

Child Safety



What staff will learn

At the end of this compliance module, you'll be able to answer the following questions:

- What is child safety and child abuse?
- What are the Child Safe Standards?
- Why is child safety important at Swinburne?
- What is Swinburne's Statement of Commitment?
- What is Swinburne's Code of Conduct?
- What are the indicators of child harm and abuse?
- What are Swinburne's reporting and compliance obligations?
- When and how to make a report of child harm and abuse?
- What happens after a report of child harm and abuse?
- How to respond to a disclosure of child harm and abuse?
- What are Swinburne's WWCC requirements?
- How does Swinburne ensure a safe environment for children of all backgrounds and needs?



What is child safety and child abuse?

Child safety includes matters related to protecting all children from child abuse, managing the risk of child abuse, providing support to a child at risk of child abuse, and responding to suspicions, incidents, disclosures or allegations of child abuse.

Child abuse includes:

- a) any act committed against a child involving:
 - a sexual offence
 - grooming
- b) the infliction, on a child, of
 - physical violence
 - serious emotional or psychological harm
- c) the serious neglect of a child

Examples of child abuse



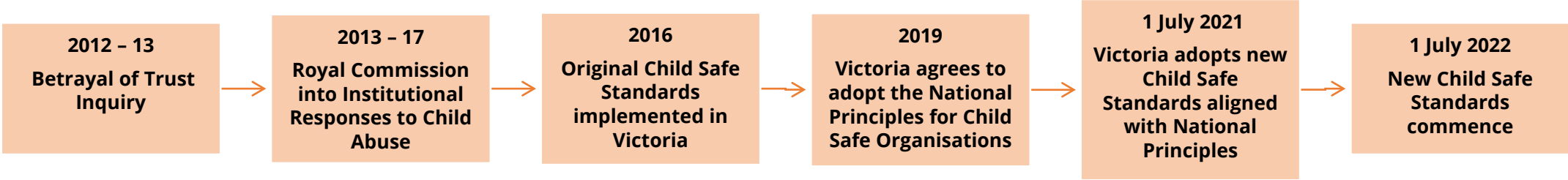
Child Safe Standards history

The Child Safe Standards are part of an evolving story of reform in Victoria to make sure that children and young people in organisations feel safe and are safe.

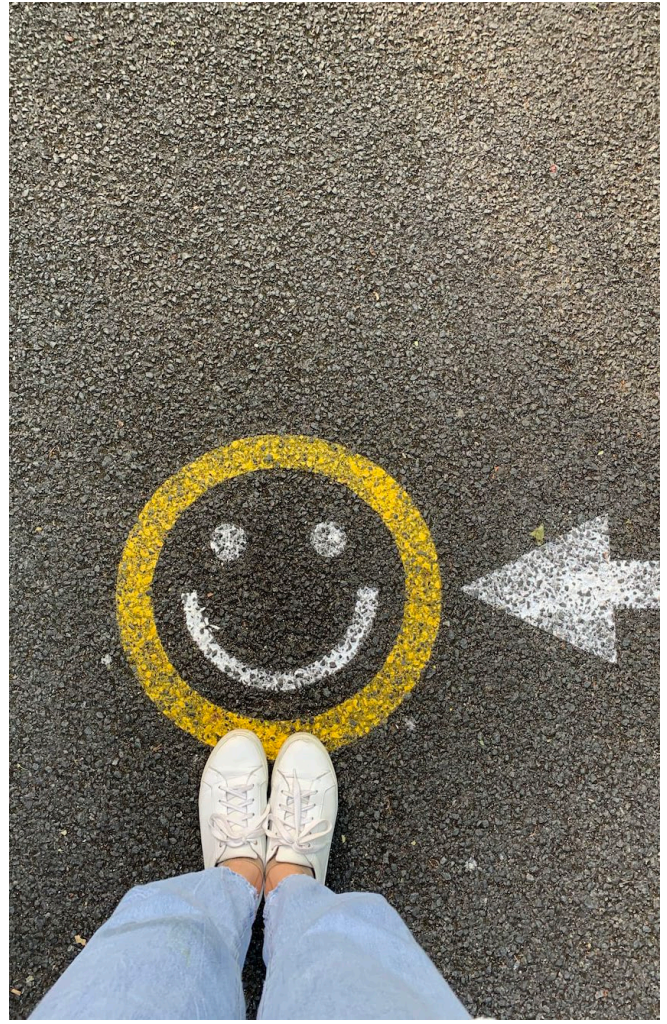
Recent enquiries have shown the harm that organisations and its people can cause to children when the right policies, practices and culture are not in place.

