



**Pyrenees**  
Shire Council

# Child Safe Code of Conduct For Councillors & Staff – 2022

*Adopted by Council 19 April 2022*

The Pyrenees Shire Council prides itself on being a child safe organisation with zero tolerance for child abuse or harm to children and young people.

We adhere to the Victorian Child Safe Standards and related legislation including *Failure to disclose*, *Failure to protect*, and *grooming* offenses. Any allegation or incident or abuse will be treated very seriously and consistently with child protection legislation, regulations, and guidelines and in accordance with Council's *Child Safety Framework*.

All Councillors, members of staff, volunteers, and contractors representing or working on behalf of Council are required to observe Child Safe Principles and expectations for appropriate behaviour towards and in the company of children.

## Statement of Commitment to Child Safety

The Pyrenees Shire Council is committed to being a Child Safe Organisation and has a zero tolerance to abuse or harm to children, young people, or any other person. We recognise our legal and moral responsibilities in keeping the children and young people in our care safe from harm.

Council is committed to creating a culturally safe environment where children feel safe, are empowered, valued, and protected – where all children have a voice and are listened to, their views respected, and provided with opportunities to contribute to the planning, design, and development of our services and activities that might impact them.

## Child Safe Standards

There are eleven Child Safe Standards.

1. Organisations establish a culturally safe environment in which the diverse and unique identities and experiences of Aboriginal children and young people are respected and valued.
2. Child safety and wellbeing is embedded in organisational leadership, governance, and culture.
3. Children and young people are empowered about their rights, participate in decisions affecting them, and are taken seriously.
4. Families and communities are informed and involved in promoting child safety and wellbeing.
5. Equity is upheld and diverse needs respected in policy and practice.
6. People working with children and young people are suitable and supported to reflect child safety and wellbeing values in practice.
7. Processes for complaints and concerns are child focused.
8. Staff and volunteers are equipped with the knowledge, skills, and awareness to keep children and young people safe through ongoing education and training.

9. Physical and online environments promote safety and wellbeing while minimising the opportunity for children and young people to be harmed.
10. Implementation of the Child Safe Standards is regularly reviewed and improved.
11. Policies and procedures document how the organisation is safe for children and young people.

### Positive behaviours to implement the Child Safe Standards

All Councillors, members of staff, volunteers, and contractors representing or working on behalf of Council are responsible for supporting the safety, participation, wellbeing, and empowerment of children by:

- a. Being aware of and adhering to Council's *Child Safe Policy* and supporting framework documents at all times and upholding the Pyrenees Shire Council's *Statement of Commitment to Child Safety*.
- b. Taking all reasonable steps within their power to protect children and young people from harm or abuse.
- c. Understand and being familiar with the Child Safe Standards and their responsibilities with regard to:
  - i. The protection of children and young people in their care, and
  - ii. The reporting of allegations or reasonable suspicion of child abuse or child safety concerns.
- d. Treating everyone with respect, including children and young people.
- e. Listening and responding to the views and concerns of children, particularly if they are telling you that they or another child has been abused and / or are worried about their safety or the safety of another.
- f. Encouraging and empowering children and young people to participate in decision-making processes and relevant organisational activities, where those issues impact or are important to them.
- g. Ensuring that children and young people are aware of their rights, including their rights to respect, fairness, and safety.
- h. Promoting the cultural safety, participation, and empowerment of Aboriginal children (for example, by never questioning an Aboriginal child's self-identification).
- i. Promoting the cultural safety, participation, and empowerment of children with culturally and/or linguistically diverse backgrounds (for example, by having a zero tolerance of discrimination).
- j. Promoting the safety, participation, and empowerment of children with a disability (for example, during personal care activities).
- k. Upholding the rights and best interests of the child and taking these matters into account in all decision-making.
- l. Ensuring as far as practicable that adults, who are not members of the child's family, are not left alone with a child.

- m. Reporting any risks that may potentially impact a child's safety or create opportunities for abuse or harm.
- n. Reporting any allegations or reasonable suspicion of child abuse or safety concerns.
- o. Where an allegation of child abuse is made, ensuring the safety of the child as quickly as possible.

### Behaviours to avoid

Councillors, members of staff, volunteers, and contractors representing or working on behalf of children must not:

- a. Develop 'special' relationships with children that could be seen as favouritism or grooming behaviours (for example, offering gifts or special treatment for specific children).
- b. Exhibit behaviours with children that may be construed as unnecessarily physical (for example, inappropriate sitting on laps. Sitting on laps may be sometimes appropriate – e.g., while reading a storybook to a small child in an open plan area where others are present.).
- c. Put children at risk of abuse (for example, by being alone in a closed room or locking doors).
- d. Do things of a personal nature that a child can do for themselves, such as toileting or changing clothes. If this is necessary, e.g., for a child with a disability, inform your supervisor and be as open as possible in your behaviour.
- e. Hit or physically assault children. This includes any physical punishment or discipline.
- f. Use inappropriate language in front of children.
- g. Develop inappropriate relationships with children or young people.
- h. Conduct a sexual relationship with a child or young person or indulge in any form of sexual contact with or in the presence of a child or young person.
- i. Engage in open discussions of a mature or adult nature in the presence of children (for example, personal social activities).
- j. Condone or participate in behaviour with or in the presence of children that is illegal, unsafe, or abusive.
- k. Express any personal views on culture, race, or sexuality in the presence of children.
- l. Discriminate against any child, including because of culture, race, ethnicity, disability, or any attribute.
- m. Have contact with a child or their family outside of Council activities without your supervisor's knowledge and/or consent (e.g., babysitting). Accidental contact (e.g., meeting in the street, is acceptable). Do not provide your personal contact details to children or young people (e.g., mobile number, address, or social media information).
- n. Have online or social media contact with a child or their family (unless necessary e.g., for providing newsletters).
- o. Use any computer, mobile phone, camera, or social media to exploit or harass children.

- p. Make inappropriate promises to children and young people, particularly relating to confidentiality.
- q. Ignore or disregard any suspected or disclosed child abuse, or allow any allegations, suspected abuse, risk of harm or disclosures go unreported.
- r. Rely on your reputation or that of Council to protect you.

## Acknowledgement

I acknowledge that:

1. I have read, understood, and agree to comply with this Child Safe Code of Conduct,
2. I acknowledge my responsibility to immediately report any breach of this Code to my manager, director, or another appropriate person within the Pyrenees Shire Council, and
3. I will report any child at immediate risk of sexual or physical abuse to the Police on 000.

Name	Signature	Date