

# Whitehorse Child Safety & Wellbeing Action Plan 2022-2025



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## Introduction

The Child Safe Standards commenced in Victoria in January 2016. Following a review, organisations covered by the Standards will need to comply with new Standards by **1 July 2022**. There are eleven new Child Safe Standards. The new Standards set out minimum requirements and outline the actions organisations must take to keep children and young people safe. They provide more clarity for organisations and are more consistent with the Standards in the rest of Australia.

This Action Plan will build on what the organisation already does to keep children and young people safe and will assist Council to be compliant with the new Standards. Child Safety is a responsibility of the whole organisation and as such some areas of Council will need to adjust how they work in order to meet the new standards.

## Child Safe Standards


<b>1</b>	<b>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</b>
<b>2</b>	<b>Child safety and wellbeing is embedded in organisational leadership, governance and culture</b>
<b>3</b>	<b>Children and young people are empowered about their rights, participate in decisions affecting them and are taken seriously</b>
<b>4</b>	<b>Families and communities are informed, and involved in promoting child safety and wellbeing</b>
<b>5</b>	<b>Equity is upheld and diverse needs respected in policy and practice</b>
<b>6</b>	<b>People working with children and young people are suitable and supported to reflect child safety and wellbeing values in practice</b>
<b>7</b>	<b>Processes for complaints and concerns are child focused</b>
<b>8</b>	<b>Staff and volunteers are equipped with the knowledge, skills and awareness to keep children and young people safe through ongoing education and training</b>
<b>9</b>	<b>Physical and online environments promote safety and wellbeing while minimising the opportunity for children and young people to be harmed</b>

10	Implementation of the Child Safe Standards is regularly reviewed and improved
11	Policies and procedures document how the organisation is safe for children and young people

### Review

This action plan is a 'living' document and will be reviewed annually and updated with any changes to the legislation.

### Action Priority Code

	Immediate priority
	3 months
	3mths – 12mths
	Ongoing/Annual

## Action Plan

In complying with Child Safe Standards an organisation must, at a minimum, ensure the following:

### 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

Objectives		Action	Who	Date Due
1.1	A child's ability to express their culture and enjoy their cultural rights is encouraged and actively supported.	Copies of meeting agendas and minutes showing that child safety is a standing agenda item and that children and young people are considered in decision making.	Everyone	Ongoing
1.2	Strategies are embedded within the organisation which equip all members to acknowledge and appreciate the strengths of Aboriginal culture and understand its importance to the wellbeing and safety of Aboriginal children and young people	Strengthen community engagement between children/young people and Council's Reconciliation in Whitehorse Action Plan. Work with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people, including identified organisations, Elders, community leaders and families on relevant initiatives.	Community Engagement & Development (CEAD)	Ongoing
1.3	Measures are adopted by the organisation to ensure racism within the organisation is identified, confronted and not tolerated. Any instances of racism are addressed with appropriate consequences	Code of conduct is updated and Council's expectations on staff and community behaviour are widely publicised i.e.: zero tolerance to racism etc. Consider cultural safety as part of Council's child safety and wellbeing approach. Set clear expectations of culturally competent behaviour from staff and volunteers.	People & Culture	Complete
1.4	The organisation actively supports and facilitates participation and inclusion within it by Aboriginal children, young people and their families	Connect with the local Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander community and incorporate knowledge from Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander families and communities	Community Engagement & Development (CEAD)	Ongoing
1.5	All of the organisation's policies, procedures, systems and processes together create a culturally safe and inclusive environment and meet the needs of Aboriginal children, young people and their families	Aboriginal children, young people and their families are encouraged to participate in the review of the Child Safe Policy.	CEAD	June 2023

