

# Child Safety and Wellbeing Policy

## 1. Introduction

Djerriwarrh Community College (the College) is an independent specialist senior secondary school based in Melton. We deliver the Victorian Pathway Certificate (VPC) and VCE Vocational Major Certificate (VM) for students aged 15-19 years. We provide a safe and inclusive learning environment for young people who may have been disengaged or are at risk of disengaging from education. The College is committed to supporting students to reach their individual personal, social and educational potential.

Djerriwarrh Community College (the College) is committed to creating and maintaining a school in which all young people are safe from harm and to providing a safe and inclusive environment for all young people from all cultures and linguistically diverse backgrounds and those with a disability.

We understand and implement our duty of care to all students, and we undertake reasonable measures of the proper supervision and protection so that no student faces risks, injury or harm.

All College School Council members, staff, volunteers and contractors have a responsibility to prevent child abuse and respond appropriately to allegations.

The College will comply with Ministerial Order 1359: Implementing the Child Safe Standards – Managing the Risk of Child Abuse in Schools and School Boarding Premises (Ministerial Order 1359) and the Victorian Child Safe Standards (VCSS).

## 2. Purpose

The College Child Safety and Wellbeing Policy demonstrates our school's commitment to creating and maintaining a child safe and child-friendly organisation, where children and young people are safe and feel safe.

This policy provides an overview of our school's approach to implementing Ministerial Order 1359 which sets out how the Victorian Child Safe Standards apply in school environments.

It informs our school community of everyone's obligations to act safely and appropriately towards children and guides our processes and practices for the safety and wellbeing of students across all areas of our work.

## 3. Scope

This policy:

- applies to all school staff, school council members, volunteers and contractors whether or not they work in direct contact with students.
- applies in all physical and online school environments used by students during or outside of school hours, including other locations provided by for a student's use (for example, excursions) and those provided through third-party providers
- should be read together with our other child safety and wellbeing policies, procedures, and codes – refer to the related school policies section below.

## 4. Definitions

<b>Child</b>	Means a child enrolled as a student at the school.
<b>Child abuse includes-</b>	Includes: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>any act committed against a child involving: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a sexual offence, or</li> <li>an offence under section 498(2) of the Crimes Act 1958 (grooming),</li> </ul> </li> <li>the infliction, on a child, of: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>physical violence, or</li> <li>serious emotional or psychological harm,</li> </ul> </li> <li>serious neglect of a child.</li> </ul>
<b>Child safety</b>	Encompasses matters related to protecting all children from child abuse, managing the risk of child abuse, providing support to a child at risk of child abuse, and responding to incidents or allegations of child abuse.
<b>Child-connected work</b>	Means work authorised by the school governing authority and performed by an adult in a school environment while children are present or reasonably expected to be present.
<b>Child-related work</b>	Means work at or for a service, body or place, that usually involves direct contact with a child
<b>College</b>	Djerriwarrh Community College, 235 Station Road, Melton, 3337
<b>Contractors</b>	Include, but not limited, to: maintenance and building personnel, consultants, casual teachers, case workers, tutors, sports coaches and cleaners.
<b>ETR Act</b>	means the <i>Education and Training Reform Act 2006</i> as amended from time to time
<b>Parent/guardian</b>	Includes parents, guardians, step-parents and/or carers as listed in the Enrolment Application Form.
<b>Principal</b>	The Principal of the College, or the Principal's authorised representative
<b>Proprietor</b>	In relation to a school, means the person who is ultimately responsible for the way the school is managed and conducted. In the case of a non-Government school, the proprietor of the school.
<b>School environment</b>	Means any physical or virtual place made available or authorised by the school governing authority for use by a child during or outside school hours, including: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a campus of the school,</li> <li>online school environments (including email and intranet systems), and</li> <li>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).</li> </ul>

