

# Child Safe Standards

## WHAT DO THEY MEAN FOR YOUR ORGANISATION?

The Victorian Child Safe Standards (the Standards) apply to all sporting organisations that operate and provide sporting services to children and young people within Victoria. Organisations that provide a service to children, including sporting organisations, are legally required to comply with the Standards from 1 July 2022. The Standards outline minimum requirements and actions organisations must take to keep children and young people safe from all forms of abuse.

### What Are The Standards?

1. Organisations establish a culturally safe environment in which the diverse and unique identities and experiences of Aboriginal children and young people are respected and valued.
2. Child safety and wellbeing is embedded in organisational leadership, governance and culture.
3. Children and young people are empowered about their rights, participate in decisions affecting them and are taken seriously.
4. Families and communities are informed, and involved in promoting child safety and wellbeing.
5. Equity is upheld and diverse needs respected in policy and practice.
6. People working with children and young people are suitable and supported to reflect child safety and wellbeing values in practice.
7. Processes for complaints and concerns are child focused.
8. Staff and volunteers are equipped with the knowledge, skills and awareness to keep children and young people safe through ongoing education and training.
9. Physical and online environments promote safety and wellbeing while minimising the opportunity for children and young people to be harmed.
10. Implementation of the Child Safe Standards is regularly reviewed and improved.
11. Policies and procedures document how the organisation is safe for children and young people.

#### Standard 1:

**Organisations establish a culturally safe environment in which the diverse and unique identities and experiences of Aboriginal children and young people are respected and valued.**

#### *This Means:*

- A child is encouraged and supported by your organisation to express their culture and enjoy their cultural rights.
- Strategies are embedded within your organisation which equip all volunteers and staff to acknowledge and appreciate the strengths of Aboriginal culture, as well as recognise its importance to the wellbeing and safety of Aboriginal children and young people.
- Measures are adopted by your organisation to ensure racism within the organisation is identified, confronted and not tolerated.
- Your organisation actively supports and facilitates participation and inclusion within it by Aboriginal children, young people and their families.
- Your organisation's policies, procedures, systems and processes together create a culturally safe and inclusive environment and meet the needs of Aboriginal children, young people and their families.

**Examples:**

- Identify and provide training and education opportunities to board, staff and volunteers addressing the creating of culturally safe environments for Aboriginal children and youth.
- Identify and consult with Traditional Owner groups or Registered Aboriginal Party relevant to your organisation's location.
- Identify, contact and consult with local Aboriginal people, Aboriginal Community Controlled Organisations (ACCOs) and local organisations with Reconciliation Action Plans or Aboriginal Inclusive policies for guidance on how your organisation can become culturally safe.
- Speak with your state or national sporting organisation about engaging with Reconciliation Australia to explore the development of a Reconciliation Action Plan.
- Be visible about your commitment to a culturally safe environment through strategies such as acknowledgement of country, display of the Aboriginal flag and use of Indigenous location names.

**Standard 2:**

**Child safety and wellbeing is embedded in organisational leadership, governance and culture.**

**This Means:**

- The organisation makes a public commitment towards child safety.
- A child safe culture is championed and modelled at all levels of the organisation - top down and bottom up.
- Governance structures facilitate the implementation of child safeguarding policies at all levels.
- A Code of Conduct provides guidelines for staff and volunteers on expected standards and responsibilities.
- Risk management strategies focus on preventing, identifying and mitigating risks to children and young people.
- Staff and volunteers understand their obligations on information sharing and record keeping.

**Examples:**

- Review your existing policies and/or develop a new child safe policy or statement of commitment to child safety.
- Communicate the statement and policy publicly and widely. This may include your organisations website, newsletters, social media and events.
- Ensure board members, staff and volunteers are aware of the organisation's child safe policy. For example, include child safety material in all induction information packs.

**Standard 3:**

**Children and young people are empowered about their rights, participate in decisions affecting them and are taken seriously.**

**This Means:**

- Working constantly to inform children and young people about their rights, including safety, information and participation.
- The importance of friendships is recognised and support from peers is encouraged, to help children and young people feel safe and less isolated.
- When appropriate, children and young people are offered access to sexual abuse prevention programs and to relevant related information in an age-appropriate way.
- The organisation's staff and volunteers are aware of signs of harm and facilitate appropriate, channels for children and young people to express their views and raise their concerns.

