

Child Safe Standards

TIPS TO ASSIST YOUR ORGANISATION – SSAs & RSAs

From 1 January 2017, the Child Safe Standards (the **Standards**) apply to all sporting organisations that operate and provide sporting services to children within Victoria.

The Standards are about developing a long-term culture of safety for children. Having member protection policies and procedures in place are definitely a good start, but additional strategies and actions are required to ensure they are enacted. A culture and environment within sport that is supportive and protective of children is our ultimate aim and there are numerous ways that this can be done.

This tip-sheet is designed to assist your organisation by providing ideas on how you can meet each Standard. It should not be interpreted as a definitive guide on meeting the Standards. Organisations are advised to ensure they undertake a thorough review and adopt an approach that is suitable for their situation.

Child safety and the implementation of the Standards is not an add-on or one-off exercise. It is a legal requirement that your organisation must be compliant with as of 1 January 2017.

Within this document you will find the following information:

- [Where to begin](#)
- [Strategies for Action](#)
 - [Standard 1: Culture of Child Safety](#)
 - [Standard 2: Child Safe Policy](#)
 - [Standard 3: Code of Conduct](#)
 - [Standard 4: Human Resource Practices](#)
 - [Standard 5: Responding & Reporting](#)
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- [Other Strategies to Consider](#)
- [Additional Resources](#)
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WHERE TO BEGIN

Many organisations will have policies and procedures in place that may address areas of the Standards which is a positive first step. Embedding the content of the policies and procedures will require the development of additional strategies.

A review and update of your own practices will assist you in understanding the requirements of the Standards so that you can assist your members more effectively.

The following steps are recommended to help you start the process:

1. Develop a **working group or sub-committee** to lead your organisation's focus on developing a child safe culture

RESOURCE

[Child Safe Sport Working Group Terms of Reference Template](#)

2. Undertake a **child safety review** to identify:

- What does a child safe environment look like in the context of your organisation
- What you already have in place
- What you are doing well
- Where you need to improve
- Do you need anyone else to help?

RESOURCE

[Child Safe Standards Review Template](#)

3. Understand your **level of risk** in relation to the services and activities you provide to your members

LINK

[Vicsport Good Governance Toolkit – Risk Management & Compliance](#)

4. Identify what **further information**, advice and support you need

LINK

[Vicsport Child Safe Standards web page](#)

LINK

[Commission for Children and Young People web page](#)

5. Develop and implement an **action plan** to ensure your organisation meets the Standards. You can find ideas on actions your organisation can undertake in the following section "Strategies for Action".

RESOURCE

[Action Plan Template](#)

STRATEGIES FOR ACTION

Upon completing a review of your organisation, identify strategies to assist you in developing a comprehensive action plan. The following information provides strategies that may assist your organisation. This is not meant to be an exhaustive list, but rather an overview of possible actions that may be relevant to your organisation and its activities.

Standard 1:

Strategies to embed an organisational **culture of child safety**,
including through effective leadership arrangements

This Means:

Leading from the top down and embedding a culture that makes child safety everyone's business by:

- Protecting the interests of the child, not the organisation
- Making child safety a top priority within the organisation
- Taking a zero-tolerance approach to child abuse and to racial, religious or cultural discrimination
- Establishing values, behavioural expectations and recruitment practices that are consistent with a child centred, child safe culture

Examples of how your organisation can meet this Standard:

- Include a commitment to child safety in your strategic plan, vision and mission statement
- Report on your progress towards child safe sport in your annual report
- Discuss child safety and your organisation's approach to the Standards at your AGM, conferences and other events
- Have child safety representatives or champions within your organisation
- Include child safety as a regular communication item with your staff and board, along with a standing item at board and staff meetings
- Undertake awareness training for all board, staff and volunteers. This may be face to face or via an online service such as those offered by Play by the Rules.
- Have a dedicated section on your website outlining your organisation's approach to child safety and the support available to members
- Display information and posters throughout offices and facilities, outlining your commitment to child safe sport

Helpful Resources:

RESOURCE

[PPT Presentation Template & Presenter Guide](#)

RESOURCE

Child Safe Sport Posters (Vicsport)

- [How Sport Should Be](#)
- [How Sport Should Be \(with editable field\)](#)
- [Commitment to Child Safe Sport](#)

RESOURCE

Child Safe Standards Posters (CCYP)

- [About the Standards](#)
- [Youth Poster](#)

LINK

[Play by the Rules – Online Courses](#)

(Child Protection, Discrimination & Harassment, Complaint Handling)

LINK

[CCYP – Standard 1: Governance & Leadership](#)

Standard 2:

A child safe policy or statement of commitment to child safety

This Means:

Creating a foundation for a child safe environment by:

- Documenting how to meet your duty of care responsibilities to children
- Affirming a commitment to child safety and the best interests of children
- Making a commitment to child safety clear to people in your organisation, children and families and the community

