

# Child Safe Standards

## Fact sheet

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## Child Safe Standards

The Child Safe Standards (Standards) were first introduced by the Victorian Government in January 2016 and subsequently updated on 1 July 2022.

The Standards set out the minimum requirements that all organisations who work with children and young people must meet to keep them safe. All organisations and businesses that provide services or facilities to children in Victoria must meet these requirements.

## Who must comply with the Standards?

The Standards apply to organisations and businesses that work with children and young people across Victoria, including out-of-home care services, support services for parents and families, homelessness services, family violence and sexual assault services, disability services for children and Victorian government departments.

A summary of the organisations and businesses covered by the standards can be found at <https://ccyp.vic.gov.au/child-safe-standards/who-do-the-standards-apply-to-page/>.

## Who regulates the Standards?

There are a number of sector regulators and integrated sector regulators for the Standards in Victoria and organisations may have multiple sector regulators depending on the services they provide and/or funding they receive. For organisations regulated by the Department of Families, Fairness and Housing (the Department), the Human Services Regulator is responsible for promoting, monitoring, and enforcing compliance with the Standards.

## What are the Standards?

There are 11 Standards as detailed in Table 1. Each Standard is expressed as an expected outcome and includes minimum requirements that organisations must meet to comply with the Standard.

Table 1: The Child Safe Standards and minimum requirements

| Child Safe Standards |   |
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| <b>Standard 1</b>    | <p><b>Relevant entities establish a culturally safe environment in which the diverse and unique identities and experiences of Aboriginal children and young people are respected and valued.</b></p> <p>In complying with Child Safe Standard 1, a relevant entity must, at a minimum, ensure:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1.1 A child's ability to express their culture and enjoy their cultural rights is encouraged and actively supported.</li> <li>1.2 Strategies are embedded within the relevant entity 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.</li> <li>1.3 Measures are adopted by the relevant entity to ensure racism within the relevant entity is identified, confronted and not tolerated. Any instances of racism are addressed with appropriate consequences.</li> <li>1.4 The relevant entity actively supports and facilitates participation and inclusion within it by Aboriginal children, young people and their families.</li> <li>1.5 All of the relevant entity'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.</li> </ul> |
| <b>Standard 2</b>    | <p><b>Child safety and wellbeing is embedded in organisational leadership, governance and culture.</b></p> <p>In complying with Child Safe Standard 2, a relevant entity must, at a minimum, ensure:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>2.1 The relevant entity makes a public commitment to child safety.</li> <li>2.2 A child safe culture is championed and modelled at all levels of the relevant entity from the top down and bottom up.</li> <li>2.3 Governance arrangements facilitate implementation of the child safety and wellbeing policy at all levels.</li> <li>2.4 A Code of Conduct provides guidelines for staff and volunteers on expected behavioural standards and responsibilities.</li> <li>2.5 Risk management strategies focus on preventing, identifying and mitigating risks to children and young people.</li> <li>2.6 Staff and volunteers understand their obligations on information sharing and recordkeeping.</li> </ul>  |
| <b>Standard 3</b>    | <p><b>Children and young people are empowered about their rights, participate in decisions affecting them and are taken seriously.</b></p> <p>In complying with Child Safe Standard 3, a relevant entity must, at a minimum, ensure:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>3.1 Children and young people are informed about all of their rights, including to safety, information and participation.</li> <li>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.</li> <li>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.</li> <li>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.</li> </ul>   |



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|                             | <p>3.5 Relevant entities have strategies in place to develop a culture that facilitates participation and is responsive to the input of children and young people.</p> <p>3.6 Relevant entities provide opportunities for children and young people to participate and are responsive to their contributions, thereby strengthening confidence and engagement.</p>  |
| <b>Standard 4</b>           | <p><b>Families and communities are informed and involved in promoting child safety and wellbeing.</b></p> <p>In complying with Child Safe Standard 4, a relevant entity must, at a minimum, ensure:</p> <p>4.1 Families participate in decisions affecting their child.</p> <p>4.2 The relevant entity engages and openly communicates with families and the community about its child safe approach and relevant information is accessible.</p> <p>4.3 Families and communities have a say in the development and review of the relevant entity's policies and practices.</p> <p>4.4 Families, carers and the community are informed about the relevant entity's operations and governance.</p>  |
| <b>Standard 5</b>           | <p><b>Equity is upheld and diverse needs respected in policy and practice.</b></p> <p>In complying with Child Safe Standard 5, a relevant entity must, at a minimum, ensure:</p> <p>5.1 The relevant entity, including staff and volunteers, understands children and young people's diverse circumstances, and provides support and responds to those who are vulnerable.</p> <p>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.</p> <p>5.3 The relevant entity 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.</p> <p>5.4 The relevant entity pays particular attention to the needs of Aboriginal children and young people and provides/promotes a culturally safe environment for them.</p> |
| <b>Standard 6</b>           | <p><b>People working with children and young people are suitable and supported to reflect child safety and wellbeing values in practice.</b></p> <p>In complying with Child Safe Standard 6, a relevant entity must, at a minimum, ensure:</p> <p>6.1 Recruitment, including advertising, referee checks and staff and volunteer pre-employment screening, emphasise child safety and wellbeing.</p> <p>6.2 Relevant staff and volunteers have current working with children checks or equivalent background checks.</p> <p>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.</p> <p>6.4 Ongoing supervision and people management is focused on child safety and wellbeing.</p>   |

