

# Child Safe Training



**Mosman**  
COUNCIL

# Welcome

Children and young people engage with Mosman Council on a variety of levels, whether it be through:

- child specific programs and services, such as youth programs
- by accessing whole of community services, such as libraries and community centres
- by participating in community events
- or by enjoying our parks and open spaces

We have a responsibility to create a child safe environment for children and young people, in our facilities and venues and online. Mosman Council is committed to becoming a child safe organisation, by embedding the NSW Child Safe Standards into our leadership, governance and organisational culture. This includes fostering awareness and accountability for child safety amongst everyone who works at Council. Keeping children safe is everyone's responsibility, regardless of how much or how little you work with children and young people. This module aims to educate all staff about:

- Child Safe Standards
- Council's responsibilities and commitment to the Child Safe Standards
- Council Child safe Policy and Code of Conduct
- Recognising the signs of child abuse
- Your responsibilities
- Council's reporting process for any concerns identified

# Welcome (cont.)

This training relates to topics that some people may find distressing or offensive. Whilst the issues raised are vital in the ongoing effort to ensure the safety and wellbeing of children, if you need to step out please feel free to do so at anytime. Your progress will be saved automatically.

If the content of this training upsets you or brings up personal issues we encourage you to seek support from:

- Mosman Council Employee Assistance Program: 1800 818 728
- The Blue Knot Foundation Helpline: 1300 657 380
- Lifeline phone: 13 11 14



# Definition

Here are some definitions of words that you will see used throughout this training module:

- **Child:** is a young person under the age of 18. For the purpose of this e-Learning module this includes children under 18 years of age who may otherwise be described as youth or young people in other Council policies, protocols and corporate practices.
- **Child Protection:** means any responsibility, measure or activity undertaken to safeguard children from harm.
- **Abuse:** A term used to refer to different types of harm or maltreatment. It refers to types of harm or maltreatment that children and young people experience, including: physical harm, sexual assault, exposure to domestic violence, psychological harm and prenatal risks.
- **Neglect:** A term used to refer to a pattern characterised when a parent or caregiver cannot regularly provide a child or young person the basic requirements for his or her growth and development such as food, clothing, shelter, medical and dental care, adequate supervision and adequate parenting and care.
- **Mandatory Reporter:** is anybody who delivers services, wholly or partly, to children as part of their paid or professional work. At Mosman Council, staff in Youth Services and Children and Families Services are **mandatory reporters**.
- **Mandatory Reporter Guide (MRG):** The MRG is a decision making tool to assist Mandatory Reporters to help determine how the suspected risk of significant harm of a child or young person is reported.
- **Contractors:** a person who Council engages to assist in the delivery of services that may involve contact with children.

# Overview

## 10 National Child Safe Standards

The Royal Commission into Institutional Responses to Child Sexual Abuse was established in response to allegations of sexual abuse of children in institutional contexts that had been emerging in Australia for many years. Some common findings that contributed to this include:

- Poor practices
- Inadequate governance structures
- Failures to record and report complaints, or understanding the seriousness of complaints
- A culture where the best interests of children were not a priority.

The Children's Guardian Amendment (Child Safe Scheme) Bill 2021 states that **all** organisations that have any contact with children must be compliant with **10 National Child Safe Standards** as outlined in Volume 6, Making Institutions Child Safe. The Standards are a benchmark against which organisations can assess their child safe capacity and set performance targets for a best practice approach to child safety.



# Mosman Council

is committed to implementing the Child Safe Standards.



## STANDARD 1

Child safety is embedded in organisational leadership, governance and culture



## STANDARD 3

Families and communities are informed and involved



## STANDARD 4

Equity is upheld and diverse needs are taken into account

## STANDARD 2

Children participate in decisions affecting them and are taken seriously



## STANDARD 5

People working with children are suitable and supported



## STANDARD 6

Processes to respond to complaints of child abuse are child focused



## STANDARD 7

Staff are equipped with the knowledge, skills and awareness to keep children safe through continual education and training



## STANDARD 8

Physical and online environments minimise the opportunity for abuse to occur



## STANDARD 9

Implementation of the Child Safe Standards is continuously reviewed and improved



## STANDARD 10

Policies and procedures document how the organisation is child safe

# Mosman Child Safe Policy and Code of Conduct

## **Why is protecting children so important?**

- All children have the right to protection.
- When a child or young person has experienced harm, abuse or neglect, it can have devastating and long lasting effects on their physical, psychological and social wellbeing.
- Council has adopted a Child Safety Policy, Child Safety Code of Conduct and is implementing the 10 National Child Safe Standards.
- Under this policy you have a duty of care to respond to children at risk when undertaking work for or on behalf of Council.

