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| Child Safe Standards implementation and compliance guide |
| For health organisations |
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To receive this document in another format, phone the Child Safety Regulation team on 1300 650 172, using the National Relay Service 13 36 77 if required, or email the Child Safety Regulation team <childsafestandards@health.vic.gov.au>.

Authorised and published by the Victorian Government, 1 Treasury Place, Melbourne.

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ISBN 978-1-76131-035-5 (online/PDF/Word)

In this document, ‘Aboriginal’ refers to both Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people.

Available at [the department’s Child Safe Standards web page](https://www.health.vic.gov.au/childsafestandards) <https://www.health.vic.gov.au/childsafestandards>

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# Overview

Victoria’s mandatory Child Safe Standards (the Standards) have been in effect since 2016.

Following the Royal Commission into Institutional Responses to Child Sexual Abuse (the Royal Commission), the Victorian Government reviewed the Standards. The review recommended a number of changes to better align the Standards with the National Principles for Child Safe Organisations and strengthen administration of the Standards.

The Victorian Government accepted the recommendations. The new Standards were released in July 2021, to apply to organisations from 1 July 2022.

The new 11 Standards state an expected outcome that organisations must achieve. Each Standard has minimum requirements that organisations must meet. The new Standards include greater guidance to help organisations meet the expected outcome, while still allowing flexibility in how they implement each Standard.

To meet the requirements of the new Standards, organisations have the opportunity to reflect on their efforts to date and continue to develop strategies, policies and practices relevant to the type of services or facilities they provide to children and keep them safe from harm.

The following legislation and subordinate measures prescribe the Standards into law and how organisations are regulated:

* *Child Wellbeing and Safety Act 2005* (the Act)
* Child Wellbeing and Safety Regulations 2017
* Child Safe Standards.

The Commission for Children and Young People (the Commission) has a statewide role in administering and promoting the Standards, including giving education, information and advice. It publishes information for organisations across all sectors on how to create a child safe environment. It provides practical guidance for implementing the Standards, including compliance indicators, case studies, tools and templates.[[1]](#footnote-1) The Commission also plays a role in promoting compliance with the Standards by:

* providing guidance to sector and integrated sector regulators
* publishing data
* promoting the exchange of information.[[2]](#footnote-2)

Oversight of the Standards is shared between the Commission and other sector and integrated sector regulators. From1 January 2023, the Secretary for the Department of Health (the department) will become the sector regulator for health organisations.

## Child Safe Standards

Each Standard states an expected outcome and includes minimum requirements that organisations must meet.

The minimum requirements describe specific actions, strategies, operational practices and governance arrangements that organisations must put in place to meet the Standards.

Each organisation must implement the Standards in a way that is appropriate for them.

The Standards are intended to drive cultural change within organisations so that protecting children from abuse is embedded in everyday thinking and practice. The aim is to ensure that the safety of children is promoted, child abuse is prevented and allegations of child abuse are properly responded to.

Creating a child safe organisation is not a ‘set-and-forget’ exercise. The outcomes focus of the Standards means organisations must continuously adapt their operations, programs and activities to address new and emerging risks to children and young people.

By law, the Standards are mandatory for in-scope organisations. There can be legal consequences for not meeting them.

# Purpose of this guide

This guide has been developed to help health organisations prepare for and implement the Standards. It can also help organisations assess their own compliance.

Organisations are encouraged to use the guide and suggested resources to develop their own appropriate systems and processes.

This guide can help organisations meet the minimum requirements of the Standards and to support continuous improvement. It is designed to be user-friendly, concise and practical for organisations. While suggesting various implementation activities, the guide is not overly prescriptive. This is to encourage organisations to consider their own unique circumstances and be innovative in how they implement the Standards and show compliance.

For each Standard, this guide includes:

* overall description of the Standard
* minimum compliance requirements
* evidence of compliance
* implementation examples.

Suggested resources, templates and examples are listed in this guide under **Useful resources**.

This guide should be read in conjunction with the Commission’s *A guide for creating a child safe organisation*. It has more details on compliance requirements and may be used by the department to determine compliance with the Standards. It is available on the [Commission website’s Resources and support for the Child Safe Standards page](https://ccyp.vic.gov.au/resources/child-safe-standards) <https://ccyp.vic.gov.au/resources/child-safe-standards>.

