

Early Learning

Child Safe Environment and Wellbeing Policy

1. Purpose

This policy provides a clear set of guidelines and procedures to:

- Provide a safe environment for all children which ensures their safety, health, and wellbeing
- Help children understand their rights and Uniting's strategies to keep them safe
- Promote the cultural safety of all children
- Identify, reduce, and remove risks of child abuse
- Intervene when a child may be at risk of abuse or neglect
- Involve children in child safety including listening to children and incorporating their views about how to provide a safe environment
- Make staff aware of their legal and duty of care obligations to report child abuse and neglect
- Make staff aware that Uniting Vic Tas has zero tolerance for racism
- Responding to requests, sharing, and requesting information to promote child wellbeing or safety and/or manage risk of family violence.

2. Scope

This policy applies to the approved provider, persons with management or control, nominated supervisor, responsible persons, persons in day-to-day charge, early childhood teachers, educators, staff, students, volunteers, parents/guardians, children, and others attending the programs and activities at the service, including during offsite excursions and activities.

3. Policy Statement

3.1 Values

Uniting Early Learning is committed to the rights of all children to feel safe, and be safe at all times, including:

- *Promoting the cultural safety and wellbeing of Aboriginal children*
- *Promoting the cultural safety and wellbeing of children from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds*
- *Promoting the safety and wellbeing of children with a disability*
- *Promoting the (right to) safety and wellbeing of trans and gender diverse children and their families in ECEC settings*
- *Ensuring that LGBTIQ+ children and families feel included*
- *Promotes the culture of child safety and wellbeing within the service*

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Version Number: <i>2.0</i>	Document Owner: <i>General Manager, Early Learning</i>	
Publication date: <i>25/09/2025</i>	Endorsed by: <i>General Manager, Early Learning</i>	
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- *Values, respects, and cares for children*
- *Fosters opportunities for each child to participate, express their views and to learn and develop*
- *Always acts in the best interests of each child and has zero tolerance of child abuse*
- *Takes all reasonable steps to ensure the health, safety, and wellbeing of children at all times, whilst also promoting their learning and development*
- *Children are educated about positive safety behaviours, including Road safety, correct use of protective equipment, correct use of facilities and equipment, Identifying and responding to safety hazards, cultural safety, and inclusive behaviour*
- *Actively manages the risks of abuse or harm to each child, including fulfilling our duty of care (refer to Glossary) and legal obligations to protect children and prevent any reasonable, foreseeable risk of injury or harm*
- *Continuously improves the way our service identifies risks of and responds to child abuse and encourages reporting and improved responses to allegations of abuse*
- *Proactively sharing information with relevant authorities to promote the wellbeing and/or safety of a child or a group of children, consistent with their best interests*
- *Educators and staff are supported to access professional development and resources about safety education and child safety requirements.*

3.2 Background and Legislation

A key requirement of the *Education and Care Service National Law Act 2010* is to ensure every reasonable precaution is taken to protect children being educated and cared for by the service from harm and from any hazard likely to cause injury (*National Law: Section 167*). The approved provider must also ensure that each Nominated Supervisor and each person in day-to-day charge of the service has successfully completed the child protection training required by the Department of Education (*National Law: Section 162A*).

Under the Education and Care Services National Regulations 2011, the approved provider of an education and care service must ensure that the nominated supervisors and staff members at the service who work with children are advised of the existence and application of the current child protection law and any obligations that they may have under that law. (Regulation 84).

Under the *National Quality Standards*, management, educators, and staff are required to be aware of their roles and responsibilities to identify and respond to every child at risk of abuse or neglect (*element 2.2.3*). At all times, reasonable

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precautions and adequate supervision must be provided to ensure children are protected from harm and hazard ([element 2.2.1](#)).

Approved providers operating under the *Children's Services Act 1996* must ensure that every reasonable precaution is taken to protect children being cared for or educated by the service from harm and from any hazard likely to cause injury ([section 107](#)).

The approved provider, persons with management control, nominated supervisor, persons in day-to-day charge, educators, staff, contractors, students, and volunteers of early childhood services have legal and duty of care obligations to protect children under their supervision and care.

Approved providers operating under the *Tasmanian Licensing Standards for Centre Based Child Care, Class 5 (0-12 Years)* must ensure the provision of a child-safe environment, where children are protected from known dangers and identified hazards.

Duty of care obligations (refer to [Glossary](#)) require the approved provider, person with management or control, nominated supervisor, persons in day-to-day charge, and staff to take reasonable steps to protect children from injury that is reasonably foreseeable.

In addition, organisations have an organisational duty of care (refer to [Glossary](#)) to take reasonable precautions to prevent the abuse of a child by an individual associated with the organisation while the child is under its care, supervision, or authority. The Victorian Reportable Conduct Scheme (refer to [Glossary](#)) seeks to improve organisation's responses to allegations of child abuse and neglect by their workers and volunteers. The scheme is established by the *Child Wellbeing and Safety Act 2005* (the Act) and relates to individuals associated with an organisation, including but not limited to committee members, employees, volunteers, and contractors.

The Children, Youth and Families Act 2005 provides the legislative basis for the provision of services to vulnerable children, young people and their families, and places children's best interests at the heart of decision-making and service delivery.

In line with the Victorian Government's Roadmap for Reform, Education State reforms and broader child safety initiatives, [Part 6A](#) of the *Child Wellbeing and Safety Act 2005* was proclaimed in September 2018. The Act established the [Child Information Sharing \(CISS\) Scheme](#), which enables sharing of confidential information between prescribed information sharing entities (refer to [Glossary](#)) in a timely and effective manner in order to promote the wellbeing and safety of children. Alongside the CISS Scheme, the *Family Violence Protection Act 2008* includes the [Family Violence Information Sharing \(FVISS\) Scheme](#) and the [Family Violence Multi-Agency Risk Assessment and Management Framework \(MARAM\)](#), which enables

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information to be shared between prescribed entities to assess and manage family violence risk to children and adults. It will allow professionals working with children to gain a complete view of the children they work with, making it easier to identify wellbeing or safety needs earlier, and to act on them sooner.

