

CHILD SAFETY



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STATEMENT OF COMMITMENT

Sirius College (the College) is committed to providing environments where our students are safe and feel safe, where their participation is valued, their views respected, and their voices are heard about decisions that affect their lives.

The College has no tolerance for child abuse and is committed to acting in children's best interests, promoting student safety and wellbeing and protecting children and students from child abuse. The College has established strategies, practices, policies and procedures to protect children and students from child abuse and harm.

The College promotes positive relationships between students and adults and between students and their peers. These relationships are based on trust and respect.

The College takes proactive steps to identify and manage any risk of harm to students in the School Environment and School Boarding Environment. The College actively works to listen to and empower children. When child safety concerns are raised or identified, the College treats these seriously, and responds promptly, thoroughly and consistently in line with the College's policies and procedures.

Child safety is a shared responsibility. Every person has an important role in promoting child safety and wellbeing and promptly raising any issues or concerns about a child's safety.

The College is committed to regularly reviewing our child-safe practices and seeking input from our students, families, staff, and volunteers to inform its ongoing child-safety strategies.

PURPOSE

The purpose of this Policy is to:

- provide a clear statement of "no tolerance" of child abuse;
- establish risk controls and risk treatments to prevent, detect and identify child abuse and harm in School Environments and School Boarding Environments, and implement risk controls and risk treatments.
- promote an organisational culture of child safety and wellbeing, including by ensuring all environments promote safety and wellbeing and minimise the opportunity for children and students to be harmed;
- ensure everyone understands their responsibilities for preventing, identifying and reporting child abuse and harm, and the risk of child abuse and harm;
- provide guidance regarding action that should be taken where abuse or harm occurs or is suspected within or outside the School Environment or School Boarding Environment;
- ensure all complaints, concerns and safety incidents are reported so they can be analysed to identify causes and systemic failures and inform continuous improvement;
- ensure all complaints, concerns and safety incidents are documented, all required reports are made and information is shared lawfully and when required by law pursuant to the College's Records Management Policy;
- provide a culturally safe and inclusive environment for the diverse needs of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children, children from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds, children with disabilities, children who cannot live at home, LGBTIQ+ children and children who are vulnerable;
- provide assurance that complaints of child abuse and harm will be taken seriously, reported, properly investigated, and responded to in a child-focused manner; and
- place an emphasis on genuine engagement with and empowerment of children and students.

This policy forms the foundation of the College's approach to implementing Ministerial Order 1359 (which sets out how the Victorian Child Safe Standards apply to schools) and fulfilling its duty of care to all children and students.

SCOPE

This Policy:

- applies to all Staff (including Boarding Premises Staff and contractors) and volunteers (including College Board members).
- applies in all physical, online or virtual School Environments and School Boarding Environments used during or outside of school hours, including other locations provided for a student's use (for example, a school camp) and those provided through third-party providers

- should be read together with our other child safety policies, procedures, and codes – refer to the related College policies section below.

DEFINITIONS

Aboriginal includes Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples.

Board means the Board of Directors of Sirius College, the governing authority of the College and the School Boarding Premises.

Boarding Premises Staff refers to individuals working in a school boarding environment who are directly engaged or employed by the college, or a contracted service provider engaged by the college to perform child-related work.

CCYP means the Commission for Children and Young People.

Child or children a person or people under 16 years in relation to the failure to disclose offence (section 327), failure to protect offence (section 49O) and grooming offence (section 49M) under the [Crimes Act 1958 \(Vic\)](#) whilst under 17 years under mandatory reporting unless the child falls under one of the categories of a 'child' as defined in section 3 of the [Child Youth and Families Act 2005](#) in which case different age limits apply.

Child abuse includes:

- any act committed against a child involving:
 - a sexual offence; or
 - grooming offences under section 49M(1) of the Crimes Act 1958 (Vic); and
- the infliction, on a child, of:
 - physical violence
 - serious emotional or psychological harm
- the serious neglect of a child including exposure to family violence and its effects.

Child sexual abuse is when a person uses power or authority over a child to involve them in sexual activity. It can include a wide range of sexual activity. Sexual offences are governed by the Crimes Act 1958 (Vic).

Child sexual exploitation is a form of sexual abuse where offenders use their power, (physical, financial or emotional) over a child or young person, or a false identity, to sexually or emotionally abuse them.

