



Welcome to the October issue!

VIC HEALTH & SAFETY MONTH

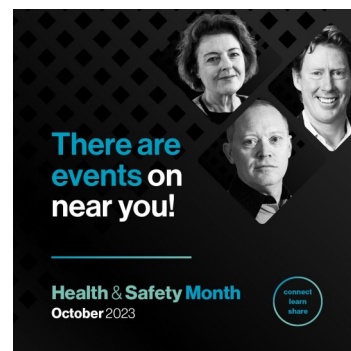
2 to 27 October 2023

Victorian Health and Safety Month is a time to commit to building a safe and healthy workplace. This year's theme – **for everyone's safety, work safely – encourages individuals and organisations to prioritise safety in the workplace and explore how to work together to create safe and healthy workplaces.**

We are encouraging schools to host a SafeTea during October to get the conversation started on health and safety. For further information go to <https://www.safeworkaustralia.gov.au/national-safe-work-month/safetea>

Work Safe Victoria are hosting free workshops both in person and virtually. For more information on Work Safe workshops go to <https://www.worksafe.vic.gov.au/events>

For Work Safe resources specific to Education go to <https://www.worksafe.vic.gov.au/education>



VIT AND PRACTISING CERTIFICATE REGISTRATION COMPLIANCE

To ensure adequate record keeping, we wanted to gently remind all teaching staff that their VIT (Victorian Institute of Teaching) registrations were due as of **30 September**.

In addition, staff who hold positions as Occupational Therapists, Psychologists, and Registered Nurses who have renewed their registration this year must ensure that they have provided an updated copy of your AHPRA (Australian Health Practitioner Regulations Agency) current practising certificate to your payroll representative so that it can be added to your personnel file.

ASSURANCE & RISK TEAM



Andrea Warr
Manager: Assurance & Risk



Simon O'Brien
Assurance & Compliance Advisor



Camelia Prenc
Policy & Governance Administrator



Simon Brown
CARSO



Susan Crowe
Improvement & Compliance



Vicky Hodgson
CARSO



Bridie Curran
CARSO



CHILD SAFE STANDARDS

This month we have selected Child Safe Standards 7, 8 & 9 and the associated evidence requirements is now available

CHILD SAFE STANDARD 7: COMPLAINTS

The DOBCEL School Complaints Handling Policy has been contextualised to ensure that it is accessible, child-focused, culturally safe, and easily understood by the school community, outlining:

- the process for making a complaint about the school or any person within the school (i.e. staff, volunteers, contractors, families, or students)
- the roles and responsibilities of leaders, staff and volunteers in complaint handling
- the process for dealing with different types of complaints, breaches of relevant policies or the code of conduct, and obligations to act and report.

EXAMPLES OF EVIDENCE

- Complaint policy and procedures are accessible to school and wider community via the school website
- Information/Professional learning/student forums on Complaint Process for staff volunteers, students, families
- Strategies to support students in raising concerns with a trusted adult if anything makes them feel uncomfortable or unsafe, such as Learning to Learn units, Wellbeing lessons, Circle Time.

For further information refer to the [Child Safe Standards Information Sheet—Standard 7: Complaints Process](#)

CHILD SAFE STANDARD 8: CHILD SAFETY KNOWLEDGE, SKILLS, AND AWARENESS

Schools need to ensure that at least annually:

- members of the school advisory council receive appropriate guidance and training regarding implementing policies and procedures related to the Child Safe Standards, and Child safety wellbeing risks in the school environment
- school staff engaged in child-connected work receive training and information on child safety that include guidance on Child Safe related policies and procedures, including responding to complaints and concerns relating to child abuse.

School also need to:

- Provide child safety training and information for volunteers engaged in child-connected work that are appropriate to their role and responsibilities.
- Ensure that staff and volunteers are supported to implement the Child Safety and Wellbeing Policy, where the policy applies to their role and responsibilities.