Any person who forms a reasonable belief (refer to [Glossary](#)), that a child is in need of protection may report their concerns to the Child Protection (refer to [Glossary](#)).

Early childhood teachers are required to be registered with the Victorian Institute of Teaching and are mandatory reporters (refer to [Glossary](#)). In addition, all educators with post-secondary qualifications in the care, education or minding of children and employed or engaged in an education and care service or a children's service and all proprietors, nominees of a children's service, approved providers, and nominated supervisors of an education and care service are mandatory reporters.

All mandatory reporters must make a report to Victoria Police and/or Child Protection (refer to [Glossary](#)) as soon as practicable if, during the course of their roles and responsibilities they form a reasonable belief that:

- A child is likely to suffer, or has suffered, significant harm as a result of physical abuse and/or sexual abuse, and the child's parents have not protected, or are unlikely protect, the child from harm of that type.

Victorian organisations that provide services to children are required under the *Child Wellbeing and Safety Act 2005* to ensure that they implement compulsory minimum *Child Safe Standards* to protect children from harm and abuse. The standards aim to drive continuous improvement in the way services prevent and report child abuse and respond to allegations of child abuse. Standard 2 requires services to have a child safety and wellbeing policy or statement of commitment to child safety and wellbeing.

Three criminal offences in the *Crimes Amendment (Protection of Children) Act 2014* protect children from child abuse:

Failure to disclose: *All adults (not just those working with children) have a legal duty to report information about child sexual abuse to Victoria Police.*

The offence applies to any adult who forms a reasonable belief that a sexual offence has been committed by an adult against a child under 16 and fails to report that information to the Victoria Police.

Failure to protect: *The offence applies to people within organisations who hold positions of authority within an education and care service, such as the approved provider, person with management or control, the nominated supervisor or the person in day to day charge and who know of the substantial risk that another adult associated with the organisation may commit a sex offence and they have the power or responsibility to remove or reduce the risk but negligently fail to do so.*

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Grooming offence: *The offence targets predatory conduct by an adult with the intent of committing child sexual abuse. Conduct may include communication, including online communication, with a child under the age of 16 or their parents.*

Victoria, **Child Link** is a key enabler of the information sharing reforms. Access to Child Link is prescribed in the **Child Wellbeing and Safety Act 2005** and associated regulations. It shows limited but critical information, including a child's participation in Victorian early childhood services and schools.

Early childhood professionals with access to **Child Link** will be able to view key information about each child in their service, amplifying their ability to meet the objectives of the information sharing schemes (**CISS and FVISS**). This assists professionals to:

- Make more informed decisions about the wellbeing, safety, and support needs of a child in their service.
- Better identify risks and vulnerabilities and provide the necessary support to prevent any escalation of harm.
- Encourage cross-service collaboration to facilitate more holistic support around a child.
- Provide support earlier by linking together information from across services.
- Facilitate smoother transitions between early childhood and education services by responding to gaps in participation.

Tasmanian early learning services are required to adhere to the **Child and Youth Safe Organisations Act 2023**. The Act established the **Child and Youth Safe Organisations Framework, Child and Youth Safe Standards, Reportable Conduct Scheme, Information Sharing Provisions** and **the Independent Regulator**.

The Tasmanian **Child and Youth Safe Standards** comprises a **Universal Principle** and 10 standards that:

- Promote the safety and wellbeing of children and young people
- Prevent abuse and harm to children and young people
- Create a benchmark that organisations that engage with children and young people need to meet
- Ensure organisations that engage with children and young people embed strategies in their day-to-day practice to realise these things
- The Child and Youth Safe Standards mirror the National Principles for Child Safe Organisations.

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The **Tasmania Reportable Conduct Scheme**, which is overseen by an independent regulator, requires leaders of specific organisations (including early learning services) to report concerns of conduct related to child abuse involving a worker of their organisation, and conduct investigations. Leaders must report any reportable conduct once becoming aware of it, even if the alleged conduct is historical in nature.

3.3 Protection of Personal Information

Enrolment and other documents kept by an approved provider include personal information of a parent, including their address and contact number. There are cases where one parent may not want the other parent to access their personal information, including for security and safety reasons. The law has changed to strengthen protections of personal information in these documents and privacy.

The requirements apply to information contained in the following documents:

- The documentation of child assessments or evaluations for delivery of educational programs
- An incident, injury, trauma, and illness record
- A medication record
- A children's attendance record, or
- A child's enrolment record
- Written consent must be first obtained before any personal information of one of the following people is disclosed:
 - A parent of a child enrolled at the service, other than the person requesting the documentation
 - A person required to be notified of an emergency if a parent cannot be contacted
 - An authorised nominee of a child
 - A person authorised to consent to medical treatment or the administration of medication to a child
 - A person authorised to authorise an educator to take a child outside the service premises
 - A person authorised to authorise the service to transport a child or arrange transportation of a child
- Consent must be expressly given in writing. Best practice is for approved providers and their services to check the currency of consent before each disclosure is made. Consent may be withdrawn at any time after it has been given. Withdrawal of consent must be in writing.

