

Welcome to the Victorian Catholic Education Authority's (VCEA) first Compliance Matters newsletter for 2024. The VCEA is committed to supporting Catholic schools to comply with regulatory requirements so every student has the opportunity to flourish in a safe school with excellent student outcomes. This newsletter provides information about common compliance issues and practical support to assist schools to comply.

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### About the Victorian Catholic Education Authority (VCEA)

The VCEA's vision is that all Victorian Catholic schools are thriving and renowned for their intellectual, practical and moral excellence, enabling students to flourish. The VCEA (formerly CECV) is the peak body for Catholic school education in Victoria. VCEA represents the interests of school communities to both state and federal governments. Its responsibilities include advocacy, government funding, school regulation, enterprise bargaining, research and data analysis. VCEA is the review body for Catholic schools and school boarding premises in Victoria with responsibility for assuring compliance with the minimum standards for school registration including the Child Safe Standards. More information can be found in the [Memorandum of Understanding](#) (MoU) with the [Victorian Registration and Qualifications Authority](#).

### Ministerial Order 1359: Implementing the Child Safe Standards – Managing the risk of child abuse in schools and school boarding premises (Ministerial Order No. 1359)

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

In 2023 school compliance reviews identified that [Standard 6](#) had the third highest incidence of non-compliance. To comply with standard 6, schools should ensure they have:

- robust recruitment processes
- provide induction to staff and volunteers
- providing ongoing training
- ongoing procedures for supervising and monitoring staff and volunteers.

### Recruitment

Ensure job advertisements have clear statements about:

- the job's requirements, duties and responsibilities regarding child safety and wellbeing
- the job occupant's essential or relevant qualifications, experience and attributes in relation to child safety and wellbeing.

Ensure **volunteers** engaged in child-connected work have a current Working With Children Check clearance.

## School compliance contacts

Diocese of Ballarat Catholic Education Limited

Dr Susan Crowe  
Executive Officer - Special Projects  
[scrowe@dobcel.catholic.edu.au](mailto:scrowe@dobcel.catholic.edu.au)

Diocese of Sale Catholic Education Sale Limited

Mr Richard Wans  
Manager Leadership & School Registration  
[rwans@doscel.catholic.edu.au](mailto:rwans@doscel.catholic.edu.au)

Catholic Education Sandhurst Ltd  
Ms Sarah Molyneaux  
Compliance & Risk Advisor  
[smolyneaux@ceosand.catholic.edu.au](mailto:smolyneaux@ceosand.catholic.edu.au)

Melbourne Archdiocese Catholic Schools Ltd  
Mr Paul Stevens  
General Manager Compliance  
[pstevens@macs.vic.edu.au](mailto:pstevens@macs.vic.edu.au)

Victorian Catholic Education Authority  
Ms Anna Rados  
Manager Integrity & Assurance  
[arados@vcea.catholic.edu.au](mailto:arados@vcea.catholic.edu.au)



For staff, sight, verify and record the person's Working with Children clearance or equivalent background check such as a Victorian Institute of Teaching (VIT) registration.

For staff engaged in child-related work, collect and record proof of:

- the person's identity
- any professional or other qualifications
- the person's history of working with children.

**This includes seeking references that address their suitability for the job and working with children.** Ensure that a reference is obtained from the person's most recent manager or supervisor and ask specific questions about the person's history of working with children and ongoing suitability to work with children. Have there been any concerns or complaints raised?

Consider whether you should conduct the same or similar checks for volunteers based on the child safety risks relevant to their role.

### **Induction**

Ensure staff and volunteers and members of the governing body engaged in child-connected work receive an induction that includes:

- the Child Safety and Wellbeing Policy
- the Child Safety Code of Conduct
- record management, information sharing and reporting obligations
- where relevant to the role, policy and procedures for managing complaints and concerns related to child safety.

