



NICA

Child Safe Training 2025

What this training covers

- NICA's Commitment to zero harm to children
- The Victorian Child Safe Standards 2025
- How to report and reporting obligations
- Protecting vulnerable children
- How to recognise harm to children and child abuse

NICA's Commitment to zero harm to children

- Protecting children is a shared and collective responsibility of all staff, students, volunteers and visitors to NICA
- It is an expectation that all staff will uphold NICA's zero tolerance to harm to children
- It is a requirement of all staff of NICA to be aware of the Victorian Child Safe Standards and to uphold them
- NICA is an environment in which Mandatory Reporting applies

NICA Workplace Protocols

Follow the **Four Critical Actions**:

- Respond to the emergency
- Report to authorities (e.g. Child Protection, Victoria Police)
- Contact families
- Provide ongoing support

Victorian Child Safe Standards

Standard 1

Organisations establish a culturally safe environment in which the diverse and unique identities and experiences of Aboriginal children and young people are respected and valued.

[Click here for details about Child Safe Standard 1](#)

Standard 2

Child safety and wellbeing is embedded in organisational leadership, governance and culture.

[Click here for details about Child Safe Standard 2](#)

Victorian Child Safe Standards

Standard 3

- Children and young people are empowered about their rights, participate in decisions affecting them and are taken seriously.
- [Click here for details about Child Safe Standard 3](#)

Standard 4

- Families and communities are informed and involved in promoting child safety and wellbeing.
- [Click here for details about Child Safe Standard 4](#)

Victorian Child Safe Standards

Standard 5

- Equity is upheld and diverse needs respected in policy and practice.
- [Click here for details about Child Safe Standard 5](#)

Standard 6

- People working with children and young people are suitable and supported to reflect child safety and wellbeing values in practice.
- [Click here for details about Child Safe Standard 6](#)

Victorian Child Safe Standards

Standard 7

- Processes for complaints and concerns are child-focused.
- [Click here for details about Child Safe Standard 7](#)

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.
- [Click here for details about Child Safe Standard 8](#)

Victorian Child Safe Standards

Standard 9

- Physical and online environments promote safety and wellbeing while minimising the opportunity for children and young people to be harmed.
- [Click here for details about Child Safe Standard 9](#)

Standard 10

- Implementation of the Child Safe Standards is regularly reviewed and improved.
- [Click here for details about Child Safe Standard 10](#)

Victorian Child Safe Standards

Standard 11

- Policies and procedures document how the organisation is safe for children and young people.
- [Click here for details about Child Safe Standard 11](#)

Resources

- [On demand video](#)
- [Plain Language Guide](#)
- [Plain Language Poster](#)

Reporting

- **What must be reported:**
 - Physical abuse
 - Sexual abuse
 - In some jurisdictions: emotional abuse, neglect, and exposure to family violence
- **When to report:**
 - When there is a **reasonable belief or suspicion** that a child is at risk or has been harmed
- **How to report:**
 - Contact the relevant child protection authority or police
 - Follow workplace protocols (e.g. Four Critical Actions in Victoria)
- **Legal protections:**
 - - Mandatory reporters are protected from legal liability and their identity is kept confidential

Legal Responsibilities of NICA Staff

- In Australia, **mandatory reporting laws** require certain professionals to report suspected child abuse and neglect. These laws vary by state and territory, but generally include:
 - **Who must report:**
 - Teachers and school staff
 - Doctors, nurses, and psychologists
 - Police officers
 - Early childhood educators
 - Religious ministers

Moral Responsibilities of NICCA staff

Every adult has a **moral duty** to protect children from harm. This includes:

- **Acting on concerns** even if you're not a mandated reporter
- **Supporting the child's wellbeing** by seeking help and not ignoring signs of abuse
- **Creating a safe environment** where children feel heard and protected
- **Encouraging others** to take child safety seriously
- The moral imperative is grounded in the belief that **children have the right to be safe**, and that adults must take responsibility for their protection.

Failure to Disclose

Failure to disclose has serious consequences. It undermines trust in institutions and can result in prolonged harm to children, making it one of the most serious violations of child protection obligations.

Failure to disclose refers to the legal and ethical breach that occurs when an adult, particularly someone in a position of authority or responsibility (such as a teacher, caregiver, or institution representative), does not report knowledge of child abuse—particularly sexual abuse—to the relevant authorities. **In Victoria, failure to disclose is an offence that can result in criminal charges.**

Failure to Protect

A *failure to protect* in child safety refers to a situation where a parent, caregiver, or responsible authority does not take reasonable steps to prevent a child from experiencing harm, despite having the capacity and knowledge to do so. This can involve neglecting signs of abuse, ignoring imminent risk, or enabling an unsafe environment where the child is exposed to physical, emotional, or psychological danger.

