



# A GUIDE FOR CREATING A CHILD SAFE ORGANISATION

Version 2.0 December 2015



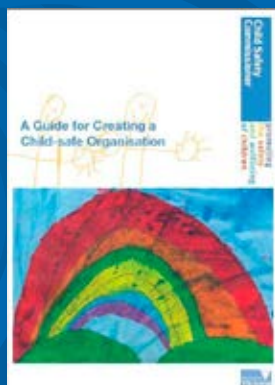
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COMMISSION FOR CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE

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This is the second, updated edition of *A Guide for Creating a Child-safe Organisation* produced by the Commission for Children and Young People. This edition replaces the 2006 edition shown here.



Disclaimer: This guide provides general information only. It is intended to help a broad range of organisations become more child safe. Each organisation will need to tailor this information to meet its own specific needs, consistent with its duty of care. While all care has been taken in the production of this guide, it is not intended to be legal advice. Because legislation and legal requirements change over time, organisations should confirm the legal requirements that apply to them and seek legal advice about their specific situation.

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The Commission for Children and Young People respectfully acknowledges the Traditional Owners of the country throughout Victoria and pays respect to the ongoing living cultures of First Peoples.

# Message from the Commissioners

We all have been entrusted with an obligation to do the best we possibly can to keep our children safe from harm. The abuse of children should not be tolerated in our community.

Never has the spotlight shone so brightly on the need for everyone to actively protect children from harm. The *Betrayal of Trust* report, the work of the Royal Commission into Institutional Responses to Child Sexual Abuse, and our Commission's recent inquiry report '*... as a good parent would...*', illustrate the undeniable need for organisations to have clear and transparent systems in place to keep children safe. From our work over the years in assisting organisations to become more child safe, we have found that safety does not just happen – you need to make it happen by enhancing your organisation's capacity to prevent and respond effectively to risks of harm to children. Children assess risk differently to adults, so it is vital that you consult with them and involve them in an ongoing way to gain their views and insights. As unsettling as it may be, as a starting point, we must acknowledge that physical, sexual, emotional, religious, cultural and racial abuse and neglect happen and that it is all of our responsibility to take action to protect children.

We applaud the Victorian government's adoption of mandatory child safe standards. These standards will help even the smallest organisations to strengthen the safety of their operations. We have no doubt that the Victorian community will welcome this initiative. It's good for children and their families, but it's also good for staff, volunteers, committees, boards and communities.

Together with the implementation of child safe standards and other new initiatives, Victoria's commitment to child safety is demonstrated in the *Commission for Children and Young People Act 2012* and the *Working with Children Act 2005*. The Commission for Children and Young People Act defines the role of the Commission for Children and Young People. Our functions include promoting the interests of vulnerable children and young people, and promoting child friendly and child safe practices within the Victorian community. We are grateful for the opportunity to do this work.

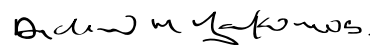
Our aim in producing this guide is to help you to assess how child safe your organisation currently is and give you practical guidance to improve your child safety and meet the Victorian child safe standards. This includes putting in place processes to ensure that you have appropriate people working or volunteering in your organisation, responding appropriately to allegations of abuse or misconduct, and, vitally, acting to prevent harm to children.

Many organisations have already started their journey to child safety and, for this, children are grateful. If that is you, we encourage you to share your expertise to inspire and support others who may have just begun this process.

We also encourage you go to [www.ccp.vic.gov.au](http://www.ccp.vic.gov.au) for additional helpful information and resources.



**Bernie Geary OAM**  
Principal Commissioner



**Andrew Jackomos PSM**  
Commissioner for Aboriginal  
Children and Young People

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All children  
have the right  
to feel safe  
and to be safe  
all of the time

# How this guide can help

The Commission for Children and Young People developed the first edition of *A Guide for Creating a Child-safe Organisation* in 2006. As a result of the introduction of compulsory minimum child safe standards in Victoria, the original guide has been updated. This new guide offers advice for organisations to help them improve their child safety approaches and make sure they comply with the new Victorian child safe standards.

Creating safe places for children to fully and actively participate in the life of the community benefits everyone. This guide will assist organisations to ensure that the children in their care are protected to the best of their ability and in line with their duty of care and the compulsory child safe standards.

# Useful definitions

## Child

The words 'child' and 'children' in this guide refers to children and young people up to the age of 18 years.

This definition is consistent with the national framework, *Creating Safe Environments for Children – Organisations, Employees and Volunteers*, the Commission for Children and Young People Act, the *Child Wellbeing and Safety Act 2005* and the *Children, Youth and Families Act 2005*.

The term 'child' in this guide is inclusive of anyone under 18 years of age. Not utilising the term 'young people' is not intended to diminish any emphasis on, or acknowledgement of, the safety risks to older children or teenagers.

## Harm and abuse

This guide uses a broader definition of 'abuse' of children than may be adopted in Victorian legislation. The use of the word 'harm' is often used to describe an event that is seen as possibly less detrimental than 'abuse' but is clearly not in the child's best interest or promoting their safety and wellbeing.

This guide acknowledges that there is a continuum of abuse of children and views all such events, regardless of whether they are seen as 'harm' or 'abuse', as damaging. This is discussed in more detail on page 11.

## Aboriginal

The term 'Aboriginal' in this guide is inclusive of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples.

# Setting the scene

Over the last decade, there has been significant research into child abuse in organisations. Measures have been identified that reduce the risk of children being exposed to or experiencing harm.

The following reports and initiatives are a good starting place if you would like to better understand child safety. They will help you plan how your organisation can best promote and provide a safe environment for children.

**Child abuse in organisations is happening now. It's not just in the past.**

## The Betrayal of Trust report

In April 2012, the Victorian government initiated an inquiry into the handling of child abuse allegations within religious and other non-government organisations. The inquiry's final report, *Betrayal of Trust*, made a number of recommendations that have been acted on by Victorian governments. These included:

- **Criminal law reform – offences relating to grooming, failure to protect and failure to disclose.** The three new laws are discussed in more detail on page 43.
- **Creating child safe organisations – mandatory child safe standards and a reportable conduct scheme.** The standards are compulsory for all organisations working with children. The proposed reportable conduct scheme will require centralised reporting of abuse allegations to an oversight body.

- **Civil law reform – removal of the time limit on legal action.** Legislation has removed the previous 12-year timeframe in which victims (including family members) needed to have commenced civil legal action for damages due to wrongful death (brought by dependants of a deceased victim) or personal injury resulting from child abuse. This reform applies to both past and future cases of child abuse.

**For more information on the implementation of these recommendations, go to:**

[www.justice.vic.gov.au/home/safer+communities/protecting+children+and+families/betrayal+of+trust+implementation](http://www.justice.vic.gov.au/home/safer+communities/protecting+children+and+families/betrayal+of+trust+implementation)

## United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child

A cornerstone of the development of universal child safe procedures is the rights that are outlined in the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (CROC). CROC specifically recognises that children have a right to be protected from physical and mental harm and neglect and be able to enjoy the full range of human rights – civil, cultural, economic, political and social rights. An extract of the convention can be found in Appendix 1.

**For more information on the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child, go to:**

[www.unicef.org/crc](http://www.unicef.org/crc)



## The Charter of Human Rights

Victoria's Charter of Human Rights and Responsibilities (the Charter) outlines the basic human rights of all people. It was introduced in Victoria through the *Charter of Human Rights and Responsibilities Act 2006*.

The Charter requires that governments, local councils and other public authorities not act inconsistently with the Charter and consider relevant rights when they make decisions.

**For more information on the Charter of Human Rights and Responsibilities, go to:**

[www.humanrightscommission.vic.gov.au](http://www.humanrightscommission.vic.gov.au)

## National Framework

Much of our nationwide thinking about child safety in organisations began in 2006 with the development of the national framework, *Creating Safe Environments for Children – Organisations, Employees and Volunteers*<sup>1</sup>, particularly the first schedule, *Guidelines for Building the Capacity of Child-Safe Organisations*.

**For more information on the national framework, go to:**

[www.ccyp.vic.gov.au/childsafetycommissioner/downloads/childsafeframework.pdf](http://www.ccyp.vic.gov.au/childsafetycommissioner/downloads/childsafeframework.pdf)

[www.ccyp.vic.gov.au/childsafetycommissioner/downloads/childsafesched01.pdf](http://www.ccyp.vic.gov.au/childsafetycommissioner/downloads/childsafesched01.pdf)

## The Royal Commission into Institutional Responses to Child Sexual Abuse

The Royal Commission into Institutional Responses to Child Sexual Abuse (Royal Commission) has investigated how institutions or organisations, such as schools, churches, sports clubs and government organisations, have responded to allegations and instances of child sexual abuse.

The Royal Commission's research and recommendations on best practice aim to provide guidance:

to protect against the occurrence of child sexual abuse and to respond appropriately when any allegations and incidents of child sexual abuse occur, including holding perpetrators to account and providing justice to victims.<sup>2</sup>

**For more information on the Royal Commission, go to:**

[www.childabuseroyalcommission.gov.au](http://www.childabuseroyalcommission.gov.au)

<sup>1</sup> Community and Disability Services Ministers' Conference, *National Framework: Creating Safe Environments For Children – Organisations, Employees and Volunteers* (2006).

<sup>2</sup> Royal Commission into Institutional Responses to Child Sexual Abuse, 'Terms of Reference', *Royal Commission into Institutional Responses to Child Sexual Abuse* (2014) <<http://www.childabuseroyalcommission.gov.au/about-us/terms-of-reference>>, accessed September 2015.

# Victoria's compulsory child safe standards

## Who do the standards apply to?

**Victorian organisations that provide services to children will be required under the Child Safety and Wellbeing Act to ensure that they implement compulsory child safe standards to protect children from harm.**

Organisations included exercise care, supervision or authority over children, whether as part of its primary function or otherwise.

**For more information on the organisations this legislation applies to, go to:**

[www.dhs.vic.gov.au/about-the-department/documents-and-resources/policies,-guidelines-and-legislation/in-scope-organisations-for-child-safe-standards](http://www.dhs.vic.gov.au/about-the-department/documents-and-resources/policies,-guidelines-and-legislation/in-scope-organisations-for-child-safe-standards)

## How can organisations comply with the standards?

To comply with the compulsory child safe standards, an organisation must include the following principles as part of each standard:

- promoting the cultural safety of Aboriginal children
- promoting the cultural safety of children from culturally and/or linguistically diverse backgrounds
- promoting the safety of children with a disability.

To create and maintain a child safe organisation, an organisation to which the standards apply must have:

1. strategies to embed an organisational culture of child safety, through effective leadership arrangements
2. a Child Safe Policy or Statement of Commitment to Child Safety
3. a Code of Conduct that establishes clear expectations for appropriate behaviour with children
4. screening, supervision, training and other human resource 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.

**This guide discusses these requirements in detail and provides advice and tools to help organisations understand and implement them.**

## Compliance with the compulsory child safe standards

The Department of Health and Human Services led the development and implementation of the compulsory child safe standards.

All organisations, even those not legally required to implement these child safe standards, are strongly encouraged to review how they interact with children. They can still take steps to clarify and document their processes, and train staff to increase their level of child safety. This will benefit all of us.

As part of the broader child safety approach, the *Education and Training Reform Amendment (Child Safe Schools) Act 2015* requires that all Victorian schools adopt minimum child safe standards to improve the protection of children, and consistent policies for responding to allegations of abuse.

### For more information on compliance with the standards, go to:

[www.dhs.vic.gov.au/about-the-department/documents-and-resources/policies,-guidelines-and-legislation/child-safe-standards](http://www.dhs.vic.gov.au/about-the-department/documents-and-resources/policies,-guidelines-and-legislation/child-safe-standards)

## Commencement of the standards

The standards will be introduced in two phases:

- **From 1 January 2016:**  
The standards will apply to organisations that receive government funding or are covered by regulation or contractual requirements.
- **From 1 January 2017:**  
The standards will apply to other organisations that provide services or facilities for children but do not receive government funding (such as sporting groups and child entertainment providers).

### For more information on when the standards will be in place, go to:

[www.dhs.vic.gov.au/about-the-department/documents-and-resources/policies,-guidelines-and-legislation/child-safe-standards](http://www.dhs.vic.gov.au/about-the-department/documents-and-resources/policies,-guidelines-and-legislation/child-safe-standards)

## How to make your organisation child safe

All children have the right to feel safe and to be safe all the time, but safety does not just happen.

A child safe organisation takes deliberate steps to protect children from physical, sexual, emotional, psychological and cultural abuse, and neglect. This commitment to protecting children must be embedded in your organisation's culture and policies. Responsibility for taking action must be understood and accepted by everyone.

A child safe organisation fosters and demonstrates openness in a variety of ways. This directly and indirectly creates a culture in which everyone – staff, volunteers, parents, carers and children – feel confident, enabled and supported to safely disclose child safety concerns.

All children, their families and carers should feel welcome in your organisation.

## It takes many components to build a child safe organisation

Organisations involved with children vary enormously in size, structure, resources and the types of interactions between staff and volunteers and children. A key objective of this guide is to help organisations to embed child safety practices in their culture.

The work that is involved in building a child safe organisation is never completed. It is a dynamic, multifaceted and ongoing developmental process of learning, monitoring and reviewing. By following the steps in this guide, embedding them in your organisation's culture and reviewing regularly, you will reduce the opportunities for harm to occur.

