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1. Statement

Ipswich City Council (Council) is committed to ensuring that the safety, welfare and wellbeing of children is maintained at all times during their participation in services conducted by Council. Council aims to promote a safe environment for all children and to assist employees, contingent workers and volunteers to recognise child abuse and neglect and follow the appropriate notification procedures when reporting alleged abuse.

This policy outlines the key elements of Council's approach to being a child safe organisation. It is designed to embed child safety and wellbeing in organisational culture and governance, and to assist Council to prevent and respond to child abuse or child safety concerns identified by or reported to Council. This includes setting out Council's responsibilities in relation to Blue Cards.

2. Purpose and Principles

To provide and promote a safe environment for children and young people, Council observes the national principles of Child Safe Organisations, which are:

- Child safety and wellbeing is embedded in organisational leadership, governance and culture
- Children and young people are informed about their rights, participate in decisions affecting them and are taken seriously
- Families and communities are informed and involved in promoting child safety and wellbeing
- Equity is upheld and diverse needs respected in policy and practice
- People working with children and young people are suitable and supported to reflect child safety and wellbeing values in practice
- Processes for complaints and concerns are child focused
- Staff and volunteers are equipped with the knowledge, skills and awareness to keep children and young people safe through ongoing education and training
- Physical and online environments promote safety and wellbeing while minimising the opportunity for children and young people to be harmed
- Implementation of the national child safe principles is regularly reviewed and improved

- Policies and procedures document how the organisation is safe for children and young people.

3. Code of Conduct

In addition to Council's Code of Conduct for all employees, the following actions specify Council's standard of appropriate conduct when interacting with children and young people.

- Treat children and young people with courtesy, respect and consideration, without discrimination of any kind
- Act as a positive role model
- Do not use physical or verbal abuse toward children and or young people, and do not expose them to abusive behaviour
- Wear neat attire that is not offensive, and is appropriate to the role or scheduled activity
- Do not consume or be under the influence of alcohol or illicit drugs while on duty
- Do not accept gifts from children or young people, or provide gifts to young people unless as part of a structured recognition or reward program
- Do not leave children unsupervised in a facility
- Do not remove a child from an organised group setting or council facility
- Respond professionally to suspicions or disclosures of harm and report them to the relevant authorities
- Act on complaints in accordance with relevant policies and procedures.

Failure to comply with the Code of Conduct may result in formal disciplinary action being taken, which may include dismissal.

4. Strategic Plan Links

This policy aligns with the following iFuture 2021-2026 Corporate Plan theme:

- A Trusted and Leading Organisation

5. Regulatory Authority

- Working With Children (Risk Management and Screening) Act 2000
- Working With Children (Risk Management and Screening) Regulation 2020
- Ipswich City Council Employee Code of Conduct
- Ipswich City Council Councillor Code of Conduct
- Working With Children Procedure

6. Human Rights Commitment

Ipswich City Council (Council) has considered the human rights protected under the *Human Rights Act 2019 (Qld)* (the Act) 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 a human right relevant to the decision in accordance with the Act.

7. Scope

This Policy applies to the development and delivery of services to children and young people, as well as other Council activities or business that involve contact with children and young people. This policy applies to all people involved directly or indirectly in the delivery of services to children and young people, including:

- Employees
- Volunteers
- Councillors
- Children and young people
- Contingent workers (e.g. contractors, agency workers).

8. Roles and Responsibilities

The Manager, People and Culture will develop appropriate procedures and identify strategies for the implementation of associated action plans in relation to this Policy.

9. Key Stakeholders

The following will be consulted during the review process:

- People and Culture Branch
- Community and Cultural Services Branch
- Library and Customer Services Branch
- Office of Economic Development
- Marketing and Promotion Branch.

10. Monitoring and Evaluation

All managers, and employees directly or indirectly involved in providing services to children and young people, are to ensure compliance with the Working with Children Policy and related procedures. All Council employees will be informed of the policy and procedures in recognition of the role everyone plays in protecting children and young people within the community.

Managers/Supervisors at all levels will have primary responsibility for monitoring compliance. This policy shall be reviewed every four (4) years to ensure compliance with legislation to ensure the risk management strategy effectively addresses the risks of harm to children and young people.

Specific measures that will demonstrate the successful implementation and effectiveness of this policy include:

- All related and supporting documentation updated to reflect updated Policy and Procedure
- Total number of Blue Card holders in Council that have attended training
- Council will undertake quarterly audit reporting to identify potential negative blue card notices.

11. Definitions

Directly involved	Involved with supervising children or young people, or having direct contact with children or young people during an event or activity. Directly involved would be indicative of holding a Blue Card.
Indirectly involved	Not directly supervising or engaging with children or young people. Is involved with decision making or the development of risk management plans and / or event or activity planning. May not hold a Blue Card.
Staff	Includes employees, volunteers, contractors (labour hire).

12. Policy Owner

The General Manager (Corporate Services) is the policy owner and the Manager, People and Culture is responsible for authoring and reviewing this policy.