

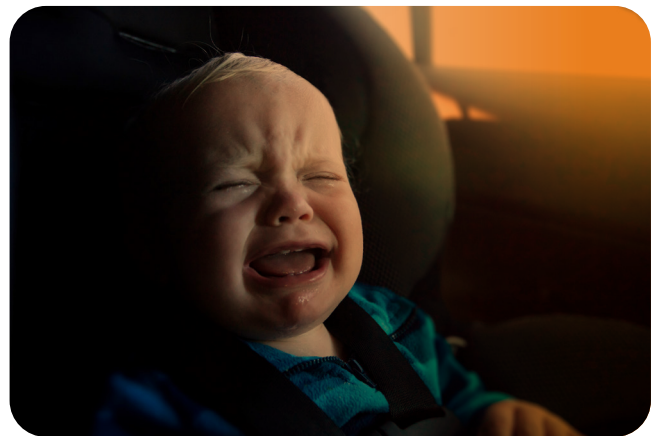
Leaving Children Unattended – Know the Law and the Risks



In Victoria, it is against the law to leave a child unattended for longer than is reasonable, without making proper arrangements for their supervision and care. This includes leaving a child alone at home, in a playground, or inside a car – even for a short time.

Why is this law important?

- Children are vulnerable – young children cannot protect themselves or make safe decisions when left alone.
- Cars heat up quickly – the temperature inside a parked car can rise to dangerous levels in just minutes, even on mild days. Children can suffer from dehydration, heatstroke, or worse.
- Unsupervised children are at risk – accidents, injuries, or emotional distress can happen when a child is left without a responsible adult.



The Law in Victoria

Under the Children, Youth and Families Act 2005, Section 494 makes it an offence to leave a child unattended without reasonable supervision and care.

Penalties for leaving a child unattended in a car include:

- A fine of up to 25 penalty units which is \$5,087
- A maximum of 6 months imprisonment
- Both

What families need to know

- Always plan ahead – if you need to run errands, make arrangements for your child to be supervised.
- Never assume “just a few minutes” is safe.
- Educators should remind families of these laws and highlight the serious risks of leaving children unattended.

Keeping children safe is everyone’s responsibility

If you see a child left alone in a car, call 000 immediately. Quick action can save a life.

For more information about child safety and legal responsibilities, visit:

Victorian Government – Children, Youth and Families Act 2005

Remember: No errand or convenience is worth the risk to a child’s life.

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