- Typical indicators of this failure may include:
-  Ignoring or minimizing reports of harm or abuse made by the child or others
-  Failing to act upon clear physical or behavioral signs of trauma
-  Leaving the child in the care of known abusers or individuals with unsafe histories
-  Allowing the child to remain in hazardous living conditions without intervention
-  Prioritizing personal interests over the child's wellbeing, such as maintaining a harmful relationship

Such failures can result in ongoing trauma, developmental setbacks, and lasting psychological damage for the child. In legal and child protection contexts, this often triggers statutory involvement and may result in removal from the home or criminal charges against the responsible adult.

Protecting Vulnerable Children

Some children are considered especially vulnerable and may face higher risk of harm due to

- **Disability:** Physical, intellectual, or developmental challenges
- **Cultural or linguistic diversity:** Including children from migrant or refugee backgrounds
- **Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander heritage**
- **LGBTQIA+ identity**
- **Socioeconomic disadvantage**
- **Family circumstances:** Such as exposure to domestic violence, neglect, or substance abuse

Recognising Harm and Abuse

Recognising child abuse and harm is crucial for protecting children and ensuring they receive the support they need.

Abuse can take many forms and each has its own warning signs—

- Physical
- Emotional
- Sexual
- Neglect



Physical Abuse

- **Unexplained injuries:** Bruises, burns, or fractures in various stages of healing
- **Inconsistent explanations:** Stories that don't match the injury or seem vague
- **Behavioural signs:** Fear of adults, flinching at sudden movements, wearing clothes that hide injuries, unexplained absences, academic problems

Emotional Abuse

- **Extreme behaviours:** Aggression, withdrawal, or excessive compliance
- **Low self-esteem:** Feelings of worthlessness or hopelessness
- **Developmental delays:** Emotional or social immaturity beyond expected age, anxiety and withdrawing, academic problems



Sexual Abuse

- **Physical indicators:** Pain or injury in genital areas, sexually transmitted infections, pregnancy
- **Behavioural signs:** Age-inappropriate sexual knowledge or behaviour, fear of specific people or places
- **Disclosure:** Direct or indirect statements about inappropriate contact
- **Note:** Be aware of grooming behaviours as risk of future abuse

Grooming behaviours

Psychological Manipulation

- **Building trust:** Giving special attention, compliments, or gifts to make the child feel valued and unique.
- **Creating secrecy:** Encouraging the child to keep secrets, often under the guise of a “special bond.”
- **Isolating the child:** Gradually distancing the child from friends, family, or other support systems.
- **Normalizing inappropriate behavior:** Introducing sexual topics or content slowly to desensitize the child.

Physical and Emotional Tactics

- **Non-sexual touching:** Starting with innocent physical contact (e.g., hugs, tickling) that escalates over time.
- **Treating the child like an adult:** Giving them responsibilities or privileges beyond their age to foster dependency.
- **Using threats or guilt:** Making the child feel responsible or fearful of consequences if they disclose the abuse.

Online Grooming

- **Using social media or games:** Building relationships through chat apps, gaming platforms, or social networks.
- **Pretending to be someone else:** Often posing as a peer or celebrity to gain trust.
- **Requesting secrecy:** Asking the child to hide conversations or interactions from others.

Neglect

- **Poor hygiene:** Dirty clothes, body odour, untreated medical issues
- **Frequent absences:** Missing school or appointments regularly
- **Lack of supervision:** Being left alone or in unsafe environments



Cultural Abuse

- **Belittling traditions:** Mocking or dismissing cultural practices, language, or customs
- **Isolation:** Preventing someone from participating in cultural events or communities
- **Control tactics:** Forcing someone to abandon their cultural identity or adopt another
- **Manipulation:** Using cultural norms to justify abuse or silence victims



Racial Abuse

- **Verbal attacks:** Slurs, insults, or jokes based on race or ethnicity
- **Exclusion:** Being left out of activities or opportunities due to race
- **Stereotyping:** Making assumptions or generalisations about someone's abilities or behaviour
- **Physical intimidation:** Threats or violence based on racial identity

Other indicators

Risk Factors

- Parental stress, substance abuse, or mental health issues
- History of family violence
- Social isolation or lack of support networks
- Unrealistic expectations of children's behaviour

General Red Flags

- Sudden changes in behaviour or mood
- Reluctance to go home or fear of caregivers
- Self-harm or talk of suicide
- Overly friendly with strangers or unusually withdrawn