

Child Safe Standards

July 2022

Child Wellbeing and Safety Act 2005 (*Vic*).



Do the Child Safe Standards apply to you?

The new Child Safe Standards apply to charities and not for profits, unless you don't do anything specifically for children. In other words, organisations in Victoria are usually required to comply with the Standards if they do one or more of the following:

- provide any services specifically for children
- provide any facilities specifically for use by children who are under the organisation's supervision
- engage a child as a contractor, employee or volunteer to assist the organisation in providing services, facilities or goods.

For those required to comply, the Standards are law and are mandatory within Victoria. Organisations must comply with all aspects of the Standards and there can be legal consequences for non-compliance.

The standards apply from July 2022, and legislative changes that provide the Commission for Children and Young People with new, enhanced enforcement and compliance powers start in January 2023.

This resource contains:

- Child Safety Standards Policy template
- Code of conduct template
- Explanations of each standard, including the documents you must have and the actions which must be done. These explanations will assist you to develop the procedures for your organisation that must accompany each standard.
- Links to further information

Read the all the resources first. Standard 11 will show you how to put the Policy and Procedures together.

The information, a Guide to creating a Child Safe Organisation and links to other resources can be found at <https://ccyp.vic.gov.au/child-safe-standards/>

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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

In complying with Child Safe Standard 1 an organisation must, at a minimum, ensure:

- 1.1 A child's ability to express their culture and enjoy their cultural rights is encouraged and actively supported.
- 1.2 Strategies are embedded within the organisation which equip all members to acknowledge and appreciate the strengths of Aboriginal culture and understand its importance to the wellbeing and safety of Aboriginal children and young people.
- 1.3 Measures are adopted by the organisation to ensure racism within the organisation is identified, confronted and not tolerated. Any instances of racism are addressed with appropriate consequences.
- 1.4 The organisation actively supports and facilitates participation and inclusion within it by Aboriginal children, young people and their families.
- 1.5 All of the organisation's policies, procedures, systems and processes together create a culturally safe and inclusive environment and meet the needs of Aboriginal children, young people and their families.

Essential Initial Documents

- A public commitment to the cultural safety of Aboriginal children is available and displayed for public access.
- Policies and procedures relating to child safety and wellbeing, including the Child Safety and Wellbeing Policy, describe the organisation's commitment to respecting and valuing Aboriginal children. This includes that:
 - staff and volunteers must encourage and support children to express their culture and enjoy their cultural rights

- staff and volunteers must actively support and facilitate participation and inclusion within the organisation by Aboriginal children and their families
 - racism will not be tolerated within the organisation and how the organisation will respond, including potential consequences
 - the organisation's leadership has a responsibility to help everyone involved with the organisation to acknowledge and appreciate the strengths of Aboriginal culture and understand its importance to the wellbeing and safety of Aboriginal children.
- The Code of Conduct and position descriptions outline expectations of staff and volunteer behaviour including:
 - zero tolerance of racism and expectations that staff and volunteers will act on incidents of racism
 - that children will be supported to express their culture and enjoy their cultural rights.
 - A plan of action sets out the steps the organisation will take by 1 July 2023 to establish a culturally safe environment in which the diverse and unique identities and experiences of Aboriginal children are respected and valued.

Essential Initial Actions

- Instances of racism are consistently identified and addressed.
<https://itstopswithme.humanrights.gov.au/resourcehub/racism-it-stops-me-conversation-guide>
- The organisation identifies steps already taken to:
 - support, guide or train staff and volunteers and leaders to understand, respect and value Aboriginal culture and to understand the importance of this to the wellbeing and safety of Aboriginal children
 - actively support and facilitate participation and inclusion of Aboriginal children and their families
 - recognise and celebrate Aboriginal peoples, their achievements, communities and cultures
 - ensure racism within the organisation is identified and appropriately addressed
 - create a culturally safe environment for Aboriginal children within the organisation.
- Identify actions the organisation needs to take to fully implement Standard 1, considering steps already taken and any gaps identified. A plan of action should identify the person or team responsible for taking action, the resources available and the timeframe.

Further Documents

- Policies and procedures, including the Child Safety and Wellbeing Policy, describe the organisation's expectations and provide detailed guidance about actions staff, volunteers and leaders must take to establish a culturally safe environment in which the diverse and unique identities and experiences of Aboriginal children are respected and valued.

Further Actions

- The organisation creates an inclusive and welcoming physical and online environment for Aboriginal children and their families by acknowledging and respecting Aboriginal peoples, communities, cultures and values.
- All children receive information from the organisation about cultural rights and the organisation takes active steps to encourage Aboriginal children to express their culture. When children express their culture, staff and volunteers in the organisation give them support.
- The organisation takes steps to empower children in the organisation and provide them with opportunities to participate in a way that is culturally safe for Aboriginal children.
- The organisation provides culturally safe opportunities for Aboriginal families to participate in the organisation.
- The organisation provides members of the organisation's community with:
 - information on cultural rights, the strengths of Aboriginal cultures and the importance of culture to the wellbeing and safety of Aboriginal children
 - information on the connection between cultural safety and the prevention of child abuse and harm for Aboriginal children
 - opportunities to learn and express appreciation of Aboriginal cultures and histories.
- Strategies that encourage the organisation's community to acknowledge and appreciate the strengths of Aboriginal cultures are developed, implemented and embedded into the organisation.
- Strategies to prevent racism are implemented and incidents of racism are not tolerated.

Practical Actions to take right now:

Find out who the traditional owner groups, or Registered Aboriginal Party is in your area:

- <https://aiatsis.gov.au/explore/map-indigenous-australia>
- <http://www.bom.gov.au/iwk/?ref=ftr>

- <https://aiatsis.gov.au/whose-country>

Talk with Aboriginal people in your area.

- Consult on creating an appropriate culturally safe outdoor and indoor environment conducive to conversation and learning
- Create opportunity for Aboriginal voice and presence in your planning, policies and activities
- Consult with local Aboriginal people, and organisation's that have Reconciliation Action Plans (RAP) and/or inclusive policies for guidance

Recognise the impact of the past.

- Research the continuing negative impacts of racism and past Government policies and practices
- Gain a knowledge of reports, and practice observance of key events:
 - Sorry Day
 - NAIDOC Week
 - Aboriginal Deaths in Custody
 - Uluru Statement
 - Mabo Decision
 - Closing the Gap National Indigenous Reform Agreement

Respect and embrace Aboriginal culture in every aspect of your organisation.

- Research, understand and show respect for the right to identity and belonging
- Select symbols, images and objects to display that are culturally appropriate for your area
- Display wall Maps, Plaques or posters that acknowledge traditional ownership of the land and water <https://antar.org.au/shop>
- Include Aboriginal adult and children's story books in your library
- Include information in your newsletters, handouts and flyers
- Children's Activities
https://www.vacca.org/content/Document/Childs_Voice_Booklet.pdf

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

In complying with Child Safe Standard 2 an organisation must, at a minimum, ensure:

- 2.1 The organisation makes a public commitment to child safety.
- 2.2 A child safe culture is championed and modelled at all levels of the organisation from the top down and bottom up.
- 2.3 Governance arrangements facilitate implementation of the Child Safety and Wellbeing Policy at all levels.
- 2.4 A Code of Conduct provides guidelines for staff and volunteers on expected behavioural standards and responsibilities.
- 2.5 Risk management strategies focus on preventing, identifying and mitigating risks to children and young people.
- 2.6 Staff and volunteers understand their obligations on information sharing and record keeping.

Essential Documents

- A public commitment to child safety is available and displayed for public access.
- The Child Safety and Wellbeing Policy sets out the organisation's expectations and practices in relation to each of the Standards.
- A Code of Conduct sets out expectations regarding behaviour of staff and volunteers with children and in promoting and maintaining child safety and wellbeing.

Essential Actions

- Committee of Governance, staff, volunteers, members and children in the organisation champion and model a child safe culture. They express support for keeping children safe, take action when they have concerns about children's safety and prioritise the safety of children as part of everyday practice.
- Committee of Governance set clear expectations around child safety and ensure the Child Safety and Wellbeing Policy is implemented by staff and volunteers.
- Committee of Governance and Management promote a culture of reporting.
- Committee of Governance and Management regularly review the organisation's performance in delivering child safety and wellbeing
- Committee of Governance supervise whether risk assessment and management in the organisation is properly focused on identifying, preventing and reducing risks of child abuse and harm.
- Staff and volunteers understand their information sharing and record keeping obligations.
- The Code of Conduct is communicated to all staff and volunteers and Committee of Governance hold them to account to comply with it.

Practical Actions to take right now:

- Committee of Governance and Management meet to discuss and ensure the organisation has shared attitudes, values, policies and practices that prioritise the safety and wellbeing of children.

- Discuss how the Committee of Governance and Management will embody the values of the organisation. Reiterate that Committee of Governance members' behaviour is key to a child safe culture. Committee members must champion child safe practices and lead by example, modelling the behaviour expected of staff and volunteers and not tolerating behaviours harmful to children.
- Committee of Governance should review the Delegation of Authority document to determine the organisation's rules about who has the authority to make decisions, how decisions should be made and monitored, and how people are to be held to account in relation to the Child Safe Standards.
- Sharing relevant information is critical to managing child safety. Your organisation's culture, systems and processes should support effective information sharing at all levels about the risks to children. Committee of Governance should review the system in place for receiving, sharing and communicating information.
- Committee of Governance should support senior leaders to monitor whether risk assessment and management in the organisation is properly focused on identifying, preventing and reducing risks of child abuse and harm. Assessing and managing risk documents should be formulated or reviewed after conducting a Risk Audit. The Risk Management Policy should be reviewed.
- A good record keeping system is central to transparency and accountability, and to the overall integrity of your organisation. It is important to create, keep and store accurate records to effectively respond to a complaint of child abuse or harm. The Committee of Governance should review the record keeping system and relevant Policy.
- Confidentiality and privacy of the people involved should always be considered when sharing information and keeping secure records. The Committee of Governance should review the Confidentiality and Privacy Policy.
- A public statement of commitment to Child Safety should be evident. Include this in Position Advertisement's, Strategic Plans, Committee member recruitment and Annual Reports.

