

Implementing the Child Safe Scheme

An introduction for faith-based organisations

2025

www.ocg.nsw.gov.au



Acknowledgement to Country

We acknowledge the Traditional Custodians of the land where we live, learn and our young people play – and where this handbook was developed on. We celebrate the longest living culture in the world, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples, and their continuous connections to Country including the land, waterways and skies.

We pay respect to Elders past and present, who continue to walk with us offering cultural strength and knowledge which is passed onto Jarjums (children) to hold for future generations to come. It manifests in song, dance, storytelling, language, ceremony and customary lore. This is what we aim to protect at the OCG.

Artwork with thanks to Wiradjuri woman, Lua Pellegrini



Acknowledgement to survivors

The effects of abuse are long lasting and serious. We want to encourage everyone to champion child safety. We owe it to survivors to prevent future abuse, whether it's sexual, physical, psychological, grooming, misconduct or lack of appropriate care.

Acknowledgement to contributors

This introductory guide builds on contributions from many individual stakeholders and the work originally done by the NSW Ombudsman's office. More recently, contributions have been made by members of the Community of Practice for Faith Organisations hosted by the NSW Office of the Children's Guardian, who emphasised the need for more practical, step-by-step guidance. We extend our thanks to all who have offered advice and suggestions or contributed to this guide.

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Introduction

Who is this guide for?

This introductory guide aims to provide faith-based organisations with practical help to be child safe and so they comply with the NSW Child Safe Scheme.

The Office of the Children's Guardian (OCG) acknowledges that we share a strong commitment with faith-based organisations to keep children safe. Many faith-based organisations have already taken significant steps. They should celebrate the work they've already done and use it to enhance their child safe practice.

We are also aware that some faith-based organisations have further to go or are just getting started on meeting the requirements of the Child Safe Scheme.

This guide provides a foundation for understanding and implementing the Child Safe Standards, building on what organisations already have in place to support children's safety, participation and wellbeing.

How to use the guide

The introductory section to the guide provides a brief explanation of the Child Safe Scheme, the 10 Child Safe Standards and the OCG's approach to monitoring how organisations are complying with the Scheme.

The rest of the guide is in two parts:

Part 1 – Getting started

This section provides six practical steps you can take to understand and implement the Child Safe Standards.

These action-based steps will help embed child safety in your everyday thinking and practice across your organisation. They can be done in parallel or one at a time – however works best for your organisation.

There are links to the OCG's resources to support you at each step. These include sample templates for key documents, an action tracker to check your progress and a Child Safe Self-Assessment tool to identify areas to build on to meet the requirements of the Child Safe Scheme to keep children safe.

Part 2 – The Child Safe Standards

A critical first step is to understand the purpose of each of the 10 Child Safe Standards and what organisations can do to put them in place.

For each Standard, some basic actions are highlighted, as well as other ideas and approaches that may suit your individual faith-based setting.

As context for each Standard, we also note some key findings from the Royal Commission into Institutional Responses to Child Sexual Abuse and some of the challenges faith-based organisations faced historically – or may continue to face.

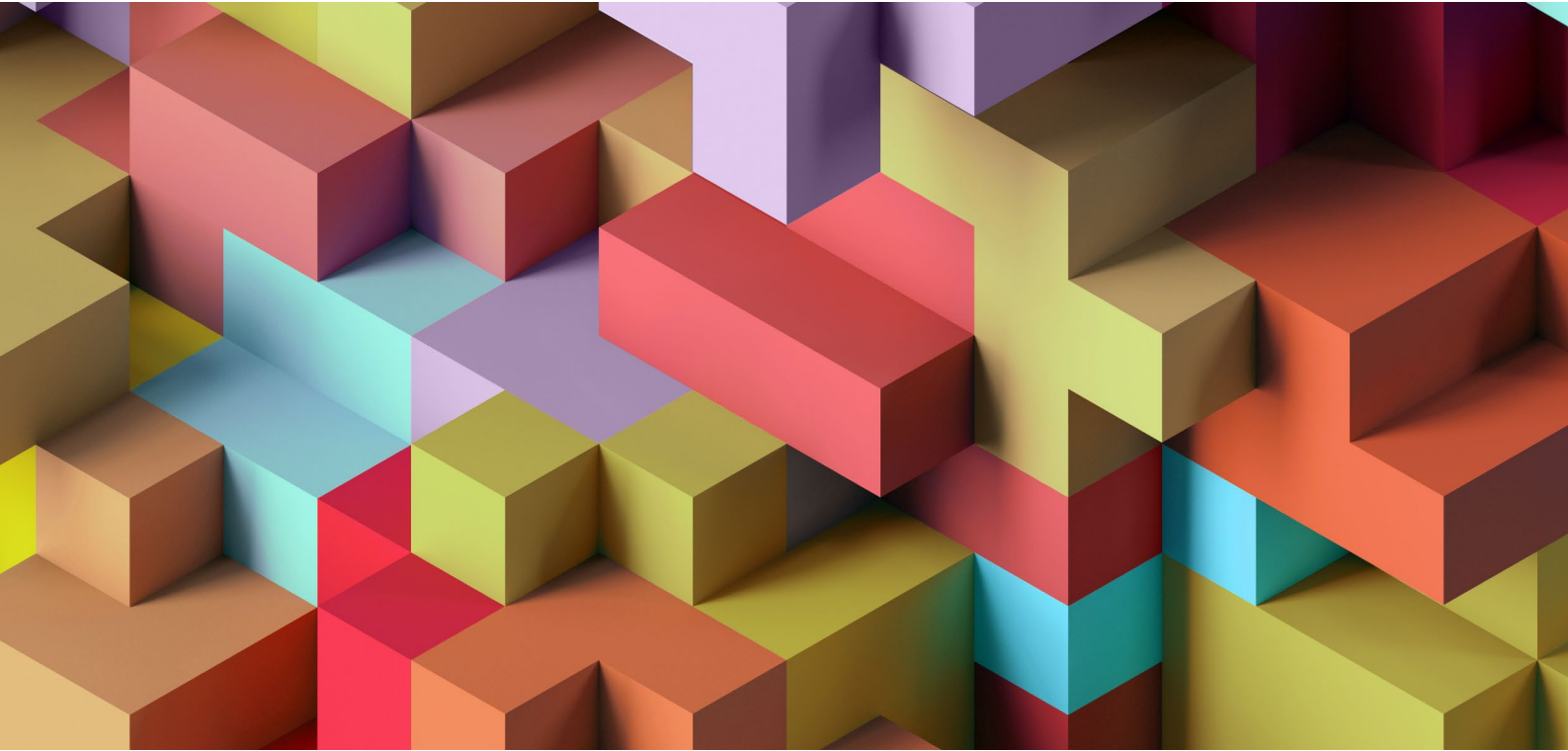
Finally, we provide some questions for reflection.

findings from the Royal Commission and challenges for organisations



Questions for reflection





The NSW Child Safe Scheme

From 2012 to 2017 the Australian Government held a special inquiry called the Royal Commission into Institutional Responses to Child Sexual Abuse. The inquiry looked at cases of child abuse in various institutions across Australia. It found that thousands of organisations had failed to protect children from abuse – or to report it properly when children or others raised concerns or abuse was identified.

The NSW Government responded to the Royal Commission by introducing new laws in February 2022. This was called the NSW Child Safe Scheme. The Scheme aims to make sure that organisations in NSW are doing everything they can to keep children safe from all kinds of abuse, including child sexual abuse – and to know what to do if it does happen.

Under these laws, it is now a mandatory requirement for religious bodies to comply with the Child Safe Scheme if they provide services to children, or if adults have contact with children in their organisation.

While the Royal Commission looked at historical events, we are aware that child abuse still occurs in organisations, including some faith-based organisations. For this reason, organisations need to remain vigilant and ensure they have systems and strategies in place to prevent, detect and respond effectively to child abuse.

This starts with organisations understanding 10 Child Safe Standards and practically applying them in their own settings.

The Child Safe Standards

The Child Safe Scheme is built on 10 Child Safe Standards. The Standards aim to promote child safety, by helping to prevent, detect and respond more effectively to harm and abuse if it occurs.

The intention of the standards is to drive change in organisational culture and leadership so that child safety becomes central to everyday thinking and practice. By applying the Standards:

- the best interests of children are always at the forefront
- child abuse is never tolerated, and everyone understands they have a role to play in creating a safe and supportive environment
- concerns about child safety are taken seriously and everyone is empowered to report allegations of abuse without obstruction, and
- systems and processes to respond to allegations of child harm are fair, transparent and effective.

The Standards can be applied in a way that best fits your organisation, the community it operates in, and how children interact with your settings and services. This means tailoring your approach.



