



Safe Environment Policy

Keywords: *allowances, reimbursements*

Reference Number:	C005
Strategic Plan:	
Classification:	<i>Community Policy</i>
First Issued/Approved:	<i>February 2011</i>
Review Frequency:	<i>Every 4 years</i>
Last Reviewed:	
Next Review Due:	2015
Responsible Officer(s):	<i>Chief Executive Officer & Administration Manager</i>
Council File Reference:	17/16/3.1
Applicable Legislation:	<i>Child Protection Act 1993 (SA)</i>
Relevant Policies:	<i>Elected Members Code of Conduct Code of Conduct for Employees</i>
Related Procedures:	
Delegations:	

KINGSTON DISTRICT COUNCIL

SAFE ENVIRONMENT POLICY

1. Introduction and Rationale

Council is committed to the safety and wellbeing of children, young people and other vulnerable people who access our services.

Amendments to the Children's Protection Act 1993 (SA) which came into affect on 1 January 2007 places a legal obligation on Councils (and all other organisations providing a service wholly or partly to children) to ensure all children in their care are safe from harm. New requirements for criminal history checks for certain staff and volunteers working in the area of aged care also apply as of 1 March 2007.

The purpose of this policy is to state Kingston District Council's position in regards to creating and maintaining a safe environment to promote and enhance the safety and welfare of children and other vulnerable people in the Kingston and district community.

The existence of this policy will assist in ensuring systems and practices are in place throughout the Council organisation to minimise the risk of harm in the delivery of council service and programs. It will also assist in the reporting of suspected abuse offences against children and other vulnerable persons.

2. Legal Obligations

Section 8C(1) of the Children's Protection Act requires local government have in place policies and procedures for ensuring:

- child safe environments are established and maintained within the organisation;
- reports of suspected abuse or neglect are made under Part 4 of the Act.

The policies and procedures must comply with the Principles and Standards issued by DFC (insofar as they are applicable to the organisation).

S11(2) prescribes mandated notifiers as any Council employee or volunteer directly involved in the delivery of health, welfare, education, sporting or recreational childcare or residential services wholly or partly for children. Mandated notifiers must report any suspicion of abuse or neglect of a child to the DFC Child Abuse Report Line: telephone 24 hours a day, 7 days a week on 13 14 78.

Section 8B requires criminal history screening to be undertaken of people occupying or acting in a prescribed position before a person is appointed to, or engaged in a prescribed position; and/or at any time as the organisation thinks necessary or desirable for the purpose of establishing or maintaining child safe environments.

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 assessing the suitability of a person to work 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 means a mandated notifier (any person providing services solely or partly to children – staff, volunteer, contractor or consultant) must report any suspicion of abuse or neglect of a child to the DFC Child Abuse Report Line.

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

- Regular contact with children or working in close proximity to children on a regular basis where that contact or work 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 children's usual environment.
- Supervision or management of above positions; and
- Access to records of a kind prescribed by regulation relating to children (including records relating to child protection services, health services, education services, disability services and court orders and proceedings).

Vulnerable people refers to those who may be at risk of abuse or exploitation due to their dependency on others or experiences of disadvantage and could include people with a disability, the frail aged, people from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds, refugees and low income groups.

4. Application of the Policy

The policy will apply from the date of endorsement, to all elected members, employees, and relevant volunteers, providing services wholly or partly to children, or who work with children or vulnerable people.

The Safe Environment Policy will be communicated to all relevant audiences to ensure awareness and understanding of Council's commitment to ensuring a safe environment.

5. Policy Statement

Kingston District Council is committed to creating and maintaining a safe environment to promote and enhance the safety and welfare of children and other vulnerable people in the Kingston and district community

5.1 Risk Management Strategy

Council will identify and assess potential sources of harm and take steps to decrease the likelihood that harm will occur to children, young people and other vulnerable people who use our services.

5.2 Codes of Conduct

All elected members, employees and relevant volunteers will be required to comply with the relevant Codes of Conduct endorsed by Council which sets out standards of conduct when providing services to children.

5.3 Involvement in decision-making

Where relevant Council will promote the involvement of children, young people and other vulnerable people in determining relevant services and any actions to mitigate any risk associated with service provision.

5.4 Responding to Suspected Abuse and Neglect

Council will ensure that elected members, staff and relevant volunteers, providing services to and/or working with children are aware of and are trained, and appropriately supported to report any suspicion of abuse or neglect on reasonable grounds.

6. Council's Commitment:

Kingston District Council commits to:

- Maintaining one trained 'Mandatory Reporting' staff member who will be the Safe Environment Contact officer.
- Fulfilling mandatory reporting obligations and dealing with complaints and issues effectively as they arise.

- Develop, monitor, evaluate and review risk management assessments to minimise harm to children and other vulnerable people.
- Increase awareness within the organisation about ensuring a safe environment where children and vulnerable people feel safe.
- Give consideration to maximising safety through appropriate design features of public places, Council buildings and facilities, parks and reserves, playgrounds and areas where young and vulnerable people gather, access services and participate in programs.

7. Policy Review

The Safe Environment Policy, together with the relevant risk assessment, will be reviewed once during the term of the Council or on the introduction of new services or programs involving young or vulnerable people

8. Council Endorsement of the Policy

This policy was endorsed by Council on 25 February 2011, resolution number 7130.

9. Availability of the Policy

This policy will be available for inspection at the Councils principle office, 29 Holland Street Kingston SE, during ordinary business hours. Copies will also be provided to interested members of the community upon request, and upon such payment of the fee fixed by Council.