

Child Safe Standards

Policy last updated

1 July 2022

Scope

- Schools
- School councils

Date: January 2020

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Policy

Policy

This policy supports schools to create and maintain a child safe organisation and protect students from all forms of abuse.

Summary

- [Ministerial Order 1359 – Implementing the Child Safe Standards – Managing the risk of child abuse in schools \(PDF\)](https://www.education.vic.gov.au/Documents/about/programs/health/protect/Ministerial_Order.pdf) <https://www.education.vic.gov.au/Documents/about/programs/health/protect/Ministerial_Order.pdf> outlines how the Victorian Child Safe Standards apply in schools.
- Schools can visit the [PROTECT website](http://www.vic.gov.au/protect) <<http://www.vic.gov.au/protect>> for templates, guidance and checklists to support schools to create and maintain a child safe organisation where children and young people are protected from abuse and feel safe.
- If a school staff member holds a reasonable belief that a child has been abused or is at risk of being abused, please refer to [Protecting Children — Reporting and Other Legal Obligations](http://www2.education.vic.gov.au/pal/protecting-children/policy) <<http://www2.education.vic.gov.au/pal/protecting-children/policy>> and the [Four Critical Actions](https://www.education.vic.gov.au/school/teachers/health/childprotection/Pages/report.aspx) <<https://www.education.vic.gov.au/school/teachers/health/childprotection/Pages/report.aspx>> .

Details

The Child Safe Standards

The Child Safe Standards (the Standards) are compulsory minimum standards for all Victorian schools to ensure they are well prepared to keep children and young people safe and protect them from abuse. [Ministerial Order 1359 – Implementing the Child Safe Standards – Managing the risk of child abuse in schools \(PDF\)](https://www.education.vic.gov.au/Documents/about/programs/health/protect/Ministerial_Order.pdf)  <https://www.education.vic.gov.au/Documents/about/programs/health/protect/Ministerial_Order.pdf> provides the framework for child safety in schools.




Victorian schools can continue to build on their existing child safety strategies, policies and practices to strengthen their culture of child safety and protect children and young people from abuse.

The Child Safe Standards include requirements to keep children, young people and students safe, including:

- involvement of families and students in child safety
- schools' focus on safety for Aboriginal students
- better management of child abuse risks in online environments
- governance, systems and processes for keeping students safe.

The Victorian Registration and Qualifications Authority is responsible for regulating the compliance of schools with the Standards. Schools are required to comply with the Standards as part of the prescribed minimum standards for registration.

There are 11 Child Safe Standards:

- [Standard 1: Culturally safe environments](https://www.vic.gov.au/schools-culturally-safe-environments-guidance)  <<https://www.vic.gov.au/schools-culturally-safe-environments-guidance>> – Establish a culturally safe environment in which the diverse and unique identities and experiences of Aboriginal children and young people are respected and valued.
- [Standard 2: Leadership, governance and culture](https://www.vic.gov.au/schools-embed-child-safety-standards-guidance)  <<https://www.vic.gov.au/schools-embed-child-safety-standards-guidance>> – Ensure that child safety and wellbeing are embedded in school leadership, governance and culture.
- [Standard 3: Child and student empowerment](https://www.vic.gov.au/schools-child-student-empowerment-guidance)  <<https://www.vic.gov.au/schools-child-student-empowerment-guidance>> – Children and young people are empowered about their rights, participate in decisions affecting them and are taken seriously.

