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| Child Safe Standards |
| Fact sheet for health organisations |
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# Overview

Victoria’s mandatory Child Safe Standards (the Standards) started in 2016, in response to recommendations from the Victorian Parliamentary Inquiry into the Handling of Child Abuse by Religious and other Non-Government Organisations.[[1]](#footnote-2)

The Inquiry found that more must be done to prevent and respond to child abuse.

Following the Royal Commission into Institutional Responses to Child Sexual Abuse, the Victorian Government reviewed the original Standards.

The review recommended several changes to:

* better align the Standards with the National Principles for Child Safe Organisations[[2]](#footnote-3)
* strengthen administration of the Standards.

The Victorian Government accepted the recommendations. Eleven new Standards were released in July 2021 and came into effect on 1 July 2022.

These Standards aim to:

* promote the safety of children
* prevent child abuse
* ensure organisations have effective processes to respond to and report allegations of child abuse.

# The 11 Child Safe 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.

# Compliance and oversight

Compliance with the Standards is a requirement of the *Child Wellbeing and Safety Act (2005).*

The Commission for Children and Young People (the Commission) has a statewide leadership and oversight role in administering the Standards.

The Commission 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.[[3]](#footnote-4)

Oversight of the Standards is shared between the Commission and other sector and integrated sector regulators.

From 1 January 2023, the Secretary for the Department of Health will become the sector regulator for health organisations.

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 comply with 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.

# More information

For more information on the Standards:

* visit the [Department of Health's Child Safe Standards web page](https://www.health.vic.gov.au/childsafestandards) <https://www.health.vic.gov.au/childsafestandards>
* email the Child Safety Regulation team <childsafestandards@health.vic.gov.au>.

The Commission also has a range of useful resources and information 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>.

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>.

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

1. Publications relating to the Inquiry, including the report and the government’s response, are available on the [Parliament of Victoria’s Inquiry into the Handling of Child Abuse by Religious and Other Organisations page](https://www.parliament.vic.gov.au/publications/fact-sheets/340-fcdc/inquiry-into-the-handling-of-child-abuse-by-religious-and-other-organisations) <https://www.parliament.vic.gov.au/publications/fact-sheets/340-fcdc/inquiry-into-the-handling-of-child-abuse-by-religious-and-other-organisations> [↑](#footnote-ref-2)
2. [Child Safe Organisations website's National principles page](https://childsafe.humanrights.gov.au/national-principles) <https://childsafe.humanrights.gov.au/national-principles> [↑](#footnote-ref-3)
3. 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-4)