This work has no end date. It is an ongoing story of maturing and improving our knowledge and practice to keep children safe.

Timeline of the Child Safe Standards:



What's different in the New Child Safe Standards?



Why are the Child Safe Standards so important?

The Child Safe Standards recognise that all children are vulnerable
 The Child Safe Standards require Swinburne to **take steps to prevent child abuse** and **build a culture of child safety**.

We cannot assume that child abuse does not and cannot happen within our Swinburne community.

Child Safe Standards

- What are the aims?
- How do they work?



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Why is Child Safety important to Swinburne?

Children and young people are part of our community. Swinburne's diverse activities in education, engagement and research involve children in many ways.

We have:

- Tertiary students under 18 years of age
- Secondary school programs - VCE and VET in Schools
- Engagement programs with primary and secondary schools
- Trade apprentices under 18 years of age
- The Young Mums program – students with infants
- Research projects involving children and youth
- Childcare facilities and school holiday programs
- Public campuses – children and youth are welcome

Who is a child?



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Swinburne must comply with the 11 Child Safe Standards

Standard 1 What is it? Indicators	Standard 2 What is it? Indicators	Standard 3 What is it? Indicators	Standard 4 What is it? Indicators
Standard 5 What is it? Indicators	Standard 6 What is it? Indicators	Standard 7 What is it? Indicators	Standard 8 What is it? Indicators
Standard 9 What is it? Indicators	Standard 10 What is it? Indicators	Standard 11 What is it? Indicators	



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Note

What are some possible consequences of not complying with the Child Safe Standards?

- Greater risk of child abuse
- Unsafe university culture
- Non compliance identified during university review
- Victorian Registration and Qualifications Authority action
- Commission for Children and Young People investigations
- Breach of duty of care or organisational duty of care
- Failure to report and failure to stop offences
- Legal action such as negligence claims
- Loss of reputation for keeping children safe

Note



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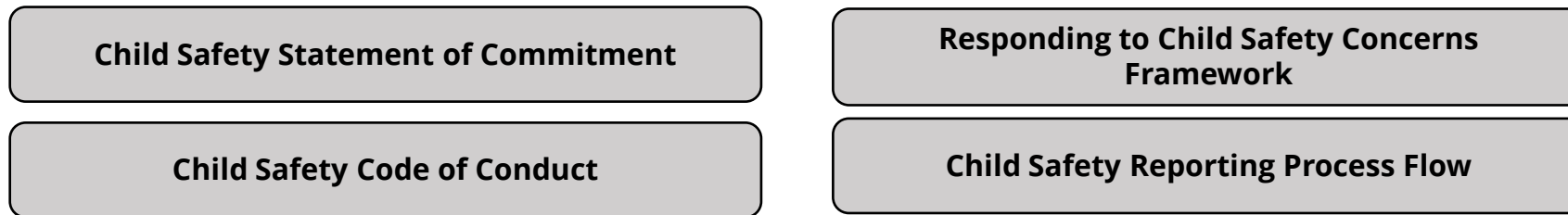


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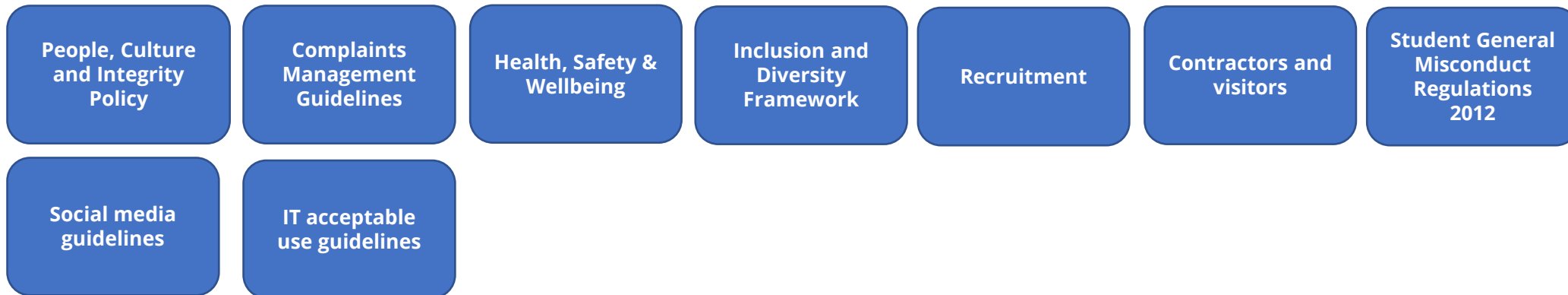
Swinburne's child safety policies and procedures



