) or the [Department of Families, Seniors, Disability Services and Child Safety](#), depending on the nature and seriousness of the concerns.

If a child is in immediate danger, please call 000.

Further information is available at the [Department of Families, Seniors, Disability Services and Child Safety](#) website.

External Reporting Process

Children, families or other members of the community can make a report to Council through mail (posted or hand-delivered), email, Council's Online Services, phone, or in-person to an officer or councillor.

Where timeliness is critical, reports should be made initially by phone or in-person to a relevant supervisor or manager and then followed up in writing.

Internal Reporting Process

All Councillors and Council Workers are required to report any concerns of actual or suspected child harm through:

- Council's standard Incident Investigation Report form
- Email to a relevant supervisor or manager
- Phone call or in-person report to a relevant supervisor or manager.

All Council Workers such as volunteers, contractors and/or labour hire staff must also report child safety concerns to their Council contact or contract manager.

Where timeliness is critical, reports should be made initially by phone or in-person to a relevant supervisor or manager and then followed up in writing.

Support

Following a reported child safety concern, Council will (where appropriate):

- assist alleged victims and their families to access counselling and support services; and
- provide support to affected Council Workers through the Employee Assistance Program (Telus).

Record Management and Information Sharing

Council is committed to protecting an individual's right to privacy. All information recorded in a child safety report will remain confidential and must meet the requirements of relevant legislation, Council's Information Privacy Policy and associated procedures.

Where appropriate, relevant information may be shared to prioritise child safety, but an individual's personal information will not be shared with any external party without their consent unless there is a legislative requirement to do so.

Risks to child safety that are identified in complaints, reports or allegations of child harm will be reviewed and incorporated into Council's operational risk registers.

Human Resources and Recruitment

Council has effective screening tools to assist the recruitment of suitable employees, labour hire staff, volunteers, contractors, work experience students and trainees to minimise the risk of inappropriate individuals entering the organisation.

Where relevant to the position, Council undertakes pre-employment Working with Children Checks to ensure potential candidates hold a current Blue Card. Council has systems in place to monitor the currency and validity of Blue Cards across the organisation.

Child safe training is included as part of Council's Corporate Induction.

Risk Management

Employees should use Council's Corporate Risk Management Policy to identify, analyse and evaluate child safety risks (both in physical and online environments). Child safety risks should be incorporated into Council's operational risk registers for regular monitoring. Managers, Principals and Coordinators are expected to ensure ongoing monitoring of the child safety risks in their respective functional areas.

Children are encouraged to:

- express their views about their safety and wellbeing to Council in a manner that is comfortable for them; and
- participate in decisions that may impact them (particularly in relation to youth-focused programs and/or public facility and public space development).

Council gives strong consideration to the voice of children and their valuable contributions when identifying and considering child safety risk mitigation.

When reporting child safety incidents, Council will identify, implement and monitor risk mitigation strategies to try to prevent similar incidents from recurring.

Responsibilities/accountabilities

Safeguarding children is a shared responsibility at Council. All Councillors and Council Workers (including volunteers, contractors and labour hire staff) are responsible for:

1. providing an environment that promotes and upholds the right to cultural safety of children who are Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander persons;
2. behaving safely and appropriately when interacting with children;
3. promoting respect for children's values, abilities, beliefs, cultural practices and ways of living;
4. providing an inclusive environment where children can participate, feel safe, empowered and respected whilst undertaking their respective roles and duties at Council or in relation to Council-facilitated activities;
5. where relevant, participating in child safe training and education;
6. engaging children in the planning of and design of relevant work at Council that impacts children;
7. providing children with the necessary pathways to report their concerns;

8. reporting any suspected or actual instances of child harm in accordance with Council's Child Safety Incident Reporting process;
9. understanding that Council Workers who, under their roles and responsibilities, are required to, or may, upon a risk assessment, be likely to regularly interact with children and/or have access to personal or confidential information pertaining to children, must:
 - a) participate in further specific child safety training as and where required; and
 - b) obtain and maintain a current Working With Children Card (Blue Card) and associated Working With Children Check requirements.

Specific responsibilities are defined in the table below.