**Child Safe Standard 2: Child safety and wellbeing is embedded in organisational leadership, governance and culture**

Objectives		Action	Who	Date Due
2.1	The organisation makes a public commitment to child safety.	Posters of Council's Commitment to Child Safety will be displayed on noticeboards in public buildings. Council's Child Safety Policy is available to people accessing Council services.	Strategic Comms & Customer Service	December 2022
2.2	A child safe culture is championed and modelled at all levels of the organisation from the top down and bottom up.	A Public Statement of Council's Commitment to Child Safety is included in all job advertisements.	People & Culture	Ongoing
2.3	Governance arrangements facilitate implementation of the child safety and wellbeing policy at all levels.	Establishment of an internal Child Safe Standards group, with relevant identified key stakeholders across Council. As part of this, the role and responsibilities of the CEO, ELT, the Corporate and Community Services directorates will be fully explored and documented. Matters for consideration and subsequent work include: documented processes for matters such reportable conduct incidents, overseeing internal investigations, supporting responses to incidents and managing and collecting information on incidents etc.	Community Development Officer- gender equality and child safety (in collaboration with relevant departments) in collaboration with People & Culture	Sep 2022
2.4	A Code of Conduct provides guidelines for staff and volunteers on expected behavioural standards and responsibilities.	Update the code of conduct to ensure the behavioural expectations relating to children have been captured. The Code of Conduct is required to describe appropriate and inappropriate behaviour. The disciplinary policy, outlines how breaches to Code of Conduct or allegations will be responded to As well as containing a record of complaints, concerns raised and disclosures made to our organisation, including how these were responded to and external reports that were made.	People & Culture	Complete

2.5	Risk management strategies focus on preventing, identifying and mitigating risks to children and young people.	<p>A review is undertaken with regard to the safety of children and young people in the use of BMX Jumping Tracks and Skate Board Facilities</p> <p>Document a process regarding animals and domestic violence situations where children are involved.</p>	<p>Community Safety</p> <p>Community Safety</p>	December 2022
2.6	Staff and volunteers understand their obligations about information sharing and recordkeeping.	New employees and volunteers are made aware of Council's Child Safety Policy on the commencement of their employment.	People & Culture	Ongoing

**Child Safe Standard 3: Children and young people are empowered about their rights, participate in decisions affecting them and are taken seriously**

Objectives		Action	Who	Date Due
3.1	Children and young people are informed about their rights, including to safety, information and participation.	Develop a simple and accessible processes that departments can use to assist children to understand what to do if they want to report abuse, inappropriate behaviour or concerns about their safety.	Community Development Officer-gender equality and child safety (in collaboration with relevant departments)	February 2023
3.2	The importance of friendships are recognised and support from peers is encouraged, to assist children and young people feel safe and be less isolated	Undertake training and capacity building across Council to ensure staff understand what safety means to children	Community Development Officer-gender equality and child safety and P&C	Ongoing
3.3	Where relevant to the setting or context, children and young people are offered access to sexual abuse prevention programs and to relevant related information in an age appropriate way.	Program information is sourced or developed and is available when required. This information is available in simplified versions to ensure accessibility.	Community Development Officer-gender equality and child safety (in collaboration with relevant departments such as Youth Services, WELS and others where children have an involvement)	Ongoing
3.4	Staff and volunteers are able to identify signs of harm and facilitate child-friendly processes for children and young people to express their views, participate in decision-making and raise their concerns	Build the capacity of staff (and where relevant volunteers) to support children's participation/engagement and develop peer support programs for children.. Create opportunities for children to be included in decision-making which will be outlined in Council's Community Engagement handbook.	WELS	Ongoing
3.5	Organisations have strategies in place to develop a culture that facilitates participation and is responsive to the input of children and young people.	Develop a child safety checklist to make it easy for all council staff to incorporate child safe standards into their work with the community. Engaging with children is a consideration in	Community Development Officer-gender equality and child safety (in collaboration with relevant departments)	March 2023 And ongoing



		the Community Engagement handbook and is required to be incorporated into project engagement plans.		
<b>3.6</b>	Organisations provide opportunities for children and young people to participate and are responsive to their contributions, thereby strengthening confidence and their engagement with Council	Create opportunities for children to be included in community engagement activity and decision-making to ensure children's participation. practice	CEAD in collaboration with cross-Council Council departments	Ongoing

