



Victorian **Registration &  
Qualifications** Authority

## Non School Senior Secondary Child Safe Standards Information Session

6 September 2016



Victorian **Registration &  
Qualifications** Authority

## Child Safe Standards Information Session Welcome and Introduction

John Mildren, Manager Schools and Senior Secondary,  
VRQA

## Today's Event

### Session outline:

- Readiness tool findings
- Building child safe cultures
- Helping you prepare
- Learning from each other and collaboration
- Next steps in the compliance monitoring process

## Key Points

- From minimum standard for **care, safety and welfare of students** to zero tolerance of child abuse
- The new requirements build on what providers are already doing
- *VRQA Guidelines for non-school senior secondary education providers: Minimum standards for registration to provide an accredited senior secondary course* amended to include **managing the risk of child abuse**



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## Child Safe Standards Information Session Preliminary self assessment findings

John Mildren, Manager School and School Projects,  
VRQA

### Findings of the VRQA child safe standards readiness tool

- Online survey sent to all NSSS providers in April 2016 with fifty-one per cent completing the survey
- Wide range of enrolments for students under 18 years
  - over forty five per cent of respondents reported having less than 50
  - almost twenty per cent reported having more than 200 students
- Twenty-seven per cent of respondents self-assessed as meeting the standards with a further 50 per cent as mostly compliant
- Most likely to report non-compliance or unsure of compliance with standard 6 and standard 5



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## Overview of the child safe standards What does a child safe organisation look like?

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Mary Kyrios



Centre for Excellence  
in Child and Family Welfare Inc.

**Child Safe Standards**

**Victorian Registration and Qualifications Authority**

**Non-School Senior Secondary Providers**

*Betrayal of Trust* is a report on a Victorian Parliamentary inquiry into the handling of child abuse by religious and other non-government organisations.

The report made 15 recommendations that are being implemented in three phases:

1. **Criminal law reform** that include offences for grooming, failure to protect a child from sexual abuse and failure to disclose child sexual abuse
2. **Child safe organisations** that includes:
  - requiring all providers to have policies for responding to abuse;
  - **introduction of child safe standards**; and
  - establishing an oversight body
3. **Civil law reform** to improve access to justice for victims



**Minimum** and **compulsory** child safe standards to create and maintain a child safe environments. They cover child sexual abuse, physical abuse, serious emotional and psychological abuse and serious neglect for children under the age of 18 years.

There are 7 child safe standards and each must embed the following 3 principles:

- *Promoting the cultural safety of Aboriginal children*
- *Promoting the cultural safety of children from culturally and/or linguistically diverse (CALD) backgrounds*
- *Promoting the safety of children with a disability.*





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#### **CHILD SAFE STANDARD 1**

**Organisations must have strategies to embed an organisational culture of child safety, including through effective leadership arrangements.**

A culture of child safety is enhanced by recognising the importance of child safety at all levels of providers from board, CEO, staff and volunteers.

To engage in this cultural change, providers need to:

- Embed child safety into everyday thinking ie OHS
- Ensure leadership is aware of allegations and responds to protect children.
- Provide induction/training to existing and new staff, volunteers
- Promote a culture of reporting
- Maintain adequate record keeping
- Child safety as a regular agenda item



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#### **CHILD SAFE STANDARD 2**

**Organisations must have a child safe policy or statement of commitment to child safety.**

- A child safe policy is an overarching document that provides key elements of an organisation's approach to ensure child safety. A statement of commitment is an affirmation of the provider's commitment of child safety.
- Child safe policy should:
  - cover all elements of the child safe standards: commitment to children's safety and best interests, definition of child abuse including grooming, detection, prevention, responding, reporting requirements/processes, continuous improvement.
  - Consolidate policies, include all other regulatory requirements etc
- Communicate child safety policies and procedures to all staff, volunteers, visitors/contractors, children/students and families



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### **CHILD SAFE STANDARD 3**

**Organisations must have a code of conduct that establishes clear expectations for appropriate behaviour with children.**

- A clear and specific code of conduct provides all staff, volunteers and students with a set of clear principles about how they should behave in a child-safe environment.
- Should cover boundaries for physical contact and recognition of any differences in what is considered acceptable behaviour.
- Recognition of culturally appropriate behaviour.
- Communicate and publicise code of conduct to students and parents.
- Requiring staff and volunteers to sign the code of conduct.
- Assists to manage reports and suspicions.



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### **CHILD SAFE STANDARD 4**

**Organisations must have screening, supervision, training and other human resources practices that reduce the risk of child abuse by new and existing personnel.**

- Ensure new and existing staff and volunteers understand the importance of child safety, are aware of the relevant policies and procedures, and are trained to minimise the risk of child abuse.
- Engage various assessment/ recruitment and selection tools to identify risks, 'red flags', WWCC/Police Checks, references
- Provide induction and ongoing training, supervision and monitoring to manage/reduce risk.
- Include child safety statements in recruitment.

