



SCHOOL STAFF SELECTION, SUPERVISION AND MANAGEMENT PRACTICES FOR A CHILD-SAFE ENVIRONMENT

Guidance for schools

Strong human resources practices promote child safe school environments and reduce the risk of child abuse. Child Safe Standard 4 (Standard 4) requires schools to use policies and procedures for recruitment, supervision, training and managing performance that support a child safe school environment. This guide outlines what is required by schools for compliance with Ministerial Order 870.

Schools already have a number of recruitment and screening practices that reduce the risk of child abuse. This resource outlines what is. New practices apply to all school employees.

In preparing for compliance schools are expected to:

- Ensure that position descriptions for all new positions advertised from 1 August 2016 include the standard 'Child Safe Environments' clause as provided in the 'Recruitment in Schools' Guide.
- Identify the actions the school proposes to take, per Standard 1, to promote and embed the Child Safety Code of Conduct in accordance with Standard 3 [this is to address Requirement 1 for existing staff], and articulate the timeframe for this.
- Determine the timeframes for the school governing authority to oversee and review Standard 4 as part of the school's Action Plan [Standard 1] and School Child Safe Environments policy [Standard 2].
- *Note that further advice on practices to ensure that principals are satisfied that an external applicant meets the Standards prior to the applicant's employment are forthcoming.*
- *Note that further advice on Induction requirements and Performance and Development requirements will be developed in 2016 to ensure schools fully meet Requirement 5 of Standard 4.*



Background

On 26 November 2015, the Victorian Parliament passed the *Child Wellbeing and Safety Amendment (Child Safe Standards) Bill 2015* to introduce seven child safe standards (the Standards) into law. The Standards apply to all organisations involved in child-related work in Victoria.

[Ministerial Order No. 870](#) provides the framework for how schools will be required to comply with the Standards. Overall responsibility for ensuring compliance rests with the Victorian Registration and Qualifications Authority (VRQA).

The Ministerial Order specifies the following requirements for schools regarding Standard 4:

1. *Each job or category of jobs for school staff that involves child connected work must have a clear statement that sets out:*
 - a) *the job's requirements, duties and responsibilities regarding child safety; and*
 - b) *the job occupant's essential or relevant qualifications, experience and attributes in relation to child safety.*
2. *All applicants for jobs that involve child connected work for the school must be informed about the school's child safety practices (including the code of conduct).*
3. *In accordance with any applicable legal requirement or school policy, the school must make reasonable efforts to gather, verify and record the following information about a person whom it proposes to engage to perform child connected work:*
 - a) *Working with Children Check status, or similar check;*
 - b) *proof of personal identity and any professional or other qualifications;*
 - c) *the person's history of work involving children; and*
 - d) *references that address the person's suitability for the job and working with children.*
4. *The school need not comply with the requirements in step (3) above if it has already made reasonable efforts to gather, verify and record the information set out in steps (3)(a) to (3)(d), above about a particular individual within the previous 12 months.*
5. *The school must ensure that appropriate supervision or support arrangements are in place in relation to:*
 - a) *the induction of new school staff into the school's policies, codes, practices, and procedures governing child safety and child connected work; and*
 - b) *monitoring and assessing a job occupant's continuing suitability for child connected work.*
6. *The school must implement practices that enable the school governing authority to be satisfied that people engaged in child-connected work perform appropriately in relation to child safety.*

Explanatory note: To be 'satisfied', it is not necessary that the school governing authority make each decision about the selection and supervision of school staff engaged in child-connected work. The school governing authority needs to be satisfied about the appropriateness of the school's arrangements that would regulate or guide other people who make such decisions for or on behalf of the school about child safety matters and child-connected work.



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Implementing child safe standard 4- Departmental and school actions

The table below outlines the steps to implement the requirements of Standard 4.

Requirement	Departmental action	School action
<p>1. <i>Each job or category of jobs for school staff that involves child connected work must have clear statements regarding the child safety requirements of the role and the expectations of the occupant</i></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The 'Recruitment in Schools' Guide has been updated and requires that position descriptions for all new positions advertised from 1 August 2016 include the following standard 'Child safe environments' clause: "Victorian government schools are child safe environments. Our schools actively promote the safety and wellbeing of all students, and all school staff are committed to protecting students from abuse or harm in the school environment in accordance with their legal obligations including the Child Safe Standards. The school's Child Safety Code of Conduct is available on the school's website." Position descriptions generated in Recruitment Online (ROL) include a standard clause regarding child safety. The Principal Class Contract of Employment has been updated to include the text italicised in the below: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Preamble: The aims of the Department include: " ... the provision of a child safe environment" Schedule B – Accountabilities of a principal – Student Support: "Pt 2) Plan, implement and monitor arrangements to ensure the care, safety, security and general well-being of all students in attendance at the school including compliance with the Child Safe Standards " This will apply for future contracts. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Ensure that position descriptions for all new positions include the standard 'Child safe environments' clause as provided in the 'Recruitment in Schools' Guide. For existing staff, the school will promote and embed the Child Safety Code of Conduct in accordance with Standard 3. Note that the Principal Class Contract of Employment has been updated to include reference to the Standards, and all contracts offered on or after 1 August will include the revised wording.
<p>2. <i>All applicants for jobs that involve child connected work for the school must be informed about the school's child safety practices (including the code of conduct).</i></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> As above 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> As above
<p>3. <i>In accordance with any applicable legal requirement or school</i></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The 'Recruitment in Schools' Guide has been updated to include that, the Principal, prior to an external applicant 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Principals implement practices to ensure that they are satisfied an external



Requirement	Departmental action	School action
<p><i>policy, the school must make reasonable efforts to gather, verify and record the following information about a person whom it proposes to engage to perform child connected</i></p> <p>4. <i>The school need not comply with the requirements in step (3) above if it has already made reasonable efforts to gather, verify and record the information about a particular individual within the previous 12 months</i></p>	<p>person commencing employment, must be satisfied that the person: “meets the Child Safe Standards.” (insert link to CSS site”</p> <p>This can be found here.</p>	<p>applicant <i>meets the Child Safe Standards</i> prior to the applicant’s employment.</p>
<p>5. <i>The school must ensure that appropriate supervision or support arrangements are in place in relation to induction and continuing suitability for child connected work</i></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Advice on alignment of/ changes to Induction will be developed in 2016. • Advice on alignment of/ changes to Performance and Development will be developed in 2016, with changes to be determined for the 2017-18 Performance and Development cycle. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Note that further advice on requirements related to Induction and Performance and Development will be developed in 2016 to ensure schools fully meet this Standard.
<p>6. <i>The school must implement practices that enable the school governing authority to be satisfied that people engaged in child-connected work perform appropriately in relation to child safety</i></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • As above. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • School Councils to oversee and review Standard 4 as part of the school’s Action Plan [Standard 1] and School Child Safe Environments policy [Standard 2]

Resources and References

- Commission for Children and Young People (2015) *A Guide For Creating A Child Safe Organisation*, Version 2.0.
- Department of Education and Training (2016) *Recruitment in Schools*
- Department of Education and Training (2016) *Suitability for Employment*
- Victorian Government, Education & Reform Act 2006, Gazette No. S2, January 2016, *Child Safe Standards – Managing the Risk of Child Abuse in Schools*, Ministerial Order No. 870.
- Victorian Registration and Qualifications Authority (2016) *Child Safety Standard 4: Staff Selection Checklist*



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