# Purpose

The purpose of this Policy is to set out Melbourne Water’s commitment regarding the safety and wellbeing of children under 18 years of age.

# Scope

This Child Safe Policy covers Melbourne Water Corporation and its Board of directors, employees and contract service providers including volunteers (“Melbourne Water”, “we” or “us”).

# Policy Statement

Melbourne Water is committed to the safety and wellbeing of children and young people.

Melbourne Water has zero tolerance for inappropriate behaviour towards anybody as part of our work, on our properties, at our events and in our online environments. Melbourne Water is committed to providing a child safe environment where children and young people are safe and feel safe.

Particular attention will be paid to the cultural safety of Aboriginal children and children from culturally and/or linguistically diverse backgrounds, children who identify as lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender or intersex, children unable to live at home, as well as the safety of children with a disability.

Every person at Melbourne Water (including volunteers) working directly with children and young people has a responsibility to understand the important and specific role they play to ensure the wellbeing and safety of those children and young people.

To deliver on its commitment to child safety, Melbourne Water;

* Takes a proactive approach to child safety
* Melbourne Water will develop and annually review systems and processes that comply with [Child Safe Standards](https://www.dhhs.vic.gov.au/publications/child-safe-standards)
* Fosters a culture of openness that supports all persons to safely disclose risks of harm to children
* Respects diversity in cultures while keeping child safety paramount
* Provides staff and volunteers who work directly with children and young people with guidance on appropriate conduct and behaviour towards children and procedures for reporting
* Provides staff and volunteers who work directly with children and young people with relevant training on Aboriginal culture
* Engages only the most suitable people to work with children and ensures adequate staff and volunteer supervision and professional development
* Ensures children know who to talk with if they are feeling unsafe, and that they are comfortable and encouraged to access easy to understand information, support and complaints processes
* Reports suspected abuse, neglect or mistreatment promptly to the appropriate authorities
* Shares information appropriately and lawfully with other organisations where the safety and wellbeing of children is at risk.

# Legislative responsibilities

# Melbourne Water takes our legal responsibilities seriously, including:

* **Failure to disclose:** Reporting child sexual abuse is a community-wide responsibility. 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:** People of authority in our organisation will commit an offence if they know of a substantial risk of child sexual abuse and have the power or responsibility to reduce or remove the risk, but negligently fail to do so.
	+ Any personnel who are **mandatory reporters** must comply with their duties.
	+ Melbourne Water Education Staff, education program contractors and volunteers are required to report any general concerns about the safety or wellbeing of a child or young person as soon as possible.

Further information on the Standards can be found on the Victorian Department of Human Services website; [Child Safe Standards](https://www.dhhs.vic.gov.au/publications/child-safe-standards)

# Definitions

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| **Reference** | **Definition** |
| **Mandatory reporters** | Some professionals such as doctors, nurses, police and school teachers are required to make a report to child protection where they form a reasonable belief, that a child has been or is at risk of significant harm, as a result of physical or sexual abuse, and the child’s parents have not protected or are unlikely to protect the child from that abuse. [Child protection](https://providers.dhhs.vic.gov.au/child-protection) |

# Stakeholder Consultation

People and Capability

Customer & Strategy, Community Engagement team

Customer & Strategy, Corporate Partnerships

Legal team

# References

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| Standards and Related documents |
| **Child Safe Procedure** | <https://inflo/inflo/cs.exe/properties/39972053> |
| **Child Safe Incident Report** | <https://inflo/inflo/cs.exe/properties/39971581> |
| **Health and Human Services** | [Child Safe Standards](https://www.dhhs.vic.gov.au/publications/child-safe-standards) |
| **Commission for Children and Young People** | [Child Safe Standards](https://ccyp.vic.gov.au/child-safe-standards/) |
| **Australian Human Rights Commission** | [Tools & resources](https://childsafe.humanrights.gov.au/tools-resources) |

# Accountability

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| Role | Responsibilities |
| Manager, Community Engagement | Review and approval of child safe documents |
| Team Leader, Education & Capacity Building | Annual policy and procedure reviewHandling of child safe incident reports |
| Program Lead, Education & Waterwatch | Participate in annual policy reviewHandling of child safe incident reportsOn-boarding and training Education & Waterwatch teams on child safety & wellbeing. |
| People & Capability | Recruitment processes include relevant employee checks, including Working With Children Checks.  |
| Employees | Working with children or young people:• Meeting the requirements of their position accountabilities• Observing requirements of the Code of Conduct• Complying with the requirements of this procedure• Attending training and awareness as required from time to time |
| Volunteers | Working with children or young people:* Complying with the requirements of this procedure
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| Contractors | Working with children or young people:• Complying with the requirements of this procedure |

# Document History

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| Date | Reviewed/ Actioned By | Version | Action |
| 03/08/17 | Mary Catus-Wood | 1.0 | New Document |
| 07/08/2017 | Elisa Bourke | 2.0 | Updated Doc ID and Version Number |
| 08/08/2018 | Greg Bain | 3.0 | Annual review undertaken |
| 08/08/2019 | Yvonne Cabuang | 4.0 | Annual review undertaken |
| 19/01/2021 | Yvonne Cabuang | 5.0 | Annual review undertaken |
| 27/06/2022 | Marita Tripp/Yvonne Cabuang | 7.0 | Annual review undertaken |