

# Victoria's Child Safe Standards

## Plain language guide



# What are the Child Safe Standards?

- The Child Safe Standards (the Standards) began in Victoria in January 2016.
- The Standards help keep children safe from abuse and harm.
- There are 11 Child Safe Standards.
- Organisations working with children<sup>1</sup> must **comply** with the Standards. **Comply** means that your organisation must have things in place to show that you<sup>2</sup> follow and meet each standard.

*This document is a summary of the Child Safe Standards. It has words and pictures that are easy to understand to help explain the Standards. It does not include the full wording of the Standards or all the things that you must do to comply. You can read the full text of the Standards and more information about how to comply on our [website](#).*



<sup>1</sup> “Children” means people under 18 years old.

<sup>2</sup> We also use the word “you” when we are talking about “your organisation”.

## Child Safe Standard 1

**Organisations make sure that Aboriginal children feel culturally safe. They respect and value the identity and experiences of each child.**



**Your organisation and staff must:**

- welcome Aboriginal<sup>3</sup> people, their culture, and their rights
- understand how this helps Aboriginal children to feel safe and well
- not allow racism and have rules and actions to deal with racism
- assist Aboriginal children to express their diverse identities, customs, beliefs, and languages
- help Aboriginal children and their families to be involved in your organisation
- make sure they feel culturally safe
- have policies and systems that show you have done these things.

<sup>3</sup> We use the word ‘Aboriginal’ to talk about Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people.

## Child Safe Standard 2

**Organisation's leaders focus on keeping children safe and well. Organisations have processes to find, avoid, and stop risks of child abuse or harm.**



**Your organisation must:**

- make a **public commitment** to child safety. This means that you let the community know that child safety is important to your organisation
- have a **Child Safety and Wellbeing Policy**. This is a document that explains how your organisation keeps children safe
- make sure that everyone in the organisation promotes child safety
- have a written **Code of Conduct** for staff and volunteers. This is a document that explains to staff how to behave around children and what is not OK
- document about how you find, avoid, and stop risks to children
- make sure that staff understand how to share information and keep records about child safety.

## Child Safe Standard 3

**Children know about their rights, are taken seriously, and take part in decisions that affect them.**



**Your organisation must:**

- tell children about their rights to:
  - safety
  - information
  - take part in decisions about them
- understand and encourage the importance of friendships. This helps children to feel safe
- offer programs and information to children about how to prevent sexual abuse
- make sure that staff and volunteers can:
  - identify signs of child abuse and harm in children
  - help children to talk openly and to talk about things that worry them
- help children to be involved in your organisation
- act on what children tell you so that they feel safe and want to stay involved in your organisation.

## Child Safe Standard 4

**Organisations tell families and communities about how they keep children safe from abuse and harm. They encourage them to be involved in keeping children safe from abuse and harm.**



**Your organisation must:**

- help families to take part in decisions that affect their child
- tell families and the community about how your organisation keeps children safe from abuse and harm
- make sure families and communities can easily find and understand this information
- make sure families and communities have a say in your organisation's policies and practices
- tell families, carers, and the community about your organisation and how it works.

## Child Safe Standard 5

**Organisations understand that every child is different. They consider the individual needs of each child to give them the care and support they need.**



**Your organisation must:**

- understand that every child is different and that some children may need more support
- help and consider the needs of children who:
  - have disability
  - are from different cultures
  - speak different languages
  - are unable to live at home
  - are lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, non-binary, gender diverse, or intersex
- make sure children can easily get the information and help they need. This must be culturally safe and easy to understand
- make sure it is easy for children to make a complaint and understand the process
- consider the needs of Aboriginal children and make sure they always feel culturally safe.

## Child Safe Standard 6

**Organisations make sure that people working with children are suitable. Staff are supported and know what to do to keep children safe from abuse and harm.**



**Your organisation must:**

- focus on child safety and wellbeing when hiring new staff and volunteers. This can be in advertising, referee checks, and screening, before they start work
- make sure that staff and volunteers have the right background checks
- make sure that new staff know what they must do to keep children safe from abuse and harm. This includes:
  - keeping good records
  - knowing when to share information
  - knowing when and how to make a report
- make sure managers help staff to focus on child safety.

