

## VICTORIAN CHILD SAFETY STANDARDS HANDBOOK FOR STEP 123

Reviewed and approved by Step 123 Child Safety Committee on 21 February 2025.

In the event of immediate concerns for a Child's safety within Step 123's organisation i.e. an allegation of child abuse is made, a concern about child abuse is raised and/or an act of child abuse is observed

(whether it is physical, psychological or through any form of media), if you hear or see something toward a child that makes you feel uncomfortable, contact the following people:

- Contact Step 123's Child Safety Officer:  
George Pontikis, [george@step123.edu.au](mailto:george@step123.edu.au)
- If the matter is of immediate concern contact Victoria Police on 000

If reported to Step 123's Child Safety Officer, they will determine the next steps and the parties to be contacted including ASQA as per Step 123's Child Safety Environment Policy and Procedure.

The Victorian Department of Health and Human Services provides information on child protection services. For more information you can contact them on:

Telephone: 03 9096 0000 or 1300 650 172

Email: [childsafetystandards@dhhs.vic.gov.au](mailto:childsafetystandards@dhhs.vic.gov.au)

Website: [www.dhs.vic.gov.au/for-individuals/crisis-and-emergency/reporting-child-abuse](http://www.dhs.vic.gov.au/for-individuals/crisis-and-emergency/reporting-child-abuse)

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### Introduction

Step 123 is committed to safety and wellbeing of all children and young people. This will be the primary focus of care and decision making.

Step 123 has zero tolerance for child abuse.

Step 123 is committed to providing a Child Safety environment where children and young people are safe and feel safe and their voices are heard about decisions that affect their lives. Particular attention will be paid to the cultural safety of Aboriginal children and children from culturally and/or linguistically diverse backgrounds as well as the safety of children with a disability.

Every person involved in Step 123 has a responsibility to understand the important and specific role he/she plays individually and collectively to ensure that the wellbeing and safety of all children and young people is at the forefront of all they do and every decision they make.

A child is defined as any person under the age of 18 years old.

Child abuse constitutes any act committed against a child involving physical violence, verbal abuse, sexual offences, emotional or psychological abuse and serious neglect. These acts are described in detail in the Victorian Department of Health Human Services document. Appendix 1 of this handbook provides Victorian Child Safety Standards (November 2015)

Each staff member and student/participant is provided with this booklet at induction. The Handbook and Code of Conduct is to be applied during the entire duration of employment and/or duration of training and assessment (any activity that takes place within Step 123's Organisation).

## Reportable Conduct Scheme

During 2017 the Victorian Government passed legislation to establish the Commission for Children and Young People.

Step 123's operations are subject to this legislation. Under specified circumstances, Step 123 is to report and respond to allegations of child abuse.

Step 123's internal operating framework under this legislation appears in Appendix 4 and 5.

## Implementation of the Child Safety Standards

All Step 123 staff and students/participants enrolled with Step 123 recognise and acknowledge the requirement that in respect of each of the Victorian Child Safety Standards, the following principles will, where applicable, be applied to each standard:

- Promote the safety of Indigenous and Torres Strait Island children
- Promote the cultural safety of children from culturally and/or linguistically diverse backgrounds; and
- Promote the safety of children with a disability

*A Child Safety culture:* Step 123's organisational culture encourages staff to raise, discuss and scrutinise concerns making it more difficult for abuse to occur and remain hidden. Step 123's plan for creating a Child Safety culture can be found in this document, Step 123 website

[www.step123.edu.au](http://www.step123.edu.au) and/or

<http://www.education.vic.gov.au/childhood/providers/regulation/Pages/protectionprotocol.aspx>

*Personnel understand their roles and responsibilities/Code of Conduct:*

- Step 123's leaders and managers including Step 123's Child Safety Officer and Child Safety Committee will ensure that each person understands their role, responsibilities and behaviour expected in protecting children and young people from abuse and neglect
- Staff will comply with Step 123's Code of Conduct. The Code of Conduct sets out clear awareness of the difference between appropriate and inappropriate behaviour and is detailed in the following Standards 1 to 7.

## Glossary

Term	Definition
<b>The Act</b>	<i>Child Safety and Wellbeing Act 2005</i> <sup>1</sup>
<b>Aboriginal child</b>	A person under the age of 18 who: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• is of Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander descent</li> <li>• identifies as Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander, and</li> <li>• is accepted as Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander by an Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander community.</li> </ul>
<b>Child abuse</b>	For the purposes of these standards, abuse constitutes any act committed against a child involving: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• physical violence</li> <li>• sexual offences</li> <li>• serious emotional or psychological abuse</li> <li>• serious neglect.</li> </ul> Further explanation of these types of abuse is provided in the section 'What is child abuse?'.
<b>Children from culturally and/or linguistically diverse backgrounds</b>	A child or young person who identifies as having particular cultural or linguistic affiliations by virtue of their place of birth, ancestry or ethnic origin, religion, preferred language or language spoken at home or because of their parents' identification on a similar basis. <sup>2</sup>
<b>Child</b>	A person who is under the age of 18 years.
<b>Child safety</b>	In the context of the child safe standards, child safety means measures to protect children from abuse.
<b>Child safe organisation</b>	In the context of the child safe standards, a child safe organisation is one that meets the child safe standards by proactively taking measures to protect children from abuse.
<b>Cultural competency</b>	A set of congruent behaviours, attitudes and policies that come together in a system, agency or among professionals that enable them to work effectively in cross-cultural situations. <sup>3</sup>
<b>Cultural abuse</b>	Actions and attitudes that deliberately ignore, denigrate or attack the culture of a person or community. <sup>4</sup>
<b>Cultural safety for Aboriginal children</b>	The positive recognition and celebration of cultures. It is more than just the absence of racism or discrimination, and more than cultural awareness and cultural sensitivity. A culturally safe environment does not ignore, challenge or deny cultural identity. Cultural safety upholds the rights of Aboriginal children to: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• identify as Aboriginal without fear of retribution or questioning</li> <li>• have an education that strengthens their culture and identity</li> </ul>

<sup>1</sup> If passed, the Child Wellbeing and Safety Amendment (Child Safe Standards) Bill 2015 will amend the *Child Safety and Wellbeing Act 2005*.