Standard 1

Child safety is embedded in organisational leadership, governance and culture



Standard 6

Processes to respond to complaints of child abuse are child focused



Standard 2

Children participate in decisions affecting them and are taken seriously



Standard 7

Staff are equipped with the knowledge, skills and awareness to keep children safe through continual education and training



Standard 3

Families and communities are informed and involved



Standard 8

Physical and online environments minimise the opportunity for abuse to occur



Standard 4

Equity is upheld and diversity is taken into account



Standard 9

Implementation of the Child Safe Standards is continuously reviewed and improved



Standard 5

People working with children are suitable and supported



Standard 10

Policies and procedures document how the organisation is child safe

How to comply with the Child Safe Scheme

Our approach

The Office of the Children's Guardian is responsible for overseeing the Child Safe Scheme. This includes making sure that child-related organisations in NSW are implementing the Child Safe Standards to keep children safe.

We want to work together with organisations to help them understand the Child Safe Scheme. However, if an organisation is not willing to use the Child Safe Standards or are placing children at risk of harm, we have other options. This is called our regulatory response.

Our regulatory response has three parts:

- firstly, we can monitor how organisations are using the Child Safe Standards
- secondly, we can investigate organisations, and
- finally, we can use our enforcement powers under NSW law to make sure an organisation does what is required to keep children safe.

Our monitoring and investigation powers

We can take a range of actions to monitor or investigate compliance with the scheme, including:

- requesting information about an organisation's child safe systems, policies and processes
- inspecting the places the organisation operates in
- directing the organisation to complete the OCG's Child Safe Self-Assessment, and
- reviewing the organisation's response to our recommendations.

Our enforcement powers

Following an investigation, the Children's Guardian may decide that enforcement actions are needed to make sure that an organisation changes what they are doing to comply with the Child Safe Standards.

To start this process, we may either send out a 'compliance notice' or put in place 'an enforceable undertaking'.

A compliance notice includes a list of actions that we require an organisation to take to improve their child safe systems, policies and processes. The organisation will then have to show us how they have implemented the actions in the compliance notice.

An enforceable undertaking is a written agreement that states that an organisation agrees to take specific actions to improve child safe systems, policies and processes by a particular date.

We can issue fines if an organisation fails to follow a compliance notice or an enforceable undertaking.

We can also post the names of organisations and their compliance notices or enforceable undertakings on our website.



The Child Safe Standards and the NSW Reportable Conduct Scheme

Under NSW law, it is also a mandatory requirement for religious bodies to comply with the [NSW Reportable Conduct Scheme](#) if they provide services to children, or if adults have contact with children in their organisation.

The OCG also administers the Reportable Conduct Scheme and provides [information and resources on its website](#).

Organisations have different sets of responsibilities under the Child Safe Scheme and the Reportable Conduct Scheme. The schemes work together to help organisations protect children and respond properly to allegations of child abuse.

Useful resources

Reportable Conduct Scheme home page

ocg.nsw.gov.au/organisations/reportable-conduct-scheme

Reportable Conduct Fact Sheets

ocg.nsw.gov.au/organisations/reportable-conduct-scheme/reportable-conduct-fact-sheets

1

Getting started with the Child Safe Standards



Six steps to getting started

For small organisations, implementing the Standards may seem daunting. However, most organisations will already have some things in place to help keep children safe. You can build on these to meet the requirements of the Child Safe Scheme and can find support by using the OCG's resources and training.

To put the foundations of child safety in place, there are **six action-based steps** you can take.

The steps can be taken at the same time as each other, or one at a time – however works best for your organisation.

For a handy version of these six steps, download or print the OCG's [4-page Getting Started guide](#), also available in several community languages.

Step 1: Understand the Child Safe Standards

It is important to know the purpose of each of the 10 Standards and what they look like in practice.

Read Part 2 of this guide, which takes you through each of the Standards.

The OCG also provides many free resources to help you find out more about the Standards. You can:

- [watch a short introductory video about the Child Safe Scheme and Standards](#)
- read the OCG's [Guide to the Child Safe Standards](#)
- [watch videos on how the Standards can be applied in different settings](#)
- [register for the OCG's Introduction to the Child Safe Standards training.](#)

Step 2: Make sure your staff and volunteers have necessary checks


Make sure that everyone in your organisation who is required to have a [Working with Children Check \(WWCC\)](#) has a verified clearance or an application underway. Your organisation must verify all WWCCs on [the OCG website](#). Some workers may also need an [NDIS Worker Check \(NDISWC\)](#).

Step 3: Develop or review your key Child Safe documents

As a foundation to creating a child safe organisation, your organisation should have the following child safe documents in place:

- Statement of Commitment to Child Safety
- Child Safe Policy
- Child Safe Code of Conduct
- Child Safe Reporting Policy
- Child Safe Recruitment, Induction and Training Policy
- Child Safe Risk Management Plan.

The OCG provides [sample templates](#) that you can use as a starting point to develop child safe documents to suit your own organisation. Ask for feedback from across your organisation, including from young people. It's important that these documents are then shared with all staff and volunteers, as well as children, parents, guardians and your community.



The image shows a preview of a 'Statement of Commitment to Child Safety' template. At the top, there is a text box labeled 'Enter your organisation's name' with a placeholder box. Below this is the title 'Statement of Commitment to Child Safety'. Underneath is an 'Instructions' section with a list of five steps: 1. Adapt the content provided in the sample to suit your organisation as it relates to your activities. 2. Ask people across your organisation to review and provide feedback. 3. Delete these instructions when finished. 4. Add your organisation's name and branding. 5. Share this document across your organisation and make sure it is easily available on your website and offline for everyone who accesses your services and events. The main body of the document contains a commitment statement: 'At Enter your organisation's name every child has the right to be safe and feel safe. We commit to the safety and wellbeing of every child in our care.' This is followed by two sections: 'To keep children safe, we commit to:' with a bulleted list of five points (implementing the 10 Child Safe Standards, providing a safe and supportive environment, making sure children are not exposed to harmful conduct, empowering children to participate in decisions, and making sure children know who to approach), and 'As a child safe organisation, we commit to:' with a bulleted list of three points (educating everyone, making sure everyone knows how to respond to complaints, and making sure everyone knows how to respond to breaches).

1 Preview of Statement of Commitment to Child Safety template

Step 4: Reduce risks to children in your organisation

Another key step to creating a child safe environment is to look across your organisation to identify potential risks to children. You then need to take action to reduce or eliminate these risks. Use your Child Safe Risk Management Plan to describe these risks and actions, and regularly review and update the plan.

To get started on understanding and managing risks to children in organisations:

- watch a [short video](#) that explains key risk principles, with examples from sports clubs, and
- read the introductory section of the OCG's handbook on managing risk: [Risk management and the Child Safe Standards Part 1: Responding to risk](#).

Step 5: Show your commitment to being a child-safe organisation

Some other simple things your organisation can do to promote and prioritise children's safety:

- **Promote and publish your Statement of Commitment to Child Safety.** This must be championed by the leaders of your organisation. You can then share it on your website and social media pages.
- **Make sure that child safety is the top priority of your organisation.** Add child safety as a standard agenda item in your regular staff, management and board meetings. Use these opportunities to make it known that child safety everyone's responsibility, and to track your progress.
- **Print and display Child Safe Standards posters.** Put these in prominent places to show that you value child safety and encourage reporting if something goes wrong. The OCG provides posters in a range of community languages.
- **Make sure all children in your organisation can speak up** about anything that concerns them. Giving children opportunities to participate in decisions that affect them helps them feel safe and included.
- **Communicate regularly to your community by newsletter, social media or email.** Make sure that volunteers, parents, guardians and others understand the importance of the Child Safe Standards in your organisation and that keeping children safe is a shared responsibility.

Step 6: Track and review your progress

You can use the OCG's [Getting Started Tracker](#) to keep track of your progress across these 6 steps.

Once you're underway, use the OCG's online [Child Safe Self-Assessment](#) to see how your organisation is doing. Share the customised action report with your staff, management and board members, and use this to identify the areas you still may need to build on.



2 Child Safe Self-Assessment action report sample



Reach out to the OCG for support

The OCG has a range of free resources to help you get started on your child safe journey. Some are available in languages other than English. There are templates, handbooks, videos, podcasts and eLearning modules. Go to our 'Getting Started' webpage: www.ocg.nsw.gov.au/child-safe-scheme/getting-started

Scan to visit the Getting Started webpage



Scan to sign up to our faith sector newsletter



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The Child Safe Standards



Standard 1

Child safety is embedded in organisational leadership, governance and culture

What does Standard 1 look like in a child safe organisation?

Organisations prioritise child safety in what they say and what they do

- Leaders champion a child safe culture both inside and outside the organisation.
- Organisations let their communities know they have a strong commitment to child safety.
- Child safety is seen as a shared responsibility for all staff and volunteers in the organisation.
- Risk management plans focus on identifying, preventing and lowering risks of harm to children.
- Staff and volunteers comply with codes of conduct that set clear rules describing how they interact with children.
- Staff and volunteers understand what they must do if they identify abuse.