## Child Safe Standard 7

**Processes for complaints and concerns are child focused**



**Your organisation must:**

- have a complaints policy. This policy must:
  - be easy to find and read
  - be child focused
  - explain:
    - what managers, staff, and volunteers must do
    - how to manage different types of complaints
    - what to do if policies or the Code of Conduct are not followed
    - when your organisation needs to make a report to authorities, like the police
- make sure that children, families, staff, and volunteers all understand how your organisation manages complaints
- handle complaints properly and in a culturally safe way
- take all complaints seriously and respond quickly
- have policies and procedures about:
  - how to report complaints to your organisation
  - who to report to
  - when to make a report
  - how to report complaints to, and work with, police and other authorities
- follow all laws about reporting, privacy, and employment.

## Child Safe Standard 8

**Organisations provide education and training to staff to keep children safe from abuse and harm.**



**Your organisation must:**

- follow the organisation's Child Safety and Wellbeing Policy
- know the signs of child abuse and harm. This includes abuse and harm caused by other children
- respond to issues of child safety and wellbeing
- help other staff when they are dealing with a child safety issue
- understand how to make children feel more culturally safe.

## Child Safe Standard 9

**Organisations make sure children are safe when they use their services, settings, and activities. This includes when children are online.**



**Your organisation must:**

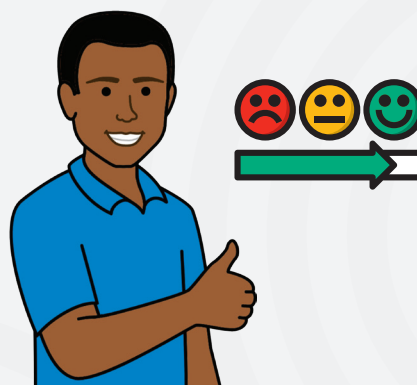
- make sure that staff and volunteers can find and stop risks. When doing this they must still protect a child's right to
  - privacy
  - information
  - have friends and not feel alone
  - learn
- make sure that staff and volunteers understand online safety. When they are online, they must meet your organisation's
  - Code of Conduct
  - Child Safety and Wellbeing Policy
- write **risk management plans**. These are plans for how you will deal with risks that may come from your settings, activities, and environment
- protect the safety of children when your organisation uses the facilities or services of other organisations.

## Child Safe Standard 10

Organisations check and improve the ways they keep children safe from abuse and harm.

Your organisation must:

- keep checking and improving what you do to keep children and young people safe
- look into complaints, concerns, and safety incidents to find out how they happened. This will help you to improve what you do
- tell staff, volunteers, the community, families, and children about what you have found.



## Child Safe Standard 11

Organisations have written documents about how they keep children safe from abuse and harm.

Your organisation must:

- have written policies and procedures that:
  - cover all Child Safe Standards
  - are easy to find and understand
- work with **stakeholders** to develop your policies and procedures. These are people with an interest in your organisation. This can be:
  - staff and volunteers
  - children and family members
  - other organisations that you work with
  - community groups or members
- look at good policies and procedures from other organisations
- make sure that your leaders support the policies and procedures
- make sure that staff and volunteers understand and follow the policies and procedures.







## Where to get help

**Child Safe Standards regulators** can give you information to help you to meet the Standards.

You can find out about **Child Safe Standards regulators** [here](#).

**You can contact the Commission by:**



**Telephone:** 1300 782 978



**Email:** [contact@ccyp.vic.gov.au](mailto:contact@ccyp.vic.gov.au)



**Website:** [www.ccyp.vic.gov.au](http://www.ccyp.vic.gov.au)



**If you need an interpreter, please call the Translating and Interpreting Service on 13 14 50. Ask them to call the Commission for Children and Young People on 1300 782 978.**

The Commission respectfully acknowledges and celebrates the Traditional Owners of the lands throughout Victoria and pays its respects to their Elders, children and young people of past, current and future generations.

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The Commission wishes to acknowledge the contribution of enliven's Health Literacy Services in the development of the Plain Language version of this resource ([www.enliven.org.au](http://www.enliven.org.au) / [healthliteracy@enliven.org.au](mailto:healthliteracy@enliven.org.au)) in May 2022.

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AND YOUNG PEOPLE