**Statement of Commitment to Child Safe Standards**

**Statement of commitment by GOTAFE of Zero Tolerance of all forms of abuse towards**

**Children and Young People**

The introduction of [Child Safe Standards](http://www.vrqa.vic.gov.au/childsafe/Pages/standards.html) is part of the Victorian Government’s response to the recommendations from the recent [Betrayal of Trust Report](http://www.justice.vic.gov.au/home/safer%2Bcommunities/protecting%2Bchildren%2Band%2Bfamilies/betrayal%2Bof%2Btrust%2Bimplementation). GOTAFE is committed to supporting increased responses to child and young person abuse in the community and will use the Child Safe Standards to promote and embed a culture of protecting children across the organisation.

All children and young people have the right to ***feel safe*** and ***be safe*** regardless of gender, sexual identity, race, national origin, religious beliefs or other affiliations, age, family structure, disability, or sexual orientation. We are committed to promoting the cultural safety and identity of [Aboriginal Children](http://www.ccyp.vic.gov.au/child-safe-standards/index.htm) and children from [Culturally and/or Linguistically Diverse](http://www.ccyp.vic.gov.au/child-safe-standards/index.htm) backgrounds, as well as the safety of [Children with a Disability](http://www.ccyp.vic.gov.au/child-safe-standards/index.htm).

Victoria set into law that failure to report suspected or disclosed child abuse is a [criminal offence](http://assets.justice.vic.gov.au/justice/resources/ea484f74-feb7-400e-ad68-9bd0be8e2a40/failure%2Bto%2Bdisclose.pdf) along with failure to protect children. People in authority can face penalties including 5 years imprisonment for failing to protect a child.

This statement of commitment and associated policy and procedures are intended to provide clear guidelines, principles and processes for staff, students, contractors and volunteers within all GOTAFE domains where adults 18 years and over interact with children and young people 17 years of age and below.

The definition of Child Abuse constitutes any act committed against a child or young person involving:

* Physical violence
* Sexual offences
* Serious emotional or psychological abuse
* Serious neglect

Reporting actual abuse, alleged abuse or suspicion based on [reasonable grounds](http://www.justice.vic.gov.au/home/safer%2Bcommunities/protecting%2Bchildren%2Band%2Bfamilies/failure%2Bto%2Bdisclose%2Boffence) is the responsibility of every person 18 years and over. In cases where there is a belief on reasonable grounds that sexual abuse towards a child 15 years and under has occurred, It is embedded into law that a [failure to disclose](http://www.justice.vic.gov.au/home/safer%2Bcommunities/protecting%2Bchildren%2Band%2Bfamilies/failure%2Bto%2Bdisclose%2Boffence) and [failure to protect](http://www.justice.vic.gov.au/home/safer%2Bcommunities/protecting%2Bchildren%2Band%2Bfamilies/failure%2Bto%2Bprotect%2Boffence) may result in imprisonment.

GOTAFE will take all allegations of abuse against a child or young person seriously and will report all allegations to the appropriate [authorities](http://www.dhs.vic.gov.au/about-the-department/plans%2C-programs-and-projects/projects-and-initiatives/children%2C-youth-and-family-services/creating-child-safe-organisations) for further investigation. This commitment extends to and includes responsibilities for the welfare of children outside of normal program contact hours such as camps, excursions, after-hours activities or structured workplace learning/ work placements.

The safety and wellbeing of children and young people is a priority for GOTAFE across all programs and services and in all domains, including on-line activities and events where GOTAFE is the sole provider or in partnership with other organisations.

To create and maintain a child safe organisation, GOTAFE commits to maintain and improve on each of the standards:

*Standard 1:* Strategies to embed an organisational culture of child safety, including through effective leadership arrangement.
*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.

These standards are the guiding principles with respect to child and young person safety in the delivery and development of all activities, events and interactions by the organisation.