

Corporate Plan Reference:	<u>Theme No. 2 - Liveability</u> 2.8 - Provide opportunities to enhance the health, wellbeing and safety of our communities. <u>Theme No. 5 - Excellence</u> 5.5 - Provide robust and transparent governance systems to build and strengthen community trust, supported by the implementation of an enterprise risk and opportunity management framework.
Council Adoption:	21 May 2026
Policy Author:	Inclusion Coach, Sports & Active Lifestyles

POLICY STATEMENT

Noosa Council (Council) is committed to fostering a child-safe organisation in which the protection, safety, and wellbeing of children and young people are central to all actions and decision-making. Council will adopt a preventative, proactive, and participatory approach to creating environments where children feel safe, valued, and empowered.

Council commits to:

- Prioritising the safety and wellbeing of children and young people within all Council services, facilities, and programs.
- Establishing a welcoming, inclusive, and safe environment for children and young people of all backgrounds, abilities, and identities.
- Embedding child-safe practices into daily Council operations and decision-making processes to prevent abuse and respond effectively to any concerns.
- Upholding a zero-tolerance approach to child abuse, ensuring all incidents of concern are reported to appropriate authorities in compliance with the *Child Protection Act 1999* and *Child Safe Organisations Act 2024*.

POLICY PURPOSE

The purpose of this policy is to:

- Protect children from harm and abuse and prevent abuse from occurring.
- Implement safeguarding practices within Council's operations that actively work to prevent harm, exploitation, and abuse of children.
- Create a safe, inclusive, and respectful community that supports children and families across diverse values, abilities, beliefs, and cultural practices.
- Support a culture of safety and inclusiveness for children in all Council activities and interactions.

The Child Safeguarding Policy is informed by and supports Council's compliance with the *Child Protection Act 1999 (Qld)* and *Child Safe Organisations Act 2024 (Qld)*, including mandatory reporting obligations and organisational responsibilities, the *Working with Children (Risk Management and Screening) Act 2000 (Qld)*, *Human Rights Act 2019 (Qld)* and the *National Principles for Child Safe Organisations (2019)*. It complements Council's *Child and Youth Risk Management Organisational Outline* and *Noosa Council's Employee and Councillor Codes of Conduct*.

The Policy also aligns with Council's organisational values: Supportive, Passionate, Authentic, Respectful and Committed and reflects the culture that Council is committed to promoting and achieving.

SCOPE

This policy applies to all Council Workers who interact with children when involved in Council facilities, services and activities, this includes;

- Employees (permanent, temporary or casual)
- Councillors
- Volunteers
- Consultants and contractors
- Committee members
- People undertaking work experience or student placements

In addition to the Child Safeguarding Policy, Council Workers, where applicable, will also adhere to the *Child and Youth Risk Management Organisational Outline* and the *Noosa Council Employee Code of Conduct/Councillor Code of Conduct*.

In limited scope, the Policy also applies to visitors to Council facilities and participants in Council services.

REVIEW

This Policy will be reviewed once per Council term (every four years) or as required with legislative changes.

DEFINITIONS

Term	Meaning
Authorities	Department of Families, Seniors, Disability Services and Child Safety - Child Safety Service and Queensland Police Service.
Reasonable Belief	Exists when there is enough information that would lead a reasonable person to believe that the alleged conduct may have occurred.
CEO	Chief Executive Officer of Noosa Council.
Child Abuse	There are 4 types of child abuse: physical, sexual, emotional and neglect. Child abuse can be a single incident or several incidents that take place over time.
Child Protection	An activity or initiative for the purpose of preventing or responding to a specific incident of child abuse.
Child Safeguarding Individual Facilities	Is an internal framework document that supports council facilities to create and maintain a safe, inclusive, and protective environment for

