

Child protection: information for Buddhist temples and organisations

Why

The NSW government is implementing new standards to ensure faith organisations keep the children in their care safe. . The government’s new Child Safe Standards will help temples and other organisations that involve children be sure that they protect them and deal well with any situations where children are at risk of abuse or neglect.

What you need to know

Following the Royal Commission into Institutional Responses to Child Abuse, the NSW government adopted in principle the 10 Child Safe Standards as a framework for child-related organisations to uphold children’s rights and work towards creating safe environments for children. The Office of the Children’s Guardian has recently amended the Children’s Guardian Act so that religious organisations have to report any allegations that a staff or volunteer harmed a child in their care. This applies to anyone in your organisation who is required to hold a Working with Children Check for the purposes of their engagement in your temple.

The person in charge of each temple/organisation (the “Head of Relevant Entity”) is responsible for having systems and processes that prevent and respond to child abuse. These are based around the idea of ‘reportable conduct’, which includes physical assault, sexual assault, sexual misconduct, psychological harm, ill treatment, neglect and an offence under s 43B (failure to protect) or s 316A (failure to report) of the Crimes Act 1900.

These systems and processes must include:

- a code of conduct for your temple/organisation
- policies, including:
 - child protection policies that cover identifying, preventing and reporting any allegations of instances of ‘reportable conduct’ or convictions
 - processes for dealing with reportable allegations (including procedural fairness for people implicated and protections for those making complaints/notifications/reports).
 - record keeping and managing information

Staff and volunteers need to be trained on those processes and policies. They need to understand what reportable conduct is, must be able to identify potential abuse and know how to report an allegation of abuse to the “Head of Relevant Entity”.

What does this mean for us?

Many Buddhist temples and organisations have already got their child safety systems set up. If you have not, it is time to start talking about it. You can begin by looking at ways to implement the Child Safe Standards and familiarise yourself with the new legislation and how to make a report.

For further information and advice:

[Reportable Conduct video](#)

[Reportable Conduct resources](#)

[Child Safe Standards resources](#)

[Child Safe Standards webinars](#)

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