



# Catholic Schools Child Safe Schools

## Child Safe Standard 4

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

### Rationale

Staff selection, supervision and training are essential in ensuring that a nurturing school environment and commitment to the safety of children is developed and sustained. These practices also send strong messages about the school's 'zero tolerance of child abuse' policy to prospective employees and volunteers.

*Catholic schools have a moral, legal and mission-driven responsibility to create nurturing school environments where children and young people are respected, their voices are heard and where they are safe and feel safe (CECV 2016).*

### In Brief

Standard 4 establishes the human resources practices that schools should adopt in order to reduce the risk of child abuse. Both newly recruited and existing staff and volunteers in schools need to understand the importance of child safety, be trained to minimise the risk of child abuse, and be aware of the school's relevant policies and procedures. Recruitment processes should be stringent in ensuring that relevant checks have been made. Induction processes need to include information on the school's policies, commitment and practices in regards to child safety. Ongoing training, supervision and monitoring of suitability to work with children should be part of a school's human resources practices.

### Ministerial Order Requirements

The Victorian government has introduced minimum Child Safe Standards into law to ensure organisations providing services for children create child safe environments. In accordance with [Ministerial Order No. 870](#) (State of Victoria, Department of Education

and Training 2016) all Victorian schools will be required to comply with these new standards from 1 August 2016 as part of their registration requirements.

The Ministerial Order (State of Victoria, Department of Education and Training 2016) specifies the following requirements for schools regarding school staff selection, supervision and management practices for a child-safe environment:

1. *Subject to the requirements of the ETR Act, the school governing authority must ensure that the school implements practices for a child-safe environment in accordance with this clause.*
2. *Each job or category of jobs for school staff that involves child-connected work must have a clear statement that sets out:*
  - a. *the job's requirements, duties and responsibilities regarding child safety; and*
  - b. *the job occupant's essential or relevant qualifications, experience and attributes in relation to child safety.*
3. *All applicants for jobs that involve child-connected work for the school must be informed about the school's child safety practices (including the code of conduct).*
4. *In accordance with any applicable legal requirement or school policy, the school must make reasonable efforts to gather, verify and record the following information about a person whom it proposes to engage to perform child-connected work:*
  - a. *Working with Children Check status, or similar check;*
  - b. *proof of personal identity and any professional or other qualifications;*
  - c. *the person's history of work involving children; and*
5. *references that address the person's suitability for the job and working with children*

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6. *The school need not comply with the requirements in Clause 10(4) if it has already made reasonable efforts to gather, verify and record the information set out in Clauses 10(4)(a) to 10(4)(d) about a particular individual within the previous 12 months.*
7. *The school must ensure that appropriate supervision or support arrangements are in place in relation to:*
  - a. *the induction of new school staff into the school's policies, codes, practices, and procedures governing child safety and child-connected work; and*
  - b. *monitoring and assessing a job occupant's continuing suitability for child-connected work.*

### **Towards Compliance (1 August 2016)**

- Revise and create clear role descriptions for staff and volunteers ensuring that duties and responsibilities regarding child safety are included. The essential and relevant qualifications, experiences and attributes in relation to child safety should be clear.
- Provide all applicants with access to the school's Child Safety policy and Code of Conduct.
- Ensure that advertisements for new positions include a statement about the school's commitment to child safe practices.
- When recruiting and selecting staff, contractors and volunteers, the school must make reasonable efforts to gather, verify and record the following information:
  - Working with Children Check status, or similar check
  - proof of personal identity and any professional or other qualifications
  - the person's history of work involving children
  - references that address the person's suitability for the job and working with children.
- Include information on policies, practices and codes pertaining to child safety in the school's staff induction program.
- Establish processes for monitoring and assessing the continuing suitability of staff to work with children including regularly reviews of the status of Working with Children Checks and staff professional registration requirements such as VIT registration.

- Document the updated processes for selection and supervision of staff with regard to child safety. Communicate these with the school's governing authority and obtain their written endorsement of these processes.
- Review and establish active supervision requirements for staff, contractors and volunteers who work with children in the school.

### **Sustaining a Culture of Child Safety**

- Continue to monitor, evaluate and review the human resource practices and procedures to ensure that child safety is embedded in the school.
- Ensure inclusive practices in the school's development and training of staff and volunteers.
- Enable regular professional learning and training of staff to build deeper understandings of child safety and prevention of abuse.
- Consider how child safety and awareness can be incorporated into ongoing appraisal and feedback processes for employees at the school.

