

Student Care, Safety and Welfare: Child Safe Policy and Procedure

1. Context

Advance College of Education (ACE) is an independent, specialist school which caters for young people primarily aged 15- 19 years who have become disengaged from mainstream education. Our students may have significant gaps in academic achievement and might find it difficult to learn in a group setting, which can lead to behavioural and social struggles at school. The College has three campuses at Hastings, Mornington and Rosebud which offer the Victorian Certificate of Applied Learning (VCAL) at Foundation, Intermediate and Senior Levels.

The VCAL qualification is based on adult learning and youth development principles that focus on developing the literacy, numeracy, work related and personal development skills required to successfully map and navigate a pathway to further education and/or employment.

The program aims to:

- Use curriculum that builds on students' interests, abilities and strengths;
- Provide practical 'hands-on' activities to facilitate learning;
- Provide opportunities to integrate learning outcomes across one activity;
- Recognise all student achievements and value their contribution;
- Allow students to learn at their own pace and in different ways according to their preferred learning style;
- Build resilience and confidence;
- Encourage and support active participation in the community; and
- Extend learning experiences beyond the classroom.

ACE supports the principles and practices of equal opportunity and human rights and undertakes to ensure that programs are accessible to all eligible members of the community and are responsive to individual needs.

ACE is committed to the cultural safety of Aboriginal students, the cultural safety of students from a culturally and/or linguistically diverse background, and to providing a safe environment for vulnerable students and students with a disability.

2. Rationale

Our Commitment to Child Safety

ACE is committed to the safety and wellbeing of all children and young people. This is the primary focus of our care and decision-making. **ACE has zero tolerance for child abuse.**

ACE is focussed on providing a child safe environment where students are safe and feel safe, and their voices are heard about decisions that affect their lives.

Every person involved in ACE has a responsibility to understand the important and specific role that they play individually and collectively to ensure that the wellbeing and safety of all young people is at the forefront of all they do and every decision that they make.

The College is dedicated to ensuring that this duty is embedded in the everyday thinking and practice of the College and in discharging its duty of care, taking account of the diversity of all young people, including: the needs of Aboriginal children, children from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds, children with disabilities and children who are vulnerable.

3. Aims

This Policy and Procedure aims to:

- Protect students in our care from abuse.
- Create and maintain a culture of child protection within the College and its community.
- Comply with the Child Safe Standards as set out in the Child Wellbeing and Safety Amendment (Child Safe Standards) Act 2015:

- Standard 1: Strategies to embed an organisational culture of child safety, including through effective leadership arrangements.
- Standard 2: A child safe policy or statement of commitment to child safety.
- Standard 3: A code of conduct that establishes clear expectations for appropriate behaviour with children.
- Standard 4: Screening, supervision, training and other human resources practices that reduce the risk of child abuse by new and existing personnel.
- Standard 5: Processes for responding to and reporting suspected child abuse.
- Standard 6: Strategies to identify and reduce or remove risks of child abuse.
- Standard 7: Strategies to promote the participation and empowerment of children.

To comply with the specific requirements as set out in Ministerial Order 870.

4. Policy

The Child Safe policy sets out the principles and framework governing the College's behaviours and activities that enact the Victorian Child Safe Standards and which aim to keep all young people safe from harm. The policy must be read and understood by all those connected to the College.

In its planning, decision-making and operations ACE will:

- Take a preventative, proactive and participatory approach to child safety.
- Value and empower young people to contribute to decisions which affect their lives.
- Foster a culture of openness that supports all persons to safely disclose risks of harm to young people.
- Respect diversity in cultures and child rearing practices while keeping child safety paramount.
- Provide written guidance on appropriate conduct and behaviour towards young people.
- Strive to engage only the most suitable people to work with young people and have high quality staff, College Governing Board member and volunteer supervision and professional development.
- Ensure students know who to talk with if they are worried or are feeling unsafe, and that they are comfortable and encouraged to raise such issues.
- Report suspected abuse, neglect or mistreatment promptly to the appropriate authorities.
- Share information appropriately and lawfully with other organisations where the safety and wellbeing of a young person is at risk.
- Value the input of and communicate regularly with families and carers.