How can faith-based organisations implement this Standard?

Getting started with Standard 1

Have your key child safe documents in place. These are a Statement of Commitment to Child Safety, a Child Safe Policy, a Child Safe Code of Conduct, a Child Safe Reporting Policy, a Child Safe Recruitment, Induction and Training Policy and a Child Safe Risk Management Plan. You can start by downloading [our sample templates](#).

- Share your Statement of Commitment to Child Safety with your community and let all staff and volunteers know that children's safety is the highest priority of your organisation.
- Identify a key member of staff to oversee your organisation's approach to keeping children safe from harm.
- Have a standing agenda item at each staff meeting and board or committee meeting to discuss child safety.

Promote a child safe culture in your organisation

- Develop and review your key child safe documents to suit your organisation and the ways you interact with children. Make sure the documents are clearly displayed and are easy for staff, volunteers, children, families and community members to understand.
- Ensure the 'Head of Entity' in your organisation understands their legal requirements relating to the [NSW Reportable Conduct Scheme](#), to [notify the Office of the Children's Guardian](#) of reportable allegations or convictions against employees (including volunteers and contractors).
- Make sure that all new and existing staff and volunteers are clear on:
 - how they should interact with children, as set out in your Child Safe Code of Conduct, and
 - what to do if they identify abuse or other breaches of the Code, in line with your Child Safe Reporting Policy.
- Develop a [Child Safe Risk Management Plan](#) for all the services and activities you provide. Put it into action by identifying and reducing risks to children when they interact with your organisation, staff and volunteers.
- Communicate regularly that child safety is everyone's responsibility, whatever their role. For example, you can promote this message on your website, on posters in your office, halls and places of worship, through your newsletters and social media, and at religious services and events.
- Have a standing agenda item at each staff meeting and board or committee meeting to discuss child safety. For example, you could:
 - focus on a different Child Safe Standard at each meeting and check your progress
 - identify ongoing or emerging risks and how to reduce these, and
 - review your child safe policies.

Have a safeguarding team or committee

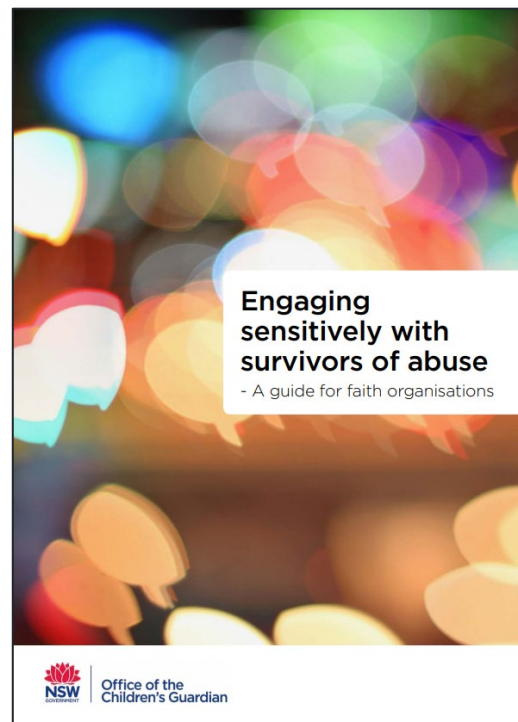
- Put an appropriate person in a position to oversee your organisation's approach to keeping children safe from harm. Identify other staff and volunteers who can act as champions to promote child safe practices.
- If you are a larger organisation, establish a Child Safeguarding Committee to give advice on best practice approaches to child safety, reporting and support for survivors of abuse.

Connect with safeguarding networks and professionals

- If you have a peak body or a state-based or national office, reach out for information, support or training they may be providing on child safeguarding.
- Develop relationships with other organisations that support child safe practices. These could be in your community, online, or via professional networks.
- Share or pool resources to identify risks to children for activities that take time to organise.

Work collaboratively with survivors of abuse

- Review the OCG's [Engaging sensitively with survivors – a guide for faith organisations](#).
- Find out about how your local survivor advocacy organisations can support survivors of abuse.
- If requested, facilitate commemorations appropriate to your faith for those who have survived abuse.



3 *Engaging sensitively with survivors of abuse guide*



Participate in events that promote child safety

- Celebrate National Child Protection Week, National Apology to Victims and Survivors of Institutional Child Sexual Abuse, Safer Internet Day and other events that specifically promote child safety and wellbeing.

Check your progress by completing the OCG's Child Safe Self-Assessment

- Assess how well your organisation is doing by using the OCG's [Child Safe Self-Assessment tool](#). Once completed, you'll be sent a customised action report showing what you're doing well and where you can improve. It will also provide links to specific resources to support your child safe journey.
- Use the customised report as a discussion and planning tool at staff meetings and with your board or committee. You can reuse the tool to check your progress over time.



Findings from the Royal Commission

In many organisations, the Royal Commission found that leaders protected their organisations and reputations, rather than the best interests of children. People holding power were automatically trusted and were often not accountable to others. Often leaders would hide behind their status or would protect others who had harmed children. There were many cases where there were conflicts of interest. Some organisations saw harming children as a moral failure, but not as something that was also illegal. This contributed to cultures where children weren't safe, and where incidents were not reported or were concealed.

What are some of the challenges faith-based organisations face when making changes?

Changing culture can take time. Organisations with fewer staff, volunteers and resources may need support to build skills and experience to apply the Standards and to put formal processes and procedures in place. The OCG can provide guidance and resources to help you. Another challenge is keeping child safety front of mind alongside other leadership responsibilities. One way to do this is to build 'child safeguarding' into regular meetings, practices, events and communications across your settings so it is embedded in how you work.

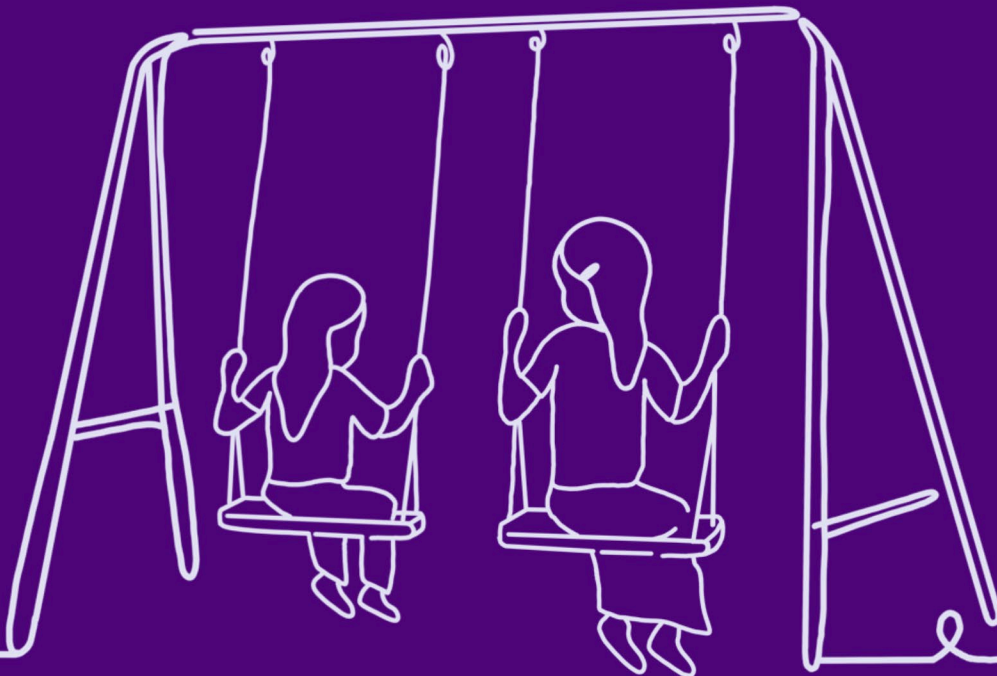


Reflective questions

How do leaders in your organisation demonstrate they see child safety as a priority?

How do leaders in your organisation model the behaviour they expect other adults to follow?

How do leaders in your organisation communicate that adults in the organisation should apply the Child Safe Standards?



Standard 2

Children participate in decisions affecting them and are taken seriously

What does Standard 2 look like in child safe organisations?

Children are encouraged to speak up and are believed

- Children are encouraged and supported to have a say about how to improve the services they are involved in.
- Children and young people have opportunities to participate in decisions that affect them.
- Staff facilitate child-friendly ways for children to communicate and raise their concerns.
- Children feel safe and connected. Friendship and peer support is valued and encouraged.
- Children can access programs that help prevent abuse, including staying safe online.

How can faith-based organisations implement this Standard?

Getting started with Standard 2

Ask children to help develop a child-friendly version of your Statement of Commitment to Child Safety and display and share this.

Make sure there are ways for all children in your organisation to speak up about anything that concerns them and participate in decisions about services and activities. This can be formal feedback processes (surveys and group discussions) and informal conversations.

