



BOULIA SHIRE COUNCIL

CHILDREN IN THE WORKPLACE POLICY

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Summary:	Children in the Workplace Policy contributes toward assisting Employees to balance work and family responsibilities.
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Related documents:	Policy 116 - Workplace health, safety, environment and quality Policy 146 - Code of Conduct Policy 149 - Equal Employment Opportunity Policy
Responsible Section:	Executive
Responsible Officer:	Chief Executive Officer
Legislation:	Work Health and Safety Act 2011 Work Health and Safety Regulation 2011 Anti-Discrimination Act 1991 (Qld) Australian Human Rights Commission Act 1986

OBJECTIVE

Council is committed to promoting a culture which is supportive of the needs and career aspirations of employees with family responsibilities. In recognising that there are no formal childcare facilities available to residents within the Boulia Shire, the Children in the Workplace Policy contributes toward assisting employees to balance work and family responsibilities.

This policy has been developed to address both the occupational health and safety requirements and equal opportunity principles and outlines the underlying principles and guidelines for bringing children into the workplace.

SCOPE

This policy applies to all employees of Boulia Shire Council. It does not form part of any employee's contract of employment.

DEFINITIONS

The following definitions are provided for the purposes of interpretation and application of this policy:

A child for the purpose of this policy is anyone under the age of 18 and is not an employee of Boulia Shire Council.

Carer is a person that is charged with the responsibility of caring for a child other than the Parent.

Employees for the requirement of this policy, refer to both paid and unpaid persons working or conducting work for or on behalf of the Council.

Parents (includes Guardian) are people who are charged with the care and management of a child.

Restricted or higher risk areas are those areas defined as having an elevated health and safety risk to individuals where crucial risk controls are implemented to maintain health and safety.

Responsibilities for the purpose of this document are 'duties' under the Work Health and Safety Act 2011.

Unattended children are those children on Council facilities without direct supervision from a Carer or Parent.

Workplace refers to any place where work is undertaken. This includes roadwork construction sites and any other site deemed under the Work Health and Safety Act 2011 as a place of work.

POLICY

Boulia Shire Council holds a responsibility to provide an environment that is conducive to work for all employees, contractors and visitors and to ensure so far as is reasonably practicable, the health and safety of employees and other persons affected by its activities at the workplace and that risks are managed.

Council expects that all employees, contractors, volunteers and visitors to our workplaces follow safe work practices as prescribed under the legislation and in our Council policies and procedures, and that they make every effort to reduce the risk of injury to themselves and others.

Places of work that children are NOT permitted include:

- Workshop areas of the Depot (any area at the Depot outside of the designated yellow lines)
- Kitchens (without direct Caregiver supervision)
- Construction sites
- Areas that contain hazardous substances or dangerous goods
- Areas that contain items of plant, including power tools that are designed for the purpose of cutting or processing materials, or produces significant heat or noise in excess of 85dB(A).

Council will, where feasible, take reasonable steps to assist employees, contractors and visitors who may have special requirements to enable access to Council facilities and services. This includes consideration of requests for children to be in the workplace on a 'temporary' basis or 'permanent' basis.

'Temporary' Work Arrangement

Council recognises that unforeseen circumstances may arise and that at those times, a need may result for an employee to bring their child to the workplace.

A temporary work arrangement is classed as the child being in the workplace for anywhere between less than one hour and up to one day.

Periods of less than one (1) hour

A Parent/Caregiver may bring a child into the workplace for a brief visit (less than one (1) hour) without gaining prior permission from their Supervisor, however the employee must inform their Supervisor of the presence of the child as soon as is practicable. Where possible, notification to the Supervisor should be given in advance.

In instances when the child enters the workplace to visit their Parent/Caregiver, they must report to the reception counter of the Parent/Caregiver's place of work before proceeding to see their Parent/Caregiver.

Periods of more than one (1) hour up to one (1) day

An employee wishing to bring a child to their place of work for a period of more than one (1) hour must first seek permission from their Supervisor. In such circumstances, requests to bring a child to work should be made (preferably in advance) directly to the employee's Supervisor.

'Permanent' Work Arrangement

A permanent work arrangement is classed as the child attending the workplace for more than one day and/or on a regular basis. Requests for such work arrangements should in the first instance be made with the employee's Supervisor. The employee's Supervisor will then place the request with the Department Manager who in turn will place the request with the Chief Executive Officer (CEO). Whilst the recommendations of the employee's Manager/ Supervisor will be taken into consideration, the CEO holds the final decision on approval being given for a child to be allowed in the workplace.

Considerations that will be made will include:

- The circumstances that have led to the request,
- The likely impact on others (employees, contractors and visitors),
- The health and safety issues and risks to the child and others, and
- The appropriateness of the child's attendance.

Due to the increased public interaction in these work areas the following areas will not be considered for 'Permanent' work arrangements:

- Swimming Pool
- Heritage Complex
- Min Min Encounter – all areas except for the closed off staff area

All requests will be considered if appropriate 'isolated' rooms are available so as not to disrupt other staff members working in that area.

RESPONSIBILITIES OF PARENTS/CARERS WHO BRING CHILDREN TO THE WORKPLACE

In all circumstances where approval is granted for a child to be allowed in the workplace:

- The child must always be under the direct supervision of the Parent/Carer whilst at the workplace. Responsibility for supervision and all aspects of the child's behaviour rests solely with the Parent/Caregiver, as does responsibility for the safety of the child.
- The Parent/Carer must consider the potential risk to the health and safety of the child and also to others that may come from bringing children into the workplace and to take reasonable steps to safeguard against those risks. Parents/Carers must be aware that the ultimate responsibility for the safety of their child/ren rests with them.
- The Parent/Carer will be responsible for behaviours of the child in their care so as not to endanger, inconvenience or otherwise disrupt the activities of employees, contractors, and visitors.
- Parents/Carers should be sensitive to the needs of colleagues and should not expect others to care for their children. When bringing children to the workplace the needs of others to work uninterrupted should be respected.
- Children must have no known communicable medical conditions, such as flu-like symptoms, chickenpox, head lice or conjunctivitis. Employees are encouraged to utilise carer's leave where available to care for children in such circumstances.

MANAGER/SUPERVISOR RIGHTS

Where a significant risk or issue is later determined, or the Supervisor has reason to believe that the child is not being appropriately supervised, and/or a child's behaviour is disruptive to other employees, the Supervisor has the right to request that the Parent/Carer remove the child(ren) from the work area.

ENFORCEMENT

The CEO, Management and Supervisors are responsible for ensuring that Council employees understand and adhere to this policy.

The CEO has primary responsibility for dealing with complaints regarding children in the workplace and in ensuring that the process of children in the workplace is followed.

The failure of any employee to comply with this policy in its entirety may lead to:

- Performance management
- Modification or termination of employment