5. Implementation

The College policy on Child Safety is made available to all students, staff, Board members, parents and carers in the following mediums:

- An overview at the Enrolment Interview
- A summary in Staff/Student Handbooks
- The College Website

The Policy is 'kept alive' through:

- Presentations and discussion at Staff and Board meetings.
- Forums for parents, staff and students to be informed about current understandings of child safety.

5.1 Responsibilities

The College Board:

- Must adhere to all aspects of the Child Safe Policy and Child Safe Code of Conduct.
- Is responsible for authorising the Child Safe Policy and Procedure, for overseeing its implementation and review and for managing the risk of child abuse.

- Along with the Principal, is responsible for meeting the requirements of Ministerial Order 870.
- Ensure that ACE's risk assessment strategies for child safety are robust enough to manage any potential child safety risks, and are reviewed regularly.
- Must ensure that appropriate training and guidance regarding individual and collective obligations and responsibilities for managing the risk of child abuse in the school environment and the College's current child safe standards is provided to individual Board members annually.

The Principal is responsible for embedding a culture of child safety and does so by ensuring:

- That the Child Safe Policy and Child Safe Code of Conduct is upheld and adhered to by all members of the ACE community.
- Any instances of child abuse are reported immediately, in line with *ACEP31 Student care, Safety and Welfare: Mandatory Reporting Policy and Procedure*.
- That all members of the ACE community understand and adhere to their responsibilities regarding child safety.
- That risk assessments for child safety are carried out regularly.
- Recruitment procedures have regard to child safety.
- A 'Child Safety Officer' is appointed to promote child safety and support all members of the College community to understand, meet and exceed their Child Safety obligations.
- The Child Safety Officer is adequately trained and resourced to carry out their duties.
- Child safe policies and procedures outlining the College's commitment to promoting children's wellbeing and protecting children from abuse are developed and implemented.
- Developing and communicating a code of conduct which specifies the standards of conduct and care required when working and interacting with children.
- That staff and other members of the College community have regular and appropriate learning to develop their knowledge of, openness to and ability to address child safety matters.
- The participation of students in decision-making by providing opportunities for them to express their views on child safety and then incorporate this feedback to improve policies and practices
- The College meets the specific requirements of the Victorian Child Safe Standards as set out in Ministerial Order No. 870.:
- All staff are aware of their legal obligations.

The Designated Child Safety Officer:

- Is responsible for implementing the College's child safe policy and the mandated requirements of Ministerial Order 870. Staff may seek advice from the Child Safety Officer if they have concerns about child safe matters and when considering whether to make a report about a child in need of protection.
- Is the main point of contact for all child safety enquiries and issues across ACE.
- Monitors adherence to child safety risk assessments and provides reports to the Principal.

Staff:

- Adhere to all aspects of the Child Safe Policy and Child Safe Code of Conduct.
- Report any instance of child abuse in line with *ACEP31 Student Care, Safety and Welfare: Mandatory Reporting Policy and Procedure*.
- Report any other child safety issues to the Child Safety Officer and the Principal.
- Are a primary point of contact and support for students and students' parents/carers in relation to child abuse and child safe issues.
- Assist students in reporting child abuse if required.

- Ensure students and students' parents/carers know, understand and adhere to the Child Safe Statement.
- Undertake regular training and education in order to understand their individual responsibilities in relation to child safety and the wellbeing of students and young people.
- Assist the Leadership Team in empowering and promoting the participation of students in decision-making by providing opportunities for students to express their views on child safety.
- Assist students to develop positive, responsible and caring attitudes and behaviours which recognise the rights of all people to be safe and free from abuse.

Volunteers and Contractors are responsible for:

- Adhering to all aspects of the Child Safe Policy and Child Safe Code of Conduct.
- Reporting any instance of child abuse in line with *ACEP31 Student care, Safety and Welfare: Mandatory Reporting Policy and Procedure*.
- Reporting any other child safety issues to the Child Safety Officer.
- Supporting staff in their child safe responsibilities when required.

