DISTRICT COUNCIL OF KAROONDA EAST MURRAY

# SAFE ENVIRONMENT POLICY

## MINIMISING THE RISK OF HARM TO CHILDREN AND VULNERABLE PEOPLE

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| **Policy No** | 26 |
| **Date of Policy Adoption** | 12/06/07 |
| **Minute Reference** | 3934 |
| **Latest Review Date & Reference** | 12 June 2012 p 4501 |
| **Next Review** | 2013 |

The Council want children and other vulnerable people who participate in our programs to have a safe and happy experience. Council support and respects all participants in our programs, our staff and volunteers.

Council regards the interests of children and vulnerable people in our community as paramount and acknowledges that abuse is abhorrent, illegal and must not be tolerated or ignored. Whilst some factors are outside the control of Council, it is recognised that Council has a role to play in fostering a safe local environment and contributing to a whole of community effort towards the protection of children and vulnerable people from abuse.

- 'Abuse' refers to all aspects of abuse, that is neglect, physical, emotional and sexual.
- 'Children' refers to children, students and young people under the age of 18 years.
- '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 linguistically diverse backgrounds, refugees, and those living in poverty.

Council acknowledges the following principles-:

Fostering the safety of children and other vulnerable people is a paramount consideration in the delivery of services and programs. Children and vulnerable people:

- need to know they have the right to be safe from abuse at all times
- are entitled to basic human rights regardless of social needs, cultural or socioeconomic
- deserving of respect, care and protection, and;
- entitled to the support of a responsible person if they experience or are at risk of harm.

Council commits to the following actions

- Increasing awareness within the organisation about a safe environment where children and vulnerable people feel safe and protected from abuse
- Maintaining a rigorous staff and volunteer recruitment and/or screening/selection process
- Providing ongoing training and support to council members, staff, volunteers and all those involved in the delivery of services and programs to ensure they are able to fulfil their duty of care
- Establishing supportive and responsive procedures for fulfilling mandatory report obligations and dealing with complaints and issues effectively as they arise
- Operate in a spirit of cooperation and consultation with other relevant agencies in matters concerning protection of children and vulnerable people from abuse
- Develop, monitor, evaluate and review risk management strategies to minimise harm to children and other vulnerable people

The Chief Executive Officer is ultimately responsible and accountable for the implementation and monitoring of this policy, although implementation responsibilities are delegated to the most senior appropriate officer(s) in Council.