



Centre for Excellence
in Child and Family Welfare Inc.

Victorian Child Safe Standards

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NEIGHBOURHOOD
HOUSES BARWON

Our Agenda for today



Background



Standards and principles



Resources and support





Background

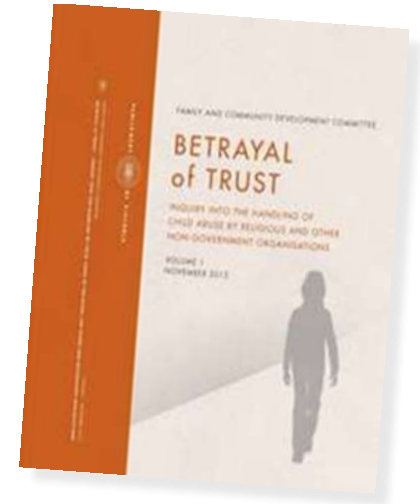


Betrayal of Trust Report

Betrayal of Trust is a report on a Victorian Parliamentary inquiry into the handling of child abuse by religious and other non-government organisations.

The report found the majority of children are safe in organisations, but organisational responses to child safety varied.

The report made 15 recommendations that are being implemented in three phases.



Victorian Commission for Children and Young People



Primary focus is on **educating** and providing **guidance**



Promote **continuous improvement** by organisations



Monitor and enforce **compliance**



Administer a **reportable conduct** scheme

Why the Standards have been developed



The Standards were developed to:

- Establish a **minimum** and **compulsory** benchmark to create and maintain safe environments for organisations that provide services to children.
- **Drive cultural change**, promote the safety of children and prevent, detect, report and respond to child abuse in organisations.
- Flexible and **principle based** standards.

What the Standards cover



The current child safe standards cover:

- ✓ Sexual abuse (including grooming)
- ✓ Physical abuse
- ✓ Emotional and psychological abuse
- ✓ Serious neglect

For children under the age of 18 years.

Who the Standards apply to



All **organisations** which provide services for children that:

- ✓ are funded and regulated by government from 1 January 2016
- ✓ have limited or no funding or regulation by government from 1 January 2017

All **registered schools** must be compliant by August 2016.

All **personnel** in an organisation

- ✓ Committees of management
- ✓ Coordinators
- ✓ Employees
- ✓ Volunteers
- ✓ Contractors
- ✓ Students on placement



A child safe organisation is everyone's responsibility, but some people will have particular roles to play.



Standards and principles



7 Child Safe Standards



Standard 1:

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

Standard 2:

A **child safe policy** or statement of commitment to child safety

Standard 3:

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

Standard 4:

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

Standard 5:

Processes for **responding to and reporting** suspected child abuse

Standard 6:

Strategies to **identify and reduce or remove risks** of child abuse

Standard 7:

Strategies to promote the **participation and empowerment** of children

Guiding Principles

In complying with the child safe standards the following principles must be included as part of each standard:

Principle 1
the cultural
safety of
Aboriginal
children

Principle 2
the cultural
safety of children
from CALD
backgrounds

Principle 3
The safety
of children with
a disability

Please also consider other groups of **vulnerable children** such as children in out of home care and LGBTIQ

Standard 1:

Organisations must have strategies to embed an organisational culture of child safety, including through effective leadership arrangements.

A **culture of child safety** is enhanced by recognising the importance of child safety at all levels of the organisation, including leadership (Committees of Management, Coordinator), staff and volunteers.

Examples for Standard 1



To engage in this cultural change, organisations need to:

- Embed child safety into everyday thinking ie OHS
- Take a **zero tolerance** approach to child abuse
- Ensure leadership is aware of allegations and responds to protect children.
- Promote a culture of reporting
- Child safety as a regular agenda item
- Respecting, embracing and supporting the **diversity** of children
- Adopt a continuous improvement approach

What is the impact for Neighbourhood Houses?



To engage in this cultural change, Neighbourhood Houses could?

- Initiate a discussion on the Child Safe Standards amongst the Committee of Management, at staff meetings
- Develop a Code of Conduct document for the Neighbourhood House.
- Role model best practice with regard to respect and trust within the organisation and the community and show zero tolerance to unacceptable behaviour.

Standard 2:

Organisations must have a child safe policy or statement of commitment to child safety.

A child safe policy is...
an overarching document that provides
key elements of child safety.

A statement of commitment is...
an affirmation of the organisations
commitment of child safety.

Examples for Standard 2



Child safe policy should:

- Cover all elements of the child safe standards: commitment to children's safety and best interests, definition of child abuse including grooming, detection, prevention, responding, reporting requirements/processes, continuous improvement.
- Consolidate policies, include other regulatory requirements and obligations etc

Communicate child safety policies and procedures to all staff, volunteers, visitors/contractors, children and families and the community

What is the impact for Neighbourhood Houses?



To action this policy Neighbourhood Houses need to?

Some examples and what else?

- Develop a child Safe policy
- Communicate the policy to all staff, Committee of Management, volunteers. Who else?

Standard 3:

Organisations must have a code of conduct that establishes clear expectations for appropriate behaviour with children.

A clear and specific code of conduct provides all staff and volunteers with a set of clear principles about how they should behave in a child-safe environment.

Examples for Standard 3



Provide **clear written guidance** on appropriate conduct and behaviour towards children.

Cover **boundaries** and detail acceptable and unacceptable behaviours, for example, physical contact, personal care, online communication

Communicate and publicise code of conduct to staff, volunteers, parents and children and what will happen if a person does not comply

Act on concerns or allegations of non-adherence to your Code of Conduct.

