

Child Safe Standards

WHAT STEPS DO WE NEED TO TAKE?

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

All sporting organisations should be taking steps to address the standards. Vicsport encourages State Sport Associations and Regional Sports Assemblies to utilise the following guide as a process through which they can begin the journey towards a Child Safe Sporting Environment.

STEP 1: Develop a working group or sub-committee

Why?

Having a dedicated group of individuals to oversee the rollout of the standards within your organisation helps to spread the work and ensure knowledge about the Standards extends beyond one individual. These individuals can also act as your first “Champions”, ensuring that the messages of child safety are spread throughout your organisation and underpinning the change in culture required to be a truly Child Safe Organisation.

What should we consider?

You will need to keep in mind who the working group reports to. Is it the board, the CEO or another senior staff member? It is important to ensure that Child Safety becomes part of your organisations culture and core activities and this starts with the leaders and key decision makers.

STEP 2: Undertake a child safety review

Why?

Undertaking a Child Safety Review can help your organisation identify what is currently in place and what needs attention. Your organisation may have policies and procedures that new staff and volunteers weren't aware of or haven't been reviewed for a while. A Child Safety Review can also assist you to identify ways to improve your current practices and highlight ways of doing things differently.

What should we consider?

When undertaking your Child Safety Review, consider the following items:

- What policies and procedures do you already have in place?
- What is the current status of your organisations Risk Management plan?
- How can we be sure to include children from diverse backgrounds and abilities in our sport?
- How can staff, volunteers and children assist with the process?
- What is happening at a national level?
- How the issues identified can link with any current initiatives or programs (i.e. Club Development)?

STEP 3: Understand your level of risk

Why?

Organisations need to adopt a risk management approach to Child Safety. Having an active approach to your duty of care towards children contributes to the development of a Child Safe culture of risk management and continuous improvement.

What should we consider?

When assessing your organisations level of risk, keep in mind:

- The range of activities your sport offers that involve children
- Both the physical and online environment
- Any activities or situations that may be of higher risk (i.e. one-on-one coaching or overnight camps)

STEP 4: Identify any further information, advice or support needed

Why?

Once your organisation has completed a review and identified your level of risk, there will undoubtedly be questions you need to ask. Connecting with individuals and organisations that can assist your organisation through the implementation and change process could also help you identify items you may not have thought of.

What should we consider?

When identifying who may be able to assist you, think about the work your organisation undertakes and services it offers. Additionally, keep in mind what type of support best suits your organisation. Is it face to face, in-depth support or just knowing who to call if you have a question? This information aids you in locating organisations and individuals across:

- Local, State and National levels
- Industries external to sport
- Content experts in:
 - Child Safe Environments
 - Engaging people with a disability
 - Engaging people from indigenous communities
 - Engaging people from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds

STEP 5: Develop and implement an action plan

Why?

Developing an action plan which clearly outlines the tasks, roles, responsibilities and timelines will assist your organisation to break down required tasks into manageable items of work. It also helps to keep everyone across the organisation focused on and accountable to what they are aiming to achieve.

What should we consider?

Keep your plan simple and achievable, but most importantly ensure the content aligns with Child Safe Standards you are required to meet. When developing your plan, remember there is no “one best way” to achieving a Child safe culture so everyone’s plans will be different. When compiling your plan, engage with local, state and national sporting bodies as relevant to ensure you align with other initiatives occurring across sport.

Further Information

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This resource is supported by the Victorian Government.

This document was developed utilising and adapting content from:

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

State Government of Victoria, Department of Health & Human Services (2015) An overview of the Victorian child safe standards