



Ice Hockey Victoria Child Safety Standards

At Ice Hockey Victoria, we support the safety, participation, wellbeing and empowerment of children and young people.

BACKGROUND

On November 26, 2015 the Victorian Parliament passed the Child Wellbeing and Safety Amendment (Child Safety Standards) Bill to introduce child safe standards into law. The standards will commence for sporting organisations on January 1, 2017.

The child safe standards are a central feature of the Victorian Government's response to the Family and Community Development Committee of the Victorian Parliament's Betrayal of Trust Inquiry into the Handling of Child Abuse by Religious and other Non-Government Organisations. The Betrayal of Trust Report found that while the majority of children are safe in organisations and in the community, more work could be done to strengthen existing approaches to child safety.

The Child Safe Standards aim to drive cultural change in organisations that provide services for children so that protecting children from abuse is embedded in everyday thinking and practice of leaders, staff and volunteers. The standards are compulsory for all organisations providing services to children. This will assist organisations to:

- prevent child abuse
- encourage reporting of any abuse that does occur
- improve responses to any allegations of child abuse.

THE CHILD SAFETY STANDARDS

To create and maintain a child safe organisation, Ice Hockey Victoria must have:

Standard 1: Strategies to embed an organisation culture of child safety, including thorough effective leadership arrangements

Standard 2: A child safe policy or statement of commitment to child safety

Standard 3: A code of conduct that establishes clear expectations for appropriate behaviour with children

Standard 4: Screening, supervision, training and other human resources practices that reduce the risk of child abuse by new and existing personnel

Standard 5: Processes for responding to and reporting suspected child abuse

Standard 6: Strategies to identify and reduce or remove risks of child abuse

Standard 7: Strategies to promote the participation and empowerment of children

DEFINITIONS

A full list of definitions is available at www.vrqa.vic.gov.au/childsafef

Aboriginal child:

A person under the age of 18 who:

- is of Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander descent
- identifies as Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander and is accepted as an Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander by an Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander Community

Bullying: One person or a group of people trying to exert physical, emotional or psychological power over another. Bullies seek out targets such as younger or smaller athletes or someone who acts differently and look for signs and signals of potential weaknesses. This provides bullies with an opportunity to intimidate, discriminate or harass. Bullying will flourish in teams and communities which do not value safety, security and responsible behaviour.

Bullying behaviour can include:

Physical bullying: hitting, pushing, spitting, kicking etc.

Emotional bullying: name calling, teasing, threatening physical violence, creating fear or anxiety

Social bullying: social exclusion, starting and perpetuating rumours, putdowns, drawing attention to a physical difference or disability

Bullying can be done in a variety of ways, e.g. directly - person to person intimidation or indirectly through texting, the internet and social media.

***If you believe that a child is at immediate risk of abuse phone 000
V001***

Child abuse includes:

Any act committed against a child involving:

- A sexual offence or
- An offence under section (49B) of the Crimes act 1958 (grooming)

The infliction, on a child of:

- Physical violence or
- Serious emotional or psychological harm

Child Safe Organisation:

In the context of the child safe standards, a child safe organisation is one that meets the child safe standards by proactively taking measures to protect children from abuse.

Child Safety: encompasses matters related to protecting all children from child abuse, managing the risk of child abuse, providing support to a child at risk of child abuse and responding to incidents or allegations of child abuse

Children: under 18 years of age

Children with a Disability

A disability can be any physical, sensory, neurological disability, acquired brain injury or intellectual disability or developmental delay that affects a child's ability to undertake everyday activities. A disability can occur at any time in life. Children can be born with a disability or acquire a disability suddenly through an injury or illness. Some disabilities may be obvious while others are hidden.

Cultural Abuse

Actions and attitudes that deliberately ignore, denigrate or attack the culture of a person or community.

Cultural Competency

A set of congruent behaviours, attitudes and policies that come together in a system, agency or among professionals that enable them to work effectively in cross-cultural situations.

Culturally and/or linguistically diverse children:

A child or young person who identifies as having particular cultural or linguistic affiliations by virtue of their place of birth, ancestry or ethnic origin, religion, preferred language or language spoken at home or because of their parents' identification on a similar basis.

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V001

Cultural Safety for Aboriginal Children

To uphold the rights of Aboriginal children so they can:

- identify as Aboriginal without fear of retribution or questioning
- have an education that strengthens their culture and identity
- maintain connections to their land and country
- maintain their strong kinship ties and social obligations
- be taught their cultural heritage by their Elders
- receive information in a culturally sensitive, relevant and accessible manner
- be involved in services that are culturally respectful

Emotional (and Psychological) Abuse: Engaging in inappropriate behaviours such as rejecting, ignoring, humiliating, isolating, threatening or verbally abusing a child or allowing others to do so. This kind of abuse does not leave physical injuries so it is often hidden and underestimated.

Neglect: Failing to meet a child's basic needs such as providing adequate food, drink, shelter, clothing, supervision, hygiene and medical attention.

Physical Abuse: Intentionally causing or threatening to cause physical injury to a child or inadvertently causing injury as a consequence of physical punishment or physically aggressive treatment of a child. The injury may take the form of bruises, cuts, burns or fractures.

Racial, Cultural and Religious Abuse: Demonstrated contempt, ridicule, hatred or negativity towards a child because of their race, culture or religion. It may be overt, such as direct racial vilification or discrimination or covert, such as demonstrating a lack of cultural respect (attitude and values) and awareness (knowledge and understanding) or failing to provide positive images about another culture.

Sexual Abuse: A child is sexually abused when any person uses their authority over the child to involve the child in sexual activity. Child sexual abuse involves a wide range of sexual activity.

