

# Child Safety Updates

Scouts Victoria 2023



Scouts Victoria acknowledges the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples, as the Traditional Custodians of this land. We pay our respects to Elders past and present, as well as the younger leaders working to support their communities.

We're grateful to do our Scouting on this country and we seek to be an inclusive organisation for all young people. We work towards respectful cultural relationships, and to develop and celebrate our understanding of the rich Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander histories and culture that is a core part of our community.

We acknowledge any Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Scouts who are present or who are part of our organisation today .





Firstly, thank you for attending tonight.  
It's really comforting to know that so many of you recognise the importance of tonight's topic and have come to learn more about it.  
It's also worth mentioning that sometimes the topic of Child Safety can be distressing, and you should take a break if you need it.

# We will be covering...

- How to get support
- Victorian Child Safe Standards
- Unit Code of Conduct
- Listen & Support. Document & Report



Our topics tonight:

- Victorian Child Safe Standards
- Unit Code of Conduct
- Listen & Support. Document & Report (our reporting mantra)
- How to get support

Before we get started, I wanted to remind you that we are not expecting you to be an expert in this field. We have experts who understand the legislation, and the requirements. This training is about giving you the tools to work with the young people around you.

# Need support for you?

- Self-care – do something nice for yourself!
- Call us for a debrief.
- Contact your GP for some mental health support.
- Contact Beyond Blue  
(<https://www.beyondblue.org.au/get-support>)
- Contact Lifeline (13 11 14)



Need to look after yourself as well!

- Self-care – do something nice for yourself!
- Call us for a debrief.
- Contact your GP for some mental health support.
- Contact Beyond Blue (
- Contact Lifeline (13 11 14)



The Victorian Child Safe Standards changed on 1 July 2022. The previous set had been established in 2016.

# Victorian Child Safe Standards

The Child Safe Standards aim to protect children and young people, by requiring organisations to put policies, procedures and processes in place to prevent and respond to abuse. The Commission for Children and Young People are the regulatory body.

Changes have been made to support greater national consistency, reflecting the *National Principles for a Child Safe Organisation* developed following the Royal Commission into Institutional Responses to Child Sexual Abuse.



## Just so you know:

The Child Safe Standards aim to protect children and young people, by requiring organisations to put policies, procedures and processes in place to prevent and respond to abuse. The Commission for Children and Young People are the regulatory body. Recent changes have been made to support greater national consistency, reflecting the *National Principles for a Child Safe Organisation* developed following the Royal Commission into Institutional Responses to Child Sexual Abuse.

# Victorian Child Safe Standards



We don't expect you to know all 11 new Standards.

You need to know two things.

1. Know that the Standards govern our work with Child Safety.
2. Follow the Scouts Victoria policies and processes, which have been created or adjusted based on the new Standards.

We've put considerable resources and effort into making sure that Scouts Victoria is compliant, and so you don't have to.



# Changes to Child Safe Standards

- There has been a move from reacting to a concern, to preventing concerns from happening.
- There is more of a focus on young people with a vulnerability such as disability, culture, out-of-home care etc.
- There is more of a focus with online environments.
- And there is more of a focus on youth empowerment.



- The new Standards have shifted from reactive to preventative. This is great! It means that we're developing a safer environment through training and education – just like this session.
- There is more of a focus on young people with a vulnerability such as disability, culture, trauma, out-of-home care etc. This involves both adults offending, but also youth offending against other youth.
- There is more of a focus with online environments, including video conferencing and chat rooms.
- And there is more of a focus on youth empowerment. Which sounds very similar to the Scout Method and is absolutely where we should be able to shine.



Let's go over some of the recent updates

# What's been updated?

- Some policies and procedures
  - Peer to peer harmful behaviours
  - Anti-bullying
  - Adult Code of Conduct
- Documentation such as Parent and Caregivers Guide to Scouting.
- Our Child Safety central Risk Register has been updated.
- We have new Child Safe posters.



New or updated policies, procedures and documents.

- Peer to peer is a new policy developed in conjunction with Child Wise and we'll come back to this in the next slide.
- Anti bullying is a great policy as it specifically lays out what is and what isn't bullying.
- The Adult Code of Conduct has been updated to include the word "Adult" as we also start building Unit Codes
- And the Parents & Caregivers Guide to Scouting has been updated, and is sent to all new families.