EXAMPLES OF EVIDENCE

- Guidance materials (such as policies, procedures, guidelines, information sheets and posters) for staff and volunteers
- New staff or volunteers Induction Checklist
- Current register staff completion of Protecting Children and Other Obligations Mandatory Reporting eLearning Module and other legal or DOBCEL specific obligations at least once a year
- Child Safety Team membership and Terms of Reference.

For further information refer to the [Child Safe Standards Information Sheet—Standard 8: Child safety knowledge, skills, and awareness](#)

CHILD SAFE STANDARD 9: CHILD SAFETY IN PHYSICAL AND ONLINE ENVIRONMENTS

Schools are required to:

- Revise or develop a statement on online conduct and online safety that is consistent with the Child Safety and Wellbeing Policy and practices, and the Child Safety Code of Conduct.
- Publish the Child Safety statement onto the school's website and that appropriate conduct and safety is implemented.
- Ensure child safety and wellbeing policies, procedures and practices enable staff and volunteers to identify and mitigate risks in both physical and online environments without compromising a child or student's right to privacy, access to information, social connections and learning opportunities.
- Ensure that procurement policies for facilities and services from third parties address the safety of children and students.

EXAMPLES OF EVIDENCE

- Complaint policy and procedures are accessible to school and wider community via the school website
- Information/Professional learning/student forums on Complaint Process for staff volunteers, children, families
- Strategies to support students in raising concerns with a trusted adult if anything makes them feel uncomfortable or unsafe, such as Learning to Learn units, Wellbeing lessons, Circle Time.

For further information refer to the [Child Safe Standards Information Sheet—Standard 9: Child safety in physical and online environments](#)

Plain language summary

Victoria's Child Safe Standards

1 Your organisation welcomes Aboriginal children. You support them to express their culture and to enjoy their rights. You don't allow racism.



2 Child safety is important to everyone at all levels in your organisation. You document how you find, avoid, and stop risks of child abuse or harm.



3 Your organisation supports children to know their rights to be safe from abuse, informed, and involved. You help them to talk openly and take part in decisions that affect them.



4 Your organisation tells families and the community about what you do, and how you keep children safe from harm and abuse. You help families to have a say and to take part in decisions that affect their child.



5 Your organisation understands that every child is different and has different needs. You make sure that they can get the information and help that they need.



6 Staff know what they must do to keep children safe from abuse and harm. They record, report, and share information about child safety when they should. Staff who work with children have had the background checks they need.



7 Children and their families know how to make a complaint and what happens when a complaint is made. Your staff know how to respond properly to complaints.



8 Your organisation trains and supports staff to keep children safe from abuse and harm. Your staff know the signs of child abuse and harm and what to do if there are issues of abuse and harm.



9 Your organisation makes sure children are safe when they use your services, settings, and activities. This includes when children are online.



10 Your organisation checks and improves the ways you keep children safe from abuse and harm.



11 Your organisation has written policies about how you keep children safe from abuse and harm. They are easy to understand, and all staff follow them.



For more information, contact the Commission for Children and Young People
www.ccyp.vic.gov.au





Handy Resource

Commission for Children and Young People's [Short guide to the Child Safe Standards](#)



EMERGENCY MANAGEMENT PREPAREDNESS

Thank you to all schools who have submitted their Emergency Management Plans. This enables DOBCEL to complete reporting to regulatory bodies.

All education sites are required to have an emergency management plan (EMP) that clearly articulates an appropriate response to all types of emergencies.

The Victorian Registration and Qualifications Authority (VRQA) requires schools to keep records and conduct an emergency response exercise or drill once per term (quarterly). In addition, schools on the Bushfire At-Risk Register (BARR) must run an evacuation drill at least once a term during bushfire season (October to April) that involves students and staff moving to either a nominated onsite 'shelter-in-place' or an offsite evacuation point as per the school's EMP.