Emotional child abuse occurs when a child is repeatedly rejected, isolated, or frightened by threats. It also includes hostility, derogatory name-calling and put-downs, and persistent coldness from a person to the extent that the child suffers, or is likely to suffer, emotional or psychological harm to their physical or developmental health.

Grooming is when a person engages in predatory conduct to prepare a child or young person for sexual activity at a later time. Grooming can include communicating or attempting to befriend or establish a relationship or other emotional connection with the child or their parent or carer.

Physical child abuse is any non-accidental infliction of physical violence on a child by any person. It can be inflicted in many ways, including beating, shaking or burning and assault with implements and female genital mutilation.

Neglect is a failure to provide a child with an adequate standard of nutrition, medical care, clothing, shelter or supervision.

Child safety includes matters related to protecting all children from child abuse or harm, managing the risk of child abuse or harm, providing support to a child at risk of child abuse or harm, and responding to suspicions, incidents, disclosures or allegations of child abuse or harm.

Child-connected work means work authorised by the Board and performed by an adult in a School Environment or School Boarding Environment while children are present or reasonably expected to be present.

Child-related work means (among other things) work at educational institutions or homestay accommodation that usually involves direct contact with a child.

CISS means Child Information Sharing Scheme.

CSOs means Child Safety Officers.

College means Sirius College, including all our campuses. All references to 'the College' in this document are also applicable to its boarding premises.

DFFH means the Department of Families, Fairness and Housing.

Mandatory Reporter who, in the course of practising his or her profession or carrying out the duties of his or her office, position or employment as set out in section 182, forms the belief on reasonable grounds that a child who is in need of protection on a ground referred to in section 162(1)(c) or 162(1)(d) of [the Children, Youth and Families Act 2005](#) must report to the [Department of Families, Fairness and Housing \(DFFH\) Child Protection](#) or the [Victoria Police](#). The mandatory reporters in the context of Sirius College are :

- Registered nurses
- Registered teachers and early childhood teachers under the Education and Training Reform Act 2006 or have been granted permission to teach under that Act
- Executive Principal within the meaning of the Education and Training Reform Act 2006
- Counsellors
- Youth, social or welfare workers,
- Registered psychologists

Reportable Conduct Scheme is the scheme that requires the College to respond to allegations of child abuse and child-related misconduct made against staff and volunteers, to notify CCYP of those allegations, and to enable CCYP to oversee the College's responses to these allegations.

School Environment is any physical or virtual place made available or authorised by the Board for use by a child during or outside school hours, including:

- a campus of the school;
- online school environments (including email and intranet systems/social media); and
- other locations provided by the school for a child's use (including, without limitation, locations used for school camps, sporting events, excursions, competitions, and other events).

School Boarding Environment is any physical, online or virtual space made available or authorised by the Board for a child or student boarding at a school boarding premises to use at any time.

Staff means an individual working in a School Environment or School Boarding Environment who is:

- directly engaged or employed by the College (including employees and designated caregivers);
- a contracted service provider (a body corporate or any other person) engaged by the College to perform child-related work;

This means Staff includes Boarding Premises Staff, teachers, non-teaching staff, counsellors, administration staff, sporting coaches, music teachers and contractors engaged for an excursion, incursion or camp.

Student means a student enrolled at the College.

Volunteer is a person who performs work without remuneration or reward for the College in the School Environment or School Boarding Environment (including Board Members).

Vulnerable students may include but are not limited to those who:

- are deemed vulnerable by a government agency, funded family service or family violence service, or assessed as requiring education and care outside the family home.
- are identified as vulnerable as a result of a referral from a government agency, funded family service or family violence service, homeless or youth justice service; or mental health or other health services.
- self-identify or are identified by Staff (including School Boarding Staff) as vulnerable.

ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES

Fulfilling these roles and responsibilities does not displace or discharge any other obligations that arise if a person reasonably believes that a child is at risk of child abuse.

If a person is captured by multiple roles below, all responsibilities apply. For example, the Campus Principal is also a Staff member.

