

A Guide on Cultural Safety and Child Safe Standard 1

The purpose of this resource is to provide operators, bus drivers and supervisors a top line overview of Child Safe Standard 1 and information and tools available, and the role and responsibilities of operators in developing cultural awareness and safety.

The Social Strategies Committee presents this ‘for operators by operators’ guide to complement BusVic’s existing Child Safe Standard 1 resources in section 2.14 of the MIS.

Purpose

This resource has been developed by the BusVic Social Strategies Committee to provide an operator perspective on the Victorian Government’s Child Safe Standard 1 supporting Victorian Aboriginal children and the bigger picture on the purpose and role we all have in creating culturally safe transport for the community.

Victorian Government Child Safe Standard 1

From 1 July 2022, bus operators were required to comply with Victorian Child Safe Standard 1 (and from 1 July 2023, its Further Steps) which requires us to:

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

In our industry, a ‘culturally safe environment’ includes the depot, offices, and our buses.

Child Safe Standard 1 aims to support Indigenous children to:

- Identify as Aboriginal, Torres Strait Islander, Indigenous and/or First Nations without fear of retribution or questioning.
- Receive an education that strengthens their culture and identity.
- Maintain connection to their land and Country.
- Maintain their strong kinship ties and social obligations.
- Be taught their cultural heritage by their Elders.
- Receive information in a culturally sensitive, relevant, and accessible manner.
- Use services, like transport, that are culturally respectful.

Child Safe Standard 1 assumes that if Aboriginal children can freely engage in and respectfully express their culture without discrimination, and are connected to their communities, it contributes to making them and everyone stronger and safer.

What is Cultural Safety?

At the heart of the Victorian Government’s Child Safe Standard 1 is the idea of **cultural safety** – the positive recognition and celebration of cultures.

Cultural safety is more than just the absence of racism or discrimination – it is about being aware and sensitive to multiple cultures that exist within our community.

The idea of cultural safety aims to create workplaces and environments that allows people (bus operators, their teams and bus drivers, supervisors, suppliers, and passengers) to:

- Feel comfortable being themselves.
- Feel comfortable expressing their culture, including religious and other beliefs.
- Be supported by others who respect their heritage and encourage their sense of self and identity.

Cultural safety needs to be thought of in the same light as workplace health and safety and other operational risks to manage.

The Child Friendly-Culturally Safe Bus

The introduction of Child Safe Standard 1 and the emergence of cultural safety as a business risk to manage has created in our industry the idea of a 'child friendly-culturally safe bus' where children and young people:

- Can feel and see from others that their culture and identity are respected.
- Are informed of their rights and responsibilities as a bus passenger.
- Are supported with easy access to help when needed and there are processes in place to raise concerns or complaints.

When done well, a child friendly-culturally safe bus and operator:

- Has policies and procedures in place to promote cultural safety.
- Has trained bus drivers, supervisors, and other personnel in cultural safety and Indigenous cultural awareness.
- Proactively addresses instances of cultural abuse, bullying, racist comments and behaviour onboard and in the workplace.
- Promotes positive cultural images onboard (such as appropriate signage and advertising images).
- Generates trust in children, their families, and the wider community as a quality provider of safe transport.
- Is open to feedback on your work and how you contribute to cultural safety in the workplace.

Why does this matter?

We know that buses are the cornerstone of every community, keeping people connected and engaged.

Our industry plays a critical role in:

1. Ensuring children and adults of all cultures and abilities can travel safely to attend school and work, visit friends and family, attend medical appointments and facilities, and engage in cultural and community events.
2. Driving cultural change in our communities by role modelling excellence in creating, maintaining, and improving child safe practices in public transport. When we apply the government standards and our own internal operating procedures we are doing our bit to build a culture where abuse of children and people of all cultures is prevented, responded to, and reported.
3. Minimising instances of cultural abuse when someone's culture is ignored, denigrated, or intentionally attacked in our depots or on our busses.

While the government's Child Safe Standards requires us to implement more policies and procedures it does help us all complying with new standards and creating a safe workplace and travelling environment for all.

Next Steps

We encourage all bus operators to continue to create an inclusive and welcoming environment for passengers of all ages and cultures.

In particular, the Child Safe Standard requires all operators to:

- Outline the role and responsibility of management.
- Undertake activities to improve and support the rights and responsibilities of children, their families, and the community.
- Develop, implement, and publish a customised Child Safety and Wellbeing Policy and Code of Conduct.
- Enhance internal recruitment and regular training practices to include child safety.
- Ensure your Complaint Handling Policy and related information sharing and record keeping policies comply with Child Safe Standards requirements.

The following resources are available within the Child Safe Standards resource section in MIS 2.14 to help you build a culturally safe environment and maintain compliance to Child Safe Standard 1:

The resource	What does it do?
MIS 2.14 - Child Safe Standards Guidance Note with 2023 Standard 1 Further Steps for Aboriginal Children's Cultural Safety	This provides the overall CSS framework within which businesses working with children have to operate, including Further Steps to ensure Aboriginal children's cultural safety in accordance with CSS Standard 1.
MIS 2.14.1 - Child Safety and Wellbeing Policy	This document describes how the organisation keeps children safe from harm and child abuse in accordance with the Victorian Child Safe Standards. The policy must be customised to your operation before it can be implemented and published.
MIS 2.14.4 - The Recruitment and Screening Policy	This template policy must be customised for your operation. It sets out what operators can do to incorporate cultural safety (more broadly) and appreciation of the need for Aboriginal cultural safety and child awareness (more specifically) in recruitment selection criteria, advertising, interviewing, and pre-employment screening.
MIS 2.14.5 - CSS Training Policy and Training Plan with Further Steps update June 2023	This document outlines steps operators need to undertake for onboarding and annual training on Aboriginal cultural safety and provides information on operator obligations, how to meet them, and resource links.
MIS 2.14.6 - CSS Compliance Review Checklist	This Child Safe Standards Compliance Checklist incorporates all CSS requirements in checklist form.
MIS 2.14.12 – Standard 1 Further Steps Implementation Record	This template builds on MIS 2.14.6 to assist operators to customise and report on their CSS Standard 1 obligations.
Aboriginal Children's Cultural Rights bus decal	BusVic has produced and provided operators with a bus decal with a QR code that links to our dedicated website page that explains Aboriginal cultural rights. This explanation is a requirement of the Standard.

Cultural Training Providers

The Social Strategies Committee discovered a number of organisations that provide Indigenous cultural awareness training but have not used their services:

[Victorian Aboriginal Community Services Association](#)

[Victorian Aboriginal Child Care Agency](#)

BusVic is member of the Kinaway Aboriginal Chamber of Commerce. You can visit their [member directory](#) and search for 'cultural awareness training'

Should you wish to engage any organisations it is recommended to consider organisations they have provided training to; online reviews and recommendations; and request background information on the program's learning objectives, key content areas, and presenters. These checks will ensure you are working with a quality provider.

Further reading

CCYP: [Understanding cultural safety for Aboriginal children and young people: A guide for implementing Child Safe Standard 1](#)

CCYP: [Tips for establishing a culturally safe environment for Aboriginal children and young people](#)

CCYP: [Frequently asked questions about cultural safety with Meena Singh, Commissioner for Aboriginal Children and Young People](#)

CCYP: [Days of importance for Aboriginal communities](#)

Australian Government National Office for Child Safety's Keeping Our [Kids Safe: Cultural Safety and the National Principles for Child Safe Organisations](#)

Australian Government Australian Institute of Family Studies' [The Relationship between Transport and Disadvantage in Australia](#)

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