

# Child Safe Standards

## TIP SHEET FOR STAFF WHO LIAISE WITH CLUBS & ASSOCIATIONS

The Child Safe Standards (the Standards) were introduced and effective in Victoria from 1 January 2017. The Standards are compulsory for all sporting organisations that operate and provide services or facilities to children within Victoria. As a State Sport Association (SSA) or Regional Sports Assembly (RSA), you should identify how you can support your members to ensure they are meeting the Standards and developing a child safe culture at their club.

SSAs and RSAs are strongly encouraged to take reasonable and practicable steps to assist and support members through the implementation and ongoing commitment of the Standards.

### First, make sure you're up to speed with the Standards

You may find it useful to review the Standards before meeting with members. Vicsport has some information sheets you can review to help you get started, including [About the Standards](#) and [What a Child Safe Organisation Looks Like](#).

### Focus on steps taken by your own organisation

Your organisation should have policies and procedures in place to address the Standards. This may have involved a review undertaken by senior staff to understand the requirements of the Standards and developing an action plan for your organisation or your affiliated clubs and associations, to meet the Standards.

In many cases, SSAs and National Sporting Organisations (NSOs) are developing policies and codes of conduct for child safety with which their affiliate organisations are required to comply. With respect to Standard 2 and 3 – developing a Child Safe Policy and Code of Conduct – it is appropriate for your members to adopt a State or National policy or code of conduct however, they need to ensure that the policy or code of conduct is read and understood by all of their members and is made publicly available. Your sport should not simply adopt a National or State policy or code of conduct without enforcing it.

You should also understand your organisation's approach to member protection and the role of Member Protection & Information (MPIO) officers. You might ask a senior manager how this is structured within your sport and check if there is a specific policy for your affiliate clubs or associations to have trained MPIO's or child safety officers.

### Understand the steps clubs and associations should take

The following steps are recommended for grassroots clubs, leagues and associations:

1. Develop a **working group or sub-committee** to lead your organisation's focus on developing a child safe culture.
2. Undertake a **child safety review** to identify:
  - What you already have in place
  - What you are doing well
  - Where you need to improve
  - Do you need anyone else to help?
3. Understand your **level of risk** in relation to the services and activities you provide to your members.
4. Identify what **further information**, advice and support you need.
5. Develop and implement an **action plan** to ensure your organisation meets the Standards.
6. Continue to **monitor and review** your organisations actions to improve and ensure ongoing compliance with the Standards is maintained.

## Questions you might ask your affiliate clubs or associations

### **Q1. Are you aware of the seven child safe standards that apply to all sport organisations in Victoria?**

Why you should ask this question: clubs and associations are legal entities in their own right and they have a duty to understand laws that apply to their organisation.

*Suggested ways to respond (depending on how the club or association reacts to your question):*

- *The Standards apply to all sporting organisations that operate and provide sporting services to children within Victoria.*
- *The aim of the Standards is to develop child safe cultures in organisations to protect the safety of children.*
- *WWCC are important, but you also need to take steps to develop a child safe culture in your club or association.*

If appropriate, you should talk through each Standard with the club or association's representative you are meeting with.

### **Q2. Have you set up a working group or subcommittee to address child safety?**

Why you should ask this question: child safety is everyone's responsibility. Organisations should ensure that multiple people are actively involved in the process to create a child safe culture.

*Suggested ways to respond (depending on how the club or association reacts to your question):*

- *Setting up a working group or subcommittee is a very useful way to review your child safe practices and develop an action plan. This should not be the responsibility of just one person.*
- *If you haven't set up a working group, let's think about who it could include. Your President should probably be involved to ensure buy in from your committee. Think about members who work as teachers, doctors or nurses – they may have dealt with Standards already and have useful advice. In addition, a committee is a great way to engage parents in the process as well as other relevant stakeholders.*

### **Q3. Have you completed a child safety review?**

Why you should ask this question: Vicsport strongly recommends that organisations complete a child safe review. Ideally, a working group or subcommittee will work on this as a team. You can download the [Child Safe Review Template](#) which assists organisations to assess what they are doing against the seven Standards and identify future actions and support required.

*Suggested ways to respond (depending on how the club or association reacts to your question):*

- *I understand this process can feel daunting. By doing a child safe review you can identify what is needed to ensure your club or association meets the Standards. You might find you are already doing a lot of the right things. You will also identify any needs you have for support, which we are here to help with.*

### **Q4. Do you understand your club or association's level of risk?**

Why you should ask this question: the aim of the Standards is to protect the safety of children in sporting environments which is paramount. This includes both the physical environment and the culture of your club or association. Persons in positions of authority at your club or association should think carefully about situations that occur frequently, or infrequently, that could pose a risk to children (i.e. one to one coaching or situations where one adult is alone with children). You may use your knowledge of the sport to suggest other risk management approaches or share ideas and strategies from other affiliate clubs or associations.

*Suggested ways to respond (depending on how the club or association reacts to your question):*

- *Think about behaviours that may expose children to risk of harm, such as aggressive behaviour or inappropriate touching. Are these behaviours prevalent in this club or association? Can you be doing more to mitigate these risks or behaviours?*
- *Another area to assess is situational risk – are there situations at the club (thinking about the way the sport operates) that pose a risk to children, such as one to one coaching or children being left alone waiting for parents to pick them up?*

#### **Q5. Have you started implementing an action plan?**

Why you should ask this question: having an action plan is a great way for an organisation to take steps to create a child safe environment. The benefits of an action plan can include: sharing the workload, ensuring necessary actions are not forgotten, setting deadlines for key tasks and provides direction for an organisation to improve. Vicsport has developed the [Action Plan Template](#) which any SSA or RSA is welcome to use and tailor to their needs.

*Suggested ways to respond (depending on how the club or association reacts to your question):*

- *I can assist you to review your club's approach and develop an action plan.*
- *If you haven't implemented an action plan, I would strongly recommend this as a way to share the workload and ensure you take steps to protect the safety of children.*
- *There are a range of templates available to assist you to develop an action plan which will assist and can be tailored to meet your club's needs.*

#### **Q6. Do you require any further advice or support?**

It may be useful to remind the club or association that outside and ongoing support is available. The primary contact for any grassroots organisation should be their affiliate SSA or RSA (not Vicsport).

*Suggested ways to respond:*

- *We are here to help. If you have any further questions or if you require certain support, please let me know.*

#### **Remember:**

Child safety is not an add-on or one off exercise. It is a legal requirement that every organisation needs to be compliant with the Standards.

Having member protection policies and procedures in place is not enough. It's about creating an ongoing culture and environment within sport that is supportive and protective of children.

#### **Further Information**

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#### **DISCLAIMER:**

This information provides general guidance regarding the Child Safe Standards. It should not be considered as a substitute for legal advice.

*This resource is supported by the Victorian Government.*

*This document was developed utilising and adapting content from:*

*State Government of Victoria, Department of Health & Human Services (2015) An overview of the Victorian child safe standards  
Commission for Children and Young People (2015), A guide for creating a child safe organisation 2.0.*