**Child Safe Standard 4: Families and communities are informed, and involved in promoting child safety and wellbeing**

Objectives		Action	Who	Date Due
4.1	Families participate in decisions affecting their child.	<p>Explore relevant opportunities for Council to undertake further work in regard to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Child Friendly Cities</li> <li>• Working with local kindergartens and schools</li> <li>• Intergenerational Project</li> <li>• MCH</li> </ul>	<p>Community Engagement &amp; Development Family &amp; Children’s Services Youth Services M&amp;CH Other identified departments</p>	Ongoing
4.2	The organisation engages and openly communicates with families and the community about its child safe approach and relevant information is accessible.	<p>The Whitehorse Child Safe Policy is made available to the community through various Council networks, promotional activity etc.</p> <p>Over the next 12 months feedback and comments actively sought from children and their families about Council’s Child Safe Policy and is incorporated (where appropriate) into the policy review process.</p>	<p>Community Engagement &amp; Development</p> <p>Family &amp; Children’s Services</p>	Immediate
4.3	Families and communities have a say in the development and review of the organisation’s policies and practices.	<p>Include the relevant elements of child safety standards in various Council social plans including: disability, diversity, reconciliation, volunteers etc. Utilise “Your Say Whitehorse” as a mechanism to provide child friendly information as well as being a channel for input/feedback and discussion</p>	<p>Community Engagement &amp; Development</p> <p>Family &amp; Children’s Services and other departments</p>	<p>October 2022</p> <p>Ongoing</p>
4.4	Families, carers and the community are informed about the organisation’s operations and governance.	<p>Relevant information to be shared with the community, which is also made available in child friendly formats</p> <p>Include reference to child safety in Councils Community Grants Program</p>	<p>Strategic Comms &amp; Customer Service</p>	Ongoing

**Child Safe Standard 5: Equity is upheld and diverse needs respected in policy and practice**

Objectives		Action	Who	Date Due
5.1	The organisation, including staff and volunteers, understands children and young people's diverse circumstances, and provides support to and responds to those who are vulnerable.	Develop a "Child Safe Standards Summary Sheet" to include key elements outlined in the State (CCYP) guidelines and distribute to all staff, contractors and volunteers	Community Development Officer-gender equality and child safety (in collaboration with relevant departments)	Complete
5.2	Children and young people have access to information, support and complaints processes, in ways that are culturally safe, accessible and easy to understand.	Develop a "Child Safe Standards Summary Sheet" (described in 5.1) in the predominant spoken languages in the community and also develop a child friendly version for distribution. Council's policy also should be made available in community languages, including the Wurundjeri language	Community Development Officer-gender equality and child safety	June 2023
5.3	The organisation pays particular attention to the needs of children and young people with disability, children and young people from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds, those who are unable to live at home, and lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender and intersex children and young people.	Implementation of the Health and Wellbeing Plan / Prevention of Family Violence 4yr Action Plan and other relevant social plans  Explore and implement opportunities for children and young people to be engaged in regard to major initiatives and capital projects	Community Engagement & Development  Major Projects / Project Delivery & Assets	Ongoing
5.4	The organisation pays particular attention to the needs of Aboriginal children and young people and provides/promotes a culturally safe environment.	Implementation of the Health and Wellbeing Plan / Prevention of Family Violence 4yr Action Plan and other relevant social plans	Community Engagement & Development	Ongoing

**Child Safe Standard 6: People working with children and young people are suitable and supported to reflect child safety and wellbeing values in practice**

Objectives		Action	Who	Date Due
6.1	Recruitment, including advertising, referee checks and staff and volunteer pre-employment screening, emphasise child safety and wellbeing.	Recruitment process updated to include child safety relevant questions in the interview process and to form a component of the referee check process  Council's position description template to be updated to include Council's commitment to child safety and our duty of care requirement.	People & Culture	Complete
6.2	Relevant staff and volunteers have current working with children checks or equivalent Background checks.	Undertake a review of roles across the organisation that require a WWCC. This is to be included within Council's recruitment policy and procedure.  Seek clarification on the status of the requirement for staff WWCC at Emergency Relief Centres  Implement a procedure to capture the WWCC in a single system with expiry dates etc. Currently held in Develop Me and will move to ERP once implemented	People & Culture  MERO  Pay Roll	Complete  Dec 2022  30 June 2023
6.3	All staff and volunteers receive an induction and are aware of their responsibilities to children and young people, including record keeping, information sharing and reporting obligations	New employees and volunteers are made aware of Council's Child Safety Policy and Reporting Processes before they commence employment.	All Mgrs / Coords Supported by Community Development Officer-gender equality and child safety	Ongoing
6.4	Ongoing supervision of staff includes a focus on child safety and wellbeing.	Ensure regular information is provided to staff and child safety is a topic included on departmental meeting agendas. Where possible, ensure that staff do not work alone with children or young people	All Managers / Coordinators	Ongoing

