

Child Safe Policy

Policy Description

This policy outlines State Schools Relief's commitment to creating and maintaining a child-safe organisation in alignment with the Victorian Child Safe Standards (2022). It establishes responsibilities, governance structures, processes, and behaviours required to ensure the safety, wellbeing, and empowerment of children who engage with State Schools Relief (SSR) programs, services, or activities.

Applies to

This policy applies to all SSR Board members, employees, volunteers, contractors, agency personnel, and any other individuals representing or acting on behalf of State Schools Relief.

Definitions

Child	A person under the age of 18 years.
Child Safe Standards (CSS)	Minimum child safety requirements legislated by the Victorian Government to prevent harm to children.
Child Abuse	Includes physical, sexual, emotional abuse, neglect, grooming, and exposure to family violence.
Reportable Conduct	Behaviour by an adult that may constitute child abuse or misconduct towards a child, as defined by the Reportable Conduct Scheme (Victoria).
Child Safety Officer	The designated SSR role responsible for coordinating child safety processes, training, and reporting guidance.
Cultural Safety	An environment where Aboriginal children and children from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds feel safe, respected, and able to express identity.
Reasonable Belief	A belief based on facts that would lead a reasonable person to suspect that child abuse or misconduct may have occurred.

Relevant Policy Statements and/or Principles

The purpose of this policy is to ensure SSR:

1. Prioritises the safety, wellbeing, and empowerment of all children
2. Embeds the Victorian Child Safe Standards (2022) into governance, operations, programs, and behaviour
3. Establishes clear expectations for Board members, staff, volunteers, and contractors
4. Maintains compliance with the Child Wellbeing and Safety Act 2005, the Reportable Conduct Scheme, and all relevant laws
5. Actively identifies, mitigates, and monitors risks to children
6. Promotes a culture of continuous improvement in child safety practice.

Policy

SSR will:

- create environments where children feel safe, valued, and able to participate
- ensure child and family feedback informs program design and risk assessment
- support the cultural safety and connection to identity for Aboriginal children
- uphold inclusive practice for children with disability or diverse backgrounds
- embed child safety into SSR strategic planning, governance, and daily operations.

Governance and Leadership

The Board will:

- provide oversight of SSR's child safety systems
- ensure resources are allocated for implementation
- review systemic child safety risks at least annually.

The CEO will:

- implement the Child Safe Standards across SSR
- ensure mandatory reporting and child safety training requirements are met
- monitor compliance and report performance to the Board.

The Child Safety Officer will:

- coordinate training, risk assessments, and incident management
- provide guidance to staff and volunteers on child safety obligations
- act as the primary contact for concerns or allegations.

Staff must:

- act immediately if a child is at risk
- document all concerns and actions in the approved SSR reporting system
- maintain confidentiality except where disclosure is legally required.

Code of Conduct for Working With Children

All adults engaged by SSR must follow the Child Safe Code of Conduct, including:

- acting respectfully and professionally
- maintaining clear boundaries and avoiding favouritism
- never using physical punishment, intimidation, or degrading behaviour
- avoiding private communication with children (including online/social media)
- reporting any concerns immediately.

Risk Management

SSR's child safety risk management includes:

- WWCC and other screening requirements for all personnel
- annual child safety risk assessments across programs, activities, and digital interactions
- supervision and behaviour management protocols.

Responding to Child Safety Concerns

All personnel must report suspected child abuse. SSR complies with:

- reportable Conduct Scheme requirements
- reporting to Victoria Police and Child Protection where required.

Reports may be made to:

- SSR Child Safety Officer
- CEO
- Victoria Police (000) in emergencies
- DHHS Child Protection.

Training and Supervision

SSR ensures all personnel receive:

- induction on the Child Safe Standards and this policy
- annual refresher training
- role specific training for positions working directly with children or sensitive information.

Participation of Children and Families

SSR will:

- where appropriate seek feedback from children, families, and schools
- provide accessible and age-appropriate information
- consult children where relevant in program design.

Processes

- All personnel must hold a valid WWCC (or equivalent) before commencing duties.
- Program and activity-specific child safety risk assessments must be completed.
- All child safety concerns must be recorded in SSR's internal reporting system.
- All investigations must follow procedural fairness and Reportable Conduct Scheme requirements.
- Separate to this policy there will be a workplan managed by senior leadership that looks across all 11 Child Standards and any actions that need to be taken

Related Legislation, State Schools Relief Documents and Other Documents

Legislation:	Child Wellbeing and Safety Act 2005 (Vic)
	Children, Youth and Families Act 2005 (Vic)
	Working With Children Act 2005 (Vic)
	Reportable Conduct Scheme (Vic)
	Crimes Act 1958 (Vic) – Failure to Protect/Failure to Disclose
Organisational Documents:	Occupational Health and Safety Act 2004 (Vic)
	SSR Code of Conduct Policy
	SSR Recruitment and Screening Policy
	SSR Risk Management Framework
	SSR Whistleblower Policy
Other Documents:	SSR Complaints and Feedback Policy
	Victorian Child Safe Standards (2022)
	Commission for Children and Young People (CCYP) Guidance Materials

DOCUMENT MANAGEMENT

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Notes	1. Policy documents should be in PDF format. Editable versions of this policy are uncontrolled.