<b>School governing authority</b>	Means: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>the proprietor of a school, including a person authorised to act for or on behalf of the proprietor, or</li> <li>the governing body for a school (however described), as authorised by the proprietor of a school or the ETR Act, or</li> <li>the principal, as authorised by the proprietor of a school, the school governing body, or the ETR Act.</li> </ul>
<b>School staff</b>	In a non-Government school, is an individual working in a school environment who is: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>directly engaged or employed by a school governing authority,</li> <li>a volunteer or a contracted service provider (whether or not a body corporate or any other person is an intermediary), or</li> <li>a minister of religion.</li> </ul>
<b>Student</b>	The Student named in the Enrolment Application Form
<b>Volunteer</b>	A person who performs work without remuneration or reward for the school or school boarding premises in the school environment or school boarding premises environment.

## 5. Statement of commitment to child safety

The College is a child safe organisation which welcomes all children, young people and their families.

We are 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. Our child safe policies, strategies and practices are inclusive of the needs of all children and students.

We have no tolerance for child abuse and take proactive steps to identify and manage any risks of harm to students in our school environments.

We promote positive relationships between students and adults and between students and their peers. These relationships are based on trust and respect.

We take proactive steps to identify and manage any risk of harm to students in our school environment. When child safety concerns are raised or identified, we treat these seriously and respond promptly and thoroughly.

Particular attention is given to the child safety needs of Aboriginal students and families, with a commitment to provide culturally safe environment in which the diverse and unique identities and experiences of Aboriginal students are respected and valued. We also prioritise the safety and wellbeing of students from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds, international students, students with disabilities, those unable to live at home, children and young people who identify as lesbian, gay, bisexual, trans and gender diverse, intersex and queer (LGBTIQ+) and other students experiencing risk or vulnerability. Inappropriate or harmful behaviour targeting students based on these or other characteristics, such as racism or homophobia, are not tolerated at our school, and any instances identified will be addressed with appropriate consequences.

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

We are committed to regularly reviewing our child safe practices, and seeking input from our students, families, staff, and volunteers to inform our ongoing strategies.

## **6. Child Safe Standards**

The Child Safe Standards (the Standards) are compulsory minimum standards for all organisations that provide services to children including Victorian schools and early childhood services. The aim of the Standards is to ensure organisations are well prepared to protect children from abuse and neglect.

The eleven Standards are:

1. Child Safe Standard 1 – Organisations establish a culturally safe environment in which the diverse and unique identities and experiences of Aboriginal children and young people are respected and valued
2. Child Safe Standard 2 – Child safety and wellbeing is embedded in organisational leadership, governance and culture
3. Child Safe Standard 3 – Children and young people are empowered about their rights, participate in decisions affecting them and are taken seriously
4. Child Safe Standard 4 – Families and communities are informed, and involved in promoting child safety and wellbeing
5. Child Safe Standard 5 – Equity is upheld and diverse needs respected in policy and practice
6. Child Safe Standard 6 – People working with children and young people are suitable and supported to reflect child safety and wellbeing values in practice
7. Child Safe Standard 7 – Processes for complaints and concerns are child focused
8. Child Safe Standard 8 – Staff and volunteers are equipped with the knowledge, skills and awareness to keep children and young people safe through ongoing education and training
9. Child Safe Standard 9 – Physical and online environments promote safety and wellbeing while minimising the opportunity for children and young people to be harmed
10. Child Safe Standard 10 – Implementation of the Child Safe Standards is regularly reviewed and improved
11. Child Safe Standard 11 – Policies and procedures document how the organisation is safe for children and young people

## **7. Roles and responsibilities**

Child safety and protection is everyone's responsibility. At Djerriwarrh Community College, the Board, School Council, staff, volunteers and contractors have a shared responsibility for contributing to the safety and protection of children.

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 College's Child Safety Officers.

### **7.1 School leadership team**

Our school leadership team (comprising the Principal and the Assistant Principal) is responsible for ensuring that a strong child safe culture is created and maintained, and that policies and practices are effectively developed and implemented in accordance with Ministerial Order 1359.