Overarching child safety documents



Connected policies and procedures for child safety



Where can I find this information?

Swinburne's statement of commitment to child safety

Swinburne has **zero tolerance for child abuse and all forms of harm to children and young people.**

Concerns or allegations are treated very seriously and acted upon.

Under Swinburne's [People, Culture and Integrity Policy](#) harm to children and young people is an unacceptable behaviour.

OUR RESPONSIBILITY

It is a shared and collective responsibility of all employees and workers, including volunteers and contractors, to facilitate a safe environment for children.

As a staff member, you are responsible for ensuring that any contractors, visitors and volunteers in your remit understand Swinburne's child safety policies and procedures.

Important



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Child Safety Code of Conduct

Swinburne's Child Safety Code of Conduct provides adults with a clear guide on the behaviour that is expected of them in our school environments, and:

- lists acceptable and unacceptable behaviours
- identifies professional boundaries and ethical behaviour
- applies to all university-related activities, including offsite trips, using digital technology and social media
- is publicly available

Who has to follow it?

Staff, students, volunteers, contractors, and any other member of our Swinburne community.



Code of Conduct with children and young people

Unacceptable behaviours

- Ignoring or disregarding concerns or allegations of child abuse or harm
- Developing a special relationship with a student that could be seen as favouritism or amount to 'grooming' behaviour
- Discriminating on the basis of age, gender, race, culture, vulnerability or sexuality
- Displaying behaviour or engaging with children and young people in ways that are not justified by the educational or professional context
- Using prejudice or oppressive behaviour with children
- Inappropriate discussion in the presence of a child
- Exchanging personal contact details or unauthorised contact with children
- Initiating unnecessary physical contact with children
- Ignoring poor behaviour or unacceptable conduct of colleagues or other adults



Code of Conduct with children and young people

Acceptable behaviours

- Promoting the physical and cultural safety, participation and empowerment of vulnerable cohorts
- Encouraging children to talk about their views or concerns and treat everyone with respect
- Awareness that children cannot always be easily identified when integrated into a tertiary environment, both on campus and online
- Being welcoming and inclusive of all children, their families and carers, and treating everyone with respect
- Modelling appropriate adult behaviour
- Working with children in a transparent way – other adults should always know about any work you are doing with children
- If child abuse is suspected, ensuring as quickly as possible that the child is safe and protected.



Code of conduct examples

Have a brainstorm of what you believe would be unacceptable and acceptable behaviours when interacting with children. Familiarise yourself with some examples listed below.

What are some unacceptable behaviours?

Answer

What are some acceptable behaviours?

Answer





Legal obligations

Swinburne has a legislative and moral duty to take reasonable measures to prevent and respond to the abuse of a child by a person associated with Swinburne while the person is under the care, supervision, or authority of the University.

To achieve this, the University has in place a structured process for reporting and acting on concerns or allegations of child abuse and harm.

What are the reporting requirements?

At Swinburne, all staff, students, contractors, visitors, and volunteers are bound by the reporting obligations outlined in the Child Safety Statement of Commitment and Practice, which requires them to:

- Contact Emergency Services and/or Swinburne Security if there is a belief that a child or young person is in immediate harm or danger.
- Report any concern or allegation child abuse and harm, and breaches to the Code of Conduct to Safer Community.