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

In complying with Child Safe Standard 3 an organisation must, at a minimum, ensure:

3.1 Children and young people are informed about all of their rights, including to safety, information and participation.

3.2 The importance of friendships is recognised and support from peers is encouraged, to help children and young people feel safe and be less isolated.

3.3 Where relevant to the setting or context, children and young people are offered access to sexual abuse prevention programs and to relevant related information in an age-appropriate way.

3.4 Staff and volunteers are attuned to signs of harm and facilitate child-friendly ways for children and young people to express their views, participate in decision-making and raise their concerns.

3.5 Organisations have strategies in place to develop a culture that facilitates participation and is responsive to the input of children and young people.

3.6 Organisations provide opportunities for children and young people to participate and are responsive to their contributions, thereby strengthening confidence and engagement.

Essential Documents

- Age-appropriate and easy to understand documents, in print or online, are easily accessible and support children to:
 - understand their rights, including to safety, information and participation
 - know how adults in the organisation should behave
 - understand the organisation's complaints process and how to raise safety concerns for themselves, their friends or peers
 - know about support services aimed at children.

- The organisation's policies and procedures:
 - promote children's empowerment and participation
 - embed support for the rights of children.

Essential Actions

- Staff and volunteers in the organisation engage with children to help them to:
 - understand their rights, including to safety, information and participation
 - know how adults in the organisation should behave
 - understand the organisation's complaints process and how to raise safety concerns for themselves, their friends or peers
 - know about support services aimed at children.

- Practices in the organisation that disempower children are identified and action is taken to change them.

- Staff and volunteers are provided with information to help them understand, recognise and act on signs of child abuse or harm.

- Where relevant, the organisation provides access to sexual abuse prevention programs and other relevant information to children in an age-appropriate and accessible manner.

- The organisation creates opportunities for children to express their views and participate in decisions that impact them. What is heard and learnt from children influences how the organisation works.

- Staff and volunteers are supported to develop knowledge and skills to help children participate, express their views and raise their concerns.

- The organisation supports children to develop social connections and friendships with their peers, build skills in children to support their peers and challenge bullying or isolating behaviour between children.

Practical Actions to take right now:

How your organisation works to inform children of their rights will depend on how much contact, and what sort of contact, you have with them.

For organisations with a high level of responsibility for the everyday needs and experiences of children, information about rights should be shared in multiple ways and regularly discussed.

For organisations who may only engage sometimes with children, it may be more appropriate to share information about their rights when your organisation first has contact with them.

Or you may provide child-friendly information on rights in areas where children spend a lot of time, and support this with occasional discussions.

- You must inform children in your organisation about their rights, including to safety, information and participation. There are many ways your organisation can do this including:
 - displaying information on rights in child-friendly posters
 - sharing workbooks or web content about rights
 - having discussions or holding workshops about rights
 - talking about rights as part of induction in your organisation
 - integrating information about children's rights into your existing everyday activities and practices.

Children benefit from strong friendships. They may see their friends as their main source of support, information and advice, and go to them for help. Children are more likely to tell their friends about abuse before they tell adults.

Some ways to support the development of friendships and peer connections include:

setting up a buddy system for new children where they are given an existing child as a buddy who can help teach them about the organisation

sharing anti-bullying information with children – [Bullying. No way!](#) has helpful resources

developing strategies that foster teamwork and peer support

having dedicated time when children are at the organisation for play, socialising, working together and sharing.

Tell children they can raise concerns with your organisation about the safety or wellbeing of their friends and peers is a good way to encourage them to support each other.

- Create a sense of team by:
 - adopting a group name
 - identifying and celebrating the strengths within the group and in individuals
 - giving all children a chance to participate, including in competitions
 - identifying shared goals and expectations
 - spending time building trust and rapport
 - working together to develop shared policies or resources such as a children's Code of Conduct, group agreement or respect/anti-bullying policy.
- Monitor group dynamics and be sure to:
 - call out bullying or exclusion
 - discourage unacceptable behaviour
 - encourage positive team dynamics.
- Celebrate positive peer interactions by asking children to:
 - share something they admire about their peers
 - thank their peers for something they have done together.

Sexual abuse prevention programs

The Royal Commission identified that prevention education should be provided to children across all age groups and a range of settings, primarily education and care based. It stated that these settings could include:

- Childcare, which encompasses Australian Government-approved long day care, family day care and out-of-school-hours care
- preschool, for children aged 3–4 years, before they start school
- primary school, for children aged about 5–11 years. Primary school begins with a foundation year, variously called preparatory, reception, or preschool in different jurisdictions
- secondary school, for children aged about 12–18 years

- sport and recreation programs, which are offered in most Australian communities to children from a young age. These are generally accessed on a voluntary basis.'

Standard 3.3 requires organisations to offer children access to sexual abuse prevention programs and related relevant information where relevant to the setting or context.

Organisations should consider whether they operate in a setting or context that would be appropriate to deliver sexual abuse prevention programs. You may also consider whether you are engaging with children who may miss out on mainstream sexual abuse prevention programs and who could be more vulnerable to child abuse and harm.

Sexual abuse prevention programs support community-wide learning about how to prevent child sexual abuse. If your organisation does not feel it is appropriate to provide these programs, you may still want to provide some information that helps children understand sexual abuse and how to get help.

The [Raising Children Network](#) has created a tip-sheet to help start conversations with teenagers about sexual abuse.

The [Australian Human Rights Commission](#) has created a guide to help children understand child sexual abuse, and how and where to get help.

[Bravehearts](#) offers personal safety education from early years through to high school.

The [Respectful Relationships program](#) supports schools and early childhood settings to promote and model respect, positive attitudes and behaviours.

[Act for Kids](#), [NAPCAN](#) and the [Daniel Morcombe Foundation](#) provide child sexual abuse prevention education resources.

The [eSafety Commissioner](#) has a range of resources aimed at keeping children safe online.

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

In complying with Child Safe Standard 4 an organisation must, at a minimum, ensure:

- 4.1 Families participate in decisions affecting their child.
- 4.2 The organisation engages and openly communicates with families and the community about its child safe approach and relevant information is accessible.
- 4.3 Families and communities have a say in the development and review of the organisation's policies and practices.
- 4.4 Families, carers and the community are informed about the organisation's operations and governance.

Essential Documents

The organisation's policies reflect the importance of family and community involvement and describe ways this involvement can occur.

Complaint handling policies include procedures for keeping families informed and provide guidance on how to do this while complying with obligations regarding confidentiality and privacy.

Essential Actions

The organisation supports families and communities to take an active role in promoting and maintaining child safety and wellbeing by communicating about their role in child safety and wellbeing within the organisation

The organisation is open and transparent with families and communities by:
providing accessible information about the organisation's child safety and wellbeing policies and practices

providing information about the organisation's governance and operations, how complaints are handled and how the organisation manages disciplinary actions and child safety risks.

Families have an opportunity to participate in decisions made by the organisation that impact the safety and wellbeing of their child. Communication with families supports the full diversity of families to participate.

Opportunities are created for families and community members to provide feedback on the organisation's policies, procedures and practices including the organisation's approach to child safety and wellbeing.

The organisation takes the feedback and involvement of families and communities seriously and takes their views into account.

Practical actions to take right now:

Discuss the meaning of family. Families are diverse and each family is unique.

- Families may be made up of a wide variety of relationships
- There are extended families, single-parent families, families that adopt or foster children, and blended families, where parents raise children of different parentage together. Some children live in rainbow families and have LGBTIQ parents or carers.
- Some family members may have disability – there are 4.4 million people with disability in Australia
- There are many families who have culturally and/or linguistically diverse backgrounds, including migrants, refugees, asylum seekers and others. Some of these families may have experienced trauma, violence and harm, lost the support of their extended family and faced racial discrimination.
- Family is the foundation of Aboriginal culture, spirituality and identity. Family is often more broadly defined within Aboriginal culture than within non-Indigenous culture. Those involved in children's lives, and helping to raise them, commonly include grandparents, aunts, uncles, cousins, nieces and nephews, and members of the community who are considered to be family.

- Organisations, families and children may have communities that they closely associate with or frequently engage with. Just like families, communities are diverse.

Some organisations may be open to engaging with families and communities, but it goes badly the first time. Offering repeated or different ways to engage shows your organisation is serious about participation and is committed.

You can show families and communities that you value their views by taking action when they raise issues. This also shows them that it is worth their effort to engage with you. People will disengage from an organisation if they feel engagement is tokenistic and does not result in change.

You should think about barriers to participation by families and communities and plan how to overcome them.

People may be busy	Introduce people to the Manager or a nominated Committee member. Pass on their contact details so they can be contacted with concerns, feedback or ideas.
	Engage by phone, text, social media, email etc, which uses less time than a face to face meeting
	Combine your engagement on child safety with other issues. Make 1 call instead of 2 or 3.
	Make engagement easy and quick. Do not hand out long documents or compile long surveys.
	The same person can become tired of participating, encourage them to nominate others that can engage also
	Schedule interactions when people are not working

Children attend your organisation without families	Have an induction session when new children join the organisation to share critical information and start the involvement of families.
	Plan and use the opportunity to engage with families when they drop off or pick up their children.

