

# Statement of Commitment to Child Safe Standards

## Statement of commitment by GOTAFE of Zero Tolerance of all forms of abuse towards Children and Young People

The introduction of [Child Safe Standards](#) is part of the Victorian Government's response to the recommendations from the recent [Betrayal of Trust Report](#). GOTAFE is committed to supporting increased responses to child and young person abuse in the community and will use the Child Safe Standards to promote and embed a culture of protecting children across the organisation.

All children and young people have the right to **feel safe** and **be safe** regardless of gender, sexual identity, race, national origin, religious beliefs or other affiliations, age, family structure, disability, or sexual orientation. We are committed to promoting the cultural safety and identity of [Aboriginal Children](#) and children from [Culturally and/or Linguistically Diverse](#) backgrounds, as well as the safety of [Children with a Disability](#).

Victoria set into law that failure to report suspected or disclosed child abuse is a [criminal offence](#) along with failure to protect children. People in authority can face penalties including 5 years imprisonment for failing to protect a child.

This statement of commitment and associated policy and procedures are intended to provide clear guidelines, principles and processes for staff, students, contractors and volunteers within all GOTAFE domains where adults 18 years and over interact with children and young people 17 years of age and below.

The definition of Child Abuse constitutes any act committed against a child or young person involving:

- Physical violence
- Sexual offences
- Serious emotional or psychological abuse

- Serious neglect
- Exposing children to family violence

Reporting actual abuse, alleged abuse or suspicion based on [reasonable grounds](#) is the responsibility of every person 18 years and over. In cases where there is a belief on reasonable grounds that sexual abuse towards a child 15 years and under has occurred, it is embedded into law that a [failure to disclose](#) and [failure to protect](#) may result in imprisonment.

GOTAFE will take all allegations of abuse against a child or young person seriously and will report all allegations to the appropriate [authorities](#) for further investigation. This commitment extends to and includes responsibilities for the welfare of children outside of normal program contact hours such as camps, excursions, after-hours activities or structured workplace learning/ work placements.

The safety and wellbeing of children and young people is a priority for GOTAFE across all programs and services and in all domains, including on-line activities and events where GOTAFE is the sole provider or in partnership with other organisations.

To create and maintain a child safe organisation, GOTAFE commits to maintain and improve on each of the standards:

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.

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

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

Standard 4: Families and communities are informed and involved in promoting child safety and wellbeing.

Standard 5: Equity is upheld and diverse needs respected in policy and practice.

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

Standard 7: Processes for complaints and concerns are child-focused.

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.

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

Standard 10: Implementation of the Child Safe Standards is regularly reviewed and improved.

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

These standards are the guiding principles with respect to child and young person safety in the delivery and development of all activities, events and interactions by the organisation.