

Child Safe Education Strategy

Aim

This Education Strategy is in response to the Ministerial Order 807 Standard Seven. Advance College will ensure children feel safe and comfortable in reporting concerns or allegations of abuse by providing simple and accessible processes that help children understand what to do if they want to report abuse, inappropriate behaviour or concerns for their safety. All staff and volunteers need to have an awareness of children's rights and adults' responsibilities regarding child abuse.

Rationale

Children often do not report abuse because they feel uncomfortable or they do not know how to raise their concerns or allegations of abuse. Advance College will have simple and accessible processes assisting children to understand their rights and how to report concerns regarding their safety.

Benefits of empowering and supporting the participation of children

- Participation and empowerment are vital components of a child safe organisation that benefits children, families, organisations and staff.
- Involving and consulting with children enables Advance College to improve its policies, practices and services as children provide a unique voice regarding what makes them feel safe and unsafe.
- Facilitating the empowerment and participation of children enhances a culture of child safety and listening to children within your organisation.
- Children and young people learn new skills, build self-esteem and develop an understanding of collaboration and rights.
- Children are more likely to report abuse or concerns if they feel safe and empowered in the organisation.
- Children feel their views are valued and listened to. Children are more likely to support the outcome if they have been involved.
- It is critical that there is genuineness in our approach to children and follow through on what we say we will do – credibility needs to be earned and can be easily lost.

To implement this standard, Advance College will:

- Provide children with child-appropriate and accessible information about what child abuse is, their rights to make decisions about their body and their privacy, that no one has a right to injure them, and how they can raise concerns about abuse. For example, information will be included in enrolment packs, information sessions and posters, as well as on the College's website.
- Ensure information and processes for reporting concerns are accessible to all children, for example by having policies and procedures that are able to be accessed and understood by children with a disability.
- Ensure information and processes for reporting concerns are culturally appropriate for Aboriginal children and for children from culturally and/or linguistically diverse backgrounds.
- Consider access and culturally appropriate language, photographs and artwork for Aboriginal children, children from culturally and/or linguistically diverse backgrounds and children with a disability when drafting communication materials.

- Gather feedback from children, for example through surveys, focus groups and social media, about whether they would feel safe and taken seriously if they were to raise concerns, and implement improvements based on this feedback.
- Enable children to express their views and make suggestions on what child safety means to them, and on child safe policies, reporting and response procedures, and acknowledge and act upon these where possible. For example, views could be gathered through suggestion boxes, surveys and feedback sessions.
- Ensure services are accessible for people with a disability, for example provide appropriate communication aids such as hearing loops.
- Train relevant staff on methods of empowering children, building healthy and respectful relationships (including sexuality), resilience, child abuse awareness and prevention, and encouraging children's participation.
- Embed these methods in the curriculum and co- curriculum where appropriate.
- Ensure Aboriginal children are accepted when identifying as Aboriginal, and that staff and volunteers understand appropriate responses to children identifying as Aboriginal.
- Encourage participation and empowerment of children in other organisational activities, such as organisational planning and decision making.
- Raise awareness in the community about the child safety standards and children's rights, for example through staff conversations with families and communications such as the College's website, enrolment information and newsletters.

Successfully implementing this standard will result in Advance College having:

- Reporting procedures for when a child feels unsafe are accessible for all children
- Children who understand what child abuse is, and their rights (age appropriate)
- Children who understand how to report an allegation of abuse or concern for their safety to the organisation, a trusted adult and external bodies (for example, the police)
- Children who feel safe, empowered and taken seriously if they raise concerns
- Children who feel empowered to contribute to the organisation's understanding and treatment of child safety
- Children's reports of concern responded to appropriately
- Staff who understand how to empower children and encourage their participation.

Review

The Strategy will be reviewed annually and after any significant incident.

Associated Documents

- AC - Child Safe Risk Assessment Matrix
- AC - Child Safe Risk Management Strategy
- AC - Child Safe Policy and Procedure
- AC - Child Safe Code of Conduct
- AC - Child Safe Standards
- AC - Student Code of Conduct
- AC - Student Welfare Policy
- Ministerial Order 870 Child Safe Standards