Review

This policy is to be reviewed by: 30/08/2026

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4. Responsibilities relating to the Child Safe Environment and Wellbeing Policy

Responsibilities	Approved provider and persons with management or control	Nominated supervisor and persons in day-to-day charge	ECT, Educators, FDC educators and all other staff	Parents/guardians	Contractors, volunteers, and students
R indicates legislation requirement, and should not be deleted					
Ensure that obligations under the <i>Education and Care Services National Law and National Regulations</i> including <i>Child Safe Standards (Vic)</i> and <i>Child and Youth Safe Standards (Tas)</i> are met <i>S 16</i>	R	✓	✓		✓
Be aware of and abide by this policy, the <i>Uniting Child Safety Policy</i> <i>Uniting Child Safety Code of Conduct</i> , <i>Uniting Privacy Policy</i> and the <i>Early Learning E-Safety Technology</i> and <i>Interactions with Children Policy</i> and their ongoing obligations to behave in accordance with these policies <i>Child Safe Standard 11 Vic Standard 10 Tas</i>	R	✓	✓		✓
Provide a safe and welcoming environment for all children, including Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children, children from all cultural and religious backgrounds, children with disability, children who are living in out-of-home care and LGBTIQ+ families <i>Child Safe Standard 1 & 5 Vic Universal Principle & Standard 4 Tas</i>	R	✓	✓		✓
Listen to and support children and their families to understand their rights and have a say in decisions that affect them <i>Child Safe Standard 3 & 4 Vic Standard 2 & 3 Tas</i>	R	✓	✓		✓
Ensure children, families, staff, and communities feel safe to speak up about child safety <i>Child Safe Standard 3 & 4 Vic Standard 2 & 3 Tas R 168</i>	R	✓	✓		✓
Provide support to children and families who have experienced abuse in the past <i>Child Safe Standard 5 Vic Standard 4 Tas</i>	R	✓	✓		✓
Ensure public commitment to the cultural safety of Aboriginal children is available and displayed prominently at the service for public access <i>Early Learning Child Safety Posters Child Safe Standard 2 Vic Standard 1 Tas</i>	R	✓	✓		✓
Ensure strategies are embedded within the service which equip all members to acknowledge and appreciate the strengths of Aboriginal culture and understand its importance to the wellbeing and safety of Aboriginal children and young people <i>Child Safe Standard 1 & 5 Vic Universal Principle & Standard 4 Tas</i>	R	✓	✓		✓

Responsibilities	Approved provider and persons with management or control	Nominated supervisor and persons in day-to-day charge	ECT, Educators, FDC educators and all other staff	Parents/guardians	Contractors, volunteers, and students
R indicates legislation requirement, and should not be deleted					
Actively support and facilitate the participation and inclusion within the service by Aboriginal children, young people and their families <i>Child Safe Standard 1 & 5 Vic Universal Principle & Standard 4 Tas</i>	R	✓	✓		✓
Support the needs of children with disability, children from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds, those who are unable to live at home, and transgender and intersex Children <i>Child Safe Standard 5 Vic Standard 4 Tas</i>	R	✓	✓		✓
Ensure racism within the service is identified, confronted and not tolerated <i>Child Safe Standard 1 Vic Universal Principle Tas</i>	R	✓	✓		✓
Establish and implement inclusive and positive interactions to engage and support all children <i>Child Safe Standard 5 Vic Standard 4 Tas</i>	R	✓	✓	✓	✓
Support and encourage a child's ability to express their culture and enjoy their cultural rights <i>R 73 Child Safe Standard 1 Vic Universal Principle Tas</i>	R	✓	✓		✓
Understand children's diverse circumstances, and provide support and respond to those who are vulnerable <i>R 155 Child Safe Standard 5 Vic Standard 4 Tas</i>	R	✓	✓		✓
Provide leadership for a culture of accountability for child safety which is open to scrutiny and is continuously reviewed and improved <i>Child Safe Standard 2 & 11 Vic Standard 1 & 10 Tas</i>	R	✓			
Ensure there is a child safe champion who can lead discussions, answer questions and support child safety and wellbeing <i>Child Safe Standard 2 & 11 Vic Standard 1 & 10 Tas</i>	R	✓			
Undertake child safety reviews and develop an action plan to maintain Child Safe Standards or Child & Youth Safe Standards at the service <i>Child Safe Standard 9 Vic Standard 8 Tas</i>	R	✓	✓		
Keep up to date and comply with any relevant changes in legislation and practices in relation to this policy <i>Child Safe Standard 8 Vic & Standard 7 Tas</i>	R	✓	✓		

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R indicates legislation requirement, and should not be deleted					
Ensure continuous improvement in the implementation of the Child Safe Standards, promoting an organisational culture of accountability for child safety which is open to scrutiny and is continuously reviewed and improved <i>Child Safe Standard 10 Vic Standard 9 Tas</i>	R	✓	✓		
Hire suitable educators to work with children and ensure that they are properly screened, including passing police checks and the Working with Children Check, and where relevant, holding Victorian Institute of Teaching (VIT) registration <i>R 145-152 Child Safe Standard 6 Vic Standard 5 Tas</i>	R	✓			
Identify the potential for child abuse and develop and implement effective prevention strategies <i>Child Safe Standard 9 Vic Standard 8 Tas</i>	R	✓	✓		
Follow processes for responding to and reporting suspected child abuse <i>Child Safe Standard 9 Vic Standard 8 Tas</i>	R	✓	✓		✓
Ensure systems are in place that cover all aspects of child protection and child safety training each year. This includes refresher training and additional professional development where needed. Different roles in the service require specific training: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> New staff, volunteers and students on placement will need comprehensive induction and training. Leadership group needs training on their specific responsibilities in the service <i>S 162A R 84</i> <i>Child Safe Standard 8 Vic Standard 7 Tas</i>	R	✓			
Ensure procedures for reporting and responding to suspected child abuse or neglect are promoted across the service and regularly reviewed in partnership with all stakeholders <i>Child Safe Standard 9 Vic Standard 8 Tas</i>	R	✓	✓		
Fulfill legal obligations, including mandatory reporting and duty of care obligations <i>Children, Youth and Families Act 2005</i>	R	✓	✓		✓
Ensure Vic staff understand and implement their obligations under the Information Sharing Schemes, and ensure they have read and understood the Uniting <i>Privacy Policy Child Safe Standard 2 Vic Standard 1 Tas</i>	R	✓	✓		✓