Students:

- Report any instance of child abuse to the Child Safety Officer or another ACE staff member they trust, who will then report it to the appropriate authorities according to *ACEP31 Student care, Safety and Welfare: Mandatory Reporting Policy and Procedure*.

Parents/Carers:

- Report any instance of child abuse to the Child Safety Officer or another ACE staff member they trust, who will then report it to the appropriate authorities according to *ACEP31 Student care, Safety and Welfare: Mandatory Reporting Policy and Procedure*.

Legal Obligations to Report:

- Duty of care – all staff, contractors and volunteers.
- Principals, teachers (and others working in schools such as medical practitioners, nurses, police, psychologists, College health and wellbeing staff, student wellbeing coordinators, mental health practitioners and School Services Support staff) are considered mandatory reporters (refer to *ACEP31 Student Care, Safety and Welfare: Mandatory Reporting Policy and Procedure* for further details).
- Failure to disclose – all adults.
- Failure to protect – adults in positions of authority.
- Reportable Conduct – principals.

5.2 Scope

The application of the policy is relevant to the governing Board, the Principal, College staff, contractors, volunteers, students and parents/carers. The College's duty of care is non-delegable. This policy and procedures also apply when students are learning with an external provider. This policy should be read in conjunction with the following policies and procedures: *ACEP21 Student Care, Safety and Welfare: Duty of Care Policy and Procedure*, *ACEP3 Privacy Policy and Procedure*, *ACEP31 Student Care, Safety and Welfare: Mandatory Reporting Policy and Procedure*.

5.3 Definitions

Duty of Care:

- The College has a responsibility to ensure reasonable care is taken to protect students from harm. The school's duty of care is non-delegable, that is the school cannot discharge its duty of care by delegating this responsibility to another person or entity.
- The College's non-delegable duty of care extends to ensuring the safety and welfare of students when they are engaged in off-site activities and when learning with another provider.
- The College as a legal entity can be sued for a breach of this duty.

- The College's duty of care is higher than that which applies to teachers.
- The College has a different and sometimes greater duty of care with respect to younger children, vulnerable children and children with disabilities.
- The College has a responsibility to make sure all staff are aware of their legal obligations relating to their individual duty of care.
- The way in which the College's duty is discharged is through the leadership, decisions, actions (and omissions) of those designated as responsible persons.

Organisational Child Abuse: A specific duty of care lies with schools and other organisations that care for children. This duty, legislated in the Wrongs Amendment (Organisational Child Abuse) Act 2017 (Vic), requires such organisations to prevent the physical and sexual abuse of children in their care committed by individuals associated with the organisation.

Child Safety: Encompasses matters related to protecting all children and young people 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.

Child Abuse includes:

- Any act committed against a child involving:
 - a sexual offence; or
 - **Grooming** is communication by an adult (either by words or conduct) with a child under the age of 16 years or with a person who has care supervision or authority of the child (e.g. the child's parents) with the intention of facilitating the child's involvement in sexual conduct, either with the groomer or another adult is an offence under section 49M(1) of the Crimes Act 1958 (Vic) and must be reported to the police. The offence of grooming applies to any person aged 18 years or over and does not apply to communication between people who are both under 18 years of age.
 - the infliction on a child of physical violence; or serious emotional or psychological harm; and serious neglect of a child.

Child: Ministerial Order 870 defines a child as a child enrolled as a student at the school.

Working with Children Check: Everyone working with children and doing child connected work is required to be screened and to hold a current Working with Children check. The College is responsible for making sure all employees, volunteers, contractors and others who fall within the definition of those undertaking child connected work have a current check. The College must retain an up-to-date register of all Working with Children checks and have evidence of how the register is maintained.

Child Connected Work: Means work authorised by or on behalf of the governing board and performed by an adult in the school environment while children are present or reasonably expected to be present.

The College Environment: Means any physical or virtual place made available or authorised by the governing board for use by a child during or outside school hours, including: a campus of the College, online College environments (including email and intranet systems) and other locations provided by the College for a child's use (including, without limitation, locations used for school camps, sporting events, excursions and other events).

Child Protection: Is the statutory child protection service provided by the Department of Families, Fairness and Housing (DFFH), which can intervene to protect children and young people at risk of significant harm.