Legislative reporting requirements

Individuals and the university must also comply with the following legislative reporting requirements where relevant:

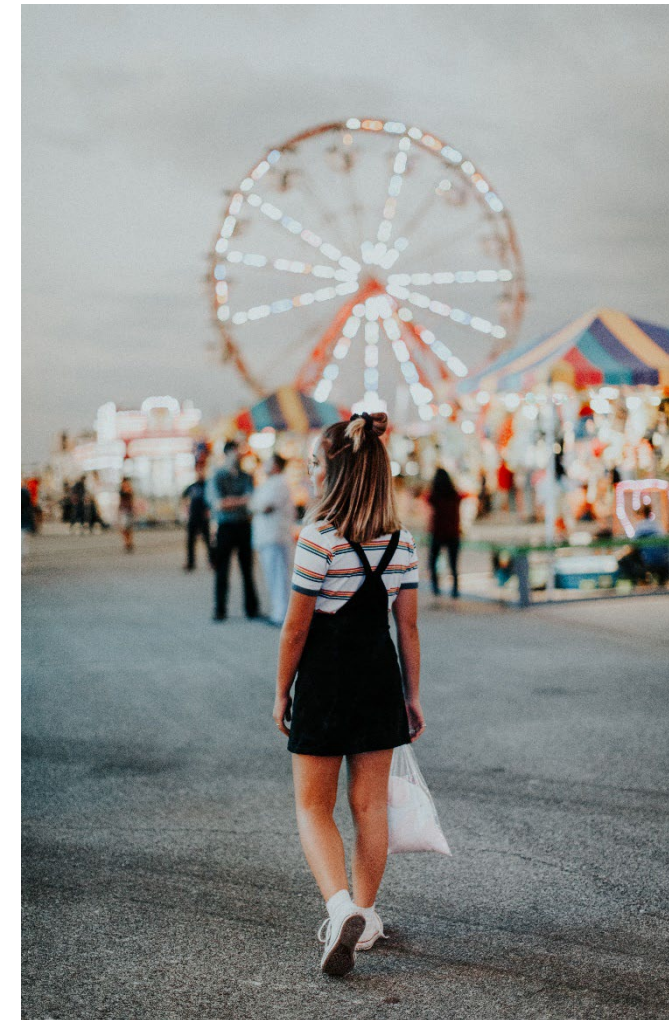
Failure to disclose

Reporting child sexual abuse is a community-wide responsibility. Under the [failure to disclose offence](#), all adults in Victoria who have a reasonable belief that an adult has committed a sexual offence against a child under 16 have an obligation to report that information to the police.

Failure to protect

The [failure to protect offence](#) stipulates that:

- where there is a substantial risk that a child under the age of 16 under the care, supervision or authority of the University will become a victim of a sexual offence committed by an adult associated with the University
- any person of authority in the University will commit an offence if they know of the risk of abuse and have the power or responsibility to reduce or remove the risk, but negligently fail to do so.



Further legislative reporting requirements

Mandatory Reporter

Any person who is a mandatory reporter under the [Children, Youth and Families Act 2005 \(Vic\)](#) must comply with their duties to report a reasonable belief of child physical or sexual abuse to child protection authorities. Examples of mandatory reporters include doctors, nurses, registered teachers, school principals, youth justice workers, psychologists, and religious and spiritual leaders.

Reportable Conduct Scheme

The reportable conduct scheme ensures organisations respond to allegations of misconduct of their workers and volunteers when involving a person under 18.

Swinburne must report any alleged **reportable conduct** of its employees, contractors and volunteers to the Commission for Children and Young People. There are tight reporting timeframes (must first report within 3 days) so any concerns must be swiftly identified and reported to Safer Community who will escalate to the Vice Chancellor's Delegate for actioning.

What is reportable conduct?



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Physical abuse

Physical abuse refers to injury that may take the form of bruises, cuts, burns or fractures. It could be intentionally causing injury, threatening to cause injury, or inadvertently causing injury because of a physical punishment or aggression.

Examples of physical abuse may include beating, shaking, or burning, assault with implements and female genital mutilation.

What are some
physical indicators?

Answer

What are some
behavioural indicators?

Answer



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Emotional and psychological abuse

Emotional and psychological abuse is often hidden and underestimated. It can occur when a person engages in inappropriate behaviours, such as rejecting, ignoring, humiliating, isolating, threatening, or verbally abusing a child, or allowing others to do so. Emotional abuse may occur with or without other forms of abuse.

What are some physical indicators?

Answer

What are some behavioural indicators?

Answer



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Sexual abuse

Child sexual abuse is the involvement of a child in sexual activity that they do not fully comprehend, are unable to give informed consent to, or they are not developmentally prepared for.

