

Child Safety

Purpose

MTHCS is committed to ensuring the safety and protection of children. The Child Safety Standards are embedded into our every day work to ensure children and young people are protected from harm. As a Health Service and a provider of Early Years services MTHCS has a number of legislative requirements that we have to follow.

Scope

All MTHCS staff, volunteers, and contractors will need to understand, and fulfil their varying responsibilities, to ensure the safety of children and young people and to undertake their legal responsibilities and duty of care to protect children.

A number of staff cohorts are Mandatory reporters and are required to ensure they fulfil their duties.

Definition

Definitions are often different from one requirement to another, and one scheme to another. The terms are often similar but have very different meanings and requirements. The definitions in each individual policy or procedure will need to be reviewed on an individual basis.

Accountability

This document outlines all of the various policies and procedures that are in place at MTHCS to ensure child and young people are kept safe.

MTHCS are a provider of Early Years Education and Care services who have additional requirements under the Education and Care Services National Regulations and Childrens Services . The Early Years procedure manual is to be referred to by Early Years workforce in addition to the information in this document.

MTHCS are committed to child safety:

Child Safe Standard	MTHCS commitment
Child Safe Standard 1 – Organisations establish a culturally safe environment in which the diverse and unique identifies and experiences of Aboriginal children and young people are respected and valued	We are committed to ensuring our service is a place where Aboriginal children feel safe, respected and valued.
Child Safe Standard 2 – Child Safety and well being is embedded in organisational leadership, governance and culture	We commit to consider the safety and well being of children in everything we do.
Child Safe Standard 3 – Children and young people are empowered about their rights, participate in decisions affecting them and are taken seriously	We commit to engaging with children in the design of key procedures and directions and co-developing an ongoing engagement framework to inform and enrich our work. We commit to developing and sharing child friendly information and pathways for children to contact and engage with the service.

Child Safety

<p>Child Safe Standard 4 – Families and communities are informed, and involved in promoting child safety and well-being</p>	<p>We commit to communicating with communities about our child safety and well-being operations</p>
<p>Child Safe Standard 5 – Equity is upheld, and diverse needs respected in procedure and practice</p>	<p>We are committed to understanding the diverse circumstances of children and working to ensure this knowledge informs everything we do.</p>
<p>Child Safe Standard 6 – People working with children and young people are suitable and supported to reflect child safety and well-being values in practice</p>	<p>We commit to reviewing and continuously improving our practices in line with best practice, to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> deter and prevent unsuitable people from working or volunteering at our service. ensure that all staff, contractors, volunteers and authorised persons understand and enact their responsibilities to support the safety of children identify and take action to address behaviours and practices that place children at risk of abuse.
<p>Child Safe Standard 7 – Processes for complaints and concerns are child focused</p>	<p>We commit to having clear procedures to inform staff, volunteers, contractors and authorised persons of their obligation to report child safety concerns and processes to do so.</p> <p>We respond to disclosures and allegations of abuse in a trauma informed way that removes the barriers to disclosure and manages the risks of further harm to children.</p>
<p>Child Safe Standard 8 – Staff and volunteers are equipped with the knowledge, skills and awareness to keep children and young people safe through ongoing education and training</p>	<p>We commit to ensuring our staff have the skills to keep the safety of children at the centre of everything they do. We have mandatory education requirements for all staff to complete.</p>
<p>Child Safe Standard 9 – Physical and online environments promote safety and wellbeing while minimising the opportunity for children and young people to be harmed</p>	<p>We commit to ensuring our online environment is used in accordance with our Code of Conduct, eSafety and Child Safety procedure and practices.</p> <p>We commit to identifying and mitigating risks to the safety of children in all our operations.</p>
<p>Child Safe Standard 10 – Implementation of the Child Safe Standards is regularly reviewed and improved</p>	<p>We are committed to ensuring our Policy and procedures are reflective of latest research about harm prevention strategies for children and young people</p>
<p>Child Safe Standard 11 – Procedures and procedures document how the organisation is safe for children and young people</p>	<p>We are committed to ensuring our procedures and procedures are clearly documented and accessible for all staff through PROMPT.</p>

Procedures

Our commitment to child safety is on displayed at all MTHCS locations through our child safety poster which is endorsed by the MTHCS board.

<p>Prompt Doc No: MTH0137217</p>		<p>Page 2 of 5</p>
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Child Safety

MTHCS has a number of procedures in place that support MTHCS to promote a workplace culture that is free from child abuse and supports a speaking up culture and minimises harm to children.

Code of Conduct

Outlines expectations of all staff, volunteers, students and contractors that deliver services on behalf of MTHCS.