What is the impact for Neighbourhood Houses?



Does your Neighbourhood House have a Code of Conduct?

Some examples and what else?

- Develop a Code of Conduct in consultation with CoM, staff and volunteers.
- Communicate and display the Code of Conduct in a public and common space.

Standard 4:

Organisations must have screening, supervision, training and other human resources practices that reduce the risk of child abuse by new and existing personnel.

Ensure new and existing staff/volunteers understand the importance of child safety, are aware of policies and procedures, and are trained to minimise the risk of child abuse.

Examples for Standard 4



Communicate your commitment to child safety in your HR documents such as child safety statements in recruitment, job descriptions, staff appraisals etc.

Engage various assessment/ recruitment and selection **tools** to identify risks, 'red flags', WWCC/Police Checks, references

Provide induction and ongoing **training, supervision and monitoring** to manage/reduce risk.

What is the impact for Neighbourhood Houses?



What practical steps does the Neighbourhood House need to put in place? Some examples and what else?

- Ensure all staff, volunteers, and CoM members have current police checks and Working with Children Checks.
- Ensure policies are up to date re the recruitment and safety screening of new staff, volunteers.

Standard 5:

Organisations must have processes for responding to and reporting suspected child abuse.

Ensure a **supportive environment** for staff, children and families who report allegations of abuse or child safety concerns.

Ensure **child safety is the priority** and respond accordingly ie suspend alleged perpetrator or arrange alternate duties with no contact with children.

Examples for Standard 5

Provide **support** to child and family

Inform parents of allegations

Maintain accurate **record** keeping

Communicate policies and procedures on how to respond to allegations and who to report to (authorities and internal organisational processes)

Failure to disclose child sexual abuse - **criminal offence**



What is the impact for Neighbourhood Houses?



What changes of policy or procedure need to be made in a Neighbourhood House?

Some examples and what else?

- Put in place policies and procedures for responding and reporting allegations of child abuse.
- Communicate and support all staff in the implementation of procedures

Standard 6: Organisations must have strategies to identify and reduce or remove the risk of child abuse.

Organisations need to **adopt a risk management approach** - develop, record and communicate clear processes for evaluating and removing risks to children.

Examples for Standard 6



Be **proactive** to reduce the likelihood of risks emerging or escalating, rather than responding when harm has occurred.

Provide **training** to identify, prevent and reduce risks.

This covers both 'business as usual' risks and risks posed by specific activities.

Ensure **contractors** are compliant with child safe standards.

Failure to protect children from sexual abuse – **criminal offence** not to act to reduce or remove risk.

What is the impact for Neighbourhood Houses?



How can Neighbourhood Houses reduce the risk?

Some examples and what else?

- Introduce a section on child safe standards to your NH risk management procedures.

Standard 7:
**Organisations must have strategies to
promote the participation and
empowerment of children.**



Examples for Standard 7



Establish **trusting environments** where children feel safe and comfortable in reporting concerns.

Promote the **participation of children** - provide opportunities for children to contribute to child safe policies and in decisions that effect them.

Actively **valuing and respecting** children's opinions

Empower children through education to understand their rights, child abuse and grooming, code of conduct, how to raise concerns about abuse.

Seeking their views about what makes them feel safe and unsafe, including **cultural safety**

Raise **community awareness** on children's rights and cultural safety.

What is the impact for Neighbourhood Houses?



What ways do Neighbourhood Houses currently empower children?

What more could we do?

- Display resources/posters suitable for children to support their participation.
- In current programs that involve children encourage them to be involved in decision making or planning.



There is no
shortcut or one
size fits all
approach to
keeping
children safe
from abuse.



Resources and support



Next steps (self-audit tools)

Assess your current policies and practices to **identify** what you do well and areas for **improvement** using the CCYP or DHHS **self audit tools** to help you.

Standard	Review and Assessment		Action Plan	Implementation
Strategies to embed an organisational culture of child safety, through effective leadership arrangements	What does your organisation have in place to meet the Standard?	Is the Standard met or is further work needed?	What needs to be done to meet the Standard?	Who is responsible, timeframe and review date?
Do you have appropriate governance arrangements in place?	-	-	-	-
Is your organisation's commitment to child safety modelled by leadership?	-	-	-	-

Policies should cover all elements of the child safe standards and principles.

Other useful links

- ✓ CCYP: [Commission for Children and Young People](#)
Register your details for updates with the CCYP via <http://eepurl.com/cmopVL>
- ✓ DHHS: [Department of Health and Human Services website](#)
- ✓ DOJ: [Department of Justice and Regulation](#)
- ✓ DET: [PROTECT](#)
- ✓ VRQA: [VRQA resources](#) (videos)
- ✓ CFECFW: [Child Safe Organisations](#)

Local resources



Child Safe Standards officers at each of our local governments:

- City of Greater Geelong Anne Miller
- Colac Otway Shire Peter MacDonald
- Surfcoast Shire Tabatha Nelson

Barwon Network of Neighbourhood Houses Christine Brooks



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Thank you for attending today's child safe standards presentation



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Disclaimer: This guide provides general information only. It is intended to help a broad range of organisations become more child safe. Each organisation will need to tailor this information to meet its own specific needs, consistent with its duty of care. While all care has been taken in the production of this guide, it is not intended to be legal advice. Because legislation and legal requirements change over time, organisations should confirm the legal requirements that apply to them and seek legal advice about their specific situation.

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