KAIKŌURA
DISTRICT COUNCIL

Cemetery Policy

Name of Policy:	Cemetery Policy
Purpose of Policy:	This policy outlines how Kaikōura District Council managing the cemetery it owns
Policy Applies to:	All employees All public
Approved by:	Executive Team
Responsible for its Updating:	Strategy, Policy and Planning
Final Approval by:	Executive
Policy First Issued:	05/2026
Proposed Date of Review:	05/2029

1. PURPOSE

a) This policy establishes how Kaikōura District Council (the Council / KDC) manages, maintains, and administers cemeteries within the Kaikōura district.
b) Cemeteries are important community assets that reflect social, cultural, historical, and spiritual values. The Council has statutory responsibilities under the *Burial and Cremation Act 1964* to provide, manage, and regulate cemetery services in a manner that is safe, respectful, and sustainable.

2. GUIDING PRINCIPLES

a) The Council is committed to ensuring that:
1. Cemeteries are maintained as respectful, dignified, and peaceful places.
2. Cemetery management complies with all relevant legislation and public health requirements.
3. Cultural, religious, and spiritual practices associated with burial and interment are recognised where practicable.
4. Cemeteries are managed sustainably to meet current and future community needs.
5. Public safety is protected for visitors, staff, contractors, and service providers.
6. Cemetery records are accurate, secure, and accessible.

3. POLICY

Scope

a) This policy applies to:
- All cemeteries owned, managed, or administered by Kaikōura District Council.
- All burial, ashes interment, memorial, disinterment, maintenance, and administrative activities within Council cemeteries.

General Council Staff Requirements

b) Council staff must:
- Comply with the *Burial and Cremation Act 1964*, associated regulations, and relevant Council bylaws and policies.
- Ensure cemeteries are managed as safe, respectful, and dignified environments.
- Ensure burial and ashes interment activities occur only with appropriate authority, documentation, and approvals.
- Apply cemetery rules, fees, and access requirements consistently and fairly.
- Ensure cultural and religious burial practices are recognised where practicable and lawful.
- Protect the accuracy, integrity, and security of cemetery records.
- Ensure contractors and service providers comply with Council requirements, including health and safety obligations.
- Take reasonable steps to prevent unsafe, unauthorised, or inappropriate activities within cemeteries.

General Public Requirements

c) Members of the public, including funeral directors, contractors, and visitors, must:
- Comply with cemetery rules, signage, and lawful directions from authorised Council staff or contractors.
- Conduct themselves in a manner that respects the purpose of cemeteries and other users.
- Obtain required approvals and permits (warrants) before conducting burials, interments, memorial installations, or other works.
- Comply with approved burial times, access conditions, and health and safety requirements.

- Not undertake unauthorised works, plantings, structures, or adornments within cemetery grounds.
- Speak to KDC staff before scattering ashes within the KDC cemetery boundary to determine the appropriate place.

4. PROCEDURES

4.1 Cemetery Administration

Staff are to:

- Maintain current registers of cemetery plots, burial rights, interments, and memorial approvals.
- Confirm receipt of all required applications and documentation before approving burials or interments.
- Ensure fees and charges are applied in accordance with Council's adopted Fees and Charges Schedule.
- Retain clear records of decisions, approvals, transfers, and variations relating to burial rights.

Council does not prescribe coffin materials or dimensions, provided burial complies with legislative and health requirements.

Council does not restrict commemorative text or imagery on memorials, provided they do not pose a safety, include derogatory terminology or present a legal risk.

Where Council agrees to repurchase a pre-purchased burial plot, the repurchase price will be the original purchase price paid, with no adjustment for inflation or market changes.

4.2 Burial and Ashes Interment Coordination

Staff are to:

- Coordinate burial and ashes interment bookings with applicants, funeral directors, and contractors.
- Confirm availability of plots and record plot selection as nominated by the purchaser or authorised applicant prior to issuing approvals.
- Ensure burial times align with approved operating hours or authorised exceptions.
- Liaise with Council contractors to ensure safe grave preparation and reinstatement.
- Address any non-standard burial requests against this policy and discuss with the KDC Facilities Manager.

4.3 Cultural and Religious Considerations

Staff are to:

- Receive and assess requests for cultural or religious burial practices sensitively and respectfully.
- Assess such requests against legislative, health, safety, and land-use constraints.
- Escalate requests requiring special arrangements or designated areas to the KDC Facilities Manager for consideration.

4.4 Memorial Permits and Compliance

Staff are to:

- Receive and assess memorial permit applications prior to installation, alteration, or removal.
- Confirm proposed memorials meet the requirements of this policy.
- Record issued permits and monitor compliance.
- Arrange remediation or removal of unsafe or non-compliant memorials in accordance with Council authority.

Temporary items may be removed after a reasonable period to allow maintenance.

4.5 Cemetery Maintenance and Safety

Staff are to:

- Oversee contractor performance relating to cemetery maintenance and presentation.
- Monitor cemeteries for hazards, unsafe memorials, or unauthorised structures.
- Take appropriate action to mitigate safety risks, including removal or securing of hazards.
- Ensure vegetation, pathways, and common areas are maintained to an appropriate standard.

Staff will arrange reinstatement of graves as soon as practicable, recognising that clay and soil settlement may require staged refilling over time.

4.6 Disinterment Requests

Staff are to:

- Receive and process disinterment applications in accordance with legislative requirements.
- Confirm receipt of required licences and health authority approvals.
- Coordinate approved disinterments with contractors and relevant agencies.
- Ensure all costs are recovered from applicants.

4.7 Records Management

Staff are to:

- Maintain cemetery records in a secure, accurate, and accessible manner.
- Verify and correct records where credible information is provided.
- Manage public access to records in accordance with privacy and information obligations.

Public access to cemetery records will be provided in accordance with the *Local Government Official Information and Meetings Act 1987* and the *Privacy Act 2020*.

4.7 Dispute Resolution

All disputes to do with the affairs within the cemetery will be first assessed by the KDC Facilities Manager, who will then decide as to whether the Chief Executive should be involved.

5. RESPONSIBILITIES

Council	Approves the Cemetery Policy and oversees its implementation
Chief Executive	Ensures organisational compliance with statutory and policy obligations

Facilities Manager	Overall operational responsibility for cemetery management and maintenance
Managers	Ensure local compliance with this policy and secure handling of cemetery records
Contractors / Vendors	Must comply with this policy and all health, safety, and privacy obligations within contracts
All Staff	Must comply with this policy and support its implementation

6. DEFINITIONS

Term	Definition
Cemetery	Any land that is purchased or vested in Council, or under control of the Council and held, taken, acquired, set apart, dedicated or reserved, under the provisions of any Act or before the commencement of the Burial and Cremation Act 1964, exclusively for the burial of the dead generally.
Council	Kaikōura District Council
Funeral Director	A person, who in the course of their business, carries out burials and related matters. This includes a person who holds themselves out as prepared to carry out body preparation for burial or cremation.
Staff	Includes all paid staff working for the Kaikōura District Council and volunteers.

7. REFERENCES AND RELATED DOCUMENTS

DOCUMENT/LINK
Burial and Cremation Act 1964
Burial and Cremation (Removal of Monuments and Tablets) Regulations 1967
Health Act 1956
Local Government Act 2002
Reserves Act 1977

8. DEVIATION FROM POLICY

a) Once this policy has been implemented, any deviation from its requirements may only be approved by the Chief Executive or the Council's Executive Team.
b) Failure to comply with this policy may be considered a breach of employment obligations, contractual terms, or conditions of access to Council cemeteries.