The Board

The Board is responsible for the detection and prevention of child abuse and complying with Ministerial Order 1359 and the Child Safe Standards. The Board members' responsibilities include:

- embedding child safety and wellbeing in leadership, governance and culture;
- ensuring appropriate and effective control systems are in place to ensure Staff and Volunteers know how to protect children and students, prevent child abuse or harm, and report it when it occurs or is suspected, including:
 - ensuring this Policy, the Child Safety Code of Conduct and Child Safety Responding and Reporting Procedure are made publicly available, are child-focused, culturally safe and easily understood;
 - processes to respond to risks, complaints and concerns of child abuse and harm,
- overseeing the implementation of the College's child safety strategy and managing the risk of child abuse including regular reviews and evaluation of this Policy, risk controls and risk treatments every two years and after any significant child safety incident; and
- ensuring that complaints, concerns and incidents are analysed to identify causes and systemic failures, and inform continuous improvement at the College by
 - ensuring child safety is a regular agenda item at the College's Board meetings for review, reflection and discussion;
 - receiving briefings, guidance and information about the updates of child safety requirements and incident reports about the College's child safety practices.
- monitoring the College's overall compliance with its child safety policies, procedures and practices by acquiring guidance and information on child safety matters from management;
- keeping up to date with its child safety obligations through training and professional development; and
- reviewing and endorsing the updates of this policy and its child-friendly versions and the Child Safety Code of Conduct and Child Safety Responding and Reporting Procedure.

In addition, Board members have the responsibilities of Volunteers outlined below.

The Executive Principal

The Executive Principal will:

- work with the Board to ensure effective child safety governance, policies, procedures, protocols and practices are in place;
- take all practical steps to ensure these child safety governance, policies, procedures, protocols and practices are implemented and embed a culture of child safety at the College;
- model a child-safe culture in all School Environments and School Boarding Environments that facilitates the active participation of students, families, Staff and Volunteers in promoting and improving child safety and cultural safety.
- reinforce high standards of respectful behaviour between all members of the school community;
- promote regular open discussion on child safety issues within the school community including at executive leadership team meetings, staff meetings and College's Board meetings including by providing updates of information/facts to the Board about reports made under this Policy and Child Safety Responding and Reporting Obligations Procedure;
- allocate roles and responsibilities to the Executive Leadership Team and Staff for achieving the College's child safety strategies, including the Child Safety Responding and Reporting Obligations Procedure;
- create an environment where child safety complaints and concerns are readily raised, and no one is discouraged from reporting an allegation of child abuse to relevant authorities;
- ensure all Staff are aware of how to respond and manage responses to any allegations or disclosures of child abuse promptly and according to this Policy and the Child Safety Responding and Reporting Obligations Procedure;
- perform the responsibilities of the Head of Entity under the Reportable Conduct Scheme or appoint a member of the Executive Team to perform this responsibility on behalf;

- either assume this responsibility or appoint another member of the Executive Team to respond to child abuse complaints or concerns that do not fall under the Reportable Conduct Scheme if any person(s) allocated responsibilities under clause 11.3(f) of Ministerial Order 1359 is unable to perform their role, and
- appoint an investigator to investigate reports of child abuse and harm, and ensure investigations meet legislative requirements (for example, the Reportable Conduct Scheme)

The Director of Operations

The Director of Operations will:

- promote knowledge of the existence and content of this Policy, Child Safety Code of Conduct and the Child Safety Responding and Reporting Obligations Procedure in the College, including making these documents publicly available;
- monitor the College's compliance with this Child Safety Policy, Child Safety Code of Conduct and Child Safety Responding and Reporting Obligations Procedure, and report identified systemic non-compliance to the Executive Principal as appropriate;
- ensure Staff and Volunteers engaged in child-connected work receive required training and information to build deeper understandings of child safety, cultural safety, prevention of child abuse and managing and responding to child abuse, and as required by Ministerial Order 1359;
- assist the Executive Principal in reporting obligations under the Reportable Conduct Scheme to the relevant authorities;
- ensure the College's child safety strategies are being implemented effectively and are strengthened where required, for example by supporting Staff to understand their responsibilities;
- maintain the Child Safety Risk Register and make it available to all staff and volunteers;
- align complaints processes with best practice, the Ministerial Order 1359 and Reportable Conduct requirements, including ensuring complaints are taken seriously and responded to promptly and thoroughly; and
- work with the government agencies on behalf of the College to provide and organise support when required.