### **Indicators of Effective Implementation**

Typical features of a school where HR practices related to child safety are embedded are that:

- all role descriptions are clear and include reference to responsibilities regarding child safety
- documented processes have been established for the selection of new staff, which ensure that they have the appropriate qualifications and experience specifically in relation to working with children; and referee checks are verified for the applicant's suitability to work with children
- Child Safe policies, practices and procedures are included in staff induction programs
- there is ongoing supervision and assessment of staff to ascertain their continuing suitability to work with children
- the school governing authority is satisfied with the practices and procedures regarding selection and supervision of staff engaged in child-connected work



- there is a staff development strategy to maintain and develop skills and capabilities, including relevant legislative requirements; understanding the risk of harm to children; the different types of harm; and how to identify grooming and abuse
- there is appropriate supervision of volunteers and contractors.

## Resources

Catholic Education Commission of Victoria Ltd (CECV) 2014, *Industrial Relations Page*, accessed 16 May 2016 [www.cecv.catholic.edu.au](http://www.cecv.catholic.edu.au). For information about and resources from the CECV Industrial Relations Unit.

Royal Commission into Institutional Responses to Child Sexual Abuse 2013, *Royal Commission into Institutional Responses to Child Sexual Abuse website*, accessed 16 May 2016 [www.childabuseroyalcommission.gov.au](http://www.childabuseroyalcommission.gov.au). For information about the focus of the Royal Commission including its research agenda and reports

State of Victoria, Commission for Children and Young People 2015, *A Guide for Creating a Child Safe Environment Version 2*, State Government of Victoria, Melbourne, accessed 16 May 2016 [www.cccyp.vic.gov.au/downloads/creating-a-childsafe-organisation-guide.pdf](http://www.cccyp.vic.gov.au/downloads/creating-a-childsafe-organisation-guide.pdf).

State of Victoria, Department of Education and Training 2016, *Child Safe Standards – Managing the Risk of Child Abuse in Schools Ministerial Order No. 870*, Education & Training Reform Act 2006, Gazette No. S2, accessed 16 May 2016 [www.gazette.vic.gov.au/gazette/Gazettes2016/GG2016S002.pdf](http://www.gazette.vic.gov.au/gazette/Gazettes2016/GG2016S002.pdf).

State of Victoria, Department of Health and Human Services (DHHS) 2015, *An overview of the Victorian child safe standards*, State Government of Victoria, Melbourne, accessed 16 May 2016 [www.dhs.vic.gov.au/data/assets/word\\_doc/0005/955598/Child-safe-standards\\_overview.doc](http://www.dhs.vic.gov.au/data/assets/word_doc/0005/955598/Child-safe-standards_overview.doc).

State of Victoria, DHHS 2011, *Human Services*, State Government of Victoria, Melbourne, accessed 16 May 2016 [www.dhs.vic.gov.au/home](http://www.dhs.vic.gov.au/home). For information on the Victorian Child Safe Standards for all organisations working with children.

State of Victoria, Department of Justice 2016, *Betrayal of Trust implementation*, State Government of Victoria, Melbourne, accessed 16 May 2016 [www.justice.vic.gov.au/home/safer+communities/protecting+children+and+families/betrayal+of+trust+implementation](http://www.justice.vic.gov.au/home/safer+communities/protecting+children+and+families/betrayal+of+trust+implementation). For information about the Betrayal of Trust Inquiry response including Criminal Law reform.

Truth, Justice and Healing Council 2016, *Melbourne Response*, Truth Justice and Healing Council, Canberra, accessed 16 May 2016 [www.tjhcouncil.org.au/about-us/about-the-council.aspx](http://www.tjhcouncil.org.au/about-us/about-the-council.aspx). For information about the Catholic Church's response to the Royal Commission into Institutional Responses to Child Sexual Abuse.

Victorian Registration & Qualifications Authority (VRQA) 2016, *Child Safe Standards*, State of Victoria (Department of Education and Training), Melbourne, accessed 16 May 2016 [www.vrqa.vic.gov.au/Pages/safety.aspx](http://www.vrqa.vic.gov.au/Pages/safety.aspx). For compliance information and advice on implementation of Ministerial Order No. 870 by the regulatory authority responsible for the registration of Victorian schools.

## References

Catholic Education Commission of Victoria Ltd (CECV) 2016, *Commitment Statement to Child Safety: A safe and nurturing culture for all children and young people in Catholic schools*, CECV, East Melbourne, accessed 16 May 2016 <http://cevn.cecv.catholic.edu.au/WorkArea/DownloadAsset.aspx?id=8589940208>. †