It is important to realise that over-reliance on any one component of child safety, such as Working with Children Checks, will prevent you from building the robust, sustainable barriers that are needed to stop inappropriate people from working with children. Gaps in your organisation's child safety practices could result in weaknesses that may be exploited.

While an important tool, Working with Children Checks – in the absence of broader child-safe strategies – do not make organisations safer for children. In fact, an over-reliance on Working with Children Checks can be detrimental to children's safety. They can provide a false sense of comfort to parents and communities, and may cause organisations to become complacent due to the belief that people who have undergone Working with Children Checks do not pose any risk to children – this is not the case.

*Royal Commission into Institutional Responses to Child Sexual Abuse, Working with Children Checks Report, 2015.*

## Adopt a harm-based perspective

There is a continuum of abuse of children, some of which are outlined below. All such events, regardless of whether they are seen as 'harm' or 'abuse', are damaging. Adopting a harm-based perspective will help your organisation to be proactive in identifying and preventing more serious abuse.

**'What I saw was not right, but I wouldn't call it abuse, so I didn't mention it to anyone.' This is harm and harm is abusive to children.**



## Physical

This means intentionally causing, or threatening to cause, physical injury to a child, or inadvertently causing injury as a consequence of physical punishment or physically aggressive treatment of a child. The injury may take the form of bruises, cuts, burns or fractures.

## Sexual

A child is sexually abused when any person uses their authority over the child to involve the child in sexual activity. Child sexual abuse involves a wide range of sexual activity including fondling genitals, masturbation, vaginal or anal penetration by a finger, penis or any other object, voyeurism and exhibitionism.

Sexual exploitation is considered a specific form of sexual abuse because children, by virtue of their age and development, are unable to give informed consent. Sexual exploitation of children takes different forms. It can include children being involved in sexually exploitive relationships, exposing a child to pornography, receiving money, goods, drug or favours in exchange for sex with one or more adults, or being exploited in more 'formal' forms of sex work. In all cases, those exploiting the children have power over them by virtue of their age, gender, physical strength, economic or other resources, such as access to drugs or gifts.

## Emotional and psychological

This occurs when a person engages in inappropriate behaviours, such as rejecting, ignoring, humiliating, isolating, threatening or verbally abusing a child, or allowing others to do so. Because this kind of abuse does not leave physical injuries, it is often hidden and underestimated.

## Neglect

This means failing to meet a child's basic needs, such as providing adequate food, drink, shelter, clothing, supervision, hygiene and medical attention.

## Racial, cultural, religious

This is conduct that demonstrates contempt, ridicule, hatred or negativity towards a child because of their race, culture or religion. It may be overt, such as direct racial vilification or discrimination, or covert, such as demonstrating a lack of cultural respect (attitude and values) and awareness (knowledge and understanding) or failing to provide positive images about another culture.

**For more information on racial, cultural and religious abuse, go to:**

[www.humanrightscommission.vic.gov.au](http://www.humanrightscommission.vic.gov.au)

**All abuse harms children. Even injuries that are not visible can be profound. They can strike at a child's sense of identity, make them fearful or ashamed, and reduce their ability to participate in their community.**

# Balancing child safety with diversity and cultural differences

A child safe organisation respects cultural differences and variations in child rearing practices due to a family's personal, cultural or religious beliefs.

However, a child safe organisation recognises that these differences do not reduce a child's right to be safe or the organisation's responsibility to protect the child from harm. The Royal Commission advises that:

Some children are more vulnerable to abuse, based on various factors including age, gender, ethnicity, disability, and prior abuse or neglect.<sup>3</sup>

**Cultural diversity refers to people who identify with particular groups based on their birthplace, ethnicity, language, values, beliefs or views.**

Respecting diversity means:

- valuing and respecting people's beliefs
- building responsive relationships
- communicating openly and honestly to find out how best to be inclusive and respect cultural needs
- examining our personal ideas, customs and beliefs and respecting that the beliefs of one person may not be the same as another
- acknowledging and respecting that others can hold different beliefs of equal significance.

## Promoting the cultural safety of Aboriginal children

Cultural safety is:

an environment that is safe for people: where there is no assault, challenge or denial of their identity, of who they are what they need. It is about shared respect, shared meaning, shared knowledge and experience, of learning, living and working together with dignity and truly listening.<sup>4</sup>

Every Aboriginal person and every Aboriginal child needs to feel that their sense of self and their identity is 'valued in some way by the people and environments that surround them.'<sup>5</sup> Cultural identity and safety is fundamental to a child's overall wellbeing. It affects how the child sees themselves in relation to others and how the environment impacts upon their sense of safety.

For Aboriginal people:

culture is about family networks, Elders and ancestors. It's about relationships, languages, dance, ceremony and heritage. Culture is about spiritual connection to our lands and waters. It is the way we pass on stories and knowledge to our babies and children; it is how we greet each other and look for connection. It is about all the parts that bind us together.<sup>6</sup>

Creating a physical environment that is respectful of Aboriginal culture is an important first step. Symbols and images that surround a place send an important message about respect. By acknowledging the Country in which your organisation is located, you are demonstrating your willingness to learn, understand and respond to the diversity of Aboriginal cultures.

3 Royal Commission into Institutional Responses to Child Sexual Abuse, *Interim Report, Volume 1* (2015), chapter 3.

4 Robyn Williams, 'Cultural safety – what does it mean for our work practice?', *Australian and New Zealand Journal of Public Health*, 213 (2) (1999), pp. 2012–13.

5 Victorian Aboriginal Child Care Agency, *This is Forever Business: A framework for maintaining and restoring cultural safety in Aboriginal Victoria* (2010).

6 Andrew Jackomos, 'International Human Rights Day Oration: Linking our past to our future: How cultural rights can help shape identity and build resilience in Koori kids', *Indigenous Law Bulletin*, Volume 8, Issue 17 (2015), p. 20.



To make sure that these symbols and images create that sense of identity, consult with the families of Aboriginal children in your organisation. Symbols that are meaningful to the families who access your service might include the acknowledgement of Traditional Owners, artwork, photographs, artefacts, flags and posters.

Creating a culturally safe environment is also about relationships and actively creating the opportunity for Aboriginal voices to be heard in your planning, policies and activities. Cultural safety is about how your organisation is experienced by Aboriginal people and in particular by Aboriginal children.

Keeping our children and youth connected to their communities and strong in their identity and culture is essential to their wellbeing and the cornerstone of resilience.

*Andrew Jackomos, Commissioner for Aboriginal Children and Young People*



Artwork by Eileen Harrison – Coming Home (Acrylic on canvas, 2014)

Copyright © Coming Home is reproduced with the permission of the artist Eileen Harrison. Eileen Harrison is a Cunai/Kurnai woman, artist and respected Elder from South East Victoria.

All the baby emus in this painting are coming home. The black emus depict the mothers and the larger emus, Elders wearing their possum skin cloaks. This work represents people coming home to their ancestral lands, their place. Country is where you belong.

## Promoting the cultural safety of children from culturally and/or linguistically diverse backgrounds

Belonging to a family from a culturally and/or linguistically diverse background is not a single shared experience. The Victorian community includes people of many backgrounds, countries and languages, including migrants, refugees, asylum seekers and others. These families have experienced varied journeys. Some have experienced trauma, violence and harm. Others have lost the support of their extended family.

While culture should not be seen as an excuse for child abuse or neglect, it is important to understand that approaches to parenting may vary considerably across different cultural groups. However, the safety of the child should always be your main consideration.



You can promote the cultural safety of children from culturally and/or linguistically diverse backgrounds by:

- ensuring your organisation clearly demonstrates a zero tolerance to discrimination
- being respectful, inclusive and welcoming of families from a range of backgrounds
- recognising times of importance to different cultures
- ensuring the physical environment has a positive image of a range of cultures, in terms of decoration and artwork
- employing staff that are representative of your local community
- actively seeking out and talking to families about how they would like to be involved
- asking about the best way to provide information to children and families.

We may not set out to hurt or exclude or differentiate but the effect can be the same. Harm can be done regardless of our intention. This is why it is so vital to build a culture where children learn and experience so many of the social interactions that will inform their lives in adulthood, where tolerance and acceptance is core and where we think about the effect of what we say and do, as much as we consider our intentions.

*Megan Mitchell, National Children's Commissioner, Australian Human Rights Commission<sup>7</sup>*

<sup>7</sup> Excerpt from a speech delivered at Generation Next 2014: The Impact of Racism on Young People's Well-Being, 25 July 2014.



## Promoting the safety of children with a disability

**Strategies that promote understanding and acceptance of diversity, including disability, and policies for identifying risks and responding to concerns are a vital component of a child safe organisation.**

An inclusive environment is beneficial to all, both people with, and without additional needs.

Children with a disability can be vulnerable to abuse. Reasons for this include:

- communication difficulties
- personal care requirements
- limited provision of developmentally appropriate sexual and relationship information
- social isolation.

Establishing child safe policies and procedures that recognise issues relating to disability helps to make these vulnerable children and their families safer.

Children with disabilities are particularly vulnerable to bullying and may have limited communication and social skills to respond in such situations. Organisations should adopt a proactive approach to this risk.

You can promote the safety of children with a disability by:

- acknowledging that children with a disability are particularly vulnerable and ensure your risk assessment process considers their needs
- ensuring your organisation clearly demonstrates a zero tolerance to discrimination and actively welcomes all children
- making sure the environment does not pose access difficulties
- being responsive to families regarding specific measures that may be required to ensure the safe participation of a child with a disability
- supporting your staff, other children and their families to understand and be inclusive of people with a disability
- thinking about how you can encourage participation and feedback from children with a disability and their families.

Significantly, children with disability are more likely to have experienced repeated incidents of sexual abuse by the time they are 18 years of age.

*Royal Commission into Institutional Responses to Child Sexual Abuse, Interim Report, 2015*

# Child safe standard 1.

## Strategies to embed an organisational culture of child safety, including through effective leadership arrangements

### Create a culture of child safety

Creating a culture of child safety within your organisation is vital to lowering the risk of harm to children. Child abuse must be acknowledged, expectations of behaviour must be clearly explained and accepted, and strategies such as robust recruitment practices must be in place. By building a strong culture of child safety, you will reduce the ability for potential abusers to be opportunistic.

There must be a high expectation that everyone in your organisation is committed to child safety. This needs to be led and facilitated by your leadership, and should be consistent with your organisation's aims and values. It can also be helpful to find the 'champion' in your organisation to help drive cultural change.

Strong and clear governance arrangements allow leaders to make sure child safety is a focus within their organisation. They should lead by example. This means ensuring child safety is discussed often in forums such as staff meetings, demonstrating an understanding and expectation of cultural safety, and valuing child safety by dedicating responsibility to a specific member of staff.

Organisations can best manage risk of child maltreatment by developing policies and procedures that extend far beyond screening for criminal history at the time of employment. Developing a child centred, child safe culture of respect within an organisation that supports early disclosures, accountability by all adults, and challenging unacceptable behaviour is now identified as the future direction in managing organisational risk.<sup>8</sup>

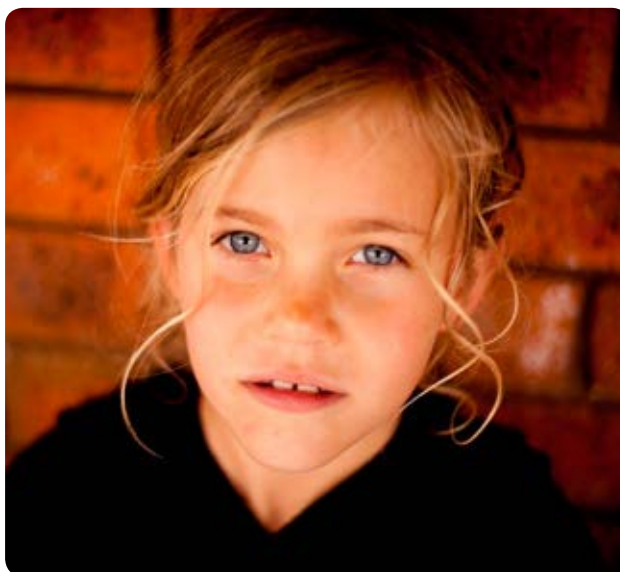
<sup>8</sup> Mel Irenyi, Leah Bromfield, Lorraine Beyer and Daryl Higgins, 'Child maltreatment in organisations: Risk factors and strategies for prevention', *Child Abuse Prevention Issues, Volume 25* (2006).

### Carry out a Child Safety Review

It is vital that the leaders in your organisation have a clear understanding of how developed their child safety approaches are. Undertaking a Child Safety Review is a good place to start. It can help you identify what is currently in place and what needs to be developed.

Some organisations find it difficult to get started on the process of creating a child safe organisation. To help with this, we have included a simple Child Safety Review checklist on page 19

There is no 'one size fits all' approach to protecting children from abuse, but there are some key activities. The checklist describes important areas of child safety and gives you the opportunity to assess whether your organisation is missing any of the essential ingredients. When you have completed the checklist, you can focus on developing or enhancing each of these ingredients.