The Campus Principal

The Campus Principal will:

- inform the school community about this Policy, Child Safety Code of Conduct and Child Safety Responding and Reporting Obligations Procedure
- create an environment where child safety complaints and concerns are readily raised, and no one is discouraged from reporting an allegation of child abuse to relevant authorities;
- enable and promote inclusive practices so the College pays particular attention to the needs of diverse students;
- ensure all policies and procedures related to child safety are implemented in all School Environments and School Boarding Environments;
- ensure all Staff and Volunteers embrace a child-safe culture and child safety strategies are achieved in practice;
- ensure concerns about child safety are dealt with promptly and in accordance with the College's policies and procedures, and any statutory obligations; and
- investigate the suspected child abuse as soon as practicable, or permit an independent investigator to do so (subject to police clearance on criminal matters).

The Director of Human Resources

The Director of Human Resources will:

- ensure that role descriptions for staff and volunteers clearly outline their duties and responsibilities regarding supervision, child safety and wellbeing, and diversity and inclusion.
- ensure all job applicants are provided with the College's Child Safety Policy and Child Safety Code of Conduct.
- screen all staff and volunteers (including Board members) for their suitability during recruitment.
- seek references for all staff and, if appropriate, for volunteers, to learn about the person's character and experience working with children;
- ensure the interview panel asks questions about child safety in job interviews;
- provide induction to Staff and Volunteers regarding child safety and wellbeing, which covers the Child Safety Code of Conduct and is appropriate to the nature of the role, which may cover:
 - the Child Safety Policy;
 - how to contribute to identifying, removing or reducing risks;
 - recordkeeping and information sharing requirements;
 - school values and philosophy;
 - procedures for managing complaints and concerns related to child abuse; and

- privacy and reporting protocols.
- ensure a process is in place to check staff and volunteers' working with children clearance status or equivalent background check on an ongoing basis and at least annually.

Child Safety Officers (CSOs)

The CSOs at the College are go-to person for child safety matters. Year Level Coordinators will take this role temporarily. CSOs must:

- champion child safety;
- raise awareness of and provide access to the College's child safety and wellbeing policies and procedures in the College community;
- implement child-safe practices in the School Environment and School Boarding Environment;
- identifying, mitigating and reporting any risks to child safety to the Campus Principal or Executive Principal;
- help coordinate responses to child safety and wellbeing risks and incidents;
- support Staff and others in the College community to maintain a child-safe environments, including by listening, discussing and clarifying issues in relation to child safety, and providing advice on child safety issues and responses.

Staff

All Staff including Boarding Premises Staff have a responsibility to prevent, identify and mitigate risks to child safety and wellbeing, and must:

- always promote child safety and wellbeing and provide a safe School Environment and School Boarding Environment for children and students;
- be aware of key risk indicators of child abuse, to be observant, and to raise any concerns they may have with the school management member;
- support and respond to vulnerable children and students, and pay particular attention to the needs of students with disability, students from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds, students who are unable to live at home, children who are vulnerable and Aboriginal students.
- participate in all child safety and wellbeing induction and training programs (including online, digital or face-to-face) provided by the College.
- always follow the College's child safety and wellbeing policies and procedures, including;
 - acting in accordance with this Policy, Child Safety Code of Conduct and Child Safety Responding and Reporting Obligations Procedure;
 - being observant and raise concerns about any child safety issues (including indicators of child abuse or harm).
- respond to all reports, allegations, complaints, concerns and disclosures of child abuse or harm, or a risk of child abuse or harm in a serious and child-focused manner, with sensitivity and professionalism;
- ensure students' views are taken seriously and their voices are heard about decisions that affect their lives, including providing support for children at risk or where an allegation, complaint or disclosure has been made;
- implement inclusive practices that respond to the diverse needs of students;
- create and maintain records of all report allegations, complaints, concerns, disclosures, safety incidents, risks, decisions and all actions taken as required by the College; and
- report any breaches of this Policy, Child Safety Code of Conduct and Child Safety Responding and Reporting Obligations Procedure to the Campus Principal.

Staff, including Boarding Premises Staff, who hold a significant concern for the safety or wellbeing of a child or student, or believe on reasonable grounds that a child or student is in need of protection from child abuse:

- may disclose that information to Victoria Police or DFFH; and
- are strongly encouraged to tell the College.

