

# Child Safe Standards

## DEVELOPING A CHILD SAFE POLICY

### Overview

One of the most effective ways to demonstrate your commitment to child safety is to document how you will meet your duty of care and responsibilities to children. This should be done through a Child Safe Policy and/or Statement of Commitment to Child Safety, together with a Code of Conduct or Behaviour for dealing with Children and Young People.

**A child safe policy** is generally a comprehensive and overarching document that provides an overview of key elements of an organisation's approach to creating a child safe organisation and a culture of child safety. It may include:

- A Commitment to Child Safety
- Reporting Procedures
- Recruitment Practices
- Risk Management Procedures.

**A Commitment to Child Safety** affirms the organisation's commitment to child safety by clearly stating that the organisation:

- Has zero tolerance for child abuse;
- Makes a commitment to children's rights, safety and wellbeing;
- Actively works to listen to and empower children in the organisation; and
- Is guided by the:
  - Cultural safety of Aboriginal children
  - Cultural safety of children from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds
  - Safety of children with a disability

It is important for your organisation to tailor an option that works best for you and consider the resources your sport already has in place. In addition to this, everyone within your sport needs to commit to the active demonstration of a child safe culture.

### Developing a Child Safe Policy

Vicsport recommends organisations undertake the following steps through the development of their Child Safe Policy. Each is explored in more detail further in this document:

1. Review Existing Policies and Procedures
2. Consult Widely;
3. Write the Policy;
4. Circulate the Draft Policy for Feedback;
5. Finalise the Policy;
6. Approve or Endorse the Policy;
7. Communicate the Policy;
8. Set a date for Review.

Undertaking a clear and well planned process will ensure that your organisation develops a thorough Child Safe Policy and contributes to a strong Child Safe Culture.

## Policy Development

### Step 1: Review Existing Policies and Procedures

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Complete the Child Safety Review Template honestly and thoroughly when reviewing any existing policies or procedures that may already be in place, such as Member Protection Policies, Codes of Conduct or Disciplinary Policies. Consider how any existing documents place the safety of children as paramount and any strengths, weaknesses and risks in your current processes.

### Step 2: Consult Widely

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Engage with a broad cross-section of individuals involved in your organisation and broader sport community to inform your policy. This may include:

- Paid Staff (at varying levels)
- Volunteer Administrators
- Coaches
- Officials
- Participants (including families and children who would be empowered in line with Child Safe Standard 7).

Consultation provides a platform for your organisation to identify issues within your sport, and ensures all areas are well represented within your policy. It also provides an opportunity for people involved in your sport to become aware of the issues you are trying to address. An additional benefit of consultation is increased ownership of the policy as individuals feel they have contributed to the organisations approach to child safety.

### Step 3: Write the Policy

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The Commission for Children and Young People advise that the following topics are essential for inclusion in a Child Safe Policy:

- Commitment to child safety
- Children's rights to safety and participation
- Valuing Diversity
- Recruiting staff and volunteers
- Supporting staff and volunteers
- Reporting a child safety concern or complaint
- Child Safe Officers (or equivalent positions)
- Risk management
- Record Keeping and Incident Monitoring
- Reviewing the policy

Your organisation should consider:

- What needs to be included in the policy that may be specific to your sport
- How the Child Safe Policy may impact or link to other key organisational documents (i.e. Member Protection Policy, Codes of Conduct or Privacy Policy)
- How this policy may link with any policies in place or being developed by your National Sporting Organisation.

If required, your organisation can utilise a sample template to write the policy. Vicsport has template policies available for State and Club level sporting organisations. These can be accessed via <https://vicsport.com.au/child-safe-standards>.

### Step 4: Circulate the Draft Policy for Feedback

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Upon finalising a draft Child Safe Policy, circulate a copy for discussion and input from a range of individuals involved in your sport. Where possible, seek feedback from those outside your

organisation and your sport. Consider other organisations that already have a policy in place, review and consider these policies and request some input from them.

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**Step 5: Finalise and Approve or Endorse the Policy**

Collate the feedback gained through the review process and update your policy. Once your policy has been finalised, you will need to identify who is required to approve or endorse it (board, committee or members). This should be outlined in your organisation's constitution. Any approval that occurs at board, committee or member meetings should be minuted and recorded for future reference.

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**Step 6: Communicate the Policy**

Once approved or endorsed, communicate your organisation's Child Safe Policy throughout your sport on an ongoing basis.

You may consider doing this through your:

- Website
- Social Media channels (Facebook, Twitter, Sport/Team Apps)
- Newsletters (hard copy and emailed)
- Direct emails to your sporting community
- Displaying throughout offices/clubrooms
- Agenda items at meeting and forums
- Included in induction processes for new staff and volunteers

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**Step 7: Set a Date for Review**

Once your policy is finalised and communicated to your members, set a date for the policy to be reviewed every two years and ensure it is updated accordingly.

**Further Information:**

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**DISCLAIMER:**

The information contained within this document is general in nature. It should not be considered as a substitute for legal advice. Vicsport recommends sporting organisations develop a Child Safe and Child Friendly Policy with the assistance of appropriate legal advisers.

*This resource is supported by the Victorian Government.*

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

*The Commission for Children and Young People (2018), A guide to creating a child safe organisation*