



Catholic  
Education  
Tasmania

## **CHILD SAFETY STANDARDS**



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## AUTHORITY AND APPLICATION

<b>Date of approval</b>	22 December 2020
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<b>Previous standards replaced by this Standard</b>	Child Safe Standards January 2018

**SIGNED:**



Chair of the CECT

**DATE:**

22.12.2020

# I. INTRODUCTION

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## I.1 Introduction

Our Child Safety Policy requires Catholic Education Tasmania (CET) to comply with the ten Child Safety Standards (the Standards) set out in this document. These Standards are principle based whose overarching purpose is to support the embedding and upkeep of best practice child safety throughout CET

The Standards have been informed by:

- Archdiocese of Hobart's Children and Vulnerable Adults Protection Policy;
- the recommendations of the Royal Commission into Institutional Responses to Child Sexual Abuse; and
- child safety laws;

The Standards are designed to:

- raise awareness of child safety as a key priority for CET;
- guide the prevention of abuse, neglect and grooming;
- foster a caring and encouraging child safety culture;
- facilitate the reporting of abuse, neglect and grooming; and
- ensure consistency of responses to allegations of abuse, neglect and grooming.

## I.2 Application

The Standards apply to all people involved in CET activities including Tasmanian Catholic Education Office (TCEO) staff, school and college principals and staff, contractors, volunteers, religious personnel and students. The Standards also apply to all CET operational environments and workplaces including online endeavours, school and college premises and grounds, camps, tours, cultural immersions, excursions, sports events and coaching / tutoring activities.

Each CET school, college and workplace is required to comply with the Standards, regardless of variances in governance arrangements and the nature of operations.

## I.3 Governance

The Standards form part of CET's suite of child safety governance instruments that collectively form CET's Child Safety Program. The diagram below sets out CET's child safety governance instrument hierarchy.

**Tier 1 - AoH**

Children and Vulnerable Adults Protection Policy

**Tier 2 - CECT**

Child Safety Policy

Reportable Conduct Policy

Working with Vulnerable People Policy

Mandatory Reporting Policy

Child Safety Standards

**Tier 3 – TCEO**

Child Safety Code of Conduct

- Child Safety Guidelines:
- Roles and Responsibilities
  - Definitions and Indicators of Harm
  - Reporting Child Safety Concerns
  - Responding to Child Safety Incidents
  - Maintaining Professional Boundaries
  - Creating and Maintaining a Child Safe Environment
  - Participation and Empowerment of Children and Young people
  - Working with Vulnerable People
  - Compliance Obligations

TCEO Child Safety Committee Terms of Reference

**Tier 4 - School / College**

School level policy, procedures and guidelines covering site specific issues and practices not covered by Tier 1, 2 or 3 governance instruments.

## 2. STANDARDS

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The Standards are:

*Standard 1:* Legal Compliance

*Standard 2:* Policy

*Standard 3:* Child Safe Behaviour

*Standard 4:* Child Safety Culture

*Standard 5:* Risk reduction

*Standard 6:* Children and young people

*Standard 7:* Staff

*Standard 8:* Contractors and volunteers

*Standard 9:* Incident reporting and response

*Standard 10:* Assurance

## 2.1 Standard I: Legal Compliance

### **Objective**

Each CET school, college and workplace achieves compliance with child safety laws through the implementation of CET's Child Safety Program.

### **Rationale**

Compliance with child safety laws is an essential element of the caring and encouraging child safe culture which has been mandated by CET's Child Safety Policy as a primary objective for every CET school, college and workplace.

### **Implementation Outcomes**

Successful implementation of this Standard should ensure that each CET school, college and workplace is fully compliant with child safety laws. Evidence of meeting this Standard would be demonstrated by:

- uniform application of CET's child safety related policies, codes of conduct, standards and guidelines;
- each school, college and workplace achieving compliance with the Standards;
- ensuring workers participate in child safety training which explains legal requirements;
- keeping records of child safety training completed by staff, contractors and volunteers; and
- maintaining adequate records of child safety issues and responses to child safety incidents.

## 2.2 Standard 2: Policy

### **Objective**

Each CET school, college and workplace adheres to CET's Child Safety Policy.

### **Rationale**

CET's Child Safety Policy details CET's commitment to developing and maintaining a caring and encouraging child safe culture in each CET school, college and workplace. It sets out the overarching organisational objectives, requirements and responsibilities that underpin the structure and implementation of CET's Child Safety Program. It also provides clear parameters for decision making with respect to the protection of children and young people from abuse, neglect and grooming.