Give children access to programs and information about preventing abuse and harm.

Make sure children know their rights

- Promote the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child to children, staff and the broader community. This includes, for example, the right for children to be protected from violence, abuse and neglect; for their wellbeing to be the priority in all decisions that affect them; and for children to have the right to be heard about issues that impact them and be taken seriously.
- Consider how you can emphasise in your religious or spiritual messages that children have a universal right to be protected from harm and supported in their growth and development. Promote these positive messages regularly.



4 Child-friendly version of the UN Convention of the Rights of the Child



Communicate clearly with children

- Use child-friendly, age-appropriate and accessible communications.
- Ask children to help develop a child-friendly version of your Statement of Commitment to Child Safety and other key messages.
- Download and share the [OCG's child safe information in Easy Read format](#).
- Get feedback on the best ways you can encourage children with disability to speak up about concerns.

Actively consult with children and encourage participation

- Ask children to help create or enhance any policies that affect them. For example, ask children to provide feedback on your Child Safe Code of Conduct and how it describes acceptable and non-acceptable behaviours. You can also include children in the review of your Risk Management Plan.
- Invite children to become members of your organisation's board or committee or set up a youth advisory group to provide feedback on your programs and activities. Make sure all groups of children are heard and valued.
- Hold discussions with children and their families to hear about key issues affecting them, including what it means to feel safe and be safe.
- Actively involve children in your faith-based services and other activities, making sure they have a voice and can fully participate.

Provide access or links to child safe education

- Educate children about what is acceptable and unacceptable behaviour between adults and children.
- Educate children about what is acceptable and unacceptable behaviour with each other.
- Where appropriate, offer workshops on healthy relationships and sex education in partnership with organisations skilled in this area.
- Provide information on how children can seek help and support in your organisation and by accessing other services.

Consider appointing a Children's Advocate

If your organisation has the resources to support this, appoint a suitable person as a Children's Advocate. This person should be carefully selected and trained for the role to be a safe point of contact for children. They should report to your board and senior management any concerns raised by children. Where possible, there should be one male and one female advocate. Consider sharing this role with other related organisations.



Findings from the Royal Commission

Places of worship were meant to be safe places for children, yet some people working in these environments were given unsupervised access to children which created opportunities for abuse to occur. The Commission found that religious figures held significant institutional power and community trust. Often children were not listened to and were not believed if they spoke up about abuse.

In many faith-based organisations, the topics of sexual behaviour, relationships and related subjects were not talked about. This resulted in children not being taught what was unacceptable behaviour. Further, perpetrators used religious doctrine and beliefs to excuse abuse and used grooming behaviour to silence and control the children they were abusing.

What are some of the challenges faith-based organisations face when making changes?

Some children in faith-based organisations may be there primarily to please their parents, so they may be resistant to participating in activities. Organisations should seek ways to create meaningful and engaging programs. Some faiths may find it challenging to discuss child abuse and sexual behaviours, believing this is a matter for families. Organisations should do what they believe is in the best interests of children and see how best they can support families to navigate sensitive issues and create opportunities for children to be heard and feel safe.



Reflective questions

How do you empower the youngest groups of children in your organisation to participate to their fullest potential in how your organisation is run?

How do you encourage the oldest group of young people in your organisation to participate to their fullest potential in how your organisation is run?

What child-friendly reporting processes exist in your organisation so that children can easily and safely report concerns about their own safety or that of their peers?



Standard 3

Families and communities are informed and involved.

What does Standard 3 look like in child safe organisations?

Organisations actively engage with families and communities to support children

- Families and guardians understand they have the primary responsibility for the upbringing and development of their child and any decisions affecting them.
- Organisations engage in open, two-way communication with families and communities about their child safety approach and relevant information is accessible.
- Families and communities have a say in the organisation's policies and practices. Their feedback is used to improve services and approaches.
- Families and communities are informed about the organisation's operations and governance.

How can faith-based organisations implement this Standard?

Getting started with Standard 3

Make sure families and communities engaging with your organisation understand your child safe approaches. For example, you can explain to them via parent evenings, newsletters, noticeboards, posters, your website, social media and information packs.

Regularly ask parents, carers and your community to give feedback on how you can improve your child safe practices and children's participation.

Support family and community members to understand and apply your Child Safe Code of Conduct.

Make everyone aware of your safeguarding practices

- Use practical strategies to improve external communication about your organisation's approach to child safeguarding. This could include:
 - sharing copies of your Statement of Commitment to Child Safety, your Child Safe Policy and your Child Safe Code of Conduct with any families joining your organisation
 - having a dedicated 'child safety and wellbeing' section on your website and social media, and in your newsletters, and
 - downloading and sharing copies of the [OCG's child safe information in Easy Read format](#).
- Have parents and carers sign a Child Safe Code of Conduct when participating in your organisation.
- Make sure families and your community know who the main child safeguarding person in your organisation is, as the 'go to' person for child safety matters.
- Provide links to information and resources on all your communication platforms so your community can learn more about keeping children safe, including online. This could include links to:
 - the Office of the eSafety Commissioner's [advice, resources and training for parents and carers](#)
 - the National Office for Child Safety's [resources for parents and carers](#), and
 - the OCG's [information for parents and carers](#).



Keep children safe during community events and faith-based retreats

- Refer to your Child Safe Risk Management Plan when you are holding a new event or retreat. Update your plan to identify risks relating to the location, transport, activities and participants. Child safe risk management should be focused on keeping children safe from harm and abuse, and be separate from Work, Health and Safety (WH&S) risk management.
- Provide opportunities for children and families to have input into planning events and services.
- Inform parents, carers and volunteers of their rights and responsibilities when supervising children at events and services.
- Make sure children – and the adults around children – are supervised at all times.
- When organising family retreats, hold an information session on the first day where child safety is discussed and where families are invited to contribute or raise concerns.



Findings from the Royal Commission

The risk of abuse can increase when organisations are ‘closed’ or are not transparent with parents, carers and families about their processes, governance and behavioural expectations. This is particularly the case in situations where families and the community have an unquestioning respect for the authority of that organisation.

In the past, some families and communities had little awareness of child abuse. They did not question their religious leaders or the decisions they made. As a result, not only were children groomed, but so were whole families and communities.

What are some of the challenges faith-based organisations face when making changes?

Some family and community members lack understanding of the Child Safe Standards and the potential risks to children’s safety in community and organisational settings. Some may have little time for learning more. You can support your community to realise the importance of child safety across all your settings by showing how keeping children safe aligns with your faith’s values and teachings and explaining it is a shared responsibility. Where language barriers exist, find ways to get this message across to all your community members.



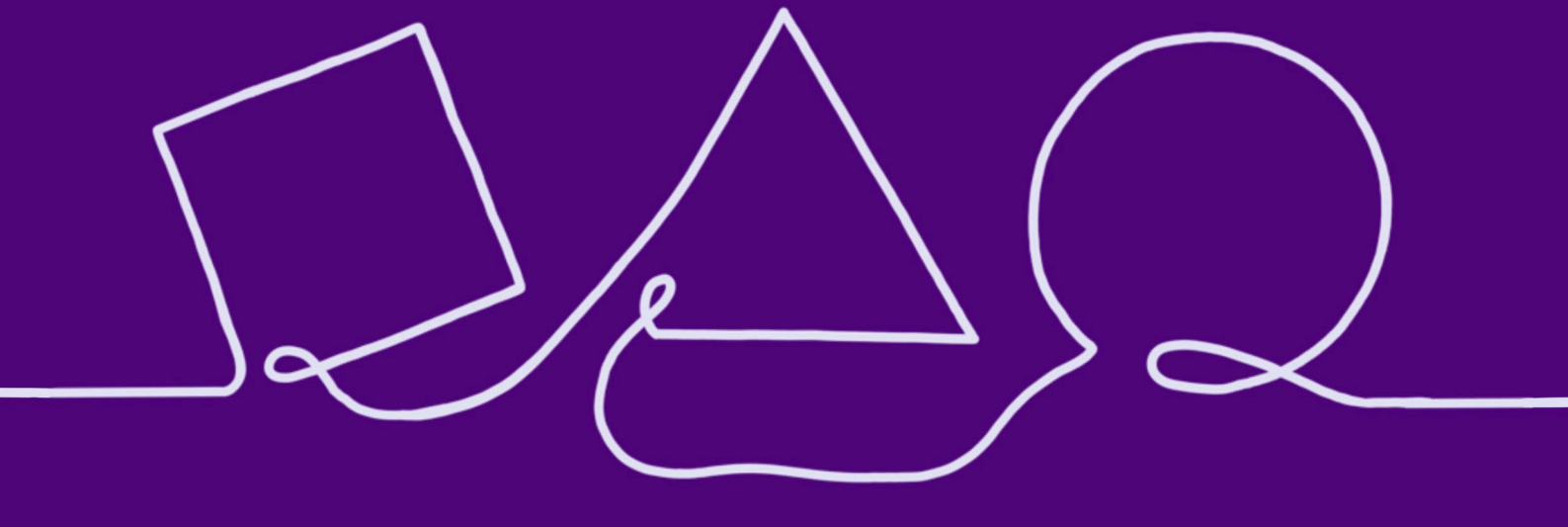
Reflective questions

How are families and the wider community encouraged to participate in your organisation?