## Review your existing policies and practices

To begin the process of assessing how child safe your organisation is, it is important to review existing policies and practices. Children's safety and wellbeing is your first consideration. By completing the Child Safety Review checklist honestly, you will identify your organisation's strengths and weaknesses in the protection of children. This will help you determine how developed the current systems in your organisation are and the level of risk associated with the services you provide. You could complete this review at a staff or volunteer meeting.

The Australian Human Rights Commission argued that one of the greatest risk factors for the harm or abuse of children is the lack of awareness about it among an institution's staff and volunteers.

*Royal Commission into Institutional Responses to Child Sexual Abuse, Interim Report, 2015.*

The review's focus is on protecting children from harm, but it also encourages you to think about broader aspects of child safety. You will be prompted to consider the diverse ages and abilities of the children, the kind of activities you run and the places in which they occur.

## Think about your organisation's risk management plan

Some activities pose greater risks than others. For example, taking a group of primary school aged children to the local swimming pool is a high-risk activity because there are many safety variables to be considered. These include members of the public accessing the swimming pool, swimming pool staff, transport to and from the pool, water safety issues, supervision in the change rooms and medical conditions. On the other hand, an activity such as an in-house chess competition may pose fewer risks, because the children are in a known and controlled environment that is formally supervised and much less susceptible to unpredictable risk. When planning activities, risk management strategies must be undertaken.

## Think about the diverse needs of the children

Children's needs and abilities vary with age and development. Younger children are particularly vulnerable and require greater levels of supervision and support. Some older children might need additional support because they have a disability or an illness, because their life experiences have had an impact on their development or because they are vulnerable to sexual abuse and exploitation.

### **Invite children to contribute to the process**

Children have a unique voice and should be able to contribute to discussions about how they interact with your organisation. Ask them what makes them feel safe and unsafe and tell them about what you are doing to help keep them safe. Make sure you consult in an age-appropriate manner, ensuring the experience is a positive one. Let them know their views are valued and respected.

### **Invite staff and volunteers to contribute to the process**

Inviting staff and volunteers to participate in the review helps to identify areas of risk of harm or injury and encourages everyone involved in the organisation to take a proactive approach to reducing risk.

### **Take action**

When you have completed the Child Safety Review you will have identified the areas in which you need to improve. Refer to the other sections of this guide to help you to formulate and implement your action plans.

Implementing your Child Safe Policy and procedures requires an ongoing commitment. It won't be achieved in one activity or exercise. However, this does not have to be a complex process. As with the Child Safety Review, the more people in the organisation who are involved, the better the outcomes will be.

In some cases you may realise that in order to implement particular parts of your action plan you need additional information or training for your staff. You may need to seek advice from others. The list of organisations and resources at the back of this guide can help you with this.

### **Set a date for the next review**

It is important to regularly review your policies and procedures. Creating child safe environments is an ongoing process of improvement. Set a date to have another look at the Child Safety Review, perhaps incorporating this into your annual planning processes. Did you miss anything the first time around? Are you confident the approach you adopted is still the best one? Have the activities you provide changed? Do you now include younger children? What can you learn from your successes and mistakes?

### **Maintain a child safe organisation**

Maintaining a child safe organisation is not a one-off task. It must become part of your organisation's ongoing processes and be embedded in your organisational culture.

We understand that competing demands stretch us all; however, child safety must be the basis on which all the other functions of your organisation stem from. Child safety must be the top priority in your organisation's operations.

Reliance on outdated systems and processes, or the gradual decline of vigilance, increases the risks within your organisation. Child safety requires a dedicated and ongoing approach.

'Given the rarity of child sexual abuse in any particular institutional setting, maintaining a safe organisation is a huge challenge. Staying vigilant against this abuse is difficult, and the chances of any organisation cutting corners on key safety operations and making them less of a priority than other functions are high. The danger can be reduced if outside forces keep up the momentum by monitoring performance and checking that safety policies are kept high on the agenda – in practice as well as in theory.'<sup>9</sup>

<sup>9</sup> Eileen Munro and Shelia Fish, *Hear no evil, see no evil: Understanding failure to identify and report child sexual abuse in institutional contexts* (Sydney: Royal Commission into Institutional Responses to Child Sexual Abuse, 2015).

## Checklist: Child Safety Review

Mandatory child safe standard	Child safety criteria			
	Do you meet the criteria? Yes/No	How does your organisation perform against the criteria?	What needs to be done to better meet the standards?	Who, when & review date
<b>Strategies to embed an organisational culture of child safety, through effective leadership arrangements</b>	Do you have appropriate governance arrangements in place?			
	Is the commitment to child safety modelled by your leadership?			
	Do you welcome all children and acknowledge that some children are particularly vulnerable?			
	Do you recognise, respect and promote the belief that cultural identity is fundamental to a child's safety and wellbeing, and provide training for staff on this?			
	Do you encourage children with special needs and from different backgrounds to participate, and do they participate?			
<b>A Child Safe Policy or Statement of Commitment to Child Safety</b>	Do you raise awareness about child abuse?			
	Is it clear that discrimination is not tolerated in your organisation?			
	Is there a clear and public commitment to child safety in the form of a Child Safe Policy or Statement of Commitment to Child Safety that all staff members know about and are required to uphold?			
	Does the Child Safe Policy specifically address the risks that have been identified in your risk assessment?			
	Do you undertake regular Child Safety Reviews to inform your policy?			
	Are children consulted about how safe they feel and what ideas they might have to promote safety in your organisation?			
	Does your Child Safe Policy promote the cultural safety of Aboriginal children and children from culturally and/or linguistically diverse backgrounds and the safety of children with a disability?			
	Do your organisation's policies include requirements relating to Failure to Disclose and Failure to Protect legislative requirements?			

Mandatory child safe standard	Child safety criteria	Do you meet the criteria? Yes/No	How does your organisation perform against the criteria?	What needs to be done to better meet the standards?	Who, when & review date
A Code of Conduct that establishes clear expectations for appropriate behaviour with children	Is there a Code of Conduct that explains acceptable and unacceptable behaviour of staff, volunteers and children?				
	Is the Code of Conduct well known by your organisation's staff, volunteers, children and families and are they required to comply with it?				
	Do your policies clearly explain how concerns regarding the Code of Conduct can be raised and how breaches of the Code of Conduct will be responded to?				
	Have you considered if additional Codes of Conduct are required (such as applying to parents or children)?				
Screening, supervision, training and other human resource practices that reduce the risk of child abuse by new and existing personnel	Do you have clear duty and position statements (job descriptions)?				
	Have you determined which employee or volunteer positions require a Working with Children Check and ensured those checks have been undertaken?				
	Do you have documented recruitment procedures including interview processes, referee checks, Working with Children Checks and other screening requirements?				
	Do you have a staff development strategy to maintain and develop skills and capabilities, including understanding the risk of harm to children, the different types of harm, how to identify child abuse and relevant legislative requirements?				
	Do you have a robust staff and volunteer performance management strategies in place?				

Mandatory child safe standard	Child safety criteria	Do you meet the criteria? Yes/No	How does your organisation perform against the criteria?	What needs to be done to better meet the standards?	Who, when & review date
<b>Processes for responding to and reporting suspected child abuse</b>	Do you have a process for reporting and acting on disclosures or concerns about child safety?				
	Are your staff and volunteers aware of their responsibility to report concerns of harm?				
	Do you have policies and procedures concerning record keeping requirements and confidentiality and privacy?				
	Do you have a complaints process that is accessible for children and families?				
	Do you have child friendly processes in place to ensure children know who to talk to if they feel unsafe or have a concern?				
<b>Strategies to identify and reduce or remove risks of child abuse</b>	Do you undertake risk assessments and have an organisational Risk Management Plan?				
	Is undertaking, monitoring and reviewing the risk management plan the designated responsibility of a specific staff member?				
	In undertaking your risk assessment, do you specifically consider the cultural safety of Aboriginal children and children from culturally and/or linguistically diverse backgrounds and the safety of children with a disability?				
<b>Strategies to promote the participation and empowerment of children</b>	Do you consult with children about decisions that affect them?				
	Do you create opportunities for participation that incorporates planning, preparation, action and feedback?				
	Do you inform children of their rights and tell them how to raise any concerns?				

# Child safe standard 2.

## A Child Safe Policy or Statement of Commitment to Child Safety

### What is a Child Safe Policy or Statement of Commitment to Child Safety?

Once you have used the Child Safety Review checklist to undertake an assessment of your organisation's activities with children, it is time to develop policies and procedures to address and reduce the risks that you have identified.

One of the most effective ways to demonstrate your commitment to child safety is to document how you will meet your duty of care and responsibilities to children. A Child Safe Policy or Statement of Commitment to Child Safety articulates an organisation's approach and culture to provide the highest level of protection for children in its care and provides information and guidance on child safety within the organisation. It requires all levels of the organisation to commit to the active demonstration of a child safe culture.

**A child safe policy** is generally a comprehensive and overarching document that provides an overview of key elements of an organisation's approach to creating a child safe organisation. It could also be a longer document which incorporates more detailed information such as a policy commitment to child safety, procedures for reporting concerns, outlines the organisation's child safe procedures in detail – for example, reporting procedures, human resources and recruitment practices, and risk management strategy and procedures.

**A statement of commitment to child safety** affirms the organisation's commitment to child safety by clearly stating that the organisation has zero tolerance for child abuse, commitment to children's best interests and keeping them safe, and that it actively works to listen to and empower children in the organisation. It could be in the form of a mission statement.

A child safe policy should include a statement of commitment.

In practice, a child safe policy is a good tool for larger organisations or those that have a higher level of responsibility for children.

A full comprehensive child safe policy may not be suitable for smaller organisations, for example a community-run Saturday morning netball team. This is why organisations may choose to tailor an option that works best for them. However, there is nothing to preclude smaller organisations from developing a child safe policy.

Once you have decided if a policy or statement of commitment is the best option for your organisation, make sure it is clear and simple so everyone understands its intention and what to do when there are concerns. When organisations work with particularly vulnerable children, they need to pay special attention to developing awareness and communication strategies for those who may be unable to speak up or communicate.

After I raised concerns about their procedures, I was told by my child's dancing school that they did not feel it necessary to develop a Child Safe Policy. Now my child attends a child and family friendly dancing school.

*Virginia, a parent*



## Create and communicate your policy or statement

### Step 1: Consult widely

You should consult staff, volunteers, families and children in the development stage. Talking about the policy or statement gives you an opportunity to discuss your organisation's aims and values. The criteria included in the Child Safety Review will help you identify the topics to include in your policy or statement.

For a Child Safe Policy to be successful, staff who work with children may have some influence in its development coupled with the support and guidance from management and the executive team. The policy should be written in a language that is understood holistically throughout the organisation. The policy should also support any legislative requirements pertaining to the Act.

*Daniel, Human Resources Manager,  
Windermere Child and Family Service*

### Step 2: Write the policy or statement

We have provided a sample Child Safe Policy on page xx. This will help you think about what you want to include in your own documents. You can use the sample as a template for writing your own policy or statement.

### Step 3: Finalise the policy or statement

Once you have developed a draft policy or statement, circulate it to staff, volunteers, parents and children. Ask someone outside the organisation to have a look at it as well. It might be helpful to have feedback from an organisation that has already developed its own policy.

Set a date for finalising the policy and ensure you have identified who will undertake the key tasks identified in the policy.

### Step 4: Approve the policy or statement

The board, committee of management or other leaders of the organisation should approve the policy or statement.

### Step 5: Communicate the policy or statement

Display the policy or statement in a place where everyone will see it. When new staff, volunteers or children join your organisation, ensure their induction includes information about the policy or statement, particularly the requirements of the Code of Conduct and the value your organisation places on child safety. When memberships are renewed, remind people about the policy or statement and its requirements.

I was surprised to find that a Child Safe Policy was not included in the comprehensive policy and procedures outlined on the otherwise excellent website for my child's crèche.

*A parent*

### Step 6: Review and update the policy or statement

As with all aspects of child safety, your Child Safe Policy or Statement of Commitment to Child Safety should be reviewed and updated regularly.

## Sample: Child Safe Policy

This sample is provided as an illustration only. The topics included in this sample policy are essential, but you should also think about what additional topics you could include in your own policy. You may also want to add more detail to each topic.

The section on commitment to child safety is appropriate to use as a statement of commitment to child safety as required by Victoria's compulsory child safe standards.

# Sunny Pines Association Child Safe Policy

This Child Safe Policy was approved by the Committee of Management on 30 June 2015 and endorsed by members at the annual general meeting. It is due to be reviewed on 30 June 2017.

This policy was written to demonstrate the strong commitment of the management, staff and volunteers to child safety and to provide an outline of the policies and practices we have developed to keep everyone safe from any harm, including abuse.

### **Commitment to child safety**

All children who come to Sunny Pines 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 to child abuse. We aim to create a child safe and child friendly environment where children feel safe and have fun.

This policy was developed in collaboration with all our staff, volunteers and the children who use our services and their parents. It applies to all staff, volunteers, children and individuals involved in our organisation.

### **Children's rights to safety and participation**

Sunny Pines staff and volunteers encourage children to express their views. We listen to their suggestions, especially on matters that directly affect them. We actively encourage all children who use our services to 'have a say' about things that are important to them.