<sup>2</sup> Victorian Government, *Cultural Responsiveness: Guidelines for Victorian Health Services* (2009)

[http://www.health.vic.gov.au/\\_\\_data/assets/pdf\\_file/0008/381068/cultural\\_responsiveness.pdf](http://www.health.vic.gov.au/__data/assets/pdf_file/0008/381068/cultural_responsiveness.pdf)

<sup>3</sup> Aboriginal Cultural Competence Framework 2008: [http://www.dhs.vic.gov.au/\\_\\_data/assets/pdf\\_file/0011/580934/Aboriginal\\_cultural\\_competence\\_2008.pdf](http://www.dhs.vic.gov.au/__data/assets/pdf_file/0011/580934/Aboriginal_cultural_competence_2008.pdf)

<sup>4</sup> Aboriginal Cultural competence Framework 2008 [http://www.dhs.vic.gov.au/\\_\\_data/assets/pdf\\_file/0011/580934/Aboriginal\\_cultural\\_competence\\_2008.pdf](http://www.dhs.vic.gov.au/__data/assets/pdf_file/0011/580934/Aboriginal_cultural_competence_2008.pdf)

Term	Definition
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• maintain connections to their land and country</li> <li>• maintain their strong kinship ties and social obligations</li> <li>• be taught their cultural heritage by their Elders</li> <li>• receive information in a culturally sensitive, relevant and accessible manner</li> <li>• be involved in services that are culturally respectful.<sup>5</sup></li> </ul>
<b>Cultural safety for children from culturally and/or linguistically diverse backgrounds</b>	An environment which is spiritually, socially and emotionally safe, as well as physically safe for children; where there is no assault, challenge or denial of their cultural or linguistic identity, of who they are and what they need. <sup>6</sup> Efforts need to be made to ensure the culturally and/or linguistically diverse children and their families receive information in a culturally sensitive, relevant and accessible manner, including in relevant community languages.
<b>Children with a disability</b>	A disability can be any physical, sensory, neurological disability, acquired brain injury or intellectual disability or developmental delay that affects a child’s ability to undertake everyday activities. <sup>7</sup> A disability can occur at any time in life. Children can be born with a disability or acquire a disability suddenly through an injury or illness. Some disabilities may be obvious while others are hidden. <sup>8</sup>
<b>Organisation<sup>9</sup></b>	<p>The <i>Child Safety and Wellbeing Act 2005</i> (the Act) will provide that the standards apply to ‘applicable entities’, which are defined in the Act as:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• an incorporated body or association</li> <li>• an unincorporated body or association (however structured)</li> <li>• an individual who carries on a business and engages contractors, employees or volunteers to assist in the business in providing services or facilities.</li> </ul>

<sup>5</sup> Victorian Aboriginal Child Care Agency, 2010, *Building Respectful Partnerships*

<sup>6</sup> Williams, R. 1999, ‘Cultural Safety – what does it mean for our work practice?’, *Australian and New Zealand Journal of Public Health*, Vol 23, Issue 2, p213-214.

<sup>7</sup> *Disability Act 2006*.

<sup>8</sup> Department of Health and Human Services, [About disability](http://providers.dhhs.vic.gov.au/people-disability-victoria). < http://providers.dhhs.vic.gov.au/people-disability-victoria >

<sup>9</sup> An individual who carries on a business but does not engage contractors, employees or volunteers to assist in the business in providing services or facilities will be required to comply with the child safe standards when the individual belongs to a class prescribed by regulation.

## **Standard 1: Strategies to embed an organisational culture of Child Safety including effective leadership agreements**

This standard establishes ways to build on existing systems to embed or improve on the culture of Child Safety at all levels.

Step 123 implemented the following to comply with this Standard:

- Mission statement is inclusive of Child Safety as a key goal
- Maintain regular Child Safety committee meetings
- Website contains a section on Child Safety
- Website including trading name websites includes the statement, '(name of business) recognise the Victorian Government Child Safety Standards and;
  - i. has a zero tolerance policy toward child abuse
  - ii. is committed to acting in a child's best interests and keeping them safe
  - iii. work actively to empower children
- Promotes an awareness of shared responsibility to implement Child Safety policies and reporting
- Provides and inducts all staff and students/participants with Child Safety Handbook and Code of Conduct
- Maintains confidential records of any reported Child Safety issues including actions taken
- Ensure the child's privacy is maintained at all times to protect the child
- A review by committee members every 3 years of Step 123's Child Safety policy and procedure, checklist, risk assessment and action plan
- Recommendations for improvements by the committee are recorded appropriately and updates are made to related documents including this handbook which is version controlled and distributed to all stakeholders

## **Standard 2: A Child Safety policy or statement of commitment to Child Safety**

This standard includes an overarching set of principles which guide policies and procedures to protect children from abuse. Step 123 maintains a public statement of commitment to Child Safety: *\*Refer to appendix 2, Child Safety Policy and Procedure*

In its planning decision-making and operations Step 123 will:

- commit to safety and wellbeing of all children and young people. This will be the primary focus of care and decision making.
- have zero tolerance for child abuse.
- commit to providing a Child Safety environment where children and young people are safe and feel safe and their voices are heard about decisions that affect their lives. Particular attention will be paid to the cultural safety of Aboriginal children and children from culturally and/or linguistically diverse backgrounds as well as the safety of children with a disability.
- ensures that all their stakeholders have a responsibility to understand the important and specific role he/she plays individually and collectively to ensure that the wellbeing and safety of all children and young people is at the forefront of all they do and every decision they make.

## **Standard 3: A code of conduct that establishes clear expectations for appropriate behaviour with children**

This standard includes a policy that provides information such as Code of Conduct, Set of Principles that establishes clear expectations for appropriate behaviour with children. For details on Step 123's Policy and Procedure refer to Appendix 2 and Code of Conduct refer to Appendix 3.

## Step 123 Principles for Child Safety:

- Take a preventative, proactive and participatory approach to Child Safety
- Value and empower children to participate in decisions which affect their lives
- Foster a culture of openness that supports all persons to safely disclose risks of harm to children
- Respect diversity in cultures and child rearing practices while keeping Child Safety paramount
- Provide written guidance on appropriate conduct and behaviour towards children
- Engage only the most suitable staff, contractors volunteers and other members of the community to work with children and provide appropriate professional development
- Ensure children know who to talk with if they are worried or are feeling unsafe and that they are comfortable and encouraged to raise such issues
- Report suspected abuse, neglect or mistreatment promptly to the appropriate authorities
- Share information appropriately and lawfully with other organisations where the safety and wellbeing of children is at risk
- Value the input and concerns of families and carers and communicate regularly with them

All stakeholders are required to follow the Child Safety Principles and expectations for appropriate behaviour towards and in the company of children. All stakeholders are responsible for supporting the safety, participation, wellbeing, and empowerment of children by:

- Adhering to Step 123 Child Safety Policies and Procedures at all times and upholding its Statement of Commitment and Code of Conduct at all times
- Treating children with respect
- Listening and responding to the views and concerns of children, particularly if they are telling you that they or another child has been abused and/or are worried about their safety or a safety of another
- Promoting the cultural safety, participation and empowerment of Indigenous and Torres Strait Islander children (for example: do not question their self-identification)
- Promoting the cultural safety, participant and empowerment of children with culturally and/or linguistically diverse backgrounds (for example: by having zero tolerance of discrimination)
- Promoting the cultural safety, participant and empowerment of children with a disability
- Ensuring adults that are left alone with children have the appropriate background checks including but not limited to *Working with Children* cards
- Immediately reporting any allegations of child abuse or Child Safety concerns to management, the Child Safety Officer or Police and in accordance with the process detailed on page 1 of this handbook
- Ensuring as quickly as possible that the child/children are safe when an allegation of abuse is made
- Informing children of their rights and their need to protect their personal privacy particularly when using the internet and social media platforms

Committee members, staff, students/participants must not:

- Develop any special relationships with children that could be seen as favouritism
- Exhibit behaviour with children which may be construed as unnecessarily physical (example: hugging, sitting on laps etc.)
- Put children at risk of abuse (example: by locking doors in their presence)
- Do things of a personal nature that a child can do for themselves
- Engage in open discussions of a mature or adult nature in the presence of children (example: personal social activities)
- Use inappropriate language in the presence of children
- Ignore or disregard any suspected or disclosed child abuse/Child Safety concerns