## Glossary

| Term used in guide | Meaning |
| --- | --- |
| Aboriginal | Includes both Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples. |
| (The) Act | *Child Wellbeing and Safety Act 2005* |
| Child or children | Children and young people under the age of 18 years |
| (The) Commission | Commission for Children and Young People |
| Integrated sector regulators | Monitor and enforce the Standards using powers in their primary legislation. They also have added powers under the Act. |
| Organisation | In this guide, the term organisationmeans relevant entity. |
| (The) Regulations | Child Wellbeing and Safety Regulations 2017 |
| (The) Regulator | Child Safe Standards Regulator (Health).The Child Safe Standards Regulator (Health**)**within the Department of Healthadministers the legislation on behalf of the Secretary. |
| Relevant entity | Health sector organisations, businesses, service providers or groups that provide facilities, services or work or volunteer with children. |
| (The) Standards | Child Safe Standards. |

# Compliance with the Child Safe Standards

As regulator for the Standards, the department has the following functions and powers:

* provide education, information and advice on the Standards to promote consistency in child safety outcomes.
* investigate, monitor and enforce compliance with the Standards.
* collect, analyse and publish information and data on compliance with the Standards. Give that information and data to the Commission as needed.
* promote continuous improvement in child safety, preventing abuse and responding properly to child abuse allegations.
* work collaboratively with the Commission, sector regulators and integrated sector regulators on child safety and meeting the Standards.
* exchange information and work with people and bodies on child safety and Standards compliance.

## Organisations that must meet the Child Safe Standards

A wide variety of organisations must meet the Standards, as prescribed in Schedule 1 of the Act.

An in-scope organisation or business must meet the Standards if it does any of the following:

* provide any services specifically for children, or
* provide any facilities specifically for use by children who are under the organisation’s supervision, or
* engage (whether paid or unpaid) a child as a contractor, employee or volunteer to assist the organisation in providing services or facilities or in producing or providing goods.

The following are in-scope organisations that the department will regulate:

* an applicable entity that operates a maternal and child health centre
* an applicable entity that operates a day procedure centre, as defined in the *Health Services Act 1988*
* a hospital listed as a public hospital in Schedule 1 of the *Health Services Act 1988*
* a multipurpose service, as defined in the *Health Services Act 1988*
* a public health service, as defined in the *Health Services Act 1988*
* a registered community health centre, as defined in the *Health Services Act 1988*
* a hospital listed as a denominational hospital in Schedule 2 of the *Health Services Act 1988*
* a mental health service provider, as defined in the *Mental Health Act 2014*
* an applicable entity that operates a private hospital, as defined in the *Health Services Act 1988*.
* an applicable entity that gets funding under a state contract to provide drug or alcohol treatment services.

## Evidence of compliance

Evidence is anything a service has that shows they meet the requirements of the Standards.

Service providers should be able to gather evidence to verify the implementation and effectiveness of the Standards in their organisation.

Organisations may need to provide evidence at the request of the Regulator. Organisations should regularly review evidence to ensure ongoing compliance.

Evidence must be relevant, reliable, current and adequate.

Table 1: Qualities of good evidence

| Term | Definition |
| --- | --- |
| Relevant | The evidence is directly related to the process or system being reviewed. |
| Reliable | The evidence is from a source or person with knowledge or experience related to the process or system being reviewed.The reliability of evidence is strengthened when it can be supported or confirmed through different information-gathering methods. |
| Current | The evidence is up to date (or from a recent timeframe). This helps show implementation over time. |
| Adequate | There is enough evidence to verify the thoroughness of implementation and the effectiveness of the process or system being reviewed. |

There are different types of evidence that can be used to show implementation and compliance with the Standards. These include:

* **documents** (such as policies, procedures, feedback and complaint forms, meeting minutes, publications, flyers, posters, material given to clients)
* **knowledge and awareness** (such as training plans, records of attendance and completion of training, agenda items, manuals, guidelines, cultural safety plans, use of interpreters)
* **monitoring and evaluation** (such as complaints or incident registers, feedback mechanisms, audits, risk management plans, observation).

## More information

More information about the Standards can be found on [the department’s Child Safe Standards web page](https://www.health.vic.gov.au/childsafestandards) <https://www.health.vic.gov.au/childsafestandards>.