Term	Meaning
Framework	children.
Children / Youth	An individual under the age of 18 years.
Contact with Children	Means providing a service, working, or participating in an activity or position that involves contact with a child, either under the position description or due to the nature of the work environment.
Council Workers	For the purposes of this Policy Council Workers includes all people undertaking paid or unpaid work on behalf of Council including: • Employees (permanent, temporary or casual) • Councillors • Volunteers • Consultants and contractors • Committee members • People undertaking work experience or student placements
Emotional Abuse	Emotional abuse happens when a child is treated in a way that negatively impacts their social, emotional or intellectual development.
Employee Assistance Program	A confidential service providing employees with counselling and support for personal or work-related issues.
Executive Team	Council's team of senior executive officers which are led by the CEO and includes departmental Directors.
Harm	Any detrimental effect of a significant nature on the child's physical, psychological or emotional wellbeing.
Mandatory Reporting	Is required by a Relevant Person who must make a report to Child Safety, if they form a reasonable belief that a child has suffered, is suffering or is at an unacceptable risk of suffering significant harm caused by physical or sexual abuse and may not have a parent able and willing to protect them.
Neglect	Depriving a child of their basic needs. These include food, clothing, warmth and shelter, emotional and physical security and protection, medical and dental care, cleanliness, education and supervision.
Noosa Council	The organisation of the Noosa Shire as established by the <i>Local Government Act 2009</i> in Queensland.
Parent / Guardian	Birth or adoptive parent, legal guardian, or other person having responsibility for, or legal custody of, a child.
Relevant Person	Is any person listed in sections 13E(1) or 13F(1) of the <i>Child Protection Act 1999</i> (Qld)
Responsible Person	An individual within the organisation who has the authority to oversee specific duties and ensure compliance with relevant policies, procedures, and legal obligations eg Director, Manager Governance, Manager People & Culture.
Risk Management Plan	A framework used to identify, assess, and control risks to ensure the safety and wellbeing of children during organisational activities.
Risk Owners	Individual or team responsible for overseeing a specific risk, ensuring controls are implemented and approving Risk Management Plans.
Sexual Abuse	Child sexual abuse happens when an adult, teenager or child uses their power or authority to involve another child in sexual activity.
Shire	Area within the Noosa that has been established as a local government.
Supervisors	A supervisor is responsible for overseeing staff, coordinating daily operations, ensuring services are delivered effectively, and maintaining compliance with Council policies and procedures. This

Term	Meaning
	includes but is not limited to Managers, Coordinators and Team Leaders.
Working with children	Working in an activity or in a position that involves or may involve contact with children either under the position description or due to the nature of the work environment.

POLICY PRINCIPLES

1. Commitment to Child Safety and Wellbeing

Council provides facilities, services and activities for the community within the Noosa Shire. Council has a clear commitment to ensuring the safety and wellbeing of the children and young people who interact with these Council services by upholding the 10 National Principles for Child Safe Organisations:

1. Child safety embedded in organisational leadership, governance and culture
2. Children participate in decisions affecting them and are taken seriously
3. Families and communities are informed and involved
4. Equity upheld and diverse needs respected
5. People working with children are suitable and supported
6. Child-focused complaints and concerns processes
7. Staff equipped through ongoing training and education to keep children safe
8. Safe physical and online environments
9. Continuous review and improvement of child safe principles
10. Policies and procedures documenting child safety

Children and young people have the right to be safe and protected. Council acknowledges the paramount importance of providing children with safe environments where their rights, needs, and interests are met.

2. Child Safe Organisations

In seeking to achieve these ends, Council strives to be a Child Safe Organisation and, in doing so, consciously and systematically:

- i. Creates an environment where children's safety and wellbeing are the centre of thought, values, and actions.
- ii. Adopts appropriate safeguarding practice and behaviour.
- iii. Places emphasis on genuine engagement with and valuing of children.
- iv. Creates conditions that reduce the likelihood of harm to children and young people.
- v. Creates conditions that increase the likelihood of identifying any harm; and
- vi. Responds to any concerns, disclosures, allegations, or suspicions of harm.
- vii. Supports the development of a safe and inclusive community, and promotes respect for diverse values, abilities, beliefs, cultural practices, and ways of living.

