Child Safety and the Child Safe Standards

Introduction

The new Child Safe Standards came into force in Victoria on 1 July 2022.

The Victorian Government has introduced NEW Child Safe Standards to better protect children and young people from abuse.

Overview

The purpose of the Child Safe Standards is to prevent abuse of children by making organisations safer for children. In order for children to feel safe in school and during their participation in an AIIU run Student Exchange Program, the responsibility for child safety should be understood and accepted by everyone in the organisation.

Every school/organisation must have:

1. Culturally Safe Environments
2. Child Safety and Wellbeing is Embedded in Leadership, Governance and Culture
3. Child and Student Empowerment
4. Family Engagement
5. Diversity and Equity
6. Suitable Staff and Volunteers
7. Complaints Processes
8. Child Safety Knowledge, Skills and Awareness
9. Child Safety in Physical and Online Environments
10. Review of Child Safety Practices
11. Implementation of Child Safety Practices

All staff, volunteers and relevant other parties must undertake three hours of compulsory Child Safety training.

In addition, all staff, volunteers and relevant other parties must sign a Code of Conduct annually to ensure they have read and understood its contents.

AIIU Regional Managers must take deliberate steps to safeguard children from physical, sexual, emotional and psychological abuse and neglect.

The new Child Safe Standards came into force on 1 July 2022, and schools/organisations now need to comply with these 11 new Standards.

What has changed in the New Child Safe Standards?

Although similar to Victoria's current Child Safe Standards, key changes include new requirements:
- to involve families and communities in organisations' efforts to keep children and young people safe
- for a greater focus on safety for Aboriginal children and young people
- to manage the risk of child abuse in online environments in relation to governance, systems and processes to keep children and young people safe.

What the Standards aim to achieve?

The Child Safe Standards aim to:
- Promote the safety of children
- Prevent child abuse
- Ensure organisations have processes in place to respond to and report all allegations of child abuse.

Child Safe Standards work by:
- driving changes in organisational culture – embedding child safety in everyday thinking and practice
- providing a minimum standard of child safety across all organisations
- highlighting that we all have a role to keep children safe from abuse.

Child Safety Standards

Standard 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

Standard 2
Child safety and wellbeing is embedded in organisational leadership, governance and culture
Standard 3: Children and young people are empowered about their rights, participate in decisions affecting them and are taken seriously

Standard 3
Empowerment of children and young people

Standard 4
Families and communities are informed, and involved in promoting child safety and wellbeing

Standard 5
Equity is upheld, and diverse needs respected in policy and practice

Standard 6
People working with children and young people are suitable and supported to reflect child safety and wellbeing values in practice

Standard 7
Processes for complaints and concerns are child focused

Standard 8
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 promote
safety and wellbeing while minimising the opportunity for children and young people to be harmed

Standard 10
Implementation of the Child Safe Standards is regularly reviewed and improved

Standard 11
Policies and procedures document how the organisation is safe for children and young people