



Victorian Child Safe Standards: What do they look like? Is there still work to do?

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Ahead of the outcomes of the Royal Commission into Institutional Responses to Child Sexual Abuse, the recommendations of the Victorian Parliamentary enquiry Betrayal of Trust led to changes to the Crimes Act and to the implementation of seven Child Safe Standards designed to bring about a change in the culture of organisations. As a condition of their registration, schools have to not just tick the box but have to be able to demonstrate that there are processes in place, and that there are mechanisms to measure their effectiveness, to shift the mindset regarding child protection across the whole school from the Board/Council through Leadership and staff down to casuals, sessionals, contractors and volunteers.

In 2016 schools were mandated to comply with addressing each Standard by either having items and processes in place or at least by committing to a detailed plan to. Each of the Standards requires that the School governing authority must be able to articulate, and to demonstrate, how the organisation is not just compliant but also how it is influencing thinking about child protection on a daily basis across the whole organisation and how effective is the implementation of controls.

This is not an easy task in the complex organisation that is the School. Now that we are one year in with implementation, this presentation looks at some practical ways that schools can demonstrate that it is working to change the culture and to embed the intent of the Standards. While the Department and other sectors have provided templates and resources, we look at examples of strategies that have appeared to work well in practice on the ground in achieving the stated intentions of the Standards in one particular setting. We also look at some of the unintended consequences and where schools may still not be compliant.