

CHILD SAFE STANDARDS

FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

The Royal Commission into Institutional Responses to Child Sexual Abuse recommended 10 child safe standards, to apply consistently across organisations engaged in child-related work. These standards will help clubs and associations to achieve and maintain a child safe culture where the best interests of children and their protection from harm is the highest priority. From 1 February 2022, these standards are now a legislative requirement and Netball NSW (NNSW) and our Affiliates must now show how we are implementing the Child Safe Standards. This Frequently Asked Questions document has been prepared to assist clubs and associations in understanding these standards and how to implement them.

What does this mean for my club or association?

To be child safe your organisation will need to have policies and practices in place which address the standards. It will be important to adopt multiple strategies to address child safety. Organisations are encouraged to share messages about how they are implementing the Child Safe Standards.

What if we don't have any of our policies?

By virtue of Affiliation to Netball NSW (NNSW), clubs and associations adopt and have access to a range of policies which meet the Child Safe Standards. These include the Child Safeguarding Policy and Member Protection Policy. We encourage affiliated clubs and associations to familiarise themselves with these policies and to ensure everyone in their organisation, including members and their families, understands how they operate in practice.

Does our organisation need to comply?

Yes. From 1 February 2022, these standards are now a legislative requirement and NNSW and our Affiliates must now show how we are implementing the Child Safe Standards.

Why do these standards exist?

The standards exist in response to the Royal Commission into Institutional Responses to Child Sexual Abuse. This Royal Commission recommended 10 child safe standards, to apply consistently across organisations engaged in child-related work. These standards will help clubs and associations to achieve and maintain a child safe culture where the best interests of children and their protection from harm is the highest priority. The findings of the Royal Commission into Institutional Responses to Child Sexual Abuse can be [found here](#).

How can we get some help and support in implementing these standards?

NNSW and the Office of the Children's Guardian (OCG) is committed to assisting clubs and associations to begin to imbed the standards within their organisation through resources, training, and support.

To support organisations in implementing the Child Safe Standards, the OCG are taking expressions of interest for introductory webinars on the background and implementation of the standards. If you

are interested, please reach out to Matt Sibley, the Child Safe Officer for Sport at Matt.Sibley@ocg.nsw.gov.au.

The OCG also has a range of useful resources which will assist your organisation to become child safe. We encourage all affiliates to review and utilise the various resources [available here](#).

If you have any further questions or would like to discuss any of the information in this document further please contact the NNSW Policy and Member Protection team at policy@netballnsw.com.

Are there consequences if we do not comply?

The OCG are committed to education and capacity building with organisations for at least the next 12 months. However, as this has now become a legislative requirement, compliance will be enforced in the future. The OCG will advise in advance when this enforcement will come into place. NNSW would like to stress that we are here to support you in meeting these standards and that there is no need to panic.

What kind of regulation will come into place?

Enforcement will take a responsive, risk based approach. The OCG have indicated that monitoring will be strengths-based and focused on outcomes, not prescriptive compliance. Enforcement will be used in circumstances where organisations are not willing to implement the Child Safe Standards and there are risks to children. This may result in the OCG issuing either an Enforceable Undertaking or Compliance Notice. For the majority of organisations the focus will be on capability building and support.

Where can I learn more about the child safe standards?

For further information on the 10 standards, their purpose, and how they apply to your organisation, please refer to the OCG's guide to the standards at: [Guide to the Child Safe Standards \(nsw.gov.au\)](#). The OCG has also created a helpful video summary of the standards which can be found at: [Child Safe Standards and the Child Safe Scheme - YouTube](#) and we encourage all interested members of your organisation to watch this video.

Further to this the OCG will be releasing a range of resources, guides, and webinars throughout the year which can be found [at this link](#).

Will these standards require significantly more work from our volunteers?