Organisations may also refer to the information and resources available on the [Commission website’s Child safety page](https://ccyp.vic.gov.au/resources/child-safe-standards) <https://ccyp.vic.gov.au/resources/child-safe-standards>.

# The Child Safe Standards

## 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.

### Description

Your organisation must ensure that all children, including Aboriginal children, feel safe and are safe when participating in your organisation.

Valuing and respecting the diverse and unique identities and experiences of Aboriginal children leads to creating and providing services in a culturally-safe environment.

‘Cultural safety is the positive recognition and celebration of cultures. It is more than just the absence of racism or discrimination and more than **cultural awareness**and **cultural sensitivity**. It empowers people and enables them to contribute and feel safe to be themselves. In a child safe, culturally safe organisation, children, young people, family and community members feel that their culture and identity are respected.’[[3]](#footnote-3)

Implementing this Standard will look different for every organisation. It is something that will occur over time and is a continual practice.

It is important to engage with Aboriginal children, families and community to learn and understand what a culturally-safe environment looks like for them and the way they access your services.

As your organisation looks to implement all the Standards, it is vital to reflect and review how cultural safety is embedded into each Standard.

SNAICC – National Voice for our Children is the Australian national non-government peak body for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children. In partnership with the National Office for Child Safety and with help from the Victorian Aboriginal Child Care Agency (VACCA), SNAICC has developed resources that can help you consider cultural safety for children. The resources are:

* a guide – *Keeping our kids safe: cultural safety and the national principles for child safe organisations* – available on the [SNAICC website’s Keeping our kids safe page](https://www.snaicc.org.au/policy-and-research/child-safety-and-wellbeing/keeping-our-kids-safe) <https://www.snaicc.org.au/policy-and-research/child-safety-and-wellbeing/keeping-our-kids-safe>
* an animated video – *Keeping our kids safe: understanding cultural safety in child safe organisations* – [Keeping our kids safe video on SNAICC YouTube](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=On93YTvP7ew) <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=On93YTvP7ew>.

### Minimum compliance requirements

1.1 A child’s ability to express their culture and enjoy their cultural rights is encouraged and actively supported.

1.2 Strategies are embedded within the organisation which equip all members to acknowledge and appreciate the strengths of Aboriginal culture and understand its importance to the wellbeing and safety of Aboriginal children and young people.

1.3 Measures are adopted by the organisation to ensure racism within the organisation is identified, confronted and not tolerated. Any instances of racism are addressed with appropriate consequences.

1.4 The organisation actively supports and facilitates participation and inclusion within it by Aboriginal children, young people and their families.

1.5 All of the 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.

#### Evidence of compliance

* The organisation displays a public commitment to the cultural safety of Aboriginal people, including children in their service.
* Resources and information are readily available for Aboriginal children and their families on their cultural rights.
* Organisation’s leadership meeting agendas and minutes.
* Organisational training plan.
* Organisational policies reflect the commitment to Aboriginal children and providing a culturally-safe space, including in online environments.
* Organisation’s Code of Conduct has behaviour expectations, including that racism is not tolerated and all people are able to express their cultural rights.

#### Implementation examples

* Develop a public commitment to the cultural safety of Aboriginal children, including the ability to express their culture and have their cultural rights.
* Create resources and information fact sheets for children on cultural rights.
* Engage with local Aboriginal community, Aboriginal staff or service users to understand culture and needs.
* Give employees training on cultural safety.
* Review and update Code of Conduct to ensure behaviour expectations are outlined and racism is not tolerated.
* Review and update policies and procedures to respond to inappropriate behaviour and racism.
* Develop a reconciliation action plan.
* Empower Aboriginal children and their families to participate in and provide feedback on your service.
* Recognise and celebrate Aboriginal achievements, cultures and events (such as Reconciliation Week, NAIDOC).

## Standard 2

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

### Description

Your organisation needs to show its staff, clients and community that it takes child safety seriously and does not tolerate child abuse or harm.

By planning how your organisation will protect children, it shows the organisation is continually working on creating and maintaining a child safe culture.

Your organisation can show that it prioritises child safety by making a public commitment that is easy to understand and to access. Leaders should lead by example by:

* modelling the behaviour that is expected of staff and volunteers
* supporting child safety measures
* responding appropriately, seriously and in a timely manner to any child safety concerns raised.