The Principal and Assistant Principal will:

- ensure effective child safety and wellbeing governance, policies, procedures, codes and practices are in place,
- model a child safe culture that facilitates the active participation of students, families and staff in promoting and improving child safety, cultural safety and wellbeing,
- enable inclusive practices where the diverse needs of all students are considered,
- reinforce high standards of respectful behaviour between students and adults, and between students,
- promote regular open discussion on child safety issues within the school community including at leadership team meetings, staff meetings and school council meetings,
- facilitate regular professional learning for staff and volunteers (where appropriate) to build deeper understandings of child safety, cultural safety, student wellbeing and prevention of responding to abuse,
- monitor the Child Safety Risk Register,
- 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.

Staff may seek advice from the Principal and/or the Assistant Principal if they have concerns about child safe matters and when considering whether to make a report about a child in need of protection.

In collaboration with the Compliance Manager, the Leadership Team will

- implement the College's Child Safety and Wellbeing Policy and the mandated requirements of Ministerial Order 1359,
- ensure all policies, procedures and related documents are maintained and up to date to reflect current legislation,
- develop and coordinate staff and volunteer training, and
- champion child safety within the College and assist in coordinating responses to child protection incidents.

## **7.2 School staff, volunteers and contractors**

All staff, volunteers and contractors have a duty of care to protect children from harm and a responsibility to comply with the College's Child Safety policies and procedures.

All staff and volunteers will:

- take seriously their duty of care to take reasonable measures to protect all students from reasonably foreseeable risks of injury;
- take seriously their duty of care to take reasonable measures to ensure all students (and other persons) on the premises will not be injured or damaged because of the state of the premises, including things done or omitted to be done to the premises;
- take seriously their duty of care to take all reasonable precautions to prevent the abuse of a child by an individual associated with the organisation while the child is under the care, supervision or authority of the organisation;
- understand that different and sometimes greater measures may need to be taken for younger students or students with disabilities to discharge this duty of care;

- participate in child safety and wellbeing induction and training provided by the school or the Department of Education and Training, and always follow the school's child safety and wellbeing policies and procedures;
- act in accordance with our Child Safety Code of Conduct available on the College website;
- identify and raise concerns about child safety issues in accordance with our Child Safety Responding and Reporting Procedure available on the College website, including following the Four Critical Actions for Schools
- annually complete the [Protecting Children Mandatory Reporting \(non-government schools\)](#);
- ensure students' views are taken seriously and their voices are heard about decisions that affect their lives; and
- implement inclusive practices that respond to the diverse needs of students.

### 7.3 Child Safety Champion

The Youth Worker at the College is the nominated Child Safety Champion. Our Principal and Child Safety Champion are the first point of contact for child safety concerns or queries and for coordinating responses to child safety incidents. Child Safety Champions work with the school leadership team, teachers, students, volunteers and the school community to create a child safe environment in the school through:

- Promoting a child safety culture
- Providing support and guidance
- Ensuring staff are trained and educated about child safety

### 7.4 School Council

The School Council takes an active role in promoting a child safe culture and works with the Principal and the Compliance Manager to ensure compliance with Ministerial Order 1359 and implementation of the Child Safety and Wellbeing Policy and Child Safety Code of Conduct.

The School Council members will:

- champion and promote a child safe culture with the broader school community;
- ensure that child safety is a regular agenda item at School Council meetings;
- approve updates to, and act in accordance with the Child Safety Code of Conduct to the extent that it applies to school council members;
- review and approve the Child Safety and Wellbeing Policy and Child Safety Code of Conduct; and
- ensure that appropriate resources are made available to allow the College's Child Safety Policy and associated procedures to be effectively implemented.

All School Council members must understand, comply and implement the Child Safe Standards. To ensure our school council 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 our school environment, the council is trained at least annually. Training includes guidance on:

- individual and collective obligations and responsibilities for implementing the Child Safe Standards and managing the risk of child abuse;

- child safety and wellbeing risks in our school environment; and
- the College child safety and wellbeing policies, procedures, codes and practices.

## **7.5 Djerriwarrh Education & Community Services Board**

The function of the Board is to ensure an organisational culture of child safety.

