

CHILD SAFETY AND WELLBEING POLICY

PURPOSE

Village Early Education is committed to creating and maintaining an organisation where children are safe, respected, included and supported to participate in decisions that affect them.

Children's safety, rights and best interests are the paramount consideration in all decisions, actions and practices.

Village Early Education implements the 11 Victorian Child Safe Standards through leadership, governance, everyday practice and an integrated framework of policies and procedures designed to prevent harm, identify and manage child safety risks, respond appropriately to concerns and continually strengthen our child safe culture.

Child abuse, neglect, grooming, inappropriate conduct and other behaviour that places children at risk will not be tolerated.

This policy applies across Village Early Education and to the way we work with children, families, employees, educators, volunteers, students, contractors and visitors.

This policy, together with Village Early Education's supporting child safety, supervision, physical environment, workforce, complaints and digital safety policies and procedures, establishes the Service's policies and procedures for providing a child safe environment as required by the Education and Care Services National Regulations.

OUR COMMITMENT TO CHILD SAFETY AND WELLBEING

Our Service is committed to the safety and wellbeing of all children and young people. We understand our responsibilities and statutory duty of care to comply with both the Victorian Child Safe Standards and the Reportable Conduct Scheme to build our capacity as an organisation to prevent and respond to allegations of child abuse.

Our Service is committed to implementing and abiding by our *Child Safety and Wellbeing Policy* based on Child Safe Standards in Victoria (2022), which accentuates our *zero tolerance* for child abuse and raises awareness about the importance of child safety in our Service and the community.

We are dedicated to protecting children from abuse and neglect and promote a child safe environment, maintaining children's wellbeing. We adhere to our comprehensive *Child Protection Policy*, standing by our mandatory reporting responsibilities to protect children from physical, sexual, emotional and psychological abuse and neglect.

We work to ensure there is clear awareness between appropriate and inappropriate behaviour concerning adults and children. We require clear precincts between children and employees, volunteers and the community to maintain children's safety.

We are dedicated to promoting cultural safety for Aboriginal children, cultural safety for children from culturally and/or linguistically diverse backgrounds, and to providing a safe environment for children with a disability.

We value diversity and do not tolerate any discriminatory practices.

We are committed to ongoing professional development for educators and staff to maintain their ability to distinguish and respond to situations of abuse and neglect, ensuring educators and staff are responsive to their responsibilities in keeping children safe.

We work in collaboration with the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child and have confidence in educating children about their right to be safe. We believe in teaching children what to do if they feel unsafe and encouraging them to express their view and thoughts on matters that directly affect them.

As educators we listen to and empower children to act on any concerns, they or others may raise which is reflective in our policies and procedures in keeping children safe.

CHILD SAFE STANDARDS

In Relation to 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.*

Village Early Education is committed to creating culturally safe environments where Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children can express their culture, identity and connection to Country and feel respected, valued and safe.

We will:

- recognise and value the strengths, identities, cultures, histories and experiences of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples
- support Aboriginal children to express and develop their cultural identity
- embed Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander perspectives respectfully within programs and environments

- build staff knowledge and cultural capability through reflection, learning and engagement
- identify and address racism, discrimination and culturally unsafe practices
- engage respectfully with Aboriginal families, Traditional Owners, Elders and local communities where appropriate
- support meaningful reconciliation initiatives
- regularly review our cultural safety practices and identify opportunities for improvement.

In Relation to Standard 2: *Child safety and wellbeing is embedded in organisational leadership, governance and culture.*

Child safety is embedded in Village Early Education's leadership, governance, decision-making and daily practice.

Village will:

- ensure children's safety, rights and best interests guide organisational decisions
- maintain a clear Statement of Commitment to Child Safety
- maintain a Child Safety Code of Conduct and clear behavioural expectations
- promote an organisational culture where concerns can be raised safely
- identify and manage child safety risks
- maintain effective child safety policies, procedures and reporting systems
- ensure child safety is regularly discussed and reviewed
- monitor compliance with child safety requirements
- ensure required external reports and regulatory notifications are made
- act promptly where practices, conduct or systems create a risk to children.