Child sexual abuse can include a wide range of sexual activity including:

- Fondling the child's genitals
- Oral sex
- Vaginal or anal penetration
- Exposure of the child to pornography

Child sexual abuse does not always include physical sexual contact and can also include non-contact offences, such as:

- Talking to a child in a sexually explicit way
- Sending sexual messages or emails to a child
- Exposing a sexual body part to a child

What are some
physical indicators?

Answer

What are some
behavioural indicators?

Answer



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Sexual exploitation

Child sexual exploitation is a form of sexual abuse where a child is involved in sexually exploitative relationships and activities where the person exploiting the child has some form of power over them.

This could be by age, gender, strength, economic means, or any other resource. It often involves situations and relationships where young people receive something (food, accommodation, drugs, alcohol, cigarettes, affection, gifts, money) in return for participating in sexual activities.

Child sexual exploitation can occur in person or online, and sometimes the child may not realise they are a victim.

What are some
physical indicators?

Answer

What are some
behavioural indicators?

Answer



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Grooming

Grooming is when a person engages in predatory conduct to prepare a child or young person for sexual activity at a later time. Grooming can include communicating or attempting to befriend or establish a relationship or other emotional connection with the child or their parent or carer.

Grooming includes online grooming which occurs when an adult uses electronic communication (including social media) in a predatory fashion to try to lower a child's inhibitions or heighten their curiosity regarding sex, to eventually meet them in person for sexual activity. This can include online chats, sexting, and other interactions.

What are some physical indicators?

Answer

What are some behavioural indicators?

Answer



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Family violence

Family violence is any threatening, coercive, dominating or abusive behaviour that occurs between people in a family, domestic or intimate relationship, or former intimate relationship, that causes the person experiencing the behaviour to feel fear.

A child can be exposed to violence either by directly experiencing family violence (being the target) or witnessing family violence being inflicted upon somebody else.

Experiences of family violence create significant risks to a child's social, emotional, psychological, and physical health and wellbeing. The longer a child experiences family violence, the greater the impact can be.

What are some
physical indicators?

Answer

What are some
behavioural indicators?

Answer



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Neglect

Neglect occurs when a caregiver fails to meet a child's basic needs, such as providing adequate food, drink, shelter, clothing, supervision, hygiene, and medical attention to the extent that the health or physical development of the child is significantly impaired or placed at serious risk.

What are some physical indicators?

Answer

What are some behavioural indicators?

Answer



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Racial, cultural and religious abuse

Racial, cultural, and religious abuse includes contempt, ridicule, hatred or negativity towards a child because of their race, culture, or religion.

It may be overt, such as direct racial vilification or discrimination, or covert, such as demonstrating a lack of cultural respect (attitude and values) and awareness (knowledge and understanding) or failing to provide positive images about another culture.

What are some indicators?

Answer



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What is cultural safety?



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What and when to report?

All incidents, disclosures, suspicions, reasonable beliefs of abuse, harm (or threat of) or misconduct involving a child or young person must be reported to the university as soon as practical.

NEVER ignore or disregard any suspected or disclosed harm.

Things to remember:

Incidents or concerns DO NOT need:

- to be witnessed by the reporter to be raised with the university.
- to constitute an emergency or pose an immediate threat to be reported.
- to come via formal complaint processes to be responded to by the university.
- proof to make a report. A concern, suspicion or reasonable belief is enough to make a report.

What is a reasonable belief?



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How to make a report?

