

Mornington Shire Council Child Safety and Wellbeing Statement of Commitment

Mornington Shire Council (Council) publicly affirms its zero tolerance for abuse, neglect, harm and exploitation of children and young people, and its commitment to creating environments where children and young people feel safe, respected and able to participate.

Our commitment to child safety and wellbeing is communicated publicly, including through our websites, council sites, and other relevant communications.

COUNCIL is committed to:

- **Always protect children’s safety and wellbeing.** We have zero tolerance for harm to children and young people and actively work to prevent, identify and respond to risks.
- **Embed child-safety in our culture and practices.** Child safety and wellbeing is a shared responsibility across all levels of Council. Leadership, workers, volunteers and others engaged by Council are expected to uphold child safe practices.
- **Empower children.** We respect the rights of children and young people, listen to their views, and involve them in decisions that affect them in ways that are appropriate to their age, maturity and circumstances.
- **Engage families and communities as partners.** We communicate openly about our child safe approach and welcome feedback from children, families and communities to strengthen our practices.
- **Uphold equity and respect diversity.** We are committed to culturally safe and inclusive environments that respect the diverse needs, identities and experiences of all children and young people, including Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children, children from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds, children with disability, children who have experienced trauma, children of diverse genders and sexualities, and children who may be vulnerable due to their circumstances, experiences or support needs.

- **Ensure workers are suitable and supported.** Council is committed to ensuring that workers, volunteers, contractors and others engaged by Council to work with or around children and young people are appropriately screened, supported and expected to uphold child safety and wellbeing in practice.
- **Respond to concerns with a child-focus.** We support child-friendly ways for concerns, complaints, disclosures and allegations to be raised, and we respond promptly, fairly and with the safety and wellbeing of children and young people as the primary consideration.
- **Building knowledge and capability.** We are committed to ongoing awareness, learning and capability-building so that people engaged by Council understand their responsibilities and are equipped to prevent, identify and respond to child safety and wellbeing concerns.
- **Maintain safe environments (physical and online).** We are committed to creating and maintaining safe physical and online environments for children and young people, and to identifying, reducing and responding to risks across Council facilities, services, programs, activities and events.
- **Regularly review and improve.** We continuously evaluate our child-safe practices – through audits, feedback, and reviews – this allows us to continually improve our processes and practices.
- **Documenting and communicating our child safe approach.** We are committed to maintaining, implementing and clearly communicating child safe policies, procedures and guidance that are accessible to workers, children, families and communities, and that support the prevention of, identification of, and response to child safety concerns.

This Statement of Commitment is endorsed by Council's governance and leadership. This Child Safe Commitment is aligned to the QLD Child Safe Standards, underpin the Council's child safe policies, procedures and practices, including the Child Safety and Wellbeing Policy, Child Safe Code of Conduct, Child Safety Complaints and Reporting Process, and Child Safety Risk Framework.

Policy Information			
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