We teach children about what they can do if they feel unsafe. We listen to and act on any concerns children, or their parents, raise with us. *(You may wish to include details of specific ways the organisation does this.)*

## Sunny Pines Association Child Safe Policy (continued)

### Valuing diversity

We value diversity and do not tolerate any discriminatory practices. To achieve this we:

- promote the cultural safety, participation and empowerment of Aboriginal children and their families
- promote the cultural safety, participation and empowerment of children from culturally and/or linguistically diverse backgrounds and their families
- welcome children with a disability and their families and act to promote their participation
- seek appropriate staff from diverse cultural backgrounds.

### Recruiting staff and volunteers

Sunny Pines applies the best practice standards in the recruitment and screening of staff and volunteers. We interview and conduct referee checks on all staff and volunteers and require police checks and Working with Children Checks for relevant positions. Our commitment to Child Safety and our screening requirements are included in all advertisements.

### Supporting staff and volunteers

Sunny Pines seeks to attract and retain the best staff and volunteers. We provide support and supervision so people feel valued, respected and fairly treated. We have developed a Code of Conduct to provide guidance to our staff and volunteers, all of whom receive training on the requirements of the Code. *(You may wish to include details of specific ways the organisation does this or refer to a separate policy or Code of Conduct.)*

### Reporting a child safety concern or complaint

Ann Smith and Kent Tan have been appointed as Child Safety Persons with the specific responsibility for responding to any complaints made by staff, volunteers, parents or children. Our complaints processes are outlined on the attached diagram. *(You may wish to include details of specific ways the organisation does this or refer to a separate policy that covers this.)*

### Risk Management

We recognise the importance of a risk management approach to minimising the potential for child abuse or harm to occur and use this to inform our policy, procedures and activity planning. In addition to general occupational health and safety risks, we proactively manage risks of abuse to our children.

### Reviewing this policy

This policy will be reviewed every two years and we undertake to seek views, comments and suggestions from children, parents, carers, staff and volunteers

# Child safe standard 3.

## A Code of Conduct that establishes clear expectations for appropriate behaviour with children

Some of our leaders have said that the guidelines in our code of practice for child safety also protect the leaders.

*Manager, church youth group*

### What is a Code of Conduct?

One of the most effective child safe strategies to help protect children from harm is a Code of Conduct.

A Code of Conduct lists behaviours that are acceptable and those that are unacceptable. It spells out professional boundaries, ethical behaviour and acceptable and unacceptable relationships.

It is important that your Code of Conduct reflects your organisation's activities and the risks that you have identified. A Code of Conduct for a sporting organisation will differ to that of an organisation that provides foster care or a health service. Their roles, responsibilities, relationships and inherent risk are different.

The Code of Conduct needs to use plain language and include examples of behaviour that are relevant to your organisation. When staff, volunteers, parents and children are clear about expectations, they are much more likely to act appropriately with each other. When everyone is educated about the Code of Conduct and understands why it is important, the organisation becomes more transparent and people are held accountable for their behaviour.

If people behave in ways that are unacceptable, the Code of Conduct enables the organisation to take action. If a person does not comply with the expected standard of behaviour, their behaviour should be discussed with them. Noncompliance can lead to disciplinary action being taken, which may result in the person being asked to leave the organisation.

Without a Code of Conduct, it can be very difficult to raise behavioural issues with staff and volunteers. If unacceptable behaviour continues, this can seriously compromise the safety of your environment. Swift and appropriate action must be taken when the Code is breached, otherwise people will continue to feel compromised or unsafe.

Rules about adult–child and child–child relationships should be unambiguous, widely disseminated, and supported by staff supervision and training.

*Royal Commission into Institutional Responses to Child Sexual Abuse, Interim Report: Volume 1, 2015*



## Develop and implement a Code of Conduct

### Step 1: Consult widely

You should consult staff, volunteers, families and children on what to include in your Code of Conduct. Consulting children will help your staff become more aware of how their behaviour impacts on children.

### Step 2: Decide how many codes you need

Children may wish to write their own Code of Conduct. This might be more meaningful to them. A child safe organisation encourages and facilitates opportunities for children to do this. If the children in your organisation want to develop their own Code of Conduct, give them the support they need to understand what they should put in their code.

For particularly high-risk activities, such as overnight camps, a specific Code of Conduct may be required. This could outline additional topics such as sleeping arrangements, personal care, leaving the site, no drugs or alcohol on site, staff-to-child ratio requirements, etc.

If parental involvement is key to your organisation, for example parent helping out at sporting competitions, a specific Code of Conduct for parents may be useful.

### Step 3: Write the code

We have provided a sample Code of Conduct on page 28. The topics covered in this sample, and in your Child Safe Policy, will help you to identify the types of behaviours that should be included in your Code of Conduct.

### Step 4: Approve the code

The board, committee of management or other leaders of the organisation should approve the code (or codes).

**Make sure your Code of Conduct defines appropriate boundaries around how staff or volunteers communicate with children online, including by text or SMS.**

### Step 5: Establish complaint and disciplinary procedures

Make sure that procedures for raising and managing complaints, and consequences for breaching of the Code of Conduct, are outlined in your Child Safe Policy and are known and understood by everyone.

### Step 6: Communicate the code

Conduct workshops and staff or volunteer training to make sure that everyone involved in your organisation understands the requirements of your Code of Conduct and are clear what to do when someone breaches it. Induction procedures or manuals for new staff and volunteers should include information about your Code of Conduct.

All members of the organisation, including parents and children, should be aware of your Code of Conduct. Display it in a prominent position and post it on your website.

### Step 7: Review and update

As with all aspects of child safety, your Code of Conduct should be reviewed and updated regularly.

## Sample: Code of Conduct

This sample is provided as an illustration only. Your organisation's Code of Conduct should reflect your particular circumstances and activities. Your code could also be written to apply to parents (for example, to clearly identify expectations of parents who are spectators at events) or to the children who participate in the activities.

# Sunny Pines Association Code of Conduct

This Code of Conduct outlines appropriate standards of behaviour by adults towards children.

The Code of Conduct aims to protect children and reduce any opportunities for abuse or harm to occur. It also helps staff and volunteers by providing them with guidance on how to best support children and how to avoid or better manage difficult situations. All staff and volunteers are required to comply.

All Sunny Pines staff and volunteers are responsible for promoting the safety and wellbeing of children and young people by:

- adhering to our Child Safe Policy, and other policies
- taking all reasonable steps to protect children from abuse
- treating everyone with respect, including listening to and valuing their ideas and opinions
- welcoming all children and their families and carers and being inclusive
- respecting cultural, religious and political differences and acting in a culturally sensitive way
- modelling appropriate adult behaviour
- listening to children and responding to them appropriately
- reporting and acting on any breaches of this Code of Conduct, complaints or concerns
- complying with our guidelines on physical contact with children
- working with children in an open and transparent way – other adults should always know about the work you are doing with children
- respecting the privacy of children and their families, and only disclosing information to people who have a need to know.

## Sunny Pines Association Code of Conduct (continued)

Sunny Pines staff and volunteers must NOT:

- seek to use children in any way to meet the needs of adults
- ignore or disregard any concerns, suspicions or disclosures of child abuse
- use prejudice, oppressive behaviour or language with children
- engage in rough physical games
- discriminate on the basis of age, gender, race, culture, vulnerability or sexuality
- initiate unnecessary physical contact with children or do things of a personal nature that children can do for themselves, such as toileting or changing clothes
- develop 'special' relationships with specific children or show favouritism through the provision of gifts or inappropriate attention
- exchange personal contact details such as phone number, social networking site or email addresses with children
- have unauthorised contact with children and young people online or by phone.

I have read this Code of Conduct and agree to abide by it at all times.

Name \_\_\_\_\_

Signature \_\_\_\_\_

Date \_\_\_\_\_

Name of Manager \_\_\_\_\_

Signature \_\_\_\_\_

Date \_\_\_\_\_

Witness \_\_\_\_\_

Date \_\_\_\_\_

# Child safe standard 4.

## Screening, supervision, training and other human resource practices that reduce the risk of child abuse by new and existing personnel

### A child safe organisation has policy and procedures for recruitment and selection processes, supervision, training and managing the performance of staff.

These policies and procedures not only help to identify the most suitable persons to work with children, they can also deter unsuitable persons from applying or being appointed, either in a paid or voluntary capacity.

### Recruit only the most suitable people

Selecting suitable and appropriate people to work with children is vital. Everyone benefits when the best people, who also share your organisation's values about keeping children safe from harm, are chosen. If you take good care during the recruitment phase, you are more likely to screen out people who are unsuitable to work with children. Good recruitment practices help to reduce the opportunities for harm to occur by deterring the 'wrong' people from applying.

### Create clear job descriptions and duty statements

Organisations need to be clear about the role and responsibilities of each position, particularly when they involve working closely with children.

A job description or duty statement should include a clear outline of the role and also state your expectation that staff must provide a child safe environment. It should clearly spell out:

- the organisational context
- duties and tasks of the role
- qualifications, experience and attributes a person must have
- the level of responsibility and supervision associated with the position.

Once you have determined the duties and responsibilities of the position, you will know if the staff member needs to have a valid Working with Children Check.

A well-developed job description is more likely to attract suitably qualified, experienced staff and volunteers. When roles and responsibilities are unclear, unsuitable people are more likely to apply because the organisation may not look as professional and capable of identifying unsuitable applicants.

### Promote child safety in your advertisements

Your job advertisement should clearly state that your organisation is committed to child safety. This should be included in all advertisements, duty statements and other documents. This may discourage unsuitable people from applying. This same job advertisement demonstrates how to do this.

#### Childcare worker

Our 50-place community child care centre is seeking a dynamic, experienced childcare worker. At Our Village Childcare we are committed to excellence in child care and to ensuring the safety and wellbeing of children.

The application form can be accessed at our website and will need to include three referees. All applicants must hold a Diploma of Early Childhood Education and Care, have previous experience working with children and provide referees who can comment on this experience.

A valid Working with Children Check and a police check is mandatory.

We are a child safe and equal employment opportunity employer. Applications from Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples and from people from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds are encouraged.



## Assess potential staff or volunteers

When recruiting new staff or volunteers, some important areas you need to assess will include:

- motivation to work with children (personal and/or professional)
- relevant and verifiable experience
- understanding of children's physical and emotional needs
- understanding of professional boundaries
- communication skills
- attitudes to children's rights and how they can be upheld
- values (honesty, integrity, reliability, fairness, and non-discrimination)
- responses from referees.

Your organisation will need to invest time and resources when recruiting staff or volunteers who will work closely with children, particularly if the children are vulnerable or have special needs.

## Check references

Screening potential staff and volunteers is essential. Reference checks are crucial. Failure to properly check references can result in negative outcomes for children and organisations.

The people responsible for interviewing candidates and conducting reference checks must be confident, assertive and probing in their questions. At least one person on the interview panel should be experienced in undertaking referee checks. An independent person may provide objectivity, particularly when internal applicants are applying to work directly with children.

When calling referees, it is important to verify who you are talking to. You must make sure they are legitimate.

Employers should insist that one referee must be the current or most recent employer, including the applicant's direct supervisor, regardless of applicant's feeling about this. A current assessment of performance is invaluable. It is also important to ask the referee whether the referee has directly supervised them and directly observed their work with children.

### **Make sure that you undertake a referee check with the applicant's most recent supervisor.**

Useful questions to ask a referee include:

- Would you employ the person again?
- Do you have any concerns about the applicant working directly with children?
- Are you comfortable knowing that the applicant might sometimes be working alone with children?
- Did they have any disciplinary matters relating to the person or concerns about their adherence with the organisation's code of conduct?

Check that the work history and details about previous employment the applicant has provided are accurate.

Also ask for an example of a time when the referee observed the applicant managing the behaviour of a child.

**If the reference is in writing, contact the referee to confirm authenticity.**

## Follow fair employment processes

When selecting staff or volunteers, the processes you follow should be fair and just; however, the safety and wellbeing of children should be your primary consideration. In addition, you should ensure your decision-making is rigorous, defensible and transparent.

Developing clear duty statements and job descriptions and ensuring appropriately qualified staff conduct interviews and referee checks are important aspects of establishing fair processes that also provide for the safety of children.

You should be aware of the requirements of privacy legislation and laws relating to unlawful discrimination. A detailed discussion of these topics is outside the scope of this guide, but a few important points are noted below. If you need more information about these topics, refer to the contacts and resources at the back of this guide.

### Privacy

It is important to remember that criminal histories, outcomes of professional disciplinary proceedings and any other information that you may consider during background checking may include sensitive personal information. This information should be treated with respect for the privacy of all individuals. You should develop appropriate safeguards around the collection, retention, use and disclosure of personal information. People being assessed should be told what will happen to any information they provide and who will have access to the information.

### Discrimination

The Human Rights and Equal Opportunity Commission has produced *On the Record: Guidelines for the prevention of discrimination in employment on the basis of criminal record*, which provides useful practical guidance on how to prevent criminal record discrimination in the workplace. These guidelines note that it is understood that there is no discrimination if an applicant is not successful in obtaining a job because they cannot fulfil the essential aspects of that particular job.

## Working with Children Check

The Working with Children Check helps protect children from physical and sexual harm. It does this by screening people's criminal records and professional conduct and preventing people who pose an unjustifiable risk to children from working with or caring for them.

