



Child Protection and Safety Policy

Objectives:

This policy provides the framework for:

- the development of work systems, practices, policies and procedures that promote child protection;
- the creation of a positive and robust child protection culture;
- the promotion and open discussion of child protection issues; and
- compliance with all laws, regulations and standards relevant to child protection in Victoria.

Statement of Commitment to Child Safety:

Child abuse includes sexual offences, grooming, physical violence, serious emotional or psychological harm, serious neglect and a child's exposure to family violence. We are committed to the protection of all children from all forms of child abuse and demonstrates this commitment through the implementation of a comprehensive Child Protection Program designed to keep children safe.

We have a zero tolerance for child abuse and are committed to acting in children's best interests and keeping them safe from harm. We regard our child protection responsibilities with the utmost importance and as such, is committed to providing the necessary resources to ensure compliance with all relevant child protection laws and regulations and maintain a child safe culture.

Screening and Management of Volunteers:

Our commitment to child safety is based on the following overarching principles that guide the development and regular review of our work systems, practices, policies and procedures to protect children from abuse.

1. All children have the right to be safe.
2. The welfare and best interests of the child are paramount.
3. The views of the child and a child's privacy must be respected.
4. Clear expectations for appropriate behaviour with children are established in our Child Safety Code of Conduct and Staff and Student Professional Boundaries Policy.
5. The safety of children is dependent upon the existence of a child safe culture.
6. Child safety awareness is promoted and openly discussed within our community.
7. Procedures are in place to screen all staff, Direct Contact Volunteers**, Third Party Contractors and External Education Providers who have direct contact with children.
8. Child safety and protection is everyone's responsibility.
9. Child protection training is mandatory for all governing body members, staff and Direct Contact Volunteers.
10. Procedures for responding to alleged or suspected incidents of child abuse are simple and accessible for all members of the school community.
11. Children from culturally or linguistically diverse backgrounds have the right to special care and support including those who identify as Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander.
12. Children who have any kind of disability have the right to special care and support.



****Direct Contact Volunteers** are those volunteers who are involved in providing support, guidance and supervision directly to students and could potentially have direct contact with students during the normal course of providing the volunteer service.

The Working with Children Check Act 2005 (Vic) defines 'direct contact' as any contact between a person and a child (aged under 18) that involves:

- physical contact; or
- face to face contact; or
- contact by post or other written communication; or
- contact by telephone or other oral communication; or
- contact by email or other electronic communication.

Examples of Direct Contact Volunteer activities may include volunteers involved in camps and excursions, coaching sporting teams or assisting in learning activities.

Child Protection Program:

We are committed to the effective implementation of our Child Protection Program and ensuring that it is appropriately reviewed and updated. We adopt a risk management approach by identifying key risk indicators and assessing child safety risks based on a range of factors including the nature of our activities, physical and online environments and the characteristics of the student body.

Our Child Protection Program relates to all aspects of protecting children from abuse and establishes work systems, practices, policies and procedures to protect children from abuse. It includes:

- clear information as to what constitutes child abuse and associated key risk indicators;
- clear procedures for responding to and reporting allegations of child abuse;
- strategies to support, encourage and enable staff, Volunteers, Third Party Contractors, External Education Providers, parents and students to understand, identify, discuss and report child protection matters;
- procedures for recruiting and screening governing body members, staff and Direct Contact Volunteers;
- procedures for reporting reportable conduct and/or misconduct;
- pastoral care strategies designed to empower students and keep them safe;
- policies with respect to cultural diversity and students with disabilities;
- a child protection training program;
- information regarding the steps to take after a disclosure of abuse to protect, support and assist children;
- guidelines with respect to record keeping and confidentiality;
- policies to ensure compliance with all relevant laws, regulations and standards (including the Victorian Child Safe Standards); and
- a system for continuous review and improvement.

As a part of our induction process, all staff and Direct Contact Volunteers are required to complete a selection of training modules on the content of our Child Protection Program.



All staff, Direct Contact Volunteers and governing body members are provided with additional, ongoing child protection training at least annually.

Staff, Volunteers, Third Party Contractors and External Education Providers are supported and supervised by the Child Protection Officers to ensure that they are compliant with our approach to child protection.

Responsibilities:

Child protection is everyone's responsibility. All governing body members and staff, as well as Volunteers, have a shared responsibility for contributing to the safety and protection of children. Specific responsibilities include:

Governing Body:

Each governing body member is required to ensure that appropriate resources are made available to allow the Child Protection and Safety Policy and the Child Protection Program to be effectively implemented and are responsible for holding the Principal and management team accountable for effective implementation.