How do you share information about your commitment and approach to child safety with families and communities?

Do you provide ways for people with disability to provide input into your child safe practices?

How do you involve families and others in the community who do not share the main language used in your organisation?



Standard 4

Equity is upheld and diverse needs are taken into account.

What does Standard 4 look like in a child safe organisation?

All children have opportunities to participate to their full potential and feel safe, supported and included

- Organisations create environments that are culturally safe for children and their families.
- Organisations proactively anticipate children's different circumstances and respond effectively to those with additional vulnerabilities by developing robust policies, procedures and a culture of inclusion.
- Staff in organisations understand the needs of different children in their communities. They recognise those with additional vulnerabilities and develop policies and procedures to support them. They promote a culture of inclusion.
- All children have access to child-friendly information about child safeguarding such as the code of conduct and complaint processes.

How can faith-based organisations implement this Standard?

Getting started with Standard 4

Display a public statement of your organisation's commitment to cultural safety for children and families. This could be in public spaces and on your website.

Get feedback from a broad range of children who interact with your faith-based services about what makes them feel safe, included and valued. This can be through informal conversations, meetings or via emails or surveys.

Identify the ways different groups of children in your organisation may be more at risk or vulnerable and put supports in place. Include these risks and actions in your Child Safe Risk Management Plan.

Support all children to feel welcome and included

- Create a welcome card for all children when they join or interact with your faith-based community or activities. Let them know where they can find support. Where possible, involve young people in designing the card and messages.
- Find opportunities to bring children together in a way that shows your organisation's commitment to supporting the safety, inclusion and wellbeing of all children. Let them know your organisation sees this as a priority.
- Translate your Statement of Commitment to Child Safety into a child-friendly version and ask your community members to translate this into community languages.
- Download and share the [OCG's child safe information in Easy Read format](#) to increase accessibility.
- Display posters in public areas that show your organisation's zero-tolerance approach to discrimination and racism.
- Host 'welcome events' which celebrate diversity and recognise or take part in significant cultural festivals.
- Actively acknowledge the diversity of your community members by sharing positive and inclusive images and stories on your social media and newsletters.



Create culturally safe environments for First Nations children and families

- Invite First Nations children, families and community elders to share what a culturally safe organisation looks and feels like to them.
- Contact a local Aboriginal organisation to run training or to share expertise that will help your staff, volunteers and faith-community understand why engagement with First Nations people is so important.
- Display in a public area and on your website an Acknowledgment of Country and the Traditional Owners of the lands where your organisation is located. Consider having an Acknowledgement of Country as a regular part of meetings and events.
- Reach out to First Nations groups in your local area and invite them to share knowledge and activities with children.
- Celebrate important dates for First Nations people, such as National Apology Day, Reconciliation Week and NAIDOC Week, through events, social media posts and newsletters.
- Where relevant to your faith-based setting, consider developing a public statement that acknowledges the impact religious organisations have had on First Nations communities. An example would be the role some religious organisations had in running missions that contributed to the forced removal of First Nations children from their families, communities and culture.

Ask for feedback from all children about how they can feel safe, included and supported

- Seek direct input from children and adults with disability about the design and delivery of your services to make sure they are fully accessible.
- Ask for feedback from children of different ages, cultural backgrounds and identities on what makes them feel safe, included and valued. This could be through informal conversations, meetings or via emails or surveys.
- Invite young people to review your Child Safe documents and policies, so they can provide wording for child-friendly versions of them.
- Create child-friendly opportunities for children to provide feedback and raise concerns, including information for children about who they can make complaints to, both inside your organisation and to outside services.

Understand the risks that children may face

- Consider the specific issues that different groups of children may face or experience. This could include feeling unsupported, unsafe or isolated. Address these risks in your Child Safe Risk Management Plan.
- Consider finding formal training that will support you to work and engage with different groups of children. Reach out to relevant community organisations.
- Read the OCG's [Empowerment and participation: a guide for organisations working with children and young people](#) to understand more about the experiences of particular groups of children and how you they can be supported.



5 Empowerment and participation guide cover



Findings from the Royal Commission

The Royal Commission found that perpetrators often targeted children who they saw as isolated or lacking support. Where organisations had cultures that did not support equity and diversity, this created additional risks for children who were already more exposed to harm and abuse.

The Commission also found that children experienced specific forms of interpersonal violence and abuse associated with different forms of disadvantage or marginalisation, including children with disability, and children from culturally and linguistically diverse communities (often due to language barriers). Children who identified as LGBTQIA+ and those experiencing confusion about their sexual orientation were more likely to face discrimination and be bullied, physically and sexually assaulted, threatened and emotionally abused.

The Commission also identified some of the unique challenges that can place Aboriginal children at a higher risk of harm and abuse in organisations – for example, trauma passed down over generations, removal from their families and fears of raising safety concerns because it could affect their family and community. Children from refugee families could be at risk due to prior trauma and adversity.

The Disability Royal Commission (2023) found that when different identities and experiences ‘intersect’, the risks of harm can be even higher. For example, risks can increase for First Nations children with disability, who can face barriers to accessing support, multiple forms of discrimination and a lack of cultural safety.

What are some of the challenges faith-based organisations face when making changes?

We know that when children become isolated and marginalised, they are more at risk of harm. They can also experience long term impacts on their mental health and wellbeing. Where an organisation does not create a safe space for all children, the risks of harm can increase across the organisation.

Creating a safe space for all children can take time. For example, some older buildings do not accommodate those needing mobility assistance. Making adjustments can take additional time and money. Helping members of your organisation understand what is and isn’t acceptable behaviour within your organisation may require specific education initiatives.

If your organisation is experiencing incidents of discrimination or exclusion, it may be valuable to remind your staff and community how children’s safety and wellbeing, as well as being compassionate and inclusive, align with the teachings and values of your faith.



Reflective questions

How do you welcome First Nations children and their families into your faith-based organisation, and support them to express their culture?

Are all children who interact with your faith-based services and activities supported to feel safe and be safe? Which groups may be at greater risk or feel isolated?

Do you provide ways for children and adults with disability to provide input into how your services are delivered so they are inclusive?



Standard 5

People working with children are suitable and supported.

What does Standard 5 look like in a child safe organisation?

Organisations attract, recruit, supervise and support staff to keep children safe

- Recruitment, including advertising and screening, emphasises child safety.
- All relevant staff and volunteers have a cleared and verified Working with Children Check (WWCC).
- All staff receive an appropriate induction and are aware of their child safety responsibilities, including reporting obligations.
- Supervision and people management roles have a clear focus on child safety.

How can faith-based organisations implement this Standard?

Getting started with Standard 5

Recruitment processes, including job advertisements, should emphasise child safety as being paramount in your organisation. Consider adding a link in the ad to your organisation's Statement of Commitment to Child Safety. Showing that the safety of children is your highest priority can deter unsuitable applicants from applying – what is known as 'self-selection.'

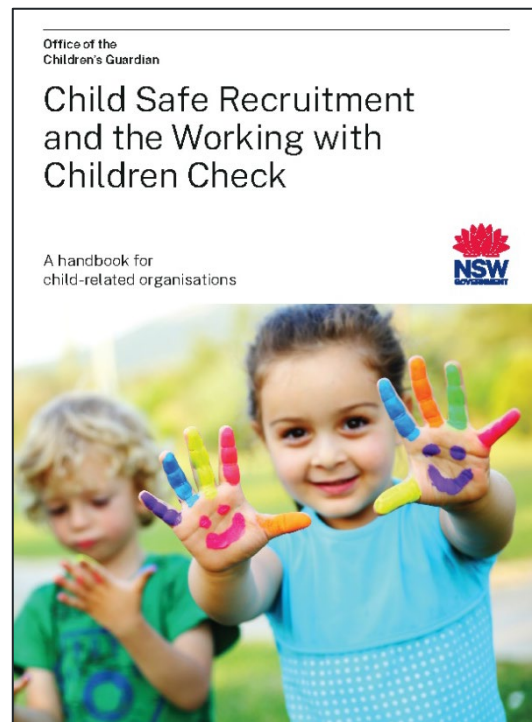
Make sure all adults who work or volunteer in child-related work in your organisation have a current, cleared Working with Children Check (WWCC). Your organisation must verify WWCCs on the OCG website for each staff member or volunteer, and keep records on file.

Have a clear child safety focus in all staff and volunteer inductions and ongoing training. This should include legal obligations to report suspicions or evidence of harm and abuse.