A Working with Children Check is valid for five years. It is transferrable between employers or volunteer organisations, as it remains the property of the individual. An exception to this is if someone is moving from a volunteer to an employee position, as you cannot use a volunteer card to engage in paid work.

A Working with Children Check is different from a police check because Working with Children cardholders are monitored on an ongoing basis for any new relevant offences or adverse professional conduct reports from prescribed professional bodies. New charges, convictions or findings relevant to the Working with Children Check will instigate a re-assessment of the person's eligibility to hold a card.

A Working with Children Check is just a starting point. It does not assess someone's suitability to work with or care for children in a particular role. It is your responsibility to assess if a worker is suitable to work with children and to monitor their behaviour around children.

A Working with Children Check is one part of building a child safe organisation, but it is not a substitute for undertaking the other strategies included in this guide.

**A Working with Children Check is not a substitute for child safe practices.**

**For more information on the Working with Children Check, go to:**

[www.workingwithchildren.vic.gov.au](http://www.workingwithchildren.vic.gov.au)

## What is checked?

The Working with Children Check screens the person's lifelong criminal history records, from Victoria Police, police in other Australian states and territories and the Australian Federal Police.

The Working with Children Check also examines reports from Corrections Victoria, the Department of Health and Human Services' Child Protection Unit, other courts, information provided by organisations and other relevant sources.

The offences that are relevant to the Working with Children Check are:

- serious sexual, violent or drug offences
- any offence that presents an unjustifiable risk to the safety of children
- offences against the Working with Children Act.

**For a complete list of relevant offences, go to:**

[www.workingwithchildren.vic.gov.au/home/resources/publications/list-of-offences](http://www.workingwithchildren.vic.gov.au/home/resources/publications/list-of-offences)

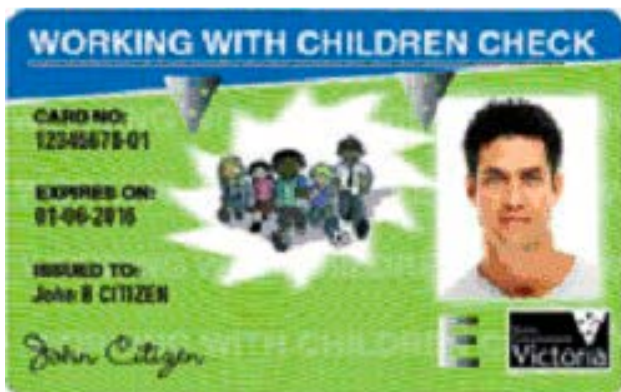


Image is LORES

## Who needs a Working with Children Check?

Anyone who intends to do child-related work, and who does not qualify for an exemption, needs a Working with Children Check.

The Working with Children Act includes some exemptions. Some examples are:

- a person who is under the age of 18 years
- a parent volunteering in an activity in which their child participates.

The complete list of exemptions is available on the Department of Justice and Regulation website.

**It is against the law for a person who has not obtained a Working with Children Check (and is not exempt) to engage in any child-related work, including volunteering. It is also against the law to knowingly employ a person who has not obtained a Working with Children Check (and is not exempt) in child-related work, including volunteering.**

To keep the children in your care safe, you must know:

- that everyone with direct and unsupervised contact with children has a Working with Children Check
- if applicants are legally permitted to work while their application is processed (people with serious sexual, violent or drug offences or who are subject to orders listed under Schedule 3 of the Working with Children Act cannot work with children while their applications are assessed)
- when workers' Working with Children Checks expire
- what to do if one of your workers:
  - has their Working with Children Check card suspended or revoked
  - is issued with an Interim Negative Notice
  - fails the Working with Children Check and is issued with a Negative Notice.

In addition to being aware of these legal obligations, you must also:

- keep a record of the application Working with Children Check receipt or card number of all workers doing child-related work in your organisation
- look carefully at workers' Working with Children Check cards and record the number, expiry date and card type ('E' for paid employees or 'V' for volunteers)
- keep and secure all correspondence you receive from the Department of Justice and Regulation about your workers
- make sure workers notify the Department of Justice and Regulation within 21 days of commencing child-related work with your organisation and whenever their personal and contact details change.

### Special requirements for religious organisations

If you are a religious organisation, you must ensure that all ministers of religion pass the Working with Children Check, unless their contact with children is only occasional and always incidental to their work.

Child-related work for ministers is defined more broadly than for everyone else. For ministers, child-related work is not limited to work involving unsupervised, direct contact with children.

By law, any contact with children, unless it is only occasional and incidental, is enough to require a minister to have a Working with Children Check. This includes ministers who visit schools, children's camps or have children present in their congregation, regardless of whether or not their contact with children is supervised.

#### For more information on your responsibilities around the Working with Children Check, go to:

[www.workingwithchildren.vic.gov.au/home/about+the+check/what+the+check+means+for+you/organisations/](http://www.workingwithchildren.vic.gov.au/home/about+the+check/what+the+check+means+for+you/organisations/)

## Working with Children Check – what you can do to help keep our children safe



Working with  
Children Check

- Make sure paid and volunteer workers engaged in child-related work\* hold or have applied for a Working with Children Check card\*\*
- Take reasonable steps to ensure you do not allow anyone charged with, found guilty or convicted of a serious sexual, physical or drug-related offence to do child-related work unless they can show you their Working with Children Check card
- View receipts and cards of all new workers before you engage them in child-related work
- Check the validity of a new worker's card or receipt using 'Check status' on the Working with Children Check website
- Regularly check the validity of the cards of all workers to make sure no one has been given a Negative Notice or had their card revoked or suspended
- Remind cardholders that they must inform the Working with Children Check Unit of their new work details and changes to personal and contact details within 21 days\*\*
- Keep a register of all workers with a Working with Children Check and record expiry dates, card numbers and card type (Volunteer or Employee)
- Ensure paid workers have an Employee card as it is an offence to use a Volunteer card for paid child-related work\*\*
- Ensure cardholders renew their Working with Children Check card by the card's expiry date if they wish to continue in child-related work
- Develop processes to deal with a worker who is given a Negative Notice. Make sure they do not do any child-related work, even if they are directly supervised or exempt.

Help keep children safe from physical and sexual harm. Meet your obligations under the *Working with Children Act 2005* by taking these steps and using best practice to manage your people.

**For more information, visit**

[www.workingwithchildren.vic.gov.au](http://www.workingwithchildren.vic.gov.au)

\* Visit the website for the definition of child-related work.

\*\* Failure to meet this obligation is an offence and financial penalties may apply.

## Police checks

A police check is different to a Working with Children Check. A police check is not an assessment by a government agency. It is only a list, at a given point in time, of the offences a person has committed.

You can request this list to help you assess a person's suitability for other kinds of work. (Working with Children Checks only consider 'relevant offences' as listed in the Working with Children Act, such as serious sexual, violent and drug offences.) For example, you might want to know about fraud offences if you are recruiting someone who will have access to cash or expensive goods.

## Staff and volunteers development, supervision and performance monitoring

Once staff or volunteers have started their work with children, your organisation needs to provide them with ongoing developmental opportunities, support, supervision and training.

### Benefits

When staff and volunteers are cared for by your organisation, they are more likely to 'do the right thing'. If they do have problems or concerns, they are more likely to report it to their supervisor or manager.

### Good supervision

People who are responsible for the supervision of staff and volunteers need to provide them with adequate support, as well as on-the-job monitoring of their performance. An ongoing commitment to this is a key component of a child safe organisation. Supervision means providing clear expectations about roles and responsibilities and giving people the best support and training you can to equip them to perform their roles as professionally as possible. When staff feel valued and supported they are much more likely to work to the best of their ability.

If your staff have regular opportunities to meet with and talk to a supervisor, they are more likely to share any observations or problems they experience or are concerned about. This could act as an alert when something is not going well or someone is not acting in the best interests of the organisation or the children in their care.

Supervisors need to be honest with staff and volunteers. They must set realistic performance management guidelines when people are not performing to the best of their ability or are acting in ways that are detrimental to children or the organisation.

### Ongoing training and professional development

When employing new staff or volunteers, your organisation needs to think about the relevant levels of training and experience you expect your staff or volunteers to have. You can specify these in job descriptions and duty statements. When staff or volunteers are appointed you need to take a developmental approach that values ongoing training and development of your staff and volunteers. Child safe organisations emphasise and implement training opportunities and strategies that equip people to do their job well.

### Understanding the nature and signs of abuse

In child safe organisations, people who work with children need to understand the definition of harm to children, including different forms of child abuse. This is essential if they are expected to identify abuse, prevent it and protect children from harm. Children often do not speak up when they are unsafe; however, their behaviour may change. It is very important that staff and volunteers are aware of this and are able to act in a preventative way. This is why staff training sessions on these topics are so important.

Staff and volunteers working with children need to have a basic understanding of children's development and how it changes through different ages and stages. If they understand this, it will be much easier for them to detect any physical or behavioural changes in children that may indicate the child could be at risk or is already being harmed. Staff and volunteers who work closely with children are in a position to observe changes and respond to or report any concerns about the child's welfare and development.

### Aboriginal cultural competency

The dynamics of culture are different for children of minority cultures and different again for children of Indigenous cultures.

For Aboriginal children, families and communities in Victoria, culture frames a sense of identity that relates to being the First Peoples of the land. Cultural competence is a means through which First Peoples can be given due respect and honour in their land in the context of a history of racism and cultural abuse. It allows the broader community to understand the resilience of Aboriginal people and appreciate the pride they have in their culture. It also enables the broader community to celebrate and take pride in this the oldest continuing culture.

Developing cultural competence in your organisation requires leadership at all levels. It takes time, so it must be planned carefully. It requires the capacity to thoughtfully and respectfully question, and develop trusting and reciprocal relationships with Aboriginal people. Cultural competence is a whole-of-agency approach that should be embedded in your governance, policies, programs, service delivery and practice approaches.<sup>10</sup>

### Inclusive practice

A dedicated focus on the continual development of inclusive practices should be a goal of your organisation across all domains of your operation, from a leadership-driven culture of inclusiveness, to recruitment, staff and volunteer training and child safe policies.



<sup>10</sup> Adapted from Victorian Aboriginal Child Care Agency, *Aboriginal Cultural Competence Framework* (Melbourne: Department of Human Services, 2008)



## Checklist: Choosing, supervising and developing suitable staff and volunteers

Choosing safe staff and volunteers	Practical suggestions	Good outcomes
<b>Develop a duty statement or job description</b>	<p>A duty statement or job description clarifies the role, responsibilities and expectations of the position and outlines reporting lines.</p> <p>Determine if the position requires a Working with Children.</p>	You will recruit the most suitable staff or volunteers.
<b>Develop key selection criteria</b>	Selection criteria help to identify key skills, attributes, experience and qualifications that are required to undertake the duties and tasks outlined in the duty statement.	
<b>Advertise the position</b>	Promote the fact that you are a child safe organisation with a Child Safe Policy.	You will encourage the best qualified people to apply.
<b>Interview applicants</b>	<p>Ask about the applicant's motivation to work with children.</p> <p>Discuss the applicant's approach to Aboriginal cultural safety and inclusive practices for all children and their families.</p> <p>Ask questions about the applicant's real-life experience.</p> <p>Have three people on the interview panel if possible.</p> <p>Have a gender mix if possible.</p> <p>Appoint an interview chairperson.</p> <p>Conduct a second interview if you aren't sure who you want to appoint.</p>	You will achieve a fair and transparent interview process that allows reasonable opportunity to assess an applicant's skills and suitability.
<b>Conduct a minimum of two reference checks</b>	<p>At least two reference checks must be undertaken by telephone or in person. Do not just accept written reference.</p> <p>Insist on references from the applicant's current or most recent employer.</p> <p>The referee needs to have personally observed the applicant's work with children.</p> <p>Useful questions:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ Would you employ the applicant again?</li> <li>■ Do you have any concerns about the applicant working directly with children?</li> <li>■ Are you comfortable knowing the applicant could sometimes be alone with children?</li> <li>■ Can you give us an example of a time when you observed the applicant managing children's behaviour?</li> </ul>	You will collect accurate information, which enables you to make informed decisions about the applicant's suitability.



Choosing safe staff and volunteers	Practical suggestions	Good outcomes
<b>Conduct identity checks</b>	<p>Ensure you are background checking the right person.</p> <p>Evidence of identity must be provided (for example, driver's licence, passport).</p> <p>Make sure you sight an original birth certificate.</p> <p>Make sure you sight original certificates of qualifications.</p>	You will employ genuine and suitable employees or volunteers.
<b>Conduct a police check and ensure that applicants have a Working with Children Check (unless they are exempt)</b>	<p>Exclude anyone with a criminal history of violence, abuse of children or serious drug or fraud charges.</p> <p>Ensure you sight the applicant's Working with Children Check Card and verify the card is valid.</p> <p>Photocopy the applicant's Working with Children Check Card and keep this document in secure personnel records.</p>	You will screen out unsuitable people.
<b>Provide supervision, support and monitoring of staff and volunteers</b>	<p>Meet regularly with staff and volunteers.</p> <p>Support them in their role.</p> <p>Provide training and resources.</p> <p>Raise performance issues and required improvements.</p> <p>Treat staff and volunteers with respect.</p>	You will employ staff and volunteers who enjoy their job and feel valued by your organisation.
<b>Monitor and review</b>	<p>As part of your annual performance management cycle, check that the Working with Children Checks of relevant staff and volunteers in your organisation are still valid.</p>	You will reduce the risk of inappropriate people working with children in your organisation.