### Minimum compliance requirements

2.1 The organisation makes a public commitment to child safety.

2.2 A child safe culture is championed and modelled at all levels of the organisation from the top down and bottom up.

2.3 Governance arrangements facilitate implementation of the child safety and wellbeing policy at all levels.

2.4 A Code of Conduct provides guidelines for staff and volunteers on expected behavioural standards and responsibilities.

2.5 Risk management strategies focus on preventing, identifying and mitigating risks to children and young people.

2.6 Staff and volunteers understand their obligations on information sharing and record keeping.

#### Evidence of compliance

* The organisation displays a public commitment to child safety on their website and within their facility.
* Organisation has a child safety and wellbeing policy or includes the following elements in existing policies: public commitment to child safety, and expectations and practices of each Standard.
* Organisational training plan.
* Leadership meeting agendas and minutes.
* Staff and volunteer Code of Conduct that includes clear expectations around interactions with children.
* Staff meeting agendas where child safety matters are raised, Code of Conduct discussed.
* Risk management plans and registers relating to child safety.
* Records showing that policies have been reviewed and updated.

#### Implementation examples

* Training on Child Safe Standards occurs at least yearly for executive staff.
* Develop or update an organisational public commitment to child safety.
* Develop a child safety and wellbeing policy (or update existing policies) that sets clear expectations of child safety and each of the Standards.
* Training for all staff on keeping children safe, how to respond to concerns and complaints, the child safety and wellbeing policy and Code of Conduct.
* Review and update relevant policies and procedures, including information sharing and record keeping requirements.
* Develop and put in place risk assessment and management strategies and plans around child safety.
* Give staff information on updated policies and procedures about child safety.

## Standard 3

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

### Description

Empowering children in your organisation creates an environment where children are valued, respected and engaged in your services. It gives children the opportunity to share what matters to them, what can keep them safe and to get the most out of the services your organisation provides.

When children are empowered and active participants in the organisation, they are more likely to raise concerns and complaints about child safety. They are also more likely to be confident that the organisation will respond appropriately.

Your organisation can better protect children with organisational policies and procedures shaped by children’s views.

### Minimum compliance requirements

3.1 Children and young people are informed about all of their rights, including to safety, information and participation.

3.2 The importance of friendships is recognised and support from peers is encouraged, to help children and young people feel safe and be less isolated.

3.3 Where relevant to the setting or context, children and young people are offered access to sexual abuse prevention programs and to relevant related information in an age-appropriate way.

3.4 Staff and volunteers are attuned to signs of harm and facilitate child-friendly ways for children and young people to express their views, participate in decision-making and raise their concerns.

3.5 Organisations have strategies in place to develop a culture that facilitates participation and is responsive to the input of children and young people.

3.6 Organisations provide opportunities for children and young people to participate and are responsive to their contributions, thereby strengthening confidence and engagement.

#### Evidence of compliance

* Age-appropriate and easy-to-understand resources that are easily available and include information on a child’s rights, safety, appropriate behaviour by adults and children, and how to raise concerns and complaints.
* The organisation’s policies and procedures promote children’s empowerment and participation.
* The organisation’s policies and procedures incorporate the rights of children.
* Staff training plan (see **Standard 8** for more details).
* Meeting agendas and minutes.
* Feedback responses and concerns and complaints received from children.

#### Implementation examples

* Develop an organisational plan to support child engagement with the organisation.
* Develop resources for children to explain their rights, including their right to safety, and available support services.
* Provide opportunities for children to give feedback on the organisation and their safety.
* Seek children’s views on appropriate child safety reporting mechanisms.
* Give children details of how their feedback and contribution to the organisation will be put in place.

## Standard 4

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

### Description

Creating a welcoming and inviting organisation for families and the wider community helps to develop an inclusive culture. Families and the community can – and should – contribute to and promote a child safe environment. It is everyone’s responsibility to protect children from abuse and harm – be they government, staff, volunteers, families or members of the community.

Organisations should ensure families and the community understand the organisation’s services to enable better participation.

Families and the community need to know who to contact in the organisation if they have a child safety or wellbeing concern.

### Minimum compliance requirements

4.1 Families participate in decisions affecting their child.

4.2 The organisation engages and openly communicates with families and the community about its child safe approach and relevant information is accessible.