#### **Standard 4: Screening, supervision, training and other human resources practices that reduce the risk of child abuse by new and existing personnel**

This standard requires all staff including committee members, contractors and volunteers to:

1. Understand the importance of Child Safety
2. Be aware of the Policy and Procedures in this handbook
3. Provide education on minimising the risk of child abuse

All Committee members and staff must adhere to the following to comply with this Standard:

- Obtain current Working with Children checks
- Provide information for reference checks
- Sign off at Induction to understanding the contents in this handbook
- Provision for education and updates to information pertaining to Child Safety
- Awareness of what is deemed appropriate behaviour toward children
- Conduct appropriate behaviour with (and in the presence of) children
- Be informed on how to identify and reduce child abuse risks
- Adhere to Step 123's Child Safety Policies and Procedures, Code of Conduct, Statement of Commitment and Principles

#### **Standard 5: Process for responding to and reporting suspected child abuse**

This standard requires clear and comprehensive processes for reporting and responding to suspected child abuse. It provides a supportive environment to children, staff, students, committee members and all people who are on Step 123 premises and who wish to report allegations of abuse and/or Child Safety.

- In the event of a concern for a child's safety whereby an allegation of child abuse is made, a concern about child abuse is raised and/or an act of child abuse is observed, follow the reporting instructions as per the procedures outlined on page 1 of this Handbook. For immediate concerns about child abuse or safety, call the Police on 000
- Accurate recording of all information and actions taken is the responsibility of Step 123 and in accordance with its Critical Management Policy and Procedure Appendix 5. All records will be stored securely to protect the privacy of the people involved
- Children reporting an allegation of abuse or safety concerns are provided with support from Step 123 and where necessary with counselling services
- If an allegation is made against a trainer or staff member of Step 123, the trainer or staff member will be required to leave the premises and cease duties with pay until an investigation has been conducted
- If an Step 123 staff member or trainer is found to be guilty of an allegation, immediate termination of employment applies

#### **Standard 6: Strategies to identify and reduce or remove the risk of child abuse**

This standard requires Step 123 to adopt a structured and documented risk management approach to identify Child Safety risks and measures in order to reduce or remove them. This is part of Step 123's legal responsibility to ensure the safety of children (duty of care).

*\*Risk Assessment is detailed in Appendix 6*

Potential Child Safety risks	Risk management/mitigation strategies
Lack of organisational culture of Child Safety	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ Implement effective risk management strategy, Code of Conduct and reporting procedures</li> <li>➤ Implement Commitment to Child Safety i.e. publish the documentation externally and internally including Mission statements, Code of Conduct, Principles and other relevant information pertaining to Child Safety</li> <li>➤ Conduct regular self-audits</li> <li>➤ Provide education and induction to all staff</li> <li>➤ Ensure Committee is meeting to review and discuss Child Safety policies and procedures according to scheduled meeting times</li> <li>➤ Ensure all staff and students receive the Handbook</li> </ul>
Lack of awareness of Child Safety information, policies and procedures	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ Distribute Handbook to all staff and students</li> <li>➤ Publish information on Step 123 website and on all trading name websites</li> <li>➤ Ensure changes to Standards are updated to policies and procedures and that these updates are communicated to all staff and students in a timely manner</li> </ul>
Natural Trust of Committee Members	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ Ensure all committee members have a current Working with Children registration and card</li> <li>➤ Ensure Committee members are reviewing Standards including policies and procedures at scheduled times (every 3 years)</li> <li>➤ Ensure the Committee conducts regular internal audits</li> </ul>
Natural Trust of Administrative and Trainers Staff	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ Ensure all administrative staff and training staff have the appropriate induction</li> <li>➤ Ensure all administrative and training staff receive the Child Safety Standards and Code of Conduct handbook</li> <li>➤ Receive and record current Working with</li> </ul>



	<p>Children registration information and card</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ Observe all staff’s interaction with children</li> <li>➤ Include Child Safety clause in employment contract</li> </ul>
Unknown people and environments outside of Step 123 premises	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ Ensure all on the job training participants including trainees, profile funded students and fee for service students receive the Child Safety Standards and Code of Conduct handbook at enrolment</li> <li>➤ Ensure all employers engaging with Step 123 for training is aware the Child Safety Standards and Code of Conduct handbook is available on Step 123 (and trading name businesses) website</li> <li>➤ Inform employers engaging with Step 123 for training that their employees undertaking training will be receiving the Child Safety Standards and Code of Conduct handbook</li> <li>➤ Ensure all Step 123 training contract trainers receive the Child Safety Standards and Code of Conduct handbook at induction and provide a copy of their Working with Children registration and card</li> </ul>
Child alone with one other person unsupervised	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ Addressed in Code of Conduct *Refer to Appendix 3</li> </ul>
Harassment via email, SMS or other media platforms	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ Students/training participants are encouraged to report allegations or concerns of child abuse emanating via any form of media, Information regarding this is detailed in this handbook (refer to Standard 5)</li> </ul>
Vulnerability of children due to unknown personal issues	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ All Step 123 staff are to remain vigilant in observing any signs of vulnerability – and reporting these to Step 123’s appointed Child Safety Officer. For example, vulnerability can be in the form of withdrawing from others, looking stressed or anxious, sudden change in behaviour and so on</li> </ul>
False allegations	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ Once determined, Step 123 to provide counselling services to the affected person/s</li> </ul>

## Standard 7: Strategies to promote the participation and empowerment of children

This standard requires Step 123 to have simple and accessible processes available to children so that they understand their rights and understand how to report concerns regarding their safety. Step 123 must allow children to feel safe and comfortable in reporting concerns or allegations of child abuse.

Step 123 implemented the following to comply with this Standard:

- Each student/training participant receives a copy of this Handbook upon enrolment
- The contact details to report are in this Handbook
- Students/training participants are made aware of where to access this handbook (if misplaced) and other information about Child Safety
- Step 123 will respond to all students/training participants who report concerns or allegations of child abuse or Child Safety matters immediately

*Appendix 1.***An overview of the Victorian Child Safety Standards, Department of Health and Human Services (November 2015)****What is Child Abuse?**

The Child Safety Standards aim to protect children from abuse in organisations. Under the Act, child abuse includes five categories of abuse as outlined below.

While the Standards apply specifically to child abuse, organisations should look to promote children's health and wellbeing in a broader sense.

**Physical Violence**

Physical violence occurs when a child suffers or is likely to suffer significant harm from a non-accidental injury or injuries inflicted by another person. Physical violence can be inflicted in many ways, including beating, shaking, burning, or use of weapons (such as belts and paddles).

**Possible physical indicators:**

Unexplained bruises  
Burns and/or fractured bones

**Possible behavioural indicators:**

Showing wariness or distrust of adults  
Wearing long sleeved clothes on hot days (to hide bruising or other injury)  
Fear of specific people  
Unexplained absences  
Academic problems

**Sexual Offences**

Sexual offences occur when a person involves the child in sexual activity, or deliberately puts the child in the presence of sexual behaviours that are exploitative or inappropriate to his/her age and development. Child sexual abuse can involve a range of sexual activity including fondling, masturbation, penetration, voyeurism and exhibitionism. It can also include exposure to or exploitation through pornography or prostitution, as well as grooming behaviour.

