

# Child Safe Policy

October 2020



West Gippsland  
Libraries

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# Child Safe Policy

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Document Control	
August 2016	Version 1
August 2018	Draft Revision
October 2020	Draft Revision with amendments and updated contact information
December 2020	Revision Adopted by Board on Dec 4 <sup>th</sup> , 2020



## 1. Title

Child Safe Policy

## 2. Policy Statement

This policy is an overarching policy that provides an overview of key elements of West Gippsland Libraries approach to creating a Child-safe organisation.

## 3. Our Child Safety Commitment

West Gippsland Libraries is committed to the safety and wellbeing of all children and young people.

## 4. Scope

This policy applies to all Corporation employees, volunteers, Board members and Community Advisory Committee members.

Specific procedures and instructions are housed within the WGL 'Child Safety Resources, Procedures and Information' section of the WGL project management platform and are easily accessible by all staff. In some areas, specific actions and processes are expanded further within the documentation relevant to a particular work area. For example, recruitment procedures are embedded within Human Resources documentation, and risk assessment procedures are embedded within risk management processes. Project Management product directs staff to relevant locations of materials and work instructions. Our general or overall WGL Code of Conduct also governs our commitment to creating ongoing Cultural change with regard to Child Safety.

## 5. Policy Details

### i. Victorian Government legislation

The Victorian Government established a three-phase implementation plan to help protect children. The three areas of focus apply to criminal law reform, civil law reform and the creation of child safe organisations. West Gippsland Libraries is a provider of services for children and families and has implemented the Victorian Child Safe Standards and will continue to embed and fulfil our obligations within these standards. The Victorian Government is currently reviewing the Seven Victorian Standards, and is considering whether any adjustments need to be made to better align with the National Principles for Child Safe Organisations. At present (October 2020) the Victorian Standards are still in operation and are mandatory for organisations in accordance with the Child Wellbeing and Safety Act 2005. (CCYP Oct 2020)

The Victorian Reportable Conduct Scheme is also established by the Child Wellbeing and Safety Act 2005 and was developed to improve organisational responses to allegations of child abuse and neglect by employees, workers, contractors, volunteers or other positions directly engaged by an organisation covered by the scheme. Heads of organisations have specific obligations under the reportable conduct scheme, including notifying the Commission for Children and Young People of any reportable allegations and undertaking appropriate investigations. There is extensive information available via the CCYP website and within the WGL Child Safety Resources

### ii. The Seven Child Safe Standards

#### Child Safe Standard One:

- Strategies to embed an organisational culture of child safety, including through effective leadership arrangements

#### Child Safe Standard two:

- A Child safe policy and/or statement of commitment to Child Safety

#### Child Safe Standard three:

- A code of conduct that establishes clear expectations for appropriate behaviour with children



Child Safe Standard four:

- Screening, supervision, training and other human resource practices that reduce the risk of child abuse by new and existing personnel

Child Safe Standard five:

- Processes for responding to and reporting suspected child abuse

Child Safe Standard six:

- Strategies to identify and reduce or remove risks of child abuse

Child Safe Standard Seven:

- Strategies to promote the participation and empowerment of children

**iii. Support and Promotion of the principles which are embedded within the Seven Child Safe Standards**

All staff, board members, and volunteers have a responsibility and duty of care to protect children; to deliver the WGL child safety message and to lead cultural change throughout the community. As providers of services and programs we maintain an awareness and commitment to:

- the cultural safety of Aboriginal children
- The safety of children from a culturally and linguistically diverse background
- The safety of children with a disability.
  - We encourage ongoing learning and professional development in relation to these principles.

**iv. A Child Safety Focused Culture – where the needs of children are considered first**

As a child safe organisation, we are committed to the following principles:

- Zero tolerance for child abuse
- We act in the best interests of children
- We actively promote child safe spaces
- We support and encourage the empowerment of children
- We build a culture that understands and promotes our obligation as Victorian citizens to report our concerns if we have a reasonable belief that a child may be in danger or at risk of harm.

**v. Child Safety in a Remote and online delivery setting**

- We are vigilant and mindful about child safety when adapting services and activities to a remote or online format, such as has occurred during Covid-19. With this at front of mind we:
  - Examine and understand any opportunities which adults may have to initiate unwanted or inappropriate contact with children and young people via technologies
  - Establish safeguards for any one-on-one contact with children via services such as live chat
  - Think about the likelihood of children entering into bullying or abusive contact with other children via technologies
  - Think about the security and appropriateness of our online platforms and delivery



**vi. Child Abuse Definition**

Abuse is an act or acts which endangers a child's health, wellbeing and/or development. It can be a single event, or a series of traumatic events and can have lifelong consequences. Examples of child abuse are:

- Physical abuse
- Sexual abuse
- Neglect
- Grooming
- Cumulative harm
- Multi-dimensional abuse

**vii. Supporting our staff and community**

Our work with children and families is governed by risk management principles and we are mindful of the following factors when determining and assessing levels of risk

- Participants
- Activities
- Settings
- Supervision

**viii. Recruitment**

- We are explicit about our child safety status in our internal and external advertising of vacancies
- We clearly articulate our child-safe status at the commencement of interviews
- We include a selection of child-safe focused questions in our interviews
- We conduct referee checks on all staff and volunteers
- Working with Children Checks and Police Checks are mandatory as part of the recruitment process for employees and volunteers alike
- A child safety induction and overview take place at commencement

**ix. Reporting and Responding**

- Kathie Olden (Manager Volunteers & Community Participation) and Michelle Nicholls (Manager Library Services) are Child Safety Officers and trainers, and Tanya Patterson (Library Customer Service & Programs Officer) is also a Child Safety Champion. Further Child Safety Champions are to be trained and appointed also

Reporting procedures (including a simple flowchart) are located in the 'Child Safety – Resources, Procedures and Information' Monday.com board which is accessible to all staff.

**6. roles and Responsibilities**

The following positions are responsible for approving, implementing, complying with, monitoring, evaluating, review and providing advice on the policy and procedures:

Implementation	CEO and Child Safety Officers
Compliance	All employees



Development/Review	Child Safety Officer/s
Interpretation/Advice	CEO and Child Safety Officers

## 7. Supporting Documents

This Policy should be read in conjunction with all other relevant Corporation policies and procedures, as well as relevant legislative requirements.

The Reportable Conduct Scheme – Information sheets

<https://www.cyp.vic.gov.au/child-safety/resources/reportable-conduct-scheme-information-sheets/#TOC-1>

The 7 Child Safety Standards & Principles – further information

<https://www.cyp.vic.gov.au/child-safety/being-a-child-safe-organisation/the-child-safe-standards/>

## 8. Human Rights Charter

This policy has been considered in relation to the *Victorian Charter of Human Rights and Responsibilities Act 2006* and it has been determined that it does not contravene the Charter.

## 9. Monitoring, Evaluation and Review

This policy will be reviewed every two years, or earlier if legislation changes.

## 10. Non-compliance, Breaches and Sanctions

Failure to comply with this policy, supporting procedures or guidelines, will be subject to investigation which may lead to disciplinary action and potential legal ramifications.

## 11. Approval

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**Board Chair**

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**Date Approved**