Board Members will:

- champion and model a strong culture of child safety and wellbeing across the organisation;
- receive and review reports from the Principal on child safety matters, including reports on any significant incidents, risks, or trends;
- review the Child Safety Risk Register at least annually or after significant incidents;
- endorse the Child Safety and Wellbeing Policy and Child Safety Code of Conduct;
- ensure appropriate governance processes are in place to monitor and review the school's compliance with child safety obligations; and
- ensure that adequate resources and supports are available to enable the effective implementation of the Child Safety and Wellbeing Policy and associated procedures.

To ensure our 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 our school environment, the Board is trained at least annually. Training includes guidance on:

- individual and collective obligations and responsibilities for implementing the Child Safe Standards and managing the risk of child abuse;
- child safety and wellbeing risks in our school environment; and
- child safety and wellbeing policies, procedures, codes and practices.

## **7.6 External Education providers**

An external education provider is any organisation that the College has arranged to deliver a specified course of study that is part of the curriculum, to a student or students enrolled at the College, for example an RTO delivering a VET course.

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

All external education providers engaged by the College are responsible for contributing to the safety and protection of children in the College environment.

All external education providers engaged by the College are required to comply with the Victorian Child Safe Standards.

## **8. Child Safety Code of Conduct**

Our Child Safety Code of Conduct sets the boundaries and expectations for appropriate behaviours between adults and students. It also clarifies behaviours that are not acceptable in our physical and online environments.

We ensure that students also know what is acceptable and what is not acceptable so that they can be clear and confident about what to expect from adults in the school.

The Child Safety Code of Conduct (available on the College website and hard copies from reception) also includes processes to report inappropriate behaviour.

## **9. Managing risks to child safety and wellbeing**

At our school we identify, assess and manage risks to child safety and wellbeing in our physical and online school environments. These risks are managed through our child safety and wellbeing policies, procedures and practices, and in our activity specific risk registers, such as those we develop for off-site overnight camps, adventure activities and facilities and services we contract through third party providers for student use.

Our Child Safety Risk Register is used to record any identified risks related to child abuse alongside actions in place to manage those risks. Our school leadership team will monitor and evaluate the effectiveness of the actions in the Child Safety Risk Register at least annually.

### **9.1 Online Environments**

At our school, we are committed to ensuring that all online interactions and digital environments uphold our commitment to child safety, wellbeing, and inclusion. All students, staff, volunteers, and members of our school community are expected to engage in safe, respectful, and responsible online behaviour in accordance with our Child Safe Code of Conduct and relevant school ICT policies.

We recognise that online spaces are an extension of our learning and community environments. In line with Ministerial Order 1359, our school ensures:

- Digital interactions between staff and students are appropriate, transparent, and professional at all times.
- Students are taught digital literacy, online safety, and respectful online behaviour through the curriculum and wellbeing programs.
- Any concerns relating to online behaviour, cyberbullying, grooming, or other forms of online harm are responded to promptly, in line with our Mandatory Reporting Policy, Reportable Conduct Scheme Policy and Child Safety Responding and Reporting Procedure.
- Parents, guardians and carers are supported with resources and communication to understand and monitor online safety at home.

All members of the school community are required to take action if they become aware of any online behaviour that threatens the safety or wellbeing of a child or young person. This includes reporting concerns to school leaders, the Child Safe Champion, or relevant external authorities.

## **10. Diversity and equity**

As a child safe organisation, we celebrate the rich diversity of our students, families and community and promote respectful environments that are free from discrimination. Our focus is on wellbeing and growth for all.

We recognise that every child has unique skills, strengths and experiences to draw on.

We pay particular attention to individuals and groups of children and young people in our community with additional and specific needs. This includes tailoring our child safety strategies and supports to the needs of:

- Aboriginal children and young people



- children from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds
- children and young people with disabilities
- children unable to live at home or impacted by family violence
- children and young people who identify as LGBTIQ+.