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R indicates legislation requirement, and should not be deleted					
Ensure compliance with legislation when disclosing information to promote the wellbeing and safety of a child or group of children <i>Child Safe Standard 2 Vic Standard 1 Tas</i>	R	✓	✓		✓
Ensure information sharing procedures abide by the <i>Child Information Sharing Scheme and Family Violence Information Sharing Scheme Guidelines (Vic only)</i> and exercise professional judgment when determining whether the threshold for sharing is met, what information to share and with whom to share it <i>Child Safe Standard 2 Vic Standard 1 Tas</i>	R	✓	✓		✓
Ensure confidential information is only shared with relevant authorities to the extent necessary to promote the wellbeing or safety of a child or group of children, consistent with the best interests of that child or those children <i>R 181 & 182 Child Safe Standard 2 Vic Standard 1 Tas</i>	R	✓	✓		✓
Ensure written consent is obtained in writing before any personal information of one of the following people is disclosed: <ul style="list-style-type: none">a parent of a child enrolled at the service, other than the person requesting the documentationa person required to be notified of an emergency if a parent cannot be contactedan authorised nominee of a childa person authorised to consent to medical treatment or the administration of medication to a childa person authorised to authorise an educator to take a child outside the service premisesa person authorised to authorise the service to transport a child or arrange transportation of a child <i>R 181 & 182 Child Safe Standard 7 Vic Standard 6 Tas</i>	R	✓	✓	✓	✓

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R indicates legislation requirement, and should not be deleted					
Maintain co-operative relationships with appropriate services and/or professionals (including Child FIRST/Orange Door) in the best interests of children and their families	✓	✓	✓		✓
Ensure Vic staff understand and implement their obligations under the Information Sharing Schemes, and ensure they have read and understood the Uniting <i>Privacy Policy Child Safe Standard 2 Vic Standard 1 Tas</i>	R	✓	✓		✓
Ensure compliance with legislation when disclosing information to promote the wellbeing and safety of a child or group of children <i>Child Safe Standard 2 Vic Standard 1 Tas</i>	R	✓	✓		✓
Ensure information sharing procedures abide by the <i>Child Information Sharing Scheme and Family Violence Information Sharing Scheme Guidelines (Vic only)</i> and exercise professional judgment when determining whether the threshold for sharing is met, what information to share and with whom to share it <i>Child Safe Standard 2 Vic Standard 1 Tas</i>	R	✓	✓		✓
Ensure confidential information is only shared with relevant authorities to the extent necessary to promote the wellbeing or safety of a child or group of children, consistent with the best interests of that child or those children <i>R 181 & 182 Child Safe Standard 2 Vic Standard 1 Tas</i>	R	✓	✓		✓
Ensure written consent is obtained in writing before any personal information of one of the following people is disclosed: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a parent of a child enrolled at the service, other than the person requesting the documentation a person required to be notified of an emergency if a parent cannot be contacted an authorised nominee of a child a person authorised to consent to medical treatment or the administration of medication to a child a person authorised to authorise an educator to take a child outside the service premises a person authorised to authorise the service to transport a child or arrange transportation of a child <i>R 181 & 182 Child Safe Standard 7 Vic Standard 6 Tas</i>	R	✓	✓	✓	✓

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R indicates legislation requirement, and should not be deleted					
Offer support to the child and their family, and to staff in response to concerns or reports relating to the safety, health and wellbeing of a child at Early Learning <i>Child Safe Standard 8 Vic Standard 7 Tas</i>	R	✓	✓		
Ensure processes for responding to and reporting are followed when there are significant concerns for the safety, health or wellbeing of a child at the service <i>Child Safe Standard 7 Vic Standard 6 Tas</i>	R	✓	✓		✓
Notify the approved provider by completing a RiskMan incident notification within 24 hours of a serious incident (refer to Glossary) occurring at the service <i>S 173, 174 & 174A Child Safe Standard 7 Vic Standard 6 Tas</i>	R	✓	✓		✓
Notify the approved provider by completing a RiskMan incident notification within 24 hours of becoming aware of a notifiable complaint (refer to Glossary) or allegation regarding the safety, health and/or welfare of a child at the service <i>S 173, 174 & 174A Child Safe Standard 7 Vic Standard 6 Tas</i>	R	✓	✓		✓
Notify the Program Manager/Senior Manager within 12 hours of becoming aware of a reportable allegation of physical or sexual abuse by a Uniting staff member, volunteer, student or contractor (refer to Glossary), under the Reportable Conduct Scheme Vic or Tas (refer to Glossary) <i>S 173, 174 & 174A Child Safe Standard 7 Vic Standard 6 Tas</i>	R	✓	✓		✓
Notify the approved provider by completing a RiskMan incident notification within 12 hours of becoming aware of a reportable allegation of physical or sexual abuse by a Uniting staff member, volunteer, student or contractor under the Reportable Conduct Scheme Vic or Tas <i>S 173, 174 & 174A Child Safe Standard 7 Vic Standard 6 Tas</i>	R	✓	✓		✓
Notify the approved provider (by completing a Uniting only RiskMan incident notification) within 24 hours of becoming aware of alleged abuse of a child occurring outside of the early learning service <i>S 173, 174 & 174A Child Safe Standard 7 Vic Standard 6 Tas</i>	R	✓	✓		✓
Maintain confidentiality at all times (refer to Uniting Privacy Policy) <i>R 181 & 182 Child Safe Standard 7 Vic Standard 6 Tas</i>	R	✓	✓	✓	✓