Volunteers

Volunteers (including Board members) must:

- promote child safety and wellbeing at all times, and provide a safe School Environment and School Boarding Environment for children and students;

- read and comply with the College's child safety and wellbeing policies and procedures, including this Policy, Child Safety Code of Conduct and Child Safety Responding and Reporting Obligations Procedure;
- be familiar with their legal obligations with respect to reporting child abuse;
- be aware of key risk indicators of child abuse and harm;
- attend all child safety training programs (including online, digital or face-to-face) offered by the College; and
- raise any concerns they may have relating to child safety with the Campus Principal, the Director of Operations or the Executive Principal.

RISK MANAGEMENT AND PREVENTION

The College has risk management strategies in place to identify, assess, and take steps to minimise child abuse risks in School Environments and School Boarding Environments as part of its overall risk management framework.

These risks are managed with the following policies and strategies:

- The College's child safety policies, procedures and practices;
- Activity specific risk register;
- Child Safety Risk Register is used to record any identified risks related to child abuse alongside actions in place to manage those risks;
- The College monitors and evaluates the effectiveness of the actions in the Child Safety Risk Register at least annually;
- The College provides training and information to Staff (including School Boarding Premises Staff) and Volunteers to be attuned to indicators of harm;
- The College also provides training to students about their rights, including to safety, information, participation, privacy, social connections and opportunities, and online safety risks.
- The College undertakes child safety due diligence when engaging third parties; and
- Child safety is a standing agenda item at College Board meetings.

Child Safety Risks

Child safety risks can particularly arise in the online environment, on overnight stays (such as camps or in the School Boarding Environment) and when children or students participate in events and activities away from the College campuses (such as excursions and interschool sports) or involving adults who are not associated with the College or College community.

Risks to child safety can include images or videos being taken of children or students, an adult being alone with a student, or an adult failing to provide adequate supervision to children or students. All Staff and Volunteers are expected to be aware of the school risk register including the Child Safety Risk Register and activity specific risk register.

Duty of care

Staff and Volunteers have a duty to take reasonable steps to protect children under their care and supervision from harm that is reasonably foreseeable.

What constitutes "reasonable steps" depends on the circumstances of each situation and the diversity of vulnerability characteristics of children and students involved (such as their age). Staff or Volunteers may breach their duty of care to a student if they fail to act in the way a reasonable or diligent professional would have acted in the same situation.

In relation to suspected child abuse, reasonable steps may include (but are not limited to):

- identifying and removing hazards or risks to child safety;
- acting on concerns and suspicions of child abuse as soon as practicable;
- seeking appropriate advice or consulting with other professionals or relevant authorities at the College; and
- sharing information with other school staff who will also be responsible for providing ongoing support to the child.

IMPLEMENTATION

Establishing a culturally safe environment

The College is committed to

- establish an inclusive and culturally safe environment where the strengths of Aboriginal culture, values and practices are respected.
- train staff and volunteers to understand the importance of Aboriginal culture to the wellbeing and safety of Aboriginal students.
- provide staff and volunteers with training to identify and address racism, bullying and discrimination.
- ensure racism is identified, confronted and not tolerated, and any instances of racism within the School Environment or School Boarding Environment are addressed with appropriate consequences.

Student empowerment

The College is committed to empower children and students and facilitating child-friendly ways for children and students to express their views, participate in decision-making and raise their concerns. To uphold this commitment, The College will

- create an inclusive and supportive environment that encourages students to contribute to our child safety approach and understand their rights and responsibilities. Children and students have the right to safety, information, participation, privacy, social connections and learning opportunities;
- encourage strong friendships and peer support in the College to ensure healthy and respectful relationships between students are reinforced, friendships are recognised and support from peers is encouraged to help children and students feel safe and be less isolated;
- inform students of their rights through the orientation programs and training activities.
- give them the skills and confidence to recognise unsafe situations with adults or other students (including online) and to speak up and act on concerns relating to themselves or their peers.
- ensure students know who to talk to if they are worried or feeling unsafe and encourage them to share concerns with a trusted adult at any time.
- listen to the complainant's account and take them seriously, check our understanding of the complaint, support the student and keep them students and their parents and carers, as appropriate informed about progress when the College receives information in relation to a complaint about alleged misconduct or abuse of a child; and
- be responsive to the input and contributions of children and students to strengthen confidence and engagement.