**Child Safe Standard 7: Processes for complaints and concerns are child focused**

Objectives		Action	Who	Date Due
7.1	The organisation has an accessible, child focused complaint handling policy which clearly outlines the roles and responsibilities of leadership, staff and volunteers, as well as approaches to dealing with different types of complaints, breaches of relevant policies and/or the Code of Conduct including obligations to act and report	Develop an organisation wide reportable conduct scheme. Ensuring that the organisation wide Reportable Conduct Scheme is made accessible to volunteers and stakeholders. Review the CCYP guidelines to ensure their approach for involving children in investigations is consistent with the guide.	Community Development Officer-gender equality and child safety (in collaboration with relevant departments)	March 2023
7.2	Effective complaint handling processes are understood by children and young people, families, staff and volunteers, and are culturally safe	Ensure the Mandatory Reporting Process is provided in the main languages of the community and also develop a child friendly/simplified version for distribution The policy will be made available in community languages, including the Wurundjeri language where appropriate	Community Development Officer-gender equality and child safety	Dec 2022
7.3	Complaints are taken seriously, and responded to promptly and thoroughly	Ensure staff understand the critical nature of reporting. This information was provided as part of the overview regarding the new child safety standards (as a component of the workshops)	Community Development Officer-gender equality and child safety (	Complete
7.4	The organisation has policies and procedures in place that address the reporting of complaints And concerns to relevant the authorities, whether or not the law requires reporting. This includes co-operating with law enforcement	Develop a clear flow chart for reporting and quick guide to assist staff with reporting requirements Develop a child focused complaint handling policy/ procedures that describe: likely time frames, review processes and the outcome process of complaints. Accessible complaint handling information is available online and in print. E.g. website, social media, brochures, posters, fact sheets. Records of training for staff and volunteers in complaint handling, how to respond to a disclosure, and Code of Conduct etc. are kept.	Community Development Officer-gender equality and child safety (in collaboration with relevant departments)  P&C	Dec 2022

7.5	Reporting, privacy and employment law obligations are met.	Ensure Staff and Volunteers are trained in these requirements once the RCS process is complete	Community Development Officer- gender equality and child safety (in collaboration with relevant departments)	Ongoing
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**Child Safe Standard 8: Staff and volunteers are equipped with the knowledge, skills and awareness to keep children and young people safe through ongoing education and training**

Objectives		Action	Who	Date Due
8.1	Staff and volunteers are trained and supported to effectively Councils child safety and wellbeing policy	Update the Employee Compliance Training Policy to include Child Safe Standards Training. Develop a training plan that sets out a schedule for training, what will be delivered when, to whom and how. In the plan, state when different types of training should be renewed or staff and volunteers should complete 'refresher' training. Maintain a record of training, when it was delivered and who participated. Supply copies of training and educational materials that show the content of the training undertaken. Maintain evidence of reviews and information provided to staff and volunteers in response to current or emerging issues.	People & Culture	December 2022 and ongoing
8.2	Councillors, staff and volunteers receive training and information so as to recognise indicators of child harm including harm caused by other children and young people.	Training programs to be developed with regard to child safety including the new standards, mandatory reporting and indicators of abuse.	People & Culture / Governance	December 2022
8.3	Staff and volunteers receive training and information to respond effectively to issues of child safety and wellbeing and are able to support colleagues who disclose harm.	Training programs to be developed with regard to child safety, including the new standards, mandatory reporting and indicators of abuse.	People & Culture	December 2022
8.4	Staff and volunteers receive training and information about how to build culturally safe environments for children and young people	Training programs to be developed with regard to child safety including the new standards, mandatory reporting and indicators of abuse. Tailored training in community engagement with children and young people	People & Culture  P&C in collaboration with CEAD	June 2023

**Child Safe Standard 9: Physical and online environments promote safety and wellbeing while minimising the opportunity for children and young people to be harmed**