Examples of how your organisation can meet this Standard:

- Develop a new (or review your existing) child safe policy or statement of commitment to child safety
- Ensure board members, staff and volunteers are aware of the organisation's child safe policy and its key provisions.
- Communicate the policy widely through appropriate channels – direct emails, newsletters, social media, written reports, website etc.
- Include your child safe policy and additional material in board, staff and volunteer inductions.
- Provide a contact person or persons in communications about your policy to assist with enquiries and activities

Helpful Resources:

RESOURCE

[Developing a Child Safe Policy](#)

RESOURCE

[Child Safe Policy Template - SSAs & RSAs](#)

LINK

[CCYP – Standard 2: Clear Commitment to Child Safety](#)

Standard 3:

A **code of conduct** that establishes clear expectations for appropriate behaviour with children

This Means:

Setting clear expectations for appropriate behaviour with children by:

- Providing written guidance on appropriate conduct and behaviour towards children
- Detailing acceptable and unacceptable behaviours in situations as they relate to your organisation. For example, physical contact, personal care, online communication, staff to child ratios and camps.
- Educating staff, volunteers, parents and children about the required standards of behaviour and what will happen if a person does not comply

Examples of how your organisation can meet this Standard:

- Develop a new (or review your existing) code of conduct to ensure it outlines clear standards for working with children in a range of situations and environments
- Embed child safe statements into any current codes of conduct (i.e. Staff, Board, Coaches, Officials, Volunteers)
- Build ownership and commitment to the code of conduct by providing opportunities for staff, volunteers, families and children to contribute to the code of conduct.
- Ensure all personnel (paid and volunteer) are aware of the code of conduct and have them sign and agree to it. This may be handwritten or electronic.
- Require agreement with the code of conduct as part of the membership or registration process
- Provide a contact person or persons to assist with enquiries and activities
- Provide written guidance on appropriate conduct and behaviour towards children outlining acceptable and unacceptable behaviours in situations as they relate to your organisation. For example, physical contact, personal care, online communication, staff to child ratios, camps etc.
- Educate staff, volunteers, parents and children about the required standards of behaviour and what will happen if a person does not comply. This may occur at:
 - Team meetings
 - Induction nights
 - Registration days (or as part of an online registration process)

Helpful Resources:

RESOURCE

[Developing a Child Safe Code of Conduct](#)

RESOURCE

[Child Safe Code of Conduct Template](#)

RESOURCE

[Guidelines for Communication When Working with Children](#)

RESOURCE

[Guidelines for Physical Contact When Working with Children](#)

LINK

[CCYP – Standard 3: Code of Conduct](#)

Standard 4:

Screening, supervision, training and other **human resources practices** that reduce the risk of child abuse by new and existing personnel

This Means:

Effectively screening and training people in your organisation to reduce the risk of child abuse by:

- Engaging only the most suitable people (whether in a paid or voluntary capacity) to work with children
- Having robust pre-employment screening processes and background checking
- Creating clear job descriptions and duty statements
- Understanding the nature and signs of child abuse
- Providing high quality supervision and professional development

Examples of how your organisation can meet this Standard:

- Build child safe selection criteria into job descriptions, recruitment advertisements and interviews
- Embed screening methods such as Police, Referee and Working with Children Checks into your recruitment strategy as required. You cannot rely on one method solely as they all address different criteria
- Ensure probation periods are established for new staff and volunteers
- Provide ongoing information and training for staff and volunteers as part of your organisation's approach to professional development. The Play By The Rules website can assist with this
- Distribute a list of easy to ask questions to utilise in interviews and "meet and greet" sessions such as:
 - Why do you want to be involved in our sport?
 - Have you worked with children before? In what capacity
 - Have you had a situation where you have had to comfort a distressed child? How did you manage this? What was the outcome?

RESOURCE

[CCYP - Video Presentations for each Standard](#)

RESOURCE

[Play by the Rules – Online Courses](#)

(Child Protection, Discrimination & Harassment, Complaint Handling)

LINK

[Working with Children Check \(Victoria\) – Who needs a Check](#)

LINK

[Working with Children Check \(Victoria\) – Exemptions](#)

LINK

[CCYP – Standard 4: Human Resource Practices](#)

NOTES:

1. Additional resources addressing Standard 4 – Human Resource Practices will be made available as soon as possible.
2. Enquiries specific to the Working with Children Check should be directed to the [WWCC Website](#) or Customer Support Line (1300 652 879)

Standard 5:

Processes for responding to and reporting suspected child abuse

This Means:

Putting in place clear procedures for responding to and reporting child safety concerns or child abuse, meaning:

- Procedures for raising concerns and complaints are clear and can be understood by children
- Children know who to talk to if they are worried, and are encouraged to report unsafe behaviours
- People within the organisation are aware of their duty of care and legal responsibilities, and know what to do to respond appropriately
- Concerns and complaints are acted upon appropriately