Mandatory Reporting: The Children, Youth and Families Act 2005 places an obligation on principals, teachers and others working in schools to make a report to the DFFH if they believe on reasonable grounds that a child needs protection from significant harm because of physical or sexual abuse.

Failure to Disclose: Any adult (not just those who work with children) who holds a reasonable belief that a sexual offence has been committed in Victoria by a person of or over the age of 18 years against a child under the age of 16 years must report that information to a police officer as soon as it

is practicable to do so, unless the person has a reasonable excuse for not doing so. This offence is legislated in the Crimes Amendment (Protection of Children) Act 2014.

Failure to Protect: The Crimes Act 1958 (Vic) provides that people in positions of authority such as principals must act to reduce or remove a substantial risk that a relevant child will become the victim of a sexual offence committed by a person of or above the age of 18 years who is associated with the College. A person in a position of authority in the College will commit the offence if they know of the risk of abuse and have the power or responsibility to reduce or remove the risk, but negligently fail to do so.

Reasonable Belief: A reasonable belief is formed if a reasonable person, doing the same work, would form the same belief on those grounds, based on the same information. Grounds for forming a belief are matters of which the person has become aware and any opinions in relation to those matters. Reporters are not expected to have evidence or to be certain. Child Protection is responsible for assessing reports and deciding how to respond.

Reportable Conduct Scheme: The Children Legislation Amendment (Reportable Conduct) Act 2017 (Vic) requires principals to have in place systems to prevent child abuse and to investigate and respond to such allegations. Principals are required to report allegations of child abuse to CCYP. The Reportable Conduct Scheme does not replace Mandatory Reporting requirements nor the need to report allegations of child abuse, criminal conduct and family violence to a police officer as soon as it is practicable to do so, unless the person has a reasonable excuse for not doing so.

Reporting Obligations of Principals to VIT: As from 1 September 2019 schools must notify the VIT if a registered teacher is charged with, been convicted or found guilty of a category A or category B sexual offence.

5.4 Relevant Legislation

- Child Wellbeing and Safety Act 2005 (Vic) (the Act)
- Child Wellbeing and Safety Amendment (Child Safe Standards) Act 2015 (Vic)
- Children Legislation Amendment (Reportable Conduct) Act 2017 (Vic)
- Children, Youth and Families Act 2005 (Vic)
- Crimes Act 1958 (Vic)
- Crimes Amendment (Grooming) Act 2014 (Vic)
- Crimes Amendment (Protection of Children) Act 2014 provides for the offences of failure to protect and failure to disclose.
- Wrongs Act 1958 (Vic)
- Wrongs Amendment (Organisational Child Abuse) Act 2017 (Vic)
- Worker Screening Act 2020 (Vic)
- Education and Training Reform Act 2006 (Vic)
- Australian Education Act 2013 (Cth)
- Australian Education Regulation 2013 (Cth)
- Education Legislation Amendment (Victorian Institute of Teaching, TAFE and Other Matters) Act 2018 (Vic)

5.5 Other Regulatory Instruments and Reports

- Victorian Registration and Qualifications Authority (VRQA) Minimum Standards 2021.
- Ministerial Order 870 January 2016 (Vic) – Managing the Risk of Child Abuse in Schools.
- Betrayal of Trust Report 2014 (Vic)
- National Principles for Child Safe Organisations, Australian Human Rights Commission 2018 and adopted by the Council of Australian Governments in February 2019.
- Review of the Victorian Child Safe Standards, December 2019.

5.6 School Staff Selection and Management Practices for a Child Safe Environment

5.6.1 Screening and Recruitment of School Staff

ACE will take all reasonable steps to employ skilled people to work with our students. When recruiting and selecting employees, contractors and volunteers involved in student-connected work, we make all reasonable efforts to:

- Confirm the applicant's Working with Children Check and National Police Check status and/or professional registration (as relevant).
- Obtain proof of personal identity and any professional or other qualifications.
- Verify the applicant's history of work involving children
- Obtain references that address the applicant's suitability for the job and working with children.
- Inform all applicants about the College's Child Safety practices including the Code of Conduct

We have processes for monitoring and assessing the continuing suitability of school staff to work with children, including regular reviews of the status of Working with Children Checks (WWCC) and staff professional registration requirements such as Victorian Institute of Teaching (VIT) registration.