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R indicates legislation requirement, and should not be deleted					
Offer support to the child and their family, and to staff in response to concerns or reports relating to the safety, health and wellbeing of a child at Early Learning <i>Child Safe Standard 8 Vic Standard 7 Tas</i>	R	✓	✓		
Ensure processes for responding to and reporting are followed when there are significant concerns for the safety, health or wellbeing of a child at the service <i>Child Safe Standard 7 Vic Standard 6 Tas</i>	R	✓	✓		✓
Notify the approved provider by completing a RiskMan incident notification within 24 hours of a serious incident (refer to Glossary) occurring at the service <i>S 173, 174 & 174A Child Safe Standard 7 Vic Standard 6 Tas</i>	R	✓	✓		✓
Notify the approved provider by completing a RiskMan incident notification within 24 hours of becoming aware of a notifiable complaint (refer to Glossary) or allegation regarding the safety, health and/or welfare of a child at the service <i>S 173, 174 & 174A Child Safe Standard 7 Vic Standard 6 Tas</i>	R	✓	✓		✓
Notify the Program Manager/Senior Manager within 12 hours of becoming aware of a reportable allegation of physical or sexual abuse by a Uniting staff member, volunteer, student or contractor (refer to Glossary), under the Reportable Conduct Scheme Vic or Tas (refer to Glossary) <i>S 173, 174 & 174A Child Safe Standard 7 Vic Standard 6 Tas</i>	R	✓	✓		✓
Notify the approved provider by completing a RiskMan incident notification within 12 hours of becoming aware of a reportable allegation of physical or sexual abuse by a Uniting staff member, volunteer, student or contractor under the Reportable Conduct Scheme Vic or Tas <i>S 173, 174 & 174A Child Safe Standard 7 Vic Standard 6 Tas</i>	R	✓	✓		✓
Notify the approved provider (by completing a Uniting only RiskMan incident notification) within 24 hours of becoming aware of alleged abuse of a child occurring outside of the early learning service <i>S 173, 174 & 174A Child Safe Standard 7 Vic Standard 6 Tas</i>	R	✓	✓		✓
Maintain confidentiality at all times (refer to Uniting Privacy Policy) <i>R 181 & 182 Child Safe Standard 7 Vic Standard 6 Tas</i>	R	✓	✓	✓	✓

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Responsibilities	Approved provider and persons with management or control	Nominated supervisor and persons in day-to-day charge	ECT, Educators, FDC educators and all other staff	Parents/guardians	Contractors, volunteers, and students
R indicates legislation requirement, and should not be deleted					
Protect the rights of children and families, and encourage their participation in decision-making <i>Child Safe Standard 3 Vic Standard 2 Tas</i>	R	✓	✓		✓
Keep informed of any relevant changes in legislation and practices in relation to this policy <i>Child Safe Standard 8 Vic & Standard 7 Tas</i>	R	✓	✓		✓
Ensure an explicit statement of commitment to child safety is displayed at the service <i>Child Safe Standard 2 Vic Standard 1 Tas</i>	R	✓	✓		
Ensure when sharing information giving precedence to the wellbeing and safety of a child or group of children over the right to privacy when sharing information under legislation <i>Child Safe Standard 9 Vic & Standard 8 Tas</i>	R	✓	✓		✓
Seek and take into account the views of the child and the child's relevant family members, if it is appropriate, safe and reasonable to do so when sharing information under <i>Vic Information Sharing Legislation (refer to Glossary) Child Safe Standard 1 & 5 Vic Universal Principle & Standard 4 Tas</i>	R	✓	✓		✓
Be respectful of and have regard to a child's social, individual and cultural identity, the child's strengths and abilities and any vulnerability relevant to the child's safety or wellbeing when sharing information under the CISS and FVISS <i>Child Safe Standard 1 & 5 Vic Universal Principle & Standard 4 Tas</i>	R	✓	✓		✓
Promote a child's cultural safety and recognise the cultural rights and familial and community connections of children who are Aboriginal, Torres Strait Islander or both when sharing information under legislation <i>Child Safe Standard 1 & 5 Vic Universal Principle & Standard 4 Tas</i>	R	✓	✓		✓
Access Child Link (Vic) to identify and intervene early where there is a wellbeing or safety concern <i>Child Safe Standard 8 Vic</i>	R	✓	✓		
Educate and empower children to talk about events and situations that make them feel uncomfortable <i>Child Safe Standard 3 Vic & Standard 2 Tas</i>	R	✓	✓		✓

Responsibilities	Approved provider and persons with management or control	Nominated supervisor and persons in day-to-day charge	ECT, Educators, FDC educators and all other staff	Parents/guardians	Contractors, volunteers, and students
R indicates legislation requirement, and should not be deleted					
Include age-appropriate child safety prevention programs to children in the service <i>Child Safe Standard 3 Vic & Standard 2 Tas</i>	R	✓	✓		✓
Provide support to staff who disclose harm <i>Child Safe Standard 8 Vic Standard 7 Tas</i>	R	✓	✓		✓
Ensure that children have access to information, support and handling complaints through processes that are culturally safe, accessible and easy to understand (I have a worry poster) <i>Child Safe Standard 7 & 6 Vic Universal Principle & Standard 4 Tas</i>	R	✓	✓		✓
Identify and mitigate risks in the online and physical environments without compromising a child's right to privacy, access to information, social connections and learning opportunities <i>Child Safe Standard 9 Vic Standard 8 Tas</i>	R	✓	✓		✓
Safety information is provided to families, such as information and practical strategies to support safety in the service and at home <i>Child Safe Standard 4 Vic & Standard 3 Tas</i>	R	✓	✓		✓
Review this policy in consultation with stakeholders <i>Child Safe Standard 4 Vic & Standard 3 Tas</i>	R	✓	✓	✓	✓
Note: Volunteers and students, while at the service, are responsible for following this policy and its procedures					✓

5. Legislation/Regulations

Children, Youth and Families Act 2005 (Vic)
Child Wellbeing and Safety Act 2005 (Vic)
Child Wellbeing and Safety (Information Sharing) Amendment Regulations 2020 (Vic)
The Child and Youth Safe Organisations Act 2023 (Tas)
Charter of Human Rights and Responsibilities Act 2006 (Vic)
Child Safe Standards (Vic)
Child and Youth Safe Standards (Tas)
Children, Young Persons and their Families Act 1997 (Tas)
National Principles for Child Safe Organisations
Crimes Amendment (Protection of Children) Act 2014 (Vic)
Office of Safeguarding Children and Young People – Department for Education, Children and Young People (Tas)
Child Safety and Wellbeing Framework 2022 (Tas)
Tasmanian Child and Youth Wellbeing Framework 2018 (Tas)
Education and Care Services National Law Act 2010 (Vic): including but not limited to Sections 165, 166, 167
Education and Care Services National Regulations 2011 (Vic): including but not limited to Regulations 84, 85, 86, 99, 100, 101, 102, 168(2) (h), 145, 146, 149, 150.
Education Training and Reform Act 2006 (Vic) (As amended in 2014)
Family Law Act 1975 (Cth)
Family Violence Protection Amendment (Information Sharing) Act 2018
National Quality Standard, including Quality Area 2: Children’s Health and Safety Reportable Conduct Scheme administered by the Commission for Children and Young People (Vic)
Worker Screening Act 2020
Worker Screen Regulations 2021 (Vic)
Registration to Work with Vulnerable People Act 2013 (Tas)
Wrongs Act 1958 (Vic)
Privacy & Data Protection Act 2014 (Vic)
Health Records Act 2005 (Vic)
Personal Information Protection Act 2004 (Tas)
Privacy Act 1988 (C 97th) Tas

