

# Child Safe Standards and workplace learning

## Fact sheet for employers

The Victorian Government takes the wellbeing and safety of children very seriously.

Victoria's new Child Safe Standards were introduced on 1 July 2022 to further strengthen child safe environments and better protect children from abuse. The Child Safe Standards are compulsory minimum standards. They make sure children and young people in organisations including schools and early childhood settings feel safe and are safe.

Examples of other organisations which must comply with the Child Safe Standards include hospitals, local councils, youth services, and sport or recreation services for children. For a list of in scope organisations for Child Safe Standards, see: [Who do the Standards apply to?](#)

[Ministerial Order 1359 – Child Safe Standards – Implementing the Child Safe Standards – managing the risk of child abuse in schools and school boarding premises](#) provides the framework for child safety in schools.

To comply with Child Safe Standard 2 and Child Safe Standard 9, schools must develop and implement risk management actions to make sure children are safe from abuse in the physical and online school environment.

Child Safe Standard 2 requires the school governing authority to:

- develop, record, and implement risk management actions to make sure children are safe in the school environment
- monitor, annually review and evaluate child safety and wellbeing risks.

Registered schools are required to develop and implement risk management strategies prior to students undertaking workplace learning to ensure their safety will not be compromised and the school and workplace complies with the requirements of Ministerial Order 1359.

## Definitions

Definition of terms used in relation to Ministerial Order 1359 include:

- **child** – a person who is under the age of 18 years
- **student** – a person who is enrolled at or attends the school or a student at the school boarding premises
- **school environment** – includes workplace learning environments where students undertake work experience, structured workplace learning, school community work (volunteering) and School Based Apprenticeships and Traineeships (SBATs).

Refer to the [definitions resource on PROTECT](#) for definitions of terms used in the Child Safe Standards and Ministerial Order 1359.

## What can employers do to manage child safety risks in the workplace?

1. Nominate a supervisor (or supervisors) who will directly supervise the student throughout their placement.
2. Ensure that the student's supervisor/s and other employees in the workplace understand acceptable and unacceptable behaviours in dealing with students. (Refer to the school's Child Safety Code of Conduct and the table in this fact sheet for some examples of these behaviours.)
3. Schools must provide employers with the schools' Child Safety and Wellbeing Policy and the Child Safety Code of Conduct. If the employer is an in scope organisation for the Child Safe Standards, they are encouraged to provide to the school a copy of their Child Safety and Wellbeing policy and Child Safety Code of Conduct.
4. At the start of the work placement, explain to the student the workplace policies regarding bullying, harassment and discrimination, and any other behavioural standards or codes of conduct that apply.
5. Explain the workplace policy for dealing with concerns or complaints about behaviour at work. Encourage the student to report any concerns directly to their supervisor, and to the school principal or another staff member at their school.
6. Ensure the student can contact their school if required during the placement.
7. Ensure school staff can contact the student to check how their placement is progressing.
8. Liaise immediately with the school regarding any issues arising in the workplace.

## More information

- Department of Education [Child Safe Standards for schools](#)
- Commission for Children and Young People:
  - [A guide for creating a Child Safe Organisation](#)
  - [Who do the Standards apply to?](#)

## What are some examples of potential risks to students in workplace learning environments?

### Unintentional/accidental harm

Poor physical environment leading to injury

Poor supervision

High-risk activity

Lack of risk mitigation strategies in place

### Psychological or emotional abuse

Bullying by adults or other children

Threatening language

Intentional ignoring and isolating (either face-to-face, online or via other technology)

Shaming, hazing

### Neglect

Lack of supervision

Not meeting the specific physical or cognitive needs of children

### Physical abuse

Physical violence e.g. hitting, punching, kicking, pushing

### Cultural safety not upheld

Lack of cultural respect

Racial or cultural vilification or discrimination

An environment that does not support the child to express their cultural identity

Treating a student unfavourably because of their disability, age, gender, race, culture, vulnerability, sexuality or ethnicity

### Sexual abuse

Sexual abuse, assault and exploitation (face to face or online)

Grooming (face-to-face or online)

Inappropriate touching or overly familiar or inappropriate behaviour towards a student

Inappropriate conversations (either face-to-face, online or via other technology)

Crossing professional boundaries e.g. contact with any student outside of school hours

## Other potential risks

School staff and employers not aware of signs of abuse

Students not informed about how to raise concerns

Families not informed about child safety risks in workplace environments and how to raise concerns

Based on the [PROTECT guidance](#) to support schools to implement the Child Safe Standards

## What are some examples of behaviours which are acceptable and unacceptable in dealing with students in the workplace?

### Acceptable behaviours

Treating everyone in the workplace, including students with respect

Promoting the cultural safety, participation and empowerment of Aboriginal students, students with culturally and/or linguistically diverse backgrounds, students with a disability, international students, students who are unable to live at home and lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender and intersex (LGBTIQ+) students

Listening and responding to the views and concerns of students, particularly if they are telling you that they have been harmed or abused, or that they are worried about their safety

Reporting any allegations of child abuse or other child safety concerns to the school principal and, if needed, the police

### Unacceptable behaviours

Ignore or disregard any concerns, suspicions or disclosures of child abuse or harm

Display behaviours or engage with students in ways which may be construed as inappropriate or are not justified by the workplace learning context

Discuss intimate topics or use sexualised language with students

Use inappropriate language in the presence of students

Treat a student unfavourably because of their disability, age, gender, race, culture, vulnerability, sexuality or ethnicity

Turn a blind eye to behaviours by other adults towards students that appear to be overly familiar or inappropriate

Communicate directly with a student through personal or private contact channels (including by social media, email, instant messaging, texting etc.) except where that communication is reasonable and related to the student's work activities or where there is a safety concern or other urgent matter

Work with students whilst under the influence of alcohol or illegal drugs

Consume alcohol or drugs at the workplace in the presence of students

Adapted from: Department of Education's [Child Safety Code of Conduct template](#)