	<p>Create a social event for families that also includes a child safety and wellbeing focus.</p> <p>Create events that celebrate the achievements of children and invite families.</p>
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Events and communications are not accessible to all families	<p>Hold events and meetings in accessible spaces. Accessible spaces provide wheelchair ramps, accessible toilet facilities and have adjustments for those with vision impairment. Check when your organisation books a venue or check on Google maps which has a feature that details whether a place is accessible. Explain the accessibility features of an event space when you advertise an event or meeting.</p>
	<p>When gathering RSVPs for events and meetings, ask people to advise of any accessibility needs and make sure you provide them. Access needs can vary and include sensory, audio, visual and mobility assistance. Ask every time, as people's access needs change.</p>
	<p>The way your organisation provides information can exclude some people, especially those with disability. Your organisation should not make assumptions about how people can receive or communicate information. Providing information and engagement in a variety of formats can help.</p>

Information provided is difficult to understand	<p>Try to provide information in Easy English or plain language where possible.</p>
	<p>Gather information about the communities and families who will be accessing your services and identify their preferred languages.</p>
	<p>Use language that is welcoming to people with disability. This language guide from People with Disability Australia can help.</p>

<p>Organisation has limited resources or experience in engaging with families and communities</p>	<p>Start small and expand over time as you learn and improve.</p> <p>Identify organisations you think engage well with families and communities and gather ideas for what might work for your organisation.</p> <p>Ask for volunteers from the organisation's community to help with engagement. They may have experience that paid staff lack or could provide additional support.</p> <p>Share the load of engagement. It may be too much for one staff member or volunteer to do all the engagement. If tasks like attending meetings with families and communities are shared, it makes the workload more manageable.</p> <p>Use existing resources if you can, for example: use existing newsletters or websites consider creating an email address for collecting family and community feedback, monitor it regularly and make sure your organisation responds to any questions or comments</p> <p>If families contact the organisation for any reason, take the opportunity to check what they know about your child safe policies and whether they have any feedback.</p>
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There are many ways to involve families in decisions in your organisation:

- organise check-ins with individual families to talk about their child and create the opportunity to hear from them before important decisions are made affecting their child. Take the opportunity to ask for feedback about your organisation and if the child feels safe at the organisation
- share information about upcoming decisions and child wellbeing and safety in the organisation's newsletter and ask for families' views
- invite families to participate in the organisation's annual planning process where decisions are made about your systems for child safety and wellbeing
- co-design relevant child safety and wellbeing projects, processes, programs or events with families
- involve families in your organisation's governance structures, such as a committee of management or advisory boards.

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

In complying with Child Safe Standard 5 an organisation must, at a minimum, ensure:

5.1 The organisation, including staff and volunteers, understands children and young people's diverse circumstances, and provides support and responds to those who are vulnerable.

5.2 Children and young people have access to information, support and complaints processes in ways that are culturally safe, accessible and easy to understand.

5.3 The organisation pays particular attention to the needs of children and young people with disability, children and young people from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds, those who are unable to live at home, and lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender and intersex children and young people.

5.4 The organisation pays particular attention to the needs of Aboriginal children and young people and provides/promotes a culturally safe environment for them.

Essential Documents

- Materials for children, including information about complaints processes and supports, are accessible, age-appropriate and available in a range of languages and formats as needed. Written documents alone are not relied on, particularly for children who are blind or vision impaired, or children who cannot read.
- The Child Safety and Wellbeing Policy describes:
 - the organisation's commitment to equity and inclusion
 - how the organisation will recognise and respect the diverse needs of all children
 - how the organisation provides avenues for children or their families to identify their individual needs
 - how the organisation will provide children with access to information, support and complaints processes in ways that are culturally safe, accessible and easy to understand
 - how the organisation will support equity and make reasonable changes to support participation by all children and respond to all children's needs
 - how the organisation upholds equity for all children and prevents child abuse and harm resulting from discrimination based on disability, race,

ethnicity, religion, sex, intersex status, gender identity or sexual orientation.

Essential Actions

- The organisation takes steps to understand the diverse circumstances and needs of children who engage, or may engage, with it.
- Staff and volunteers:
 - are provided with information and guidance about children's diverse circumstances, how to identify factors that can increase a child's vulnerability to harm, and how to promote equity and safety for all children
 - take action to support and respond to children who are experiencing vulnerability, including making inquiries and responding where there are signs of increased vulnerability
 - take action to uphold equity for all children, promote children's safety and prevent child abuse and harm.
- Committee of Governance and Management set clear expectations around achieving equity and respect for diversity.
- The organisation ensures all children are reasonably supported to participate.

Practical actions you can take right now:

- This Standard is designed to eliminate discrimination. Committee of Governance members, Management staff and volunteers should become familiar with the following Victorian and Commonwealth Laws that make it unlawful to discriminate against or vilify children in certain contexts on the basis of particular attributes. These include the:
 - [Equal Opportunity Act 2010 \(Vic\)](#)
 - [Racial and Religious Tolerance Act 2001 \(Vic\)](#)
 - [Change or Suppression \(Conversion\) Practices Prohibition Act 2021 \(Vic\)](#)
 - [Charter of Human Rights and Responsibilities Act 2006 \(Vic\)](#)
 - [Disability Discrimination Act 1992 \(Cth\)](#)
 - [Sex Discrimination Act 1984 \(Cth\)](#)

The [Victorian Equal Opportunity & Human Rights Commission](#) website has further information on rights and discrimination in Victoria.

- A child safe organisation recognises and respects diversity and understands that some children are more vulnerable to abuse than others. Develop policies and procedures that make sure children have access to the relationships, skills, knowledge and resources they need to be as safe as their peers.

To achieve this, you should:

- get to know and understand the diversity of children in your organisation and community
 - learn about the circumstances that some children encounter that increase the risk of experiencing abuse
 - identify possible gaps in your approach to child safety and consider ways to make sure every child can have a positive experience and how your organisation will respond to the specific and additional needs of children
 - inform and train your staff and volunteers so they can recognise diverse needs, and tailor responses so all children are equally safe
 - build systems, policies and procedures to embed these practices in day-to-day operations.
- Some children are more vulnerable to abuse and these children may also find it more challenging to speak up and to believe that adults will take them seriously. Be aware of the possible different backgrounds of the children who engage with you:
 - have previous experiences of trauma
 - have previously been the victim of bullying, harassment, abuse or maltreatment
 - have encountered racism, sexism, homophobia or other forms of discrimination
 - have disability or mental health issues
 - are socially isolated
 - come from families facing poverty and lacking support, or that have experienced trauma
 - have experienced stress, worry and challenges that have negatively impacted their physical and emotional health, hopefulness and wellbeing.

Taking a trauma-informed approach supports all children to engage safely and minimises the chance that the organisation will cause them distress or harm.

More information on taking a trauma-informed approach can be found in [Child abuse and harm](#).

- Understanding the children accessing your organisation and the barriers they may face in raising a complaint will help you develop an accessible process. Think about:
 - fear of not being believed
 - being unable to understand or read procedures or policies
 - the power imbalance between children and adults
 - feelings of mistrust
 - fear of getting people into trouble
 - cultural differences or sensitivities
 - a lack of help or support
 - fear of retribution or vengeance
 - fear of being excluded, shamed or ridiculed
 - a lack of access to information about their rights
 - a lack of access to someone other than an abuser (for example, a personal carer)
 - past experiences of racism.

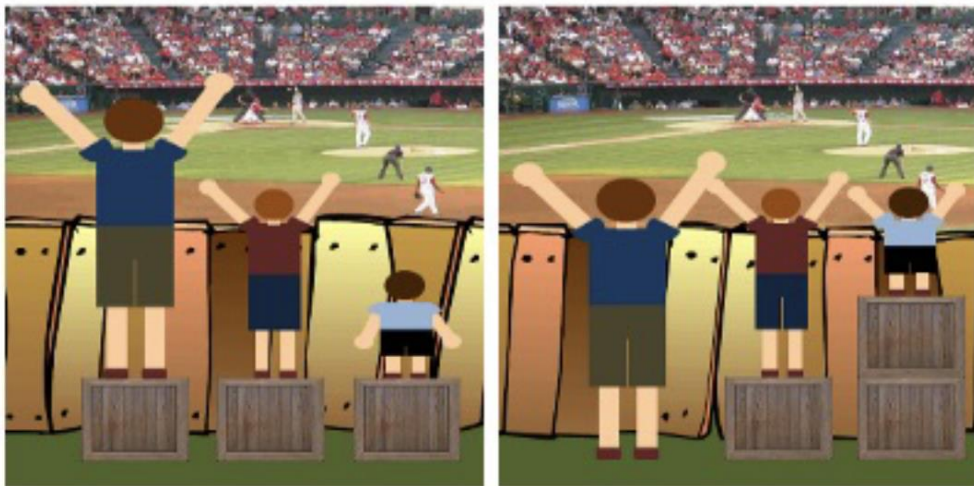
Improving accessibility to your complaints process might involve:

- partnering with a range of children in developing or reviewing the process to respond better to diverse needs
- seeking advice and support from local community groups in developing or reviewing processes
- providing support for people from the child's cultural background to engage with the process
- considering the gender of staff who may be involved in handling a complaint
- providing interpreters and support for alternative communication methods if needed.

- Ask LGBTIQ, non-binary and gender diverse people what makes them feel safe and unsafe and drawing on their perspectives to build a child safe culture within your organisation:
- Use the appropriate language. Language to describe different LGBTIQ people changes over time and can differ across cultures and generations. There will also be differences in how people individually use or define particular terms and how people choose to identify

themselves.¹ [Minus 18](#) is a youth-focused organisation that provides information on how young people self-identify.

- Make adjustments so that children have equal opportunity to the skills, knowledge and resources they need to be safe regardless of their characteristics, circumstances, life experiences and backgrounds.



Equality (left) versus equity (right) reflecting that different adaptations may be needed for each child to enable them to participate

– Craig Froehle 2012

¹ Adapted from Victorian Government, [LGBTIQ+ inclusive language guide](#).

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

In complying with Child Safe Standard 6 an organisation must, at a minimum, ensure:

- 6.1 Recruitment, including advertising, referee checks and staff and volunteer pre-employment screening, emphasise child safety and wellbeing.
- 6.2 Relevant staff and volunteers have current working with children checks or equivalent background checks.
- 6.3 All staff and volunteers receive an appropriate induction and are aware of their responsibilities to children and young people, including record keeping, information sharing and reporting obligations.
- 6.4 Ongoing supervision and people management is focused on child safety and wellbeing.