**Possible physical indicators:**

Presence of sexually transmitted diseases  
Pregnancy  
Vaginal or anal bleeding or discharge

**Possible behavioural indicators**

Displaying sexual behaviour or knowledge that is unusual for the child's age  
Difficulty sleeping  
Being withdrawn  
Complaining of headaches or stomach pains  
Fear of specific people  
Showing wariness or distrust of adults  
Displaying aggressive behaviour

**Serious Emotional or Psychological Abuse**

Serious emotional or psychological abuse occurs when harm is inflicted on a child through repeated rejection, isolation, or by threats or violence. It can include derogatory name-calling and put-downs,

or persistent and deliberate coldness from a person, to the extent where the behaviour of the child is disturbed or their emotional development is at serious risk of being impaired. Serious emotional or psychological abuse could also result from conduct that exploits a child without necessarily being criminal, such as encouraging a child to engage in appropriate or risky behaviours.

Possible physical indicators:

Delays in emotional, mental or even physical development  
Physical signs of self-harming

Possible behavioural indicators

Exhibiting low self-esteem  
Exhibiting high anxiety  
Displaying aggressive or demanding behaviour  
Being withdrawn, passive and/or tearful  
Self-harming

**Serious Neglect**

Serious neglect is the continued failure to provide a child with the basic necessities of life, such as food, clothing, shelter, hygiene, medical attention or adequate supervision, to the extent that the child's health, safety and/or development is, or is likely to be, jeopardised. Serious neglect can also occur if an adult fails to adequately ensure the safety of a child where the child is exposed to extremely dangerous or life threatening situations.

Possible physical indicators:

Frequent hunger  
Malnutrition  
Poor hygiene  
Inappropriate clothing

Possible behavioural indicators

Stealing food  
Staying at school outside of school hours  
Aggressive behaviour  
Misusing alcohol or drugs  
Academic issues

Action: Call the police on 000 if you have immediate concerns for a child's safety.

Information about child protection services can be found on the Department of Health and Human Services website [www.dhs.vic.gov.au/for-individuals/crisis-and-emergency/reporting-child-abuse](http://www.dhs.vic.gov.au/for-individuals/crisis-and-emergency/reporting-child-abuse)

## Appendix 2

### **Child Safety Policy and Procedures**

Policies and Procedures outlining Step 123 approach to the Child Safety Standards are documented below.

#### **Policy Statement**

Meeting the needs of children and making sure they are safe in the family is a shared responsibility between individuals, the family, the community and the government. When adults caring for children do not follow through with their responsibilities, are abusive or exploit their positions of power, then it is the Child Protection System that becomes responsible for taking action.

The Victorian Child Protection Service is specifically targeted to those children and young people at risk of harm or where families are unable or unwilling to protect them.

The main functions of child protection are to:

- investigate matters where it is alleged that a child is at risk of harm
- refer children and families to services that assist in providing the ongoing safety and wellbeing of children
- take matters before the Children's Court if the child's safety cannot be ensured within the family
- supervise children on legal orders granted by the Children's Court
- provide and fund accommodation services, specialist support services and adoption and permanent care to children and adolescents in need

Step 123 is committed to continuously promote and protect the interest and safety of children. Moreover, Step 123 employs best practice to ensure children are safe at all times.

#### **Purpose**

This policy shall:

- Facilitate the prevention of child abuse occurring at any service delivered by Step 123
- Work towards a child safe organisational culture
- Ensure that all parties are aware of their responsibilities
- Provide guidance to staff/students/volunteers/contractors as to action that should be taken where they suspect any abuse
- Provide assurance that any and all suspected abuse will be reported and fully investigated

#### **Related Legislation**

- Children, Youth and Families Act 2005 (Vic)
- Crimes Act 1958 (Vic)
- Crimes Amendment (Grooming) Act 2014 (Vic)
- Crimes Amendment (Protection of Children) Act 2014 (Vic)
- Education and Training Reform Act 2006 (Vic)

#### **Scope**

- Step 123 is committed to promote child safety and protect children involved in its programs.

- Step 123 supports and respects all children, staff and volunteers, as well as the cultural safety of Aboriginal children, and children from culturally and/or linguistically diverse backgrounds, and children with a disability.
- All children, regardless of their gender, race, religious beliefs, age, disability, sexual orientation, family or social background, have equal rights in protection from abuse.
- Step 123, just as the State of Victoria has zero tolerance for child abuse. Employees are responsible for the care and protection of the children and **MUST** report information relating to suspected child abuse.
- Child protection is a shared responsibility between Step 123 employees, workers, contractors, and associates.
- Step 123 considers the opinion of children and engages their responses in the development of child protection policies.

### Duty of Care

Step 123 staff has a duty of care to protect the safety, health and wellbeing of children in their care. If a staff member has concerns, they should take immediate action.

In the case of a child who may be in need of protection or therapeutic treatment, or where there are significant concerns about the wellbeing of a child, Step 123 staff can discharge this duty of care by taking action which includes the following:

- reporting their concerns to the DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH AND HUMAN SERVICES (VICTORIA) Child Protection or another appropriate agency (as identified above)
- notification to the Principal Executive Officer (PEO), or a member of the Step 123 Management Team of their concerns and the reasons for those concerns.

Staff member who form a **reasonable** belief that a sexual offence has been committed in Victoria by an adult against a child under 16 **must** disclose that information to police. Failure to disclose the information is a criminal offence, except in limited circumstances such as where the information has already been reported to DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH AND HUMAN SERVICES (VICTORIA) Child Protection.

The offence applies to **all adults** in Victoria, not just professionals who work with children.

**Any employee who has an allegation against them in relation to child abuse (physical, emotional, sexual, grooming, neglect) shall be suspended on full pay pending an investigation. This investigation may be internal, utilising law enforcement agencies or an external investigation with Step 123 being briefed accordingly.**

### Definition of Abuse

Child abuse refers to an act by parent/guardian/carers or caregivers which endangers a child or young person's physical or emotional health or development. It can be a single act but usually takes place over time (Department of Human Services).

Child abuse also refers to any non-accidental behaviour by parent/guardian/carers, caregivers, teachers, other adults, younger adolescents or older adolescents that is outside the norms of conduct and entails a substantial risk of causing physical or emotional harm to a child or young person. Such behaviours may be intentional or unintentional and can include acts of omission (i.e. neglect) and commission (i.e. abuse). (Australian Institute of Family Studies)

### Physical abuse

Physical abuse occurs when a child suffers or is likely to suffer significant harm from an injury inflicted by a child's parent/guardian/carer or caregiver. The injury may be inflicted intentionally or

may be the inadvertent consequence of physical punishment or physically aggressive treatment of a child. The injury may take the form of bruises, cuts, burns or fractures.

### **Sexual abuse**

Sexual abuse occurs when a person uses power or authority over a child to involve the child in sexual activity and the child's parent/guardian/carer has not protected the child. Physical force is sometimes involved. Child sexual abuse involves a wide range of sexual activity. It includes fondling of the child's genitals, physical sexual activity involving a child or allowing a child to view such activity, or exposure of the child to pornography. Sexual abuse can also occur without physical contact.