- [Standard 4: Family engagement](https://www.vic.gov.au/schools-family-engagement-guidance) > <<https://www.vic.gov.au/schools-family-engagement-guidance>> – Families and communities are informed and involved in promoting child safety and wellbeing.
- [Standard 5: Diversity and equity](https://www.vic.gov.au/schools-diversity-equity-guidance) > <<https://www.vic.gov.au/schools-diversity-equity-guidance>> – Equity is upheld and diverse needs are respected in policy and practice.
- [Standard 6: Suitable staff and volunteers](https://www.vic.gov.au/schools-suitable-staff-volunteers-guidance) > <<https://www.vic.gov.au/schools-suitable-staff-volunteers-guidance>> – People working with children and young people are suitable and supported to reflect child safety and wellbeing values in practice.
- [Standard 7: Child-focused complaints processes](https://www.vic.gov.au/schools-complaints-process-guidance) > <<https://www.vic.gov.au/schools-complaints-process-guidance>> – Ensure that processes for complaints and concerns are child focused.
- [Standard 8: Child safety knowledge, skills and awareness](https://www.vic.gov.au/schools-knowledge-skills-awareness-guidance) > <<https://www.vic.gov.au/schools-knowledge-skills-awareness-guidance>> – Staff and volunteers are equipped with the knowledge, skills and awareness to keep children and young people safe through ongoing education and training.
- [Standard 9: Physical and online environments](https://www.vic.gov.au/schools-physical-and-online-environments-guidance) > <<https://www.vic.gov.au/schools-physical-and-online-environments-guidance>> – Physical and online environments promote safety and wellbeing while minimising the opportunity for children and young people to be harmed.
- [Standard 10: Review of child safety practices](https://www.vic.gov.au/schools-review-child-safety-practices-guidance) > <<https://www.vic.gov.au/schools-review-child-safety-practices-guidance>> – Implementation of the Child Safe Standards is regularly reviewed and improved.
- [Standard 11: Implementation of child safety practices](https://www.vic.gov.au/schools-implementation-child-safety-practices-guidance) > <<https://www.vic.gov.au/schools-implementation-child-safety-practices-guidance>> – Policies and procedures that document how schools are safe for children, young people and students.

What help is available?

Schools can visit:

- the [PROTECT website](https://www.vic.gov.au/protect) > <<https://www.vic.gov.au/protect>> for templates, guidance and checklists to support compliance with each Standard.
- the [School Policy Templates Portal](https://edugate.eduweb.vic.gov.au/edrms/keyprocess/cp/SitePages/SchoolPoliciesDetail.aspx?CId=66) > <<https://edugate.eduweb.vic.gov.au/edrms/keyprocess/cp/SitePages/SchoolPoliciesDetail.aspx?CId=66>> (staff login required) for templates policies to support compliance with the Standards.




Related policies

- [Protecting children — Reporting and Other Legal Obligations](http://www2.education.vic.gov.au/pal/protecting-children/policy) <<http://www2.education.vic.gov.au/pal/protecting-children/policy>>
- [Student Sexual Offending and Problem Sexual Behaviour](http://www2.edu-) <<http://www2.edu->

[cation.vic.gov.au/pal/student-sexual-behaviours/policy](http://www2.education.vic.gov.au/pal/student-sexual-behaviours/policy)>

- [Working with Children and other Suitability Checks for School Volunteers and Visitors](http://www2.education.vic.gov.au/pal/suitability-checks/policy) <<http://www2.education.vic.gov.au/pal/suitability-checks/policy>>

Relevant legislation

- [Child Wellbeing and Safety Act 2005 \(Vic\)](https://www.legislation.vic.gov.au/in-force/acts/child-wellbeing-and-safety-act-2005)  <<https://www.legislation.vic.gov.au/in-force/acts/child-wellbeing-and-safety-act-2005>>
 - [Education and Training Reform Act 2006 \(Vic\)](https://www.legislation.vic.gov.au/in-force/acts/education-and-training-reform-act-2006)  <<https://www.legislation.vic.gov.au/in-force/acts/education-and-training-reform-act-2006>>
 - [Ministerial Order 1359 – Implementing the Child Safe Standards – Managing the risk of child abuse in schools \(PDF\)](https://www.education.vic.gov.au/Documents/about/programs/health/protect/Ministerial_Order.pdf)  <https://www.education.vic.gov.au/Documents/about/programs/health/protect/Ministerial_Order.pdf>
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Guidance


Guidance


Guidance, policies and templates

The [PROTECT website](https://www.vic.gov.au/protect)  <https://www.vic.gov.au/protect> includes detailed templates, guidance and checklists to support schools to implement the new standards.