Essential Documents

- Employment advertising includes the organisation's commitment to child safety and wellbeing.
- Position descriptions set clear expectations about the role's requirements, duties and responsibilities regarding child safety and wellbeing.
- Organisational recruitment, human resources and volunteering policies describe:
 - recruitment practices that support the organisation to appoint people who are suitable to work with children

- pre-employment screening practices including interviewing, referee checks, Working with Children Check and other registration or background checking
 - requirements for an induction about the organisation's child safety practices
 - how supervision and people management practices will support ongoing assessment of a person's suitability to work with children.
- Induction documents for staff and volunteers include:
 - the Code of Conduct
 - the Child Safety and Wellbeing Policy
 - information about the organisation's child safety practices and complaints process as well as reporting, record keeping and information sharing obligations.

Essential Actions

- The child safety and wellbeing requirements of each role are assessed before recruitment of new staff and volunteers. These include:
 - qualifications, experience and attributes required
 - duties and responsibilities with children
 - measures required to manage any child abuse or harm risks including screening, training and supervision requirements.
- Information and guidance are provided to recruiting staff on how to prioritise child safety in the recruitment process, including how to identify and manage any child safety concerns raised through the application, interview and screening process.
- Recruitment processes include:
 - a range of values-based interview questions to establish suitability to work with children
 - pre-employment screening practices including referee checks, Working with Children Check and other registration or background checking
 - verification that required qualifications, registrations and Working with Children Check are valid and up-to-date
 - keeping records of the recruitment process.

- Supervision and people management includes regular reviews to check whether staff are following Codes of Conduct and other child safe policies.
- Guidance is provided for people managers on steps to take when managing staff or volunteers whose behaviour raises child safety concerns.
- Qualifications, Working with Children Check and other registration or ongoing screening checks are regularly reviewed for changes and that they are still valid. Action is taken to manage the risks to children when a person's qualifications, Working with Children Check or other registration or ongoing screening check are no longer valid.
- Staff and volunteers receive an induction adjusted to each role's requirements, duties, risks and responsibilities in relation to child safety and wellbeing. The induction covers the organisation's child safety practices and complaints process as well as reporting, record keeping and information sharing obligations.

Practical Actions to take right now:

Recruitment

As Child Safety is everyone's responsibility, organisations should review the position descriptions for each role to ensure they clearly state:

- the organisation's commitment to child safety
- the duties and tasks of the role
- the qualifications, experience and attributes required
- whether the position is subject to a satisfactory criminal record check or a Working with Children Check
- the clear expectation that staff and volunteers must have, and maintain, a commitment to child safety, equity and inclusion, and cultural safety
- the level of responsibility and supervision associated with the role
- the obligation to abide by the Child Safety and Wellbeing Policy and the Code of Conduct and all child safe policies and procedures.

Job advertisements should clearly state the organisation's commitment to child safety and wellbeing and zero tolerance for child abuse and harm. In fact, this should be included in all advertisements, position descriptions and other related documents. The advertisement should include the screening requirements required for the role, including the requirement for reference checks. By including this in job advertisements the organisation's expectations are made clear from the start and may discourage unsuitable applicants from applying.

You should carefully assess the application before progressing to the interview stage. Try to get a sense of the values of an applicant to help assess their suitability (values-based interviewing). Important areas to ask about include:

- why they want to work or volunteer with children
- their understanding of children's physical and emotional needs
- past misconduct or offences
- their understanding of professional boundaries between adults and children
- attitudes to children's rights and how they can be upheld
- understanding of, or willingness to learn about, the importance of cultural safety for Aboriginal children
- understanding of, or willingness to learn about the diverse needs of children
- whether their values and past behaviour align with a commitment to child safety and zero tolerance of child abuse and harm.

Think carefully about who will be on the interview panel and ensure they have the right skills, experience and information to perform their role. Some organisations include children on interview panels or as part of the recruitment process. This can provide a real opportunity for children to actively participate in your organisation and have a say about decisions that impact them.

Failing to properly check references can compromise child safety. You should request that one referee is the applicant's current supervisor. You should also ask whether the referee has observed their interactions with children. It is best practice to ask for a verbal reference rather than relying on a written one.

You should ask the referee direct questions that assess the applicant's suitability to work with children. Questions could include:

- What level of contact has the applicant had with children in their role?

Have you observed the applicant interacting with children and/or managing the behaviour of children?

Are you comfortable knowing they might sometimes be working alone with children?

Do you have concerns about them working with children?

Did you have any disciplinary matters relating to the applicant or concerns about their adherence with the organisation's Code of Conduct?

Induction

Induction for Committee members, staff and volunteers must include an overview of your organisation's Child Safety and Wellbeing Policy and Code of Conduct. The induction must also include information about your organisation's complaint handling policy, reporting and child information sharing obligations. Committee members, staff and volunteers should receive clear information on what to do if they have a child safety or wellbeing concern.

Record keeping

Staff and volunteers should receive guidance on the importance of keeping accurate records and your organisation's child safe record keeping policies and practices.

Organisations should provide clear guidance about what, how and where information should be stored.

Staff and volunteers should understand that children may wish to access their records in the future and any case notes or other documents should be written with this in mind.

Reporting

Staff and volunteers should be provided with information to understand their reporting obligations both within the organisation and to external bodies like Child Protection and Victoria Police.

It is important that staff and volunteers also understand their legal obligations when requests to provide information or to seek information are received. These obligations may arise because of a Child Protection investigation, or through the Child Information Sharing Scheme and the Family Violence Information Sharing Scheme.

Supervision

A risk assessment will help you decide what level of ongoing supervision and management is necessary to ensure staff and volunteers continue to perform their role in a way that promotes child safety and wellbeing.

Supervision of staff and volunteers can be conducted in many ways including:

- managers checking with children and families about the performance of staff and volunteers and asking for feedback

- regular face-to-face, phone or online meetings between managers and their staff or volunteers

- formal or informal observation of staff and volunteer activities

- performance plans that include meeting expected child safety requirements.

Training

This should all be supported by training in Child Safety, along with training for Committees, managers and volunteers on the systems for gathering information on staff and volunteer conduct and any concerns raised.

The Commission for Children and Young People has developed a [Practical guide to choosing, supervising and developing suitable staff and volunteers](#) for further information.

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

In complying with Child Safe Standard 7 an organisation must, at a minimum, ensure:

7.1 The organisation has an accessible, child-focused complaint handling policy which clearly outlines the roles and responsibilities of leadership, staff and volunteers, approaches to dealing with different types of complaints, breaches of relevant policies or the Code of Conduct and obligations to act and report.

7.2 Effective complaint handling processes are understood by children and young people, families, staff and volunteers, and are culturally safe.

7.3 Complaints are taken seriously and responded to promptly and thoroughly.

7.4 The organisation has policies and procedures in place that address reporting of complaints and concerns to relevant authorities, whether or not the law requires reporting, and co-operates with law enforcement.

7.5 Reporting, privacy and employment law obligations are met.

Essential Documents

- The complaint handling policy is easy to understand, culturally safe, accessible and child-focused. The complaint handling policy:
 - includes information on how adults and children can make a complaint and how the organisation will respond to and investigate complaints in a prompt and thorough way
 - creates a complaints process that is accessible to the full diversity of children, staff, volunteers, families and communities
 - covers alleged abuse and harm of children by adults and by other children
 - covers breaches of the organisation's Code of Conduct
 - sets out what support and assistance will be provided for those making a complaint
 - outlines how risks to children will be managed when a complaint is raised and an investigation is underway
 - covers record keeping obligations
 - supports privacy and employment law obligations to be met.

- Documents, in print or online, describe the complaints process for staff, volunteers, children, families and communities.
- Policies and procedures include information about when complaints should be reported to authorities, including Victoria Police, Child Protection and the Commission for Children and Young People.
- Disciplinary policies support the organisation to take action when a complaint is raised.

Essential Actions

- The organisation makes information about how to make a complaint available and accessible to everyone involved with the organisation.
- The organisation provides staff and volunteers with support and information on what and how to report, including to authorities outside the organisation.
- Complaints are taken seriously, meaning the organisation consistently:
 - identifies and manages any risks to children
 - responds to complaints promptly and thoroughly
 - prioritises the safety of children and also meets privacy and employment law obligations
 - supports everyone involved in the complaints process
 - reports complaints of alleged abuse or harm of children and concerns about child safety to the authorities and cooperates with law enforcement.
- Records are kept of complaints made to the organisation, including concerns raised about the safety of children and disclosures about alleged abuse or harm of children, and actions taken to respond.

- Children, families and communities are consulted when designing and reviewing complaint handling policies and procedures.
- The organisation reviews complaint handling policies and procedures at regular intervals.

Practical Actions to take right now:

Do not be afraid of a concern or complaint, or the process. Encourage and welcome the reporting of concerns, respond to complaints promptly, thoroughly and fairly, and take immediate action to protect children at risk. Committee and staff should actively communicate that complaints are welcome from anyone in the organisation's community, are taken seriously and are a valuable source of information which can help improve the organisation

- Go through your complaints policy and documents with all Committee, staff and volunteers present. Make sure they are clear and well understood by all. Remove jargon and any unnecessarily wordy or confusing aspects. Ensure the procedures are child-friendly and accessible.
- You may choose to develop a stand-alone policy or process that is aimed at children. This could be a simple flowchart or poster that provides clear information about what they can do if they have a complaint or concern. You may also choose to create separate information for parents and carers.
- Make sure your complaint handling policy sets out who reports can be made to. You should carefully select these people because they need to be able to be trusted by children. Your organisation may choose to have a nominated child safety person(s) who receives specific training. Another option is for reports to be made to the head or senior member of the organisation. You should have more than one person able to receive reports in case a person wants to raise allegations or concerns about individuals who have the responsibility to receive reports.

