

Under 18's Policy and Procedure



RTO: 22360

Distribution	All Staff and students under 18
Skills First References	2024-25 Standard VET Funding Contract Skills First Program Clauses 2.7 - 2.10
Skills First Quality Charter Principles	N/A
ASQA References	Standard 2.6, 4.3
Legislative Context	Child Safe Standards (Victoria) VET Student Loans Rules 2016 Working with Children Act 2005 (VIC)
Related Documents	VFA Learning Pre-Training Review Policy and Procedure VFA Learning Record Management Policy and Procedure VFA Learning Staff Handbook VFA Learning Student Enrolment Policy and Procedure VFA Learning Student Handbook VFA Learning Student Support Policy and Procedure

Under 18's Policy and Procedure



Table of Contents

1. Policy	3
2. Purpose	3
3. Scope	3
4. Definitions	3
5. Requirements, Process & Procedures	3
5.1 Skills First Eligibility Requirements for Under 17s	3
5.3 VET Student Loans Requirements for Students Under 18	4
5.4 Child Safety Responsibilities	5
5.5 Child Safety Officer	5
5.7 Additional Safeguards for Students Under 18	6
6. Responsibility	6
7. Review Date	6
8. Major Version History	7

1. Policy

VFA Learning is committed to supporting the educational and vocational development of young learners while complying with all regulatory requirements and relevant legislation. We are committed to creating a safe, inclusive, and supportive environment for all students under 18.

All students under eighteen (18) years of age who are enrolled have a right to feel and be safe. We support and respect all students and are committed to their safety and participation.

2. Purpose

This policy outlines the enrolment requirements and compliance obligations for individuals under the age of 18, particularly those under 17 years of age, seeking to undertake training subsidised under the Skills First program or access a VET Student Loan (VSL). It ensures the organisation meets all regulatory and contractual obligations while safeguarding the welfare of younger students.

3. Scope

This policy applies to all prospective and enrolled students under the age of 18 at the time of enrolment, and all staff involved in student enrolment, training, support, and compliance.

4. Definitions

Duty of Care is a legal obligation that is imposed on an individual, requiring adherence to a standard of reasonable care to avoid careless acts.

Safe environment is an environment that is

- is free of bullying and harassment.
- fosters positive practices contributing to a young person's wellbeing.
- includes modelling and teaching positive social skills.
- recognises that young persons may need confidential support of staff or referral to a counsellor.
- respects the wishes of a young person regarding disclosure of information within the principles of mandatory reporting.
- protects the young person from physical injury.

Mandatory reporting the legal obligation for certain individuals, known as mandated reporters, to report suspected cases of child abuse or neglect (and in some cases, elder or dependent adult abuse) to the appropriate authorities

Wellbeing support services means support services and resources to assist with VET students' physical, mental and emotional wellbeing.

5. Requirements, Process & Procedures

5.1 Skills First Eligibility Requirements for Under 17s

In accordance with Clause 2.7 of the Skills First Funding Contract:

- Individuals who will be under 17 years of age at the time their training commences are not eligible for Skills First subsidised training unless:

Under 18's Policy and Procedure



- They are undertaking the training as part of a School Based Apprenticeship or Traineeship; or
- They have been granted a formal exemption from school attendance.

To receive an exemption:

- The student must undertake training on a full-time basis, or participate in a combination of training and employment.
- The exemption must:
 - Clearly identify:
 - The training provider and the training to be undertaken, or
 - The employer, if the individual is to undertake an Apprenticeship or Traineeship; and
 - Be signed by:
 - A Department of Education Regional Director if the student has not completed Year 10;
 - The school principal or a Regional Director if the student has completed Year 10;
 - A Regional Director if the student has never been enrolled in a Victorian school (e.g., home-schooled or interstate/overseas education).

Evidence Collection (Clause 2.9)

- VFA Learning must sight and retain:
 - A valid exemption from school attendance in line with the Guidelines About Eligibility;
 - Supporting evidence for School Based Apprenticeships or Traineeships, where applicable.

Notification Obligation (Clause 2.10)

- If a student under 17 is enrolled under an exemption and they stop attending or complete their training while still under 17:
 - [Organisation Name] must notify:
 - The relevant Department of Education Regional Office, and
 - The student's previous Victorian school (if applicable).

5.3 VET Student Loans Requirements for Students Under 18

In accordance with Section 85(2)(b) of the VET Student Loans Rules 2016, additional requirements apply when a student applying for a VET Student Loan is under 18 years of age at the time of enrolment.

To be eligible for a VET Student Loan, a student under 18 must provide one of the following forms of evidence:

- A parental consent form signed by a responsible parent of the student.
 - This form must be obtained prior to submitting enrolment information into the eCAF system; or
- Evidence of the student's assessment as independent for the purposes of Youth Allowance, within the meaning of Part 2.11 of the Social Security Act 1991.

- This is typically provided via a Centrelink Income Statement confirming that the student has been assessed as independent.

