

# Child Safety Policy — 2021



# OUR VISION

Our vision is for connected, inclusive and resilient communities that are supported to grow and thrive.



# MISSION SUPPORTING OUR COMMUNITIES IS OUR MISSION. WE HELP PEOPLE:

## OUR VALUES

**Relationships**  
We build relationships with our stakeholders, communities and each other.

**Excellence**  
We will deliver excellence in everything we do.

**Bravery**  
We anticipate and bravely adapt with the changing needs of our communities.



**Connect**  
We are responsive and bring people together



**Belong**  
We are inclusive and work with you



**Learn**  
Our free resources allow minds to explore and create

# Child Safety Policy – 2021

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<b>Document Control</b>	
October 2021	Version 1

## 1. Title

Child Safety Policy

## 2. Policy Statement

This policy is an overarching policy that provides an overview of key elements of the Myli – My Community Library Ltd (Myli) approach to creating a Child-safe organisation.

## 3. Purpose

To comply with, adhere to and support the Victorian State Governments Child Safe Standards

## 4. Scope

This policy applies to all employees, volunteers, Board members and Community Advisory Committee members. Specific procedures and instructions are housed within the 'Child Safety Resources, Procedures and Information' package on Monday.com 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. The 'Child Safety' Monday.com board directs staff to relevant locations of materials and work instructions. Our general or overall Myli Code of Conduct also governs our commitment to creating ongoing Cultural change regarding 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. Myli 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 initial seven standards commenced in January 2016, and new Standards, to be introduced in July 2022 will see an increase to eleven standards. These increased standards better align with the National Principles for Child Safe Organisations. Victorian Child Safety Standards 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 Myli Child Safety Resources

### ii. The Eleven Child Safe Standards

#### Child Safe Standard 1

**Organisations establish a culturally safe environment in which the diverse and unique identities and experiences of Aboriginal children and young people are respected and valued.**

In complying with Child Safe Standard 1, an organisation must, at a minimum, ensure:

1.1 a child's ability to express their culture and enjoy their cultural rights is encouraged and actively supported

1.2 Strategies are embedded within the organisation which equip all members to acknowledge and appreciate the strengths of Aboriginal culture and understand its importance to the wellbeing and safety of Aboriginal children and young people

1.3 Measures are adopted by the organisation to ensure racism within the organisation is identified,

confronted, and not tolerated. Any instances of racism are addressed with appropriate consequences.

1.4 The organisation actively supports and facilitates participation and inclusion within it by Aboriginal children, young people, and their families

1.5 All of the organisation's policies, procedures, systems, and processes together create a culturally safe and inclusive environment and meet the needs of Aboriginal children, young people, and their families

#### Child Safe Standard 2

##### **Child safety and wellbeing is embedded in organisational leadership, governance, and culture.**

In complying with Child Safe Standard 2, an organisation must, at a minimum, ensure:

2.1 The organisation makes a public commitment to child safety

2.2 A child safe culture is championed and modelled at all levels of the organisation from the top down and bottom up

2.3 Governance arrangements facilitate implementation of the child safety and wellbeing policy at all levels

2.4 A Code of Conduct provides guidelines for staff and volunteers on expected behavioural standards and responsibilities

2.5 Risk management strategies focus on preventing, identifying, and mitigating risks to children and young people

2.6 Staff and volunteers understand their obligations on information sharing and recordkeeping

#### Child Safe Standard 3

##### **Children and young people are empowered about their rights, participate in decisions affecting them and are taken seriously**

In complying with Child Safe Standard 3, an organisation must, at a minimum, ensure:

3.1 Children and young people are informed about all of their rights, including to safety, information, and participation

3.2 The importance of friendships is recognised and support from peers is encouraged, to help children and young people feel safe and be less isolated

3.3 Where relevant to the setting or context, children and young people are offered access to sexual abuse prevention programs and to relevant related information in an age-appropriate way