- DO NOT restrict staff and volunteer access to the complaint handling policy. Limiting who can receive a copy or making people ask a particular staff member can make it hard to act quickly and effectively if an urgent issue arises and can also discourage complaints.

Process:

- Accept complaints in the communication methods most comfortable for the people involved. Face-to-face verbal report, letter, email, telephone call, meeting. Most younger people might prefer to send a text. Keep a record.
- The child safety person, manager, supervisor will:
 - offer support to the child, the parents or carers, the person who reports and the accused staff member or volunteer
 - initiate internal processes to ensure the safety of all children including an alleged victim, clarify the nature of the complaint and commence disciplinary process and investigation (if required)
 - decide, in accordance with legal requirements and duty of care, whether the matter should/must be reported to police, Child Protection and/or the Commission* and make a report as soon as possible if required. (* Applies only to organisations covered by the Reportable Conduct Scheme.)
- Complete the investigation; decide the outcome; notify the relevant staff, volunteers, parents, carers and child of the outcome; take disciplinary action, review and update policies and procedures where necessary.

When responding to a disclosure:

- Give the child or young person your full attention.
- Maintain a calm appearance.
- Don't be afraid of saying the "wrong" thing.
- Reassure the child or young person it is right to tell.
- Accept the child or young person will disclose only what is comfortable and recognise the bravery/strength of the child for talking about something that is difficult.
- Let the child or young person take his or her time.
- Let the child or young person use his or her own words.
- Don't make promises you can't keep.
- Tell the child or young person what you plan to do next.

- Do not confront the perpetrator.

- It is important to keep good records of all stages of the complaint process. Your notes should be detailed, objective and include the context and supporting information so they form good evidence if needed. Notes should be dated and clearly list the details of participants and witnesses. It is good practice to create and implement a checklist for documentation for handling complaints to make sure consistent records are maintained.

In line with the [Complaint handling guide](#) and [Public Record Office of Victoria guidelines](#) ensure that all records are maintained with context in an 'indexed, logical and secure manner'. Records should be kept securely so they cannot be interfered with or destroyed.

- Physical or sexual abuse, including grooming, of children is a crime and should be reported to the police.
- If a concern relates to family violence it should be reported to the police.

- If an adult reasonably believes a sexual offence has been committed by an adult against a child under the age of 16, they must report it to Victoria Police by calling 000 or going to their local station. Failure to disclose the information may be a criminal offence. The offence applies to all adults in Victoria, not just professionals who work with children, unless they have a reasonable excuse.

For more information refer to the [Failure to disclose offence](#) fact sheet.

Once an organisation has made a report to Victoria Police or Child Protection, it should not investigate the allegation without consulting them first. If a criminal or Child Protection investigation is underway, there is a risk that an investigation by the organisation could negatively impact future police action or put children at risk. If there is any doubt about whether actions by the organisation might negatively impact a later investigation, consult with the relevant external authority or law enforcement body first.

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

In complying with Child Safe Standard 8 an organisation must, at a minimum, ensure:

- 8.1 Staff and volunteers are trained and supported to effectively implement the organisation's Child Safety and Wellbeing Policy.
- 8.2 Staff and volunteers receive training and information to recognise indicators of child harm including harm caused by other children and young people.
- 8.3 Staff and volunteers receive training and information to respond effectively to issues of child safety and wellbeing and support colleagues who disclose harm.
- 8.4 Staff and volunteers receive training and information on how to build culturally safe environments for children and young people.

Essential Documents

- A training action plan for staff and volunteers includes training on:
 - the Child Safety and Wellbeing Policy
 - identifying indicators of child abuse and harm
 - how to support a person making a disclosure about harm to a child
 - how to respond to issues of child safety including internal and external reporting requirements, notifying families and carers and managing risks to children
 - how to support cultural safety.
- Guidance materials (such as policies, procedures, guidelines, information sheets and posters) for staff and volunteers provide guidance about:
 - identifying indicators of child abuse and harm, including where caused by other children

- how to respond to issues of child safety including internal and external reporting requirements, notifying families and carers and managing risks to children
 - how to support a person disclosing harm to a child
 - how to create culturally safe environments in the organisation.
- A training register records completion of training by staff and volunteers

Essential Actions

- Leaders communicate to staff and volunteers that child safety training is mandatory.
- Training is provided to staff and volunteers on the Child Safety and Wellbeing Policy on induction and at regular intervals.
- Training is provided to staff and volunteers that supports their ability to:
 - identify signs of child abuse and harm
 - respond to issues of child safety including internal and external reporting requirements, notifying families and carers and managing risks to children
 - support a person disclosing child harm
 - create culturally safe environments in the organisation.
- Training and guidance on child safety is:
 - appropriate to the organisation's engagement with children and the needs of children in the organisation
 - trauma-informed
 - offered on a regular basis to enable staff and volunteers to keep their skills and knowledge up-to-date
 - regularly reviewed and updated to remain effective.
- Supervision and management of staff and volunteers includes identifying child safety training needs.

Practical actions to take right now:

- Make sure your organisation assists staff and volunteers to develop their child safety knowledge and skills through:
 - induction
 - ongoing training and professional development
 - supervision and management.

Induction

An induction should equip staff and volunteers to:

- implement the organisation's Child Safety and Wellbeing Policy
- understand the behaviour expected of them with children as set out in the organisation's Code of Conduct
- identify child harm and respond to child safety issues, including when a child discloses safety concerns or abuse
- fulfil child safety reporting obligations
- provide culturally safe environments for children
- follow record keeping and information sharing obligations.

The induction process needs to be thoroughly documented so that staff and volunteers receive all the training and information they should. Induction might be needed for staff and volunteers who change roles in the organisation as well as those who are new. It should occur before any work with children begins.

Training and Information

Once staff or volunteers have started with the organisation, they should be provided with ongoing opportunities to continue to develop and update their knowledge and skills.

- regular communication with staff and volunteers about the Child Safety and Wellbeing Policy and Code of Conduct. This could be in supervision meetings, at staff meetings, in newsletters and staff updates.
- See training as an ongoing obligation, not a once-off.
- Make sure training is specific and tailored to your organisation.

- Include child safety and wellbeing as a standing item on leadership, team and staff meeting agendas to reinforce lessons from training.
- organising online or face-to-face training for teams or individuals as well as regular refresher training
- seminars or information sessions provided by the organisation or external providers
- mentoring or coaching
- Physical and behavioural indicators of child harm can be found in [Child abuse and harm](#). Being aware that certain factors can increase a child's risk of being abused supports staff and volunteers to be alert to the risk of child harm and consciously looking for possible indicators of harm.
- When providing training be aware and sensitive to the fact that the training may be confronting to some. If staff members or volunteers are distressed by the thought of attending group training you should provide alternate methods for people to access the information. If your organisation has access to employee assistance or support programs, consider making support available following the session.
- Remember that general training on child safety or the Standards will not equip your organisation's staff and volunteers to understand and implement the specifics of your Child Wellbeing and Safety Policy, Code of Conduct and complaint handling policy. Your organisation will need to provide specific training and information on this.

Here is a [Sample learning or training action plan](#) for an organisation seeking to meet its training obligations under the Standards.

- Training should include cultural awareness and cultural safety

Supervision and people management

- Supervising staff and volunteers, monitoring their performance, conducting appraisals and providing feedback is an important way to develop knowledge and skills.
- Staff and volunteers should have opportunities to discuss issues and raise concerns with their managers and supervisors.
- Managers should also look to act early to provide feedback and correct any unsafe or concerning conduct by staff and volunteers before they harm children.

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

In complying with Child Safe Standard 9 an organisation must, at a minimum, ensure:

9.1 Staff and volunteers identify and mitigate risks in the online and physical environments without compromising a child's right to privacy, access to information, social connections and learning opportunities.

9.2 The online environment is used in accordance with the organisation's Code of Conduct and Child Safety and Wellbeing Policy and practices.

9.3 Risk management plans consider risks posed by organisational setting, activities and the physical environment.

9.4 Organisations that contract facilities and services from third parties have procurement policies that ensure the safety of children and young people.

Essential Documents

- A risk assessment identifies risks of child abuse and harm in both physical and online environments connected with the organisation.
- Risk management plans list the actions the organisation will take to prevent or reduce each identified risk of child abuse and harm.
- The Code of Conduct and Child Safety and Wellbeing Policy identifies how the organisation will keep children safe in physical and online environments, with specific reference to higher-risk activities.

- Procurement policies about engaging third-party contractors set out processes to protect children from risks of child abuse and harm, such as requiring compliance with the organisation's Code of Conduct and Child Safety and Wellbeing Policy.

Essential Actions

- Risk assessment and management plans are informed by and responsive to the views and concerns of staff, volunteers and children. Plans show that the organisation has balanced the need to manage the risk of harm and abuse against children's rights to privacy, access to information, social connections and learning opportunities.
- Staff and volunteers are provided with risk management plans so they are aware of risks of child abuse and harm and know what action they need to take to prevent and reduce them.
- Action is taken by staff and volunteers in the organisation to prevent and reduce risks of child abuse and harm when identified.
- Risk assessments and management plans are regularly reviewed to keep them up-to-date and include lessons from complaints, concerns and safety incidents.
- The organisation's leadership and governance arrangements ensure risk assessment and management are focused on identifying, preventing and reducing risks of child abuse and harm.
- When negotiating contracts with third parties, contracts include terms that allow the organisation to take action if the third party does not meet expected child safety and wellbeing standards.