4.3 Families and communities have a say in the development and review of the organisation’s policies and practices.

4.4 Families, carers and the community are informed about the organisation’s operations and governance.

#### Evidence of compliance

* Child safety information is easily accessible for families, carers and the community, including how to report concerns and complaints.
* Register of feedback, concerns and complaints, including actions taken.
* Updated policies and procedures incorporating how the organisation involves families, carers and the community.

#### Implementation examples

* Develop a statement (or policy) that indicates how the organisation engages with families, carers and community on child safety.
* Develop procedures for families or carers to take part in decisions on the child’s safety and wellbeing.
* Create feedback mechanisms for families, carers and the community.
* Make information on child safety and the organisation’s operations available to families, carers and the community (including appropriately translated materials).

## Standard 5

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

### Description

Embracing diversity as an organisation gives all children opportunities to take part in and access services, regardless of their background, characteristics, personality or beliefs. Recognising that some children are more vulnerable or likely to be at risk of harm means organisations must have policies and procedures so all children have what they need to be as safe as their peers.

Each child is unique and has different skills and life experiences that shape their world view and what services they need. Recognising their individuality and sense of identity can be vital to their wellbeing.

A child safe organisation embraces equity and diversity and gives children a safe environment – no matter their circumstances, abilities, gender, cultural background or socioeconomic status. This is reflected in all aspects of the organisation.

### Minimum compliance requirements

5.1 The organisation, including staff and volunteers, understands children and young people’s diverse circumstances, and provides support and responds to those who are vulnerable.

5.2 Children and young people have access to information, support and complaints processes in ways that are culturally safe, accessible and easy to understand.

5.3 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.

5.4 The organisation pays particular attention to the needs of Aboriginal children and young people and provides/promotes a culturally safe environment for them.

#### Evidence of compliance

* Policies and Code of Conduct include:
	+ commitment to equity and inclusion
	+ how diverse needs of children will be respected and recognised
	+ how participation of children will occur within the organisation (where practicable).
* Resources are available in a diverse range of styles, formats and languages as needed.
* Organisational training plan.
* Staff meeting agendas.

#### Implementation examples

* Develop or update existing strategies, policies or statements that express how the organisation upholds equity and diversity.
* Provide training to staff and volunteers on upholding equity and diversity in the organisation and responding to vulnerabilities.
* Update policies and the Code of Conduct to ensure the diverse needs of children are met appropriately.
* Translate resources and information on the organisation and how to report child safety concerns or complaints.
* Ensure information is easily accessible and appropriate for children.

## Standard 6

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

### Description

To prevent harm to children in your organisation, it is critical that strong recruitment and screening practices and processes are in place.

A child safe organisation has policies in place that make sure only appropriate staff work with children. This includes recruitment, screening, induction and other human resource practices that create a proactive culture of child safety and wellbeing in the organisation.

Organisations should prioritise child safety outcomes by providing support, supervision and ongoing professional development to staff.

An organisation’s recruitment policies and procedures need to be linked to other relevant policies, including the child safety and wellbeing policy (or equivalent). Children and families should be aware of how child safety is prioritised in recruitment.

These policies and procedures can also apply to volunteers and third-party contractors where appropriate.

### Minimum compliance requirements

6.1 Recruitment, including advertising, referee checks and staff and volunteer pre-employment screening, emphasise child safety and wellbeing.

6.2 Relevant staff and volunteers have current working with children checks or equivalent background checks.

6.3 All staff and volunteers receive an appropriate induction and are aware of their responsibilities to children and young people, including record keeping, information sharing and reporting obligations.

6.4 Ongoing supervision and people management is focused on child safety and wellbeing.

#### Evidence of compliance

* Records of job advertising includes the organisation’s commitment to child safety and wellbeing.
* Relevant position descriptions include information on child safety requirements.
* Records of recruitment processes, including pre-employment screening activities and interview questions (including questions on suitability to work with children, where needed).
* Employee records include relevant registrations, working with children or police checks and expiry dates.
* Recruitment and induction policies and procedures include child safety measures.
* Staff induction plan.
* Organisational training plan.
* Staff meeting agendas and minutes.