Leaders and managers are expected to actively model and promote child safe behaviours and practices.

In Relation to Standard 3: *Children and young people are empowered about their rights, participate in decisions affecting them and are taken seriously.*

Children have the right to be heard, participate in decisions affecting them and have their views taken seriously.

Village Early Education will support children to:

- understand that they have rights
- feel confident expressing their views, preferences and concerns
- participate meaningfully in decisions affecting their daily experiences
- understand that they can say no or express discomfort
- identify trusted adults

- understand how to seek help when they feel unsafe
- provide feedback and make complaints in ways appropriate to their age, development and communication needs
- understand, in an age-appropriate way, what happens when they raise a concern.

Educators will recognise that children may communicate concerns through words, behaviour, play, emotional responses, drawings or other forms of communication.

Children's requests, preferences and expressions of consent will be respected wherever practicable and consistent with their safety and wellbeing.

Children will be provided with age and developmentally appropriate learning about personal safety, body autonomy, protective behaviours and help-seeking.

In Relation to Standard 4: *Families and communities are informed and involved in promoting child safety and wellbeing.*

Families and communities are important partners in creating and maintaining child safe environments.

Village Early Education will:

- communicate openly with families about child safety
- make child safety policies and procedures accessible
- inform families about how children are supported to raise concerns
- explain how families can provide feedback or make a complaint
- provide opportunities for families to contribute to child safety practices, policies and continuous improvement
- consider cultural, language, communication and accessibility needs
- support families to understand relevant changes to child safety requirements
- work respectfully with families while maintaining appropriate privacy and confidentiality.

Families will be encouraged to contribute their knowledge of their child, including their child's culture, strengths, needs, communication style and individual circumstances.

In Relation to Standard 5: *Equity is upheld and diverse needs respected in policy and practice.*

Village Early Education recognises that children experience safety differently and that some children may experience increased vulnerability, exclusion or barriers to participation.

Child safety practices will consider the individual needs and circumstances of children, including:

- Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children
- children from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds
- children with disability or developmental differences

- children with diverse identities
- children experiencing vulnerability or disadvantage
- children with different communication needs
- children whose family or personal circumstances may affect their safety or participation.

Village will:

- provide equitable access and participation
- make reasonable adjustments where required
- adapt communication, environments and practices to individual needs
- challenge discrimination, racism and exclusion
- work collaboratively with families and relevant professionals
- support children to maintain their identity, dignity and sense of belonging.

In Relation to Standard 6: *People working with children and young people are suitable and supported to reflect child safety and wellbeing values in practice.*

Village Early Education will ensure people working or volunteering with children are appropriately screened, suitable, supported and aware of their child safety responsibilities.

Child safe recruitment and workforce arrangements will include:

- child safety expectations within recruitment and position requirements
- appropriate screening and reference checking
- verification of required Working with Children Checks, teacher registrations, prohibition status and other suitability requirements
- compliance with the National Early Childhood Worker Register requirements
- child safety induction
- clear professional boundaries and behavioural expectations
- ongoing monitoring of required checks and suitability
- appropriate supervision and performance management.

Detailed recruitment, screening and workforce processes are governed by the Recruitment Policy, Staffing Arrangements Policy and related procedures.

In Relation to Standard 7: *Processes for complaints and concerns are child-focused.*

- Children, families, staff, volunteers and other persons must be able to raise child safety concerns without fear of dismissal, disadvantage or retaliation.
- Village Early Education will maintain complaint and concern processes that are:
- child-focused

- accessible
- culturally safe
- respectful
- responsive to different communication needs
- promptly acted upon
- appropriately documented
- confidential as far as reasonably possible.
- A concern raised by a child will be taken seriously regardless of whether the child can provide a detailed or formal account.
- Complaints involving child safety, abuse, inappropriate conduct or other risk to a child will be immediately escalated and managed under the Child Protection Policy and Procedure, Reportable Conduct Scheme Policy and other applicable reporting requirements.