- When third-party contractors are engaged, action is taken by the organisation to assess whether, and the extent to which, the engagement of third-party contractors poses risks of child abuse and harm.
- Depending on the level of risk posed by third-party contractors, the organisation should take actions to prevent or reduce risks of child abuse or harm. Appropriate actions may include:
 - requiring third-party contractors to comply with the organisation's policies and procedures
 - monitoring compliance by third-party contractors with the Child Safe Standards and/or the organisation's policies and procedures
 - working with third-party contractors to identify, prevent and reduce risks of child abuse and harm
 - where an organisation is unable to adequately manage risks of child abuse and harm posed by third-party contractors, consider terminating the contract or take other appropriate action to protect children.
- If appropriate, staff, volunteers, parents, carers and children are provided with information about online safety and risks in the online environment, such as online grooming, cyber bullying and sexting. Support is given to reporting negative experiences or concerns.

Practical actions to take right now:

- Ensure all involved in the organisation understands the concept of 'risk'. A risk is the possibility of something bad happening at some time in the future. You may be familiar with some types of risk and how to manage them, such as financial risk, legal risk, or occupational health and safety (OHS) risk. These are usually thought of as risks to the organisation.

For the Standards, you need to think about a different kind of risk – risks to children from the organisation or those involved with it, the activities undertaken by the organisation and its physical and online environments. This kind of risk management is focused on preventing and reducing **child abuse** and **harm**.

- Aim for a balanced approach between managing risk and being too cautious or risk averse. Organisations should not be so risk averse that they prevent healthy and positive relationships developing between adults and the children they work with.

Risk Management Process

1. Communicate and consult.

Perceiving risk can be subjective. Always consult with a wide range of people when identifying risks. Consult with children, children from particularly vulnerable groups, parents, families, carers, communities and staff and volunteers for their input on the risks they perceive.

2. Establish context

Consider all the different ways children engage with your organisation. Events, programs, activities, the IT and social media system and the decisions you make at governance level eg. reducing staff (and the impact that could have).

3. Risk Identification and Analysis

While thinking about the contexts consider all the different ways children could be harmed or abused (grooming, sexual abuse, physical violence, serious neglect, bullying, abuse by adults or other children, abuse by volunteers or paid staff etc)

When thinking about child safety, consider risks from four different angles:

- Situational. What is happening, and where?
- Vulnerability. Who is most vulnerable?
- Propensity. What are the people, staff and volunteers engaging like?
- Institutional. Does your organisation have the internal structures (culture, attitude, skills, policies, practices and resources) to empower children?

When assessing the risk (likelihood vs consequence) you should always consider the consequence of child abuse and harm to be severe or catastrophic.

4. Risk Management

Risk management plans should thoroughly document all identified risks to child safety and wellbeing and record the way your organisation will manage each one.

[Risk assessment and management templates](#) have been developed to help you complete your child safe risk assessments and management plan.

5. Monitoring and Review

Understand risk management is not 'set and forget'. The risks need to be assessed every time you introduce a new activity, venue, staff member etc. Risk management plans should be reviewed regularly to check they have been implemented, and to monitor their effectiveness. Good practice is to review risk management plans annually, but sometimes you might need to do this more frequently so they stay up-to-date with changes in your organisation.

The online environment

Just like physical environments, online environments need to be included when implementing the Standards and assessing the risks of child abuse or harm. This means that online behaviour needs to be covered in your organisation's Code of Conduct and addressed in your Child Safety and Wellbeing Policy and practices.

Be aware of:

- opportunities for unwanted or unsupervised contact with children
- opportunities for grooming
- cyberbullying and abuse such as 'trolling'
- risks of exposure to inappropriate, illicit or explicit content or imagery
- access to content that is not age-appropriate
- sharing personal information that can be used later to cause harm to a child, including requesting or sending images
- possible breaches of privacy, including sharing or acquiring without permission or stealing personal or sensitive information or personal images

- people not connected to the organisation viewing online activities, or accessing a child's computer to obtain information about children (for example, names or email addresses)
- scams targeting children.

The [eSafety Commissioner](#) has information about popular and emerging online technologies and ways to manage online risks.

Third Party Contractors

You can manage the risks to children presented by third parties in different ways. For example:

- check with any third parties you engage about how they incorporate child safety considerations and expectations in their policies and practices
- provide a copy of your Code of Conduct and Child Safety and Wellbeing Policy and ask third parties to read and agree to work within these requirements. You may include this requirement in any procurement contracts
- be clear in any procurement contracts what your organisation will do if a third party fails to meet the requirements for child safety
- establish any points of contact between the third party and children and put specific risk management strategies in place, like using sign in/sign out registers or supervising the third party onsite
- duty of care may be incorporated into contractual arrangements or agreements with third parties where relevant, however, these arrangements should recognise your organisation retains the primary duty of care
- ensure that reporting or information sharing arrangements cover any child safety incidents or significant changes that may affect the delivery of care to children under the arrangement.

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

In complying with Child Safe Standard 10 an organisation must, at a minimum, ensure:

10.1 The organisation regularly reviews, evaluates and improves child safe practices.

10.2 Complaints, concerns and safety incidents are analysed to identify causes and systemic failures to inform continuous improvement.

10.3 The organisation reports on the findings of relevant reviews to staff and volunteers, community and families, and children and young people.

Essential Documents

- All policies and procedures have a regular review period indicated in the document.
- Reports document any child safety and wellbeing reviews and findings.

Essential Actions

- Records are kept of complaints, concerns, allegations and actions taken to respond.
- Complaints, concerns, safety incidents or significant breaches of policy (such as the Code of Conduct) are examined to understand what caused the problem and whether there are any flaws in the organisation's policies, procedures and practices that contributed to the problem. Where flaws or failings are identified, improvements are made to prevent the problem from happening again.

- The organisation regularly reviews policies, procedures and child safe practices, and makes improvements considering:
 - analysis of complaints, concerns, safety incidents and significant breaches of policy
 - feedback sought from staff, volunteers, children, families and communities
 - whether the organisation has fully implemented each of the Child Safe Standards.

- Reports about the findings and actions taken in response to reviews of the organisation's child safe practices are shared with staff, volunteers, children, families and communities.

Practical Actions to take right now:

- Set a review timetable. You need to regularly check that your policies, procedures and practices are up-to-date and effective, and that they are fully implemented and followed by everyone. Reviews may be annual, more often if necessary or a response to change or an incident.

- When reviewing:
 - identify what is working well in your child safe approach
 - check that policies and procedures are fit for purpose, understood by everyone and have been properly implemented and followed
 - have a continuous improvement approach to child safe practices
 - learn from safety incidents, concerns, complaints and feedback
 - address weaknesses, failures or gaps in child safe systems
 - adapt to address new challenges or concerns
 - reflect on any changes in your organisation
 - ensure you have involved your community in your approach to child safety and wellbeing

- Who does the review, and whether you review 1 thing or everything will depend on the size of your organisation, however you should always

include actions, timeframes, roles and responsibilities and success indicators as part of the review.

A review looks like this:

1. Collect information

- Child safety and wellbeing policies, codes of conduct, complaints and reporting policies and procedures, risk management frameworks, record keeping and information sharing policies, and diversity and inclusion policies, records about how staff and volunteer recruitment, screening, induction and training is actually completed, what communication or engagement happens with your community, programs, training or workshops; how you provide culturally safe environments and promote equity and diversity, and whether children are informed about safety, rights or participation and feedback and incident-related reports. Also look externally and gather information about any relevant new legislative requirements or regulations and best practice approaches.

2. Consult

- staff (including leaders) and volunteers
- children
- families, including parents and carers
- members
- related organisations, such as organisations you share facilities or activities with, third-party providers, or peak bodies
- other community groups or members with an interest in child safety in your organisation.

3. Assess the information

Think about whether changes need to be made to:

- culture
- governance
- policies and procedures

- communication
- training
- risk management
- consultation
- reporting
- interactions between staff and volunteers with children
- record keeping and information sharing
- other areas of practice.

4. Make findings and plan for improvement

Child safe organisations are open and transparent about their child safe practices. You should report findings from reviews to staff and volunteers, children in your organisation, their families, and other relevant community members.

Warning:

It is **not** appropriate for organisations to publicly report information that is personal or sensitive. Your organisation may be able to share themes or high level, non-identifying summaries of complaints, safety concerns or safety incidents in a way that protects personal or sensitive information of individuals.

Here is a list of helpful questions to ask during a review:

- Do our existing policies, practices and procedures address all the Standards?
- Do people know how to raise child safety concerns and complaints?
- Do people know what to do if an allegation of child abuse or harm is disclosed?
- What is working well in our current child safe practices and systems?
- Where are the weaknesses, gaps or recurring issues in our child safe practices and systems that need attention?
- Have we identified any risks of harm or abuse to children that have not been properly managed?

- Has anything changed (such as new activities, facilities or different participants) that require changes to our policies, procedures and practices? Do the changes alter how we need to communicate about them?
- Are our policies and procedures accessible, widely known and understood by all the organisation's community?
- Are our policies, procedures and practices consistently followed by staff and volunteers?
- What do complaints (or lack of them), concerns, safety incidents and feedback tell us about how well things are working to keep children safe? What does this tell us about what people think about our policies, practices and procedures?
- Are our child safe practices inclusive, meeting the diverse needs of all children in our organisation?
- Are our child safe practices and systems up-to-date and consider any changes to legislation or major developments in child safety?
- What do our indicators from community consultation tell us about where things might need to change?
- What can we learn from our successes and mistakes?

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

In complying with Child Safe Standard 11 an organisation must, at a minimum, ensure:

- 11.1 Policies and procedures address all Child Safe Standards.
- 11.2 Policies and procedures are documented and easy to understand.
- 11.3 Best practice models and stakeholder consultation informs the development of policies and procedures.
- 11.4 Leaders champion and model compliance with policies and procedures.
- 11.5 Staff and volunteers understand and implement policies and procedures.

Essential Documents

A Child Safety and Wellbeing Policy sets out the organisation's expectations, practices and approach in relation to each of the Child Safe Standards.

A Code of Conduct sets out the expectations for behaviour and responsibilities of staff and volunteers.

Risk assessment and management plans address risks of child abuse and harm.