Refer to the OCG's handbook on child safe recruitment and the WWCC for more guidance.

Recruiting and screening staff and volunteers

- Have a Child Safe Recruitment, Induction and Training Policy that outlines the recruitment process for both paid staff and volunteers (including job descriptions, interview processes and referee checks).
- Include questions relating to child safety in your interviews and referee checks for all roles.
- Make sure you have a process in place to update any changes to your organisation's 'WWCC contact person' so that the OCG knows who to contact if one of your staff or volunteer's WWCC status changes.



6 *Child Safe Recruitment and the Working with Children Check handbook cover*



Induction of staff and volunteers

- Familiarise staff and volunteers with relevant child safe policies, provide formal child safe education and offer other relevant 'on the job training' so everyone is equipped to work with children. The OCG offers webinars and training in this area.
- Make sure your Child Safe Recruitment, Induction and Training Policy contains a description of what to do if your organisation is notified that someone in a child-related role is barred from working with children.
- Keep a register that shows all staff and volunteers have read and signed your Child Safe Code of Conduct.
- Have dedicated physical and online spaces for staff and volunteers that promote child safe messages.



Findings from the Royal Commission

The Royal Commission heard that in some faith organisations, there was a failure to adequately screen the backgrounds of religious leaders and others working with children. Some organisations moved leaders or workers to other sites or locations when complaints were made or when suspicions arose. This allowed people unsuitable to work with children to have continued access to children, undeterred, and for children in other organisations to experience abuse.

What are some of the challenges faith-based organisations face when making changes?

As volunteers are sometimes hard to find (and can be time poor) they may not want to obtain a WWCC or participated in induction or training. Some leaders may not understand their child safe obligations and fail to support child safe recruitment and supervision requirements. In both these cases, the organisation must emphasise that its commitment to child safety is paramount and there are no exceptions to these screening and on-boarding processes.



Reflective questions

How is child safety supported in your induction process for all your staff and volunteers?

Do you have a process to keep the contact details of those nominated as WWCC contacts up to date?

What reference checks do you conduct when you recruit new staff and volunteers?

What 'self-selection' methods do you use when you advertise for new staff and volunteers to help deter people who are unsuitable to work with children?



Standard 6

Processes to respond to complaints of child abuse are child focused

What does Standard 6 look like in a child safe organisation?

Children are the priority when responding to complaints of abuse

- Organisations have a child-focused complaint handling system that supports children at every stage.
- This complaint handling system is understood by children, staff, volunteers and families.
- Organisations have an effective Child Safe Reporting Policy that clearly outlines roles and responsibilities, approaches to dealing with different types of complaints, and obligations to act and report.
- Complaints are taken seriously and responded to promptly and thoroughly.
- Legal obligations to report abuse are acted on appropriately.

How can faith-based organisations implement this Standard?

Getting started with Standard 6

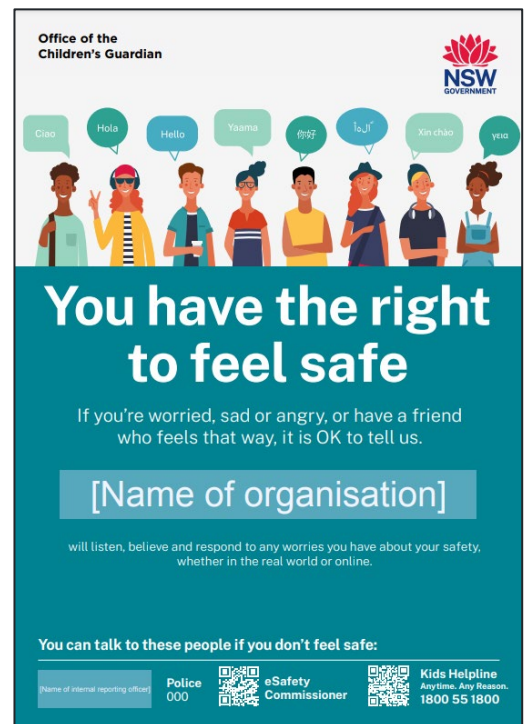
Ensure children are encouraged to speak up about anything that concerns them.

Ensure adults understand what to do if a child raises a concern.

Have a robust response to concerns of harm that is seen as a necessary element for child safe environments.

Develop a child-centred complaints handling process

- Have a Child Safe Reporting Policy that identifies all types of harm and abuse and provides clear instructions on how to respond when allegations are made, including what matters must be reported to the police.
- Make sure your complaints handling process is accessible and age-appropriate for children. Consider developing a version of your Child Safe Reporting Policy that is age and ability appropriate for the children and young people interacting with your organisation.
- Provide different ways to raise concerns that are accessible and appropriate for children and young people.
- Have discussions with children and young people about the ways they'd feel most comfortable about raising a concern.
- Advise young people on how to respond if a friend or peer discloses that they have experienced harm or abuse.
- Consider protective behaviours training for the younger children in your organisations, such as the OCG's SAFE Series.



7 Child-centred reporting poster



Promote a culture that encourages feedback, including raising concerns

- Make sure staff and volunteers know about the ‘whistle blower’ protection in the [Children’s Guardian Act 2019](#).
- Facilitate opportunities for verbal complaints or allegations as well as written ones. For example, have someone in a safeguarding role who children know they can go to about anything that concerns them.
- Provide information about complaint handling in a variety of forms such as posters, online posts or in newsletters.
- Encourage input from your members and the wider community about ways to make your organisation safer for children. This could include members of your faith community who work in child-related organisations.



Findings from the Royal Commission

Within faith-based organisations, child sexual abuse was sometimes viewed as a forgivable sin or a moral failing rather than a crime. This contributed to inadequate responses. Often, despite multiple allegations, abuse was seen as a 'one-off' incident, rather than ongoing behaviour. This led to children being re-traumatised and allowed perpetrators to continue their offending. People in leadership positions were not given training in relation to prevention, identification and appropriate response to child sexual abuse.

What are some of the challenges faith-based organisations face when making changes?

In the past many allegations of harm were ignored. Sometimes leaders failed to respond appropriately. Sometimes this was to 'protect the reputation' of the organisation, or to cover up abuse and protect the perpetrator. Organisations should always have the welfare of children as their priority, and ensure they have systems in place to support best-practice responses to concerns a child is at risk of harm.



Reflective questions

How do you engage with children and young people to identify more ways they feel comfortable to report any issues about themselves, or their peers?

What protective behaviours training and information do you offer the children and young people in your organisation?

What child-friendly reporting processes do you have in your organisation so that children can easily and safely report concerns about their own safety or that of their peers?



Standard 7

Staff are equipped with the knowledge, skills and awareness to keep children safe through continual education and training.

What does Standard 7 look like in child safe organisations?

Organisations invest in building staff skills, abilities and confidence

- Staff and volunteers receive training on child maltreatment, particularly on how to identify and prevent abuse that occurs in organisations.
- Staff and volunteers receive training on the organisation's child safe practices and child protection strategies.
- Staff and volunteers receive training on how to respond appropriately to disclosures or suspicions of harm.
- The organisation's child safe practices are reflected in the way staff and volunteers work.

How can faith-based organisations implement this Standard?

Getting started with Standard 7

Make sure all staff and volunteers are given training in child safe practices and procedures.

Be proactive in developing your child safety knowledge

- Sign up to newsletters and access websites to build your awareness of child safety, including the [OCG's free resources](#).
- Seek out mentors, both individuals and larger organisations with strong child safe practice and initiatives.
- Join an existing safeguarding network or Community of Practice or start your own.
- Keep up to date with legislative changes relating to child safety.
- Invite survivor advocacy groups to provide feedback on your child safe initiatives.

Ongoing training

- Hold regular training on mandatory reporting and child safeguarding for relevant staff.
- Attend the [OCG's webinars and training programs](#) to build an understanding of the Child Safe Standards and how to meet the requirements of the Child Safe Scheme.
- Register for the OCG's free [eLearning modules](#) on the Child Safe Standards and other related topics.
- Encourage staff to attend training, webinars and professional development opportunities provided by your faith-based network or those of other religious institutions.
- Explore the potential of engaging an external expert to work with your organisation to deliver training that is appropriate for your needs.

Develop engaging training content

- Where possible, include survivor stories to build empathy and understanding with all your organisation's attendees.
- Find ways to include the voices and perspectives of children and young people in your in-house training material.
- Use different forms of delivery (face-to-face, electronic, printed) so that a range of learning styles are provided.
- Consider language and cultural needs when planning training.



Other considerations for training

- Have support measures in place if training participants are confronted or triggered by child safe training.
- Keep a training register that includes dates, names of participants and when training content should be reviewed.
- Ask for feedback from participants about the quality and usefulness of the training. Use this for continuous improvement.



