

Child Safe Organisations: What VET providers need to know

Queensland's new child safeguarding law – the *Child Safe Organisations Act* – is now in effect. Organisations in Queensland that work with children or provide services or spaces specifically for them, should now be working to embed the new requirements.

The new law works to protect Queensland children from harm when they interact with businesses or organisations.

Under the new law, registered training organisations need to implement 10 Child Safe Standards, which include the Universal Principle of cultural safety, and comply with the Reportable Conduct Scheme.

These two elements work together: the Standards aim to protect children from harm when they interact with businesses and organisations, and the Reportable Conduct Scheme enables an appropriate response if harm or misconduct happens.

Over 40,000 businesses and organisations statewide will need to comply, including TAFE Queensland, registered training organisations and universities. If your organisation works with or for children, start work now.

Implementing the Standards—what does my organisation need to do?

The Child Safe Standards create safe environments for children by requiring organisations to prioritise the safety of children in their culture, governance, policies and practices.

When implementing the Standards, organisations also need to create environments that promote and uphold the right to cultural safety for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children, which is known in the legislation as the Universal Principle. This means making Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children feel welcome, safe, valued, included and respected.

The actions you need to take to implement the Standards will depend on the size and scale of your organisation, and the kind of work you do with children. There is no one-size-fits-all approach, and your implementation will depend on your circumstances.

The Queensland Family and Child Commission is implementing the law in Queensland. Its Quick Reference Guide and detailed guidelines will help you to understand the Standards, and its Self-Assessment Tool will help you assess your organisation's progress and plan the actions you need to take to prioritise the safety of children. You can find these resources on the Commission's [website](#).

Reportable Conduct Scheme

Registered training organisations also need to comply with the Reportable Conduct Scheme when it comes into effect on 1 July 2026.

These organisations are required to:

- ensure systems are in place for preventing reportable conduct and for reporting, investigating and responding to reportable allegations against, and convictions of, their workers
- notify the Commission of reportable allegations or convictions
- arrange for an investigation of the reportable allegation or conviction and provide a report to the Commission
- provide information as requested by the Commission.

Organisations should be preparing for the Reportable Conduct Scheme now. Find information on how a Reportable Conduct Scheme operates on the Commission's [website](#).

What do boards and leaders need to do?

The Child Safe Organisations system holds particular responsibilities for leaders of organisations. Depending on your organisational structure, these responsibilities apply to your leadership group, a Chief Executive Officer or equivalent, your board or governance body, or a combination of these roles.

Leadership, governance and culture are the focus of Standard 1, indicating the critical importance of leaders in creating environments that prevent harm. Strong leadership and clear governance lay the foundation for proactive, accountable and child-focused organisations where children are safe.

Leaders should champion a child safe culture across day-to-day operations. In practical terms, this includes:

- basing every decision on the safety and wellbeing of children
- building and maintaining staff capability to identify risks or signs of harm and taking prompt action
- responding to complaints or concerns that are raised
- developing, implementing and maintaining child safe policies and procedures, including a comprehensive approach to risk management
- screening, training and supporting staff and volunteers to deliver a child safe environment
- ensuring physical and online environments are safe for all children and young people
- enabling children to raise concerns and be involved in decisions
- communicating regularly with families and communities about the actions your organisation is taking to be child safe
- continually reviewing your child safe practices.

Board members responsible for an organisation's governance must also take responsibility for embedding child safety and wellbeing across governance and operations. This includes actions such as a child safe governance framework and developing and embedding child safe policies and procedures.

How will the Act be enforced?

Under the Act, the Commission is responsible for monitoring and reporting on the operation of the Child Safe Organisations system.

The best outcomes for children and young people occur when organisations understand their responsibilities, have capacity to meet them, and are held accountable when risk or harm isn't dealt with appropriately. The Commission's focus will be on working cooperatively with organisations to support their compliance, particularly in the early stages of implementation, as part of a graduated model of regulation. This will allow the Commission to escalate interventions where necessary and take decisive action where children's safety is compromised.

Find more about the Commission's regulatory approach and enforcement powers on its [website](#).

Focusing on culture change, not compliance

The Standards require continuous review and improvement. It is important for organisations to remember that compliance is not a set-and-forget or tick-box exercise. A child safe organisation focuses on continually strengthening its safeguards to best protect children.

Need more information?

Head to www.qfcc.qld.gov.au/childsafe for more information or contact the Child Safe Organisations team directly at cso@qfcc.qld.gov.au.