Our Student Wellbeing and Engagement Policy (available on the College website) provides more information about the measures we have in place to support diversity and equity.

## **11. Establishing a culturally safe environment**

At the College, we are committed to establishing an inclusive and culturally safe school where the strengths of Aboriginal culture, values and practices are respected.

We think about how every student can have a positive experience in a safe environment. For Aboriginal students, we recognise the link between Aboriginal culture, identity and safety and actively create opportunities for Aboriginal students and the Aboriginal community to have a voice and presence in our school planning, policies, and activities.

We have developed the following strategies to promote Aboriginal cultural safety in our school community:

- Begin events and meetings with a Welcome to Country or an Acknowledgement of Country as a standing agenda item.
- Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander voices, perspectives and cultures are embedded in the curriculum.
- A commitment to take action against racism
- Education about how to be a good ally.
- Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander flags proudly displayed on school grounds.
- Display plaques and signs to acknowledge Country and Traditional Owners.
- Established ongoing meaningful relationships with local Aboriginal Elder/s in the Melton community.
- Implementation of a Reconciliation Action Plan.
- Annual staff training

### **11.1 Valuing diversity**

We value diversity and equity for all students and their families. The first goal of our Strategic Plan is to create a safe and inclusive learning environment. To achieve this, we:

- have zero tolerance of racism and other forms of discrimination and act when discrimination or exclusion is identified,
- implement a Diversity and Equal Opportunity Policy,
- have established a Respectful Relationships Committee promoting cultural safety on a weekly basis,
- provide training for all staff and volunteers on understanding diversity and how to support inclusion and cultural safety,

- offer students and families through our enrolment process the opportunity to provide information about themselves, including any specific needs to participate fully in our programs,
- deliver curriculum that reflects the diversity of our students, their interests and cultures
- acknowledge and celebrate important cultural dates in our classes,
- have a physical and online environment that actively celebrates diversity, and
- commit to ensuring our facilities and online activities promote inclusion of children and young people of all abilities.

## **12. Student empowerment**

To support child safety and wellbeing at the College, we work to create an inclusive and supportive environment that encourages students and families to contribute to our child safety approach and understand their rights and their responsibilities.

Respectful relationships between students are reinforced and we encourage strong friendships and peer support in the school to ensure a sense of belonging through implementing our whole school approach to Respectful Relationships, our student Code of Conduct, our school values.

We inform students of their rights through the issuance of the Student/Parent Handbook and give them the skills and confidence to recognise unsafe situations with adults or other students and to speak up and act on concerns relating to themselves or their peers. We ensure our students know who to talk to if they are worried or feeling unsafe and we encourage them to share concerns with a trusted adult at any time. Students and families can also access information on how to report concerns at reception and the College website.

When the school is gathering information in relation to a complaint about alleged misconduct or abuse of a child, we will listen to the complainant's account and take them seriously, check our understanding of the complaint, support the student and keep them (and their parents and carers, as appropriate) informed about progress.

Other ways the College will empower children and students (but not limited to):

- Respectful Relationships Committee and curriculum embedded practices.
- Circle practice each Monday morning where students can express feelings, emotions and share with the class what is going on in their lives.
- Fortnightly Student Representative Council (SRC) Meetings.
- Student representatives on the School Council.
- Anonymous student suggestion box.
- Weekly Social and Emotional Learning classes.
- Access to Education Support, a Youth Worker and Psychologist each day.
- Support Services Directory created for students and staff to access.
- Wellbeing noticeboard.
- Weekly Home Group sessions.
- Promote and monitor positive online behaviours with training and support for students.

- Partnerships with external organisations for delivery of appropriate training e.g., sexual abuse, self-harm, self-esteem training.
- Care team meetings.
- Biannually Student Progress Meetings.
- Annual Student Feedback Surveys.
- School leadership having an open door policy for students.
- Onsite posters that are teen friendly and promote student rights.
- Gender diversity programs and all staff wear the LGBTIQ colours pinned to their lanyards.
- Ongoing training for staff on how to communicate appropriately and assist students to feel safe listened to and empowered.
- Documented clear procedures for responding to and reporting allegations of child abuse.