Most current amendments to listed legislation can be found at:

- [Victorian Legislation – Victorian Law Today:](#)
- [Commonwealth Legislation – Federal Register of Legislation:](#)
- [Tasmanian Legislation – Department of Justice:](#)

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Charter of Human Rights and Responsibilities Act 2006 (Vic)
Child Safe Standards (Vic)
Child and Youth Safe Standards (Tas)
Children, Young Persons and their Families Act 1997 (Tas)
National Principles for Child Safe Organisations
Crimes Amendment (Protection of Children) Act 2014 (Vic)
Office of Safeguarding Children and Young People – Department for Education, Children and Young People (Tas)
Child Safety and Wellbeing Framework 2022 (Tas)
Tasmanian Child and Youth Wellbeing Framework 2018 (Tas)
Education and Care Services National Law Act 2010 (Vic): including but not limited to Sections 165, 166, 167
Education and Care Services National Regulations 2011 (Vic): including but not limited to Regulations 84, 85, 86, 99, 100, 101, 102, 168(2) (h), 145, 146, 149, 150.
Education Training and Reform Act 2006 (Vic) (As amended in 2014)
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7. Sources

Australian Human Rights Commission: www.humanrights.gov.au

Betrayal of Trust Implementation: www.justice.vic.gov.au

Charter of Human Rights and Responsibilities Act 2006 (Vic):
www.legislation.vic.gov.au

Child Information Sharing Scheme Ministerial Guidelines: www.vic.gov.au/guides-templates-tools-for-information-sharing

Child link

Commission for Children and Young People (CCYP): [Generic learning or training action plan and training materials](#)

Commission for Children and Young People (CCYP): <https://ccyp.vic.gov.au>

Cultural safety for Aboriginal children and combatting racism:
[Keeping our kids safe: Understanding cultural safety in Child Safe Organisations](#)

Department of Education Mandatory Reporting eLearning Module:
<https://www.education.vic.gov.au/childhood/professionals/health/childprotection/Pages/eonlinelearning.aspx>

Ministerial Guidelines for the Family Violence Information Sharing Scheme:
www.vic.gov.au/family-violence-information-sharing-scheme

National Children's Commissioner: <https://humanrights.gov.au>

Quality Assessment and Regulation Division's online guidance: [Early Childhood Guidance on the Child Safe Standards](#)

Service Agreement Information Kit for Funded Organisations:
<https://fac.DFFH.vic.gov.au/service-agreement-requirements>

Star Health's 'Being Equal' model for change in early childhood services:
[Gender Equality and Respect in Early Learning Services](#)

The United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child: www.unicef.org

Victorian Institute of Teaching: www.vit.vic.edu.au

Working with Children (WWC) Check: www.workingwithchildren.vic.gov.au

Strong Families, Safe Kids - Advice and Referral Line on **1800 000 123**.

Department of Education PROTECT Portal:
[Documenting response to suspected child abuse outside of the service: template for all Victorian early childhood services](#)

[National Model Code for Early Childhood Education and Care](#)

[Building belonging: A toolkit for early childhood educators | Australian Human Rights Commission](#)

[CISS & FVISS intranet link](#)

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8. Sources

Australian Human Rights Commission: www.humanrights.gov.au

Betrayal of Trust Implementation: www.justice.vic.gov.au

Charter of Human Rights and Responsibilities Act 2006 (Vic):
www.legislation.vic.gov.au

Child Information Sharing Scheme Ministerial Guidelines: www.vic.gov.au/guides-templates-tools-for-information-sharing

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Commission for Children and Young People (CCYP): <https://ccyp.vic.gov.au>

Cultural safety for Aboriginal children and combatting racism:
[Keeping our kids safe: Understanding cultural safety in Child Safe Organisations](#)

Department of Education Mandatory Reporting eLearning Module:
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Ministerial Guidelines for the Family Violence Information Sharing Scheme:
www.vic.gov.au/family-violence-information-sharing-scheme

National Children's Commissioner: <https://humanrights.gov.au>

Quality Assessment and Regulation Division's online guidance: [Early Childhood Guidance on the Child Safe Standards](#)

Service Agreement Information Kit for Funded Organisations:
<https://fac.DFFH.vic.gov.au/service-agreement-requirements>

Star Health's 'Being Equal' model for change in early childhood services:
[Gender Equality and Respect in Early Learning Services](#)

The United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child: www.unicef.org

Victorian Institute of Teaching: www.vit.vic.edu.au

Working with Children (WWC) Check: www.workingwithchildren.vic.gov.au

Strong Families, Safe Kids - Advice and Referral Line on **1800 000 123**.

