

CHILD SAFETY AND WELLBEING POLICY

Policy Owner:	People and Strategy Business Unit
Adoption:	3 March 2026 (GM/26/5633)
Version:	1
Link to Corporate Plan:	Connecting Communities – We work with you and for you, supporting the success of our communities Accountable Council – We are providing good stewardship built on a foundation of trust
Head of Power:	<i>Child Safe Organisations Act 2024</i>

1 PURPOSE

Gladstone Regional Council is committed to the safety and wellbeing of all children. This policy outlines Council's commitment to the standards and principles of the *Child Safe Organisations Act 2024*.

2 SCOPE

This policy applies to all workers and councillors of Gladstone Regional Council.

3 POLICY STATEMENT

Council is committed to embedding the ten Child Safe Standards and the Universal Principle as set out in the *Child Safe Organisations Act 2024*, as its framework for child safety and protection in the planning and delivery of its services and infrastructure.

3.1 The Universal Principle

Council will include the Universal Principle¹ in adopting and actioning the Child Safe Standards to promote and uphold the right to cultural safety for First Nations children, ensuring practices are culturally safe, respectful, and responsive.

3.2 Child Safe Standards

Council will implement the 10 Child Safe Standards as set out below.

3.2.1 Organisational Leadership and Culture: Council will assign and monitor child safety responsibilities to build strong child safety leadership and embed a culture of child protection.

3.2.2 Children's Rights and Participation: Council will incorporate child-focussed children's rights information, in service delivery and incorporate child-friendly feedback opportunities where children feel safe, respected and are taken seriously.

3.2.3 Families and Community: Council will promote opportunities for families and the community to be involved and supported in child safety and wellbeing initiatives.

¹ Refer to S.11(2) of the *Child Safe Organisations Act 2024*

- 3.2.4 Equity and Diversity: Council will ensure equity is upheld and diverse needs are respected, including the cultural rights and cultural safety of First Nations children.
- 3.2.5 Worker Suitability: Council will ensure that our people working with children are suitable through screening, supervision and performance management processes, and are supported in the delivery of services and facilities for children.
- 3.2.6 Complaints: Council will incorporate child-focussed complaint options in Council services and facilities that allow children to voice concerns regarding their wellbeing or the wellbeing of others.
- 3.2.7 Training: Council will provide training and support to equip our people with the knowledge and skills to keep children safe and informed on First Nations cultural safety and inclusion.
- 3.2.8 Physical and Online Environments: Council will assess and manage the physical and psychological risks to children in Council controlled environments.
- 3.2.9 Review and Improvement: Council will ensure that its implementation of the Child Safe Standards and the Universal Principle is regularly reviewed and improvement opportunities identified.
- 3.2.10 Governance, Policies and Procedures: Council will embed child safety and wellbeing into Council's strategic and operational documents which govern the way our people plan and work.

3.3 Responsibilities

- 3.3.1 Council will acknowledge and respect the rights, cultures and connection to Country of First Nations peoples and will engage with Traditional Owners, Elders and Aboriginal community-controlled organisations, to support culturally-safe child safety and wellbeing practices.
- 3.3.2 Council Leaders are responsible for embedding child safety and the universal principle into organisational culture and governance.
- 3.3.3 Our people are responsible for understanding and applying the principles of this policy in their work.
- 3.3.4 From 1 July 2026, our people are responsible for ensuring that Reportable Conduct is reported and managed in accordance with Council's policies and procedures.

4 RELATED LEGISLATION (Qld)

Child Protection Act 1999

Child Safe Organisations Act 2024

Criminal Code 1899

Human Rights Act 2019

Information Privacy Act 2009

Public Sector Ethics Act 1994

Work Health and Safety Act and Regulation 2011

Working with Children (Risk Management and Screening) Act 2000

Working with Children (Risk Management and Screening) Regulation 2011

5 RELATED DOCUMENTS

5.1 Gladstone Regional Council's:

Access and Inclusion Action Plan 2024-27

Code of Conduct Policy
 Complaints Management Policy and Corporate Standard
 First Nations People Cultural Protocol for Events Policy
 Incident Reporting and Investigation Corporate Standard
 Information Management Policy
 People and Culture Policy
 Privacy Policy
 Public Interest Disclosure Procedure Corporate Standard
 Reconciliation Action Plan
 Records Management Corporate Standard
 Recruitment, Onboarding and Probation Corporate Standard
 Risk Management Policy and Corporate Standard
 Work Health and Safety Policy