| <b>Child Safe Standards</b> |  |
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| <b>Standard 7</b>           | <p><b>Processes for complaints and concerns are child-focused.</b></p> <p>In complying with Child Safe Standard 7, a relevant entity must, at a minimum, ensure:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>7.1 The relevant entity 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.</li> <li>7.2 Effective complaint handling processes are understood by children and young people, families, staff and volunteers, and are culturally safe.</li> <li>7.3 Complaints are taken seriously and responded to promptly and thoroughly.</li> <li>7.4 The relevant entity 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.</li> <li>7.5 Reporting, privacy and employment law obligations are met.</li> </ul> |
| <b>Standard 8</b>           | <p><b>Staff and volunteers are equipped with the knowledge, skills and awareness to keep children and young people safe through ongoing education and training.</b></p> <p>In complying with Child Safe Standard 8, a relevant entity must, at a minimum, ensure:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>8.1 Staff and volunteers are trained and supported to effectively implement the relevant entity's child safety and wellbeing policy.</li> <li>8.2 Staff and volunteers receive training and information to recognise indicators of child harm including harm caused by other children and young people.</li> <li>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.</li> <li>8.4 Staff and volunteers receive training and information on how to build culturally safe environments for children and young people.</li> </ul>   |
| <b>Standard 9</b>           | <p><b>Physical and online environments promote safety and wellbeing while minimising the opportunity for children and young people to be harmed.</b></p> <p>In complying with Child Safe Standard 9, a relevant entity must, at a minimum, ensure:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>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.</li> <li>9.2 The online environment is used in accordance with the relevant entity's Code of Conduct and child safety and wellbeing policy and practices.</li> <li>9.3 Risk management plans consider risks posed by organisational settings, activities, and the physical environment.</li> <li>9.4 Relevant entities that contract facilities and services from third parties have procurement policies that ensure the safety of children and young people.</li> </ul>  |
| <b>Standard 10</b>          | <p><b>Implementation of the Child Safe Standards is regularly reviewed and improved.</b></p> <p>In complying with Child Safe Standard 10, a relevant entity must, at a minimum, ensure:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>10.1 The relevant entity regularly reviews, evaluates and improves child safe practices.</li> <li>10.2 Complaints, concerns and safety incidents are analysed to identify causes and systemic failures to inform continuous improvement.</li> <li>10.3 The relevant entity reports on the findings of relevant reviews to staff and volunteers, community and families and children and young people.</li> </ul>  |



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| <b>Standard 11</b>   | <p><b>Policies and procedures document how the organisation is safe for children and young people.</b></p> <p>In complying with Child Safe Standard 11, a relevant entity must, at a minimum, ensure:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>11.1 Policies and procedures address all Child Safe Standards.</li> <li>11.2 Policies and procedures are documented and easy to understand.</li> <li>11.3 Best practice models and stakeholder consultation informs the development of policies and procedures.</li> <li>11.4 Leaders champion and model compliance with policies and procedures.</li> <li>11.5 Staff and volunteers understand and implement policies and procedures.</li> </ul> |

## Where to get more information?

You may find information about the Standards on the Commission for Children and Young People's website: [www.ccyp.vic.gov.au](http://www.ccyp.vic.gov.au)

You may find further information about the Human Services Regulator on the Human Services Regulator's website: <https://www.dffh.vic.gov.au/human-services-regulator>

To receive this document in another format, phone 1300 310 778, using the National Relay Service 13 36 77 if required, or [email Child Safe Orgs](mailto:childsafeorgs@dffh.vic.gov.au) <childsafeorgs@dffh.vic.gov.au>

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