- Organisations adopt strategies to develop a culture that facilitates participation and is responsive to the input of children and young people.
- Organisations are responsive to the contributions of children and young people, thereby strengthening their confidence and engagement.

**Examples:**

- Provide opportunities for children and young people to have a say in how your organisation is run. This might be through social functions, uniform design or the structure of training sessions.
- Review your existing codes and/or develop a new code of conduct with input from children and young people. Outline clear standards of behaviour when working with children so that everyone knows what is and isn't acceptable conduct.
- Let children and young people know who they can speak to if they feel unsafe or unsure of something and that their concerns will be listened to. Use a mix of posters, conversations, social media and more.
- Host or provide online access to regular child safety information sessions or training so that staff and volunteers remain attune to recognising signs of harm or abuse.

**Standard 4:**

**Families and communities are informed and involved in promoting child safety and wellbeing.**

**This Means:**

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

**Examples:**

- Provide families, carers and communities with accessible information about child safety measures in place.
- Encourage feedback on what child safety means to families and communities through a range of methods. This could include anonymous surveys, suggestion boxes, or feedback sessions.
- Ensure staff and volunteers receive training on how to engage and communicate clearly on the issue of child safety.
- Inform families, carers and communities when changes or updates are being made to policies or procedures and invite them to have a say through consultation sessions.

**Standard 5:**

**Equity is upheld and diverse needs respected in policy and practice.**

**This Means:**

- The organisation understands children and young people's diverse circumstances and provides support and responds to those who are vulnerable.
- Children and young people have access to information, support and complaints processes in ways that are culturally safe, accessible, confidential and easy to understand.
- The organisation pays particular attention to the needs of children and young people with disability, children and young people from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds, those who are unable to live at home, and lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender and intersex children and young people.
- The organisation pays particular attention to the needs of Aboriginal children and young people and provides/promotes a culturally safe environment for them.

**Examples:**

- Celebrating diversity through days of significance and events of importance (i.e. Diwali, Pride Month or International Children’s Day).
- Listen seriously to children when they raise concerns or express their feelings about an issue.
- Have easy to understand, child friendly information about the complaints process – who, what, when and how children and young people can raise an issue.
- Provide information in a variety of formats (i.e. Written, visual, different languages, imagery and fonts).
- Utilise training and education opportunities to understand the diverse needs of children (i.e. cultural awareness training, conversations with Indigenous leaders).
- Provide flexible opportunities to participate (i.e. relaxed uniform requirements & payment options).
- Ensure diversity and inclusion policies are informed by a range of individuals who have lived experience.

**Standard 6:**

**People working with children and young people are suitable and supported to reflect child safety and wellbeing values in practice.**

**This Means:**

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

**Examples:**

- Undertake a risk assessment to identify potential risks your organisation may face and how to address them.
- Child safety questions are included as part of the interview process.
- All staff and volunteers have provided an up-to-date working with children check before starting work with the organisation.
- Regularly schedule discussion about child safety and risk minimisation in staff and team meetings.

**Standard 7:**

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

**This Means:**

- The organisation has an accessible, child focused complaint handling policy which clearly outlines the roles and responsibilities of leadership, staff and volunteers, approaches to dealing with different types of complaints, breaches of relevant policies or the Code of Conduct and obligations to act and report.
- Effective complaint handling processes are understood by children and young people, families, staff and volunteers, and are culturally safe.
- Complaints are taken seriously and responded to promptly and thoroughly.
- Reporting, privacy and employment law obligations are met.

**Examples:**

- A complaint handling processes is developed with input from children and their safety as the central focus.
- Education about what the process is and how it operates is provided to relevant individuals.
- The policy clearly outlines what should be reported to authorities and by when.
- Complaint handling process is easily accessed and regularly communicated, such as via an organisational email or newsletter.
- Education is provided so that individuals understand their legal requirements for employment, reporting and privacy.