#### Implementation examples

* Develop and include a statement on child safety in all job advertisements.
* Create value-based questions on suitability to work with children to ask in interviews, as needed.
* Develop recruitment procedures that include:
	+ pre-employment screening (referee checks, working with children or police checks or both)
	+ verification of qualifications and valid registrations
	+ appropriate record keeping practices.
* Develop or update a staff or volunteer supervision policy to review staff performance and if they are complying with relevant child safe policies and the Code of Conduct.
* Give managers training on recruitment practices and child safety.
* Develop or update new staff induction to include child safety policies, procedures and Code of Conduct.
* Position descriptions are updated to include clear expectations of roles and responsibilities around child safety, as needed.

## Standard 7

Processes for complaints and concerns are child focused.

### Description

To create a child safe organisation, you must have an organisational culture where complaints are welcomed, responded to promptly and appropriately, and action is immediately taken to protect children.

Any complaint handling processes and policies should be child-focused, clear and well communicated. This will enable any complaint, concern or allegation about child safety to be made.

It can be difficult to make a complaint about child safety matters. It is important that your processes are child-friendly and accessible for all people who engage with your organisation and services. Your organisation may choose to develop a specific process and document for children to ensure that it is simple and easy for them to understand and follow.

Your policies and procedures need include all relevant reporting requirements, including to:

* Child Protection
* Victoria Police
* Commission for Children and Young People.

The National Office for Child Safety commissioned the Office of the NSW Ombudsman to develop the *Complaint handling guide: upholding the rights of children and young people*.[[4]](#footnote-4) The complaint handling guide helps organisations build their capacity in handling complaints involving children. It has practical advice on how to develop, implement and maintain a complaint handling system.

### Minimum compliance requirements

7.1 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.

7.2 Effective complaint handling processes are understood by children and young people, families, staff and volunteers, and are culturally safe.

7.3 Complaints are taken seriously and responded to promptly and thoroughly.

7.4 The organisation has policies and procedures in place that address reporting of complaints and concerns to relevant authorities, whether or not the law requires reporting, and co-operates with law enforcement.

7.5 Reporting, privacy and employment law obligations are met.

#### Evidence of compliance

* Complaints policy is easy to understand, culturally safe, accessible, child-focused and includes:
	+ alleged abuse and harm of children
	+ breaches of Code of Conduct
	+ managing risks
	+ support for all parties
	+ record keeping.
* Children, staff, volunteers, parents, carers and the community are given easily accessible information on how to raise a child safety concern and complaint.
* Organisational training plan.
* Complaints are taken seriously and responded to promptly and appropriately.
* Staff members are identified as child safety officers.
* Policies and procedures are updated to reflect reporting requirements and how the organisation responds to child safety concerns and complaints.
* Organisational leadership approve child safety policies, and complaints and reporting procedures.

#### Implementation examples

* Develop or review the organisation’s complaints policy to ensure it is child-focussed and understood by a variety of stakeholders, including children, parents, carers, community members and staff.
* Develop or review the process for how concerns and complaints about child safety are managed.
* Ensure any processes for reporting child safety concerns include age-appropriate processes.
* Consult with children, parents, carers and the community on the complaints policy and processes.
* Review policies to ensure they meet privacy and employment law requirements.
* Develop or update a register for handling complaints.
* Review policies to include required reporting requirements, including to Victoria Police, Child Protection and the Commission for Children and Young People.
* Training for staff on responding to child safety concerns and complaints.
* Review and update disciplinary policy on how to respond to a concern or complaint.
* Identify staff to respond to child safety concerns and complaints and update position descriptions.

## 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.

### Description

Equipping staff with information, training and skills on your organisation’s child safety practices helps staff to report child safety concerns and embrace the child safe values, policies and procedures of the organisation.

Appropriate staff training on child safety should be trauma-informed and relevant to the services your organisation provides. It should include:

* recognising indicators of child harm
* responding to child safety concerns
* building a culturally safe organisation.

Keep records of attendance and training topics. Training should be offered regularly for new staff, along with opportunities for staff to undertake refreshers.

### Minimum compliance requirements

8.1 Staff and volunteers are trained and supported to effectively implement the organisation’s child safety and wellbeing policy.

8.2 Staff and volunteers receive training and information to recognise indicators of child harm including harm caused by other children and young people.

8.3 Staff and volunteers receive training and information to respond effectively to issues of child safety and wellbeing and support colleagues who disclose harm.

8.4 Staff and volunteers receive training and information on how to build culturally safe environments for children and young people.

