

Changes to the Victorian Child Safe Standards



The Victorian Commission for Children and Young People (CCYP) has released 11 new Victorian Child Safe Standards that come into effect on 1 July 2022.

The new Victorian Child Safe Standards (VCSS) are a combination of the previous seven (7) standards and the 10 National Principles for Child Safe Organisations with some minor additions and variations. If you are implementing the Parish and Entity Child Safety Assessment Tool (the Self-Assessment Tool), then you are in a good position to be compliant with the new 11 standards. In this information sheet, we will focus on VCSS Standards 1 & 2.

Victorian Child Safe Standard 1:

Organisations establish a culturally safe environment in which the diverse and unique identities and experiences of Aboriginal children and young people are respected and valued.

Change:

- This is a new standard that has been introduced and requires parishes to identify and address incidences of racism with the involvement of Aboriginal children and young people, and their families.
- The CAM Discrimination policy which applies to employees and includes racism and reporting procedures, will be extended to apply to volunteers and parishioners within the Archdiocese.

Implementation hints:

- Identify ways parishes can establish an environment that demonstrates Aboriginal parishioners are welcome.
- Find out who the Traditional Owner groups or Registered Aboriginal Organisations are in your area and publicise.
- Create public displays that recognise the land the parish is on and its people (specific to the area). This could include an Aboriginal flag in places of meeting and prayer (e.g. parish office, church, meeting rooms, rooms for children's liturgy), or local symbols and signs from the land your parishioners are meeting on.
- Acknowledge Country and Traditional Owners at the beginning of all meetings.

- Acknowledge publicly and celebrate NAIDOC Week, Harmony Week and Reconciliation Week through activities including Masses that recognise the local Aboriginal clans.
- Celebrate the local Aboriginal community by sharing learnings with staff, volunteers and families through existing communication channels.
- Review publications to include Acknowledgment of Country and localise where possible.
- Create opportunities for child-centred programs (e.g. children's liturgy) to include information on "inclusion and diversity" and CAM's zero tolerance to discrimination.
- Consult with Aboriginal organisations for guidance on how your parish can become culturally safe. If you have Aboriginal people attending the parish activities, engage with them.
- Establish a parishioner complaints procedure if racism is experienced in the parish.

SAVE-THE-DATE: To assist parishes, the PSU will be hosting an introductory webinar on Aboriginal Cultural Safety on 1 June 2022 (during Reconciliation Week). In the meantime, you may wish to read our existing information sheet on [Promoting the Cultural Safety of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Children and Young People](#).

Victorian Child Safe Standard 2:

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

Change/s:

- This standard places a greater emphasis on the importance of the role of leadership, and in particular senior leadership in ensuring child safety and wellbeing.
- Refer to the [Self-Assessment Tool \(Standard 1\)](#)
- Note the inclusion of "wellbeing" in the descriptor for this standard. NB. The PSU is currently awaiting guidance from the Australian Catholic Safeguarding Ltd. (ACSL) on how "wellbeing" is to be incorporated into existing child safe policies.

Implementation hints:

- Parishes will be required to ensure that children and young people have access to information, support and complaints processes that are culturally safe and easy to understand.



- Senior leaders supervise whether risk assessment and management is focussed on identifying, preventing and reducing risks of child abuse and harm.
- Leaders promote a culture of reporting.
- Decision-making prioritises children.
- Organisational culture creates an environment where it is difficult for abuse to occur.
- Personnel understand and comply with the Code of Conduct which describes professional boundaries, ethical behaviour, expected standards of behaviour, acceptable and unacceptable relationships and what happens if a person breaches it.
- Personnel understand their information sharing and record keeping obligations.

Links to additional resources:

- [CCYP guide](#)
- [ACSL Implementation Guide \(Standard 1\)](#)
- [ACSL Implementation Guide \(Standard 2\)](#)

Where to for support?

You can contact the Professional Standards Unit for support on 9926 5621 / 0448 488 614 or send an email to the team at psu@cam.org.au.

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