### **Grooming**

The offence of grooming concerns predatory conduct undertaken to prepare a child for sexual activity at a later time.

The offence applies where an adult communicates, by words or conduct, with a child under the age of 16 years or with a person who has care, supervision or authority for the child with the intention of facilitating the child's involvement in sexual conduct, either with the groomer or another adult.

Grooming does not necessarily involve any sexual activity or even discussion of sexual activity – for example, it may only involve establishing a relationship with the child, parent/guardian/carer or carer for the purpose of facilitating sexual activity at a later time.

### **Emotional abuse**

Emotional abuse occurs when a child's parent/guardian/carer or caregiver repeatedly rejects the child or uses threats to frighten the child. This may involve name calling, put downs or continual coldness from the parent/guardian/carer or caregiver, to the extent that it significantly damages the child's physical, social, intellectual or emotional development.

### **Neglect**

Neglect is the failure to provide the child with the basic necessities of life such as food, clothing, shelter, medical attention or supervision, to the extent that the child's health and development is, or is likely to be, significantly harmed.

### **Indicators of Abuse**

There are many indicators of child abuse and neglect. Some general indicators of child abuse may include, but are not limited to, the following:

- showing wariness and distrust of adults
- rocking, sucking or biting excessively
- bedwetting or soiling
- demanding or aggressive behaviour
- sleeping difficulties, often being tired and falling asleep
- low self-esteem
- difficulty relating to adults and peers
- abusing alcohol or drugs
- being seemingly accident prone
- poor hygiene
- constant hunger
- having broken bones or unexplained
- bruising, burns or welts in different stages of healing

- being unable to explain an injury, or providing explanations that are inconsistent, vague or unbelievable
- feeling suicidal or attempting suicide
- having difficulty concentrating
- being withdrawn or overly obedient
- being reluctant to go home
- creating stories, poems or artwork about abuse or about sexual situations inconsistent with the maturity of the child.

The presence of a single indicator of abuse, or even several indicators, does not prove that abuse or neglect has occurred. However, the repeated occurrence of an indicator, or the occurrence of several indicators together should alert staff to the possibility of child abuse and neglect. It should also be noted that a single incident of abuse may be enough to cause these effects.

### **Sexual Misconduct**

The law is always the minimum standard for behaviour. Any sexual act (contact or non-contact) with a child or young person under the age of 18 by an adult is a criminal offence, and will be dealt with and reported in the same manner as any other criminal offence. For example, exposing children or young people to pornographic material through any medium (a non-contact act of sexual abuse) will be treated with equal seriousness as 'contact' acts of sexual abuse.

Any sexual behaviour is prohibited even if the student is over the relevant age of consent. This is because the relationship is formed under circumstances of authority of power. Sexual conduct, involving a person placed in a position of authority, whether consensual or not may be perceived to be exploitative because there is usually a disparity between adults and children in terms of authority, maturity, status, influence and dependence.

### **Mandatory Reporting Overview**

Mandatory Reporters, who believe on reasonable grounds that a child or young person is in need of protection as a result of physical injury or sexual abuse, **must** report their concerns to DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH AND HUMAN SERVICES (VICTORIA) Child Protection or Victoria Police. All teachers and PEOs are defined as Mandatory Reporters.

All staff members who have concerns for the wellbeing of a child or young person, when mandatory reporting is not triggered, are encouraged to discuss their concerns with the PEO or a member of Step 123's Management Team.

### Types of Reporting

#### **Mandatory Reporting**

Mandatory Reporters must make a report to Department of Health and Human Services (Victoria) Child Protection **as soon as practicable** if, in the course of practising their profession or carrying out their duties, they form a belief on reasonable grounds that a child or young person is in need of protection, as a result of physical injury or sexual abuse, and the child's parent/guardian/carers are unable or unwilling to protect the child. Failure to report that a child is in need of protection may be a criminal offence.

Mandatory Reporters are defined as: Registered Teachers, PEOs or Head Teachers, Registered Medical Practitioners, Registered Psychologists, Nurses, Police.

#### **Child in Need of Protection**



Step 123 encourages all staff members, whether a Mandatory Reporter or not, to make a report to Department of Health and Human Services (Victoria) Child Protection and Victoria Police if they believe on reasonable grounds that a child is in need of protection for any of the following reasons:

- The child has been abandoned and there is no other suitable person who is willing and able to care for the child
- The child's parent/guardian/carers are dead or incapacitated and there is no other suitable person who is willing and able to care for the child
- The child has suffered or is likely to suffer significant harm as a result of physical injury or sexual abuse or emotional or psychological harm and the parent/guardian/carers are unable or unwilling to protect the child
- The child's physical development or health has been, or is likely to be significantly harmed and the parent/guardian/carer are unable or unwilling to provide basic care, or effective medical or other remedial care.

### **Child in Need of Therapeutic Treatment**

Any person may make a report to Department of Health and Human Services (Victoria), Child Protection if they believe on reasonable grounds that a child, who is 10 years of age or over, but less than 15 years of age, is in need of therapeutic treatment because he or she has exhibited sexually abusive behaviours.

A child will have exhibited sexually abusive behaviours when they have used their power, authority or status to engage another person, or child, in sexual activity that is either unwanted or where, due to the nature of the situation, the other person or child is not capable of giving consent (for example children who are younger or who have a cognitive impairment).

### **Obligations regarding Reporting Suspected Child Sexual Abuse**

In addition to the Mandatory Reporting requirements above, any person, whether a Mandatory Reporter or not, is **required** to report to Victoria Police **as soon as practicable** if they know or reasonably believe that a sexual offence has been committed by an adult (including by a student over 18 years old) against a child under the age of 16. It is a criminal offence to fail to comply with this obligation

Any person who has the power to reduce or remove a substantial risk that a child may fall victim to a sexual offence committed by an adult must not negligently fail to reduce or remove the risk. It is a criminal offence to fail to comply with this obligation.

Adults who communicate with children under the age of 16 (who are under the care, supervision or authority of that adult) must not do so with the intention of facilitating the child's involvement in a sexual offence with another person. It is a criminal offence to fail to comply with this obligation.

### **Significant concerns about wellbeing of a child**

In addition to the reporting obligations set out above, any person may make a report to Department of Health and Human Services (Victoria) Child Protection or Child First (Child First ensures that vulnerable children, young people and their families are linked effectively into relevant services and may be the best way of connecting children, young people and their families to the services they need) if they have significant concerns for the wellbeing of a child.

### **Responsibility**

The Child Safety Committee has the ultimate responsibility for setting the governance that ensures the detection and prevention of child abuse and is responsible for ensuring that appropriate and

effective internal control systems are in place.

