

CHILD SAFE SPORT

Cardinia Shire Council

Cardinia

3rd June 2025

Acknowledgement of Country

Vicsport acknowledge the Traditional Custodians of the lands on which we are gathering today, the Bunurong People of the Kulin Nation and pay our respects to Elders past and present.

We acknowledge the important contribution that Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Peoples make in creating a strong and vibrant Australian society. We would also like to extend our respect to any First Nations Peoples joining us today.

WHO IS VICSPORT

VICSPORT

Peak body for sport and active recreation in Victoria.

Independent member-based organisation.

We aim to encourage and assist more Victorians and Victorian communities to enjoy the enormous benefits that sport and active recreation can provide.

Vicsport is committed to helping create safe, supportive, and protective sporting environments for children and young people across Victoria.

Michaela Cook (She/Her) Participation and Inclusion Manager
- Child Safeguarding
- Diversity & Inclusion
- Recruitment & Retention

OUR ROLE

VICSPORT

SUPPORTING CHILD SAFEGUARDING IN COMMUNITY SPORT

Since 2017, Vicsport has provided State Sporting Associations and other sport and active recreation organisations with sport specific guidance on the Victorian Child Safe Standards.

Vicsport Help Desk
- Phone and email support and guidance

Child Safe Sport Webinars
- Overview of the new Standards, Cultural Safety, and Engaging children, youth, families & communities

Child Safe Online Education Program
- Designed to support Victorian base clubs implement the 11 Victorian Child Safe Standards.

Child Safe Sport Resources
- Sportified resources and templates. Ie Child Safety and Wellbeing Policy template and guide.

CONTENT WARNING

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We aim to create a safe space for everyone. We acknowledge that discussing child safety can be challenging and there may be survivors of childhood abuse in the room.

IF ANYTHING DISCUSSED TODAY RAISES ISSUES FOR YOU, CONTACT:

Beyond Blue
1300 22 4636 or
www.beyondblue.org.au

1800RESPECT
NATIONAL DOMESTIC FAMILY AND SEXUAL VIOLENCE COUNSELLING SERVICE

Lifeline
Saving Lives
Crisis Support. Suicide Prevention.
13 11 14 or
www.lifeline.org.au

blueknot
empowering recovery from complex trauma
1300 657 380
for survivors of childhood trauma

SEXUAL ASSAULT CRISIS LINE
1800 806 292

Bravehearts
EDUCATE + EMPOWER + PROTECT
www.bravehearts.org.au/

OVERVIEW

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1. **Why** Child Safe Sport?
2. **What** do we need to know?
   a) Victorian Child Safe Standards
   b) Your Roles
   c) Legal Requirements
3. **How –** Support to create a Child Safe Culture in your club

REFLECTIONS



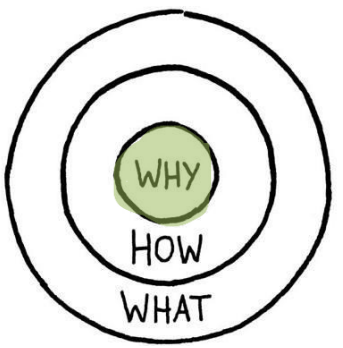
REASONS WHY WE SAFEGUARD CHILDREN IN SPORT

- We love our sport. We want others to love it
- Children – and adults - will keep playing if they feel safe, welcome and included
- Parents will support your clubs and sport if they trust that their children are safe – safeguarding children is a drawcard
- People understand more these days as to what behaviour is acceptable or not acceptable – knowing that protects all of us too
- We have to comply with Vic Standards – government audits are occurring in sports
- AND… we DO have concerning behaviour and conduct to address

SO… SAFE & INCLUSIVE CULTURES & SAFEGUARDING CHILDREN IS CRITICAL

START WITH WHY

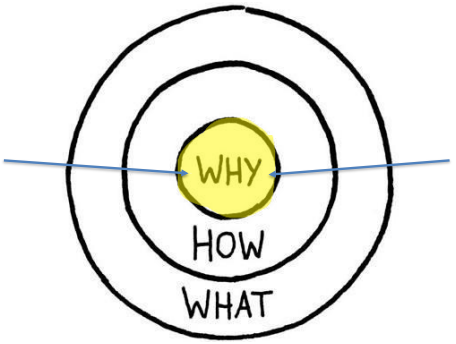
VICSPORT



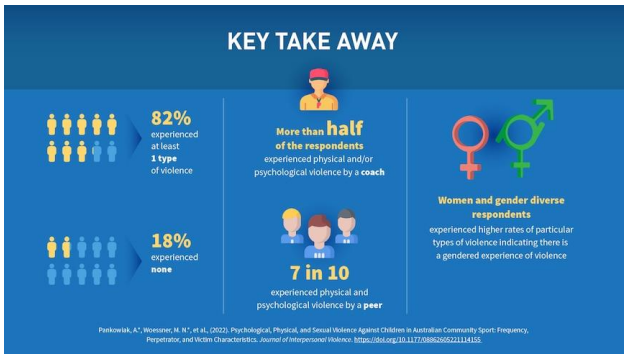
CHILD SAFE SPORT

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1. More than half of all participants in organised sport are children (under 18 years old)
2. Child abuse is still happening
3. Organisations have failed to protect and empower children, leading to legislated standards