Department of Education PROTECT Portal:
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[Building belonging: A toolkit for early childhood educators | Australian Human Rights Commission](#)

[CISS & FVISS intranet link](#)

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9. Related Documents

Uniting

[Diversity Statement](#)

[Child Safety Commitment Statement](#)

Child Safety Code of Conduct

Child Safety Policy

Code of Conduct

Duty of Care Policy

Acceptable Use Policy

Mobile Phone & BYOD Procedure

Privacy Breach Procedure

Feedback, (Compliments, Suggestions and Complaints) Procedure

Inclusion, Diversity and Equity Policy

Incident Reporting & Management Procedure

Information Sharing & MARAM Policy

[MARAM & Information Sharing \(sharepoint.com\)](#)

- [Information Sharing Schemes \(sharepoint.com\)](#)
- [CISS flowchart1](#)
- [FVISS flowchart1](#)
- [UF-172-Information Sharing Schemes form.dotx](#)

Privacy Policy

Reportable Conduct Scheme Procedure

Reporting Allegations of Child Abuse Procedure

Responding to Allegations of Harm or Abuse involving Consumers Procedure

[RiskMan \(sharepoint.com\)](#)

WHS & Wellbeing Policy

Early Learning

Acceptance and Refusal of Authorisations

Compliments, Complaints and Grievances policy

Delivery and Collection of Children Policy

E - Safety Technology Policy

Incident, Injury, Trauma, and Illness Policy

Interactions with Children Policy

Mental Health and Wellbeing Policy

Participation of Volunteers and Students Policy

Staffing Policy

Supervision of Children Policy

Safe Arrival of Children

Relaxation and Sleep

Processes for responding to incidents, discloser and suspicions of child abuse

Other Forms and documents available at [Early Learning \(sharepoint.com\)](#)

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Appendix 1 – Procedures

Processes for responding to incidents, disclosures, and suspicions of child abuse.

1. Overview

- The approved provider or staff, including those with mandatory reporting responsibilities (refer to Glossary) must act when they form a reasonable belief or have a suspicion that a child has been, or is at risk of being abused. Regardless of the suspected cause, all concerns about the wellbeing of a child (or an unborn child) should be taken seriously and acted upon. This includes concerns about the wellbeing of a child, which does not appear to be the result of abuse.
- Staff must seek advice from the approved provider or person with management or control, DFFH Child Protection, Orange Door, and/or Victoria Police (Vic), Safe Families, Safe Kids, and/or Tasmania Police if they are uncertain about whether they have sufficient grounds to form a reasonable belief.
- If staff hold a reasonable belief that a child has been or is at risk of being abused, regardless of the advice of the Approved Provider or Person with Management or Control, or any other staff member, they must still make a report to Child Protection and/or Victoria Police or Safe Families, Safe Kids and/or Tasmania Police.
- The steps outlined in the Department of Education’s flowchart: Four critical actions for early childhood services: Responding to Incidents, Disclosures and Suspicions of Child Abuse, provides a summary of the critical actions which are to be followed: www.education.vic.gov.au (to be used in Vic and Tas).
- Records are to be kept about all child safety concerns or complaints. These records contain comprehensive descriptions of incidents/ issues of concern and provide evidence for actions taken, including reports made to statutory authorities or professional bodies and follow-up actions to be completed. The records are stored in accordance with the [Privacy Policy](#) and uploaded into the child’s Xap/Harmony profile.
- Privacy is maintained, and information is disclosed when it promotes the safety or wellbeing of a child.
- Permission is not required from parents/guardians of a child to make a report where abuse is suspected.

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2. Responding to concerns about the wellbeing of a child

2.1 When to make a referral to Orange Door Vic or the Child Safety Service Tas

Both services are a free service for women, children and young people who are experiencing family violence, or families who need assistance with the care and wellbeing of children to access the services they need to be safe and supported. Both services ensure that vulnerable children, young people and their families are linked effectively into relevant services, and this may be the best way to connect children, young people and their families with the services they need.

2.2 How to make a referral to Orange Door Victoria

You can use the information sharing schemes if you meet the requirements of the CISS.

You may share information under the Child Information Sharing Scheme (CISS) if:

- 1.** The **purpose** of sharing is to promote the [wellbeing](#) or safety of a child or group of children
- 2.** You reasonably believe that sharing information will assist the recipient in carrying out at least one **specified activity**, including:
 - Making a decision, an assessment or a plan relating to a child
 - Initiating or conducting an investigation relating to a child
 - Providing a service relating to a child
 - Managing any risk to a child

- 3.** The information is not [excluded information](#)

To share information using the CISS, refer to the [Uniting EL CISS flowchart](#) and [Uniting EL CISS/FVISS flowchart](#) and [UF-172-Information Sharing Schemes form.dotx](#)

2.3 Responding to concerns about the safety of a child

You can use information sharing schemes if you meet the requirements of the FVISS.

The Family Violence Information Sharing Scheme (FVISS), which enables prescribed organisations and services to share information to facilitate assessment and management of family violence risk to children and adults.

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You may share information under the Family Violence Information Sharing Scheme (FVISS), if:

1. The **purpose** of sharing is to protect, assess or manage a risk of family violence to a child victim survivor (under 18) or adult victim survivor (where there is risk to a child).
2. The information is not excluded information

To share information using the FVISS, refer to the [Uniting EL FVISS flowchart](#) **and** [Uniting EL CISS/FVISS form](#) **and** [UF-172-Information Sharing Schemes form.dotx](#)

2.4 When to report wellbeing concerns to Victoria Police

In addition to reporting suspected abuse to appropriate authorities, you must contact Victoria Police on 000 if the:

- Child's immediate safety is compromised.
- Child is partaking in any risk-taking activity that is illegal and extreme in nature or poses a high risk to their safety, or the safety of somebody else.

2.5 When to report wellbeing concerns to DFFH Child Protection

In addition to reporting suspected abuse to appropriate authorities, you should contact DFFH Child Protection if you have significant protective concerns for the wellbeing of a child, but the parents are unable or unwilling to address or resolve these concerns.

This includes all concerns that:

- Have a serious impact on a child's safety, stability, or development (including abandonment, death or incapacity, extreme risk-taking behaviour, or harm to an unborn child)
- Are persistent and entrenched and likely to have a serious impact on a child's safety, stability or development.
- Relate to a parent/s who cannot or will not protect the child from significant harm.
- Include a belief that the family is likely to be uncooperative in seeking assistance.

2.6 Managing a disclosure

It is very important to validate a child's disclosure, by listening to the child, taking them seriously and responding and acting on the disclosure by implementing the Early Learning's reporting procedures.