In Relation to 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.

People working and volunteering at Village Early Education must have the knowledge, skills and awareness necessary to keep children safe.

Relevant staff, educators, students and volunteers will receive induction, training, supervision and guidance appropriate to their roles.

This will include:

- Victorian Child Safe Standards
- children's rights
- recognising and responding to child safety concerns
- responding to disclosures
- child protection and mandatory reporting
- grooming
- inappropriate conduct
- Reportable Conduct Scheme requirements
- culturally safe practice
- professional boundaries
- child-focused complaints
- online and digital safety
- relevant information-sharing obligations.

All persons required by law will complete prescribed national child safety training and Victorian child protection training within required timeframes.

Training requirements and completion will be monitored and recorded.

In Relation to Standard 9: *Physical and online environments promote safety and wellbeing while minimising the opportunity for children and young people to be harmed.*

Village Early Education will identify, assess and manage risks within physical and online environments to minimise opportunities for child abuse, harm or inappropriate conduct.

Child safety risks will be considered in relation to the design and use of Service environments, supervision, privacy, digital technologies, third-party access and any external facilities or services used by the Service.

Children will be supported to identify and communicate concerns about physical and online environments, and their views will be considered when assessing and managing child safety risks.

Physical environments

Village Early Education will:

- maintain environments that support effective supervision
- consider children's privacy, dignity, age, development and individual needs when designing and using spaces
- maintain secure access to and from the Service
- ensure toileting, nappy change, sleep and personal care areas support both appropriate supervision and children's privacy and dignity
- identify and manage risks associated with visitors, students, volunteers, contractors and other third parties
- maintain safe arrival, departure and collection arrangements
- undertake regular environmental and child safety risk assessments
- complete routine opening, closing and daily safety checks
- address identified hazards promptly or record and escalate them for maintenance or further action
- review physical environment risks following incidents, complaints, changes to the environment or identified child safety concerns.

Detailed requirements relating to supervision, premises, arrivals and departures, visitors and other physical safety matters are contained within the relevant policies and procedures.

Third parties, contractors and visitors

Village Early Education will identify and manage child safety risks associated with third parties who may have access to children, Service environments or children's information.

This may include:

- contractors and tradespeople
- allied health professionals
- photographers
- entertainers and incursion providers
- transport providers
- external educators or program providers
- visitors
- other persons or organisations engaged to provide facilities or services.

Appropriate child safety controls may include:

- screening or suitability requirements where applicable
- sign-in and identification requirements
- supervision and access restrictions
- compliance with the Code of Conduct and relevant child safety policies
- restrictions on photography, recording and digital devices
- clear expectations about professional boundaries
- risk assessment where the activity, person or service creates an identified child safety risk
- consideration of child safety when selecting, engaging or reviewing external providers and facilities.

Online and digital environments

Village Early Education will maintain controls for the safe use of digital technologies, online environments, images, video and children's personal information.

This includes:

- using authorised Service devices and systems
- restricting access to children's images, recordings and personal information
- obtaining appropriate family authorisation
- securely storing, retaining and disposing of images and recordings
- assessing the safety and suitability of applications, software and online platforms
- managing risks associated with online communication and digital access
- supervising children's use of digital technologies

- complying with requirements relating to personal electronic devices

Child safety risk management

Child safety risks relating to physical and online environments will be considered as part of Village Early Education's broader child safety risk management framework.

Risk assessment will consider, where relevant:

- supervision and line of sight
- secluded, hidden or high-risk areas
- toileting, changing and personal care environments
- access by visitors and third parties
- external venues and facilities
- digital technologies and online platforms
- photography, video and image storage
- children's individual vulnerabilities and support needs
- professional boundaries
- activities or arrangements that may increase opportunities for harm.

Risk controls will be reviewed when circumstances change and following significant incidents, complaints or identified concerns.

In Relation to Standard 10: *Implementation of the Child Safe Standards is regularly reviewed and improved.*

Village Early Education will regularly review the effectiveness of its child safety systems and practices.

