

CHILD SAFE STANDARD 4: 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. [This fact sheet updates the earlier version released on 15 July 2016.](#)

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.
- Implement practices to ensure that the principal is satisfied an external applicant is suitable for child-connected work prior to the person commencing employment.
- Ensure that current letters of offer available on HRWeb are used.
- 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].

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.

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 <u>for all new</u> 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) now include a standard clause regarding child safety. The Roles and Responsibilities for the Teaching Service document has been amended to include the statement "to provide a child safe environment in accordance with child safe standards" for all job categories 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 	<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 the child safe clause that has been included for all job categories (Principal Class, Teacher, Paraprofessional and Education Support) in the Roles and Responsibilities document. 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 include the revised wording.

Requirement	Departmental action	School action
	<p>general well-being of all students in attendance at the school including compliance with the Child Safe</p>	
<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 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>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The 'Recruitment in Schools' Guide has been updated to include that, prior to an external applicant commencing employment, the principal must be satisfied that the person is suitable for child connected work, as follows: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ The person's current or immediate past employer is to be contacted and asked a range of questions as outlined in the <i>Suitability for child-connected work</i> section in the Guide. ○ Where the responses to these questions raise any concerns with the principal, before taking any further action in relation to that person's employment, the principal must seek advice from the Employee Conduct Branch. • Letters of Offer for all school-based positions have been amended to include a reference to the offer being subject to the person being suitable for child-connected work (see Forms-teaching service page on HRWeb). 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Principals implement practices to ensure that they are satisfied an external applicant is suitable for child connected work prior to the person's employment. • The casual relief and school council pre-employment requirements are understood and checked. • Ensure that current letters of offer are used (see Forms-Teaching Service page on HRWeb).

Requirement	Departmental action	School action
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Pre-employment requirements information on the casual relief and school council employment pages have been updated. 	
<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"> Alignment of changes to Induction processes/policy include the following updates: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> New Teacher Induction Plan Checklist for Principals Guide for Beginning teachers 2016 Principal's Induction Guide All updated Induction related material is housed on the Principal's portal and/or the Induction homepage. Links will also be provided through the PROTECT portal under Standard 4. Further work will be undertaken to develop a Volunteer and Service Contractor Checklist for Principals before the beginning of the 2017 school year. 	
<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*