3. Provision of Safe Environments

Council acknowledges its responsibility to provide safe, supportive environments for children and young people within the local Shire. Council recognises the paramount importance of meeting children's rights, needs, and interests by ensuring that all spaces, programs, and services are free from harm and risk.

ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES

Safeguarding children from harm and abuse is an essential responsibility for Council. We are committed to ensuring that any child who interacts with Council is properly safeguarded. Every person must play an active role ensuring children are properly safeguarded.

Council has ultimate responsibility for ensuring that there are appropriate and effective internal control systems in place for creating a child safe organisation.

Council will:

- Provide a culture of child safety in all levels of council.
- Provide training and awareness to keep children safe.
- Provide the support and supervision that children require.
- Provide the necessary referral pathways for areas of concern.
- Provide safe and secure facilities and environments which may be accessed by children.
- Value diversity and inclusion.
- Respond appropriately to allegations or complaints in relation to child safety.
- Report allegations or concerns to relevant authorities, whenever appropriate; and
- Provide a safe and responsive mechanism for reporting concerns.

Roles within Council have a range of relevant responsibilities.

Council's CEO and Executive Leadership Team must:

- Create the environment and processes to ensure Council adheres with its legislated requirements.
- Advocate and promote child rights, empower and engage children, and young people in support of this Policy.
- Ensure that all Council Workers are aware of relevant laws, organisational policies and procedures, and the Employee/Councillor Code of Conduct.
- Ensure appropriate supports, such as Employment Assistance Program (EAP) and formal debriefing, are provided for any employees involved in a matter related to responding to a concern for the safety and wellbeing of a child or young person.
- Develop opportunities for regular discussion and review to support a culture of continuous improvement and accountability of keeping children and young people safe from abuse and neglect.
- Deal with and investigate reports of misconduct by all people subject to the policy including developing and implementing a Reportable Conduct Scheme.
- Make reports to the relevant authorities of reasonably suspected or actual child harm.
- Ensure that all Council Workers are aware of their responsibilities and obligations regarding child safety and wellbeing; and
- Ensure that all staff working in regulated child-related employment have current working with children clearance in accordance with Queensland and Commonwealth legislation.

All Managers and Supervisors must ensure that they:

- Promote child safety within their team.
- Assess the risk of child abuse within their area of control and eradicate or minimise any risk to the maximum extent possible.
- Ensure that the Child Safeguarding Individual Facilities Framework is complete and up to date for relevant facilities and services.
- Educate Council Workers about the prevention and detection of child abuse.

- Create and/or oversee Risk Management Plans with relevant child specific measures.
- Deal with and investigate reports of misconduct by Council Workers; and
- Facilitate the reporting of any inappropriate behaviour or suspected abusive activities.
- Incorporate children's safety into daily operations.

All Council Workers share the responsibility for maintaining a child safe environment and must:

- Support an environment that is supportive of all children's emotional and physical safety.
- Maintain an understanding of the commitments and expectations of this Policy, as well as all other policies relevant to safeguarding children and young people.
- Familiarise themselves with the relevant laws and the Council's Employee/Councillor Code of Conduct.
- Advocate and promote child rights, empowering and engaging children, and young people in support of this Policy.
- Ensure they are aware of how to and who to report concerns about a child's safety or welfare within the Council workplace and work-related activities.
- Handle allegations and complaints of any harm or abuse calmly, promptly, and sensitively.
- Listen and respond to children and families if they disclose harm.
- Not promise a child to keep their disclosure secret as a disclosure will need to be reported accordingly.
- Not ask unnecessary, biased, or probing questions which could cause further distress, harm, confusion or interfere with later enquiries. Only ask enough questions to confirm the need to report.
- Ensure privacy of all persons concerned is respected and acknowledged.
- Keep information regarding the disclosure confidential and only share with relevant Supervisors, Managers or Authorities or any other relevant agency or department as required by law, to support the handling of the disclosure.
- Report any reasonable belief that a child's safety may be at risk to their Supervisor or Manager (or, if their Supervisor or Manager is involved in the reasonable belief, to a Responsible Person in the organisation); and

