

# Guide Dogs.



## Guide Dogs Victoria Childsafe Booklet

Image description: Two young children smiling while laying on a picnic blanket at a park.



# We value you and your safety.

Welcome to Guide Dogs Victoria.

We're so glad you're here. Maybe we're supporting you to learn to look after yourself and how to manage more things around your home or school on your own. Or perhaps you're having mobility training or even joining us on a camp.

Whatever the reason you're here at Guide Dogs Victoria, our job is to make sure you meet your goals, you know you're listened to and that you feel safe - both physically (your body) and emotionally (your mind and heart), when we're with you.

Image description: Young child with her Orientation and Mobility specialist learning to use the long cane.



# What does personal safety mean?

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## Feeling and being safe can be many things.

At Guide Dogs Victoria, we want to ensure you feel safe when you are with us as well as build your confidence to be safe in other places in your life.

### 1 It can mean knowing it's okay to ask questions

If you're unsure about something, talking about it can be helpful. Sometimes we just need to have something explained another way, so that it makes better sense to us. It may mean asking questions a few times. Other times, it may feel as though there is a lot to remember and a reminder is helpful. We want you to know you can ask as many questions as you need and as often as you like.

### 2 It can be knowing that it's okay to say 'no'

Saying no is ok. Sometimes you need more information before you can say yes. It's about knowing it's okay to say 'no' if someone asks you to do something you feel unsure about or you believe or feel is wrong. If someone asks a personal question you don't feel comfortable answering, it's okay to say 'no'. There are some things like eating healthy food and doing homework that we all can't say no to – even in this situation, we do want to ensure you can voice an opinion and not feel forced into anything.

### 3 Feeling safe can be knowing you're allowed to take a break when you need it

When you're concentrating on learning something new, breaks can be helpful. A break could be finding somewhere quiet to sit for a moment, having a drink, or even a toilet stop. We want you to be healthy and your best self. If we don't see that you need a break, it's okay to let us know. Your individual preferences and how fast, or slow, you complete things is important to us and we will work with you to understand this.

### 4 Knowing you have safe people to talk with

Safe people are the ones you can share your worries with, no matter what they are. At Guide Dogs Victoria, your safe people are the ones working with you. It might be your Occupational Therapist or Orientation & Mobility Specialist. It is a good idea to decide who a safe person is for you in any environment or when trying something new. It's a good idea throughout your life.

## **5 Advocating is a big word and is something we all need to do**

Advocating means speaking up for yourself or, for someone you're with. Sometimes you need to advocate for yourself, like reminding someone how they can best help you. Other times it can be that you're worried your friend has missed out on a turn or has perhaps forgotten their lunch, it's okay to speak up if they are not confident to do this themselves. Just like you would want. If you want to say something on behalf of your friend you should ask your friend's permission first. You may support them to do this for them self or have their permission to speak to a safe person about your concerns.

## **6 We welcome your feedback**

If there is something we missed or you really didn't like, please let us know. Without your feedback, we won't know how we can change things to make them better. We'll often ask you and your family at the end of a session or camp for your thoughts on how it went. In addition, you can provide your thoughts or ideas for improvement at anytime. You don't have to wait until the end of your time with us.

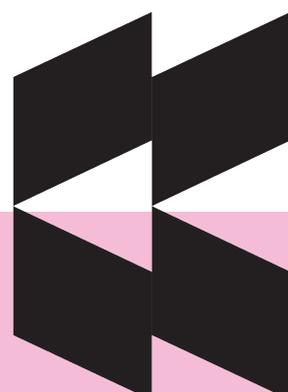
## **7 You have good ideas**

Your ideas are the best ones. Make sure you share your ideas with us so we can consider including them in your programs or on our camps.

## **8 If you're worried about speaking up in front of others or you need some help, there are ways we can quietly help you.**

We understand it can be a bit scary to speak up in front of other people and friends. We can support you with other ways to ensure you are listened to, or example, you and your Occupation Therapist or Orientation and Mobility specialist might choose a code word or an action you can use in times when you need support.

Image description: Yellow Labrador puppy laying on the grass looking at the camera.



# **We not only want you to feel safe when you're with us, we want you to be safe wherever you are.**

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## **How Orientation and Mobility Specialists (O&Ms) support you to stay safe**

### **O&Ms can teach you:**

1. How to avoid bumps, trips and falls.
2. How to know where you are so you don't become lost.
3. How to problem solve if things don't go quite to plan.
4. How to advocate for yourself.
5. Practical ways to stay safe.
6. How to participate in the community

## **How Occupational Therapists (OTs) support you to feel safe**

OTs can assist you learn many things. Depending on your age, this could mean learning:

1. How to tie your shoelaces, so you don't trip over them.
2. Ways of joining in an activity so you don't miss out.
3. Keeping safe in the kitchen when you're getting drinks or making snacks.
4. Recognising your things and knowing how to look after them.
5. Personal skills related to hygiene.



