

CHILD SAFE STANDARDS GUIDE

The Child Safe Standards were introduced in Victoria effective 1 August 2016. The Standards are a compulsory framework to help drive cultural change in organisations that provide services to children including Early Childhood services, Out of School Hours Care services and Family Day Care services. The Victorian Child Safe Standards were reviewed in 2019 with an aim to better align with the National Principles for Child Safe Organisations to ensure a greater focus on the safety and wellbeing of all children, improve Aboriginal cultural safety and empower children and young people. Our Service is committed to implementing an inclusive and culturally safe environment for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children.

Our *Child Safety and Wellbeing Policy* will ensure the Service meets all obligations and requirements under the Child Wellbeing Safety Act 2005 (Vic). Our *Child Safety and Wellbeing Policy* will work together with the Service's *Code of Conduct Policy*, *Recruitment Policy*, *Child Safe Environment Policy*, *Reportable Conduct Policy* and other related policies to develop a child safe culture within the Service and community. The policy will provide direction and guidance for all educators, staff and visitors (including students and volunteers) to comply with and adhere to the 11 Child Safe Standards to ensure a child safe environment for all children. Eleven new Child Safe Standards were released in 2021, with Services having to comply to the new standards from July 2022. The 11 new Standards will replace the previous 7 Child Safe Standards and Principles.

The 11 Child Safe Standards aim to create a culture where:

- the safety of children is promoted,
- child abuse is prevented and
- allegations of child abuse will be taken seriously and acted upon.

Changes to the child safe standards include;

- to involve families and communities in organisation's efforts to keep children and young people safe
- for a greater focus on safety for Aboriginal children and young people
- to manage the risk of child abuse in online environments
- in relation to governance, systems and processes to keep children and young people safe.

By law, all Victorian organisations that provide services for children must comply with the Child Safe Standards. The Commission for Children and Young People (CCYP) is responsible for assisting organisations understand the Standards, the Commission will apply its [Regulatory Approach](#) when supporting and enforcing compliance with the new Standards.

The Commission works together with other government organisations to support and implement the standards and ensure compliance including:

- Department of Health and Human Services
- Victoria Police and
- the Victorian Registration and Qualifications Authority (VRQA).

Core principles of a child safe organisation are the recognition of:

- cultural safety for children of Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait background
- cultural safety of children from culturally and /or linguistically diverse backgrounds and
- the safety of children with a disability.

The eleven Child Safe Standards that early childhood services must implement to create and maintain a child safe organisation:

Standard 1: Organisations establish a culturally safe environment in which the diverse and unique identities and experiences of Aboriginal children and young people are respected and valued

Standard 2: Child safety and wellbeing is embedded in organisational leadership, governance and culture

Standard 3: Children and young people are empowered about their rights, participate in decisions affecting them and are taken seriously

Standard 4: Families and communities are informed and involved in promoting child safety and wellbeing

Standard 5: Equity is upheld and diverse needs respected in policy and practice

Standard 6: People working with children and young people are suitable and supported to reflect child safety and wellbeing values in practice

Standard 7: Processes for complaints and concerns are child-focused

Standard 8: Staff and volunteers are equipped with the knowledge, skills and awareness to keep children and young people safe through ongoing education and training

Standard 9: Physical and online environments promote safety and wellbeing while minimising the opportunity for children and young people to be harmed

Standard 10: Implementation of the Child Safe Standards is regularly reviewed and improved

Standard 11: Policies and procedures document how the organisation is safe for children and young people

Services are required to make a public commitment to Child Safety. A Commitment to Child Safety and Wellbeing Statement informs the public community that your Service priorities the safety of children and will not tolerate child abuse and harm.

Our Service will complete the *Child Safety and Wellbeing Checklist* to review and reflect upon current practices and processes to determine compliance of minimum requirements of the Child Safe Standards. The Checklist can be used as an audit to check the policies and procedures the Service currently has in place, questions from the [A guide for creating a Child Safe Organisation](#) will provide points for critical reflection and discussion within the team of educators. Following the completion of the *Child Safety and Wellbeing Checklist* our Service will develop a *Child Safety and Wellbeing Action Plan* to record and document our journey to creating a child safe culture. The *Child Safety and Wellbeing Action Plan* can be used as a tool to support the QIP to document and record further actions required to ensure ongoing compliance with the Child Safe Standards.