Action 1: Responding to an emergency

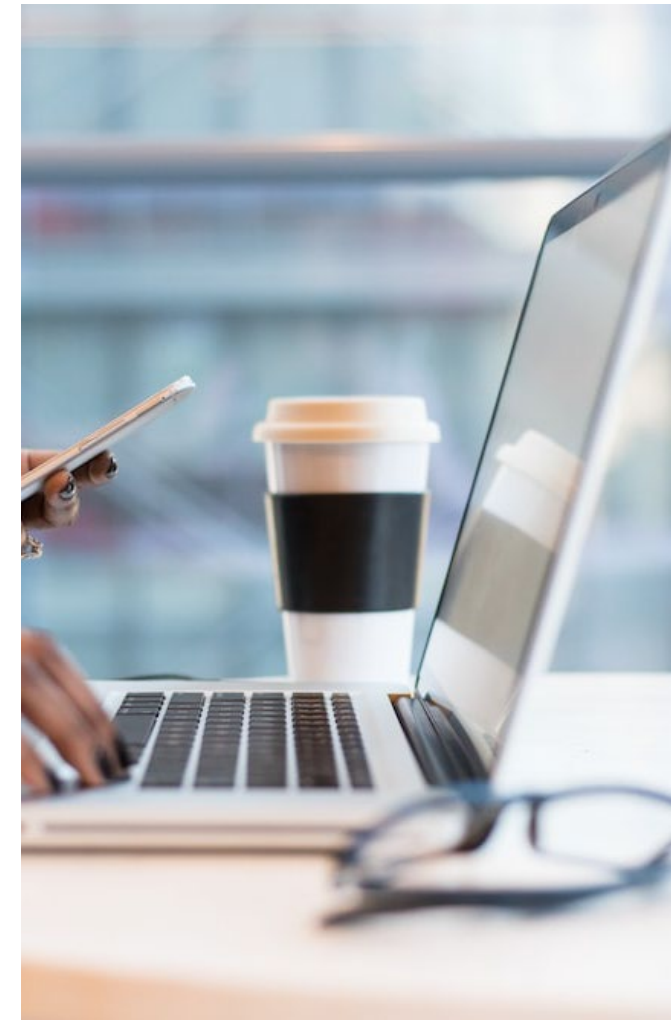
If there is no risk of immediate harm go to ACTION 2.

If a child or young person affiliated with the university is in immediate danger, a report must be made to:

- Emergency Services on 000 and/or Campus Security (03) 9214 3333

Action 2: Reporting to Safer Community

Once immediate health and safety concerns are addressed, a report must be made to Safer Community ([Online reporting form](#) or via safercommunity@swin.edu.au).



What happens after a report?

Safer Community will facilitate and support a report to the Police and/or Child Protection authorities.

Investigation and risk management

If the source of suspected abuse is from within the university:

- The university will investigate and escalate as warranted including to the Behavioural Risk Assessment and Management (BRAM) Committee.
- Individuals who are the subject of an allegation which Swinburne is investigating will be afforded procedural fairness.
- Pending the assessment and management of a child safety matter, the university may suspend an alleged staff of concern with pay, remove alleged student perpetrators and/or victims from class, or establish any other temporary arrangements, without judgement.
- Where an allegation of child abuse or harm is substantiated, the university will initiate disciplinary and misconduct proceedings towards the alleged staff or student of concern to mitigate further risks.

What is the BRAM Committee?



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What happens after a report?

Working with authorities

- All staff members involved in the reporting of a concern are to cooperate with Police, Child Protection, or other authorities for outcomes of external investigations. Staff members will be supported by Safer Community in this process.
- Safer Community and the Vice Chancellor's delegate will liaise with the Vice Chancellor to ensure any reporting to the Commission for Children and Young people is completed according to the Reportable Conduct Scheme.

Providing ongoing support

- Swinburne will provide age and culturally appropriate support for children/young people within the Swinburne community impacted by abuse or harm.
- The support provided/facilitated will vary dependent upon the case. It may be direct intervention, advice, advocacy for special consideration or referral to internal or external processes and services.



Responding to a disclosure of child abuse or harm

- Give the child or young person your full attention.
- Maintain a calm appearance.
- Reassure the child or young person it is right to tell.
- Accept the child or young person will disclose only what is comfortable and recognise the bravery/strength of the child for talking about something that is difficult.
- Let the child or young person take their time and use their own words.
- Don't make promises you can't keep.
- Assess their current level of safety. Take immediate action if they are injured or at risk of significant harm/danger.
- Tell the child or young person what you plan to do next. This includes your obligations to report the concerns to Safer Community for follow-up and escalate to Emergency services or Security to address immediate risk.
- Do not confront the perpetrator.

How to tell a child your reporting obligations?



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Protecting vulnerable children and young people

Some children and young people are recognised as being more vulnerable to abuse than others, based on various factors including **age**, **gender**, **ethnicity**, **disability**, and **prior abuse** or **neglect**.

It is important to proactively provide cultural safety, and safety for those with additional needs.

How do we promote safety of children and youth with a disability?

