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| Child Safe Standards  |
| Quarterly bulletin – September 2024 |
| OFFICIAL |

# Introduction

# Welcome to the Social Services Regulator’s Child Safeguarding Regulation team’s first edition of the Child Safe Standards news bulletin.

The Child Safe Standards bulletin (the bulletin) provides updates and links to resources to support organisations implementing the Standards. The content is targeted to organisations providing services to children who are required to comply with the Standards under the *Social Services Regulations Act 2021*. Our aim is to publish the bulletin every three months, ensuring we keep you up to date with what’s going on in the sector. If you have any suggestions for future content, we’d love to hear from you.

**Who we are**

The Social Services Regulator (the Regulator) is an independent statutory authority established under the *Social Services Regulation Act 2021* (Vic). Established on 1 July 2024, the Regulator regulates the Victorian Child Safe Standards (the Standards) as an integrated sector regulator for the social services sector.

Organisations that are in scope of the Child Safe Standards, and were regulated by the Human Services Regulator, are now regulated by the Regulator.

The Regulator is the prescribed integrated sector regulator for entities described under section 25F(1)(b) of the *Child Wellbeing and Safety Act 2005*. These include:

* Organisations that receive funding under a State contract to provide early therapeutic intervention specifically for children with a disability, additional needs, or developmental delay
* Disability service providers within the meaning of the *Disability Act 2006*
* Applicable entities outside of the meaning within the *Disability Act 2006*, that provide disability services
* Applicable entities that receive funding under a State contract to provide services in relation to family violence or sexual assault
* Applicable entities that receive funding under a State contract to provide support services for parents and families
* Applicable entities that receive funding under a State contract to provide housing services or other assistance to homeless persons
* Applicable entities that receive funding under a State contract to provide child protection services
* Out of home care services within the meaning of the Children, Youth and Families Act 2005, and
* Department of Families, Fairness and Housing registered providers that deliver services to children including child protection and forensic disability.

Our approach and the year ahead

#### The Regulator is taking a graduated approach to regulating the Child Safe Standards. This means the Regulator will focus on informing and educating organisations about their obligations under the Child Safe Standards. However, there may be instances where the Regulator takes further regulatory action to ensure an organisation’s compliance with the Standards and to address serious risks to the safety of children and young people.

#### The Regulator has various functions as outlined under s14 of the Social Services Regulations Act 2021(the Act). In carrying out its functions, the Regulator will work collaboratively with other integrated sector regulators, sector regulators and the Commission for Children and Young People in relation to the safety of children and compliance with the Standards. This means more than one regulator might be involved in following up on a compliance matter. This might involve sharing of information between regulators or jointly responding to a matter.

#### During our establishment phase, our initial focus will be on promoting our role in regulating the Standards. We also intend to engage with the sector to provide education and information about the Standards.

**What’s new in the world of Child Safe Standards?**

The Commission for Children and Young People (CCYP) recently published new Child Safe Standards resources*:* [Understanding cultural safety for Aboriginal children and young people](https://ccyp.vic.gov.au/child-safe-standards/cultural-safety/)<https://ccyp.vic.gov.au/child-safe-standards/cultural-safety/>

These resources have been developed to help organisations with understanding and implementing Standard 1. The new resources include the following guidance materials:

* [Understanding cultural safety for Aboriginal children and young people: A guide for implementing Child Safe Standard 1](https://ccyp.vic.gov.au/child-safe-standards/cultural-safety/#cultural-safety) <https://ccyp.vic.gov.au/child-safe-standards/cultural-safety/#cultural-safety>
* [Tips for creating a culturally safe environment](https://ccyp.vic.gov.au/child-safe-standards/cultural-safety/tips-for-creating-a-culturally-safe-environment/) <https://ccyp.vic.gov.au/child-safe-standards/cultural-safety/tips-for-creating-a-culturally-safe-environment/>
* [Days of importance for Aboriginal communities](https://ccyp.vic.gov.au/child-safe-standards/cultural-safety/days-of-importance/) <https://ccyp.vic.gov.au/child-safe-standards/cultural-safety/days-of-importance/>

##### More information about the new resources can be accessed on the [CCYP website](https://ccyp.vic.gov.au/resources/child-safe-standards/)  <https://ccyp.vic.gov.au/resources/child-safe-standards/>

**Spotlight: Capacity Building**

Staff and volunteers play a key role in providing care and support to children and young people. Standard 8 requires that staff and volunteers are equipped with the knowledge, skills, and awareness to keep children and young people safe, through ongoing education and training.