Schools are asked to ensure that:

- Emergency management procedures and drills are practised at least once a term, with specific fire drills during bushfire season (October to April)
- routine servicing of critical and other evacuation or emergency systems is conducted on a regular basis and ahead of bushfire season
- records are kept of all emergencies, exercises, drills and meetings (such as post-emergency and drill debriefs) in the school's EMP.
- Schools have been asked to submit a copy of their Emergency Management Plan. This will enable DOBCEL to complete the yearly EMP review, as we are required to do under legislation.

EVACUATION DIAGRAMS

Principals were sent information regarding the review and updating of Evacuation Diagrams on Friday 6 October 2023. Principals have been asked to review the provided information and complete the [survey](#) to indicate the services/s your school require by **Friday 20 October**.

Evacuation diagrams are mandatory for all workplaces under *Australian Standard 3745-2010* and are part of the Essential Safety Measures and Occupational Health and Safety audits. These diagrams are required to be current, clearly show evacuation procedures, fire and safety equipment, designated exits, and details of emergency assembly areas.

The VRQA requires that there be evidence of:

- building and facility compliance with local planning regulations and with the Building Code of Australia, Class 9b or equivalent
- policy and procedures to ensure the school complies with the *Occupational Health and Safety Act 2004*.

It had been noted during the regular Essential Safety Measures and Occupational Health and Safety audits conducted by Planning & Infrastructure that many school evacuation diagrams were not compliant with AS 3745-2010. Failure to meet this requirement can result in fines up to \$30,000 per incident.

In Victoria, evacuation diagrams are valid for five years or until any renovations or changes to the business or building structure have been implemented.

Quotes have been sought from a selection of companies that specialise in evacuation diagrams and emergency management, with the aim to find a suitably qualified contractor to assist schools in meeting their obligations in relation to AS 3745-2010, by providing evacuation diagrams that are current and contain all required information.

DOBCEL has selected Hendry Group as the preferred provider with approximate costs for small, medium and large schools at \$250, \$450 and \$750, respectively.

Unless a school has recently had its evacuation diagrams updated it is recommended that all schools have their existing diagrams reviewed by Hendry.

It is proposed that each school engage Hendry individually. However, in the first instance, Hendry have requested CEB to manage the coordination of interested schools. This will assist Hendry to keep costs to a minimum and manage the work in a cohesive sequence. Hendry can also be engaged by you to provide additional services as outlined [here](#).



STANDARDS THAT ARE MOST COMMONLY ASSESSED AS NON-COMPLIANT

Every year the Catholic Education Commission (CECV) reports to the Victorian Registration and Qualification Authority (VRQA) on the number and types of non-compliances against the Minimum Standards (the Standards).

Since the implementation of Ministerial Order 1359 on 1 July 2022 schools have worked towards being fully compliant with the new Child Safe Standards, however the following standards are the ones with most non-compliances.

Student Welfare Standard

Governance, Leadership and Culture Standard

The Student Welfare Standard is the most non-compliant area overall with the Child Safety Standard commonly the most non-compliant standard within this. One of the main reasons for this non-compliance is that in the Governance, Leadership and Culture Standard, accurate and consistent record keeping is an ongoing issue.

Emergency Bushfire Management

Another area within the Student Welfare Standard demonstrating high rates of non-compliance is Emergency Bushfire Management. The most common reasons are due to schools not having up to date Emergency Management Plans or Bushfire Site Preparation Self-Assessments. CECV plan to obtain a copy of each school's Emergency Management Plan at the start of each year and review its contents to confirm it meets the minimum VRQA standards which should improve the non-compliance rate.

School Governance Standard

Probity

Probity, within the School Governance Standard features in the top areas of non-compliance also. The main area for improvement is ensuring Fit and Proper Statutory Declarations for Responsible Persons are completed accurately and keeping a list of all Responsible Persons along with their position and qualifications.

Whilst these are the top areas of non-compliance with the Standards, an ongoing focus for schools is to always ensure full compliance. The four-year cyclical review is an opportunity for a point in time assessment of school compliance and this is what is reported on by CECV to the VRQA annually.