5.6.2 Job Requirements and Duties for College Staff Involved in Child-Connected Work

- Be familiar and comply with the College's Child Safe Policy, Child Safe Code of Conduct and any other policies and procedures relating to Child Safety
- Be familiar and comply with legal obligations relating to Child Safety (e.g. Mandatory Reporting)
- Comply with all responsibilities in relation to Child Safety (as listed in 5.1 Responsibilities, above)

5.6.3 Essential Qualifications, Experience and Attributes in Relation to Child Safety

- Demonstrated understanding of Child Safety
- Demonstrated understanding of appropriate behaviours when engaging with children
- Working with Children Check and National Police Check clearance and/or professional registration (as relevant).
- Annual completion of Protecting Children Mandatory Reporting online module

5.7 Child Safety – Education and Training

Training and education are important to ensure that everyone at ACE understands that child safety is everyone's responsibility. We provide employees, College Board members and volunteers with regular and appropriate opportunities to develop their knowledge of, openness to and ability to address child safety matters. This includes:

- An induction program for all new and returning staff, College Board members and volunteers.
- Ongoing training and professional learning to ensure that everyone understands their professional and legal obligations and responsibilities, and the procedures for reporting suspicion of child abuse and neglect.
- Time for staff to complete the DET (Department of Education and Training) Mandatory Reporting module.
- Time allocated during staff meetings for professional learning in the area and to ensure that all staff are aware of their legal obligations.

We also support our staff, individual Board members and volunteers through ongoing supervision to develop their skills to protect children from abuse and to promote the cultural safety of Aboriginal children and children from linguistically and/or diverse backgrounds, vulnerable children and the safety of children with a disability.

New employees and volunteers will be supervised regularly to ensure they understand ACE's commitment to child safety and that everyone has a role to play in protecting children from abuse, as well as checking that their behaviour towards children is safe and appropriate (and reflects the

College's *Child Safe Code of Conduct*). Any inappropriate behaviour will be reported through appropriate channels, including the DFFH and Victoria Police.

5.8 Risk Management

At ACE we are committed to proactively and systematically identifying and assessing risks to student safety across our whole school environment, and reducing or eliminating (where possible) all potential sources of harm. We have risk management strategies in place to identify, assess, and take steps to minimise child abuse risks, which include risks posed by physical environments (*for example, any doors that can lock*), and online environments (*for example, no staff or school-based volunteer is to have contact with a student on social media*). If the College identifies risks of child abuse occurring in one or more school environments the Principal must make a record of those risks and specify the action(s) the College will take to reduce or remove the risks (risk controls).

As part of its risk management strategy and practices, the College will monitor and evaluate the effectiveness of the implementation of its risk controls. At least annually, the school must ensure that appropriate guidance and training is provided to individual members of staff, the Governing Board and volunteers about:

- Individual and collective obligations and responsibilities for managing the risk of child abuse.
- Child abuse risks in the College environment.
- Child Safety Standards.

6. Procedure

6.1 Responding to and Reporting Suspected Child Abuse

This procedure is designed to provide guidance on what to do if a child discloses an incident of abuse, or if a parent/carer raises a concern or allegation of abuse which may have taken place at ACE.

6.1.1 If a student discloses an incident of abuse to you:

- Try and separate them from the other students discreetly and listen to them carefully.
- Let the child use their own words to explain what has occurred.
- Reassure the child that you take what they are saying seriously, and it is not their fault and that they are doing the right thing.
- Explain to them that this information may need to be shared with others, such as with their parent/carer, specific people at the College, or the police.
- Do not make promises to the child such as promising not to tell anyone about the incident, except that you will do your best to keep them safe.
- Do not leave the child in a distressed state. If they seem at ease in your company, stay with them.
- Provide them with an incident report form to complete, or complete it together, if you think the child is able to do this.
- As soon as it is practicable to do so (unless there is a reasonable excuse for not doing so) record the information using the child's words and report the disclosure to the Child Safety Officer or the Principal, police or child protection.
- It is the responsibility of the Principal or, if unable to, the Assistant Principal to manage the College's response, including responding appropriately to the child, monitoring procedural compliance and to ensure the disclosure is recorded accurately, and that the record is stored securely.