### **13. Family engagement**

Our families and the school community have an important role in monitoring and promoting children's safety and wellbeing and helping children to raise any concerns.

To support family engagement, at the College we are committed to providing families and community with accessible information about our school's child safe policies and practices and involving them in our approach to child safety and wellbeing.

We will 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.

We do this by:

- publishing this policy and our Child Safety Code of Conduct on the College website;
- publishing our Parent Guardian Carer Code of Conduct on the College website;
- notifying parents, guardians and carers of updates to our policies and procedures through Compass;
- Implementing care team meetings that include parent, teacher, student and external case worker where required;
- child safety and protection posters are displayed in each classroom and office space;
- promoting activities and child safety updates to parents, guardians and carers in the College Circular;
- including available support services on the College website;
- ensuring support plans are reviewed by parents, guardians and carers and students;
- scheduling biannual Student Progress Meetings; and
- conducting an annual survey feedback process with parents/guardians and students.

## **14. Suitable staff and volunteers**

At the College, we apply robust child safe recruitment, induction, training, and supervision practices to ensure that all staff, contractors, and volunteers are suitable to work with children. All staff and volunteers must understand, comply and implement the Child Safe Standards

### **14.1 Staff recruitment**

The College takes all reasonable steps to ensure that it engages the most suitable and appropriate people to work with our students. We develop selection criteria and advertisements that clearly demonstrate our commitment to child safety, and we interview and conduct referee checks on all potential employees and volunteers.

We actively encourage applications from Aboriginal peoples, people from culturally and/or linguistically diverse backgrounds and people with a disability, adults impacted by family violence, culturally and/or linguistically diverse and the LGBTQ+ community.

When selecting employees, volunteers, students on placement and contractors the College will:

- ensure that all teaching staff have current Victorian Institute Teaching (VIT) registration;
- ensure all non-teaching staff have a current Working with Children Check and that this has been sighted and a copy retained;
- obtain a Nationally Coordinated Criminal History Check (NCCHC) and an International Police check (if applicable);
- obtain proof of personal identity;
- review their history of working with children;
- obtain at least two references that address the applicant's suitability for the job and working with children history, including one from the most recent employer;
- verify all references by contacting the referee and asking child safe related questions; and
- ensure all position description include the College's commitment to Child Safety.

All applicants for positions, including volunteers and students on placement, within the College are provided with a copy of the Child Safety and Wellbeing Policy and the Child Safe Code of Conduct. The Child Safe Code of Conduct is to be read, agreed to and signed by the applicant prior to them commencing work at the College

### **14.2 Staff induction**

All newly appointed staff will be expected to participate in our child safety and wellbeing induction program. The program will include a focus on:

- the Child Safety and Wellbeing Policy (this policy);
- the Child Safety Code of Conduct;
- the Mandatory Reporting Policy and the Child Safety Responding and Reporting Procedure; and
- any other child safety and wellbeing information that school leadership considers appropriate to the nature of the role.

### **14.3 Ongoing supervision and management of staff**

All staff engaged in child-connected work will be supervised appropriately to ensure that their behaviour towards children is safe and appropriate.

Staff will be monitored and assessed to ensure their continuing suitability for child-connected work.

All new employees and volunteers will be supervised regularly to ensure they understand the College's commitment to child safety and that everyone has a role to play in protecting children and young people from abuse, as well as checking that their behaviour towards children and young people is safe and appropriate.

The College has processes for monitoring and assessing the continuing suitability of all staff and volunteers to work with young people, including regular reviews of the status of Victorian Institute of Teaching (VIT) registration and Working with Children Checks, probationary periods and performance review processes.

Inappropriate behaviour towards children and young people will be managed swiftly and in accordance with our school and department policies and our legal obligations. Child safety and wellbeing will be paramount.