Answer

How do we promote the cultural safety of Indigenous youth?

Answer

How do we promote cultural safety of youth from culturally and/or linguistically diverse backgrounds?

Answer

How do we promote safety of children at a whole-of-university level?

Answer



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Working With Children Checks (WWCC)

Swinburne has committed to maintaining a child-safe environment by ensuring **all employees** have a current and valid Working With Children Check.

This includes staff who are existing, new, prospective, agency and volunteers.

Even if staff are not student-facing, Swinburne is a public institution with open campuses and facilities. All staff contribute to the safety of the Swinburne community.

Managers of staff and volunteers who work directly with under-18s also need to adopt management practices around supervision of conduct, and educating their team about child safety responsibilities and reporting mechanisms.

Even students who undertake child-related work placements as part of their course are required to have a WWCC.



Requirement to hold a working with children check

Which of these groups require a valid working with children check within a university environment?

Newly Commencing or Current Staff

Answer

Students on Placement

Answer

Visitors on campus grounds

Answer

Volunteers

Answer

University students under 18 years of age

Answer

Administration and Office Staff

Answer

Tradesmen and Building Contractors

Answer



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Case study 1

Suzie is a 17-year-old student, who overheard an explicit conversation between two university staff members. She raised the inappropriate language and content with one of her teachers and became emotional as she recounted the event.

Suzie's teacher provided comfort by placing a hand on her shoulder and told her that the conversation was not meant for her and that there was nothing wrong with two staff members speaking to each other. The teacher gave Suzie a personal phone number and mentioned that she could call anytime.

Was the advice and comfort provided by the teacher appropriate?

YES

Answer

NO

Answer



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Case study 2

A 17-year-old student, Jonathan, studying at Swinburne reports to you that they have felt physically threatened by another teacher engaging in a role play scenario of a confronting nature i.e. a violent client. Although Jonathan was aware of the nature of the assessment, he disclosed a previous incident of family violence and believed it to be a real threat as he thought they were about to be hurt by the teacher.

What are the indicators of harm?

Answer

What is the type of harm?

Answer

What should you do next?

Answer



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Case study 3

You receive an email from an over-18 Swinburne student, Emily, who has alleged that a staff member has been using language and educational examples of a sexually inappropriate nature in the classroom, which has been made several students feel uncomfortable and unsafe. Emily advises that one of the students in the classroom who has felt uncomfortable, Amelia, is only 17 years old.

What are the indicators of harm?

Answer

What is the type of harm?

Answer

What should you do next?

Answer



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Case study 4

One of your under-18 students, Ethan, arrives to class with a black eye and is covered in bruises. You ask them in private whether they are okay and require any medical support. Ethan discloses that they were involved in a physical altercation with Jackson, an older student in the class, however they do not want to make a report or take this situation any further.

What are the indicators of harm?

Answer

What is the type of harm?

Answer

What should you do next?

Answer



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Case study 5

You receive an email from a student, Sophia, requesting an extension. Sophia has disclosed that they have recently been involved in a family violence incident. In this email, Sophia mentions that their father has recently been physically abusive towards their 10-year old brother, Andrew. This has caused them considerable distress and has raised concerns for their and Andrew's safety and wellbeing.

What are the indicators of harm?

Answer

What is the type of harm?

Answer

What should you do next?

Answer



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Case study 6

A 17 year old student, Amy, has recently displayed a pattern of not attending class, despite being highly engaged with studies previously. You decide to check in with Amy via email and she discloses to you a male student has been making unwanted sexual comments to her and placed his hand on her inner thigh during class a few weeks ago, causing her to feel uncomfortable and unsafe. Amy does not want wish to make a formal report at this stage.

What are the indicators of harm?

Answer

What is the type of harm?

Answer

What should you do next?

Answer



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Case study 7

Jake, a 16-year-old student, is sitting in their first class of the semester and you and another teacher use an icebreaker activity to get the students comfortable with knowing their peers. You and your colleague ask everyone to go around the class and describe which culture they identify with. Jake proudly says that they are Aboriginal, to which your colleague comments that Jake does not look Aboriginal. Jake appears withdrawn and disengaged for the remainder of the class.

Was there anything wrong with the teachers comments?

YES

Answer

NO

Answer

What are the indicators of harm?

Answer

What is the type of harm?