Our Child Safety central risk register has been reviewed and updated,

We have a new Child Safe poster, delivered in August last year to DCs and must be up in halls with youth by now. Spare copies can be downloaded from our website.

# Unit Code of Conduct

By the end of June 2024, all Units will have a Code of Conduct that includes our “categories of behaviour” on display in their hall.

This is being rolled out via Sections, and there are resources being released to support Units in developing their own.



This is from our work with Child Wise over 2022. Part of that work was a series of focus groups with parents, Leaders and young people.

By the end of June 2024, all Units will have a Code of Conduct that includes our “categories of behaviour” on display in their hall.

This is being rolled out via Sections, and there are resources being released to support Units in developing their own.

You don't need to do anything about this right now.

# Purpose of a Unit Code of Conduct

- To empower young people.
- To clearly state the behavioural expectations.
- To support teamwork and collaboration.
- To support our Leaders.



By creating a Unit Code of Conduct, we are empowering our young people with knowledge. Everyone works better with clear and explicit expectations. We are reminding them about right and wrong and supporting them with the language to stand up for themselves.

By creating individual Unit Codes, we're promoting Youth Leading, Adult Supporting and assisting everyone to have a collaborative framework.

We're also supporting our Leaders to know exactly what needs reporting to Scouts Victoria, while developing a shared language to create better communication and reporting for all of us.

# Unit Code of Conduct

Category 1: Behaviour we want to see...

Category 2: Behaviour that needs permission...

Category 3: Behaviour that is inappropriate...

Category 4: Behaviour that is harmful or unsafe...



Category 1: Behaviour we want to see. We have to encourage the positive behaviours.

Category 2: Behaviour that needs permission. This is where we're having the consent conversation.

Category 3: Behaviour that is inappropriate. These are the teachable moments, where a member is corrected and changes their behaviour.

Category 4: Behaviour that is harmful or unsafe.

# Examples of Category 4

- Bullying, harassment or discriminating behaviour
- Purposefully making someone else uncomfortable, including intimidation, sexual innuendo, stalking and threats
- Partaking (or knowing someone else is) in drugs, alcohol, cigarettes or vape.
- Having or sharing inappropriate material on devices
- Any sexual interactions
- Any violent or threatening behaviour
- Any illegal behaviour
- Category 2 behaviour without permission
- Persistent or repeated Category 3 behaviour



Category 4 is what must be reported to Scouts Victoria and covers anything that makes another person feel unsafe or uncomfortable, including category 2 behaviours without permission, or repeated category 3 behaviours.

I promise more of this is coming from your Sections team over the next 6 months.



So we've gone through the major updates, let's revise exactly what you, as a local Leader, needs to know about reporting,





Firstly, if you're in any sticky situation and you're not sure what to do – these four words will help.  
Listen & Support. Document & Report.

# Listen carefully

- Ensure the situation is safe. Stay in sight, but out of hearing of others.
- Listen to what the young person wants to share.
- Let them take their time, and encourage their own words.
- Ask open questions such as “can you tell me more about that?” instead of leading questions such as “Did they touch you here?”



The first step is to listen carefully to the person sharing with you, adult or youth.

Make sure they are safe in that immediate moment (if not call 000).

Remember to stay in sight, but not in hearing.

Let them take their time to find their words.

This step is incredibly powerful.

A member has decided that they trust you and they want to share with you. That's a massive win already!

# Support the person

- Hold back your own emotions and judgements.
- Let the young person know it's not their fault and they are not in trouble.
- Acknowledge that it must have been difficult to share.
- Inform them that you may need to report to Scouts Victoria so we can work together to help keep them safe. Do not promise to keep it a secret.
- Be a listener, you are not an investigator.



While you're listening, be an active supporter. Tell them that you recognise it would have been hard to share.

Thank them for sharing, and let them know that you can support them make a plan to get some help.

Hold back your emotions and judgements.

Do not promise to keep it a secret. Explain to them that you need to share with Scouts Victoria in order to help you.

# Document Everything

- Be as specific as you can.
- Use the young person's own language and words where possible. Differentiate direct quotes from general statements.
- Include who was present, and any other discussions you've had i,e, with your GL or other Section Leaders.