### **14.4 Ongoing mandatory registration/checks**

Teaching staff are required to provide evidence of current VIT Registration annually. Non-teaching staff are required to maintain a current Working with Children Check Clearance and to undergo a Nationally Coordinated Criminal History Check (NCCHC) every three (3) years for the duration of their employment with Djerriwarrh Community College.

### **14.5 Suitability of volunteers**

All volunteers are required to comply with our Volunteers Policy, which describes how we assess the suitability of prospective volunteers and outlines expectations in relation to child safety and wellbeing induction and training, and supervision and management.

Volunteers are held to a different standard to staff – obligations are different.

## **15. Child safety knowledge, skills and awareness**

Ongoing training and education are essential to ensuring that staff understand their roles and responsibilities and develop their capacity to effectively address child safety and wellbeing matters.

In addition to the child safety and wellbeing induction, our staff will participate in a range of training and professional learning to equip them with the skills and knowledge necessary to maintain a child safe environment.

Staff child safety and wellbeing training will be delivered at least annually and will include guidance on:

- the College's child safety and wellbeing policies, procedures, codes, and practices;
- completing the Protecting Children – Mandatory Reporting and Other Legal Obligations online module annually;
- recognising indicators of child harm including harm caused by other children and students;

- responding effectively to issues of child safety and wellbeing and supporting colleagues who disclose harm;
- how to build culturally safe environments for children and students;
- information sharing and recordkeeping obligations; and
- how to identify and mitigate child safety and wellbeing risks in the school environment.

Other professional learning and training on child safety and wellbeing, for example, training for our volunteers, will be tailored to specific roles and responsibilities and any identified or emerging needs or issues.

The College provides employees and volunteers with regular and appropriate opportunities to develop their knowledge of and ability to address child safety matters.

All new staff and volunteers are trained and informed at induction of their legal and moral responsibilities in relation to child safety and protection.

All staff, including teaching staff and support staff, School Council members and volunteers receive annual refresher training on the College's policies and procedures relating to child safety, including but not limited to, the Child Safety and Wellbeing Policy, the Child Safe Code of Conduct, the Mandatory Reporting Policy and the Reportable Conduct Scheme Policy.

All staff and volunteers must undertake annual Mandatory Reporting Training.

All staff are encouraged to undertake additional training and educational opportunities relating to child safety issues provided by external training providers that may arise from time to time.

All staff will be advised via email of any changes in child safety reporting requirements and expectations and/or changes to the College's policies and procedures. The Principal and Compliance Manager will arrange for staff and volunteer training when new or revised policies and procedures are issued.

## **16. Complaints and reporting processes**

The College fosters a culture that encourages staff, volunteers, students, parents, and the school community to raise concerns and complaints. This makes it more difficult for breaches of the code of conduct, misconduct or abuse to occur and remain hidden.

Anyone in the school community or a member of the public can make a complaint or raise concerns regarding child safety and protection.

We have clear pathways for raising complaints and concerns and responding and this is documented in our school's Complaint Policy and Complaints Procedure. The Complaints Policy and Complaints Procedure can be found at reception and available on the College website.

Our Student Wellbeing and Engagement Policy and Bullying Prevention Policy (available on the College website) cover complaints and concerns relating to student physical violence or other harmful behaviours.

### **16.1 Child abuse incidents and allegations**

If there is an incident, disclosure, allegation or suspicion of child abuse, all staff and volunteers (including school council members) must follow our Child Safety Responding and Reporting Procedure (available at reception and on the College website). Our policy and procedures address complaints

and concerns of child abuse made by or in relation to a child or student, school staff, volunteers, contractors, service providers, visitors or any other person while connected to the school.

As soon as any immediate health and safety concerns are addressed, and relevant school staff have been informed, we will ensure our school follows:

- the [Four Critical Actions](#) for complaints and concerns relating to adult behaviour towards a child
- the [Four Critical Actions: Student Sexual Offending](#) for complaints and concerns relating to student sexual offending

## 17. Communications

The College is committed to communicating our child safety strategies to the school community through:

- ensuring that key child safety and wellbeing policies are available on our website including the Child Safety and Wellbeing Policy (this document), Child Safety Code of Conduct, the Mandatory Reporting Policy, and the Child Safety Responding and Reporting Procedure;
- displaying PROTECT posters around the school;
- updates in the College Circular; and
- ensuring that child safety is a regular agenda item at school leadership meetings, staff meetings and school council meetings.