No, definitely not. We are encouraging our clubs and associations not to panic. It is highly likely that you are already meeting the standards and taking steps to make your organisation child safe. These standards are not about creating additional work, but rather about encouraging organisations to embed child safety into their everyday practices and decision making. These standards are a framework under which we can all develop our policies and procedures to ensure that the protection of harm is at the forefront of every decision we make in the course of activities we are already doing. There is lots of support in place from the OCG and NNSW to make this an easy process with great outcomes for our organisations.

What standards should we focus on initially?

The OCG and NNSW will be focusing on the following standards in 2022;

- Standard 1 – Child Safety is embedded in organisational leadership, governance, and culture.

- Standard 6 – Processes to respond to complaints of child abuse are child focused.
- Standard 8 – Physical and online environments minimise the opportunity for abuse to occur.
- Standard 9 – Implementation of the Child Safe Standards is continuously reviewed and improved.
- Standard 10 – Policies and procedures document how the organisation is child safe.

Through training resources and education sessions, both the OCG and NNSW will be supporting your organisation to recognise the steps you need to take to implement these standards. Many of these standards will be met through things your organisation is already doing.

What do we need to do?

- a) Adopt and implement NNSW's Child Safeguarding Policy when it becomes available. Please reach out to policy@netballnsw.com if you have any questions about implementing this policy within your organisation or how this applies to you. Like all policies, this should be made publicly accessible to members of your organisation.
- b) Express your interest to join an OCG introductory webinar to learn more about the scheme.
- c) Utilise the OCG resources available here to begin to review the Child Safe Practices within your organisation and to promote the Child Safe Standards within your netball community. This includes taking the time to understand your reporting obligations.
- d) Ensuring that all persons engaged in direct unsupervised contact with children have a valid and verified WWCC and that recruitment practices within your organisation are thorough.
- e) Keep an eye out for notifications from the OCG and NNSW about various resources and training opportunities which will be released throughout the year. Child Safe Officers are also available to run specific training session for clubs and associations. Register your interest by clicking here, or contacting Matt Sibley, Child Safe Officer (Sport), by emailing Matt.Sibley@ocg.nsw.gov.au.
- f) Contact the [NNSW Policy and Member Protection team](#) or the [OCG](#) if you have any questions or require additional support.

Do volunteers/staff in our organisation need Working with Children Checks (WWCC)?

All persons who have or may have unsupervised contact with children should be required within your organisation to hold a valid WWCC. This includes but is not limited to coaches, team managers, physios, and other support persons.

If a person does not have direct supervised contact a WWCC is not necessary. This might include umpires, members of the executive who do not hold other roles, and/or team managers who are not likely to be unsupervised with a team.

Does our club/association need to verify Working with Children Checks?

Yes. It is not enough that each person who has unsupervised contact with children has a WWCC, as it also needs to be verified with the OCG. WWCC's only check a persons status at the time the check is conducted and confirms they have not been charged or convicted with any child related offences at that time. If a person is subsequently convicted or charged and the WWCC has not been verified, your organisation will not be notified, and that person may continue operating in their role.

By verifying a WWCC you ensure that your organisation will be informed if concerns exist around a staff member or volunteer. For example if a person becomes interim barred as a result of child related concerns, organisations who have verified their WWCC's will be notified in real time.

Organisations can vary Working with Children Checks [here](#).

How do we prevent threats from joining our organisation?

Recruitment is the first defence against child abuse. It is important that organisations make sure their recruitment process is formalised and applies to all roles where there may be direct unsupervised contact with children or young people. Organisations are encouraged to develop appropriate, child centric selection criteria for roles and ensure all people engaged in child related work have valid and verified WWCCs. The Netball NSW Child Safeguarding Policy contains a variety of template questions that clubs and associations may find useful in this process. Below are some examples of steps your organisation should consider in the recruitment process;

- Include a commitment to child safety in your role advertisements.
- Make it clear that child related roles are subject to WWCC requirements.
- Hold interviews or informal discussions for all potential candidates.
- Ask applicants about their understanding of appropriate behaviours when dealing with children.
- Conduct reference checks where possible.