**Standard 8:**

**Staff and volunteers are equipped with the knowledge, skills and awareness to keep children and young people safe through ongoing education and training.**

**This Means:**

- Staff and volunteers are trained and supported to effectively implement the organisation’s child safety and wellbeing policy, as well as how to recognise indicators of child harm.
- Staff and volunteers receive training and information to respond effectively to issues of child safety and wellbeing and support colleagues who disclose harm.
- Staff and volunteers receive training and information on how to build culturally safe environments for children and young people.

**Examples:**

- Regular training sessions held that may cover recognising indicators of harm or abuse, how to respond to issues, who to report to and what cultural safety is.
- Discussions at meetings about what the organisation’s child safe policies are and how they work.
- Staff and volunteers are provided information that supports their training.
- Make child safety as part of ongoing professional development requirements.

**Standard 9:**

**Physical and online environments promote safety and wellbeing while minimising the opportunity for children and young people to be harmed.**

**This Means:**

- Staff and volunteers identify and mitigate risks in the online and physical environments without compromising a child’s right to privacy, access to information, social connections and learning opportunities.
- The online environment is used in accordance with the organisation’s Code of Conduct and child safety and wellbeing policy and practices.
- Risk management plans consider risks posed by organisational settings, activities, and the physical environment.
- Organisations that contract facilities and services from third parties have procurement policies that ensure the safety of children and young people.

**Examples:**

- Undertake a risk assessment for online environments.
- Make venue/facility risk assessments part of events or competition requirements.
- Develop a social media policy and educate staff/volunteers on how it works.
- Ask children where they do/don’t feel safe within a venue/facility.
- Utilise a two-deep, open and transparent communication practice online with children (i.e. ensure parents/guardians and other organisation representatives are included in online communication).

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

**This Means:**

- The organisation regularly reviews, evaluates and improves child safe practices.
- Complaints, concerns and safety incidents are analysed to identify causes and systemic failures to inform continuous improvement.
- The organisation reports on the findings of relevant reviews to staff and volunteers, community and families and children and young people.

**Examples:**

- Schedule a yearly review of your child safe practices.
- Seek input from a variety of individuals for a broad understanding of child safety in your organisation.
- Provide an update on the outcome of your review and what the next steps will be via website, social media and newsletter.
- When an incident occurs, review what led to it happening and identify ways to prevent it.
- Have an ongoing action plan of strategies to meet the Standards.

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

**This Means:**

- Policies and procedures address all Child Safe Standards.
- Policies and procedures are documented and easy to understand.
- Best practice models and stakeholder consultation informs the development of policies and procedures.
- Leader's champion and model compliance with policies and procedures.
- Staff and volunteers understand and implement policies and procedures.

**Examples:**

- Invite input and feedback from children, young people, families and communities when developing/reviewing policies.
- Have child friendly versions of all relevant policies.
- Have a dedicated page on your website where child safe information, policies and procedures are stored. Make it obvious and easy to access.
- Run education sessions for staff and volunteers about the policies, how they are used and where they are located.
- Ensure organisation leaders (i.e. CEO, Board/Committee Members) talk about and promote child safety within your organisation.

### Additional Resources:

The examples provided in this document should not limit your organisations approach to child protection. In addition to the [Vicsport website](#), you can find child safe information on the following websites:

Commission for Children & Young People  
[Child Safe Standards Resources and support](#)

Play by the Rules  
[Child Safe Sport](#)

Sport Integrity Australia  
[E-Learning Hub](#)

### Remember:

- Child safety is not an add-on or one off exercise. It is a legal requirement that your organisation must be compliant with.
- Having member protection policies and procedures in place is not enough. It's about creating a culture and environment within sport that is supportive and protective of children.
- Victorian law requires mandatory reporting by any adult who has a reasonable belief that an instance of child sexual abuse has occurred. Information on how to report child abuse can be found here: <https://services.dhhs.vic.gov.au/reporting-child-abuse>

### Further Information

P +61 3 9698 8100 E [admin@vicsport.com.au](mailto:admin@vicsport.com.au) W [www.vicsport.com.au/child-safe-standards](http://www.vicsport.com.au/child-safe-standards)

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### DISCLAIMER:

This information provides general guidance regarding the Child Safe Standards. It should not be considered as a substitute for legal advice.

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*State Government of Victoria, Department of Health & Human Services (2015) An overview of the Victorian child safe standards  
Commission for Children and Young People (2018), A guide for creating a child safe organisation*