The complaint handling policy and processes address how the organisation will respond and all internal and external reporting obligations.

Organisational recruitment, human resources and volunteering policies have a clear child safety focus.

If your organisation contracts facilities and/or services from third parties, procurement policies ensure the safety of children.

Essential Actions

- Regular consultation on child safety with everyone involved in your organisation is undertaken.

The organisation uses input from consultations and available information about creating child safety and wellbeing to help develop, review and update policies and procedures related to child safety.

The organisation's policies and procedures cover all the Child Safe Standards and address the risks to the safety of children that are specific to the organisation and its environment.

Policies and procedures are easy to understand and can be accessed easily.

Practical actions to take right now:

- Incorporate child safety in your other policies (where relevant). This will embed child safe policies and practices in your organisation. Child safety should not be seen as an add-on or something separate. Rather, it is an everyday part of how your organisation operates.
- It is not enough to think about preferred practices or believe that everyone in the organisation is already doing the right thing. Rules and expectations need to be written down and formalised in policy so they can be shared and used to embed child safety consistently.
- While policies and procedures need to be thorough and accurate, try to keep the language and contents as simple and accessible as possible. They should be easy for everyone to understand.
- Policies and procedures should not be:
 - long, complex documents that stay 'on the shelf' and are not used or known about
 - out-of-date and not trusted by staff and volunteers as presenting the organisation's current position
 - developed in isolation from staff and volunteers, the children they work with or families and carers

- ignored by leaders, staff or volunteers.

If you recognise your organisation in the above points, seek assistance on how to write or adopt Policies and Procedures that everyone can relate to and use.

Ask these questions:

Who are our staff and volunteers, and what is their capacity to read and apply this policy?

What kind of images, diagrams, maps or simplified language can we use to make this policy short and easy to understand?

How can we make this policy, or key information from it, accessible to children?

Do we need a specific version of the policy for children and their families?

How can we communicate the policy to people to support them to understand its purpose and how to use it?

How will we make the policy accessible to people from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds, or people with disability?

How can we invite feedback to make the policy more accessible?

Aim for best practice. Best practice in child safety for your organisation is what works for your unique circumstances. What works for one organisation may not work for another. Research best practice.

Try searching online for:

Commission for Children and Young People guidance

other Commissioners for Children and Young People around Australia

Royal Commission into Institutional Responses to Child Sexual Abuse

National Office for Child Safety

industry and sector peak bodies

academic and other research.

Keep a record of updates and other resources you find useful here, as well as questions you need answers to:

Organisation name Child Safety and Wellbeing Policy and Procedures

(suitable for a small organisation. Overarching policy which may be followed up with procedures dealing with each standard??)

(Organisation name) acknowledges the (local traditional owners) People, the Traditional Owners of the land on which we operate. We acknowledge and respect their contributions, experience and knowledge as First Nations people. We pay our respects to their Elders, past and present and their young leaders.

This Child Safety and Wellbeing Policy demonstrates the strong commitment of management, staff and volunteers to child safety and wellbeing, and how our organisation keeps children safe from harm, including child abuse.

Commitment to child safety

All children who come to (Organisation name) have a right to feel and be safe. The welfare of the children in our care will always be our first priority and we have a zero-tolerance approach to child abuse and harm. We aim to create a child safe and child-friendly environment where children feel safe and have fun while participating and enjoying our programs and activities.

Purpose

This Policy outlines how (Organisation name) prioritises the safety and wellbeing of children and what steps we will take to do this.

Scope

This policy applies to all staff, volunteers, Governance Committee members, children and other individuals involved in our organisation. This policy applies to all programs, activities and social interactions conducted by and held at (Organisation name)

Definitions

Governance Committee means the President, Vice President, Secretary, Treasurer and general committee members that provide strategic direction and are responsible for legal and compliance oversight of (Organisation name)

Child abuse means:

a sexual offence committed against a child
an offence committed against a child under section 49M(1) of the Crimes Act 1958 (Vic), such as grooming
physical violence against a child
causing serious emotional or psychological harm to a child
serious neglect of a child.

Harm is damage to the health, safety or wellbeing of a child or young person, including as a result of child abuse by adults or the conduct of other children. It includes physical, emotional, sexual and psychological harm. Harm can arise from a single act or event and can also be cumulative, that is, arising as a result of a series of acts or events over a period of time.

Child/Children means a person who is under the age of 18 years.

Concerns and complaints

A concern refers to any potential issue that could impact negatively on the safety and wellbeing of children.

A complaint is an expression of dissatisfaction to (Organisation name) related to one or more of the following:

our services or dealings with individuals
allegations of abuse or misconduct by a staff member, a volunteer or another individual associated with (Organisation name)
disclosures of abuse or harm made by a child or young person
the conduct of a child or young person at (Organisation name)
the inadequate handling of a prior concern
can take the form of general concerns about the safety of a group of children or activity.

Role of the Management Committee

The Governance Committee has the role of making sure (Organisation name) prioritises children's safety and that action is taken when anyone raises concerns or tenders a complaint about children's safety.

The Management Committee will champion and model a child safe culture at (Organisation name). We encourage anyone involved with the organisation to report a child safety concern. The Governance Committee will work to create a positive culture around reporting so that people feel comfortable to raise concerns.

Everyone at (Organisation name) has a role in identifying and managing risks of child abuse and harm. The Governance Committee will make sure that staff and volunteers are conducting risk assessments and taking action to manage risks in accordance with

this policy. They will also ensure that appropriate child safety training for staff and volunteers is identified and completed.

The Governance Committee will conduct an annual review of how effectively (Organisation name) is delivering child safety and wellbeing. The input of people involved with (Organisation name) will be sought as part of this review.

Children's empowerment and participation

(Organisation name) actively seeks to include children's views and ideas in our organisational planning, delivery of services, and management of facilities.

We want children to develop new friendships through (Organisation name) programs and activities and encourage children to be supportive of each other. We do not tolerate bullying or abusive behaviour between children and take action if this occurs.

We respect the rights of children and provide them with information about their rights, including the right to be safe at (Organisation name). We actively seek to understand what makes children feel safe in our organisation. We regularly communicate with children about what they can do if they feel unsafe.

(Organisation name) values the voices of children and will act on safety concerns raised by children or their families. (Organisation name) supports children's participation in the following ways:

Regular discussions with children, including child-led conversations on what makes them feel safe and unsafe.

A suggestion box for children that is regularly emptied with suggestions assessed and acted on where appropriate. Children are provided with feedback on their suggestions.

Consultation with children about any proposed significant changes to the physical environment, policies, procedures, programs or staffing. Children's views are collected by staff, provided to management and considered in the decision-making process.

Information provided to children and families about (Organisation name) operations, staffing and programs are made suitable for different age groups and diversity of the children. Child safety information sessions will be offered in a language other than English where needed.

Families and communities

(Organisation name) recognises the important role of families and involves parents and carers when making significant decisions about their child. Parents, families and communities are welcome to provide feedback at any time through our contact email address and are encouraged to raise any concerns they have with us.

(Organisation name) provides information to families and community about our child safe policies and practices including through:

publishing this Child Safety and Wellbeing Policy and Code of Conduct on our website including information about our child safety approach, our operations and

Management Committee and management structure, in the (Organisation name) parent and carer information handout

including articles and information on child safety and wellbeing, and reminders about our policies and procedures, in our newsletter.

Creating culturally safe environments for all Aboriginal children and their families

(Organisation name) is committed to creating environments where Aboriginal culture is celebrated and Aboriginal children, families and community members are welcomed and included. Strategies to embed cultural safety for Aboriginal children include:

an Acknowledgement of Country at all formal meetings

consulting with families and members of the Aboriginal community to identify opportunities to promote Aboriginal culture and practices in the (Organisation name) programs and activities

providing opportunities for children to share their cultural identity and express their culture, including through performance and during Kids Have Fun Performing Arts Academy community activities

supporting children who wish to explore their culture, including consulting with their family and relevant Aboriginal organisations

providing training for staff and volunteers on the strengths of Aboriginal culture and its importance to the wellbeing and safety of Aboriginal children

celebrating NAIDOC Week and acknowledging significant events including National Sorry Day and National Reconciliation Week

seeking feedback from Aboriginal children, families and communities on their experience at (Organisation name), particularly how safe they feel expressing their identity including their culture.

Valuing diversity

We value diversity and equity for all children. To achieve this, we:

provide training for all Governance Committee members, staff and volunteers on understanding diversity and how to support inclusion and cultural safety

welcome and support participation of all children, including children with disability, children from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds, those who are unable to live at home, LGBTIQ children and Aboriginal children and their families

offer students and families through our enrolment forms the opportunity to provide information about themselves, including any specific needs to participate fully in our programs

have zero tolerance of racism and other forms of discrimination and take action when discrimination or exclusion is identified

deliver programming that reflects the diversity of our students, their interests and cultures

strive to reflect the diversity of our community through representation in our staff and Governance Committee members

acknowledge and celebrate important cultural dates

have a physical and online environment that actively celebrates diversity

commit to ensuring our facilities and online activities promote inclusion of children of all abilities.

Code of Conduct

(Organisation name) has a Child Safe Code of Conduct. Staff, volunteers and the Governance Committee must comply with the Code of Conduct at all times. Breaches of the Code of Conduct may result in disciplinary action including termination of a person's involvement with the organisation.

All third-party contractors are also expected to abide by the Child Safe Code of Conduct, and where they are engaging with children will have to sign an agreement to comply with the code, prior to delivering any services.

Recruiting staff and volunteers

(Organisation name) puts child safety and wellbeing at the centre of recruitment and screening processes for staff and volunteers as outlined in the recruitment and screening policy. We only recruit staff and volunteers who are appropriate to engage with children. Members of the Governance Committee must also be screened.

We require a Working with Children Check, Police Checks and referee checks for all staff and volunteers who have a role with children or have access to children's personal information. We require staff to have appropriate qualifications for their roles and check to make sure these qualifications are valid. Members of the Governance Committee must hold a valid Working with Children Check and a national Police Check is required.