Ongoing training and capacity building is essential across both generalist and specialized areas of child safeguarding. Organisations are urged to facilitate training and opportunities for staff and volunteers to develop competencies that enable them to keep children and young people safe.

Organisations are also encouraged to facilitate staff and volunteer training based on the needs of their relevant service user groups.

Resources for Child Safe Standard 8:

1. The National Office for Child Safety, [Engaging with victims and survivors of child sexual abuse: A practice guide for workers and organisations: An Australian Government initiative](https://www.childsafety.gov.au/what-we-do/practice-guide-workers-and-organisations)

<https://www.childsafety.gov.au/what-we-do/practice-guide-workers-and-organisations>

This guide is intended to help all workers engaging with victims and survivors including specialist sexual assault services, generalist service providers and other frontline organisations that work with children, young people, and adults.

It covers multiple practice areas including working safely with trauma, embedding cultural safety, responding to child sexual abuse disclosures across the lifespan and prioritising workforce development and wellbeing. This resource can help increase staff knowledge regarding responding to child sexual abuse and help organisations in complying with minimum requirements under Standard 8.

Further information regarding this resource and how to use it can be accessed on the [National Office for Child Safety](https://www.childsafety.gov.au/what-we-do/practice-guide-workers-and-organisations)  web page <https://www.childsafety.gov.au/what-we-do/practice-guide-workers-and-organisations>

1. The Australian Centre for Child Protection, [Practice Guide - Understanding Harmful Sexual Behaviours: A Layered Continuum](https://www.unisa.edu.au/research/australian-centre-for-child-protection/our-resources/#resources) <https://www.unisa.edu.au/research/australian-centre-for-child-protection/our-resources/#resources>

This resource was recently updated, and it may be used to implement minimum requirements 8.2 and 8.3 in the context of understanding harmful sexual behaviours.

**Upcoming events**

**Griffith University grooming survey**

The Commission for Children and Young People and the Griffith University are calling for peoplewho are subject to the Reportable Conduct Scheme and/or the Child Safe Standards to take part in a short survey on grooming behaviours.

The survey is part of a research project run by Griffith University, to better understand grooming behaviours and how we identify them in organisations.

The survey is anonymous and should take 20 minutes to complete.

Griffith University is also conducting in-depth discussions about survey responses. Details on how you can volunteer to participate in these discussions are included at the end of the survey.

The results will help to better understand what behaviours are recognised as grooming, so Griffith University and the Commission for Children and Young People can support organisations to keep children and young people safe from abuse.

Please note that scenarios used in the survey may be disturbing to some participants. If this is the case, you can withdraw from the survey at any time. Contact details for Lifeline and The Commission for Children and Young People are provided in the survey and we include them here for your reference:

Lifeline: 13 11 14

Commission for Children and Young People: 1300 78 29 78

The survey closes on 10 October 2024.

Here a link to the survey: [https://griffithuw.qualtrics.com/jfe/form/SV\_0oHE3CB3fOk3TGS](https://urldefense.com/v3/__https%3A/griffithuw.qualtrics.com/jfe/form/SV_0oHE3CB3fOk3TGS__;!!C5rN6bSF!ETYuaVYe-cbTs8yI3rG5e-2Hq7Bmk1I2rBGaWAZb06iks5_heGNVgApumGyBhdwWxFj7u6zgVdgxD-5y5c-4d_z-w9BW$)

**Children’s Week 2024**

This year’s Children’s Week will be held between Saturday 19 October to Sunday 27 October 2024, under the theme “Children have the right to a clean and safe environment”.

The theme is based on Article 24 of the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (UNCRC) and it aligns with Standard 9, particularly minimum requirements 9.1 and 9.3. Organisations are encouraged to consider measures that can be taken to reduce risks and create safe physical spaces for children and young people.

Additional information about Children’s Week is available on the [Children's Week Council of Australia (childrens-week.org.au)](https://childrens-week.org.au/) website < https://childrens-week.org.au/>

**For more information**

If your organisation requires further assistance to comply with the Standards or if you have feedback and suggestions about Child Safe Standards content for future bulletins, please contact Child Safeguarding Regulation on 1300 310 778 or email us on childsafeorgs@ssr.vic.gov.au <childsafeorgs@ssr.vic.gov.au>

If you are interested in receiving updates, sector guidance, news, and events from the Regulator you

can subscribe to our Social Services Regulator (SSR) newsletter via this link [www.ssr.vic.gov.au](http://www.ssr.vic.gov.au).

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