The Policy supports the members of each CET school and college community and workplace to fully participate in the delivery of an effective CET child safety program.

### **Implementation Outcomes**

Successful implementation of this Standard should ensure that each CET school, college and workplace is able to demonstrate a strong commitment to child safety. Evidence of meeting this Standard would be demonstrated by:

- being able to demonstrate adherence with CET's Child Safety Policy; and
- publishing the CET Child Safety Policy on school / college / workplace's public website and staff intranet or equivalent.

## 2.3 Standard 3: Child safe behaviour

### **Objective**

Consistent and timely demonstration of the child safe behaviours set out in CET's Child Safety Code of Conduct by all personnel working within CET including TCEO staff, school and college principals and staff, contractors, volunteers and religious personnel.

### **Rationale**

A fit-for-purpose code of conduct enables an organisation to hold people to account for standards of behaviour and assists in the development of the desired organisational culture.

CET's Child Safety Code of Conduct establishes clear behavioural expectations and boundaries for all adults in all CET operational environments and workplaces regarding interactions with children and young people.

### **Implementation Outcomes**

Successful implementation of this Standard should ensure that appropriate behaviour with children and young people is clearly defined, accessible, understood and accepted by staff, contractors, volunteers, families, children and young people. Evidence of meeting this Standard would be demonstrated by:

- being able to demonstrate adherence to CET's Child Safety Code of Conduct;
- ensuring training for all staff, regular contractors and regular volunteers (see Standard 8) with respect to CET's Child Safe Code of Conduct;
- publishing CET's Child Safety Code of Conduct on the school / college / workplace's public website and staff intranet or equivalent; and
- displaying CET's Child Safety Code of Conduct in prominent places throughout CET operational environments and workplaces.

## 2.4 Standard 4: Child safety culture

### **Objective**

Each CET school, college and workplace applies sufficient resources to the fostering of a caring and encouraging child safety culture.

### **Rationale**

Fostering a culture where the demonstrable consideration of the welfare and wellbeing of children and young people is part of everyday thinking is of critical importance to child safety. A child safety orientated culture, in the context of CET, is one where the adequate care and encouragement of children and young people is a non-negotiable outcome of all decisions made by all people involved in CET activities.

### **Implementation Outcomes**

Successful implementation of this Standard should ensure that each CET school, college and workplace has embedded a caring and encouraging child safety culture to the extent where required child safety practices have become an accepted integral part of 'the way we do things around here'. Evidence of meeting this Standard would be demonstrated by:

- the proactive endeavours of school, college or workplace leadership teams to embed a caring and encouraging child safety culture in their workplaces;
- allocating child safety roles and responsibilities to staff;
- providing appropriate training and support to staff with child safety responsibilities to enable the promotion of a caring and encouraging child safety culture within the school, college or workplace and to effectively manage any child safety incidents that may occur;
- providing initial and refresher child safety training to all workers (staff, contractors and volunteers) and ensuring its completion in a timely manner;
- maintaining adequate records of child safety training, issues and responses to child safety incidents; and
- the CET's Child Safety Officer engaging with school / college communities with respect to child safety strategies and initiatives.

## 2.5 Standard 5: Risk reduction

### **Objective**

To utilise risk management principles to support the achievement of legal compliance and to guide the efficient use of resources regarding the implementation of CET's Child Safety Program and, by extension, the fostering of a caring and encouraging child safety culture in all CET workplaces.

### **Rationale**

Risk management is a core responsibility for CET and its schools, colleges and workplaces with respect to CET's duty of care to protect children and young people as well as being a legal obligation with respect to workplace health and safety. CET is required to either eliminate or, if that is not achievable, to reduce risks to child safety to as low as is reasonably practicable. By taking a risk-based approach to child safety CET and its schools, colleges and workplaces can better target their use of resources and, in so doing, build a stronger, more effective child safety culture.

### **Implementation Outcomes**

Successful implementation of this Standard should ensure that CET is effectively controlling child safety risks. Evidence of meeting this Standard would be demonstrated by:

- taking a proactive approach to identifying and assessing child safety risks occurring in school, college and workplace environments;
- recording assessed risks in a risk register;
- taking steps to eliminate or reduce child safety risks to as low as is reasonably practicable; and
- regularly reviewing the effectiveness of the risk mitigation measures that have been applied.

## 2.6 Standard 6: Children and young people

### **Objective**

Each CET school and college to provide simple and accessible age-appropriate information and processes that help children and young people understand what to do if they want to raise a child safety matter or report inappropriate behaviour or concerns about their safety or the safety of others.