Sexual Exploitation: A specific form of sexual abuse because children, by virtue of their age and development, are unable to give informed consent. Sexual exploitation of children takes different forms. In all cases, those exploiting the children have power over them by the virtue of their age, gender, physical strength, economic or other resources such as access to drugs or gifts.

LEGISLATION

FAILURE TO DISCLOSE

Any adult who forms a reasonable believe that a sexual offence has been committed by an adult against a child under 16 years of age, has an obligation to report that information to police, unless they have a reasonable excuse for not disclosing or exemptions apply. **Failure to disclose the information to police is a criminal offence. Failure to disclose obligations apply to all adults in Victoria.**

FAILURE TO PROTECT

The failure to protect offence commenced on July 1, 2015 and applies to people within organisations who knew of a risk of child sexual abuse by someone in the organisation and had the authority over children to reduce or remove the risk but did not act to protect the child. **Failure to protect obligations apply to people in authority within a relevant organisation.**

GROOMING FOR SEXUAL CONDUCT WITH A CHILD UNDER THE AGE OF 16 YEARS OF AGE

This applies where a person over 18 years of age communicates by words or conduct, online or face to face with a child under 16 years of age or with a person who has care, supervision or authority for a child, with the intention of later sexual activity with a child. **This is a criminal offence.**

MANDATORY REPORTING

There are certain classes of professionals, who are classified as “mandatory reporters”. Mandatory reporters include all:

- Victorian Institute of Teaching (VIT) registered teachers (including Principals)
- staff who have been granted permission to teach by the VIT
- registered doctors and nurses.



Ice Hockey Victoria

Our commitment to child safety

If you believe that a child is at immediate risk of abuse, phone 000

COMMITMENT TO CHILD SAFETY ORGANISATION

All children who participate in Ice Hockey Victoria's sanctioned games and events have the right to feel and be safe.

- Ice Hockey Victoria will ensure they provide an inclusive, safe and welcoming environment for children.
- Ice Hockey Victoria will ensure that players feel accepted and respected, irrespective of their age, disability, gender, gender identity, sexuality, Indigenous background or diverse cultural or linguistic backgrounds.
- Ice Hockey Victoria is committed to the safety, participation and empowerment of all children.
- Ice Hockey Victoria has a zero tolerance of child abuse, and all allegations and safety concerns will be treated very seriously and consistently. A key part of achieving this is through the coach. The coach is responsible for the safety and welfare of the players in their care. Club and community members look to the coach to set the standard for others, particularly young people.
- All persons involved in situations where harm is suspected or disclosed, must be treated with sensitivity, dignity and respect.
- Ice Hockey Victoria is committed to preventing child abuse and identifying risks early, and removing and reducing these risks.
- Ice Hockey Victoria will maintain appropriate confidentiality, with information being provided to those who have a right or need to be informed.
- Ice Hockey Victoria supports and respects our staff and volunteers.
- Ice Hockey Victoria is committed to train and educate staff and volunteers on child abuse risks.

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CHILDREN'S RIGHTS TO SAFETY AND PARTICIPATION

- Ice Hockey Victoria's staff and volunteers encourage children to express their views and will listen to their suggestions, especially on matters that directly affect or are important to them.
- Ice Hockey Victoria will teach children about what they can do if they feel unsafe and will listen and act on any concerns children or their parents raise with us.
- It is everyone's responsibility to report behaviour that contravenes the codes of behaviour. Minor issues can be reported to the manager and major issues to the Ambassadors.

VALUING DIVERSITY

Ice Hockey Victoria values diversity and does not tolerate any discriminatory practices. To achieve this:

- We will promote the cultural safety, participation and empowerment of Aboriginal children and their families.
- We will promote the cultural safety, participation and empowerment of children from culturally diverse and/or linguistically diverse backgrounds and their families.
- We will welcome children with a disability and their families and act to promote their participation.
- We will continue to seek appropriately qualified staff from diverse cultural backgrounds.

RECRUITING STAFF AND VOLUNTEERS

- Ice Hockey Victoria will apply the best practice standards in the recruitment of staff and volunteers.
- We will interview and conduct reference checks on all staff and volunteers and require police checks and Working with Children Checks for relevant positions. Our commitment to Child Safety and our screening requirements will be included in all advertisements.

SUPPORTING STAFF AND VOLUNTEERS

- Ice Hockey Victoria seeks to attract and retain the best staff and volunteers.
- We will provide support and supervision so people feel valued, respected and fairly treated.
- Ice Hockey Victoria will have a new Code of Behaviour to provide guidance to our staff and volunteers, all of whom will receive training on the requirements of the Code.

REPORTING A CHILD SAFETY CONCERN OR COMPLAINT

- A Child Safety Person will be appointed in 2017 with the specific responsibility for responding to any complaints made by staff, volunteers, parents or children.
- A new complaint process will be published.
- We all have a responsibility to report an allegation of abuse if we have a reasonable belief that an incident took place (see information about failure to disclose above).
- If an adult has a **reasonable belief** that an incident has occurred, then they must report the incident.

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Factors contributing to reasonable belief may be:

- A child states they or someone they know has been abused (noting that sometimes the child may in fact be referring to themselves)
- Behaviour consistent with that of an abuse victim is observed
- Someone else has raised a suspicion of abuse but is unwilling to report it
- Observing suspicious behaviour

RISK MANAGEMENT

Ice Hockey Victoria recognises the importance of a risk management approach to minimising the potential for child abuse or harm to occur and uses this to inform our policy, procedures and activity planning.

- In addition to general occupational health and safety risk, Ice Hockey Victoria will proactively manage risk of abuse to our children.

REVIEWING THIS POLICY

- This policy will be reviewed at the end of 2017 and then every two years. We undertake to seek views, comments and suggestions from children, parents, carers and staff.