The College provides information to children and students about child safety and wellbeing, and their rights, via a range of strategies to ensure this information is accessible, easy to understand and age-appropriate. The College does this for younger children and students, children and students living with a disability and children and students from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds by:

- organising incursions;
- conducting induction and orientation sessions for newly enrolled students;
- developing curriculum deliverables;
- meeting with school leaders to run open discussions;

about key messages about child safety and the Policy and the Child Safety Responding and Reporting Obligations Procedure.

Family engagement

To ensure families and communities are informed and involved in promoting child safety and wellbeing and have a say in the development of child safety and wellbeing-related policies and practices, the College will:

- provide families and community with accessible information about the College's child-safe policies and practices and involving them in our approach to child safety and wellbeing;
- give families opportunities to participate in child safety and wellbeing decisions that affect their child;
- create opportunities for families to have input into the development and review of our child safety policies and practices and encourage them to raise any concerns and ideas for improvement.
- ensure prospective students and families feel respected, included and safe to come onto school grounds and provided information about child safety, the College's complaints processes and how to raise concerns.

Any person who holds a significant concern for the wellbeing of a child or student, or believes on reasonable grounds that a child is in need of protection from child abuse:

- may disclose that information to Victoria Police or DFFH; and
- is encouraged to tell the Campus Principal or the Executive Principal at the College.

When assessing whether to communicate with parents, carers or guardians about a child safety concern, the safety of children and students is paramount. Generally, the College includes families in decisions related to child safety and wellbeing that affect their child, however, there may be times when the College will need to report concerns of child safety to the DFFH or Victoria Police without notifying a parent, carer or guardian, for example, when there are concerns that the parent, carer or guardian is involved in perpetrating the harm, or communication may increase the risk of harm.

Diversity and equity

The College is committed to providing a culturally safe environment in which the diverse and unique identities and experiences of Aboriginal children are respected and valued.

To ensure the College ensures equity and responds diverse needs in policy and practice, the College pays particular attention to the needs of children and students:

- with a disability;
- from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds;
- who are unable to live at home, including students living in the School Boarding Environment;
- who are gender diverse; and
- who are Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander.

The College will:

- create an environment where all school communities celebrate the rich diversity of our students, families and community and promote respectful environments that are free from discrimination.
- train staff and volunteers to understand the diverse circumstances of children and students, and provide support and respond to vulnerable children and students.
- ensure all Staff and Volunteers pay particular attention to individuals and groups of children, including the needs of Aboriginal students in our community with additional and specific needs.

Suitable staff and volunteers

In all decisions relating to the recruitment of Staff, the safety and wellbeing of children and students is paramount. The College will:

- undertake a comprehensive recruitment and screening process for all staff and volunteers which aims to:
 - promote and protect the safety of all children and students;
 - identify the safest and most suitable people who share the College's values and commitment to protect children from child abuse and harm; and
 - prevent a person from working at the College if they pose a risk to children.
- when engaging staff or volunteers to perform child-related work,
 - follow the instructions in the [Recruitment and Selection](#) guideline and the Recruitment Child Safety Checklist available at Sirius Expert.
 - collect and record:
 - proof of the person's identity and any professional or other qualifications.
 - the person's history of working with children.
 - references that address suitability for the job and working with children.
- supervise all Staff and Volunteers engaged in child-connected work appropriately to ensure that their behaviour towards children is safe and appropriate, including:
 - periodically, between checks, including via review of the status of any accreditations and any incident reports;
 - during any scheduled performance review; and
 - after any concern is raised regarding their conduct with children and students; and

- manage inappropriate behaviour towards children and students promptly and thoroughly and in accordance with relevant policies and procedures.

Child safety knowledge, skills and awareness

The College will provide child safety training according to the College's Child Safety Training Plan and as required by Ministerial Order 1359, which includes:

- ensuring the Board is equipped with the knowledge required to make decisions in the best interests of student safety and wellbeing, and to identify and mitigate child safety and wellbeing risks in the School Environment and the School Boarding Environment;
- ensuring Staff and Volunteers understand their roles and responsibilities and develop their capacity to effectively address child safety matters.
- inducting all newly appointed staff about:
 - the Child Safety Policy;
 - the Child Safety Code of Conduct;
 - how to contribute to identifying, removing or reducing risks;
 - school values and philosophy;
 - the Child Safety Responding and Reporting Obligations Procedure;
 - privacy and reporting protocols; and
- providing Staff with training, information and professional learning at least annually that includes:
 - this Policy and the Child Safety Code of Conduct;
 - procedures to manage complaints and concerns relating to child abuse, including the Child Safety Responding and Reporting Obligations Procedure;
 - how to recognise indicators of child harm;
 - how to respond effectively to issues of child safety and wellbeing;
 - mandatory reporting and criminal offences;
 - how to support colleagues who disclose harm;
 - how to build culturally safe environments;
 - their information sharing and recordkeeping obligations; and
 - how to identify and mitigate child safety and wellbeing risks in the School Environment and School Boarding Environment; and
- providing Volunteers (excluding Board members) training and information that equips them with the skills and knowledge necessary to maintain a child-safe environment (in addition to the child safety induction).

All Staff must complete the [Protecting Children - Mandatory Reporting and Other Obligations Non-Government Schools](#) online module annually to learn how to protect the safety and wellbeing of children and young people.

Complaints and Reporting Processes

When there are concerns that a child is in immediate danger, call Victoria Police on 000.

All Staff and Volunteers must follow the Child Safety Responding and Reporting Obligations Procedure, which sets out when and how they must report:

- breaches of this Policy, the Child Safety Responding and Reporting Obligations Procedure or Child Safety Code of Conduct; and
- actual or suspected child abuse or risk of harm to students or children.

When the College receives information that a child or student has been harmed or is at risk of harm, the College will respond in a child-focused and professional manner that prioritises the safety of children, taking into account the diverse characteristics of the children and students involved.

The College will:

- foster a culture that encourages staff, volunteers, students, parents, and the members of the College community to raise concerns and complaints;
- create multiple communication channels for students and families to report child safety concerns, including writing, drawing, or physical forms of communication, to the Campus Principal, the Executive Principal or under the Whistleblower Policy;
- ensure all staff and volunteers follow our Child Safety Responding and Reporting Obligations Procedure if there is an incident, disclosure, allegation, suspicion, complaint or concern of child abuse or harm;
- take complaints or concerns seriously, and respond promptly and thoroughly; and
- implement policies, practices and procedures to ensure recordkeeping, reporting, privacy and employment law obligations are met when responding to complaints or concerns.

This Policy and the Child Safety Responding and Reporting Obligations Procedure address complaints and concerns of child abuse made by or in relation to a child or student, Staff, Volunteers, contractors, service providers, visitors or any other person while connected to the College.

Information about the College's investigation processes is in the Child Safety Responding and Reporting Obligations Procedure. The complaints and concerns of child abuse will be processed based on the Feedback Management Policy.

Communications

The College will:

- ensure that key child safety and wellbeing policies are available on the College website, including the Child Safety Policy, Child Safety Code of Conduct, and the Child Safety Responding and Reporting Obligations Procedure;
- display posters, infographics and artwork around the school and digital communication channels, including website, newsletter and social media accounts;
- ensure that child safety is a regular agenda item to communicate the updates and collect feedback at school leadership meetings, staff meetings and the College Board meetings.

The College acknowledges the importance of making sure access to information, support and complaints processes are culturally safe, accessible and easy to understand for all students, Staff, Volunteers and the College community (including the College boarding premises community).

RECORDS MANAGEMENT

Staff must create and maintain clear and comprehensive records of all complaints, concerns, safety incidents, risks, disclosures, decisions and all actions taken in relation to a child safety complaint or disclosure.

Staff and Volunteers should provide as much information as possible regarding suspected child abuse. The information will be critical to any reports to government agencies and may be sought at a later date if the matter is the subject of court proceedings.

We acknowledge that good records management practices are a critical element of child safety and manage our records in accordance with the College's [Records Management Policy](#). Staff must follow the Records Management Policy.

Confidentiality, Privacy and Information Sharing

Staff and Volunteers must respect individuals' privacy, and limit sharing or disclosing information about child abuse and harm when it is not necessary to comply with reporting obligations, this Policy or the Child Safety Responding and Reporting Obligations Procedure, or support the child or student. For example, Staff should not discuss child abuse concerns in the Staff room when many people are present. Instead, Staff should arrange a private time and space to talk to the Campus Principal.

The College collects, uses, and discloses information about children and their families in accordance with Victorian privacy laws, other relevant laws and the College's [Privacy Policy](#). Staff must comply with the Privacy Policy.