Role	Responsibility
Business Information Management	Responsible for: 1. archiving and storage of records for the requisite amount of time.
Chief Executive Officer (CEO)	Responsible for facilitating Council's compliance with the Child Safe Standards and Universal Principle (including, but not limited to, the allocation of appropriate resources).
Executive Leadership Team (ELT)	Responsible for: 1. leading, strengthening and modelling a culture of child safety and wellbeing and strong child safe governance at Council; 2. overseeing and ensuring compliance with the Child Safe Standards and Universal Principle, and Council policies and procedures in their respective areas of responsibility; and 3. developing opportunities for regular discussion and review to support a culture of continuous improvement and accountability of keeping children safe from harm.
Mayor and Councillors	Responsible for: 1. modelling and supporting a culture of child safety and wellbeing and strong child safe governance at Council.
Managers, Principals, Coordinators, Team Leaders, Supervisors	Responsible for: 1. leading, strengthening and modelling a culture of child safety and wellbeing and strong child safe governance at Council; 2. ensuring ongoing monitoring of the child safety risks in their respective functional areas. 3. ensuring that their respective functional area is compliant with legislative and regulatory requirements for the recording and storage of information pertaining to children. 4. supporting employees to identify and respond to child safety incidents. 5. ensuring child safety is embedded and monitored in the management of relevant contracts and grants with appropriate responses implemented for child safety breaches. 6. supporting employees involved in the reporting processes. 7. ensuring Council's Child Safety and Wellbeing policies and procedures are implemented in all work areas and all employees have access to them.

Role	Responsibility
	- ensuring employees have completed child safe training and an induction on child safety responsibilities. - ensuring a workplace culture that supports a transparent, continually improving environment in relation to child safety.
People and Culture	Responsible for: - planning and delivering child safe training at an appropriate level for Council workers. - ensuring child safe competencies are identified for relevant positions in the recruitment process and preferred / successful candidates meet these competencies. - maintaining Council's recruitment policies and procedures and conducting child safe recruitment and screening processes for all Council Workers such as volunteers, work experience students, labour hire staff and contractors including ensuring all identified persons hold and retain a current Working With Children (Blue Card) and associated checks consistently across Council. - ensuring employees have completed child safe training and an induction on child safety responsibilities. - providing child safe training and awareness to keep children safe. - supporting the roll out of specific child safe training to persons who are required under their roles and responsibilities to regularly interact with children. - overseeing the reporting process with the Governance Team, where applicable. - supporting Managers in dealing with breaches of Council's Code of Conduct for Employees.
Governance Compliance Team	Responsible for: - leading the implementation of the Child Safe Standards and Universal Principle, and Reportable Conduct Scheme at Council, including the development of systems and processes in collaboration with relevant functional areas across Council to ensure organisational compliance. - promoting child safety and wellbeing culture across Council. - supporting employees to follow the reporting process. - providing reports on child safety data trends. - providing guidance, information and training to teams supporting them to embed child safety in their work. - increasing the understanding of child safe obligations across Council. - providing advice and support to People Managers and employees about what to do if they are concerned for child's safety and effective service responses. - implementing and supporting continuous child safe improvement processes. - supporting investigations of reportable conduct allegations.

Related policies/documents

Members of the public can access Council policies on Council's website. If a policy listed below does not appear on the website please contact 1300 005 872 or email general@lvrc.qld.gov.au to request a copy.

Council policies

- Community Engagement Policy
- Complaints Management Policy
- Compliance Policy
- Confidentiality Policy
- Corporate Risk Management Policy
- Cultural Diversity Policy
- Disaster Management Policy
- Facebook Community Guidelines Policy
- Fixed CCTV and Audio Recordings Policy
- Information Privacy Policy
- Investigation Policy
- Library Services Policy
- Media Relations Policy
- Public Interest Disclosure Policy
- Right to Information Policy
- Social Media Policy
- Work Health & Safety Policy

Other documents

- Child Safe Commitment Statement
- Child Safe Commitment Statement (Child Friendly Version)
- Code of Conduct for Employees
- Complaints Management Procedure
- Compliance Procedure
- Corporate Plan 2022-2027
- Public Interest Disclosure Procedure

ⁱ Queensland Government, '[Types of Child Abuse](#)', Webpage, last updated 20 March 2018, last accessed 2 September 2025