

# VEC child safety code of conduct

## Parent policy

To be read as an addendum to the Victorian Public Service, senior election official (SEO) and election staff codes of conduct.

## 1. Introduction

All staff working with or appointed by the Victorian Electoral Commission (VEC) are required to observe child safe principles and expectations for appropriate behaviour towards and in the company of children. These principles are based on the 11 Child Safe Standards as prescribed for organisations by the Commission for Children and Young People Victoria.

## 2. Scope

This code applies to all VEC employees, contractors and appointees.

## 3. The code

All staff appointed by the VEC are responsible for supporting the safety, participation, wellbeing and empowerment of children by:

- adhering to the VEC's *Child safety policy* at all times
- upholding the VEC's *Statement of commitment to child safety* at all times
- taking all reasonable steps to protect children from abuse
- treating everyone 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 the safety of another
- promoting the cultural safety, participation and empowerment of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children (for example, by never questioning an Aboriginal child's self-identification)
- promoting the cultural safety, participation and empowerment of children with culturally and/or linguistically diverse backgrounds (for example, by having a zero tolerance of discrimination)
- promoting the safety, participation and empowerment of children with a disability (for example, during personal care activities)
- recognising the gender identity of LGBTIQ+ children
- ensuring, as far as practicable, that adults are not left alone with a child
- ensuring - as quickly as possible - where an allegation of child abuse is made, that the child(ren) is/are safe.

### Staff must not:

- use the electoral roll for an election to identify the address of any child
- exchange personal contact information with a child
- develop any 'special' relationships with children that could be seen as favouritism (for example, the offering of gifts or special treatment for specific children)

- exhibit behaviours with children which may be construed as unnecessarily physical (for example inappropriate sitting on laps)
- put children at risk of abuse (for example, by locking doors)
- do things of a personal nature that a child can do for themselves, such as toileting or changing clothes
- engage in open discussions of a mature or adult nature in the presence of children (for example, personal social activities)
- use inappropriate language in the presence of children
- express personal views on cultures, race or sexuality in the presence of children
- discriminate against any child, including because of culture, race, ethnicity, gender identity or disability
- have any online (social media or other) contact with a child or their family
- ignore or disregard any suspected or disclosed child abuse.

#### 4. Code updates or amendments

The VEC can update or amend this code at its absolute discretion. Employees will be notified of changes.

#### 5. Endorsement

Approval		
<b>Date approved:</b> April 2019	Date of effect: April 2019	Next review due: June 2023
<b>Approved by</b>	Executive Management Group	
<b>Owner</b>	Director Human Resources	
<b>Responsible branch</b>	Human Resources	
<b>Supporting documents, procedures and forms</b>	VPS code of conduct SEO code of conduct Election staff code of conduct	
<b>References and legislation</b>	The <i>Child Safe Standards Victoria (2022)</i>	
<b>Audience</b>	VEC employees, contractors and appointees	

#### 6. Change history

Version	Date	Author	Changes	Approved by
V2	01/06/2022	Angela Kelly Director HR	2022 new standards change and format update	EMG