### **Ongoing supervision and monitoring**

Ensure there are procedures for ongoing supervision and monitoring of staff and volunteers. This includes evaluating staff for compliance with the Child Safety Code of Conduct at performance appraisals.

### **Child connected work and child related work**

Schools maintain registers of staff and volunteers required to have:

- a Working With Children clearance
- a Victorian Institute of Teaching registration.

These are minimum standards for school registration.

Be clear about the staff and volunteers who perform 'child-connected' and 'child-related' work.

Child-connected work is:

- authorised by the governing authority
- performed by an adult in a school environment while children are present or reasonably expected to be present.

This definition is likely to cover all, or the vast majority of school staff, and many volunteers.

Child-related work is more specific. It is an adult who:

- works with children. This includes paid and unpaid work.
- has direct contact with children as a usual part of their duties
- is not occasional or incidental to their work.

If in doubt about whether staff or a volunteer performs child-connected work, assume they do, and apply the steps detailed here.

Further guidance can be found at [Victorian Government Child Safe Standards website](#)

## Minimum standard – Curriculum & Student Learning

### Curriculum framework

Schools are required to have a planned and structured curriculum that substantially addresses the 8 key learning areas - English; mathematics; sciences (physics, chemistry, and biology); humanities and social sciences (history, geography, economics, business, civics and citizenship); the arts; languages; health and physical education; information and communication technology, and design and technology. The minimum standard requires that schools provide instruction in these areas in years F-10.

Secondary schools should ensure they structure any elective programs so it is compulsory for students to study each of the key learning areas. In relation to languages, this may be delivered once across the year 9 and 10 band.

Schools which may be unable to deliver a languages program for a variety of reasons, for example inability to recruit a languages teacher must apply to the VRQA for an exemption from complying with the curriculum minimum standards. Applications for exemptions must be made through the VCEA and exemptions are granted for a school year only.

Schools must document:

- a curriculum plan showing how the learning areas will be substantially addressed and how the curriculum will be organised and implemented, including the number of teaching hours delivered in the 8 key learning areas,
- timetables that demonstrate how all 8 key learning areas (above) are delivered,
- an explanation of how and when the curriculum and teaching practice will be reviewed,
- an outline of how the school will deliver its curriculum.

### Student learning outcomes

Schools are to have appropriate processes in place to support all students to progress towards and achieve the learning outcomes normally expected for its student cohort, and for the school to plan for and achieve improvements in those learning outcomes. To demonstrate how this is done at the school, their strategy is to be documented and must include:

- policies and procedures for reviewing the curriculum and teaching practices,
- the processes used to set goals and targets for outcomes for all students, including students at risk,
- what data will be collected, and how it will be analysed and used to improve student learning outcomes.

### Student assessment and reporting

Schools must undertake ongoing assessment, monitoring and recording of all students' performance and report on performance, in writing, to parents and guardians at least twice a year.

Schools must document how they assess and monitor student progress and achievement, including how this is reported to parents and guardians. This evidence must include statements about how it meets Commonwealth Government student reporting requirements.

## Tips

- Check the review dates of school policies. Are they up to date and current?
- Are students in F-10 participating in all 8 learning areas, including compulsory languages across the year 9 and 10 band? If not, please discuss your situation with your diocesan languages contact or contact the VCEA.

### Useful links / resources

- [Compliance on the CEVN website](#)
- [Child Safe Standards Assessment Tool](#)
- [Child Safe Standards for education providers](#)
- [VRQA Guidelines to the Minimum standards for school registration](#)
- [Minimum Standards Record of Review \(RoR\)](#)
- [Boarding Premises RoR](#)

### Contact Us

#### Do you have any compliance questions?

Let your school compliance contact know what compliance-related topics you would like to see in a future newsletter by emailing us at the address below.

[Send us an email](#)

Let us know if there are any compliance-related topics you would like to see in the next newsletter by emailing us on the address below.

Contact us: [compliancereviews@vcea.catholic.edu.au](mailto:compliancereviews@vcea.catholic.edu.au)