5.2 Queensland Family and Child Commission

Website Resources at <https://www.qfcc.qld.gov.au/>

6 CONSIDERATION OF HUMAN RIGHTS

Gladstone Regional Council has considered the human rights protected under the *Human Rights Act 2019 (Qld)* when adopting and/or amending this policy. When applying this policy, Council will act and make decisions in a way that is compatible with human rights and give proper consideration to any human rights relevant to the decision.

7 ATTACHMENTS

Nil

8 EVALUATION OF POLICY

This policy is successful when Council has a proactive culture of child protection and safety which results in no harm to children who engage with Council's services and facilities and where children are heard and encouraged to voice any concerns regarding their wellbeing or the wellbeing of others. This will be measured through the Reportable Conduct Scheme, regular review of child centred risk assessments, incident reporting, complaints and the uptake of child focussed feedback.

9 DEFINITIONS

To assist in the interpretation of this policy the following definitions apply:

Term	Definition
Child / Children	Defined in Schedule 1 of the <i>Acts Interpretation Act 1954</i> and Section 8 of the <i>Child Protection Act 1999</i> , meaning an individual under 18 years
Child Safe Organisation	A child safe organisation is one that creates a culture, adopts strategies and takes action to promote wellbeing and prevention of harm to children. A child safe organisation is one that: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • creates an environment where children's safety and wellbeing are the centre of thought, values and actions; • places emphasis on genuine engagement with and valuing children; • creates conditions that reduce the likelihood of harm to children; • creates conditions that increase the likelihood of identifying any harm to children; • Responds to any concerns, disclosures, allegations or suspicions.

Term	Definition
Child Safe Standards	The child safe standards identified in the <i>Child Safe Organisations Act 2024</i>
Council	Gladstone Regional Council
Councillors	Mayor and Councillors (as defined in the <i>Local Government Act 2009</i>), of Gladstone Regional Council
Leaders	Council's executive leadership team, managers, team leaders and other positions that supervise council workers
Our People	Workers and Councillors
Reportable Conduct	As defined in Section 26 of the <i>Child Safe Organisations Act 2024</i>
Worker ²	As defined in Section 7 of the <i>Work Health and Safety Act 2011</i>
Universal Principle	Requires child safe organisations to provide an environment that promotes and upholds the right to cultural safety of children who are Aboriginal Persons or Torres Strait Islander Persons – Refer to Section 11(2) of the <i>Child Safe Organisations Act 2024</i>

10 REVIEW

This policy is to be reviewed upon the earlier of:

1. Five years from the date of adoption of the most recent version;
2. Any relevant statutory review periods;
3. The related legislation or governing documents are amended or repealed; or
4. A request from the Chief Executive Officer or Council.

11 DOCUMENT CONTROL

Version	Reason/Change	Date	Council Resolution
1	Adoption – New Policy	03.03.2026	GM/26/5633
2			
3			

² 7 Meaning of worker

- (1) A person is a worker if the person carries out work in any capacity for a person conducting a business or undertaking, including work as— (a) an employee; or (b) a contractor or subcontractor; or (c) an employee of a contractor or subcontractor; or (d) an employee of a labour hire company who has been assigned to work in the person's business or undertaking; or (e) an outworker; or (f) an apprentice or trainee; or (g) a student gaining work experience; or (h) a volunteer; or (i) a person of a prescribed class.
- (2) For this Act, a police officer is— (a) a worker; and (b) at work throughout the time when the officer is on duty or lawfully performing the functions of a police officer, but not otherwise.
- (3) The person conducting the business or undertaking is also a worker if the person is an individual who carries out work in that business or undertaking.