



Child Safe Organisations

Queensland is taking the next step to safeguard children

Safeguarding children against harm is a shared responsibility that requires a collective effort across organisations, communities and regulators. Children have the right to be safe, always, and it is the responsibility of the adults and systems around them to make every effort to ensure this right is upheld.

The Child Safe Organisations system will build child safe cultures where children are valued, heard and at the centre of everything they do. The Queensland Family and Child Commission (QFCC) is responsible for ensuring the Child Safe Organisations system is implemented across Queensland and monitored.

QFCC's key functions

The *Child Safe Organisations Act 2024* (the Act) outlines that the QFCC's key functions are to:

- take a responsive, risk-based approach to regulation with an emphasis on capacity building
- provide centralised oversight, working collaboratively with sector regulators to support organisations to implement Child Safe Standards
- administer, oversee, and monitor the operation and reporting of allegations of reportable conduct under the Reportable Conduct Scheme.

The QFCC has enforcement powers to apply in a tailored manner with consideration to the type of organisation and seriousness of noncompliance. Strong action will be taken for serious situations and penalties will apply.

QFCC's role

The QFCC will engage with regulators to implement Child Safe Standards across Queensland and ensure a coordinated and consistent approach to safeguarding children.

Regulatory agencies, such as government departments and non-government peak bodies, have pre-established relationships and communication channels that will effectively support the implementation of these standards across Queensland.

Compliance to Child Safe Standards

In Queensland, the Child Safe Standards apply to a broad range of organisations, including schools, sports clubs, religious institutions, and community services. These organisations are required to implement policies and practices that promote child safety, such as conducting thorough background checks of employees and volunteers, providing training about protecting the safety of children and establishing procedures for responding to any concerns or incidents.

Queensland Legislation

The *Child Safe Organisations Act 2024* is "an Act to establish child safe standards and a Reportable Conduct Scheme to promote and protect the rights, interests and wellbeing of children in Queensland". A child is anyone under the age of 18 years.

The main purpose of the Act is to:

- protect children from harm
- promote the safety, wellbeing and best interests of children.

The Act achieves three main outcomes. It:

1. establishes that all Queensland 'child safe entities' must comply with 10 Child Safe Standards, based on the National Principles and a Universal Principle for cultural safety for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children
2. establishes a reportable conduct scheme for the oversight of reporting and investigations into allegations of child abuse by organisations within scope
3. establishes the Queensland Family and Child Commission as the independent oversight body responsible for administration of Child Safe Standards and a Reportable Conduct Scheme.

By adhering to the Child Safe Standards, organisations in Queensland play a critical role in safeguarding children, providing the safe, supportive environments they need to thrive.

What are Child Safe Standards?

The Child Safe Standards are a set of guidelines designed to help organisations create environments that are safe for children and young people. These standards are grounded in a commitment to ensuring that all children are protected from harm, including abuse and neglect, while participating in activities and receiving services from organisations.

What is the Universal Principle?

The Universal Principle is a core principle to promote and uphold the right to cultural safety for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children when implementing the child safe standards. This principle requires that organisations adopt a proactive and comprehensive approach to safeguarding, ensuring that their policies, practices, and cultures are inclusive and protective. Compliance with the Universal Principle is crucial as it establishes a foundation for trust and accountability, helping to prevent harm and promote positive outcomes.

What is a Reportable Conduct Scheme?

The Reportable Conduct Scheme is a protective measure designed to ensure the safety and wellbeing of children by holding those in positions of trust accountable. Under this scheme, organisations are required to report any allegations or instances of misconduct involving children, such as abuse, neglect, or inappropriate behaviour, by their employees or volunteers. The purpose is to ensure that all concerns are properly investigated and addressed, creating a safer environment for children. This scheme is vital as it reinforces community trust, ensures transparency, and helps prevent harm by promoting accountability and action against misconduct.

When will implementation occur?

Implementation is planned to commence from January 2025, with full operation expected by July 2027.

See the **Sector Implementation Timeline** below for key dates that may impact your organisation.

Sector Implementation Timeline