The PEO will be responsible for:

- Dealing with the investigating reports of child abuse
- Ensuring that all staff, contractors, and volunteers are aware of relevant laws, organisational policies and procedures, and the organisation’s Code of Conduct
- Ensuring that all adults within the Step 123 community are aware of their obligation to report suspected sexual abuse of a child in accordance with these policies and procedures
- Ensuring that all staff, contractors and volunteers are aware of their obligation to observe the Code of Conduct (particularly as it relates to Child Safety)
- Providing support for staff, contractors and volunteers in undertaking their child protection responsibilities

All Managers must ensure that they:

- Promote Child Safety at all times
- Assess the risk of child abuse within their area of control and eradicate/minimise any risk to the extent possible
- Educate employees about the prevention and detection of child abuse
- Facilitate the reporting of any inappropriate behaviour or suspected abusive activities
- Management should be familiar with the types of abuse that might occur within their area of responsibility and be alert for any indications of such conduct.
- All staff/volunteers/students/contractors share in the responsibility for the prevention and detection of child abuse, and must:
- Familiarise themselves with relevant laws, the Code of Conduct, and Step 123’s policy and procedures in relation to child protection, and comply with all requirements
- Report any reasonable belief that a child’s safety is at risk to the relevant authorities (such as the police and/or the state-based child protection service) and fulfil their obligations as mandatory reporters
- Report any suspicion to their supervisor (or if their supervisor is involved in the suspicion, to a responsible person in the organisation)
- Provide an environment that is supportive of all children’s emotional and physical safety.

### Privacy

All collated, collected or personal information will be classified as private and confidential. Any deliberations or discussions, with ensuing investigations, internal and external and outcomes shall also remain circumscribed to protect victims, reporters and other relevant parties.

### Review

Document Title	Version No	Key Words	Approval Date	Author	Approved by	Amendment
Child Safety Policy and Procedure	One	Child Safety	21/02/2025	Managing Director	CEO	N/A

Appendix 3

**Child Safety Code of Conduct**

**Purpose**

The Victorian Government introduced the Child Safety Standards (the standards), which are compulsory minimum standards for organisations that provide services for children (or are used by children) to help protect them from harm. The Standards require organisations that provide services for children to have a Code of Conduct that establishes clear expectations for appropriate behaviour with children.

Step 123 Child Safety Code of Conduct outlines the Child Safety principles and minimum expectations for appropriate behaviour that all employees, consultants, contractors or volunteers (**staff**) engaged by the department must observe when in the company of children.

**Scope**

Step 123's Child Safety Code of Conduct applies to all staff. It applies to a broad range of situations where interaction with children may occur. For example, the Child Safety Code of Conduct will apply when staff comes into contact with children as part of their duties:

- in the youth justice system
- in the adult corrections systems through their parents or guardians
- who appear in court as a child witness
- through incidental contact (e.g. via home visits, children visiting Justice Service Centres)
- through services provided by funded agencies.

It is important that all staff are aware of Step 123's obligations under the **Reportable Conduct Scheme Policy**, whereby allegations of employee misconduct involving children can be made against an employee even if the conduct occurred outside of their work.

**Statement of commitment**

Step 123:

- is committed to Child Safety and children's best interests
- has zero tolerance for child abuse and will take all allegations of reportable conduct and safety concerns very seriously, ensuring such conduct is dealt with in accordance with departmental policies and procedures
- will uphold the right of all children who come into contact with the department to feel safe and protected
- is committed to preventing child abuse and identifying risk early, and removing and reducing these risks
- will actively work to listen to and empower children who come into contact with the department
- has legal and moral obligations to contact authorities when there are concerns about a child's safety, which will be followed rigorously
- has robust human resources and recruitment practices for all staff and volunteers
- is committed to provide training and educating staff and volunteers on child abuse risks
- is committed to promoting cultural safety for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children, cultural safety for children from culturally and/or linguistically diverse backgrounds, and to providing a safe environment for children with a disability
- considers the needs of same sex attracted and intersex children and young people, and recognises gender diversity in providing a safe environment.

Step 123 requires all staff to uphold these commitments and has specific policies, procedures and training in place to achieve these commitments.

### **Statement of Code of Conduct**

The Child Safety Standards require organisations that provide services for children to have a Code of Conduct that establishes clear expectations for appropriate behaviour with children.

All staff of the Step 123 are required to observe the below Child Safety principles and expectations for appropriate behaviour towards and in the company of children.

The following Code of Conduct outlines appropriate standards of behaviour by staff towards children. It aims to protect children and reduce opportunities for abuse or harm to occur. It also helps staff (including volunteers and contractors) by providing them with guidance on how to best support children and how to avoid or better manage difficult situations.

Everyone at Step 123 has a role to play – the CEO, Managing Director, Training Manager, Compliance Team, Administration, Committee, Volunteers, Students, Trainers/Assessors and Contractors – they need to understand their roles and be supported to take action.

### **Child Safety Code of Conduct Standards and Obligations**

All staff (including employees, consultants, contractors or volunteers) of Step 123 is responsible for supporting the safety, participation, wellbeing and empowerment of children they come into contact with and must:

- adhere to Step 123's Child Safety Policy at all times and abide by its commitment and obligation to creating a Child Safety organisation
- treat children with respect, including valuing ideas and opinions
- take all reasonable steps to protect children from abuse by being vigilant to signs of abuse
- provide a welcoming, inclusive and safe environment for all children and young people
- promote the cultural safety, participation and empowerment of all children
- work with children in an open and transparent way. For example, by ensuring where appropriate, interactions with children can be observed by other adults
- disclose any information of charges, convictions of abuse and all other offence history in accordance with Step 123's Working with Children's Check policy
- challenge unacceptable behaviour and report all allegations or suspicions of abuse to the Child Safety Officer
- respect the privacy of children and their families and only disclose information to people on a need to know basis and in accordance with privacy legislation
- encourage children to 'have a say' and participate in all relevant organisational activities where possible, especially on issues that are important to them.

Staff (including employees, consultants, contractors or volunteers) of Step 123 must not:

- develop inappropriate relationships with children or young people
- display violence behaviour towards a child
- ignore or disregard any concerns, suspicions or disclosures of child abuse
- initiate unnecessary physical contact with children or exhibit behaviours with children which may be construed as inappropriate
- put children at risk of abuse (for example, by allowing unnecessary one-adult/one-child encounters to occur)
- conduct a sexual relationship with a child or young person or indulge in any form of sexual contact with a child or young person

- engage in open discussions of a mature nature in the presence of children
- use inappropriate, offensive, harassing, abusive, sexually provocative, demeaning, culturally inappropriate or discriminatory language when speaking with, or in the presence of, a child or young person
- discriminate against any child, including because of age, gender, race, culture, vulnerability, sexuality, ethnicity or disability
- use any computer, mobile phone, or video and digital camera to exploit or harass children or expose children to offensive or sexualised content
- exchange personal contact details with a child such as phone number, social networking sites or email address, unless necessary
- have contact with a child client or their family outside of the department, unless necessary (such as providing details to client's family regarding treatment).

All staff are obliged to report any breaches of this Code of Conduct to the Child Safety Officer or appropriate person. In instances where a reportable allegation has been made, the matter will be managed in accordance with the department's Reportable Conduct Policy and may be subject to referral to Victoria Police.

All staff of the department who breaches this Code of Conduct may be subject to disciplinary procedures in accordance with the relevant industrial instrument and/or relevant terms of engagement.

### **Definitions**

*Child Safety Standards* as made under section 17(1) of the *Child Wellbeing and Safety Act 2005*.

*Child Abuse* means any act committed against a child involving a sexual offence or an offence under section 49B(2) of the *Crimes Act 1958* or the infliction on a child of physical violence, serious emotional or psychological harm, or the serious neglect of a child.