# Child safe standard 5.

## Processes for responding to and reporting suspected child abuse

Ensure children know who to talk to if they are worried or are feeling unsafe, and make sure that they are comfortable to do so. Children, parents, staff and volunteers must be encouraged and supported in their efforts to protect themselves and others. Your organisation should proactively engage with children in an age-appropriate manner about abuse, rather than relying on them to disclose abuse.

### Support the child and their family

It is very important to validate a child's disclosure, no matter how you feel about it. This means listening to the child, taking them seriously and responding and acting on the disclosure by implementing your organisation's reporting procedures.

Key steps include:

- let the child talk about their concerns in their own time and in their own words. Give them your full attention, the time and a quiet space in which to do this
- be a supportive and reassuring listener. Comfort the child if they are distressed
- tell the child it is not their fault and that telling you was the right thing to do
- let them know that you will act on this information and that you will need to let other people know
- alert relevant people in your organisation, the police or Child Protection, as documented in your organisation's policy

### Report suspected abuse promptly to the appropriate authorities

- record the child's disclosure using the child's words
- contact the child's parents to let them know (other than if the disclosure related to abuse within the family)
- assist the child and their family to access appropriate support for the child, such as counselling
- let the child and their family know about steps the organisation is taking, such as an investigation, and any resulting action, such as changes to policy or procedures
- praise the child for helping the organisation become safer for children.

**A recurring theme in submissions to the Royal Commission into Institutional Responses to Child Sexual Abuse was that victims of abuse were not believed when they disclosed abuse.**

## Safety and the risk of harm as the primary consideration

People are much more likely to report concerns if there is a clear and effective reporting process to follow. Reporting can be difficult to do. The safety of the child and the risk of harm must always be the primary consideration, with due regard for confidentiality and fairness to the person against whom the allegation is made.

## Clear and well-publicised reporting policy

Organisations have a responsibility to encourage staff, volunteers and children to speak up when they are uncomfortable or concerned. When there is a well-publicised reporting process that staff and volunteers are trained to use, it is more likely that people will raise relevant and important issues about child safety. This process will also encourage people to give helpful and important information that reduces the risk of all forms of harm to children, staff and volunteers.



## What concerns should be reported?

Concerns about the safety and wellbeing of children can range from an uncomfortable feeling through to a direct observation or a disclosure by a child. People are encouraged to speak to someone and be proactive rather than wait until it is too late. Staff and volunteers need to be aware of their duty of care to children and of their legal responsibilities.

Examples of child safety concerns include:

- concerns about a physical environment that may pose a risk to children (this includes health and hygiene issues)
- inappropriate or special relationships developing between staff or volunteers and children
- inadequate staff–child supervision ratios
- breaches of the Code of Conduct, particularly if they are persistent
- feelings of discomfort about interactions between a staff member or volunteer and a child
- suspicions or beliefs that children are at risk of harm
- observations of concerning changes in behaviour
- children's disclosures of abuse or harm, which must be reported to Child Protection or the police.

## When should concerns be reported to the police?

Physical or sexual abuse of children is a crime and must be reported to the police.

**If a child is in imminent or immediate danger, call 000 immediately.**

## When should concerns be reported to Child Protection?

Anyone may make a report to Child Protection if they believe, on reasonable grounds, that a child is in need of protection.

Child Protection is part of the Victorian Department of Health and Human Services. It provides child-centred, family-focused services to protect children and young people from significant harm caused by abuse or neglect within the family. It also aims to ensure that children and young people receive services to deal with the impact of abuse and neglect on their wellbeing and development. It is the Child Protection practitioner's job to investigate significant harm.

### How to make a report

To make a report of child abuse, contact your regional Child Protection office as soon as possible. Contact numbers are listed on page xx of this guide. You can also call 13 1278 for after-hours notifications.

## Mandatory reporting

Although everyone has a moral and social responsibility to report concerns about child abuse, some professionals are legally required to make a report to Child Protection if they form a belief on reasonable grounds that a child has suffered, or is likely to suffer, significant harm as a result of physical injury or sexual abuse and the child's parents have not protected, or are unlikely to protect, the child from harm of that type.

As an example, doctors, nurses, midwives, teachers and school principals, police, youth workers, social workers and psychologists are mandatory reporters under the *Children, Youth and Families Act 2005*.

As long as a report is made in good faith, the report is not unprofessional conduct or a breach of professional ethics and the reporter cannot be held legally liable. Confidentiality is provided for reporters in the *Children, Youth and Families Act*, and prevents the disclosure of the name or any information likely to lead to the identification of a person who has made a report in accordance with the legislation except in very specific circumstances.

**Share information appropriately and lawfully with other organisations where the safety and wellbeing of children is at risk.**

## Criminal offences

Your organisation needs to be aware of and be responsive to the following criminal offences that help protect children from harm.

### **Grooming for sexual conduct with a child under the age of 16 years**

Many perpetrators of sexual offences against children purposely create relationships with victims, their families or carers in order to create a situation where abuse can occur. The grooming offence applies where a person over 18 years of age communicates, by words or conduct, online or face-to-face, with a child under the age of 16 years or with a person who has care, supervision or authority for a child, with the intention of later sexual activity with a child.

### **Failure to disclose**

Any adult who forms a reasonable belief that a sexual offence has been committed by an adult against a child under 16 years of age has an obligation to report that information to police, unless they have a reasonable excuse for not disclosing or exemptions apply. Failure to disclose the information to police is a criminal offence.

A *reasonable belief* is formed if a reasonable person in the same position would have formed the belief on the same grounds.

**Failure to disclose obligations apply to all adults in Victoria.**

## Failure to protect

The failure to protect offence commenced on 1 July 2015 and applies to people within organisations who knew of a risk of child sexual abuse by someone in the organisation and had the authority to reduce or remove the risk, but did not act to protect the child.

**Failure to protect obligations apply to people in authority within a relevant organisation.**

A *relevant organisation* is one that exercises care, supervision or authority over children, whether as part of its primary function or otherwise.

**For more information on new offences and reporting obligations, go to:**

[www.justice.vic.gov.au/home/safer+communities/protecting+children+and+families/betrayal+of+trust+implementation](http://www.justice.vic.gov.au/home/safer+communities/protecting+children+and+families/betrayal+of+trust+implementation)

## Keep accurate and secure records

Your organisation should record any child safety complaints, disclosures or breaches of the Code of Conduct and store the records in accordance with security and privacy requirements. Keep a record of action taken, any internal investigations and any reports made to statutory authorities or professional bodies.

To avoid confusion and maintain confidentiality, everyone, including children, should be made aware of the need to report serious matters involving child protection to external authorities. You cannot promise confidentiality in these matters; however, you must assure privacy in handling the matter and that only those who need to know will be advised.

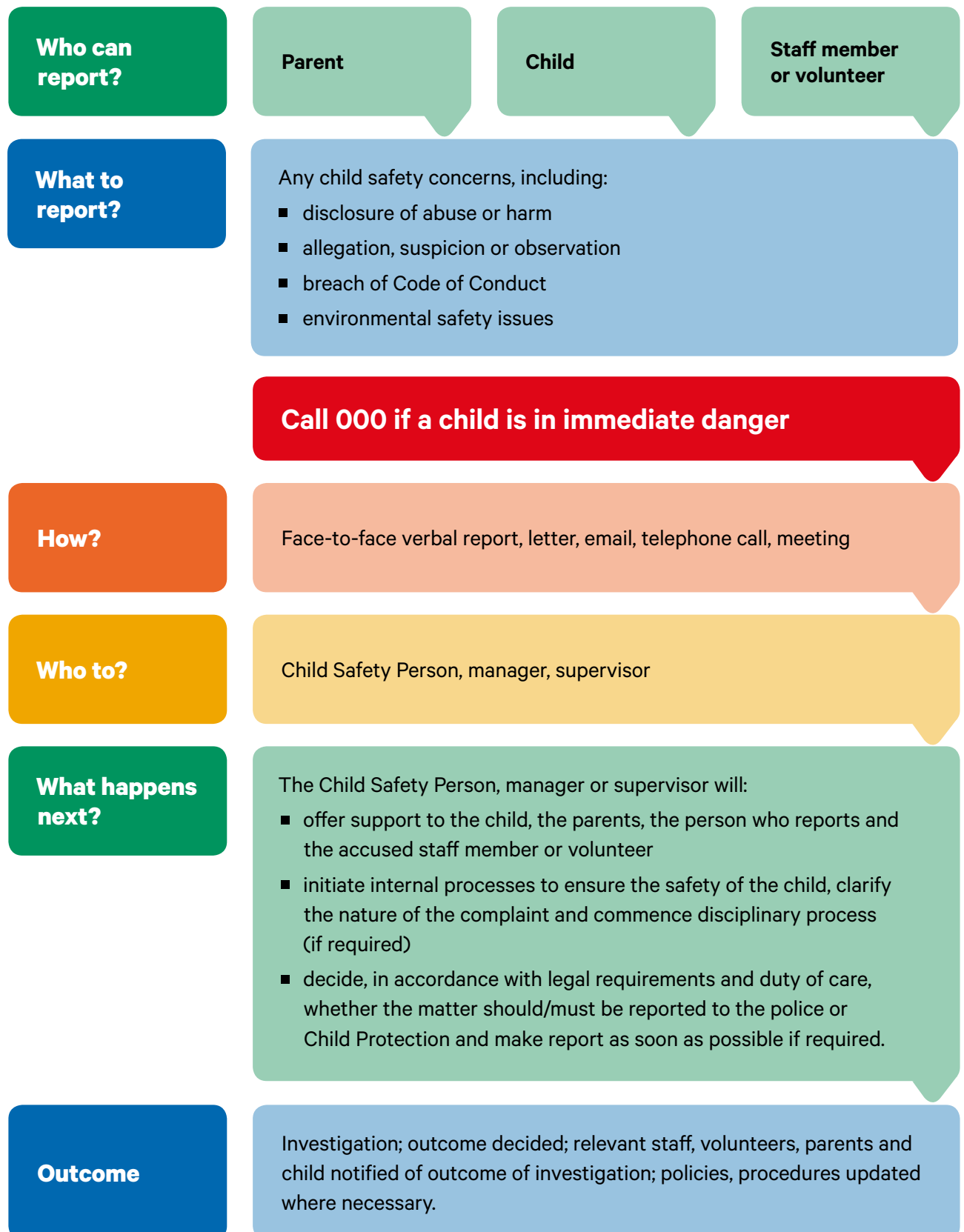
A flowchart outlining the process for reporting child safety concerns can convey a clear message to everyone that their concerns will be handled fairly, confidentially and efficiently. You should attach this to your organisation's Child Safe Policy.

A sample flowchart is provided on the following page.

## Appoint a dedicated Child Safety Person

The reporting process can be simplified by appointing a dedicated Child Safety Person who manages the process from beginning to end. If there is no specific Child Safety Person, your organisation must advise all staff, volunteers, parents and children who they should report concerns to. Staff and volunteers generally report to their supervisor or manager.

## Flowchart: Child safety reporting process





# Child safe standard 6.

## Strategies to identify and reduce or remove risks of child abuse

### Adopt a risk management approach

All organisations have a duty of care to protect the children they are involved with.

Creating a child safe organisation begins with a clear, evidence-informed understanding of the potential risks to children in your setting.

Taking a preventative approach means identifying the potential risks in your organisation. These range from the impact of the physical environment and how it affects the continual supervision of staff and children to staff recruitment practice.

Despite the implementation of best-practice approaches, risks always exist for children who access organisations. You are in the best position to know where the vulnerabilities and risks are located within your organisation and its activities and how you can plan to prevent them. By adopting a risk management approach, you are acting in a preventative manner and can reduce the likelihood of risks becoming realised.

### Develop a risk management plan

To reduce the likelihood of harm, think about and define the risks. What could go wrong within your organisation as a whole or for any specific activity? Do not forget to involve children in this process, as they may have a very different idea about what makes them feel unsafe.<sup>11</sup>

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<sup>11</sup> Formal processes for risk management are outlined in the national standard for risk management, AS/NZS ISO 3100:2009: *Risk management – Principles and guidelines* (Standards Australia/Standards New Zealand, 2009).