The Child Information Sharing Scheme is a system under which the College can share confidential information when sharing will protect the safety and wellbeing of children, for example, by helping the College undertake an investigation. We will involve families and children, where appropriate and safe, when we share information under the Child Information Sharing Scheme.

Confidentiality assists the investigative process by encouraging witnesses to be forthcoming in their evidence. It reduces the likelihood or opportunity for evidence to become compromised and reduces the risk of untested or unsubstantiated allegations being circulated within the school community.

However, confidentiality does not mean that the details of information or evidence provided to the school will not be provided to the government agencies. The College, Staff and Volunteers may have legal obligations to report information.

BREACHES

At all times and in all decisions relating to a breach or potential breach of this Policy, the Child Safety Responding and Reporting Obligations Procedure or the Child Safety Code of Conduct, the safety of children and students is paramount.

If the College becomes aware of a breach or suspected breach of this Policy, the Child Safety Responding and Reporting Obligations Procedure or Child Safety Code of Conduct, it will take immediate steps to ensure the safety and wellbeing of any child who may be at risk. A breach of this Policy, Child Safety Responding and Reporting Obligations Procedure or the Child Safety Code of Conduct may result in disciplinary action (up to and including the immediate termination of engagement or employment with the College).

Suspected breaches will be investigated in accordance with any relevant legislation (for example, the Reportable Conduct Scheme), and in a manner that is child-focused and provides procedural fairness.

MONITORING AND REVIEW

The College welcomes feedback from all members of the community on ways that it can improve its approach to child safety and wellbeing. Children, students, families and communities have a say in the development and review of the College's policies and procedures.

The College reviews and evaluates this Policy, the Child Safety Responding and Reporting Obligations Procedure, the Child Safety Code of Conduct and the College's child safety procedures and practices every two years as well as after any significant child safety incident. This includes evaluating how effective the College's risk controls and risk treatments are, partly by reference to the Child Safety Risk Register. The Executive Principal is responsible for ensuring this review is conducted.

The Executive Principal must ensure the College Board is notified following any incident in relation to child safety and wellbeing. When the College Board is notified following any incident in relation to child safety and wellbeing, the College Board must review and evaluate the College's Policy and the Child Safety Responding and Reporting Obligations Procedure.

Review of child safety practices

The College will

- review and improve our policy regularly based on the College's [Policy Development Policy](#), or after any significant child safety incident or requirements update.
- analyse any complaints, concerns, and safety incidents to improve policy and practice.
- act with transparency and share pertinent learnings and review outcomes with staff and our school community.

RELATED POLICIES, PROCEDURES AND LAWS

This Child Safety Policy is to be read in conjunction with other related school policies, procedures, and codes. These include our:

- [Bullying and Harassment Policy](#);
- [Child Safety Responding and Reporting Obligations Procedure](#);
- [Child Safety Code of Conduct](#);
- [Feedback Management Policy](#);
- [Acceptable Use of ICT for staff Policy](#);
- [Acceptable Use of ICT for students Policy](#);
- [Pastoral Care and Wellbeing Policy](#);
- [Professional Boundaries Policy](#);
- [Duty of Care Policy](#);
- Records Management Policy;
- [Visitors Policy](#);
- [Volunteers Policy](#); and

- [Whistleblower Policy](#)

Relevant laws include:

- *Children, Youth and Families Act 2005* (Vic)
- *Child Wellbeing and Safety Act 2005* (Vic)
- *Crimes Act 1958* (Vic)
- *Education and Training Reform Act 2006* (Vic)
- *Victorian Institute of Teaching Act 2001* (Vic)

Name of Policy	Child Safety
Description of Policy	It outlines the College's commitment to ensuring the safety, wellbeing, and empowerment of all children and students by fostering a culture of "no tolerance" for child abuse, implementing robust risk controls, promoting inclusivity, ensuring accountability, and providing clear guidance for preventing, identifying, and responding to harm, in alignment with Ministerial Order 1359 and the Victorian Child Safe Standards.
Policy Responsible Officer	Director of Operations
Category	Risk and Compliance
Creation Date	10/07/2016
Date of Last Revision	12/08/2024
Effective Date of Last Revision	12/08/2024
Date of Next Revision	01/07/2025
Review History	10/07/2016, 30/06/2022; 12/08/2024