*Child* means a child or young person under the age of 18 years.

### **Related policy and other documents**

- *Privacy and Data Protection Act 2014*
- *Working with Children Act 2005*
- *Criminal Record Check Guideline and Related Policy Criminal Record Check Policy*
- *Child Wellbeing and Safety Act 2005*
- *Children Legislation Amendment (Reportable Conduct) Act 2016*

### **Approval**

This Child Safety Code of Conduct is issued under the authority of the Secretary pursuant to the *Child Wellbeing and Safety Act 2005*.

The contents of this document represent the current Child Safety Code of Conduct of Step 123 and reflect its current practices and experience.

This Code of Conduct is subject to review every 3 years and will be altered if necessary (and the alterations communicated to users) as, and when, appropriate in order to ensure that it remains current.

Changes to this Code of Conduct can be requested by the Child Safety Committee by presenting a suitable case to the CEO and Child Safety Officer.

**Contacts**

The following people may be contacted in relation to the matters arising under this policy:

**Step 123**

Child Safety Officer, email: [george@step123.edu.au](mailto:george@step123.edu.au)

**Commissioner for Children and Young People**

<https://ccyp.vic.gov.au/>

## Appendix 4

### Reportable Conduct Scheme

The Reportable Conduct Scheme compliments and works in tandem with the Child Safety Standards. It is an independent oversight on responses to suspected child abuse. Child Safety Standards promotes Child Safety, reducing risk and responding appropriate to suspected child abuse.

From 1 July 2017, the Reportable Conduct Scheme applies to registered training organisations such as Step 123. It covers the conduct of all staff, students, trainers, contractors aged 18 years and older involved with Step 123 and its operations even if their work and/or tasks do not directly relate to children.

The Commission for Children and Young People (Commission) administers the Reportable Conduct Scheme.

### Reportable Allegation

This is defined as information that leads a person to form a reasonable belief that a Step 123 staff member, student, trainer, contractors aged 18 years and older has committed reportable conduct (misconduct need not occur within the work environment and may be historical).

Reportable conduct covers all of the following (but is not limited to):

- A sexual offence/misconduct
- Physical violence
- Behaviour which causes significant emotional or psychological harm
- Significant neglect of a child

### Obligations under the Scheme

Step 123 has established a policy for notification. Refer to Step 123 Critical Incident Policy and Procedure. (*Appendix 5*)

Reportable allegations do not include:

- A person taking reasonable steps to protect a child from immediate harm
- A person with responsibility for discipline taking lawful and reasonable disciplinary action or
- An appropriately qualified person who gives medical treatment to a child in good faith

In the event of a reportable allegation that is a suspected criminal matter, Victoria Police must also be notified at this time and if appropriate, Child Protection must also be notified. Refer to Step 123 Critical Incident Policy and Procedure on how to report such allegations.

The standard of proof is on the balance of probabilities and procedural fairness must be exercised. Step 123 **may** need to seek legal advice before taking action. There is no time limit regarding this but it should be completed as soon as practicable.

Appendix 5

**Critical Incident Policy and Procedure**

**Principles**

The timely and comprehensive alerting of critical incidents and management results in:

- immediate appropriate advice and management of a critical incident including
- providing staff and client support
- effective provision of incident information, data requests and briefings
- informed, accurate and timely responses to executive and media enquiries.

This policy and procedure aims to ensure those incidents of a critical or sensitive nature involving staff, clients, children and services are alerted to the correct management level, so they are dealt with quickly and appropriately.

**Scope**

This policy and procedure applies where head office and business area staff members become aware of an incident as listed below to the Critical Incident Reporting Procedure titled 'Critical Incident Types'.

**Notification Process**

Level 1 Critical Incident:

- immediate verbal advice to the Managing Director (or similar level officer) and;
- completion of a Critical Incident report within four business hours of notification of the incident.

Level 2 Critical Incident:

- immediate verbal advice to the Manager (or similar level officer) and;
- completion of a Critical Incident report by 5pm the next business day of notification of the incident.

**Roles and Responsibilities**

Head Office Training Manager (including Child Safety Officer):

- provide advice and guidance to all staff about submitting Critical Incident reports and the level of report required
- immediately advise the Managing Director of Step 123 of all Level 1 Critical Incidents
- be advised verbally of all Level 2 Critical Incidents
- receive alerts relating to their area of responsibility
- ensure that follow-up actions and activities are completed as required
- ensure information is disseminated to all relevant staff where amendments to the Critical Incident policy is released

Business Managers:

- be advised verbally and receive Critical Incident reports for all Level 1 Critical Incidents in their work environment and/or business stream
- advise Training Manager and/or Managing Director (of parent company Step 123) of all Level 1 Critical Incidents in their area of business as soon as practicable
- if the incident is 'death-in-care', ensure the incident has been reported immediately to a police officer or coroner. *Refer to Standard 5 for Reporting procedures*
- ensure processes are in place to provide opportunities for continual improvement and feedback to support staff involved in Critical Incidents



- receive all alerts and undertake the roles and responsibilities associated with managing a Critical Incident for the business area

#### **Child Safety Services (all staff):**

- undertake the required actions as per this policy for Level 1 Critical Incident notifications received between 8.30am and 9.30pm and weekends and public holidays

#### **Governance, Management and Executive Services:**

- provide advice to all staff in relation to policy application and required actions
- initiate the closure of reports where appropriate advice has been provided by the business area manager responsible and follow up any required actions and activities

#### **Compliance Services:**

- provide advice to head office and departmental staff on incidents referred within the jurisdiction of Compliance Services

#### **Administrative Services:**

- monitor and action access requests for the Critical Incident Reporting Management System and ensure requirements are reviewed periodically (*Refer to Standard 5*)

#### **All Staff:**

- advise the appropriate person of the incident and their intention to submit a Critical Incident Report
- complete the Critical Incident Report using Step 123 form
- staff who do not have access to a form should verbally notify their Business Area Manager of the incident and email the details to the Training Manager or Managing Director of Step 123
- regional staff must submit the Critical Incident Report within applicable timeframes
- undertake follow-up actions as requested or required

#### **Authority:**

*Child Protection Act 2005*

*Disability Services Act 2006*

*Coroners Act 2008*

*Coroners Regulation 2009*

**Date of approval:** 21 February 2025

**Date of operation:** 22 February 2025

**Date to be reviewed:** 21 February 2028

**Help Contact:** Training Manager – george@step123.edu.au

Step 123 Managing Director – george@step123.edu.au

Phone: 8528 2682

### **Critical Incident Types**

*LEVEL 1 Immediate verbal notification to either the Training Manager, Managing Director or Business Area Manager followed by critical incident report form submitted within four business hours of the staff member becoming aware of the incident*

#### **1.1 Death of a person**

- who was a child or young person known to Child Safety in the previous 12 months; or
- with a disability which is defined as a 'death in care' under the *Coroners Act 2003*; or

- where another client, foster or kinship carer or staff member is allegedly involved in the death; or
- while attending or using department provided or funded services, facilities or activities

#### 1.2 Life threatening injury to a person

- where another client, foster or kinship carer or staff member is allegedly involved in the injury; or
- while attending or using departmental provided or funded services, facilities or activities