Objectives		Action	Who	Date Due
9.1	Staff and volunteers identify and mitigate risks in online and physical environments without compromising a child's right to privacy, access to information, social connections and learning opportunities.	Investigate opportunities for Web Filtering Software – ensuring controls are in place when children and young people have access to Councils IT infrastructure	Information Technology	Ongoing
9.2	The online environment is used in accordance with the organisation's Code of Conduct and child safety and wellbeing policy and practices.	<p>Inductions held for members of the Youth Advisory Committee and anyone on work experience should include information about expectations and safety</p> <p>Included in the Code of Conduct documents are the expectations and boundaries for staff and volunteers.</p> <p>Build the capacity of children and young people to both identify and speak up about negative experiences online.</p> <p>Develop procedures to support responding to online concerns.</p> <p>Be aware of increased physical and online risks for children and young people with increased vulnerability.</p>	Youth Services All relevant Managers / Coordinators	Ongoing
9.3	Risk management plans to consider risks posed by organisational settings, activities, and the physical environment.	<p>All risk management plans for capital and major projects to include a section on child safety from and end product perspective, as well as a construction perspective (including contractors on site). This includes strategies for not having anyone work in isolation / on their own, near or where children may be present.</p> <p>Support departments to consider the risks in regard to child safety and the associated mitigations.</p> <p>Paying attention to higher-risk settings like online environments, change rooms, cars, offsite activities, transport arrangements.</p>	<p>Major Projects and Capital Works</p> <p>OH&amp;S in collaboration with Managers</p>	Ongoing



		<p>Provide information to children, young people, parents, staff and volunteers about online safety. Talk with and listen to children and young people about what makes them feel safe or unsafe in physical environments. Take action in regard to their feedback.</p>		
9.4	<p>Organisations that contract Council facilities and services from third parties have procurement policies that ensure the safety of children and young people.</p>	<p>All contract arrangement to include child safety provisions and requirements for contractors to have Child Safe arrangements in place</p>	<p>Procurement / Property / Contract Managers</p>	<p>Ongoing</p>

**Child Safe Standard 10: Implementation of the Child Safe Standards is regularly reviewed and improved**

Objectives		Action	Who	Date Due
<b>10.1</b>	The organisation regularly reviews, evaluates and improves child safe practices	<p>Annual Review and reporting undertaken of Action Plan outcomes, full review of policy every 3 years (or earlier if there is a legislative change). Ensure that the review:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• refers to the Standards</li> <li>• encourages a culture of continuous improvement</li> <li>• engages with staff, volunteers, children, young people and their families</li> <li>• Identifies any systemic issues in response to incidents. How are we applying the Standard?</li> <li>• analyses complaints and incidents to , trends that highlight areas that need to be addressed, or can be strengthened and areas that need to be addressed</li> <li>• Evolves our child safe practices, recognising that it's a dynamic environment where we are and responding to new issues.</li> </ul>	Community Development Officer-gender equality and child safety (in collaboration with relevant departments)	July 2023 and Ongoing
<b>10.2</b>	Complaints, concerns and safety incidents are analysed to identify causes and systemic failures to inform continuous improvement	<p>Reporting processes with respect to Child Safety are developed.</p> <p>These reports may include (but are not be limited to):</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• potential breaches</li> <li>• number and nature of complaints</li> <li>• number of issues reported to the regulator</li> <li>• average time taken to respond to a child safety complaint/allegation</li> <li>• child safety training completion rates etc.</li> </ul>	Community Development Officer-gender equality and child safety (in collaboration with relevant departments)	Dec 2023
<b>10.3</b>	The organisation reports the findings of relevant evaluations/reviews to staff and volunteers, community and families and children and young people	Identify what reviews need to take place, how often and the audience of these. Develop a mechanism to report outcomes.	Community Development Officer-gender equality and child safety	Ongoing

**Child Safe Standard 11: Policies and procedures document how the organisation is safe for children and young people**

Objectives		Action	Who	Date Due
<b>11.1</b>	Policies and procedures address all Child Safe Standards.	Update all processes and policies to include alignment with new child Safe Standards	WELS	Dec 2022
<b>11.2</b>	Policies and procedures are documented and easy to understand	Child friendly and Culturally safe versions of all documents developed	Child Safety Advisor	June 2023
<b>11.3</b>	Best practice models and stakeholder consultation informs the development of policies and procedures.	Workshops and targeted consultation to be undertaken when reviewing or re-developing the child safe policy	Child Safety Advisor	Ongoing
<b>11.4</b>	Leaders both champion and model in practice compliance with policies and procedures.	Commitment to policy and action plan and formal sign off. ELT champion change and integration of policy into their work areas including but not limited to the Action Plan deliverables	ELT	30 June 2022
<b>11.5</b>	Staff and volunteers understand and implement policies and procedures.	Relevant training and user friendly information and flow charts made available to all staff and volunteers	Community Development Officer- gender equality and child safety	Ongoing