## **Child Safety Policy**

The Mosman Child Safety Policy outlines our approach to keeping children safe. It makes clear that child protection is a shared responsibility between Council employees, Council leaders, our Councillors, our volunteers, our contractors, organisations that we lease or hire premises to as well members of the Mosman community who may use our services and facilities. The Policy also:

- Informs the child protection practices of the entire organisation.
- Ensures that Council adheres to its legislative requirements under relevant NSW law.
- Ensures that children and young people have safe and positive experiences in our community.

Take a moment now to review the attached **Child Safety Policy**.

# Mosman Child Safe Policy and Code of Conduct (cont.)

## Child Safety Code of Conduct

Mosman Council expects all staff and representatives of Council to engage in positive relationships and interactions with all children and young people.

The **Child Safety Code of Conduct** outlines the expectations and professional behaviours of Councillors, staff, volunteers, contractors, and representatives working with children and young people.

Take a moment now to review the attached **Child Safety Code of Conduct**.

**Child Safe Framework** as show in chart below is made up of documents to support child safe practices in your work area. The framework applies to all Councillors and to Council staff, contractors, volunteers delivering services on Council's behalf.





# Recognising the Signs of Child Abuse



The categories used to define when a child or young person is at or has been at risk of harm include:

- physical abuse
- neglect
- sexual abuse
- grooming
- psychological/emotional abuse
- domestic/family violence
- carer concern - substance use
- carer concern - mental health concerns

Let's look at each of these in more details.

# Recognising the Signs of Child Abuse (cont.)



**Physical Abuse:** is a non-accidental injury or pattern of injuries to a child or young person caused by a parent, caregiver or any other person. It includes but is not limited to injuries which are caused by excessive discipline, severe beatings or shakings, cigarette burns, attempted strangulation and female genital mutilation. (FaCS, 2019)

**Important points:**

- Physical abuse may be intentional or may be the unintended result of physical punishment or excessive discipline
- It can be a single act or repeated acts
- Physical abuse does not always leave visible marks or injuries

**Neglect:** is when a parent or caregiver cannot regularly give a child the basic things needed for his or her growth and development such as food, clothing, shelter, medical and dental care, adequate supervision, and enough parenting and care. (FaCS, 2019)

**Important points:**

- A child's needs may be similar across cultures, but how these needs are met might differ from one family to another
- Parenting behaviour can range from 'good enough' parenting through to an inability to provide for a child's basic needs
- Some parents may have difficulty providing for their children due to circumstances like poverty, addiction or mental illness

# Recognising the Signs of Child Abuse (cont.)



**Sexual Abuse:** is when someone involves a child or young person in a sexual activity by using their power over them or taking advantage of their trust. Often children or young people are bribed or threatened physically and psychologically to make them participate in the activity. (FaCS, 2019)

**Important points:**

- Sexual abuse isn't necessarily sexual assault – it can also include a range of sexual behaviours that can be physical, verbal, emotional or grooming.
- Children are usually abused by someone they know and it can start when they are very young.
- Sexual abuse is generally not an isolated one-off incident
- Threats, tricks or bribes may be used to keep the child from telling anyone about it

**Grooming:** is when a person engages in predatory conduct to prepare a child for sexual activity at a later time. This can include communicating and/or attempting to befriend or establish a relationship or other emotional connection with the child or their parent/carer.

Grooming includes giving gifts or special attention, controlling through threats or authority, making close physical contact and exposing the child to nudity or sexual materials, this also includes online grooming using electronic communication including social media.

**Important points:**

- The perpetrator typically tries to manipulate the child so they let their guard down
- Children may form unusual connections with older people. There may be visible mood changes, use of different language, appearance of gifts and money, secrecy dishonest.

# Recognising the Signs of Child Abuse (cont.)



**Psychological/Emotional Abuse:** serious psychological harm can occur where the behaviour of their parent or caregiver damages the confidence and self esteem of the child or young person, resulting in serious emotional disturbance or psychological trauma. (FaCS, 2019)

**Important points:**

- It's sometimes called verbal abuse
- It's when someone keeps saying or doing things that are hurtful
- It can include constant yelling, criticising, rejecting, isolating and bullying
- Emotional abuse can be just as harmful as physical abuse

**Domestic/Family Violence:** children and young people are affected by domestic and family violence, even if they haven't directly seen or heard the abuse or violence.