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Strategies include:

- Let the child talk about their concerns in their own time and in their own words.
- Give them your full attention, the time, and a quiet space in which to do this and be a supportive and reassuring listener.
- Remain calm and use a neutral non-judgmental tone.
- Comfort the child if they are distressed.
- Record the child's disclosure using the child's words.
- Tell the child that telling you is the right thing to do and that what has happened is not their fault.
- Let them know that you will act on this information and that you will need to let other people know so that they can help the child.
- It is the role of DFFH Child Protection, Victoria Police, Strong Families Safe Kids or Tasmania Police to investigate. DO NOT taking any steps to investigate. Avoid asking investigative or invasive questions which may cause the child to withdraw and may interfere with an investigation. Avoid going over information repeatedly.

2.7 Responding to incidents, disclosure, and suspicions of child abuse VIC and TAS

To make a report to Child Protection, a staff member needs to have formed a reasonable belief (refer to Definition) that a child has suffered or is likely to suffer significant harm as a result of abuse or neglect, and that their parent has not protected or is unlikely to protect the child from harm of that type.

It is strongly recommended that ALL early childhood service staff in Victoria and Tasmania follow [the Four Critical Actions](#) as soon as they witness an incident, disclosure or form a reasonable belief that a child has or is at risk of being abused.

2.8 Action 1: Responding to an emergency

If it is alleged that a child has just been abused or is at immediate risk of harm you must take reasonable steps to protect them.

These include:

- Separate the alleged victim and others involved, ensuring all parties are supervised.
- Arrange and provide urgent medical assistance where necessary by:
- You should also identify a contact person at the service for future liaison with police.

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- Taking reasonable steps to preserve evidence, such as the environment, clothing, other items, and potential witnesses until the police or other relevant authorities arrive on the premises.
- Administering first aid assistance
- Calling 000 for an ambulance and following any instructions from emergency service officers/paramedics
- Calling 000 for urgent police assistance if the person who is alleged to have engaged in the abuse poses an immediate risk to the health and safety of any person.

2.9 Action 2: Reporting to authorities

As soon as immediate health and safety concerns are addressed you must report all incidents, suspicions, and disclosures of child abuse as soon as possible. Failure to report physical and sexual child abuse may amount to a criminal offence.

IF THE SOURCE OF SUSPECTED ABUSE IS FROM WITHIN THE FAMILY OR COMMUNITY:

DFFH Child Protection or Strong Families Safe Kids

You must report to DFFH Child Protection or Strong Families Safe Kids if a child is considered to be:

- *In need of protection from child abuse*
- *At risk of being harmed (or has been harmed) and the harm has had, or is likely to have, a serious impact on the child's safety, stability, or development.*

Victoria Police or Tasmania Police

You must also report all instances of suspected sexual abuse (including grooming) to Victoria Police or Tasmania Police.

Report to early learning management

You must report to your approved provider by completing a RiskMan notification (Uniting only incident).

2.10 Action 3: Contacting parents/carers

You must consult with Victoria Police/ DFFH Child Protection or Strong Families Safe Kids/ Tasmania Police to determine what information can be shared with parents/carers. They may advise:

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- Not to contact the parents/carers (e.g. in circumstances where the parents are alleged to have engaged in the abuse, or the child is a mature minor and has requested that their parent/carer not be contacted)
- To contact the parents/carers and provide agreed information as soon as possible.

2.11 Action 4: Providing ongoing support

Your service should take reasonable steps to make a child feel safe and supported whilst they are attending your service.

- Your service should also consider providing support for children impacted by abuse. E.g. Referral to wellbeing professionals.
- You must follow [the Four Critical Actions](#) every time you become aware of a further instance or risk of abuse. This includes reporting new information to authorities.

If the source of suspected abuse comes from within the service (this includes any forms of suspected child abuse involving a staff member, contractor, or volunteer):

- You must report internally by contacting the Program Manager and the approved provider by completing a RiskMan notification (Reportable Conduct notification)
- The approved provider must also notify the Quality Assessment and Regulation Division
- The approved provider (Uniting Incidents & Investigations team) must notify the Commission for Children and Young People (CCYP) Vic or the Reportable Conduct Scheme Tas within **three** business days of becoming aware of an allegation (refer to Reportable Conduct Scheme)
- You must contact Victoria Police via your local police station (where appropriate they will refer you on to the local Sexual Offences and Child Abuse Investigation Team) or the Tasmania Police
- Contact the parents/carers and provide agreed information as soon as possible (for approved provider's, it is a requirement that parents/carers are notified within 24 hours if the suspected abuse occurred at the service)
- A contact person must also be identified at the service for future liaison with Child Protection and Victoria Police and seek advice about contacting parents/carers.

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Document Number: <i>UP-EL-017</i>	Classification: <i>Internal/External</i>	
Version Number: <i>2.0</i>	Document Owner: <i>General Manager, Early Learning</i>	
Publication date: <i>25/09/2025</i>	Endorsed by: <i>General Manager, Early Learning</i>	
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2.12 Child Protection in early childhood: privacy and information sharing Victoria

The Child Information Sharing Scheme (CISS), and the Family Violence Information Sharing Scheme (FVISS) allow professionals working with children to gain a complete view of the children they work with, making it easier to identify wellbeing or safety needs earlier, and to act on them sooner.

Following a report to DFFH Child Protection, Victoria Police and/or Child FIRST you should:

- Consult with your approved provider before disclosing information about the report and the child and their family to another information sharing entity FLOWCHART (except to verified Victoria Police and DFFH Child Protection workers in urgent situations and/or if the information is required to protect the safety of that child) and/or
- Seek consent from a child or their parents/carers before disclosing information about the report and the child and their family to anyone other than authorities and service staff members (provided this does not place the child or another person at risk).

Privacy laws allow for staff to share a child's personal and health information to enable the services to:

- Provide and support the education of the child, plan for individual needs and address any barriers to learning.
- Support the social and emotional wellbeing and health of the child.
- Fulfill duty of care obligations to the child, other children, staff, and visitors
- Make reasonable adjustments if the child has a disability, including a medical condition or mental illness.
- Provide a safe and secure workplace.

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