Review activities may include:

- child safety self-assessment
- risk assessment reviews
- analysis of complaints, concerns, incidents and near misses
- review of reportable conduct matters
- consultation with children
- consultation with families
- staff feedback
- audits
- regulatory findings
- review of training and professional development
- consideration of emerging child safety risks and guidance.

Identified improvements will be documented and monitored through appropriate action plans, risk registers and/or the Quality Improvement Plan.

Relevant outcomes and improvements will be communicated to children, families and staff where appropriate.

In Relation to Standard 11: *Policies and procedures document how the organisation is safe for children and young people.*

Village Early Education will maintain policies and procedures that collectively address all Victorian Child Safe Standards.

Policies and procedures will:

- clearly describe Village's child safety expectations
- be written in practical and accessible language
- be available to relevant staff and families
- reflect current legislation, regulatory requirements and recognised guidance
- be developed and reviewed with appropriate stakeholder input
- clearly identify reporting and escalation requirements
- be supported by practical procedures and resources
- be reviewed and updated where improvements are identified.

Leaders will actively support implementation and monitor compliance.

Staff, educators, students and volunteers must understand and follow the child safety policies and procedures relevant to their role.

INAPPROPRIATE CONDUCT AND PROFESSIONAL BOUNDARIES

Children must not be subjected to inappropriate conduct or inappropriate discipline.

All persons working with or around children must:

- maintain appropriate professional boundaries
- comply with the Code of Conduct
- interact with children respectfully
- avoid conduct that could reasonably cause harm, fear, humiliation or distress
- report observed or suspected inappropriate conduct
- follow child protection and regulatory reporting requirements.

Allegations of inappropriate conduct will be managed under the Child Protection Procedure and Management of Inappropriate Conduct Procedure.

RESPONDING TO CHILD SAFETY CONCERNS

All child safety concerns, allegations and disclosures will be taken seriously and acted upon promptly.

Staff must:

- act immediately where a child is unsafe
- listen to and support children
- report concerns in accordance with the Child Protection Procedure
- not investigate suspected child abuse themselves
- comply with mandatory reporting and other legal reporting requirements
- escalate allegations involving staff, volunteers or other adults
- maintain confidentiality
- preserve relevant information and records.

Detailed child protection reporting and response requirements are contained in the Child Protection Policy and Procedure.

INFORMATION SHARING AND PRIVACY

Child safety information will be handled sensitively and confidentially.

Information may be shared where authorised or required by law to:

- protect a child
- respond to a child safety concern
- meet reporting or notification requirements
- support an authorised investigation
- promote a child's safety or wellbeing.

CISS, FVISS and MARAM requirements are governed by the Child Information Sharing and Family Violence Reforms Policy.

CONTINUOUS IMPROVEMENT/REFLECTION

Our *Child Safety and Wellbeing Policy* will be evaluated and reviewed on an annual basis or earlier if there are changes to legislation, ACECQA guidance or any incident related to our policy. Feedback will be requested from children, families, staff, educators and management. All families will be notified 14 days before any policy change that may have a significant impact on the provision of education and care to any child enrolled at the Service or the family's ability to utilise the Service.

NATIONAL QUALITY STANDARD (NQS)

QUALITY AREA 2: CHILDREN'S HEALTH AND SAFETY
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2.2	Safety	Each child is protected.
2.2.1	Supervision	At all times, reasonable precautions and adequate supervision ensure children are protected from harm and hazard.
2.2.2	Incident and emergency management	Plans to effectively manage incidents and emergencies are developed in consultation with relevant authorities, practiced and implemented.
2.2.3	Child safety and protection	Management, educators and staff are aware of their roles and responsibilities regarding child safety, including the need to identify and respond to every child at risk of abuse or neglect.
QUALITY AREA 5: RELATIONSHIPS WITH CHILDREN		
5.1.1	Positive educator to child interactions	Responsive and meaningful interactions build trusting relationships which engage and support each child to feel secure, confident and included.
QUALITY AREA 7: GOVERNANCE AND LEADERSHIP		
7.1	Governance	Governance supports the operation of a quality service that is child safe.