**Important points:**

- Domestic and family violence is a form of child abuse and can often co-occur with other forms of abuse and neglect
- Children who witness regular acts of violence have greater emotional and behavioural problems than other children
- Children will react differently depending on age and exposure

# Recognising the Signs of Child Abuse (cont.)

## Carer Concerns

### 1. Substance Abuse

- Parent/carer use of alcohol or drugs:
- A child/young person discloses significant substance use by a parent/carer
- You observe a parent/carer to be significantly impaired by substance use
- Inappropriate parent/carer substance use is reported to you by a third party
- A child is born and there is evidence that the child was exposed to alcohol or drugs during pregnancy

### 2. Mental Health Concerns

- Parent/carer may have mental illness or there are mental health concerns:
- A child/young person discloses significant parent/carer mental health concerns
- You observe a parent/carer to be significantly impaired by mental health concerns
- Parent/carer mental health concerns are reported to you by a third party

**We all have a part to play in keeping children safe. Click on the [YouTube link](#) to watch the video before continuing to the next section.**



# Child Safe Reporting Procedure

## Mandatory Reporters

Sections 23 and 27 of the Child and Young Persons (Care and Protection) Act 1998 require mandatory reporters to report suspected cases of child abuse and neglect to the NSW Department of Communities and Justice (formerly known as FaCS or DoCS)

If you work in Youth Services or Children and Families Services at Council, **your role** has been identified as a mandatory reporter.

This means:

- Responding to and reporting children who are at risk of harm is not a choice but a legal requirement
- Seeking advice and guidance from your superior is encouraged, however; you are individually responsible for responding to identified concerns and suspicions

Refer to the [Mandatory Reporting Guide](#) (MRG) for assistance in making the decision to report to the NSW Department of Communities and Justice (DCJ).



# Child Safe Reporting Procedure (cont.)

At Mosman Council, staff in Youth Services and Children and Families Services are **mandatory reporters**. This means they have a legislative requirement to report risk of harm of children and young people. However, in accordance with **Council's Child Safety Policy**, Councillors, **ALL** staff members, volunteers, contractors, organisations that we lease or hire premises to as well members of the Mosman community who may be using our services should report any incidents, disclosures or suspicion as part of their legal duty of care to children and young people.

**If you have a concern related to a child in need of immediate protection, or you have formed a belief that a child is at significant risk of harm, what do you do?**

**Step 1 - Report** any child safety concerns, including:

- Disclosure of abuse or harm
- Allegation, suspicion or observation of abuse or neglect
- Breach of Child Safety Code of Conduct
- General safety and environmental concerns

**Step 2 - Who to report to**

- In an emergency, where there are immediate danger or urgent concerns to a child/young person's health and safety **CALL POLICE on 000**
- If you are a volunteer, immediately notify your direct Supervisor or their Manager. If you are a contractor, immediately notify the member of Council that contracted you. If the concern is about your supervisor or a colleague, you are able to report directly to the **Manager Human Resources on (02) 9978 4012**.

# Child Safe Reporting Procedure (cont.)



- Once you have reported the incident, a Council member of staff will complete the **Child Safe Incident Reporting Form** and register this in ECM. The form is located on the intranet. They will talk to you to make sure it has thorough and concise facts and information as well as attach any supporting document when they complete the form.
- If you are a contractor who is a mandatory reporter you should also follow your own organisations Child Safe Reporting Procedures.

Should a staff member be suspected of putting a child or young person at risk, a report must be made immediately to Mosman Council Human Resources for investigation in addition to the mandatory report to the NSW NSW Department of Communities and Justice. An additional report will be made by Council to the NSW Office of Children's Guardian by Human Resources within 7 days.