The Enrolment Officer or delegated authority will ensure that one of these requirements is met and verified before enrolment and eCAF submission for any underage student applying for a VET Student Loan. Records of the required documentation will be securely retained in accordance with Record Management Policy and Procedure.

5.4 Child Safety Responsibilities

VFA Learning is committed to the safety, wellbeing, and empowerment of all children and young people, including those from diverse backgrounds and with additional needs.

We take proactive steps to ensure a child-safe culture, and our practices align with the Child Safe Standards (Victoria), including:

1. Embedding a child safety culture through leadership and governance;
2. Empowering children and young people to understand their rights and participate in decisions that affect them;
3. Family and community involvement in promoting child safety;
4. Upholding equity and diversity, ensuring cultural safety for Aboriginal children and all students;
5. Robust child safety policies and procedures, including codes of conduct;
6. Effective risk management for all environments where children engage;
7. Staff training and supervision to build child safety capabilities;
8. Clear processes for complaints and concerns, including child-friendly reporting;
9. Reporting obligations and record-keeping to meet legal requirements;
10. Ongoing review and continuous improvement of child safety practices.

5.5 Child Safety Officer

A nominated staff member will take on the role of Child Safety Officer. As the designated person, all parties are to contact them regarding:

- Any allegations, disclosures, or concerns about student safety or wellbeing;
- Any mandatory reporting requirements; and
- Guidance on responding appropriately to concerns or disclosures.

Our designated Child Safety Officer provides a single point of contact for students, parents, and staff to seek advice and support regarding the safety and wellbeing of students, including assistance with fulfilling mandatory reporting obligations.

The Child Safety Officer is responsible for:

- Acting as the first point of contact for student safety concerns;
- Supporting staff and students with child safety matters;
- Monitoring and promoting child safety policies and procedures;
- Ensuring alignment with the Child Safe Standards and other legislative obligations;
- Coordinating with relevant authorities where required.

Under 18's Policy and Procedure



Contact information for the current Child Safety Officer is made available to all students, parents/guardians, and staff via the Student Handbook, Staff Handbook and VFA Learning Website.

The current Child Safety Officer is:

Catherine Cross

(p) 03 5223 6800

(e) catherinec@vfalearning.vic.edu.au

5.7 Additional Safeguards for Students Under 18

- Age-appropriate welfare support is made available to all underage students.
- Parents/guardians are engaged in matters involving safety, attendance, and progress (where appropriate).
- Staff working with under-18s must hold current Working with Children Checks and complete regular child safety training.
- Risk assessments are conducted for activities involving students under 18.

6. Responsibility

The Data, Quality and Compliance Manager is responsible for effective implementation and management of this policy as well as provision of information on ways to resolve complaints of breaches of this policy.

VFA Learning's Chief Executive Officer (CEO) has the overall responsibility for final approval and review of this policy.

Any complaints or breaches in relation to this policy should be reported to the Data, Quality and Compliance Manager in person or by email to: privacy@vfalearning.vic.edu.au

7. Review Date

12 months from the date of this version, or as required.

Under 18's Policy and Procedure



8. Major Version History

Version Number	Date	Reason for change	Prepared By	Approved By
1		Creation	Linda Sahajdak (Compliance Manager)	Glenn Hanegraaf (Director)
2	26/7/2018	Updating of Child Safety Officer to Cheryl Winnell. Formatting changes	Cheryl Winnell (Compliance Manager)	Glenn Hanegraaf (Director)
3	25/02/2019	Change of Policy name from Child Safety to Under 18s Policy and Procedure. Updating Child Safety Officer Formatting and grammar changes.	Angie Morgan (Compliance Manager)	Glenn Hanegraaf (Director)
4	10/12/2020	Updated Child Safety Officer to Krystal McCluskey details	Angie Morgan (Compliance Manager)	Glenn Hanegraaf (Director)
5	17/03/2021	Updated Child Safety Officer to Justin Healy details	Angie Morgan (Compliance Manager)	Glenn Hanegraaf (Director)
6	28/02/2022	Introduction of Child Safety Standards information.	Perrin Vogeli (Compliance Manager)	Emily Sicura (General Manager)
7	28/02/2023	Updated to bring policies in line with parent entity, Angus Knight.	Miranda Biamis (National Compliance Manager)	Emily Sicura (General Manager)
8	03/01/2024	Updated to reflect 2024-2025 Skills First Contract.	Miranda Biamis (National Compliance Manager)	Emily Sicura (General Manager)
9	21/5/2024	Changed logo to remove CRICOS registration number	Nicola Weber (Quality and Compliance Leader)	Emily Sicura (General Manager)
10	1/7/2025	Formatting, change of staff position titles, change of reference for revised Standards for RTOs 2025, additional information added about VET Student Loans requirements.	Nicola Weber (Data, Quality and Compliance Manager)	Rathini Sonnadara (Senior RTO Manager)