PROTECT includes:

- [Ministerial Order 1359 \(PDF\)](https://www.education.vic.gov.au/Documents/about/programs/health/protect/Ministerial_Order.pdf)  <https://www.education.vic.gov.au/Documents/about/programs/health/protect/Ministerial_Order.pdf>
- [information about regulation and compliance](https://www.vic.gov.au/child-safe-standards-schools-regulations)  <https://www.vic.gov.au/child-safe-standards-schools-regulations>
- [guidance on how to implement the 11 Child Safe Standards](http://www.vic.gov.au/new-child-safe-standards-schools)  <http://www.vic.gov.au/new-child-safe-standards-schools>
- [training, resources and templates](https://www.vic.gov.au/child-safety-standards-templates-resources)  <https://www.vic.gov.au/child-safety-standards-templates-resources> .

Updated guidance for [child safety champions](https://www.vic.gov.au/guidance-child-safety-champions)  <https://www.vic.gov.au/guidance-child-safety-champions> is also available.

Other updated policy templates for schools are available through the [School Policy Templates Portal](https://edugate.eduweb.vic.gov.au/edrms/keyprocess/cp/SitePages/SchoolPoliciesDetail.aspx?CId=66)  <https://edugate.eduweb.vic.gov.au/edrms/keyprocess/cp/SitePages/SchoolPoliciesDetail.aspx?CId=66> (staff login required) – including bullying prevention, child safety responding and reporting obligations, complaints, digital learning, student wellbeing and engagement, supervision, visitors and volunteers.

Steps to implementation

Government schools can use this action list to implement the Standards:

[Child Safety action list \(DOCX\)](https://www.education.vic.gov.au/Documents/about/programs/health/protect/2023_CSS_Action_list_gov_schools.docx)  <https://www.education.vic.gov.au/Documents/about/programs/health/protect/2023_CSS_Action_list_gov_schools.docx>

To meet the Standards, schools should consult with families, students and the local community when developing policies and practices to address the Standards.

For additional guidance on how to consult, refer to [Child Safe Standard 4: Family Engagement](https://www.vic.gov.au/schools-family-engagement-Family_Engagement)  <https://www.vic.gov.au/schools-family-engagement-Family_Engagement>

guidance> .

Schools must review their child safety and wellbeing policies:

- after any significant child safety incident
- at least once every 2 years.

For further support to implement the Child Safe Standards, schools can contact child.safe.schools@education.vic.gov.au <mailto:child.safe.schools@education.vic.gov.au> or school.compliance@education.vic.gov.au <mailto:school.compliance@education.vic.gov.au>

Resources

Resources





Resources to support schools implement the Child Safe Standards.

Action list


[Child Safe Standards action list for government schools \(DOCX\)](#) 

<https://www.education.vic.gov.au/Documents/about/programs/health/protect/2023_CSS_Action_list_gov_schools.docx> – a quick reference check list of requirements for each Standard

Template policies and school documents

- [Child safety and wellbeing policy](#)  <<https://www.vic.gov.au/child-safety-and-wellbeing-policy>>
- [Child safety code of conduct](#)  <<https://www.vic.gov.au/child-safety-code-conduct>>
- [Child safety risk management](#)  <<https://www.vic.gov.au/child-safety-risk-management>>
- [School Policy Templates Portal](#)  <<https://edugate.eduweb.vic.gov.au/edrms/keyprocess/cp/SitePages/SchoolPoliciesDetail.aspx?CId=66>> (staff login required) — additional templates that schools can use to help them comply with the Child Safe Standards

Guidance for Child Safety Champions

[Guidance for child safety champions](#)  <<https://www.vic.gov.au/guidance-child-safety-champions>> – schools can nominate a senior staff member as a child safety champion to support child safety

School training resources

[Child Safe Standards training resources](#)  <<https://www.vic.gov.au/child-safe-standards-training-material>> – including PowerPoint presentations for school councils, school staff, and volunteers

Useful websites

[PROTECT](#)  <<https://www.vic.gov.au/protect>> – information to help schools fulfil their obligations under Ministerial Order 1359

Reviewed 05 August 2020