Once you've ensured immediate safety and listened to the concerns, write it all down! We have a form for you – Child Safe notification, on the website – or just pop it in your email, or notes on your phone.

Don't record the youth member, but you can record your notes afterwards if you find it easier.

You are allowed to seek support – a GL, another Section Leader – but remember to respect the privacy of the person making the disclosure. They chose to share with you for a reason.

# What to report?

- If it's a category 4 behaviour from a Code of Conduct.
- If you form a reasonable belief that a young person could be at risk of harm or you have concerns for their safety or well-being
- If someone discloses sexual, physical, psychological or emotional harm or neglect towards a young person.
- If you have observed harmful behaviour towards a young person or seen suspected signs of abuse.
- If you have observed a child participate in harmful behaviour against someone else.
- If you are not sure if you should report or not.



Once documented, you need to assess the need for reporting.

You must report:

1. If it's a category 4 behaviour from a Code of Conduct, regardless of your thinking.
2. If you form a reasonable belief that a young person is at risk of harm or you have concerns for their safety or well-being
3. If someone discloses sexual, physical, psychological or emotional harm or neglect towards a child. This doesn't matter who they are alleging against. Parent, youth, member, not member.
4. If you have observed harmful behaviour towards a child or seen suspected signs of abuse
5. You have observed a child participate in harmful behaviour against someone else.
6. If you are not sure if you should report or not. If you ask yourself the question "should I report?" the answer is always yes.

Think of reporting like doing a jigsaw puzzle.

You might not have the full picture, but if the system is working, you might give us the final piece we need to take more or specific action.

# How to report?

- Report via 1800 870 772 or [childsafes@scoutsvictoria.com.au](mailto:childsafes@scoutsvictoria.com.au)
- Please be in contact within 24 hours of any disclosure, concern or notification.
- Scouts Victoria understand that this can be distressing and we are there to support you.
- We may ask you to notify an external authority such as Victoria Police and we can help you do that.
- We will ask you to complete our notification report on our website.
- Remember, if in doubt, make the call.



Reporting via 1800 870 772 – it's a free call for anyone and someone is on duty 24/7 to respond.

This is really for when you need immediate assistance or advice.

Alternatively, if you're just reporting something, you can email us on [childsafes@scoutsvictoria.com.au](mailto:childsafes@scoutsvictoria.com.au)



## CHILD SAFETY CONCERN

If you form a reasonable belief that a young person is at risk of harm or you have concerns for their safety or well-being, please contact the Scouts Victoria Child Safety line on 1800 870 772

### When to report?

- If a child is at risk of harm or you have concerns for their safety or well-being.
- If a child discloses sexual, physical, psychological or emotional harm or neglect. This includes if a third person (such as parent or friend) discloses on their behalf.
- If you have observed harmful behaviour towards a child or seen suspected signs of abuse
- If you are not sure if you should report or not.  
(For example; if you ask the question, should I report it? Then the answer is yes!)

When listening to a young person disclose information

**Listen, support, document & report.**



This is a screen shot of the reporting form – it asks you to share information about who the concern is for, what the situation is, and what has happened. It takes you through what we need to know, and is useful to use because you might not be thinking clearly. You can find this under the Child Safe tab on our website.

# What happens when you report?

- Historical reports
  - Usually forwarded to our Executive Manager and People & Culture Manager.
- Mental health concerns
  - Depending on specifics, we often notify emergency services in these cases, to ensure the safety of the person involved.



What happens when you report?

Obviously it depends on what sort of report you are making.

There are a few different types of concerns.

Historical reports (prior to 2020) are forwarded to Exec Manager and Manager – People & Culture to be dealt with from head office. Those can sometimes involve litigation or redress.

Mental Health concerns - depending on specifics, we often notify emergency services in these cases, to ensure the safety of the person involved. We can support you to make those calls.



# What happens when you report?

- Case involves an adult against a youth member
  - An adult who isn't in Scouting, and it didn't happen at Scouting.
  - An adult who isn't in Scouting and it did happen at Scouting.
  - An adult who is in Scouting.



There are three types of cases here.