Findings from the Royal Commission

Many faith-based organisations relied on untrained staff and volunteers to take on leadership in child-related roles. There was no training on child protection or how to handle allegations of abuse and no professional oversight of leaders or volunteers. They were rarely given information on the importance of supervision when adults were interacting with children.

What are some of the challenges faith-based organisations face when making changes?

Faith-based organisations have acknowledged that finding time for members to attend child safe training can be challenging. In addition, some members feel that they don't need training. Keeping training records in an appropriate format can also demand prioritising resources. In all these cases, ensuring members understand that children are a priority, both ethically and from a legal perspective, will help ensure these perceived barriers are overcome.



Reflective questions

How do you identify what child safe training needs your organisation has?

How do you identify current best practice approaches for child safety to introduce to your organisation?

How do you engage with child safe professionals to create more robust child safe environments in your organisation?



Standard 8

Physical and online environments minimise the opportunity for abuse to occur

What does Standard 8 look like in child safe organisations?

Risks to children in physical and online environments are identified and minimised

- Risks in physical and online environments are appropriately managed without compromising a child's right to privacy and healthy social development.
- Physical spaces allow for appropriate supervision of adults working with children.
- The online environment is used by staff and volunteers in accordance with the organisation's Child Safe Code of Conduct and relevant child safe policies.
- The organisation reassesses risks to children and takes action to minimise these when:
 - there are changes to the physical and online spaces used by the organisation
 - new activities and services involving children are introduced, including off-site events and transportation.

How can faith-based organisations implement this Standard?

Getting started with Standard 8

Make sure your Child Safe Risk Management Plan includes all the situations where children interact with your organisation. This should cover physical spaces both on-site and offsite (for example transport, camps and excursions) and online spaces and communication.

Make sure that all activities for children can be observed and are open to additional adult supervision. Opportunities for adults to be alone with children should be avoided where possible.

Make sure that people in your organisation know how to recognise grooming behaviours, including understanding that these behaviours can also take place online. Share a link to the [OCG's video](#) that explains what grooming can look like to help reduce opportunities for grooming to occur in your organisation.

Set clear guidelines for conduct in physical and online spaces

- Make sure your Child Safe Code of Conduct outlines appropriate conduct for both physical and online environments in your faith-based settings and services.
- Make sure you have clear Child Safe risk management strategies for any activities you run in settings outside your main sites. For example, these should include transporting children to or from one-off events, overnight camps, tutoring or coaching provided by staff or volunteers, private functions for children where staff and volunteers may attend or any other external event you organise.
- Make sure parents and carers understand your organisation's rules when children are participating in special activities. Put in place a registration process for parents and carers to complete before their child can attend groups, such as Sunday school, sports activities, overnight camps or any other activities you organise. Ask parents and carers to read and sign your Child Safe Code of Conduct if they are involved in the events.



8 Risk Management and the Child Safe Standards Part 1 handbook cover

Apply a situational prevention approach in your faith-based settings

- Put in place what is known as a ‘situational prevention risk management approach’. This means removing opportunities that can expose children to harm in physical and online settings.
- This means making sure:
 - all activities for children are observable and open to additional adult supervision
 - where possible, adults are not alone with a child, either in person or online
 - staff can monitor all interactions between adults and children
 - doors are left open where possible, windows are unobstructed and unused spaces are locked
 - parents and carers are encouraged to supervise their children while they’re online, and
 - parents and carers know when to drop off and pick up children to make sure there is less opportunity for children to be alone with adults unsupervised.

Build an awareness of grooming behaviours and online safety

- Make sure that adults in your organisation know how to recognise grooming behaviours, including understanding that these behaviours can take place online.
- Encourage staff, volunteers and parents and carers to access free resources or training on supporting children to stay safe online, such as those offered by the [eSafety Commissioner](#).

Risk management for persons of concern

- Have a clear policy on how your organisation manages known perpetrators of abuse and people under investigation for child abuse. These people are known as persons of concern.
- Consider engaging the person of concern in a contract that outlines the conditions of them attending your organisation. This should include what they can and cannot do, noting that:
 - the person of concern should not be in child-related roles (as per the statutory obligations)
 - the person of concern should only attend your organisation when there are no or few children present, where possible, and
 - the person of concern should be monitored at all times.



Findings from the Royal Commission

The Royal Commission reported on situations where children were alone with adults in religious settings without any supervision. In many cases this was because of the trust they had for leaders and places of worship in general. In these instances, children were more at risk of harm and abuse. Often organisations lacked policies and procedures that addressed and minimised situational risks. Risk of harm also increased in situations where children lived away from their parents or at times when children travelled alone with an adult in a bus or car or on overnight trips.

The Commission recognised that many online interactions for children were positive and supported their social development, peer relationships and education. However, it also found that the online environment can also expose children to harm. The Commission identified four key areas of concern or risk for children and young people:

1. the use of online communications for grooming purposes by perpetrators
2. the use of digital technologies and platforms to produce, harvest, distribute and broadcast child sexual exploitation materials
3. sexual images of children shared or published without their consent for blackmail or humiliation, and
4. children's increased levels of exposure to online pornography, including depictions of violence or coercive behaviours.

What are some of the challenges faith-based organisations face when making changes?

Faith-based organisations operate in a wide variety of environments, including online spaces. Robust risk management can help ensure the safety of children. Building modifications to make sure children remain in a clear line of sight are sometimes difficult to create due to the architecture of some religious organisations. In these cases, rules should be put in place to help remove opportunities for adults to be alone with children.

The online environment can also be challenging to monitor. A Child Safe Code of Conduct with clear lists of what is acceptable and what is unacceptable regarding interaction of adults and children that takes place online or via mobile devices will support children to be safer.



St Bede's Catholic Church, Braidwood



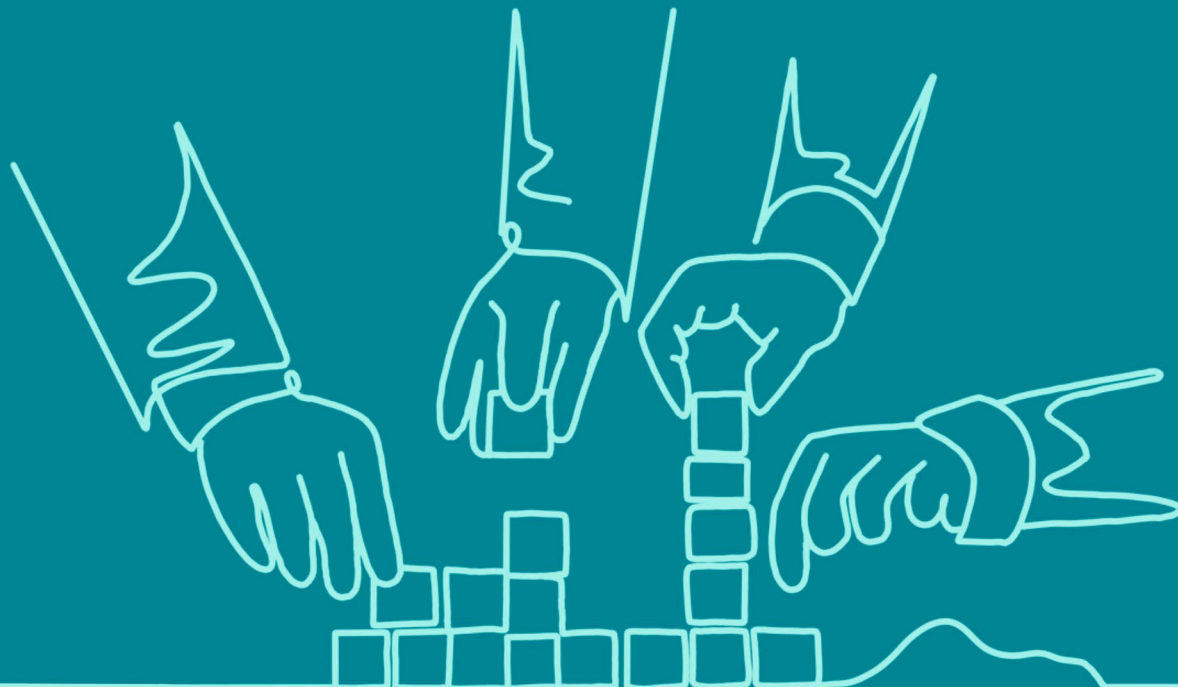
Reflective questions

What process has been undertaken to identify all the different environments, both physical and online, that are used to engage with children in your faith-based setting and to identify the risks that are present in them?

How has this information been used to create Child Safe Risk Management Plan?

How do you make sure children, parents and carers are aware of your policies and procedures to minimise these situational risks?

How do you promote online safety to children interacting with your organisation?



Standard 9

Implementation of the Child Safe Standards is continuously reviewed and improved

What does Standard 9 look like in child safe organisations?