3.4 Staff and volunteers are attuned to signs of harm and facilitate child-friendly ways for children and young people to express their views, participate in decision-making and raise their concerns

3.5 organisations have strategies in place to develop a culture that facilitates participation and is responsive to the input of children and young people

3.6 organisations provide opportunities for children and young people to participate and responsive to their contributions, thereby strengthening confidence and engagement

#### Child Safe Standard 4

##### **Families and communities are informed, and involved in promoting child safety and wellbeing**

In complying with Child Safe Standard 4, an organisation must, at a minimum, ensure:

4.1 Families participate in decisions affecting their child

4.2 The organisation engages and openly communicates with families and the community about its child safe approach and relevant information is accessible.

4.3 Families and communities have a say in the development and review of the organisation's policies

and practices

4.4 Families, carers and the community are informed about the organisation's operations and governance

#### Child Safe Standard 5

##### **Equity is upheld and diverse needs respected in policy and practice**

In complying with Child Safe Standard 5, an organisation must, at a minimum, ensure:

5.1 The organisation, including staff and volunteers, understands children and young people's diverse circumstances, and provides support and responds to those who are vulnerable.

5.2 Children and young people have access to information, support and complaints processes in ways that are culturally safe, accessible, and easy to understand

5.3 The organisation pays particular attention to the needs of children and young people with disability or special needs, children and young people from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds, those who are unable to live at home, and lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender and intersex children and young people

5.4 The organisation pays particular attention to the needs of Aboriginal children and young people and provides / promotes a culturally safe environment for them

#### Child Safe Standard 6

##### **People working with children and young people are suitable and supported to reflect child safety and wellbeing values in practice**

In complying with Child Safe Standard 6, an organisation must, at a minimum, ensure:

6.1 Recruitment, including advertising, referee checks and staff and volunteer pre-employment screening, emphasise child safety and wellbeing

6.2 Relevant staff and volunteers have current working with children checks or equivalent background checks

6.3 All staff and volunteers receive an appropriate induction and are aware of their responsibilities to children and young people, including record keeping, information sharing and reporting obligations

#### Child Safe Standard 7

##### **Processes for complaints and concerns are child focused**

In complying with Child Safe Standard 7, an organisation must, at a minimum, ensure:

7.1 The organisation has an accessible, child focused complaint handling policy which clearly outlines the roles and responsibilities of leadership, staff, and volunteers, approaches to dealing with different types of complaints, breaches of relevant policies or the Code of Conduct and obligations to act and report

7.2 Effective complaint handling processes are understood by children and young people, families, staff, and volunteers, and are culturally safe

7.3 Complaints are taken seriously, and responded to promptly and thoroughly

7.4 The organisation has policies and procedures in place that address reporting of complaints and concerns to relevant authorities, whether or not the law requires reporting, and co-operates with law enforcement

7.5 Reporting, privacy and employment law obligations are met

### Child Safe Standard 8

#### **Staff and volunteers are equipped with the knowledge, skills, and awareness to keep children and young people safe through ongoing education and training**

In complying with Child Safe Standard 8, an organisation must, at a minimum ensure:

- 8.1 Staff and volunteers are trained and supported to effectively implement the organisation's child safety and wellbeing policy
- 8.2 Staff and volunteers receive training and information to recognise indicators of child harm including harm caused by other children and young people
- 8.3 Staff and volunteers receive training and information to respond effectively to issues of child safety and wellbeing and support colleagues who disclose harm
- 8.4 Staff and volunteers receive training and information on how to build culturally safe environments for children and young people

### Child Safe Standard 9

#### **Physical and online environments promote safety and wellbeing while minimising the opportunity for children and young people to be harmed**

In complying with Child Safe Standard 9, an organisation must, at a minimum, ensure:

- 9.1 Staff and volunteers identify and mitigate risks in the online and physical environments without compromising a child's right to privacy, access to information, social connections and learning opportunities
- 9.2 The online environment is used in accordance with the organisations' code of conduct and child safety and wellbeing policy and practices
- 9.3 risk management plans consider risks posed by organisational settings, activities, and the physical environment
- 9.4 Organisations that contract facilities and services from third parties have procurement policies that ensure the safety of children and young people

### Child Safe Standard 10

#### **Implementation of the Child Safe Standards is regularly reviewed and improved**

In complying with Child Safe Standard 10, an organisation must, at a minimum, ensure:

- 10.1 The organisation regularly reviews, evaluates, and improves child safe practices
- 10.2 Complaints, concerns and safety incidents are analysed to identify causes and systemic failures to inform continuous improvement
- 10.3 the organisation reports on the finding of relevant reviews to staff and volunteers, community and families and children and young people

### Child Safe Standard 11

#### **Policies and procedures document how the organisation is safe for children and young people**

In complying with Child Safe Standard 11, an organisation must, at a minimum ensure:

- 11.1 Policies and procedures address all Child Safe Standards
- 11.2 Policies and procedures are documented and easy to understand
- 11.3 Best practice models and stakeholder consultation informs the development of policies and procedures

11.4 Leaders champion and model compliance with policies and procedures

11.5 Staff and volunteers understand and implement policies and procedures

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

All staff, board members, and volunteers have a responsibility and duty of care to protect children; to deliver the Myli 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 and the provision of a culturally safe environment.
- The safety of children from a culturally and linguistically diverse background
- The safety of children with a disability, through an inclusive practice lens (see point iv. Below)

**iv. Developing ongoing Inclusive Practice and Culture at Myli**

- Myli strives to uphold equity and to respect diverse needs and experiences
- Respecting diverse needs can include, but is not limited to, the provision of appropriate training for team members that ensures children, young people and families with lived experience are consulted and involved in an accessible and meaningful way
- The Commission for Children and Young People recommend that particular attention to respectful policy and practice be at front of mind when working with Children and Young People with disability, Children & Young people from Culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds, those who may not be able to live at home, and to lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender and intersex children and young people
- Myli recognises the need for ongoing education about the provision and promotion of our libraries as welcoming and culturally safe environments for Aboriginal Children and young people.

**v. 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.

**vi. 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 bullying or abusive contact with other children via technologies
- Think about the security and appropriateness of our online platforms and delivery
- Think about the practical applications of safety in a remote setting – for example – should

cameras be switched off and should identifying information be hidden? What is the likelihood of people outside the activity being able to access information about the participants?

**vii. 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

**viii. 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

**ix. 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

**x. Reporting and Responding**

Further information and guidance can be sought from the following key staff positions:

- The Manager of Volunteers & Community Participation
- The Manager of Library Services
- Other trained and authorised Child Safety Champions / officers as may be appointed from time-to-time

Reporting procedures (including a simple flowchart) are 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 reviewing and providing advice on the policy and procedures:

Implementation	CEO and Child Safety Officers
Compliance	All employees, Volunteers, Board Members and Community Advisory Committee members.
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 Myli policies and procedures, as well as relevant legislative requirements including.

*The Child Wellbeing and Safety Act 2005*

## 8. Human Rights Charter

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

## 9. Monitoring, Evaluation and Review

The Child Safety Policy will be reviewed every two years, or earlier if legislation changes

## 10. Non-compliance, Breaches and Sanctions

Employees have an obligation to ensure that this policy and/or any relevant legislation laws are not breached. This is in accordance with the current 'Code of Conduct'. Depending on the severity of any breach, Myli may need to initiate counselling and/or escalate disciplinary action. Unlawful actions may lead to the laying of criminal charges or legal action.

## 11. Definitions and Abbreviations

Extensive information sheets and further details can be accessed on the website of the Commission for Children and Young People at [www.cyp.vic.gov.au](http://www.cyp.vic.gov.au).