EDUCATION AND CARE SERVICES NATIONAL LAW AND NATIONAL REGULATIONS

S. 2A	Paramount consideration — safety, rights and best interests of children
S. 51	Conditions on service approval
S.162A	Child protection training
S. 162B	Child safety training
S.165	Offence to inadequately supervise children
S.166	Offence to use inappropriate discipline
S.166A	Offences relating to inappropriate conduct
S.167	Offence relating to protection of children from harm and hazards
Part 6A	Devices in education and care services
S. 188	Offence to engage person to whom prohibition notice applies
12	Meaning of serious incident
82	Environment to be free from tobacco, vaping devices, vaping substances, drugs and alcohol
83	Staff members and family day care educators not to be affected by alcohol or drugs
84	Awareness of child protection law
97	Emergency and evacuation procedures

99	Children leaving the education and care service premises
102AAB	Safe arrival of children policies and procedures
103	Premises, furniture and equipment to be safe, clean and in good repair
122	Educators must be working directly with children to be included in ratios
123	Educator to child ratios—centre-based services
128B	Child protection training
128D	Foundation child safety training
128E	Advanced child safety training
136	First aid qualifications
145	Staff record
149	Volunteers and students
154A	National Early Childhood Worker Register
155	Interactions with children
162	Health information to be kept in enrolment record
167	Record of service's compliance
168	Education and care service must have policies and procedures
170	Policies and procedures to be followed
171	Policies and procedures to be kept available
172	Notification of change to policies or procedures
175	Prescribed information to be notified to Regulatory Authority
176B	Nominated supervisor, staff member or volunteer must notify approved provider of changes
176C	Approved providers must notify Regulatory Authority of changes
358	Working with children check—nominated supervisors, staff members and volunteers

RELATED LEGISLATION

<i>Crimes Act 1958 (Vic) (including the Failure to Disclose and Failure to Protect offences)</i>	<i>Family Law Act 1975 (Cth)</i>
<i>Child Wellbeing and Safety Act 2005 (including Reportable Conduct Scheme) (Vic)</i>	<i>Family Violence Protection Act 2008 (Vic)</i>

<i>Children, Youth and Families Act 2005 (Vic)</i>	<i>Worker Screening Act 2020 (Vic)</i>
<i>Commission for Children and Young People Act 2012 (Vic)</i>	

SOURCES

Australian Children's Education & Care Quality Authority. (2026). [Guide to the National Quality Framework](#)

Australian Children's Education & Care Quality Authority. (2025). [NQF Child Safe Culture Guide](#).

Australian Children's Education & Care Quality Authority. (2026). [Information sheet. Using digital devices in centre-based education and care services](#).

Commission for children and young people. [Creating a Child Safety and Wellbeing Policy](#)

Commission for children and young people. [A guide for creating a Child Safe Organisation](#).

Department of Education Victoria. (2026) [Child Information Sharing Scheme](#).

Department of Education Victoria. (2026) [Child Safe Standards guidance for early childhood services](#).

Department of Education Victoria. (2026) [Child safety and wellbeing](#).

Department of Education Victoria. (2026) [PROTECT for early childhood](#).

Early Childhood Australia. (2016). *Code of Ethics*

[Education and Care Services National Law Act 2010](#)

[Education and Care Services National Regulations 2011](#)

Victorian Government (2025). [Family Violence Information Sharing Scheme](#)

Working with Children Act 2005 (Vic)

REVIEW

POLICY REVIEWED BY	Kelsey Pearce		
POLICY REVIEWED	AUGUST 2026	NEXT REVIEW DATE	AUGUST 2027
VERSION NUMBER	V7.08.26		
MODIFICATIONS	• annual policy review • strengthened alignment with the Victorian Child Safe Standards • removed duplicative and outdated content • updated content for accuracy, clarity and consistency • reviewed and updated sources as required		