#### Evidence of compliance

* Organisational training plan (including topics), attendee register and completion records.
* Leadership meeting agendas and minutes.
* Staff meeting agendas and minutes.

#### Implementation examples

* Training is held regularly for all leaders on individual and organisational responsibilities for:
	+ Child Safe Standards
	+ managing risks of child abuse
	+ child safety and wellbeing risks in the organisation
	+ policies and procedures about child safety.
* Training is held regularly for all staff and volunteers on individual and organisational responsibilities for:
	+ policies and procedures regarding child safety
	+ responding to child safety concerns or complaints
	+ creating a culturally safe organisation
	+ indicators of harm to children, including family violence
	+ how to identify and mitigate child safety risks.

## Standard 9

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

### Description

Your organisation must adopt a risk management approach to child safety. This means analysing, understanding and then reducing risks to children involved with your organisation and its services.
Risk considerations should include:

* physical environments – buildings, facilities or spaces used (including shared spaces)
* service delivery – level, nature and duration of interactions with children
* online environments – computers, phones, telehealth (including video), websites, social media.

Your organisation needs to balance the risk of harm to children with the benefits of the child accessing your organisation's services.

### Minimum compliance requirements

9.1 Staff and volunteers identify and mitigate risks in online and physical environments without compromising a child’s right to privacy, access to information, social connections and learning opportunities.

9.2 The online environment is used in accordance with the organisation’s Code of Conduct and child safety and wellbeing policy and practices.

9.3 Risk management plans consider risks posed by organisational setting, activities and the physical environment.

9.4 Organisations that contract facilities and services from third parties have procurement policies that ensure the safety of children and young people.

#### Evidence of compliance

* Risk assessment and management plan.
* Document reviews and audits of risk assessments, management plans and actions.
* Organisational training plan.
* Updated policies and Code of Conduct relating to how the organisation keeps children safe from risks.
* Third-party contracts and terms include child safety requirements.
* Leadership meeting agendas and minutes.

#### Implementation examples

* Develop (or review) and regularly update risk assessments and management plans about child safety.
* Undertake risk assessments that balance the need to manage risk of harm to children and their rights and engagement in the service.
* Leadership regularly reviews risk assessment and management plans about child safety.
* Training for staff on assessing child safety risk and preparing management plans.
* Review and update policies and procedures on risk management to include the need to assess risk and harm to children in activities.
* Review and update third-party contracts to include the requirement to comply with organisational child safety policies and procedures, and terms allowing action to be taken if they pose a risk to children.
* Give staff information about online safety and risks.

## Standard 10

Implementation of the Child Safe Standards is regularly reviewed and improved.

### Description

Becoming a child safe organisation requires an ongoing commitment by your organisation to prioritise a child’s safety and wellbeing. It is not a one-off, check-box exercise. Rather, it needs ongoing effort in being open and transparent, and learning from mistakes.

Regularly reviewing your organisation’s child safe policies and procedures offers opportunities to incorporate lessons learned (both internal and external) on child safety and wellbeing. It ensures that your policies and procedures are up-to-date, effective, in place and known by all in the organisation.

The Standards require that reviews be part of an organisation’s implementation of the Standards.

Reviews will look different for each organisation, depending on the services and activities they provide to children. They should be undertaken regularly. Child safety policies and procedures should document when they must occur. Reviews should also take place when a child safety incident occurs or there are changes in the organisation.

### Minimum compliance requirements

10.1 The organisation regularly reviews, evaluates and improves child safe practices.

10.2 Complaints, concerns and safety incidents are analysed to identify causes and systemic failures to inform continuous improvement.

10.3 The organisation reports on the findings of relevant reviews to staff and volunteers, community and families, and children and young people.

#### Evidence of compliance

* All policies and procedures have a regular review period stated in the document.
* Reports document any child safety and wellbeing concerns and outcomes.
* Findings and actions taken in response to reviews are shared with staff, volunteers, children, families and communities.
* Leadership meeting agendas and minutes.

#### Implementation examples

* Include a revision date on all policies, procedures and Codes of Conduct and review accordingly.
* Updates are given to leadership meetings on child safety concerns.
* Leadership and managers review incidents and breaches of policies and Code of Conducts to identify failings and make improvements to prevent further risks.
* Develop or update a system to record and analyse all concerns and complaints received.
* Include outcomes of relevant reviews on child safety incidents in reports.