## Risk management

<b>Establish the context</b>	<p>How does your organisation interact with children? Remember that different levels of risks are inherent in different types of activities.</p> <p>What governance and supervision structures are in place to prevent harm or abuse?</p> <p>Describe the children accessing your organisation. All children are vulnerable due to their developmental level; however, some children are particularly vulnerable. This may include children who have experienced trauma, abuse or neglect; Aboriginal children; and children with a disability.</p>
<b>How will you undertake the risk management plan?</b>	<p>What approach will you adopt?</p> <p>Who will be involved?</p> <p>How long will it take?</p>
<b>Consult and communicate</b>	<p>How will you let children, parents, carers, staff, volunteers and any other stakeholders know you are doing a risk management plan?</p> <p>How will you seek their views and input?</p> <p>How will you inform them about the plan?</p>
<b>Identify the risks</b>	<p>These may range from occupational health and safety risks to child abuse and accidents.</p> <p>Do not forget to include risks related to the online environment.</p>
<b>Analyse the risks</b>	<p>Consider the likelihood and consequence for children, your organisation, staff, volunteers and others if harm did occur.</p>
<b>Develop intervention</b>	<p>What you can do to reduce the likelihood of risk?</p> <p>What would you need to do if the risk did occur?</p> <p>Changing the environment, putting preventative measures in place to make it harder for someone to perpetrate abuse and making it more likely that abuse will be discovered can also reduce the potential for abuse to occur.</p>
<b>Monitor and review</b>	<p>Have a clear monitoring structure to record any risks that did eventuate, how effective the risk management plan was and how it can be improved.</p> <p>Have a set timeframe for reviewing this plan to incorporate these learnings.</p>
<b>Designate and manage</b>	<p>Risk management should be a responsibility of a designated role within your organisation. This person must lead the child safety culture.</p>

Adapted from the NSW Office of the Children's Guardian, [www.kidsguardian.nsw.gov.au](http://www.kidsguardian.nsw.gov.au)

## Key risks

Some of the key risks to children in organisational settings are outlined below:

Risks to children	
Unintentional/accidental harm	Physical abuse
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>■ Poor physical environment leading to injury</li><li>■ Poor supervision</li><li>■ High-risk activity</li><li>■ Lack of risk mitigation strategies in place</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>■ Physical punishment</li><li>■ Pushing, shoving</li><li>■ Punching, slapping, biting, kicking</li></ul>
Psychological abuse	Cultural abuse
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>■ Bullying</li><li>■ Threatening language</li><li>■ Shaming</li><li>■ Intentional ignoring and isolating (either face-to-face, online or via other technology)</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>■ Lack of cultural respect</li><li>■ Racial or cultural vilification or discrimination</li><li>■ Lack of support to enable a child to be aware of and express their cultural identity</li></ul>
Neglect	Sexual abuse
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>■ Lack of supervision</li><li>■ Not providing adequate nourishment</li><li>■ Not providing adequate clothing or shelter</li><li>■ Not meeting the specific physical or cognitive needs of children</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>■ Sexual abuse, assault and exploitation</li><li>■ Grooming</li><li>■ Inappropriate touching</li><li>■ Inappropriate conversations of a sexual nature (either face-to-face, online or via other technology)</li><li>■ Crossing professional boundaries</li></ul>

Adapted from the NSW Office of the Children's Guardian, [www.kidsguardian.nsw.gov.au](http://www.kidsguardian.nsw.gov.au)

Once you have identified the risks faced by children in your organisation, you have a better understanding of what policies and procedures your organisation requires and how these should be communicated.

## Cyber, online and mobile phone safety

Although the use of technology provides enormous opportunities, children are particularly vulnerable in the online environment. They can be very trusting of what they are told, and may not yet understand how their own online behaviour can harm other people.

There are many technologies used for communication and they are evolving all the time. Children move to new and emerging technology quickly and can be a step ahead of their parents, carers and organisational staff. New technologies include:

- text or SMS messaging
- Facebook
- Instagram
- Snapchat
- Twitter
- smartphone applications.

**Online harm includes harm caused by other children or by adults seeking to groom children.**

It is vital that organisations acknowledge the risk to children in the online world and keep themselves up to date and ensure that their child safe polices include online and cyber harm.

### Cyberbullying

Cyberbullying is using an internet service or mobile technologies with the intention of harming another person. Cyberbullying includes:

- abusive texts and emails
- hurtful messages, images or videos
- imitating others online
- excluding others online
- nasty online gossip and chat.

### Online grooming

Online grooming of children is the illegal act of an adult or adults making online contact with a child under the age of 16 with the intention of facilitating a sexual relationship. Online grooming includes:

- asking a child inappropriate or personal questions
- sending a child offensive, confronting or obscene content
- asking a child to send intimate pictures or do things online that make them feel uncomfortable
- singling a child out for a 'special' relationship.

**For more information on Victoria's grooming legislation, go to:**

[www.justice.vic.gov.au/home/safer+communities/protecting+children+and+families/grooming+offence](http://www.justice.vic.gov.au/home/safer+communities/protecting+children+and+families/grooming+offence)

### Trolling

Trolling describes a user anonymously abusing or intimidating others online for fun. Trolls post inflammatory or nasty statements to watch the reactions of others.

### Profile privacy settings

It is fundamentally important to make sure children know not to have online profiles set as 'public'. Public profiles can be accessed by anyone.

Each individual application or devices' privacy setting should be set to 'private'.

**For more information on online safety, visit the office of the Children's eSafety Commissioner:**

[www.esafety.gov.au](http://www.esafety.gov.au)

# Child safe standard 7.

## Strategies to promote the participation and empowerment of children

### Promote the participation of children


It must be acknowledged that a significant power imbalance exists between children and adults. Specific efforts must be taken to ensure the voices of children are heard. Enabling and promoting the participation of children within your organisation has many benefits. These include:

- demonstrating your commitment to upholding the rights of children
- providing you with the opportunity to check that what you are doing is actually what children want
- strengthening the commitment of children to your organisation
- building the communication and leadership skills of children
- building cultural understanding and respect
- enhancing the safety of children.

When children are respected and valued, they are much more likely to speak up about issues of safety and wellbeing. If children feel they cannot express themselves in an organisation, there is a risk that any harm that is occurring will remain undiscovered and ongoing.

**Children may not feel safe if they are unaware of what you are doing to keep them safe – participation and communication are vital.**





Becoming a child safe organisation means developing strategies to communicate and engage with all children who are involved with your organisation. It is important to ask children when they feel safe, and when they feel unsafe – their comments may surprise you.

Children's views can be sought by:

- consulting directly with children about what they think makes an organisation safe for them
- giving children information about the standards of care they are entitled to, particularly about their rights
- teaching children how to raise concerns, make complaints or let someone know they feel unsafe
- regularly checking with parents and children that they are aware of relevant child safe policies and procedures and that the child safety culture is visible.

I am always impressed and amazed by the unique insight that is so generously provided by children and young people when we consult with them.

*Manager, Monitoring Programs and Services,  
Commission for Children and Young People*

## Talk to children about safety

To create a true child safe organisation, it makes sense to ask those you are trying to protect when they feel safe and when they feel unsafe. Their comments and insight will always be different from the adult perspective. Well-intentioned people put policies and procedures aimed at protecting children in place, yet it is rare that children know these policies exist. Often children do not know what to do if they feel unsafe or are concerned about something.

The concept of 'safety' is very broad and means different things to different people, especially children. It is much easier to understand the concept of 'physical' safety and the need for safe practices around hygiene, road and water safety, slippery surfaces, pool fencing, sign-in and sign-out procedures and staff supervision ratios. All of these contribute to the physical protection of children.

In a child safe organisation, we also want to promote 'psychological' safety. Even if the physical environment is as safe as we can make it, when children feel unsafe we need to understand why and respond to their needs. Psychological safety means children feel valued, respected and cared for. They know they can speak to people if they feel unsafe or unhappy, and that something will be done to address their concerns. Knowing this increases their self-esteem, which boosts their confidence and empowers them to speak up when necessary.

Children also contribute valuable insight and ideas towards the creation of a meaningful child safe organisation. Children may be able to identify strengths, weaknesses, risks and dangers in activities that may not be identified by other methods.

Children must be empowered to understand their rights, recognise what abuse is and understand it is not ok and that they can do something about it.

**Helping children to recognise abuse in an age-appropriate way can help them avoid situations that might put them at risk.**

## Consulting and talking to children

### Practical suggestions

### Good outcomes

#### Establish what safety means to children

Ask children when they feel safe and when they feel unsafe.

Ensure the physical environment is safe, warm and friendly towards children.

Children's insight and responses will inform the development of the Child Safe Policy, Code of Conduct and complaints management process.

You will be alerted to any physical danger in the environment.

#### Educate children about their rights

Run informal education sessions on the Convention on the Rights of the Child.

Teach children that with every right they enjoy, they need to meet its corresponding responsibility.

Undertake activities on rights versus wants.

The children will understand their basic human rights and also understand they need to meet their responsibilities.

The children will know the difference between a 'right' and a 'want'.

#### Include children in policy development

Explain what the organisation is attempting to do and ask the children for their ideas, opinions and suggestions.

Run small discussion groups, and provide refreshments and activities. Give regular breaks.

Your organisation will have a Child Safe Policy that children understand and which represents their suggestions.

Practical suggestions will be contributing to a physically safe environment.

#### Encourage children to develop their own Code of Conduct

Ask children what is acceptable behaviour and unacceptable behaviour. This includes behaviour of adults towards children, of children towards adults and of children towards children.

Formulate a code of conduct using 'DO' and 'DO NOT' or 'WE WILL' and 'WE WILL NOT'.

Your organisation will have a child friendly Code of Conduct written by children for children.

Your organisation will have guidelines for staff and volunteers about their interactions, expected behaviour and relationships with children.





# Helpful organisations

## **Commission for Children and Young People**

Level 20/570 Bourke Street  
Melbourne Victoria 3000  
Tel: 03 8601 5884  
Web: [www.ccyp.vic.gov.au](http://www.ccyp.vic.gov.au)  
Email: [childsafe@ccyp.vic.gov.au](mailto:childsafe@ccyp.vic.gov.au)

## **Australian Childhood Foundation**

PO Box 525  
Ringwood Victoria 3134  
Tel: (03) 9874 3922  
National Free Call: 1800 176 453  
Web: [www.childhood.org.au](http://www.childhood.org.au)  
Email: [info@childhood.org.au](mailto:info@childhood.org.au)  
Web: [www.safeguardingchildren.com.au](http://www.safeguardingchildren.com.au)  
Email: [safeguardingchildren@childhood.org.au](mailto:safeguardingchildren@childhood.org.au)

## **Centre for Excellence in Child and Family Welfare Inc.**

Level 5/50 Market Street  
Melbourne Victoria 3000  
Tel: 03 9614 1577  
Web: [www.cfecfw.asn.au](http://www.cfecfw.asn.au)  
Email: [admin@cfecfw.asn.au](mailto:admin@cfecfw.asn.au)

## **Child Family Community Australia**

Australian Institute of Family Studies  
Level 20 South Tower/485 La Trobe Street  
Melbourne Victoria 3000  
Tel: 03 9214 7888  
Web: [www.aifs.gov.au/cfca](http://www.aifs.gov.au/cfca)  
Child Protection  
After Hours Crisis Line: 13 1278 (24 hours, 7 days a week)  
During business hours contact your local Department of Health & Human Services Division office.

## **Barwon–South Western Division**

Level 2/30–38 Little Malop Street  
Geelong Victoria 3220  
Tel: 1800 075 599  
Web: [www.health.vic.gov.au/regions/barwon/](http://www.health.vic.gov.au/regions/barwon/)

## **Eastern Metropolitan Division**

883 Whitehorse Road  
Box Hill Victoria 3128,  
Tel: 1300 360 391  
Web: [www.health.vic.gov.au/regions/eastern/](http://www.health.vic.gov.au/regions/eastern/)

## **Gippsland Division**

64 Church Street  
Traralgon Victoria 3844  
Tel: 1800 020 202  
Web: [www.health.vic.gov.au/regions/gippsland/](http://www.health.vic.gov.au/regions/gippsland/)

## **Grampians Division**

Corner Mair Street and Doveton Street  
Ballarat Victoria 3350  
Tel: 1800 000 551  
Web: [www.health.vic.gov.au/regions/grampians/](http://www.health.vic.gov.au/regions/grampians/)

## **Hume Division**

43 Rowan Street  
Wangaratta Victoria 3677  
Tel: 1800 650 227  
Web: [www.health.vic.gov.au/regions/hume/](http://www.health.vic.gov.au/regions/hume/)

## **Loddon Mallee Division**

74–78 Queen Street  
Bendigo Victoria 3550  
Tel: 1800 675 598  
Web: [www.health.vic.gov.au/regions/loddonmallee/](http://www.health.vic.gov.au/regions/loddonmallee/)

## **North and West Metropolitan Division**

145 Smith Street  
Fitzroy Victoria 3065  
Tel: 1300 369 536  
Web: [www.health.vic.gov.au/regions/northwestern/](http://www.health.vic.gov.au/regions/northwestern/)

## **Southern Metropolitan Division**

122 Thomas Street  
Dandenong Victoria 3175  
Tel: 1300 655 795  
Web: [www.health.vic.gov.au/regions/southern/](http://www.health.vic.gov.au/regions/southern/)



### **Children's Protection Society**

70 Altona Street  
Heidelberg West Victoria 3081  
Tel: 03 9450 0900  
Web: [www.cps.org.au](http://www.cps.org.au)  
Email: [cps@cps.org.au](mailto:cps@cps.org.au)

### **Child Wise**

PO Box 1117  
South Melbourne Victoria 3205  
Tel: 03 9645 8911  
National Helpline: 1800 991 099  
Web: [www.childwise.org.au](http://www.childwise.org.au)  
Email: [office@childwise.org.au](mailto:office@childwise.org.au)

### **ChildSafe**

PO Box 7127  
Banyule Victoria 3084  
Tel: 03 9037 6415  
Web: [www.childsafe.org.au](http://www.childsafe.org.au)

### **Commissioner for Privacy and Data Protection**

Level 6/121 Exhibition Street  
Melbourne Victoria 3000  
Tel: 1300 666 444  
Web: [cpdp.vic.gov.au](http://cpdp.vic.gov.au)  
Email: [privacy@cpdp.vic.gov.au](mailto:privacy@cpdp.vic.gov.au)

### **Royal Children's Hospital Safety Centre**

Flemington Road  
Parkville Victoria 3052  
Tel: 03 9345 5085  
Web: [www.rch.org.au/safetycentre](http://www.rch.org.au/safetycentre)  
Email: [safetycentre@rch.org.au](mailto:safetycentre@rch.org.au)

### **VicSport**

Level 3/375 Albert Road  
South Melbourne Victoria 3205  
Tel: 03 9926 1376  
Web: [vicsport.com.au](http://vicsport.com.au)  
Email: [admin@vicsport.com.au](mailto:admin@vicsport.com.au)

### **Victoria Police**

Contact your local Sexual Offences and Child Abuse Investigation Team or call 000 and ask for police.