#### **CHILD SAFE STANDARD 5**

**Organisations must have processes for responding to and reporting suspected child abuse.**



Providers should:

- Ensure a supportive environment for children and families who report allegations of abuse or child safety concerns.
- Ensure child safety is the priority and respond accordingly ie suspend alleged perpetrator or arrange alternate duties where no contact with children.
- Inform parents and provide support to child and parents.
- Ensure awareness to identify signs, how and who to report abuse allegations
- Clear policies and procedures for complying with all legal requirements such as notifying authorities, including internal organisational processes.

#### **CHILD SAFE STANDARD 6**

**Organisations must have strategies to identify and reduce or remove the risk of child abuse.**



- Providers need to adopt a risk management approach by considering their child safety risk(s) based on the nature of their activities with children, physical and online environments and the characteristics of children.
- Where the provider engages contractors to provide services to children you should ensure that the contractors are compliant with child safe standards.
- Failure to protect children from sexual abuse – criminal offence not to act to reduce or remove risk to protect students.
- Encourage early identification and raising awareness of possible risks.
- Training to identify, prevent and reduce risks.
- Developing, recording and communicating clear processes for evaluating and removing risks to children.

**CHILD SAFE STANDARD 7**  
**Organisations must have strategies to promote the participation and empowerment of children.**



- Providers need to have environments where children feel safe and comfortable in reporting concerns.
- Provide opportunities for students to discuss any concerns.
- Provide opportunities for children to contribute to child safe policies.
- Empower students through education by providing students with accessible information about child abuse, code of conduct, their rights and how they can raise concerns about abuse. For example, community languages, posters, information sheets, websites and social media.
- Raise awareness in the provider and community of children's right and cultural safety.

- Many providers will have relevant policies and processes in place – child safe standards will help providers address any **gaps**.
- Assess your current policies and practices to identify what you do well and areas for improvement. Make sure they cover all elements of the child safe standards are other regulations.
- Further supplementary guidance materials, including toolkits and templates are available on the VRQA, DET (Protect), DHHS and CCYP website.

### Case study 1

Jennifer, a student coordinator is informed by Rebecca, a sixteen year old student that Mr Thatcher, a provider's trainer has been providing her with private free home tutoring. Rebecca states that last night Mr Thatcher behaved in an inappropriate sexual manner with her.

Jennifer advises Mr Thatcher that he can longer tutor Rebecca.

What child safe standards apply?

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### Case study 2

A non school senior secondary provider operates education programs for adults and another program for young people aged 16 - 17.

In accordance with the requirements of the child safe standards what measures should be put in place?

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## Case Studies Reporting Back



## Afternoon Tea



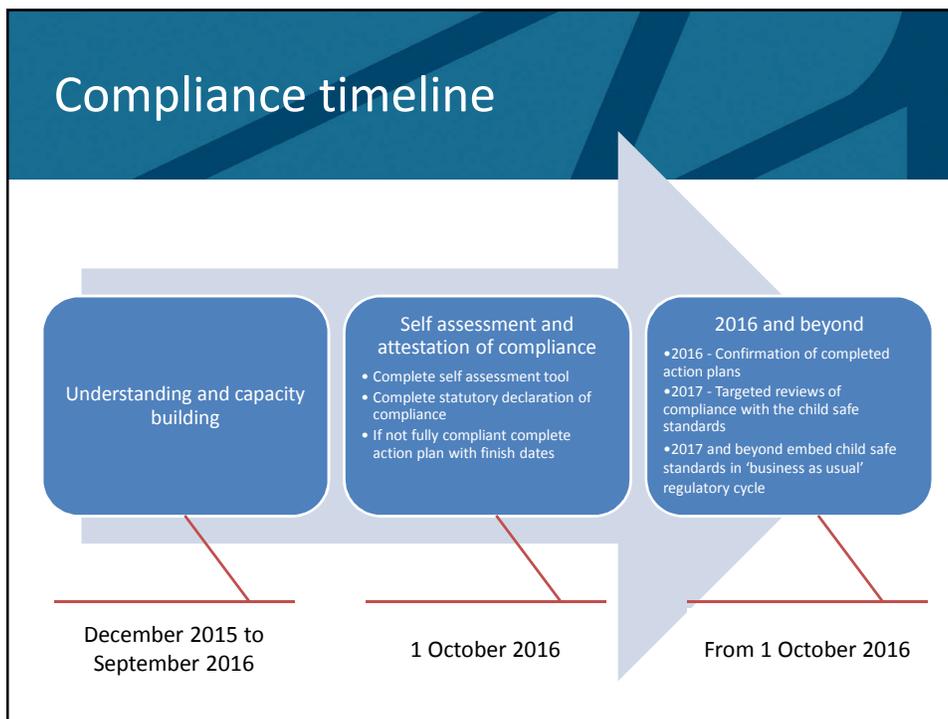
## Child Safe Standards Information Session Compliance monitoring framework and next steps

Don Hudgson, Regulatory Projects Manager  
VRQA

## Compliance framework

The VRQA is using the following framework of regulatory practice based on four primary activities to guide its implementation of the child safe standards:

1. Providing advice and guidance
2. Conducting licensing and approvals processes
3. Carrying out monitoring and compliance activities
4. Undertaking enforcement actions for no-compliance.