Visitors to Council Facilities and Participants in Council Services must:

- Support the safety and wellbeing of children and young people within Council services, facilities, and activities.
- Abide by legislation and Council's policies and procedures relevant to maintaining a child-safe environment.
- Follow lawful instructions by Council Workers in relation to the Child Safeguarding Policy and other relevant legislation; and
- Take reasonable steps to report concerns about a child's safety or welfare within a Council facility, service or activity.

Mandatory Reporting Responsibilities

Under the *Child Protection Act 1999* (Qld), some individuals have a legal duty to report any reasonable belief that a child has been, or is likely to be, harmed or exploited. Any people that are deemed to be a "relevant person" under the *Child Protection Act 1999* (Qld) are required to complete Mandatory Reporting by making a report to the Department of Families, Seniors, Disability Services and Child Safety - Child Safety Services, if they form a reasonable belief that a child has suffered, is suffering or is at risk of suffering significant harm caused by physical or sexual abuse, and may not have a parent able and willing to protect them.

Council will undertake regular reviews of child-related positions to check whether they meet Mandatory Reporting criteria. Employees will be made aware if they are a “relevant person” under the Act and will be required to adhere to Mandatory Reporting requirements. They will be safeguarded under the law from legal or professional liability if they make a report in good faith in accordance with the legislation.

While Mandatory Reporting by relevant persons must report directly to Child Safety Services, Council also requires internal reporting to appropriate teams such as People and Culture or Workplace Health and Safety to ensure support, risk management, and follow-up.

In certain circumstances, such as imminent risk of harm or criminal activity, reporting to the Queensland Police Service may also be required on an urgent basis.

BREACHES

Council expects that all Council Workers will adhere to this Child Safeguarding Policy and comply with all other relevant organisational policies, guidelines, and procedures.

Any reports of breaches of Council’s Child Safeguarding Policy or other relevant policies and procedures will be managed in accordance with Council’s Complaint and Grievance Management Policy and procedures. Any act or lack of action by an employee of Council that contravenes this policy framework may result in Council taking disciplinary action against that employee in accordance with Council’s Discipline and Misconduct Policy and Procedure and Council’s Reportable Conduct Scheme.

Council Workers will report any breaches of this Child Safeguarding Policy or policy framework to their Supervisor, Manager or other Responsible Person.

Parents, guardians, children and youth, and visitors can report concerns or breaches to this Child Safeguarding Policy or policy framework to Council facility or service managers.

RISK MANAGEMENT PLANS

Council is committed to developing and reviewing facility and service Risk Management Plans, as required, which include appropriate measures to minimise risk and provide safe environments for children and young people.

Each Council run facility that involves high risk activities and special events will develop activity-specific relevant Risk Management plans.

These plans are documented separately to this Policy and are available on request.

Risk Owners must assess the effectiveness of controls on a regular basis and at least annually in accordance with Noosa Councils *Enterprise Risk and Opportunity Management Framework 2023*.

EMPLOYMENT OF NEW PERSONNEL

Council undertakes a recruitment and screening process for all workers and volunteers that aims to:

- Promote and protect the safety of all children and young people engaged in Council services, programs and facilities; and

- Identify and appoint suitable persons who demonstrate alignment with Council's SPARC values and commitment to child and youth safeguarding

When an advertised role involves working with children, the position description will clearly outline the expectations, essential qualifications, experience, and responsibilities required within the role. Council will ensure compliance with the Working with Children (Risk Management and Screening) Act 2000 (Qld), including requirements for a valid Blue Card (Working with Children Check) where applicable. No person will commence regulated child-related employment without holding, or having applied for, a valid Blue Card in accordance with legislative requirements.

