



Catholic Schools Child Safe Schools

Child Safe Standard 3

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

Rationale

A Child Safety Code of Conduct establishes for all staff and others working with children, clear behavioural expectations and boundaries in the school's environment and enables all to be held accountable.

The Catholic Education Commission of Victoria Ltd (CECV) holds the care, safety and wellbeing of children and young people as a central and fundamental responsibility of Catholic education (CECV 2016).

In Brief

Standard 3 has the objective of promoting child safety in schools by establishing clear expectations of staff and volunteers for appropriate behaviour with children, in order to safeguard them against sexual, physical, psychological and emotional abuse and/or neglect. A Child Safety Code of Conduct recognises the critical role that school staff play in protecting the children in their care, and clarifies and affirms the standards of behaviour expected of all Catholic school staff and personnel who work in or provide services to Catholic schools.

Ministerial Order Requirements

The Victorian government has introduced Child Safe Standards into law to ensure organisations providing services for children create child-safe environments. In accordance with [Ministerial Order No. 870](#), under the Education and Training Reform Act 2006 (Vic.), all Victorian schools will be required to comply with these new standards from 1 August 2016 as part of their registration requirements.

The Ministerial Order (State of Victoria, Department of Education and Training 2016) specifies the following requirements for schools regarding a Code of Conduct:

The school governing authority must develop, endorse, and make publicly available a code of conduct that:

- has the objective of promoting child safety in the school environment*
- sets standards about the ways in which school staff are expected to behave with children*
- takes into account the interests of school staff (including other professional or occupational codes of conduct that regulate particular school staff), and the needs of all children*
- is consistent with the school's child safety strategies, policies and procedures as revised from time to time.*

The Ministerial Order defines school staff as:

... an individual working in a school environment who is:

- directly engaged or employed by a school governing authority*
- a volunteer or a contracted service provider (whether or not a body corporate or any other person is an intermediary); or*
- a minister of religion.*

Towards Compliance (1 August 2016)

- Be familiar with the *Guide for Catholic Schools Developing a Child Safety Code of Conduct* (CECV 2016b) resource which forms part of this Guide. It includes a suggested process for developing a Child Safety Code of Conduct, a sample Code and a template to facilitate the development process in schools.
- Consult with staff, parents, volunteers and students about what should be in the Code.
- Review relevant school policies related to child safety that can inform the Child Safety Code of Conduct.

>>

- Develop a staff Child Safety Code of Conduct specifying appropriate and inappropriate behaviours with students.
- Ensure the language in the code is clear and enables all in the school community to understand it.
- Ensure the Code is aligned with the school's child safety strategies, policies and procedures.
- Obtain written endorsement of the Code of Conduct from the school's governing authority.
- Communicate the Code to the school community (e.g. through website and newsletters).
- Include the Code of Conduct into school induction processes.
- Determine when the Code will be revised.
- Staff demonstrate culturally safe behavior with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children, children from culturally and/or linguistically diverse backgrounds and children with disabilities.
- The Code is visible on the school website and in prominent school locations so that the school community can easily access and understand the Child Safety Code of Conduct.
- The behaviour of staff is in keeping with the Child Safety Code of Conduct .
- Staff are clear about how to raise concerns about behaviour which does not appear to be in keeping with the code.
- The Code is reviewed and updated taking into account emerging factors in the school context.
- The Code is translated into different languages and well known by the school staff, volunteers and the children and families.

Sustaining a Culture of Child Safety

- Embed and review the school's Child Safety Code of Conduct. Refer to the *CECV Guide for Catholic Schools Developing a Child Safety Code of Conduct* (CECV 2016b) for advice about these steps.
- Consider whether other Child Safety Codes of Conduct would be suitable for the school such as a Parent Code or Student Code.
- Conduct workshops to ensure that everyone involved in the school understands the requirements of the Child Safety Code of Conduct.

Indicators of Effective Implementation

Typical features of a school where a Child Safety Code of Conduct is embedded:

- The school has a Child Safety Code of Conduct for school employees, volunteers, contractors and clergy in which appropriate behaviour with children and young people is clearly defined, accessible and understood by all members of the school community.
- All school staff in the school environment are covered by the Child Safety Code of Conduct.

Resources

Catholic Education Commission of Victoria Ltd (CECV) 2014, *Industrial Relations Page*, accessed 16 May 2016 www.cecv.catholic.edu.au. For information about and resources from the CECV Industrial Relations Unit.

Royal Commission into Institutional Responses to Child Sexual Abuse 2013, *Royal Commission into Institutional Responses to Child Sexual Abuse website*, accessed 16 May 2016 www.childabuseroyalcommission.gov.au. For information about the focus of the Royal Commission including its research agenda and reports

State of Victoria, Commission for Children and Young People 2015, *A Guide for Creating a Child Safe Environment*, Version 2, State Government of Victoria, Melbourne, accessed 20 May 2016 www.ccyp.vic.gov.au/downloads/creating-a-childsafe-organisation-guide.pdf.

State of Victoria, Department of Justice 2016, *Betrayal of Trust implementation*, State Government of Victoria, Melbourne, accessed 16 May 2016 www.justice.vic.gov.au/home/safer+communities/protecting+children+and+families/betrayal+of+trust+implementation. For information about the Betrayal of Trust Inquiry response including Criminal Law reform.



State of Victoria, Department of Health and Human Services 2011, *Human Services*, State Government of Victoria, Melbourne, accessed 16 May 2016 www.dhs.vic.gov.au/home. For information on the Victorian Child Safe Standards for all organisations working with children.

Truth, Justice and Healing Council 2016, *Melbourne Response*, Truth Justice and Healing Council, Canberra, accessed 16 May 2016 www.tjhcouncil.org.au/about-us/about-the-council.aspx. For information about the Catholic Church's response to the Royal Commission into Institutional Responses to Child Sexual Abuse.

Victorian Registration & Qualifications Authority (VRQA) 2016, *Child Safe Standards*, State of Victoria (Department of Education and Training), Melbourne, accessed 16 May 2016 www.vrqa.vic.gov.au/Pages/safety.aspx. For compliance information and advice on implementation of Ministerial Order No. 870 by the regulatory authority responsible for the registration of Victorian schools.

References

Catholic Education Commission of Victoria Ltd (CECV) 2016a, *Commitment Statement to Child Safety: A safe and nurturing culture for all children and young people in Catholic schools*, CECV, East Melbourne, accessed 16 May 2016 <http://cevn.cecv.catholic.edu.au/WorkArea/DownloadAsset.aspx?id=8589940208>.

CECV 2016b, *Guide for Developing a Child Safe Code of Conduct*, CECV, East Melbourne, accessed 19 May 2016 <http://cevn.cecv.catholic.edu.au/WorkArea/DownloadAsset.aspx?id=8589940537>.

State of Victoria, Department of Health and Human Services (DHHS) 2015, *An overview of the Victorian child safe standards*, DHHS, Melbourne, accessed 16 May 2016 www.dhs.vic.gov.au/_data/assets/word_doc/0005/955598/Child-safe-standards_overview.doc.

State of Victoria, Department of Education and Training 2016, *Child Safe Standards – Managing the Risk of Child Abuse in Schools Ministerial Order No. 870*, Education & Training Reform Act 2006, Gazette No. S2, accessed 16 May 2016 www.gazette.vic.gov.au/gazette/Gazettes2016/GG2016S002.pdf. †