6.1.2 If a parent/carer says their child has been abused at school or raises a concern:

- Explain that ACE has processes to ensure all abuse allegations are taken very seriously.
- Ask about the wellbeing of the child.
- Allow the parent/carer to talk through the incident in their own words.
- Advise the parent/carer that you will take notes during the discussion to capture all details.

- Explain to them the information may need to be repeated to authorities or others, such as Advance College's Senior Management or Child Safety Officer, the police or child protection.
- Do not make promises at this early stage, except that you will do your best to keep the child safe.
- Provide them with an incident report form to complete, or complete it together.
- Ask what action they would like to take and advise them of what the immediate next steps will be.
- Ensure the report is recorded accurately, and that the record is stored securely.

You need to be aware that some people from culturally and/or linguistically diverse backgrounds may face barriers in reporting allegations of abuse. For example, people from some cultures may experience anxiety when talking with police, and communicating in English may be a barrier for some. You need to be sensitive to these issues and meet people's needs where possible, such as having an interpreter present (who could be a friend or family member).

If an allegation of abuse involves an Aboriginal child, you will need to ensure a culturally appropriate response. A way to help ensure this could include engaging with parents of Aboriginal children, local Aboriginal communities or an Aboriginal community- controlled organisation.

Some children with a disability may experience barriers disclosing an incident. For example, children with hearing or cognitive impairments may need support to help them explain the incident, including through sign language interpreters.

Vulnerable students may find it difficult to disclose an incident. For example, they may feel that they haven't been heard or valued in the past. They may be anxious and need the support of a 'trusted adult'. You need to be sensitive to these issues.

If you believe a child is at immediate risk of abuse phone 000.

Legal Responsibilities

While the child safe standards focus on organisations, every adult who reasonably believes that a child has been abused, whether in their organisation or not, has an obligation to report that belief to authorities.

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

Appendix A

Victorian Child Safe Standards at Advance College of Education

STANDARD 1: Strategies to embed an organisational culture of child safety, including through effective leadership arrangements.

- All College care, safety and welfare of students policies outline staff, Governing Board and volunteer responsibilities to keep students safe.
- Assigning the role of 'Child Safety Officer' to promote child safety and support all members of the school community to understand and meet our child safety obligations.
- The leadership team oversees child safety and meets regularly to monitor the College's effectiveness in relation to a child safe culture.
- All adult visitors sign in and wear a 'Visitor' badge or lanyard to identify them whilst they are in the College during standard school hours.
- Staff and Students regularly practise emergency procedures including onsite evacuations and lock down procedures.
- Child Safe Standards listed as a standing item on agendas for College Board, Staff and Leadership team meetings.
- Staff meetings include regular discussion items around child safe practices.
- The College Board is regularly informed of Mandatory Reporting requirements of staff and briefed on Child Safe requirements.

STANDARD 2: A child safety policy or statement of commitment to child safety.

- A Statement of Commitment to Child Safety has been developed.
- A Child Safe Policy has been developed and endorsed by the College Board.
- The Child Safety Policy is made available for new staff, Board members and volunteers as part of their induction, and reviewed regularly by existing staff and Board members at relevant meetings.
- All staff are provided access to Ministerial Order 870 (*stored on Staff Shared Drive*).
- Parents and Community have access to the documents on the school website.

STANDARD 3: A code of conduct that establishes clear expectations for appropriate behaviour with children.

- A Child Safe Code of Conduct has been developed and endorsed by the College Board.
- The Child Safety Code of Conduct is provided for new staff, Board members and volunteers as part of their induction, and reviewed regularly by existing staff at staff meetings.
- All staff are provided access to Ministerial Order 870 and Victorian Institute of Teaching (VIT) Code of Conduct.
- Parents and Community have access to the documents upon request.