### **Rationale**

Children and young people need to feel safe when raising concerns or reporting allegations of inappropriate behaviour. Children and young people may not report child safety incidents because they feel uncomfortable or because they do not know how to raise their concerns. High levels of awareness and simple and accessible processes are required to ensure that children and young people are empowered and can participate effectively in reporting inappropriate behaviour or concerns about their own safety or the safety of others.

### **Implementation Outcomes**

Successful implementation of this Standard should empower children and young people, and allow them to safely report any concerns or allegations of child safety incidents that they may have. Evidence of meeting this Standard would be demonstrated by:

- providing CET students with age-appropriate information regarding:
  - what constitutes child abuse, neglect, grooming and inappropriate behaviour;
  - their right to make decisions about their body and their privacy;
  - the fact that no one has a right to injure them; and
  - how they can raise concerns about abuse, neglect, grooming and inappropriate behaviour;
- ensuring information and processes for reporting concerns are accessible to all children and young people, including those from culturally diverse backgrounds and those with disabilities;
- training relevant staff, contractors and volunteers on methods of empowering children and young people and encouraging their participation;
- all staff, contractors and volunteers having an awareness and acceptance of children and young people's rights and their own responsibilities with respect to child safety.
- gathering feedback from children and young people, for example through surveys and focus groups, about whether they would feel safe and are taken seriously if they were to raise concerns, and implementing improvements based on this feedback; and
- raising awareness in the school, college and workplace communities about children and young people's rights and processes for reporting child safety concerns, for example through school and college assemblies, websites and newsletters.

## 2.7 Standard 7: Staff

### **Objective**

To reduce the risk of child abuse or grooming by staff through the implementation of adequate CET child safety related policies and work practices (such as screening, recruitment, supervision and training) in each CET school, college and workplace.

### **Rationale**

Adequate child safety related policies and work practices applied in a conscientious manner will attract appropriate staff and deter potential offenders.

### **Implementation Outcomes**

Successful implementation of this Standard should ensure that each CET school, college and workplace complies with CECT endorsed child safety related policies and work practices and in so doing reduces the risk of using potential offenders to as low as is reasonably practicable. Evidence of meeting this Standard would be demonstrated by:

- ensuring that all staff are registered to work with vulnerable people (WWVP registration),
- adopting child safety practices when recruiting staff, including:
  - embedding a statement of commitment to keeping children and young people safe on the CET careers web page and any online recruitment platform being used by CET;
  - having a clear statement on the duties and responsibilities with respect to child safety for each position or role that involves contact with children and young people;
  - ensuring child safety practices are embedded in online application processes;
  - asking specific questions during interviews to confirm child safe attitudes and values are consistent with CET child safety practices;
  - in addition to relevant WWVP registration checks, undertaking further screening, including:
    - proof of identity
    - proof of any professional or other qualifications;
    - the person’s history of work involving children and young people;
    - references that address the person’s suitability for the job and working with children and young people; and
    - attestations and confirmations of child safe credentials where required;
- ensuring staff induction and onboarding includes:
  - participation in CET’s child safety training regarding professional boundaries in adult/student interactions, mandatory reporting and recognising and responding to child safety incidents and

- introduction to CET’s Child Safety Policy and Child Safety Code of Conduct, and any specific school, college or workplace child safety work practices and procedures relevant to their role;
- ensuring that appropriate supervision or support arrangements are in place in relation to monitoring and assessing a role occupant’s continuing suitability for child-connected work; and
- implementing work practices, as required by CET’s Child Safety Program, to enable Principals and workplace managers to be satisfied that staff engaged by a school, college or workplace are behaving in an appropriate manner in relation to child safety.

## 2.8 Standard 8: Contractors and volunteers

### **Objective**

To reduce the risk of child abuse or grooming by contractors and volunteers through the implementation of CET child safety related policies and work practices (such as screening, recruitment, supervision and training) in each CET school, college and workplace.

### **Rationale**

Contractors and volunteers are in a similar position to school, college and TCEO staff, in that they may have direct contact with children and young people during the normal course of their work, or be in a position to establish a relationship of trust with a child or young person. Hence, their appointment, induction and ongoing supervision with regard to child safety must be carried out to the same standard as for school, college and TCEO staff.