Article Source: CECV. (2023) *The Standards that are most commonly assessed as non-compliant. Compliance Matters Newsletter.*



Giggle Corner

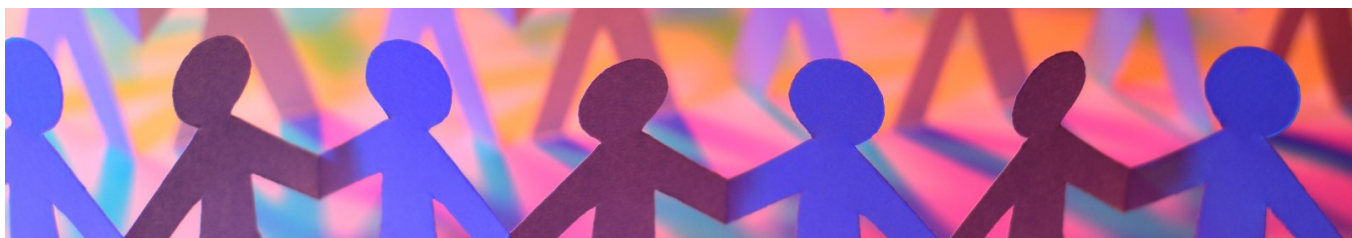
Patient: "Doctor, Doctor! I think I'm a compliance officer!"

Doctor: Well, have you double-checked?



"If you think compliance is expensive - try non-compliance."

Former U.S. Deputy Attorney General Paul McNulty



RESPONSIBLE PERSONS

A central register has been created to store Responsible Person information and declaration forms of key staff across all DOBCEL Schools. The development of a central register is to comply with VRQA Minimum requirements for 'Probity', and to align with the [Responsible Persons Policy & Procedure \[DOBCEL\]](#)

Regulatory Context

(2) In a non-government School, every responsible person must be a fit and proper person.

Schedule 4 clause 15 of the Education and Training Reform Regulations 2017

Evidence Requirements

The VRQA have determined that all schools need to demonstrate the following evidence:

- Completed Fit and Proper Person (FPP) Declaration from each person
- List of each responsible person, their role and a summary of their qualifications and experience.

FPP Central Register Process

1. Schools to check if they have current FPP Declaration Forms for all their FPPs. A FPP declaration needs to be within 3 years of being signed. FPP Declaration Forms that have expired or are close to expiry need to be re-signed and submitted to DOBCEL via eSORT. Directions on where to store forms in eSORT are provided below.
2. School must ensure that the Professional Background section (page 4) is also filled in. If you have current FPP Declarations but have not yet submitted the FPP's summary of qualifications and experience, we have created a *FPP Qualifications and Experience Template* below which you can fill in and submit via the 'Fit & Proper Persons Forms Completed' sub-folder under the Governance Folder in eSORT.

Links to Resources

All the following documents are available in eSORT. Below are links to these documents for your convenience.

- [Fit & Proper Persons Declaration Form](#)
- [FPP Qualifications and Experience Template](#)
- [Responsible Persons Policy & Procedure \[DOBCEL\]](#)

All current FPP declarations are due by Monday 27 November 2023

WHERE TO OBTAIN & STORE FPP DECLARATION FORMS IN eSORT

PPP Category Tree

- + COMPLIANCE AND STATUTORY REQUIREMENTS
- + ORGANISATIONAL AND GOVERNANCE REQUIREMENTS
- Proposed DOBCEL structure (under construction)
 - + Child Safety
 - + Employment
 - + Enrolment
 - + Financial
 - Governance
 1. Fixed Policies (5)
 2. School Policy/Forms/Appendices/Checklists Templates (2)
 3. Contextualised School Policies
 4. Contextualised Policy Forms/Appendices/Checklists
 5. Supporting Documentation
 6. Fit & Proper Persons Forms Completed
 - + Information Technology
 - + Infrastructure
 - + Quality Education
 - + Risk & Compliance
 - + Student Care, Safety and Wellbeing

Go to the 'Proposed DOBCEL structure (under construction)'

Go to 'Governance Category'

The *Fit and Proper Persons Declaration Form* can be found under the 'School Policy/Forms/Appendices/Checklists Templates' subfolder

Scanned copies of the *Fit and Proper Persons Declaration Form* and *FPP Qualifications and Experience Template* (if relevant) to be stored under the 'Fit & Proper Persons Forms Completed' sub-folder.