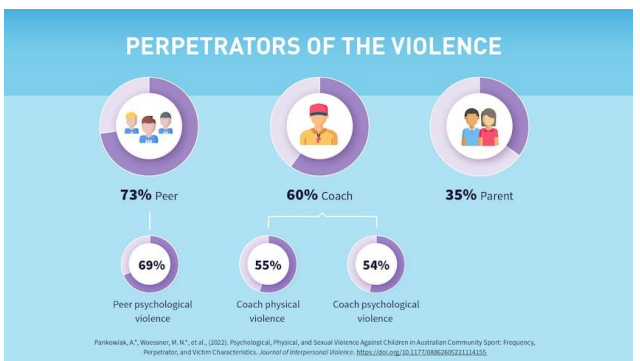


Sport should be safe, fun, welcoming & inclusive for everyone



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VU Study 2022



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VU Study 2022

CHILD SAFE STANDARDS

BACKGROUND

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- The **Betrayal of Trust** Inquiry (2012-14)
- Compulsory **Child Safe Standards (2016)**
- The **Royal Commission** into Institutional Responses to Child Sexual Abuse (2013 – 2017)
- **National Principles** for Child Safe Organisations (2019)
- **New Victorian Child Safe Standards** (1 July 2022)

WHO DO THEY APPLY TO?

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PERSONNEL

The Standards apply to the **organisation as a whole**, not only the areas that work with children

The Standards apply to **all personnel** in your organisation

This includes:

- Board of Management / Committee Members
- All paid staff (administrators, coaches and official, contracted players etc)
- All Volunteers (Coaches, officials, administrators, scorers etc)
- Any contractors and third-party suppliers you engage

WHAT IS CHILD ABUSE?

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Child - defined as a person **under the age of 18 years**.

Child Abuse *is the mistreatment of a Child or Young Person that has harmed, is harming or is likely to harm or endanger the Child or Young Person's physical or emotional health, safety, development or wellbeing….*

Types of Child Abuse?

- Physical
- Sexual
- Emotional/psychological eg. bullying
- Neglect
- Family violence
- Grooming
- Sexual exploitation
- Cyber bullying (online)

WHAT ARE THE STANDARDS?

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1. A **culturally safe** environment for Aboriginal children and young people

2. Child safety and wellbeing is **embedded in organisational** leadership, governance and culture

3. Children are empowered about their rights, **participate** in decisions affecting them and are **taken seriously**

4. Families and communities are informed and involved in decisions affecting them and their children

5. Equity is upheld and diverse needs are respected in policy and practice

6. People working with children and young people are **suitable and supported**

WHAT ARE THE STANDARDS?

VICSPORT

7. Processes for complaints and concerns are child focused

8. Staff and volunteers are equipped with the knowledge, skills and awareness through **education and training**

9. Physical and online environments promote safety and wellbeing, while minimising the risk of harm

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.

CHILD SAFE SPORT

REFLECTIONS

How might you respond if you are asked…

"What are you doing to ensure the safety of children in your sport?

CHILD SAFE SPORT

PROTECTION



EMPOWERMENT

- Commitment, promotion and role modelling
- Policies, regulations, processes and procedures
- Compliance– facilities, recruitment, screening and onboarding
- On-going education and regular discussions
- Respecting and celebrating First Nations People, diverse cultures and abilities
- Empowering and engaging children, young people, parents & communities
- Develop behaviours that build trust
- Empower adults to behave appropriately around children
- A safe, welcoming experience for everyone

YOUR ROLE

1. Model appropriate behavior
2. Understand your role in the identification and reporting of child abuse
3. Be aware of the risk factors – code of behaviour, recruitment & screening
4. Be a leader and advocate
5. Organisational leaders: protect the safety of children and empower children's voices within your club

YOUR ROLE

IDENTIFYING CHILD ABUSE

Some signs **may** include:

- unusual or regressive changes in behaviour
- being extremely sensitive and alert to their surroundings (hypervigilance)
- frequent headaches or stomach pains
- raising a concern about a friend or someone they know
- unexplained physical injuries & inconsistent explanations
- unusual fear of physical contact
- wariness or fear of someone including a parent, carer, other adult or child
- trying to protect friends or other family members from someone
- reluctance to go home
- taking on a caring or parental role with siblings prematurely.
- Hiding a device

YOUR ROLE

REPORTING CHILD ABUSE

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000 – If a child is in immediate danger

Victoria Police
Phone: 131 444
Website: police.vic.gov.au

Department of Families, Fairness & Housing
Phone: 1300 475 170
Website: dffh.vic.gov.au

SSA Child Safe Policy

IF IN DOUBT…ASK

YOUR ROLE

RISK FACTORS

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The following were identified as risk factors in the Royal Commission into Institutional Responses to Child Sexual Abuse:

- Location
- No Typical Perpetrator
- Leadership
- Culture: Normalised Behaviours
- Culture: Barriers to Reporting