Supporting staff and volunteers

(Organisation name) is committed to ensuring that all leaders, staff and volunteers receive training to ensure they understand their responsibilities in relation to child safety and to support their engagement with children. (Organisation name) assists its leaders, staff and volunteers to incorporate child safety considerations into decisions

and to promote a safe environment where children are empowered to speak up about issues that affect them.

Complaints and reporting

All reports of child abuse and child safety concerns will be treated seriously, whether they are made by an adult or a child and whether they are about the conduct of an adult or a child. All complaints and child safety concerns will be responded to promptly and thoroughly.

(**Organisation name**) has a complaint handling policy that includes information for staff and volunteers about how a complaint or child safety concern will be responded to. An easy-to-understand complaints information sheet will be provided for children, families and the community to know about the complaint process and the supports available to those making a complaint and those involved in the complaint process.

If a complaint includes an allegation or incident of child abuse or harm, then staff and volunteers at **Organisation name** must report it in accordance with the complaint handling policy. **Organisation name** staff and volunteers are required to prioritise children's safety in any response and to report all potentially criminal conduct to Victoria Police. Under the complaint handling and disciplinary policies, staff and volunteers may be subject to actions to support child safety including:

being stood down during an investigation or terminated following an investigation
having their duties altered so they do not engage with children at **Organisation name**
not being allowed unsupervised contact with children at **Organisation name**
removing their access to the **Organisation name** IT system and facilities.

Complaints can be emailed to [organisation email address](#) or you can speak with the Manager or Committee member

If there is concern for the immediate safety of a child, immediately call 000.

Record keeping

Organisation name is committed to making and keeping full and accurate records about all child-related complaints or safety concerns.

All child safety complaints, concerns, incidents and near misses will be recorded in the incident reporting system.

Records which may assist with the investigation of a complaint or safety concern will be identified and kept as part of the record of an investigation. Records will be kept even if an investigation does not substantiate a complaint.

We will record and keep the outcome of any investigations, and the resolution of any complaints. This includes findings made, reasons for decisions and actions taken.

Records will be stored securely and kept by **Organisation name** for at least 45 years.

Confidentiality

Organisation name may share relevant information to promote the safety and wellbeing of children, where it is appropriate and in their best interests. **Organisation name** will keep information about complaints confidential, except where it is necessary to share information to respond properly to a complaint or to prioritise child safety. We may also need to share information about incidents or complaints with external authorities to comply with the law or to prioritise safety. Please refer to our complaint handling policy.

Risk management

We recognise the importance of identifying and managing risks of child harm and abuse in the physical and online environments **Organisation name**

We conduct regular risk assessments and have a risk management plan to address the risk of child abuse and harm at **Organisation name**. The risk management plan will be developed in consultation with our staff, volunteers, parents and children. We will ensure that any risk controls put in place balance the need to manage harm with the benefits of participating in programs and activities. The Management Committee is responsible for approving the risk management plan.

Any contractors or other providers of services using our venue will be provided with a copy of this Policy to ensure child safety when room booking. The **Organisation name** Code of Conduct applies to all room hirers.

Non-compliance with this policy and the Code of Conduct

Organisation name will enforce this policy, the Code of Conduct and any other child safety and wellbeing policies (see list below). Potential breaches by anyone will be investigated and may result in termination of room hire, restriction of duties, suspension or termination of employment or engagement or other corrective action.

[More information can be found in our disciplinary policy.](#)

Review

Organisation name will review all child safe practices and policies at least every two years. We also review relevant practices and policies in response to a child safety incident or 'near miss'. Findings from reviews will be reported to the people involved in our organisation and also inform our approach to continuous improvement of our child safety practices. Reviews are conducted and approved by the Governance Committee and will be informed by consultation with children, families and staff.

Supporting documents

any other child safety policies

Child Safe Standards 1 July 2022

Code of Conduct
complaint handling policy
recruitment and screening policy
disciplinary policy
risk management plan
professional development training plan.

Supporting legislation

Child Wellbeing and Safety Act 2005 (Vic) (including Child Safe Standards)
Children, Youth and Families Act 2005 (Vic) (including reporting to Child Protection)
Crimes Act 1958 (Vic) (including Failure to Protect and Failure to Disclose offences)
Wrongs Act 1958 (Vic) (including Part XIII – Organisational liability for child abuse)

Child Safety Standards

Organisation name CODE OF CONDUCT

We are committed to having an organisation that is safe for all children where child abuse and harm are not tolerated. Child safety is a priority for **organisation name** and the prevention and reporting of abuse is supported and encouraged. All Committee members, staff, volunteers and facilitators are responsible for promoting the safety, wellbeing and empowerment of children. **Organisation name** recognises that discrimination can harm children and we treat all children with dignity and respect.

This Code of Conduct sets expectations for how Committee members, staff, volunteers and facilitators at **organisation name** should behave around children. This helps children participate safely in our programs/activities and have fun.

Not following standards of acceptable and unacceptable behaviour is a breach of this Code of Conduct and may result in disciplinary action. Some behaviours on their own may not be a serious breach of the Code of Conduct but together may indicate a concerning pattern of behaviour that poses a risk to the safety of children. Our disciplinary policy provides further information on processes that will be followed if breaches are identified.

All **organisation name** Committee members, staff, volunteers and facilitators must always follow these standards of behaviour, including when at the **organisation name venue**, attending an offsite campus or excursion destination, in our online classes and when engaging with **organisation name** children and their families at any time:

I WILL:

- take all reasonable steps to protect children from abuse
- take disclosures of harm or abuse made by a child seriously
- raise concerns with management if risks to child safety are identified. Report and act on any concerns or observed breaches of this Code of Conduct
- participate in available training and professional development, especially training on child safety and wellbeing
- treat all children and young people with respect, regardless of race, sex, gender identity, sexual orientation, language, religion, political or other opinion, nationality, cultural background, financial situation, disability or other characteristics
- consider the different needs of all children at **organisation name**, support them to participate fully in programs/activities and help them and their families feel included
- make Aboriginal children and families feel included and welcome at **organisation name** and support Aboriginal children to express their culture and enjoy their cultural rights
- never be racist towards anyone at **organisation name** and report any instances of racism I become aware of

- help **organisation name** be a place where people of all cultures feel safe and included
- listen to children and respond to them if they feel unsafe.
- value children and young people's ideas and opinions
- promote friendships and encourage children and young people to support their peers
- involve children and young people in decisions about the activities they participate in at **organisation name** and welcome the participation of parents and carers in these decisions
- report any conflicts of interest I have (such as an outside relationship with a child) that may affect my ability to perform my role
- respect the privacy of children and their families, including keeping all personal information confidential unless required by law to share it
- inform parents and carers if there are situations that need to be safely managed but are outside the boundaries of this Code of Conduct (such as driving a child off-site)
- ensure breaches of this Code are reported to our Manager immediately
- comply with all relevant Australian and Victorian legislation and our child safe policies and procedures
- uphold the rights of the child and always prioritise their needs.

I WILL NOT:

- condone or participate in illegal, unsafe, abusive or harmful behaviour towards children – this includes physical violence, sexual abuse, emotional or psychological abuse, grooming, neglect or sexual misconduct
- ignore or disregard any concerns, suspicions or disclosures of child abuse or harm
- exaggerate or trivialise child abuse issues
- use hurtful or offensive behaviour or language with children
- fail to report information to police if I know a child has been abused
- touch children in a way that is unnecessary or unsuitable and falls outside what is reasonable to engage with children at **organisation name**
- persistently criticise and/or denigrate a child
- deliberately prevent a child from forming friendships
- verbally assault a child or create a climate of fear
- offer children and young people alcohol, cigarettes or other drugs
- show children pornographic images
- share details of sexual experiences with a child
- use sexual language or gestures in the presence of children
- initiate unnecessary physical contact with children or do things of a personal nature that children can do for themselves such as changing clothes

- develop 'special' relationships with specific children or show favouritism through the provision of gifts or unnecessary or unsuitable attention
- have unauthorised contact with children and young people online, on social media or by phone
- take photographs, screenshots or share images of children involved in programs/activities that are not authorised by **organisation name**
- be alone with a child when there is no professional reason for doing so
- engage in babysitting, mentoring and/or tutoring a child out of work hours (without managerial approval for this kind of secondary employment)
- enter toilets or other facilities without first knocking.

If I suspect that this Code of Conduct has been breached by another person in the organisation:

I WILL:

- act to prioritise the best interests of the child or children
- promptly take actions to ensure the child or children are safe
- as soon as possible report the incident or concerns using the **organisation name** complaints process
- maintain the privacy of those involved, following **organisation name** record keeping, privacy and information sharing guidelines.

Complaints about a breach of this Code of Conduct must be reported to our Manager. The Manager can be contacted on her mobile: **0555 555 555**, or via her email: **manager@organisation name etc.**

Committee members, Staff and volunteers who breach our Code of Conduct may also be subject to disciplinary action. Some breaches of this Code of Conduct may need to be reported to the Victorian Police.

PLEASE NOTE:

If any person in a position of authority within our organisation becomes aware of a substantial risk that a child may become the victim of a sexual offence committed by an adult associated with the organisation (for example, an employee, facilitator, visitor or volunteer), and they have the power or responsibility to reduce or remove the risk, then they must take all reasonable steps to do so. A person in authority who negligently fails to take appropriate action to address the risk may be charged with the criminal offence of 'failing to protect' and may face a term of imprisonment.

If an adult reasonably believes a sexual offence has been committed by an adult against a child under the age of 16, they must report it to Victoria Police by calling 000 or going to their local police station. Failure to disclose the information may be a criminal offence.

I have read this Code of Conduct and agree to abide by its terms.

Name:

Signature:

Date:

Administration only:

Date Code of Conduct implemented:

Review date:

Responsible Party: Committee of Governance