## Self assessment action plan template

- Now available on VRQA website – pre-populated with details
- Content:

Standard	Compliant (Y/N)	Action proposed	Completion date	Responsibility
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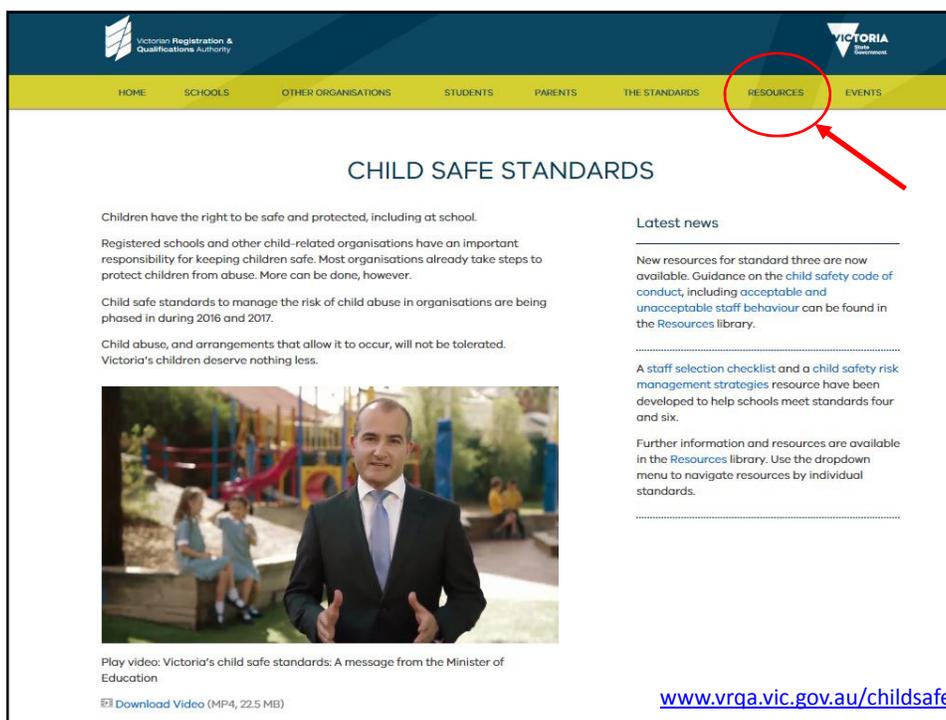
- Refer self-audit tool in DHHS publication: ***An overview of the Victorian child safe standards*** available at <http://www.dhs.vic.gov.au/about-the-department/documents-and-resources/policies,-guidelines-and-legislation/child-safe-standards-resources>

## Next steps

The child safe standards website is progressively being updated with additional resources: [www.vrqa.vic.gov.au/childsafestandard](http://www.vrqa.vic.gov.au/childsafestandard)

Subscribe to the VRQA e-news for important information and updates [www.vrqa.vic.gov.au/enews](http://www.vrqa.vic.gov.au/enews)

Advice to providers early in October about compliance



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## CHILD SAFE STANDARDS

Children have the right to be safe and protected, including at school.

Registered schools and other child-related organisations have an important responsibility for keeping children safe. Most organisations already take steps to protect children from abuse. More can be done, however.

Child safe standards to manage the risk of child abuse in organisations are being phased in during 2016 and 2017.

Child abuse, and arrangements that allow it to occur, will not be tolerated. Victoria's children deserve nothing less.



Play video: Victoria's child safe standards: A message from the Minister of Education

[Download Video \(MP4, 22.5 MB\)](#)

### Latest news

New resources for standard three are now available. Guidance on the [child safety code of conduct](#), including [acceptable and unacceptable staff behaviour](#) can be found in the Resources library.

A [staff selection checklist](#) and a [child safety risk management strategies](#) resource have been developed to help schools meet standards four and six.

Further information and resources are available in the [Resources](#) library. Use the dropdown menu to navigate resources by individual standards.

[www.vrqa.vic.gov.au/childsafestandard](http://www.vrqa.vic.gov.au/childsafestandard)

## Further information

Further information is available at:  
[www.vrqa.vic.gov.au/childsafes](http://www.vrqa.vic.gov.au/childsafes).

If you have any questions or comments, please email the VRQA  
at: [vrqa.schools@edumail.vic.gov.au](mailto:vrqa.schools@edumail.vic.gov.au)

or by phone to: (03) 9637 2806