The Principal:

The Principal is responsible, and will be accountable for, taking all practical measures to ensure that this Child Protection and Safety Policy and the Child Protection Program are implemented effectively and that a strong and sustainable child protection culture is maintained.

Child Protection Officers:

A number of senior staff members are nominated as Child Protection Officers. Our Child Protection Officers receive additional specialised training with respect to child protection issues. They are the first point of contact for raising child protection concerns within our school. They are also responsible for championing child protection and assisting in coordinating responses to child protection incidents.

Staff Members:

All staff are required to be familiar with the content of our Child Protection and Safety Policy and our Child Protection Program and their legal obligations with respect to the reporting of child abuse. It is each individual's responsibility to be aware of key risk indicators of child abuse, to be observant, and to raise any concerns they may have relating to child abuse with one of our Child Protection Officers.

Direct Contact Volunteers:

All Direct Contact Volunteers, as defined in this policy, are required to be familiar with the content of our Child Protection and Safety Policy, our Child Protection Program and their legal obligations with respect to the reporting of child abuse.

It is each individual's responsibility to be aware of key risk indicators of child abuse, to be observant, and to raise any concerns they may have relating to child abuse with one of the Child Protection Officers.



Indirect Contact Volunteers:

Indirect Contact Volunteers (or 'Indirect Volunteers') are those volunteers who are involved in providing support and services whilst not directly assisting a specific group of students. All Indirect Volunteers are responsible for contributing to the safety and protection of children in the school environment.

All Indirect Volunteers are required to be familiar with our Child Protection and Safety Policy and our Child Safety Code of Conduct.

Examples of Indirect Contact Volunteer activities may include assisting with administrative functions.

Third Party Contractors:

All Third Party Contractors (service providers) which we engage are responsible for contributing to the safety and protection of children in the school environment.

Third Party Contractors include, for example, maintenance and building personnel, consultants, casual teachers, tutors, sports coaches and cleaners.

This also includes music teachers and other extra-curricular teachers and instructors who are engaged by students and their families directly but have an agreement with us to use school facilities.

All service providers we engage are required to be familiar with our Child Protection and Safety Policy and our Child Protection Program.

We may include this requirement in the written agreement with the service provider.

Direct Contact Contractors:

Direct Contact Contractors are:

- those who have direct contact** with students during the normal course of their work;
- those who may be in a position to establish a relationship of trust with a student notwithstanding that unsupervised access to students would be rare (for example full-time maintenance personnel); and
- any contractors whom we are legally required to screen.

**The Working with Children Act 2005 (Vic) defines 'direct contact' as any contact between a person and a child (aged under 18) that involves:

- physical contact; or
- face to face contact; or
- contact by post or other written communication; or
- contact by telephone or other oral communication; or
- contact by email or other electronic communication.

Indirect Contact Contractors:

Indirect Contact Contractors are those contractors who do not meet the definition of "Direct Contact Contractor". Refer to Third Party Contractors' Responsibilities for more information.



External Education Providers:

An External Education Provider is any organisation arranged to deliver a specified course of study that is part of the curriculum, to a student or students enrolled at our school.

The delivery of such a course may take place on premises or elsewhere.

All External Education Providers we engage are responsible for contributing to the safety and protection of children in the school environment.

All External Education Providers we engage are required to be familiar with our Child Protection and Safety Policy and our Child Protection Program.

We may include this requirement in the written agreement with the External Education Provider.

Reporting Child Protection Concerns:

Our Child Protection Program provides detailed guidance for governing body members, staff and Direct Contact Volunteers as to how to identify key risk indicators of child abuse and how to report child abuse concerns to one of our Child Protection Officers. It also contains detailed procedures with respect to the reporting of child abuse incidents to relevant authorities.

Staff, Third Party Contractors, External Education Providers, Volunteers, students, parents/guardians and other community members who have concerns that a child may be subject to abuse or grooming are asked to contact the Senior Child Protection Officer.

Communications will be treated confidentially on a "need to know basis".

Whenever there are concerns that a child is in immediate danger the Police should be called on 000.

Related Policies and Procedures:

Risk Management Program

Compliance Program

Human Resources Program

Student Duty of Care Program

Occupational Health & Safety Program

Child Protection Staff Training

Recruitment & Selection Procedures

Induction Procedures