

# CHILD PROTECTION POLICY STATEMENT

Everyone in society has a moral and ethical responsibility to keep children safe and to protect them from harm. The complexity of abuse and neglect and the resultant trauma on children themselves requires a united response from government and non-government agencies, community welfare groups, various professionals and individual citizens.

Sutherland Shire Council, as one of these government agencies, has a place in ensuring that children are protected from harm and believes that all children have a right to be kept safe. Sutherland Shire Council can use a range of opportunities to educate the community about keeping children safe from harm.

Sutherland Shire Council employs a number of staff who during the course of their duties work either directly or indirectly with children. There is also opportunity for many staff working in council to meet children in the course of their work.

Council acknowledges their responsibility both to protect children and protect staff from allegations of child abuse. This policy is designed to assist in this process and to ensure that all current legislative requirements are met.

Sutherland Shire Council recognises that abuse can take many forms, these are sometimes hard to recognise and they occur across all socio-economic groups. Council has a responsibility to provide training for staff to assist them in recognising the indicators of abuse and in the mandatory reporting of child abuse (where applicable).

It is essential for staff to adopt and adhere to work practices that not only ensure the safety of children, but also minimise the possibility of allegations of child abuse and neglect being made against them, vexatious or otherwise. Where allegations against a staff member are made, Council holds a responsibility to investigate these.

## INFORMATION FROM YOUR COUNCIL

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