Child Protection Procedure

Procedure outlines steps to take for detecting and reporting suspicion of harm to Police, Child Protection, or Child FIRST. It outlines who are mandatory reporters and processes to follow should you be concerned about a child’s safety.

Child Protection from Sexual Abuse Procedure

Outlines failure to protect obligations laws to protect our children from sexual abuse and exposure to sexual offenders.

Reportable Conduct Procedure:

The Reportable Conduct Scheme seeks supports MTHCS response to allegations of child abuse and neglect by staff and volunteers. MTHCS is required to report all allegations of abuse to the Commission for Children and Young People to promote fair, effective, timely and appropriate responses, support independently overseeing on investigations and, monitoring and, where appropriate, make recommendations to improve MTHCS responses.

Family Violence and Child information Sharing Procedure

Procedure outlines the implementation of MARAM Framework at MTHCS and support workers to understand their responsibilities to undertake risk assessment and management, including information sharing and working collaboratively.

Child Information Sharing Scheme (CISS)

CISS enables authorised organisations and services to share information to promote the wellbeing or safety of children.

Family Violence Information Sharing Scheme (FVISS)

FVISS enables authorised organisations and services to share information to facilitate assessment and management of family violence risk to children and adults.

Family Violence Sensitive Inquiry and Response Procedure

MTHCS acknowledges that family violence is a serious health issue which significantly effects health and wellbeing. Family violence is common and impacts upon people of all ages including children and the Elderly.

Prompt Doc No: MTH0137217		Page 3 of 5
Version Number: 3.0	Reviewed by: PLSWCD	Last Reviewed: 07/10/2025
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Child Safety

Child Link (Under development)

Child Link is a digital tool that authorised key professionals have access to. Child Link shows critical information, such as a child’s participation in key early childhood and education services. Child Link helps authorised key professionals to collaborate with other services and professionals, make more informed decisions about the wellbeing, safety and support needs, identify needs, issues and vulnerabilities that may be present earlier and provide the support necessary to prevent an escalation of harm.

Recruitment Procedure

Outlines the robust system to ensure staff that we employ are safe to work with children.

Working With Children’s Checks Procedure

Outlines whist risk assessed roles at MTHCS require a check to be completed prior to employment commences.

Providing a child safe environment - Early Years

MTHCS is an Early Years Manager of 5 Kindergarten services and 4 child care services these services are regulated under National and State Laws. This procedure outlines Early Years procedure that are essential to chaild safe workplace culture.

Grievance Procedure

Outlines how staff can raise concerns they have in the workplace around behaviour of others.

Staff are to refer to individual procedures as required to support a child safe environment free from harm.

References:

- Australian Human Rights Commission: www.humanrights.gov.au
- Betrayal of Trust Implementation: www.justice.vic.gov.au
- Charter of Human Rights and Responsibilities Act 2006 (Vic): www.legislation.vic.gov.au
- Commission for Children and Young People (CCYP): <https://ccyp.vic.gov.au/>
- National Children’s Commissioner: www.humanrights.gov.au
- Department of Education and Training’s Protect Portal: www.education.vic.gov.au
- Safe Supportive Schools Community Working Group: <https://bullyingnoway.gov.au/>
- Service Agreement Information Kit for Funded Organisations: <https://fac.dhhs.vic.gov.au/service-agreement-information-kit>
- The United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child: www.unicef.org
- Victorian Institute of Teaching: www.vit.vic.edu.au

Prompt Doc No: MTH0137217		Page 4 of 5
Version Number: 3.0	Reviewed by: PLSWCD	Last Reviewed: 07/10/2025
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Child Safety

Working with Children (WWC) Check: www.workingwithchildren.vic.gov.au

Legislation:

Relevant legislation and standards include but are not limited to:

Children, Youth and Families Act 2005 (Vic)

Child Safety and Wellbeing Act 2005 (Vic)

Charter of Human Rights and Responsibilities Act 2006 (Vic)

Crimes Amendment (Protection of Children) Act 2014 (Vic)

Children’s Service regulations 2020

Education and Care Services National Law Act 2010 (Vic): including but not limited to Sections 165, 166, 167

Education and Care Services National Regulations 2011 (Vic): including but not limited to Regulations 84, 85, 86, 99, 100, 101, 102, 168(2) (h)

Education Training and Reform Act 2006 (Vic) (As amended in 2014)

Family Law Act 1975 (Cth)

Reportable Conduct Scheme administered by the Commission for Children and Young People (Vic)

Working with Children Act 2005 (Vic)

Working with Children Regulations 2006 (Vic)

Wrongs Act 1958 (Vic)

Standards:

National Quality Standard, including Quality Area 2: Children’s Health and Safety

Child Safe Standards (Vic)