### **Implementation Outcomes**

Successful implementation of this Standard should ensure that each CET school, college and workplace implements adequate contractor and volunteer management practices and in so doing reduces the risk of a contractor or volunteer offending to as low as is reasonably practicable. Evidence of meeting this Standard would be demonstrated by:

- ensuring each job / role or category of jobs / roles for contractors and volunteers has a clear statement relating to the contractors' / volunteers' duties and responsibilities with respect to child safety;
- ensuring applicants for contractor / volunteer work are informed about CET's child safety expectations and requirements;
- ensuring that Regular Contractors<sup>1</sup> and Regular Volunteers<sup>3</sup> are registered to work with vulnerable people (WWVP Registration) unless exempt as per CET's WWVP Guideline;
- requiring further screening of Regular Contractors and Regular Volunteers in addition to completing WWVP Registration checks, such as:
  - proof of identity;
  - proof of professional or other qualifications (where relevant);
  - the person's history of work involving children and young people (where relevant);
  - references that address the person's suitability for the job and working with children and young people (where relevant); and
  - attestations and confirmations of child safety credentials where required;

- the onboarding / induction of regular contractors and regular volunteers covers relevant aspects CET's Child Safety Program, in particular:
  - CET's Child Safety Policy;
  - CET's Child Safety Code of Conduct;
  - professional boundaries in adult/student interactions;
  - mandatory reporting;
  - recognising and responding to child safety incidents.
- ensuring that appropriate supervision or support arrangements are in place in relation to ensuring casual contractors<sup>2</sup> and casual volunteers<sup>5</sup> are not left alone, one-on-one, with a child or young person;
- monitoring and assessing a contractor's / volunteer's continuing suitability for child-connected work; and
- implementing applicable work practices as required by CET's Child Safety Program that enable Principals and workplace managers to be satisfied that contractors and volunteers engaged by a school, college or workplace are behaving in an appropriate manner in relation to child safety.

**1. Regular Contractors** are individuals who provide contractor services to any CET school or college:

- where, in the normal course of providing their services, they are likely to have direct contact with children or young people, in circumstances where they:
  - are likely to be left alone, one-on-one, with a child or young person; or
  - a reasonable person would consider the contact may enable the individual to form a relationship of trust with a child or young person; or
  - a reasonable person would consider the contact to create a risk to the safety of a child or young person.
- or if not likely to have direct contact, provide contractor services to CET more than seven times in any one year.

**2. Casual Contractors** are individuals who provide contractor services to any CET school, college or workplace seven times or less in any one year, who may have contact with children or young people, but only in circumstances where they:

- are not left alone, one-on-one, with a child or young person; and
- a reasonable person would not consider the contact to enable the individual to form a relationship or trust with a child or young person; and
- a reasonable person would not consider the contact to create a risk to the safety of a child or young person.

**3. Regular Volunteers** are individuals who provide volunteer services to any CET school or college:

- where, in the normal course of providing their services, they are likely to have direct contact with children or young people, in circumstances where they:
  - are likely to be left alone, one-on-one, with a child or young person; or

- a reasonable person would consider the contact may enable the individual to form a relationship of trust with a child or young person; or
  - a reasonable person would consider the contact to create a risk to the safety of a child or young person.
  - or if not likely to have direct contact, provide volunteer services to CET more than seven times in any one year.
- 4. Casual Volunteers** are individuals who provide volunteer services to any CET school, college or workplace seven times or less in any one year, where they may have contact with children or young people, but only in circumstances where:
- they are not left alone, one-on-one, with a child or young person; and
  - a reasonable person would not consider the contact to enable the individual to form a relationship of trust with a child or young person; and
  - a reasonable person would not consider the contact to create a risk to the safety of a child or young person.

## 2.9 Standard 9: Incident reporting and response

### **Objective**

All child safety incidents including allegations and suspicions or disclosures of abuse, neglect or grooming are reported in a timely manner via user friendly processes underpinned by a supportive workplace environment. Furthermore, all reported incidents are managed in accordance with regulatory requirements, adequately investigated and, subsequently, have all resultant actions taken.

### **Rationale**

Reluctance to report allegations and suspicions or disclosures of abuse, neglect or grooming would be a clear indicator of an organisation which does not have a caring and encouraging child safety culture. Cumbersome processes and recriminatory or suspicious behaviour by staff involved in facilitating, managing or assessing reports are barriers to the voluntary reporting of concerns and incidents and, thus, cannot be tolerated. Processes need to be accessible and easy to use. Furthermore, workplace leaders need to foster a workplace environment where people feel safe to report and know they will receive adequate support having made a report.

