

Child Safety and the Child Safe Standards

Introduction

Arising from the work of the Royal Commission into Institutional Responses to Child Sexual Abuse, the Australian Human Rights Commission developed the National Statement of Principles, which were endorsed by states and territories in February 2019.

The National Principles are underpinned by a child-rights, strengths-based approach to Child Safe Organisations and are designed to be flexible so that all sectors that engage with children, and organisations of different sizes, can implement them.

These principles collectively show that a Child Safe Organisation is one that creates a culture, adopts strategies and takes action to promote child wellbeing and prevent harm to children and young people. They are intended to guide what institutions need to do to be child safe by setting best practice to drive and guide performance.

The Queensland Child Safe Standards are based on the National Principles which means there is significant consistency between the new Queensland scheme and the schemes operating in other states.

Schedule 1 of the new Child Safe Organisation Act 2024 sets out the categories of organisations and businesses that need to comply with the Child Safe Standards.

Organisations that are deemed to be child safe organisations, which are based and operating in Queensland, will be required to uphold 10 Child Safe Standards.

When organisations implement the Child Safe Standards, they must also provide an environment that ensures the cultural safety of Aboriginal children and Torres Strait Islander children. This is known as the Universal Principle. The Universal Principle needs to be embedded in each of the 10 Child Safe Standards. It has the same importance as each of the 10 Child Safe Standards Child Safety Standards

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 AIU run Student Exchange Program, the responsibility for child safety should be understood and accepted by everyone in the organisation.

All staff, volunteers and relevant other parties must undertake 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.

AIU Regional Managers must take deliberate steps to ensure that AIU safeguards children from physical, sexual, emotional and psychological abuse and neglect.

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 SAFE STANDARDS

Standard 1

Child safety and wellbeing is embedded in organisational leadership, governance and culture.

Standard 2

Children are informed about their rights, participate in decisions affecting them and are taken seriously.

Standard 3

Families and communities are informed and involved in promoting child safety and wellbeing.

Standard 4

Equity is upheld and diverse needs respected in policy and practice.

Standard 5

People working with children are suitable and supported to reflect child safety and wellbeing in practice.

Standard 6

Processes to respond to complaints of child abuse are child focused.

Standard 7

Staff and volunteers are equipped with the knowledge, skills and awareness to keep children safe through ongoing education and training.

Standard 8

Physical and online environments promote safety and wellbeing and minimise the opportunity for children to be harmed.

Standard 9

Implementation of the Child Safe Standards is regularly reviewed and improved.

Standard 10

Policies and procedures document how the organisation is safe for children.