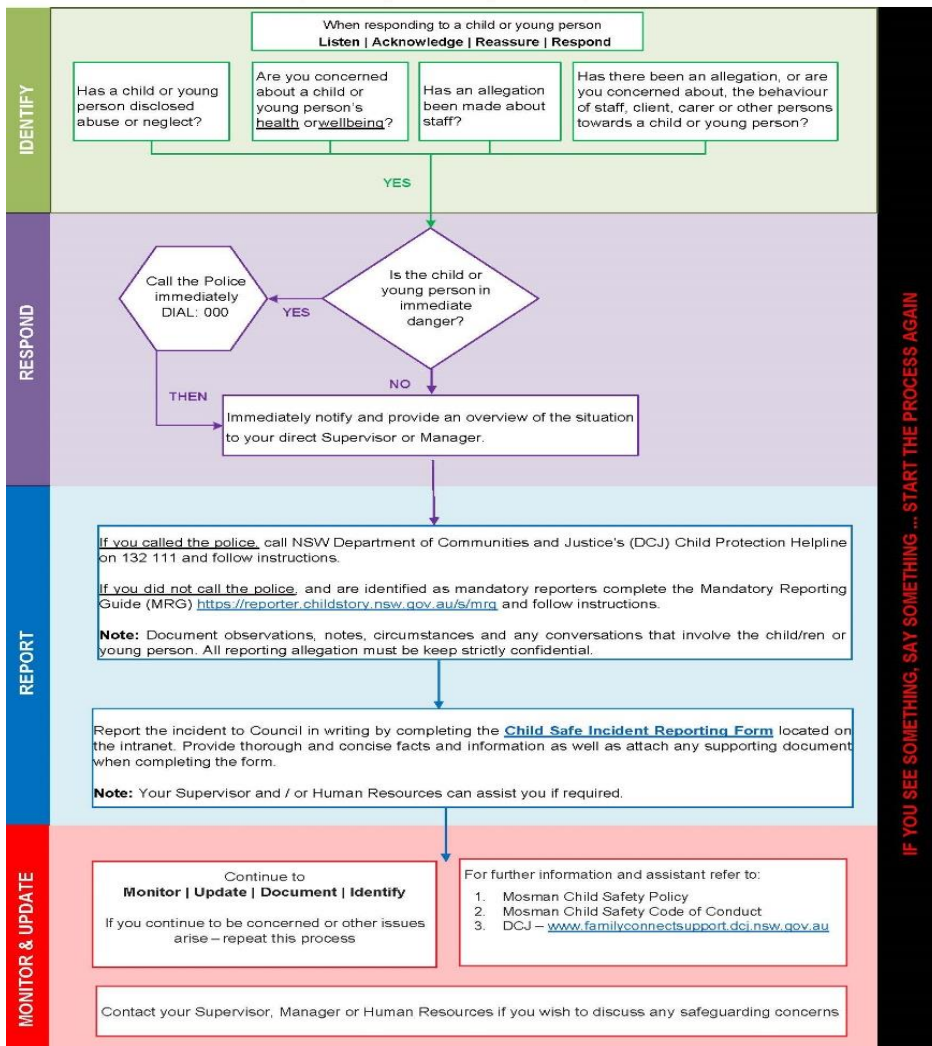
**It is your responsibility, together with your supervisor/manager to make the report. All reported allegations will be kept strictly confidential.**

Take a moment now to review the attached **Child Safety Reporting Procedure**.

**Refer to the flowchart in the next slide outlining the main steps in child safety reporting procedure.**



# Responding to Safeguarding Concerns



IF YOU SEE SOMETHING, SAY SOMETHING ... START THE PROCESS AGAIN

# Working with Children Check (WWCC)

## Working With Children Check (WWCC)

The **Child Protection (Working With Children) Act 2012** and **Child Protection (Working With Children) Regulation 2013** makes background checking mandatory for adults in child-related work. A Working With Children Check is a legal requirement for anyone in paid or voluntary child-related work in NSW.

## Who needs a WWCC?

Child related workers (paid or unpaid) who have direct contact with a child or children where contact is a usual part of the work are considered to be in child-related work and need a WWCC.

The process involves a national police check and a review of findings of workplace misconduct. Checks expire after five years, and employers must verify their workers have renewed their checks.

## WWCC Verification – Contractors and Suppliers

If Council staff are using contractors and suppliers who are working with children then they are required to request a Working with Children Check (WWCC) from them and have them complete a Child Safe Training and Assessment before they commence.



# Useful Contacts

- Emergency: 000
- Family and Community Services (FaCS): <https://www.facs.nsw.gov.au/> and Child Protection Helpline: 132 111
- Kids Helpline: <https://kidshelpline.com.au/>, 1800 55 1800
- Lifeline: <https://www.lifeline.org.au/>, 131 114



# Next Steps...

1. Read and sign the Acknowledgement Form.
2. Please complete the assessment to consolidate your learning.
3. Return the signed Acknowledgement Form and the completed Assessment to the relevant staff at Mosman Council.