**No matter what age you are, we'll work together step by step, so you can become your most confident and happy self.**

**Remember, if you have any questions about what we've just talked about, please ask us or, your safe person or, people at home if you need more information.**

# How to raise a concern

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If you feel unsafe or have been hurt, we encourage you to tell us. You can tell any staff member you feel comfortable with.

Our Child Safety Officer is our CEO Nicky Long.  
+61 3 9372 4142 • [NickyL@guidedogsvictoria.com.au](mailto:NickyL@guidedogsvictoria.com.au)

If you or someone you know needs help or support, remember that you are not alone.

## Other support services

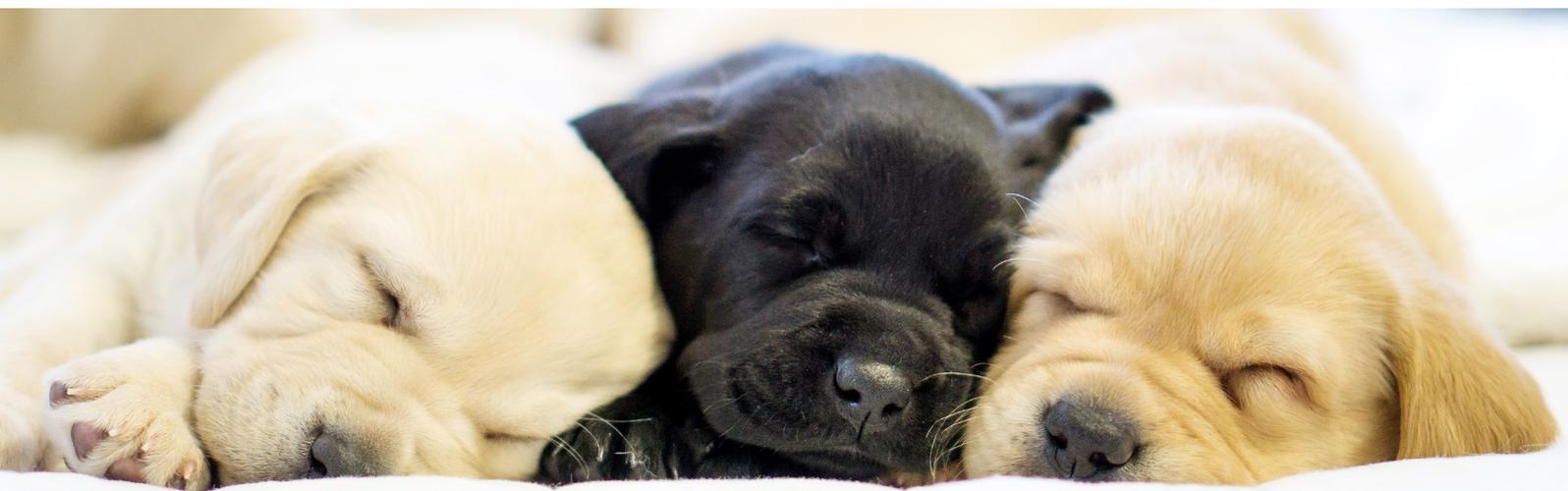
**Kids Helpline** for support. It's a free, confidential service offering counselling 24/7 for ages 5 to 25. Trained counsellors are there to listen and help at 1800 55 1800 or [www.kidshelpline.com.au](http://www.kidshelpline.com.au)

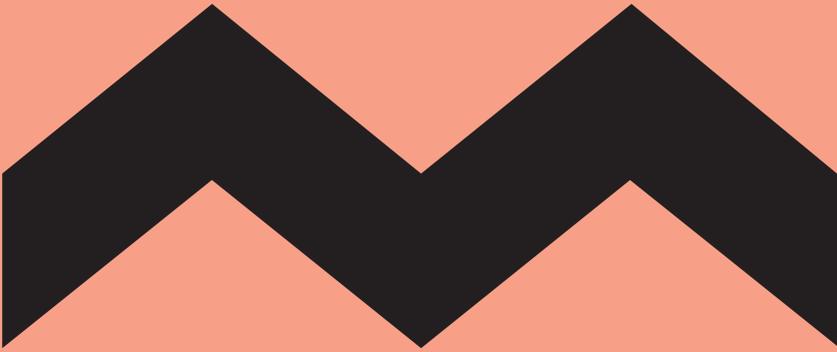
**eSafety Commissioner** for support with cyberbullying and online safety. It's a free service that helps if someone is being mean, scary or hurtful to you online. Visit [esafety.gov.au](http://esafety.gov.au) for advice and support.

**Emergency Services (000)** for urgent help. It's a free number to call if you or, someone else is in danger and need Police, Fire or Ambulance right away. Call 000 in an emergency.

*It is the policy of Guide Dogs Victoria to comply with legislation regarding the reporting of suspected Child Abuse or developmental risk in line with the Children Youth, and Families Act 2005 (CYFA), The Child Wellbeing and Safety Act, 2005 and The Children, Youth and Family Regulations, 2007 and the Victorian Child Safe Standards.*

Image description: Three Labrador puppies, two yellow, one black asleep together.





1800 484 333



[vic.guidedogs.com.au](http://vic.guidedogs.com.au)

**Guide Dogs.**