- An adult who isn't in Scouting, and it didn't happen at Scouting.
- An adult who isn't in Scouting and it did happen at Scouting.
- An adult who is in Scouting and therefore covered by our own Adult Code of Conduct.

All of these cases are important and are referred to different external agencies depending on the situation.

Some agencies (such as Child Protection), we might ask you to call, because you have the more accurate information, and some we will need to call ourselves such as Commission for Children and Young People (CCYP) with the Reportable Conduct Scheme

## What happens when you report?

- Concern has peer to peer youth members and involves Category 3 type behaviour.
  - Usually, the People & Culture Youth team supports the local team to manage the issue.
  - Could involve parent meetings, management plans, updating Operoo, Unit Councils, counselling, Code of Conduct sessions, running workshops, debriefing etc.



Management of category 3 behaviour, the inappropriate behaviour that can be correct, can be complex or challenging and the People & Culture Youth team can support you. Every situation is different and sometimes depend on the experience and the skill of local leaders. Someone who has been a Scout Leader for 15 years might deal with something in a different way to a first year Scout Leader, and that's okay. We can help you make a plan, and support you to work through that plan.

The People & Culture Youth team is much larger now, and includes our Assistant Chief Commissioner, People & Culture, State Commissioner, People & Culture – Youth, Child Safeguarding Officer, and various other members depending on the need of the case.

## What happens when you report?

- Concern has peer to peer youth members and involves Category 4 type behaviour.
  - Generally, the People & Culture Youth team will take over these issues.
  - It can involve an investigation with youth interviews, parent meetings, Police reports, Child Protection and counselling.
  - It can involve a suspension of the youth members.
  - It can be complex and drawn-out.



Management of category 4 behaviour is usually quite difficult and time-consuming. We don't expect you to know the legislation, but we do, so the People & Culture Youth team will take these cases over for you.

The process can involve interviews, external reports such as Police, Child Protection, Case Managers and collecting lots of information and data. These cases are often managed by our Child Safeguarding Officer, supported by our State Commissioner, People & Culture (Youth).

We aim to have these managed in 3 months, but in reality, it often takes much longer, when you factor in that youth interviews can only take place after school and need to be carefully managed to support the young person.

Another point to note; if a case has been taken over by Victoria Police (any case at all), we can't tell you. It looks bad on us, because it looks like we're doing nothing, but we have to just wait to protect their investigation.



Don't worry – no role playing!  
We're going to do one scenario together and then split into groups to discuss some other scenarios.

# SCENARIO

Kristy met Louise (a PL from the neighbouring Group) at Scout Hike last month. This week, Kristy has disclosed to you (as her Section Leader) that Louise has been sending her text messages suggesting that Kristy should hurt herself. Kristy is distressed, the messages are hurtful and there are many of them.

What do you do?



Give them a few minutes to discuss amongst themselves and then ask for responses.

Correct answer is anything along the lines of Listen & Support. Document & Report.

Please raise these points, if they don't come up:

- Active listening with Kristy
- Supporting Kristy to screenshot messages, then block and delete.
- Supporting Kristy by ensuring her parents are aware or that she has support in place.
- Clearly document everything with screenshots
- You might, (but you don't need to,) notify your GL and/or your DC for support. Make it clear that you are reporting it.
- Report to Scouts Victoria Child Safe Team – this is definitely Cat 4, as it has made someone else feel unsafe.
- Scouts Victoria will notify the GL/DC/RC as part of our process.

## Remember...

- If you see something, say something.
- You are a representative of Scouts Victoria. If you know something, the legal expectation is that so does Rod Byrnes, as our Chief.
- Within a Scouting context, you don't get a chance to say "it's not my job"
- Never assume someone else will report it.



Many of our cases could have been prevented.  
Someone usually knows something isn't right.  
If they speak up, they help us to protect our young people.

Also if you know something, the legal system deems that so does Rod, the Chief Commissioner.  
We have a whistleblower policy. If you are reporting in good faith, you will be protected.  
You never know what else is happening, please just say something.



**1800 870 772**

[childsafe@scoutsvictoria.com.au](mailto:childsafe@scoutsvictoria.com.au)



If you don't already have it, please take a moment to pop this number in your phone.  
Thank you for coming. Are there any questions?