### **Victoria Police Sexual Offences and Child Abuse Investigation Team**

Melbourne: 03 8690 4056  
Dandenong: 03 8769 2200  
Box Hill: 03 8892 3292  
Knox: 03 9881 7939  
Web: [www.police.vic.gov.au/content.asp?document\\_id=36448](http://www.police.vic.gov.au/content.asp?document_id=36448)

### **Victorian Equal Opportunity and Human Rights Commission**

Level 3/204 Lygon Street  
Carlton Victoria 3053  
Tel: 1300 891 848  
TTY: 1300 289 621  
Web: [www.humanrightscommission.vic.gov.au](http://www.humanrightscommission.vic.gov.au)  
Email: [information@veohrc.vic.gov.au](mailto:information@veohrc.vic.gov.au)

### **Victorian Institute of Teaching**

Level 9/628 Bourke Street  
Melbourne Victoria 3000  
Tel: 1300 888 067  
Web: [www.vit.vic.edu.au](http://www.vit.vic.edu.au)  
Email: [vit@vit.vic.edu.au](mailto:vit@vit.vic.edu.au)

### **Working with Children Check**

Department of Justice and Regulation  
GPO Box 1915  
Melbourne, Victoria 3001  
Tel: 1300 652 879  
Web: [www.workingwithchildren.vic.gov.au](http://www.workingwithchildren.vic.gov.au)  
Email: [workingwithchildren@justice.vic.gov.au](mailto:workingwithchildren@justice.vic.gov.au)

### **Youth Affairs Council of Victoria**

Level 2/180 Flinders Street  
Melbourne Victoria 3000  
Tel: 03 9267 3799  
Tel: 1300 727 176  
Web: [www.yacvic.org.au](http://www.yacvic.org.au)  
Email: [info@yacvic.org.au](mailto:info@yacvic.org.au)

# Useful links and resources

Andrew Jackomos, *Cultural rights for Koorie children*, available at: [www.ccyp.vic.gov.au](http://www.ccyp.vic.gov.au)

Australian Children's Commissioners and Guardians, *Principles for Child Safety in Organisations*, available at: [www.ccyp.vic.gov.au/downloads/accg-principles-for-child-safety-in-organisations.pdf](http://www.ccyp.vic.gov.au/downloads/accg-principles-for-child-safety-in-organisations.pdf)

Child Wise, *Choose With Care: 12 steps to a child safe organisation*, available at: [www.childwise.org.au/page/37/online-publications](http://www.childwise.org.au/page/37/online-publications)

Community and Disability Services Ministers' Conference, *National Framework: Creating Safe Environments for Children – Organisations, Employees and Volunteers*, available at: [www.ocsc.vic.gov.au](http://www.ocsc.vic.gov.au)

Family and Community Development Committee, *Betrayal Of Trust: Inquiry into the Handling of Child Abuse by Religious and Other Non-Government Organisations*, available at: [www.parliament.vic.gov.au/images/stories/committees/fcdc/inquiries/57th/Child\\_Abuse\\_Inquiry/Report/Preliminaries.pdf](http://www.parliament.vic.gov.au/images/stories/committees/fcdc/inquiries/57th/Child_Abuse_Inquiry/Report/Preliminaries.pdf)

Government of South Australia, *Child Safe Environments: Principles of Good Practice*, available at: [www.decd.sa.gov.au/docs/documents/1/ChildSafeEnvironGoodPrac.pdf](http://www.decd.sa.gov.au/docs/documents/1/ChildSafeEnvironGoodPrac.pdf)

Government of South Australia, *Protecting children and young people with disability: A booklet for parents and carers*, available at: [www.decd.sa.gov.au/docs/documents/1/ProtectChildDisabBooklet.pdf](http://www.decd.sa.gov.au/docs/documents/1/ProtectChildDisabBooklet.pdf)

Government of South Australia, *A guide to protecting children and young people with disability and preventing sexual abuse (a companion to Protecting children and young people with disability)*, available at: [www.decd.sa.gov.au/docs/documents/1/MacswdChildProtectionBook.pdf](http://www.decd.sa.gov.au/docs/documents/1/MacswdChildProtectionBook.pdf)

Government of Western Australia, *Safer Organisations Safer Children: A guide to making your organisation child-safe and friendly*, available at: [www.checkwwwc.wa.gov.au/NR/rdonlyres/D783A393-347E-45A8-AAC0-085F941C1989/0/SaferOrganisationsSaferChildrenBooklet0914.pdf](http://www.checkwwwc.wa.gov.au/NR/rdonlyres/D783A393-347E-45A8-AAC0-085F941C1989/0/SaferOrganisationsSaferChildrenBooklet0914.pdf)

New South Wales Government, *Become a Child Safe Organisation*, available at: [www.kidsguardian.nsw.gov.au/working-with-children/become-a-chilsafe-organisation](http://www.kidsguardian.nsw.gov.au/working-with-children/become-a-chilsafe-organisation)

Royal Commission into Institutional Responses to Child Sexual Abuse, *Interim Report*, available at: [www.childabuseroyalcommission.gov.au/about-us/our-reports/interim-report-html](http://www.childabuseroyalcommission.gov.au/about-us/our-reports/interim-report-html)

Royal Commission into Institutional Responses to Child Sexual Abuse, *Working with Children Checks Report*, available at: [www.childabuseroyalcommission.gov.au/policy-and-research/working-with-children-checks](http://www.childabuseroyalcommission.gov.au/policy-and-research/working-with-children-checks)

State of Queensland, *Child and Youth Risk Management Strategy Toolkit*, available at: [www.bluecard.qld.gov.au/pdf/rmst/201506-Child-and-youth-risk-management-strategy-toolkit.pdf](http://www.bluecard.qld.gov.au/pdf/rmst/201506-Child-and-youth-risk-management-strategy-toolkit.pdf)

Victorian Aboriginal Child Care Agency, *Aboriginal Cultural Competence Framework*, available at: [www.dhs.vic.gov.au/\\_\\_data/assets/pdf\\_file/0011/580934/Aboriginal\\_cultural\\_competence\\_2008.pdf](http://www.dhs.vic.gov.au/__data/assets/pdf_file/0011/580934/Aboriginal_cultural_competence_2008.pdf)

Victorian Aboriginal Child Care Agency, *This is 'Forever Business': A framework for maintaining and restoring cultural safety in Aboriginal Victoria*, available at: [www.sheltersa.asn.au/wp-content/uploads/130123-Forever-Business-Report.pdf](http://www.sheltersa.asn.au/wp-content/uploads/130123-Forever-Business-Report.pdf)

# Appendix 1:

## United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child

### Highlights of the convention

- Every child has the inherent right to life, and states shall ensure to the maximum child survival and development.
- Every child has the right to a name and nationality from birth.
- Children shall not be separated from their parents, except by competent authorities for their wellbeing.
- States shall facilitate reunification of families by permitting travel into, or out of, their territories.
- Parents have the primary responsibility for a child's upbringing, but states shall provide them with appropriate assistance and develop child care institutions.
- States shall protect children from physical or mental harm and neglect, including sexual abuse or exploitation.
- States shall provide parentless children with suitable alternative care. The adoption process shall be carefully regulated and international agreements should be sought to provide safeguards and assure legal validity if and when adoptive parents intend to move a child from his or her country of birth.
- Disabled children shall have the right to special treatment, education and care.
- Children are entitled to the highest attainable standard of health. States shall ensure that health care is provided to all children, placing emphasis on preventive measures, health education and reduction of infant mortality.
- Primary education shall be free and compulsory. Discipline in schools shall respect the child's dignity. Education should prepare the child for life in a spirit of understanding, peace and tolerance.
- Children shall have time to rest and play and equal opportunities for cultural and artistic activities.
- States shall protect children from economic exploitation and from work that may interfere with their education or be harmful to their health or wellbeing.
- States shall protect children from the illegal use of drugs and involvement in drug production or trafficking.
- All efforts shall be made to eliminate the abduction and trafficking of children.
- Capital punishment or life imprisonment shall not be imposed for crimes committed before the age of 18.
- Children in detention shall be separated from adults; they must not be tortured or suffer cruel or degrading treatment.
- No child under 15 shall take any part in hostilities; children exposed to armed conflict shall receive special protection.
- Children of minority and indigenous populations shall freely enjoy their own culture, religion and language.
- Children who have suffered mistreatment, neglect or exploitation shall receive appropriate treatment or training for recovery and rehabilitation.
- Children involved in infringements of the penal law shall be treated in a way that promotes their sense of dignity and worth and aims at reintegrating them into society.
- States shall make the rights set out in the convention widely known to both adults and children.

# Appendix 2:

## Working with Children Check occupational fields

For an activity to be defined as child-related work under the Working with Children Act, it must be represented by one of the occupational fields listed below. However, not all work within the occupational categories is child-related work, and some people are exempt.

Service or place of work	Details	Code
<b>Camps</b>	All overnight camps for children	10
<b>Child Care Services</b>	Child care services including: <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>■ Centre based long day care</li><li>■ occasional care</li><li>■ family day care</li><li>■ in home care</li><li>■ outside school hours care</li></ul>	14 16 18 20 22
<b>Child employment – supervisors</b>	Supervision of a child in employment (where the child is under 15 years of age) pursuant to the <i>Child Employment Act 2003</i>	76
<b>Child-minding</b>	Babysitting or child-minding services arranged by a commercial agency	12
<b>Child Protection Services</b>	Child Protection Services	24
<b>Children's services</b>	Children's services under the <i>Children's Services Act 1996</i> and education and care services within the meaning of the Education and Care Services National Law (Victoria) including kindergartens or preschools	26
<b>Clubs and associations</b>	Clubs, associations or movements of a cultural, recreational or sporting nature	42
<b>Coaching and tuition</b>	Coaching or tuition services of any kind specifically for children	28
<b>Counselling services</b>	Counselling or other support services for children	40
<b>Educational institutions</b>	Educational institutions for children, specifically: <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>■ state schools (including all primary, secondary, technical and special state schools)</li><li>■ non-government schools (including all primary, secondary and special non-government schools)</li><li>■ TAFE colleges and TAFE divisions of universities providing VCE and/or Victorian Certificate of Applied Learning (VCAL) subjects</li><li>■ Some adult education providers providing VCE and/or VCAL subjects</li><li>■ other institutions providing children's study or training programs.</li></ul>	44 46 48 50 52

Service or place of work	Details	Code
<b>Entertainment and party services</b>	Commercial entertainment or party services for children, unless they are merely incidental to or in support of other business activities	30
<b>Foster care</b>	Fostering children	54
<b>Gym or play facilities</b>	Commercial gym or play facilities for children, unless they are merely incidental to or in support of other business activities	32
<b>Out-of-home care services</b>	Out-of-home care services (that are established or approved under the <i>Children, Youth and Families Act 2005</i> )	38
<b>Paediatric wards</b>	Paediatric wards of public, private or denominational hospitals as defined in the <i>Health Services Act 1988</i>	58
<b>Photography services</b>	Commercial photography services for children, unless they are merely incidental to or in support of other business activities	34
<b>Refuges</b>	Refuges or other residential facilities used by children	62
<b>Religion</b>	Religious organisations	64
<b>School crossings</b>	School crossing services	66
<b>Student exchange programs/homestay</b>	Accommodation services specifically provided for students as part of a student exchange program under Part 4.5A of the <i>Education and Training Reform Act 2006</i> , including accommodation in a person's home such as a homestay arrangement	78
<b>Talent and beauty competitions</b>	Commercial talent or beauty competitions for children, unless they are merely incidental to or in support of other business activities	36
<b>Transport</b>	Publicly funded or commercial transport services specifically for children	60
<b>Youth justice</b>	Youth remand, residential, or justice centres, supervision units and probation services within the meaning of the <i>Children Youth and Families Act 2005</i> .	56





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## COMMISSION FOR CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE

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### **Commission for Children and Young People logo**

The logo represents our vision for all children to be strong in health, education, culture and identity; and facing the world with confidence.

The people are connected, equal in size and importance and there is a fluidity that binds them together.  
This is the mission of the Commission as an organisation, and also the goals it seeks to achieve for all young Victorians.

The symbol is a Koorie design created by Marcus Lee for the Commission.

The Commission respectfully acknowledges the Traditional Owners of the country throughout Victoria  
and pays respect to the ongoing living cultures of First Peoples.