Recruitment and selection processes may include:

- Referee checks that specifically address the applicant's suitability to work with children;
- Verification of qualifications and employment history; and
- Assessment of the applicant's understanding of child safeguarding obligations.

All employees are required to comply with Council's Child Safeguarding Policy and related policy framework, including probation requirements, and are expected to uphold Council's commitment to maintaining a child safe environment at all times.

BLUE CARD COMPLIANCE

The Working with Children Check (Blue Card) system helps protect children by regulating people working in specific child-centered services or businesses. Council is committed to upholding the requirements of the Blue Card system, the Working with Children (Risk Management Screening) Act 2000 and the Working with Children (Risk Management Screening) Regulation 2020.

A Blue Card is required for roles defined as regulated child-related employment under the Act and Regulation. Council employees in these roles must complete the required checks and hold a current Blue Card.

Council will identify positions that require a Blue Card and ensure employees in those roles have had the appropriate checks and validation and hold a current Blue Card. Council will regularly review the underpinning legislation to ensure that any changes are reflected in Council's approach to implementing the Working with Children checks.

TRAINING AND AWARENESS

All Council Workers must:

- be provided with, or have ready access to, a copy of the Policy;
- be briefed on the Policy as part of their induction and orientation; and
- be provided with training relevant to their role.

To assist all new employees in understanding Council's processes and requirements, a comprehensive induction and orientation process is in place. All employees will receive an email from the People and Culture Branch on their first day of commencement with links to the following online training inductions for completion:

- Employee Code of Conduct
- Employee Safety Induction
- On-boarding Training Module
- Child and Youth Risk Management Organisational Outline
- Child Safeguarding Policy

- National Principles for Child Safe Organisations (Blue Card holders)

Further training relevant to an employee's role will be provided to employees working in Council's child-related facilities and services.

Employees will be made aware if they are a mandatory reporter based on the *Child Protection Act 1999*.

Information on Council's child safety policies, practices and procedures will be made accessible to visitors to Council facilities and participants in Council services.

RELEVANT LEGISLATION AND POLICIES

Queensland Legislation	Working with Children (Risk Management and Screening) Act 2000 and Regulation 2020
	Child Safe Organisations Act 2024
	Child Protection Act 1999
	Local Government Act 2009
	Human Rights Act 2019
Framework Standard	National Principles for Child Safe Organisations 2019
Noosa Council Policies	Child and Youth Risk Management Organisational Outline
	Employee Code of Conduct
	Gifts and Benefits Policy
	Privacy Policy
	Recruitment and Screening
	Responding and Reporting
	WHS Policy
	New Staff Induction
	Noosa Aquatic Centre Staff In-Service
	Noosa Aquatic Centre Photography Rules
	Noosa Aquatic Centre Children in Changeroom Policy

HUMAN RIGHTS STATEMENT

In developing this framework, the subject matter has been considered in accordance with the requirements of the Human Rights Act 2019 (Qld). It is considered that the subject matter does not conflict with any human rights, including the right to privacy and reputation, and supports a human rights approach to decision making by Council.

Council representatives will endeavour to act and make decisions under this Policy in a manner that is compatible with human rights. Representatives will endeavour to:

1. Identify relevant human rights which may be affected by the action or decision;
2. Give proper consideration to the impact of its actions and decisions on human rights; and,
3. Ensure that any conduct or decision by Council which limits an individual's human rights is reasonable and justifiable.

This policy should be read in conjunction with Council's Human Rights Policy and Operational Guidelines for Decision-Making & Complaints Management for Human Rights.

Version control:

Version	Reason/ Trigger	Change (Y/N)	Endorsed/ Reviewed by	Date
1.0	New	Y	Council	21/05/2026
	Eg. Review			