## Standard 11

Policies and procedures document how the organisation is safe for children and young people.

### Description

A child safe organisation documents how it keeps children safe through its policies and procedures.

These are critical to how an organisation implements all of the Standards. They also guide service users, staff and volunteers in how the organisation promotes child wellbeing and prevents and responds to child safety issues.

Effective policies and procedures help everyone to:

* understand their role in keeping children safe
* respond consistently and appropriately
* maintain child safe practices throughout the organisation.

Your documents need to be widely available, easy to understand and accessible to all in the organisation – and, where appropriate, to children, families and the wider community. This also enables them to be implemented across the organisation and championed by leaders and staff.

### Minimum compliance requirements

11.1 Policies and procedures address all Child Safe Standards.

11.2 Policies and procedures are documented and easy to understand.

11.3 Best practice models and stakeholder consultation informs the development of policies and procedures.

11.4 Leaders champion and model compliance with policies and procedures.

11.5 Staff and volunteers understand and implement policies and procedures.

#### Evidence of compliance

* Policies that set out the organisation’s expectations for child safety and wellbeing and incorporate the requirements of the Child Safe Standards.
* Code of Conduct includes expected behaviour and responsibilities of staff around child safety and wellbeing, and consequences for breaches.
* Leadership meeting agendas and minutes.

#### Implementation examples

* Update policies, procedures and Codes of Conduct to address child safety and wellbeing.
* Have appropriate consultations with children, families, carers, community and staff on child safety and wellbeing approaches.
* Establish processes to ensure policies, procedures and Codes of Conduct are easily understood by all people involved with the organisation, including children.

## Useful resources

### Department of Health resources

The following are available on [the department’s Child Safe Standards web page](file:///C%3A/Users/vidsw9s/AppData/Local/Microsoft/Windows/INetCache/Content.Outlook/M37VCJX8/the%20department%E2%80%99s%20Child%20Safe%20Standards%20web%20page) <https://www.health.vic.gov.au/childsafestandards>

* Child Safe Standards self-assessment tool
* Child Safe Standards action plan tool
* Child Safe Standards evidence mapping tool
* Child Safe Standards fact sheet for health organisations.

### Commission for Children and Young People resources

The following are available on the [Commission website’s Resources and support for the Child Safe Standards page](https://ccyp.vic.gov.au/resources/child-safe-standards) <https://ccyp.vic.gov.au/resources/child-safe-standards>:

* *A guide for creating a child safe organisation*
* *Short guide to the Child Safe Standards*
* New Child Safe Standards information sheet
* *Creating a child safety and wellbeing policy*
* *Steps to develop or update your Code of Conduct*
* Sample learning or training action plan
* *Empowerment and participation guide*.

### Other resources

* *Complaint handling guide: upholding the rights of children and young people* – available on the [National Office for Child Safety website's Complaint handling guide page](https://childsafety.pmc.gov.au/resources/complaint-handling-guide-upholding-rights-children-and-young-people) <https://childsafety.pmc.gov.au/resources/complaint-handling-guide-upholding-rights-children-and-young-people>.
1. Commission for Children and Young People. Available on the [Commission website’s Resources and support for the Child Safe Standards page](https://ccyp.vic.gov.au/resources/child-safe-standards) <https://ccyp.vic.gov.au/resources/child-safe-standards> [↑](#footnote-ref-1)
2. Child Wellbeing and Safety Act 2005 [↑](#footnote-ref-2)
3. SNAICC, Keeping our kids safe, 2022. Accessed on the [SNAICC website’s Keeping our kids safe page](https://www.snaicc.org.au/policy-and-research/child-safety-and-wellbeing/keeping-our-kids-safe) <https://www.snaicc.org.au/policy-and-research/child-safety-and-wellbeing/keeping-our-kids-safe> [↑](#footnote-ref-3)
4. Commonwealth of Australia, Department of the Prime Minister and Cabinet (DPMC), Complaint handling guide: upholding the rights of children and young people, 2019. Available on the [National Office for Child Safety website's Complaint handling guide page](https://childsafety.pmc.gov.au/resources/complaint-handling-guide-upholding-rights-children-and-young-people) <https://childsafety.pmc.gov.au/resources/complaint-handling-guide-upholding-rights-children-and-young-people>. [↑](#footnote-ref-4)