#### 1.3 Serious injury to a child that results in hospitalisation

- when a child or young person, currently known to Child Safety or known to Child Safety in the previous 12 months, is believed to have an injury that meets the definition of a serious physical injury under the *Child Protection Act 2005*

#### 1.4 Abduction

- abduction of a child or young person subject to departmental intervention from their carer/service provider

#### 1.5 Major security incident

- a major security incident involving an emergency response to a hostage situation, fire, power failure, bomb threat or discovery of a bomb

#### 1.6 Alleged rape, sexual assault or serious assault of a child under 18 years

- with a disability while attending or using departmentally provided or funded services, facilities or activities; or
- of or by a child or young person subject to departmental intervention; or
- while attending or using department provided or funded services, facilities or activities

LEVEL 2 Immediate verbal notification to the manager followed by a critical incident report form submitted by 5pm next business day of the staff member becoming aware of the incident

#### 2.1 Serious injury to a person that results in hospitalisation

- where another client, foster or kinship carer or staff is allegedly involved in the injury; or
- while attending or using department provided or funded services, facilities or activities

#### 2.2 Alleged rape, sexual assault or serious assault

- of a person with a disability while attending or using department provided or funded services, facilities or activities; or
- of or by a child or young person subject to departmental intervention; or
- of or by a person while attending or using department provided or funded services, facilities or activities; or
- of a departmental staff member whilst performing their duties

#### 2.3 Attempted suicide

- of a person in a departmental facility; or
- of a person who is a client of accommodation support provided or funded by the department; or
- of a child or young person in care

#### 2.4 Missing Child

- any child whose location is unknown and there are fears for the safety or concern

for the welfare of that child

#### 2.5 Missing person

- clients who are missing from their place of residence where there are serious concerns for their safety or wellbeing due to their vulnerability

#### 2.6 Alleged abuse, neglect or exploitation of a person with a disability

- where another client, staff member or direct carer is allegedly involved; or
- who is a client of accommodation support provided by the department

## Child Safety Incident Report Form

The child safe standards require organisations that provide services for children<sup>1</sup> to have processes for responding to and reporting suspected child abuse.<sup>2</sup> You can provide this resource to a child or their family if they disclose an allegation of abuse or safety concern in your organisation. Your staff can also use this resource to record disclosures.

All incident reports must be stored securely.

### Incident details

<b>Date of incident:</b>	
<b>Time of incident:</b>	
<b>Location of incident:</b>	
<b>Name(s) of child/children involved:</b>	
<b>Name(s) of staff/volunteer involved:</b>	

If you believe a child is at immediate risk of abuse phone 000.

### Does the child identify as Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander?

(Mark with an 'X' as applicable)

No  Yes, Aboriginal  Yes, Torres Strait Islander

### Please categorise the incident

**Physical violence**

**Sexual offence**

**Serious emotional or psychological abuse**

**Serious neglect**


1 For a list of the organisations in scope for the child safe standards, please see the Department of Health and Human Services website: <[www.dhs.vic.gov.au/about-the-department/documents-and-resources/policies,-guidelines-and-legislation/in-scope-organisations-for-child-safe-standards](http://www.dhs.vic.gov.au/about-the-department/documents-and-resources/policies,-guidelines-and-legislation/in-scope-organisations-for-child-safe-standards)>.  
2 The child safe standards aim to protect children from abuse in organisations, including physical violence, sexual offences, serious emotional or psychological abuse and serious neglect. For further explanation of the different types of child abuse, please see An Overview of the Victorian child safe standards: <[www.dhs.vic.gov.au/data/assets/word\\_doc/0005/955598/Child-safe-standards\\_overview.doc](http://www.dhs.vic.gov.au/data/assets/word_doc/0005/955598/Child-safe-standards_overview.doc)>.

## Please describe the incident

<b>When did it take place?</b>	
<b>Who was involved?</b>	
<b>What did you see?</b>	
<b>Other information</b>	

## Parent/carer/child use

<b>Date of incident:</b>	
<b>Time of incident:</b>	
<b>Location of incident:</b>	
<b>Name(s) of child/children involved:</b>	
<b>Name(s) of staff/volunteer involved:</b>	

---

## Office use:

<b>Date incident report received:</b>	
<b>Staff member managing incident:</b>	
<b>Follow-up date:</b>	
<b>Incident ref. number:</b>	

## Has the incident been reported?

<b>Child protection</b>	
<b>Police</b>	
<b>Another third party (please specify):</b>	

## Incident reporter wishes to remain anonymous?

*(Mark with an 'X' as applicable)*

Yes  No

## Appendix 6

### Risk Assessment

Risk	Likelihood	Consequence	Current Risk Assessment	Responsible Party	Risk Rating	Reason
Lack of Child Safety Organisational Culture	Unlikely	Severe	Low	Child Safety Officer/ Child Safety Committee/Training Manager/Compliance/Governance/Trainers/Students/Contractors	Low	Legislation.
Lack of Awareness of Step 123's Child Safety policies and procedures and Code of Conduct	Unlikely	Major	Low	Child Safety Officer/ Child Safety Committee/Training Manager/Compliance/Governance/Trainers/Students/Contractors	Low	All staff, trainers and students are given the 'Child Safety Standards Handbook for Step 123's at induction. Handbook, Policies and Procedures, Code of Conduct etc can be found on Step 123 website.
Untrustworthy Staff/Committee/Trainers/ Contractors/Students/ Officers/Owners	Unlikely	Severe	Low	Child Safety Officer/ Child Safety Committee/Training Manager/Compliance/Governance/Trainers/Students/Contractors	Low	Working with Children Checks is mandatory for all Step 123 employees. Students are closely supervised while on Campus.
Unknown people/Guest speakers/Excursions	Possible	Severe	Medium	Child Safety Officer/ Child Safety Committee/Training Manager/Compliance/Governance/Trainers/Students/Contractors/Unknown People	Low	Students are closely supervised by trainers in the classroom and on excursions.
Unsupervised periods	Possible	Severe	Medium	N/A	Low	Step 123 does not enrol many under 18 students, learners, trainees or apprenticeships. There have been no reportable Incidents to date. There have been no obvious signs of abuse or neglect to date.
Harassment via SMS, email or other media platforms	Possible	Severe	Medium	Child Safety Officer/ Child Safety Committee/Training Manager/Compliance/Governance/Trainers/Students/Contractors/Unknown People	Low	Step 123 does not enrol many under 18 students, learners, trainees or apprenticeships. There have been no reportable

# STEP 123

RTO 45007 TRADE SKILLING CENTRE

						Incidents to date. There have been no obvious signs of abuse or neglect to date.
Vulnerability of children due to unknown personal issues	Possible	Severe	High	N/A	Low	There have been no reportable Incidents to date. There have been no obvious signs of abuse or neglect to date.
Inappropriate behaviour not reported	Unlikely	Severe	Low	Child Safety Officer/ Child Safety Committee/Training Manager/Compliance/Governance/ Trainers/Students/Contractors	Low	All staff, trainers and students are given the Step 123 'Child Safety Standards Handbook at induction including Policies and Procedures, Code of Conduct and Reporting Critical Incidents Policy and Procedure and form.