Answer

What should you do next?

Answer



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Case study 8

You and a colleague have been teaching a class together and have the class for a semester. It is currently half-way through the semester and you have been teaching the current students for several weeks.

You notice that over the course of several weeks your colleague has been paying particular attention to a student named Damon, who is under the age of 18. Your colleague spends a disproportionate amount of time assisting Damon with his work, and when your colleague has finished assisting Damon, they always lightly pat Damon on the shoulder. Your colleague has also verbally stated to the classroom that Damon is their favourite student. More recently, you have seen your colleague walk Damon to the train station after class. You have also overheard a conversation between Damon and your colleague, where Damon was thanking them for a new pair of shoes your colleague had bought for them.

In this scenario, would you hold concerns for Damon's safety and wellbeing?

YES

Answer

NO

Answer

What are the indicators of harm?

Answer

What is the type of harm?

Answer

What should you do next?

Answer



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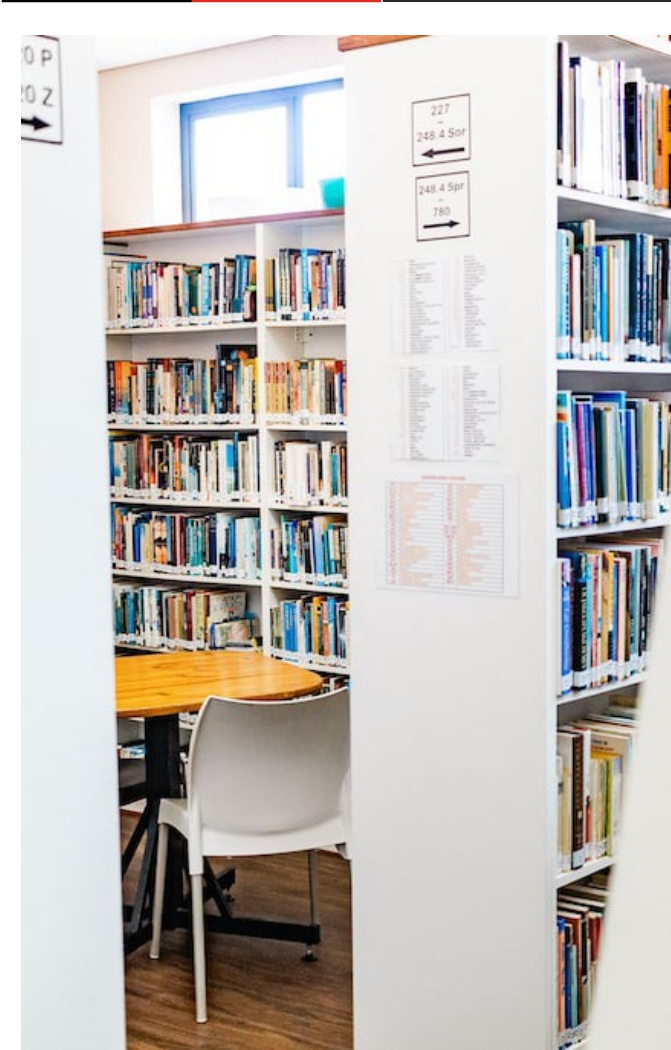
Who governs Child Safety?

The [Child Wellbeing and Safety Act 2005](#) creates the standards and is designed to drive cultural change and embed a focus on children's rights and wellbeing.

The [Commission for Children and Young People \(CCYP\)](#) are an independent statutory body that promote improvement in policies and practices affecting the safety and wellbeing of Victorian children and young people.

The [Reportable Conduct Scheme](#) requires organisations to respond to allegations of child abuse and enables independent oversight as well as facilitating information sharing between organisations, their regulators, police and relevant state departments.





Important links

Internal

- [Child Safety webpage](#) - on Swinburne's public facing website.
- [Safer Community webpage](#) - on Swinburne's public facing website
- Child Safety intranet [awaiting creation]- for staff only
- [Safer Community wiki](#) - for staff only

External

- [Child Safe Standards information sheet](#) - on the Commission for Children and Young People website
- [Child Safe Standards information sheet - easy read \(PDF\)](#)
- [Posters about the Child Safe Standards](#) - on the Commission for Children and Young People website
- [Resources for Child Safe Standards](#) - on the Providers website