



What the Child Safe Standards mean for your children

Information for parents and carers



Child Safe Standards

All children have the right to feel safe and to be safe all the time. An organisation that provides a child safe environment is one that has a range of strategies and policies in place to ensure children are protected from harm and abuse.

To help keep children safe, the Victorian Government has introduced mandatory minimum Child Safe Standards (the Standards) for organisations that provide services or facilities for children.

This will assist organisations to:

- build a culture of child safety that makes child safety everyone's business
- apply a child safety lens to existing and new policies and practices
- set clear expectations for staff and volunteers in relation to child safety
- recruit child-safe staff and volunteers
- enable staff and volunteers to feel empowered to act in the best interests of children when they have safety concerns
- prevent child abuse, encourage reporting and improve responses to any allegations of child abuse
- identify and mitigate risks to child safety
- gain valuable information about how children experience the organisation.

You can check which types of organisations are in scope of the Standards by visiting the Department of Health and Human Services' [Compliance with Child Safe Standards webpage](http://providers.dhhs.vic.gov.au/compliance-child-safe-standards) <<http://providers.dhhs.vic.gov.au/compliance-child-safe-standards>>.

The Commission for Children and Young People and relevant authorities such as the Department of Health and Human Services, play important complementary roles in overseeing and promoting compliance with the Standards.

What do organisations have to do?

To comply with the Standards, an organisation must have:

1. strategies to embed an organisational culture of child safety through effective leadership arrangements
2. a child safe policy
3. a code of conduct that establishes clear expectations for appropriate behaviour with children
4. screening, supervision, training and other human resources practices that reduce the risk of child abuse by new and existing personnel
5. processes for responding to and reporting suspected child abuse
6. strategies to identify and reduce or remove risks of child abuse
7. strategies to promote the participation and empowerment of children.

Child safety is everyone's responsibility

Organisations must also ensure they have a particular focus on promoting the cultural safety of Aboriginal children, the cultural safety of children from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds and the safety of children with a disability.

What can you do?

To be confident your child is safe when attending a service or facility and to help you know what measures you should see in place, please refer to the tip sheet [What to look for in a child safe organisation](https://ccyp.vic.gov.au/assets/resources/tipsheet-childsafe-org-5922.pdf) <<https://ccyp.vic.gov.au/assets/resources/tipsheet-childsafe-org-5922.pdf>>. This resource includes a number of questions that you can ask your organisation including:

- 'Does the organisation provide training for staff on child abuse recognition and prevention?'
- 'Is there a clear and accessible complaints procedure for children, parents and staff?'
- 'Are policies in place to minimise risk involved in one-to-one situations with a child?'

You can also ask to see an organisation's evidence of compliance with the Standards. Organisations that provide services or facilities to children should be able to demonstrate how they have implemented the Standards.

If you believe an organisation should take a stronger approach to child safety, speak to someone in a leadership or management role. It may also be useful to talk to and listen to your child about their experiences of feeling safe in the organisation.

How can I raise a concern or complaint?

You can raise a concern or make a complaint by contacting:

Commission for Children and Young People

Phone: (03) 8601 5281

Email: childsafestandards@ccyp.vic.gov.au

Department of Health and Human Services

Refer to: <https://dhhs.vic.gov.au/making-complaint>

Victorian Ombudsman

Phone: (03) 9613 6222

Email: ombudvic@ombudsman.vic.gov.au

To receive this publication in an accessible format, email [Child Safe Orgs](mailto:ChildSafeOrgs@dhhs.vic.gov.au) <ChildSafeOrgs@dhhs.vic.gov.au>.

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In this document, 'Aboriginal' refers to both Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people. 'Indigenous' or 'Koori/Koorie' is retained when part of the title of a report, program or quotation.

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Available at <<https://providers.dhhs.vic.gov.au/child-safe-standards>>