## 18. Privacy and information sharing

The College collects, uses, and discloses information about children and their families in accordance with Victorian privacy laws, and other relevant laws. For information on how our school collects, uses and discloses information refer to the College's Privacy Policy.

## 19. Records management

We acknowledge that good records management practices are a critical element of child safety and wellbeing and manage our records in accordance with the College's Records Management Policy.

The College will ensure that full and accurate records are created to document all aspects of any child abuse incidents, allegations and investigations. These records will be properly managed, protected and retained over time in accordance with the Public Office of Victoria (PROV)'s PROS 22/06 Retention and Disposal Authority for School Records and PROS 19/08 Retention and Disposal Authority for Records of Organisational Response to Child Sexual Abuse Incidents and Allegations.

## 20. Review of child safety practices

At the College, we have established processes for the review and ongoing improvement of our child safe policies, procedures, and practices.

We will:

- review and improve our policy every two (2) years or after any significant child safety incident;

- analyse any complaints, concerns, and safety incidents to improve policy and practice; and
- act with transparency and share pertinent learnings and review outcomes with school staff and our school community.

## 21. Communication

This Child Safety and Wellbeing Policy is available on the College website, the school management system, Compass and hard copies can be obtained from College Reception.

The College is committed to communicating our child safety strategies to the school community in an accessible way through:

- ensuring that key child safety and wellbeing policies are available on our website including the Child Safety and Wellbeing Policy (this document) and the School Child Safety Code of Conduct;
- updates in our school newsletter, Circular and Compass; and
- ensuring that child safety is a regular agenda item at school leadership meetings, staff meetings and School Committee meetings.

## 22. Associated documents and legislation

<b>Associated policies and procedures</b>	Child Safety Responding and Reporting Procedure Mandatory Reporting Policy Reportable Conduct Scheme Policy Duty of Care Policy Privacy Policy Complaints Policy and Procedure Records Management Policy Recruitment Policy Performance Management Policy Disciplinary Action Policy Volunteer Policy
<b>Other associated documents Internal</b>	Child Safe Code of Conduct Staff Code of Conduct Parent/Guardian Code of Conduct Child Safe Risk Register
<b>Relevant legislation</b>	<i>Child Wellbeing and Safety Amendment (Child Safe Standards) Act 2015 (Vic)</i> <i>Child Wellbeing and Safety Act 2005 (Vic)</i> <i>Child Wellbeing and Safety Regulations 2017 (Vic)</i> <i>Children, Youth and Families Act 2005 (Vic)</i> <i>Crimes Act 1958 (Vic)</i> <i>Education and Training Reform Act 2006 (Vic)</i> <i>Education and Training Reform Regulations 2017 (Vic)</i>



	<i>Equal Opportunity Act 2010 (Vic)</i> <i>Worker Screening Act 2020 (Vic)</i> <i>Worker Screening Regulations 2021 (Vic)</i> <i>Privacy Act 1988 (Cth)</i>
<b>Other associated documents</b> <b>External</b>	Ministerial Order No. 1359: Implementing the Child Safe Standards – Managing the Risk of Child Abuse in Schools and School Boarding Premises VRQA Guidelines to the Minimum Standards and Requirements for School Registration PROS 19/08 Retention and Disposal Authority for Records of Organisational Response to Child Sexual Abuse Incidents and Allegations PROS 22/06 Retention and Disposal Authority for School Records

## 23. Issuance and approval

<b>Document No:</b>	040	<b>Version no:</b>	4.0	<b>Classification:</b>	Welfare
<b>Document owner:</b>	Principal	<b>Authorised by:</b>			School Council
<b>Issue date:</b>	28 May 2025	<b>Review date:</b>			28 May 2027