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| Higher Education and Skills Group  **Participation Branch Memo**  **Department of Education and Training** |

***NUMBER:*** *2016 / September / 13*

**TO:**

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| Learn Local organisations  *– ALL* | ACFE Board | ACFE Regional Councils |
| Adult Education Institutions | Learn Local Stakeholders | Participation Branch Staff |

**FROM:** Ryan Collins, Director - Participation Branch

**DATE:** 13 / 09 / 2016

**SUBJECT:** Child safe standards for non-school senior secondary education providers

**ACTIONS / CRITICAL DATES:**

* Victoria’s child safe standards came into effect for non-school senior secondary education providers on 1 January 2016. They have been required to work towards compliance with the seven Department of Health and Human Services (DHHS) child safe standards from that date.
* VRQA ran a workshop on the child safe standards for non-school senior secondary education providers on Tuesday 6 September 2016.
* Learn Local organisations who are non-school senior secondary education providers should visit the VRQA website at links below, for further information.

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**Background**

Victoria’s child safe standards came into effect for non-school senior secondary education providers on 1 January 2016. They have been required to work towards compliance with the seven Department of Health and Human Services (DHHS) child safe standards from that date. The *Guidelines for Non-School Senior Secondary Education Providers: Minimum Standards for Registration to Provide an Accredited Senior Secondary Course* have been updated to reflect this requirement.

The standards respond to the findings of the *Betrayal of Trust* report into the handling of child abuse by religious and under non-government organisations.

VRQA child safe webpage**:** [**http://www.vrqa.vic.gov.au/childsafe/Pages/default.html**](http://www.vrqa.vic.gov.au/childsafe/Pages/default.html)

**VRQA workshop**

The VRQA ran a workshop on the child safe standards for non-school senior secondary education providers on Tuesday 6 September 2016. The workshop included an overview of the standards, opportunities for discussion about implementation by non-school senior secondary education providers and an overview of the compliance process.

The workshop was facilitated by Mary Kyrios of the Centre for Excellence in Child and Family Welfare. Mary has led a series of child safe standards workshops throughout 2015 and 2016 in collaboration with the Department of Health and Human Services.

**Child Safe Standards**

In complying with the child safe standards, an entity to which the standards apply must include the following principles as part of each standard:

* promoting the cultural safety of Aboriginal children
* promoting the cultural safety of children from culturally and/or linguistically diverse backgrounds
* promoting the safety of children with a disability.

To create and maintain a child safe organisation, an entity to which the standards apply must have:

* Standard 1: Strategies to embed an organisational culture of child safety, including through effective leadership arrangements
* Standard 2: A child safe policy or statement of commitment to child safety
* Standard 3: A code of conduct that establishes clear expectations for appropriate behaviour with children
* Standard 4: Screening, supervision, training and other human resources practices that reduce the risk of child abuse by new and existing personnel
* Standard 5: Processes for responding to and reporting suspected child abuse
* Standard 6: Strategies to identify and reduce or remove risks of child abuse
* Standard 7: Strategies to promote the participation and empowerment of children.

Further details of each of these standards are in the Guidelines for Non-School Senior Secondary Education Providers:

[**http://www.vrqa.vic.gov.au/childsafe/Pages/organisations.html#tab-organisations-2**](http://www.vrqa.vic.gov.au/childsafe/Pages/organisations.html#tab-organisations-2)

**VRQA resources and self-assessment survey**

In April 2016 VRQA invited providers to participate in an anonymous online self-assessment of their current policies, processes and documents against the child safe standards. They received 26 responses (50%) from providers. A summary of the findings of the self-assessment was discussed at the workshop:

* All but one provider was aware of the child safe standards
* 27% of respondents assessed their organisation as meeting the standards, with a further 50% assessing their organisation as mostly compliant.

Compliance details are at: <http://www.vrqa.vic.gov.au/childsafe/Pages/resources.html>

VRQA has a self-assessment action plan template for providers, at:

<http://www.vrqa.vic.gov.au/childsafe/Pages/resources.html>

Thank you