Organisations continuously improve their child safe practices and make changes when failures or harm occurs

- Organisations regularly review and improve their child safe practices.
- Organisations identify new risks to children's safety and take proactive steps to minimise these.
- Organisations analyse complaints and incidents to identify causes and systemic failures. They use this knowledge and experience to make changes that help prevent future harm to children and improve responses.

How can faith-based organisations implement this Standard?

Getting started with Standard 9

Ensure you have key child safe policies, plans and processes in place.

Add a standing agenda item to your meetings and board meetings to regularly review your child safe practices, policies and procedures.

Make sure you have a regular review process in place to keep these documents up-to-date and relevant. Include children, family and community members in the review process.

Establishing quality improvement practices

- Decide who will be responsible for making sure that your faith body regularly reviews its child safe policies, procedures and practices (and also after critical incidents). Ideally this would be a group of people with skills and experience in different areas of child safety, and take place at least once a year.
- For larger organisations, establish a safeguarding panel or professional standards committee with external experts to give advice on your policies, procedures and training.

Use OCG's Child Safe Self-Assessment for continuous improvement

- Use the OCG's Child Safe Self-Assessment tool to support continuous improvement. The customised action report shows where you're doing well and where you can improve. It will also provide links to specific resources to support your child safe journey.
- Use the action report as a discussion and planning tool at staff meetings and with your board or committee.
- Retake the assessment to check your progress over time.



Promote a culture that encourages feedback, including raising concerns

- Encourage input from children and families attending your services and from the wider community about ways to make your organisation safer for children or any safety concerns they may have.
- Where appropriate, ask families, staff, volunteers and children for feedback about on how your faith body dealt with them in relation to any concerns raised. Use this information to improve your communications and processes.
- Make sure staff and volunteers know about the protections set out in in the Children's Guardian Act 2019 for any person, acting in good faith, who gives, or proposes to give:
 - a report to the head of your organisation or to the Children's Guardian, or
 - a complaint or notification to the Children's Guardian in relation to the Reportable Conduct Scheme.

Sharing knowledge

- Engage with other faith communities and survivor advocacy groups to share knowledge, experience and good practice ideas.
- Become a safeguarding champion.
- Seek out resources and examples of continuous improvement activities from other faith-based organisations or groups.



Findings from the Royal Commission

The Royal Commission found that some faith organisations failed to have processes that monitored or reviewed their child safe policies and procedures. In other cases, policies didn't exist. The Commission identified that a process of continuous improvement allowed organisations to stay up to date with contemporary child safe practices and emerging risks to children.

What are some of the challenges faith-based organisations face when making changes?

Faith organisations can face challenges keeping up to date. For example, regional communities may not have access to the same resources as those in metropolitan centres. In addition, language barriers, lack of internal resources and competing priorities may also create challenges. In these cases, making sure there is one person, or a committee, with lead responsibility for child safety, and setting regular review dates, can support a process of continuous review and improvement.



Reflective questions

What processes do you have in place so that there is a mindset of continuous improvement towards child safety?

How would you conduct an analysis after a critical incident to understand why it happened and what factors may have caused the incident?

What contact do you have with similar organisations to support each other to implement the Standards?



Standard 10

Policies and procedures document how the organisation is child safe

What does Standard 10 look like in child safe organisations?

Policies and procedures are championed by leaders, relevant to your organisation, understood by staff and clearly communicated

- Policies and procedures address all ten Child Safe Standards.
- Policies and procedures are accessible and easy to understand.
- Children, best practice models and stakeholder consultation inform the development of policies and procedures.
- Leaders champion and model compliance with policies and procedures.
- Staff understand and implement all your organisation's policies and procedures.

How can faith-based organisations implement this Standard?

Getting started with Standard 10

At a minimum, you should have the following documents in place to make sure your organisation is implementing the Child Safe Standards: Statement of Commitment to Child Safety, Child Safe Policy, Child Safe Code of Conduct, Child Safe Reporting Policy, Child Safe Recruitment, Induction and Training Policy and a Child Safe Risk Management plan.

To get started, use the OCG's [sample templates](#) and adapt these for your organisation.

Keep records of NSW Working with Children Checks (WWCC) of all adults in child-related work in your organisation. This should include records of the outcomes of verification checks.

Make policies readily available and accessible

- Make child safe policies available to as many different audiences as possible by using all the different channels available to you, such as on your website and social media, on notice boards, in induction packs and more.
- Have all adults working or volunteering with children read and sign your Child Safe Code of Conduct as recognition that they understand their child safe obligations. Keep a record of these signed copies.
- Put all child safety policies and procedures into one overarching 'framework' so that they are easy to locate.
- Provide training to staff and volunteers on your child safe policies.
- Have a disciplinary policy (or include one in your Child Safe Reporting Policy or Code of Conduct) which describes the potential outcomes if someone fails to comply with your organisation's child safe policies and breaches of your Child Safe Code of Conduct. The policy should include how you record these incidents.

Make sure your policies are up to date, relevant and accessible

- Have your policies and procedures regularly reviewed to make sure they:
 - comply with the Child Safe Standards
 - reflect any changes that have occurred in how your organisation interacts with children or changes to legislation, and
 - incorporate stakeholder feedback.
- Regularly ask different people within your faith community (such as staff, volunteers, children, parents and speakers of languages other than English) whether they find your policies and procedures easy to understand.



Findings from the Royal Commission

The Royal Commission found that organisations which failed to provide clear guidance and instructions through their policies, codes of conduct and practices also failed to provide safe places for children.

What are some of the challenges faith-based organisations face when making changes?

Some organisations fail to ensure their policies are fit-for-purpose and are put into practice. Sometimes organisational leaders are unsure of their responsibilities. In these cases, people in the organisation with responsibility for child safety or other champions should request leaders do more to understand and implement the Standards, such as accessing appropriate training. Boards and committees can also request that leaders meet the requirements.



Reflective questions

What processes do you have to ensure your policies and procedures are regularly reviewed and updated?

How do you ensure that your policies and procedures are accessible and understood by members of your community who speak another language?

What processes exist if someone witnesses a breach of policy, procedure or your Child Safe Code of Conduct?

How do you assess your policies to ensure that they are working in the way that they're intended to work?



Resources

Guidance and handbooks on the Child Safe Standards

Getting Started webpage - guidance and links to information, videos, sample templates and Getting Started Tracker:

www.ocg.nsw.gov.au/child-safe-scheme/getting-started

Guide to the Child Safe Standards – a more comprehensive guide to the standards

https://ocg.nsw.gov.au/sites/default/files/2021-12/g_CSS_GuidetotheStandards.pdf

Child Safe Policy handbook:

https://ocg.nsw.gov.au/sites/default/files/2022-07/g_css_childsafepolicyresource.pdf

Child Safe Code of Conduct handbook:

https://ocg.nsw.gov.au/sites/default/files/2024-02/G_CSS_ChildSafeCodeofConduct.pdf

Child Safe Reporting Policy handbook:

https://ocg.nsw.gov.au/sites/default/files/2022-07/g_css_reportingobligationsresource.pdf

Child Safe Recruitment, Induction and Training Policy handbook:

https://ocg.nsw.gov.au/sites/default/files/2022-12/G_CSS_ChildSafeRecruitmentandWWCC.pdf

Child Safe Risk Management handbooks:

https://ocg.nsw.gov.au/sites/default/files/2022-03/G_CSS_Risk%20Management_Resourceprt1.pdf

https://ocg.nsw.gov.au/sites/default/files/2022-03/G_CSS_Risk%20Management_Resourceprt2.pdf

Empowerment and participation guide:

[Empowerment and participation: a guide for organisations working with children and young people](#)

Multilingual child safe resources

Getting Started on Implementing the Child Safe Scheme - a short guide in community languages:

https://ocg.nsw.gov.au/sites/default/files/2025-02/G_CSS_GettingStartedminiguide.pdf

Child Safe Standards – community language posters:

https://ocg.nsw.gov.au/sites/default/files/2024-10/b_css_childsafetranslatedposters.zip

Child safe Reporting – community language posters:

https://ocg.nsw.gov.au/sites/default/files/2024-05/p_css_reportingpostermultilingual.zip

Easy Read information:

https://ocg.nsw.gov.au/sites/default/files/2025-03/fs_css_easyreadchildsafestandards.pdf

Guidance on the NSW Reportable Conduct Scheme

Reportable Conduct Scheme fact sheets:

<https://ocg.nsw.gov.au/organisations/reportable-conduct-scheme/reportable-conduct-fact-sheets>

OCG training

Register for our webinars and training:

<https://ocg.nsw.gov.au/events>

Register for our online learning modules:

<https://ocg.nsw.gov.au/training-and-resources/elearning>

Office of the Children's Guardian

Office of the Children's Guardian

Locked Bag 5100
Strawberry Hills NSW 2012

Office hours:
Monday to Friday
9.00am — 5.00pm

T: (02) 8219 3600
E: childsafes@ocg.nsw.gov.au
W: www.ocg.nsw.gov.au