Read more at https://www.playbytherules.net.au/resources/articles/royal-commission

YOUR ROLE

RISK FACTORS

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Be aware of and proactive in the following areas:

Vulnerability
- Type of children involved

Institutional
- Organisation Structure
- Organisation Culture
- Policies & Procedures

Situation
- Your Activities
- Physical Environment
- Online environment

YOUR ROLE

MODEL APPROPRIATE BEHAVIOR - EXAMPLES

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DO	DO NOT
Encourage children to feel safe and have positive relationships with friends and peers.	**Do not** take disciplinary action involving physical punishment or any form of treatment that could reasonable be considered as degrading, cruel, frightening or humiliating.
Encourage children to 'have a say' and listen to their views.	**Do not** contact a child directly via electronic devices without a parent included in the communication – for example, direct messaging them over social media.
Seek permission from the child to touch them prior to any contact occurring- for example, "Can I move you to adjust your technique?"	**Do not** engage in touch that would appear to a reasonable observer to have a sexual connotation.
Be aware of and respect signs indicating the child is uncomfortable with physical contact.	**Do not** develop 'special' relationships with specific children or show favouritism through the provision of gifts or inappropriate attention.

CHILD SAFEGUARDING IN CLUBLAND

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REFLECTION & DISCUSSION

1. What are the top three potential risks you can identify?

2. How can you address these and create a fun, engaging and safe experience for children, young people and their families at your club?

YOUR RESPONSIBILITIES

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OFFENCES

Failure to Disclose	Failure to Protect
If: • you are an adult, and • you have information that leads you to form a 'reasonable belief' that another adult has **sexually offended** against a child under 16 in Victoria. **It must be reported to the police.**	Where there is: • Substantial risk that a child under the age of 16 under will become a victim of a sexual offence • Committed by an adult associated with that organisation. Committed If: • They know of the risk of abuse • Have the power or responsibility to reduce or remove the risk, but negligently fail to do so.

CHILD SAFE SPORT

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REFELCTION

What are the top three things you can do differently or better for your club to reduce risks and create a welcoming, safe and inclusive culture, particularly in terms of:

- Cultural inclusion
- Engaging children and Families
- Leading and Communicating?

SUGGESTED ACTION

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ENGAGING CHILDREN AND FAMILIES

- Find out what they (and other children) are thinking and feeling
- Start a suggestion box
- Form a youth leadership group
- Invite young people to attend a Committee Meeting
- Host education and information sessions for children and their families
- If things go wrong, ensure that you let families know and keep them informed

SUGGESTED ACTION
CULTURAL INCLUSION

- Consult with those from diverse backgrounds
- Ensure appropriate representation of cultural groups on committees or forums
- Celebrate days of significance
- Provide information in different languages of formats – relevant to your context
- Communicate your stance against racism and respond appropriately if it occurs
- Visible signs – First Nations Flags, Acknowledgement of Country plaques

CHILD SAFE SPORT
RECOMMENDED ACTIONS

- Appoint at least one child safety officer
- Discuss child safety for 10 minutes at your committee meetings. Put it first on the agenda
- Discuss the risks of child abuse occurring in your club with key club personnel, including coaches
- Engage children and parents on what a child safe culture means to them
- Use the Vicsport Getting Started Checklist template to identify actions

SUGGESTED ACTION
RECRUITMENT & SCREENING

Baseline:

- Ensure WWCC in place or application pending
- Induction/Onboarding - policies, standards, processes, people
- Maintain records on file
- Maintain Register of WWCCs

Best practice:

- Advertising roles – clear statement and available info.
- Face-to-face or video interviews – at least one with child safe questions
- Conduct a minimum of two reference checks.
- Sight "proof of identity" and "proof of qualification" docs.

CREATING A CHILD SAFE CULTURE



CREATING A CHILD SAFE CULTURE

BENEFITS

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Your duty as a leader in sport

Kids feel safe, have fun & STAY

Decrease Risks

Child Safe Culture

Adults satisfied, tell other adults

Participant Retention

Positive Reputation

GETTING STARTED

CHECKLIST

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1. Read, Discuss and Understand the 11 Standards
2. Gain Commitment from Leaders
3. Develop a Sub-Committee or Working Group
4. Build Your Plan
5. Train & Educate
6. Child Safe Policy
7. Child Safe Code of Conduct
8. The Right People
9. Inform, Engage and Support your Community
10. Have CYP friendly information
11. Embed child safe sport in your organisation
12. Review your progress

Resource: Getting Started Checklist (Vicsport)

SUPPORT & RESOURCES

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Vicsport
03 9698 8100
admin@vicsport.com.au
www.vicsport.com.au/child-safe-standards

The Commission for Children and Young People
03 8601 5281
childsafestandards@ccyp.vic.gov.au
www.ccyp.vic.gov.au/child-safe-standards.htm

Play by the Rules
https://www.playbytherules.net.au/

Sport Integrity Australia
https://www.sportintegrity.gov.au/

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Access the Child Safe Sport Online Education Program

SCAN ME

QUESTIONS?

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