Examples of how your organisation can meet this Standard:

- Develop (or review) a process for reporting suspected child abuse that is clear and robust. Sports may find some of this information in current Member Protection Policies & Procedures.
- Distribute updated policies and procedures widely through your communication channels
- Have at least two people within your organisation to assist with enquiries and complaints. This may be your current MPIO or a designated Child Safe Officer.
- Develop/adapt and distribute easy to follow information, such as posters and tip sheets, outlining who to contact if there are concerns
- Provide access to easy-to-use reporting documents, such as a dedicated place on your website
- Provide access to online training for staff and volunteers. The Play By The Rules website can assist with this

NOTES:

1. Victoria has a **Reportable Conduct Scheme** to oversee allegations of child abuse and misconduct. The Scheme outlines requirements for organisations to respond to allegations of child abuse and may apply to some sporting organisations. Sporting organisations are encouraged to visit the CCYP website for more information: <https://ccyp.vic.gov.au/reportable-conduct-scheme/>

2. 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: <http://www.dhs.vic.gov.au/for-individuals/children,-families-and-young-people/child-protection>

LINK

[Play by the Rules – Online Courses](#)
(Child Protection, Discrimination & Harassment, Complaint Handling)

LINK

[Victorian Reportable Conduct Scheme](#)

LINK

[Victorian Mandatory Reporting information](#)

LINK

[CCYP – Standard 5: Responding and Reporting](#)

Standard 6:

Strategies to identify and reduce or remove risks of child abuse

This Means:

Identifying potential for harm and proactively planning to prevent, reduce or remove the risk of child abuse, such as:

- Having a clear understanding of the vulnerabilities of the organisation (and the specific activities provided) and the potential risks this may pose to children
- Being proactive to reduce the likelihood of risks emerging or escalating
- Adopting a risk management approach and developing a risk management plan

Examples of how your organisation can meet this Standard:

- Undertake a risk assessment to identify potential risks your organisation may face and how to address them
- Embed child safety in your organisation's risk matrix to ensure it is an ongoing action
- Regularly schedule discussion about child safety and risk minimisation in staff and team meetings
- Ensure staff and volunteers are trained to identify and respond to suspected child abuse
- Address risk management as a broad concept at upcoming conferences – embed Child Safety in the message

LINK

[Vicsport Good Governance Toolkit – Risk Management & Compliance](#)

LINK

[CCYP – Standard 6: Risk Management and Mitigation](#)

Standard 7:

Strategies to promote the participation and empowerment of children.

This Means:

Supporting children and young people to understand their rights, contribute to child safety planning and to raise concerns by:

- Valuing and respecting the opinions of children
- Encouraging child participation in decision making
- Establishing an environment of trust and inclusion that enables children to ask questions and speak up if they are worried or feeling unsafe.

Examples of how your organisation can meet this Standard:

- Provide children with child-appropriate and accessible information about what child abuse is, their rights and how they can raise any concerns
- Provide opportunities for children to provide suggestions and thoughts on what child safety means to them through a range of methods. This could include email, suggestion boxes and feedback sessions
- Ensure staff and volunteers receive training on how to engage and empower children on this issue
- Utilise a “junior advisory group” to provide input and feedback to strengthen your sport
- Provide child appropriate posters for display at club-rooms and facilities

RESOURCE

Child Safe Sport Posters (Vicsport)

- [How Sport Should Be](#)
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- [Commitment to Child Safe Sport](#)

RESOURCE

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- [About the Standards](#)
- [Youth Poster](#)

LINK

[CCYP - Standard 7: Empowering Children](#)

OTHER STRATEGIES TO CONSIDER:

The Standards are about developing a long-term culture of safety for children. Within the sporting environment there are numerous ways that this can be done. In addition to the examples already listed, the following strategies should also be considered for implementation within your sport:

- Embed a child safe module in coaching and officiating training
- Promote a “policy of the month” via your newsletters, social media and communication channels
- Develop and promote case studies of what is happening within your sport
- Discuss child safe scenarios at team and staff meetings
- Utilise upcoming conferences and training day to present to your members about the Standards
- Congratulate clubs and leagues who are taking steps to address the Standards via presentations, emails and your website

ADDITIONAL RESOURCES:

The examples provided in this document should not limit your organisation's approach to child protection. The following resources may also be of assistance to your organisation and its members:

[Vicsport](#)

[Play by the Rules](#)

[An overview of the Victorian child safe standards](#)

(State Government of Victoria, Department of Health & Human Service)

[A guide for creating a child safe organisation 3.0](#)

(Commission for Children and Young People)

FURTHER INFORMATION

P +61 3 9698 8100 **E** admin@vicsport.com.au **W** www.vicsport.com.au/child-safe-standards

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Commission for Children and Young People (2015), A guide for creating a child safe organisation 2.0*