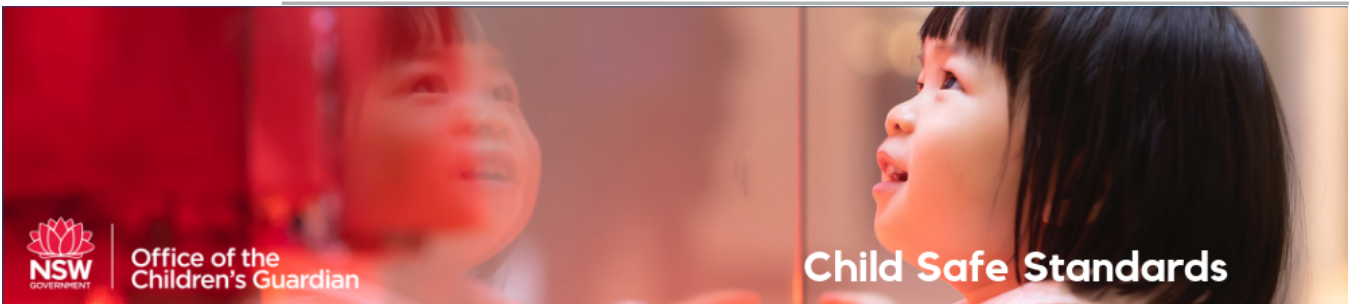




Office of the
Children's Guardian



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Child Safe Standards

The Royal Commission recommended 10 child safe standards, drawing on its findings and extensive research and consultation about what makes institutions child safe.

These standards come with core components to help your organisation implement each standard.

1. Child safety is embedded in institutional leadership, governance and culture

Core components when implementing this standard

- a. The institution publicly commits to child safety and leaders champion a child safe culture
- b. Child safety is a shared responsibility at all levels of the institution
- c. Risk management strategies focus on preventing, identifying and mitigating risks to children
- d. Staff and volunteers comply with a code of conduct that sets clear behavioural standards towards children
- e. Staff and volunteers understand their obligations on information sharing and record keeping

2. Children participate in decisions affecting them and are taken seriously

Core components when implementing this standard

- a. Children are able to express their views and are provided opportunities to participate in decisions that affect their lives
- b. The importance of friendships is recognised and support from peers is encouraged, helping children feel safe and be less isolated
- c. Children can access sexual abuse prevention programs and information
- d. Staff and volunteers are attuned to signs of harm and facilitate child-friendly ways for children to communicate and raise their concerns

3. Families and communities are informed and

involved

Core components when implementing this standard

- a. Families have the primary responsibility for the upbringing and development of their child and participate in decisions affecting their child
- b. The institution engages in open, two-way communication with families and communities about its child safety approach and relevant information is accessible
- c. Families and communities have a say in the institution's policies and practices
- d. Families and communities are informed about the institution's operations and governance

4. Equity is upheld, and diverse needs are taken in to account

Core components when implementing this standard

- a. The institution actively anticipates children's diverse circumstances and responds effectively to those with additional vulnerabilities
- b. All children have access to information, support and complaints processes
- c. The institution pays particular attention to the needs of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children, children with disability, and children from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds

5. People working with children are suitable and supported

Core components when implementing this standard

- a. Recruitment, including advertising and screening, emphasises child safety
- b. Relevant staff and volunteers have Working With Children Checks
- c. All staff and volunteers receive an appropriate induction and are aware of their child safety responsibilities, including reporting obligations
- d. Supervision and people management have a child safety focus

6. Processes to respond to complaints of child sexual abuse are child focused

Core components when implementing this standard

- a. The institution has a child-focused complaint-handling system that is understood by children, staff, volunteers and families
- b. The institution has an effective complaint-handling policy and procedure which clearly outline roles and responsibilities, approaches to dealing with different types of complaints and obligations to act and report
- c. Complaints are taken seriously, responded to promptly and thoroughly, and reporting, privacy and employment law obligations are met

7. Staff are equipped with the knowledge, skills

and awareness to keep children safe through continual education and training

Core components when implementing this standard

- a. Relevant staff and volunteers receive training on the nature and indicators of child maltreatment, particularly institutional child sexual abuse
- b. Staff and volunteers receive training on the institution's child safe practices and child protection
- c. Relevant staff and volunteers are supported to develop practical skills in protecting children and responding to disclosures

8. Physical and online environments minimise the opportunity for abuse to occur

Core components when implementing this standard

- a. Risks in the online and physical environments are identified and mitigated without compromising a child's right to privacy and healthy development
- b. The online environment is used in accordance with the institution's code of conduct and relevant policies

9. Implementation of the Child Safe Standards is continuously reviewed and improved

Core components when implementing this standard

- a. The institution regularly reviews and improves child safe practices
- b. The institution analyses complaints to identify causes and systemic failures to inform continuous improvement

10. Policies and procedures document how the institution is child safe

Core components when implementing this standard

- a. Policies and procedures address all Child Safe Standards
- b. Policies and procedures are accessible and easy to understand
- c. Best practice models and stakeholder consultation inform the development of policies and procedures
- d. Leaders champion and model compliance with policies and procedures
- e. Staff understand and implement the policies and procedures

A principle-based approach

Each standard is principle-based and focused on the outcome that the organisation is seeking to achieve by implementing child safe strategies. This focus on outcomes allows flexibility in how the standards are applied in different organisational contexts. The standards work together to emphasise the importance of adopting multiple strategies to address child safety and avoiding an over-reliance on any one strategy.

The child safe standards encompass existing child safety requirements for individuals and organisations such as the Working with Children

Check, the Reportable Conduct Scheme and requirements to report information to police and to the Department of Family and Community Services. Providing support for organisations to understand how any existing requirements work together to support child safety will be an important element of regulating the child safe standards.

The aim of the child safe standards is to achieve and maintain a genuine commitment to child safe culture and practice through incremental and continuous improvement over time.

The Royal Commission developed *core components* of each standard to help organisations understand what it means to meet the standard.

You can learn more about the Royal Commission's findings and recommendations for making organisations child safe in [Volume 6](#) of the [Final Report](#). Also see our [Resources page](#) for downloads.