SLIPS, TRIPS & FALLS

Are your ramps slippery, need extra grip, cleaning or repairs like the below?

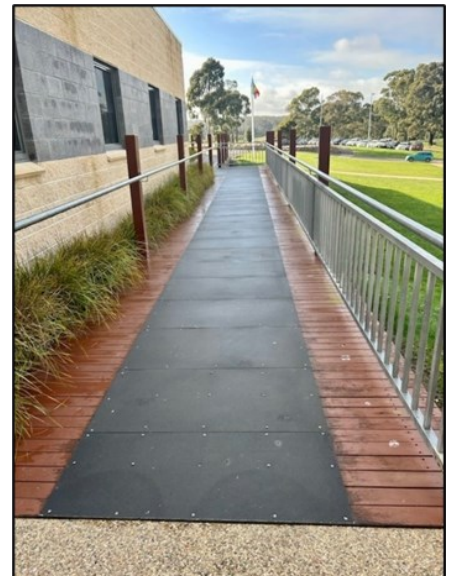


We have seen an increase in slips, trips and falls particularly on ramps and the colder weather hasn't helped with frost and dew present; some of these falls have resulted in serious injuries for our staff and students.

There are different cost-effective options to reduce the slip, trip, fall risk of ramps on different surfaces and never underestimate the power of a good pressure wash on concrete to lift debris.

The below examples are of new grip options:

- A) grip paint (does need ongoing maintenance)
- B) Ultra Mat attached to existing surface and framed
- C) C) Anti-slip floor plate also attached to existing surfaces.



For assistance with recommendations of products contact **Penelope Irish | Properties & Facilities Advisor | M: 0429 473 351.**



ACTIONS TO PREVENT MOSQUITO-BORNE DISEASES IN HIGH-RISK AREAS

With a range of mosquito-borne diseases being detected in Northern Victoria and the warmer weather fast approaching there are a number of schools in the Ballarat Diocese, located within the high-risk area. They are being encouraged to follow the [CECV health advice](#) to minimise the risk for students and staff.

The local government areas, within the Ballarat Diocese, at the highest risk from mosquito-borne diseases are: Buloke, Hindmarsh, Horsham, Mildura, Northern Grampians, Swan Hill, West Wimmera and Yarriambiack.

Schools within the areas listed above are asked to consider the risks of mosquito-borne disease when planning outdoor activities, and to:

- Reconsider outdoor activity or limit time spent outdoors to areas where residual insecticide treatments have been applied;
- Recommend that staff and students wear insect repellent if outdoor activities occur; and
- Undertaking maintenance to prevent mosquitoes from breeding around the school.

If you require further advice or information regarding contact:

Simon O'Brien, Assurance and Compliance Advisor, sobrien@ceob.edu.au

STAFF PROFILE



Leah Crough | OH&S Coordinator

What is your current role and what does it involve?

OHS Coordinator, the role involves injury management (work and non work related), provide advise on health and safety matters, manage OHS projects and initiatives, incident reporting and investigation, keep abreast of legislative requirements and changes, manage WorkSafe queries and entries, perform OHS assessments, policy and procedural work, OHS reporting, OHS committee.....it never ends!

How long have you been in your current role or with Catholic Education in general?
11 months.

What's your secret talent no one knows about?
I can swim long distances

What is something about you that most people don't know?

I decompress at the end of most days by tending to my very well established island on [Animal Crossing](#) - such a geek!

Do you have any pets?

Yes, I have a Golden Retriever called Murphy. He is the best thing since sliced bread, and I have two Ragdoll cats called Marley and Katie who rule the roost!