STANDARD 4: Screening, supervision, training and other human resources practices that reduce the risk of child abuse by new and existing personnel.

- Staff, Board member and volunteer induction program includes information regarding child safety encompassing matters related to protecting all children from child abuse, and responding to incidents or allegations of child abuse.
- Our College has robust human resources and recruitment practices for all staff, Board members and volunteers which clearly state the experience, qualifications, qualities and attributes expected from the successful applicant.
- Teachers are required to provide VIT registration which is recorded and a copy of VIT registration cards is retained on file.

- All people engaged in child-related work, including volunteers, are required to hold a Working with Children Check (WWC) and to provide evidence of this check.
- External organisations working with students at our College are always in direct line of sight supervision by a staff member or parent/carer.
- Regular Professional Development is provided for staff as deemed necessary with regards to trauma informed practice (BSEM), responding appropriately to abuse, understanding behavioural issues and disabilities.
- Appropriate guidance and training is provided to staff, volunteers and Board members about their individual and collective obligations and responsibilities for the College's current child safety standards.
- The Child Safety Code of Conduct is publicly available on the College website. Students and their families are encouraged to raise any concerns about the behaviour of any person, and can expect to be listened to and supported.

STANDARD 5: Processes for responding to and reporting suspected child abuse.

- The College's Mandatory Reporting Policy is followed and reviewed regularly by staff.
- Staff update their knowledge via an on-line course every year.
- The Principal or Child Safety Officer will support staff to make mandatory reports.
- All staff are provided with the *Protect - Four Critical Actions* poster to display in their room.
- Staff have access to contact details for Family First, DFFH and Police (000).

STANDARD 6: Strategies to identify and reduce or remove risks of child abuse.

- Development of the College's Child Safe Risk Assessment matrix which is reviewed annually and upon any knowledge of potential or existing risk.
- Developing, recording and communicating clear processes for removing risks to children (e.g. Bullying Prevention, Cyber Safety, ICT acceptable use, Duty of Care, Yard Supervision, Excursions and Camps).
- Providing staff with training and resources in identifying child abuse risks.
- Reinforcing/reviewing supervision of student's requirements for staff and volunteers.
- Recognising and adapting to the needs of students and communities, including Aboriginal children, culturally and/or linguistically diverse children, vulnerable children and children with a disability. For example, acknowledgement that greater staff or volunteer to child ratios may be needed for some vulnerable children.
- Recognising and addressing risks to children with a culturally and/or linguistically diverse background, which might exist because of their experiences, by increasing communication with families to build trust and understanding of College activities.
- Recognising and addressing risks for children with a disability, such as communication barriers when telling an adult, they feel unsafe.
- Recognising and addressing risks for vulnerable children such as the impact that previous trauma can have on the child's capacity to trust adults and to communicate their feelings effectively.
- Adhering to the Child Safety Code of Conduct.
- Developing Behaviour Management and Safety Plans for students when necessary.
- Induction for all visitors, staff, Board members volunteers and contractors.
- Access external supports such as Counselling for students in need.
- Access to the School Psychologist as needed.
- Assessment of new or changed physical environments for child safety risks.
- Pre-employment reference checks that include checking for child safety.

- Criminal history checks and confirming currency of Working with Children Checks and Victorian Institute of Teaching registration.

STANDARD 7: Strategies to promote the participation and empowerment of children.

- Regular reference to the School Values.
- Social and Emotional learning which may include content like that provided through the *Resilience, Rights and Respectful Relationships* curriculum and the Berry Street Education Model.
- Providing students with appropriate and accessible information about their rights to feel safe and how they can raise concerns about their safety Student leadership program and Student Forums.
- Access to external programs such as Youth Mental First Aid.
- eSmart Cyber Safety program.

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| <p>Creation Date: Version Four. Created 22/03/2022</p> | <p>Next Review: 2025 or as required due to changes in relevant Acts, Laws, or should situations arise that require earlier consideration.</p> | <p>Availability: Web: ✓ K-drive: ✓ On request: ✓</p> | <p>Actions: Communication to the whole College via the College newsletter in July each year. Circulate and discuss at a Board and staff meetings annually.</p> |
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