### **Implementation Outcomes**

Successful implementation of this Standard should ensure that each CET school, college and workplace can effectively utilise the applicable aspects of CET's Child Safety Program for facilitating, responding to and managing reports of alleged, suspected or disclosed child safety incidents. Evidence of meeting this Standard would be demonstrated by:

- the notification of CET's Child Safety Officer as soon as reasonably practicable, (and in any event within 12 hours) by a CET school, college or workplace on becoming aware of a child safety incident (either current or historical) that relates to abuse or grooming, or potential abuse or grooming, by a member of staff, contractor or volunteer and this notification is provided in the manner and form prescribed by CET's Child Safety Officer;
- all people involved in CET activities including TCEO staff, school and college principals and staff, contractors, volunteers, religious personnel and students being able to access to user friendly guidelines that:
  - cover abuse, neglect, grooming behaviours and other inappropriate conduct (collectively "child safety incidents");
  - apply to allegations, suspicions or disclosures of child safety incidents made by or in relation to a child, young person, staff member, volunteer, contractor, visitor or other person who is connected to any of CET's operational environments and workplaces, regardless of when these actions are alleged to have taken place;
  - identify the position(s) of the person or people who are responsible for:

- promptly managing the school, college or workplace’s response to an allegation, suspicion or disclosure of a child safety incident, and ensuring that the allegation, suspicion or disclosure is taken seriously; and
  - responding appropriately to the person who makes or is affected by a child safety incident report;
- include an alternative procedure for responding to an allegation, suspicion or disclosure if the person or people allocated primary responsibility cannot perform their role due to conflict of interest or otherwise;
- include a statement that fulfilling the roles and responsibilities documented in CET’s Child Safety Program does not displace or discharge any other obligations that arise if a person reasonably believes that a child or young person is at risk of abuse, neglect or grooming;
- include clear descriptions of the actions CET will take to respond to a child safety allegation, including actions to:
  - inform appropriate authorities about the allegation (including mandatory reporting and if necessary any inappropriate/reportable conduct of staff);
  - inform the child or young person’s parents/carers as appropriate and as soon as practicable unless the allegation involves their behaviour or as advised by the Tasmanian Government agency responsible for child protection not to do so;
  - protect any child or young person connected to the alleged child safety incident until the allegation is resolved;
  - make, secure, and retain records of the child safety allegation and the school, college or workplace’s response to it; and
- include specifications that prevent:
  - the prohibition or discouragement of staff from reporting an allegation, suspicion or disclosure of a child safety incident to an appropriately authorised person external to the school, college or workplace;
  - statements or expressions implying that it is the victim’s responsibility to inform the police or other authorities of the allegation;
  - requiring staff to make a judgment about the truth of the allegation; or
  - the prohibition of staff from making records in relation to an allegation, suspicion or disclosure of a child safety incident.
- all people involved in CET activities including TCEO staff, school and college principals and staff, contractors, volunteers, religious personnel and students being able to access to user friendly processes that enable the reporting of allegations, suspicions and disclosures of child safety incidents.

## 2.10 Standard 10: Assurance

### **Objective**

The provision of assurance to the CECT regarding the compliance of each CET school, college and workplace with child safety laws and the requirements of CET's Child Safety Program.

### **Rationale**

The demonstration of adequate due diligence by the CECT regarding child safety matters requires regular assurance from each CET school, college and workplace regarding compliance with child safety laws and the requirements of CET's Child Safety Program.

Proactive engagement with respect to policy commitments by personnel charged with governance responsibilities is a key driver for the embedding of the desired culture in an organisation.

### **Implementation Outcomes**

Successful implementation of this Standard should assure the CECT of the overall effectiveness of CET's Child Safety Program as implemented within each CET school, college and workplace and ensure that all reportable matters are brought to the attention of the CECT. Evidence of meeting this Standard would be demonstrated by:

- each CET school, college and workplace:
  - providing the CET's Child Safety Officer with an annual assurance report regarding adherence to CET's Child Safety Program, compliance with child safety laws and the current level of child safety risk.; and
  - actively co-operating with any auditing or monitoring undertaken by the CET's Child Safety Officer or delegate.
- CET's Child Safety Officer or delegate:
  - regularly auditing and monitoring CET school, college and workplace compliance with CET's Child Safety Program;
  - undertaking an annual review of the efficacy of CET's Child Safety Program which includes:
    - analyses of the annual assurance reports provided by schools, colleges and workplaces; and
    - the identification of opportunities for improvement.
  - reporting, on an annual basis, the findings and recommendations arising from the annual review to the CECT.