

Child Safety & Wellbeing Policy

Date Approved:	20/06/2023
Scheduled Review Date:	30/06/2025
Policy Owner:	Principal

1. Context & Purpose

This policy is an overarching document that outlines key elements of The College’s approach to protecting children from abuse. It seeks to explain our approach to implementing Ministerial Order 1359, which sets out how the Victorian Child Safe Standards apply in school environments

The policy forms the foundation of the College’s procedures, practices, decision-making processes and ultimately our culture with respect to child safety and wellbeing. It is designed to be published on our public website and student management system, as well as communicated through other mediums such as newsletters, our annual report and in induction and welcome packs for Board members, staff and volunteers.

The College’s Child Safety & Wellbeing Policy has been approved and endorsed by the Board, and will be reviewed by the Board at least every two years to ensure it is fit for purpose and operating effectively.

2. Application

This policy applies:

- to all College Board members, school staff, volunteers and contractors whether or not they work in direct contact with students.
- in all physical and online school environments used by students during or outside of school hours, including other locations provided by the College for a student’s use (for example, a camp or excursion) and those provided through third-party providers.

3. Statement of Policy

This policy demonstrates our commitment to creating and maintaining a child safe organisation, where our students are safe, happy and empowered.

Our College is a child safe organisation which welcomes all young people and their families. We are committed to providing an environment 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 and practices are intended to meet the needs of our students. We have zero tolerance for child abuse and take proactive steps to identify and manage any risks of harm to students in our care.

We promote positive relationships between students and adults and between students. We understand that students will be nearing or will reach 18 years of age while at the College, so will seek to build relationships that are based on trust, understanding and respect. As emerging adults we will encourage student agency and responsibility.

As a school that will enrol Muslim students, we are committed to the cultural safety of Muslim children, and the cultural safety of children from other culturally and/or linguistically diverse backgrounds should they come to the College. This includes paying particular attention to the cultural, safety and wellbeing needs of children from Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students should they attend the College. We also recognise the needs of children and young people who identify as LGBTQIA+ 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.

The College regards its child protection responsibilities with the utmost importance and as such, is committed to providing the necessary resources to ensure compliance with all relevant child protection laws and regulations and maintain a child safe culture.

4. Values & Beliefs Driving our Child Safe Culture

Three of the Colleges values are as follows:

Connection	We show genuine interest in others and share experiences
Humility	We appreciate and use our strengths to lift up others
Care	We look out for each other

These values and underlying behaviours will help guide our commitment to child safety. We also hold the following beliefs to help to guide the development and regular review of our work systems, practices, policies and procedures to protect children from abuse.

- All children have the right to be safe
- The welfare and best interests of our students are paramount

- The views of the child and a child's privacy must be respected
- The safety of children is driven by the existence of a child safe culture
- Child safety awareness should be promoted and openly discussed within our College community
- Child safety and protection is everyone's responsibility
- Child protection training is important to build awareness and understanding
- Procedures for responding to alleged or suspected incidents of child abuse should be simple and accessible for all members of the College community
- Children from culturally or linguistically diverse backgrounds have the right to special care and support, including those who identify as Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander
- Children who have any kind of disability have the right to special care and support

5. Roles & Responsibilities

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

There are also particular people or groups within the College who have a more defined responsibility:

College Board

The Board knows that it is the body directly responsible for the adoption by the College of all necessary child safety policies, procedures and practices, and that this duty cannot be delegated, although certain roles and responsibilities can be assigned to management.

In performing their functions and exercising their powers, the College Board will:

- champion and promote a child safe culture with the broader school community;
- ensure that child safety is a regular agenda item at Board meetings and that it receives a report from the Principal on relevant matters concerning child safety;
- undertake annual training on child safety;
- approve updates to, and act in accordance with the Child Safety Code of Conduct to the extent that it applies to the College Board;
- when appointing new Board members, ensure that selection, supervision, and management practices are child safe; and
- when appointing new employees or volunteers, ensure that the Principal, who has delegated responsibility for employment of staff, follows this policy.

College Principal

As a small school, particularly in the formative years, the College will only have a Principal, teaching staff and office administration staff. From a leadership perspective, it will therefore be the Principal, with support from the Board, who 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 will:

- ensure effective child safety and wellbeing governance, policies, procedures, codes and practices are in place and followed;
- 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 staff meetings and College Board meetings;
- facilitate regular professional learning for the Board, staff and volunteers (where appropriate) to build deeper understandings of child safety, cultural safety, student wellbeing and prevention of responding to abuse; and
- create an environment where people are comfortable raising child safety complaints and concerns, and no one is discouraged from reporting an allegation of child abuse to relevant authorities.

As the College grows, a deputy Principal or coordinator roles may be created, at which time, the broader leadership team will lead in creating a child safe culture, and ensure that policies and practices are effectively developed and implemented in accordance with Ministerial Order 1359.

School staff and Direct Volunteers

All staff and direct volunteers* are required to be familiar with the content of this policy, our Child Safety Code of Conduct and their legal obligations with respect to the reporting of child abuse. It is each individual's responsibility to be aware of key risk indicators of child abuse, to be observant, and to raise any concerns they may have relating to child abuse with the Principal.

All staff and direct volunteers will:

- participate in child safety and wellbeing induction and training provided by the College or the Department of Education and Training, and always follow the College's child safety and wellbeing policies and procedures;
- act in accordance with our Child Safety Code of Conduct;
- identify and raise concerns about child safety issues in accordance with our Child Safety - Responding and Reporting Obligations Policy, including following the Four Critical Actions for 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.

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

Indirect Contact Volunteers

Indirect Volunteers are those volunteers who are involved in providing support and services whilst not directly assisting a specific group of students – such as administrative functions. All Indirect Volunteers are responsible for contributing to the safety and protection of children in the School environment. All Indirect Volunteers are required by the College to be familiar with our Child Safety and Wellbeing Policy and our Child Safety Code of Conduct.

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.

The delivery of such a course may take place on the 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 be familiar with our Child Safety and Wellbeing Policy. The College may include this requirement in the written agreement between it and the External Education Provider where the curriculum is delivered by the staff of the External Education Provider and where College staff will not be present.

Third Party Contractors

All Third-Party Contractors (service providers) engaged by the College are responsible for contributing to the safety and protection of children in the College environment. Third Party Contractors include, for example, maintenance and building personnel, consultants, casual teachers, tutors, sports coaches and cleaners.

All service providers engaged by the College are required to be familiar with our Child Safety and Wellbeing Policy. The College may include this requirement in the written agreement between it and the service provider.

Specific child safety responsibilities

The College has nominated each class teacher as a child safety champion, to support the Principal to implement our child safety policies and practices, including staff and volunteer training.

Our Principal and child safety champion(s) are the first point of contact for child safety concerns or queries and for coordinating responses to child safety incidents.

The Principal is responsible for monitoring the College's compliance with the Child Safety and Wellbeing Policy. Anyone in our school community should approach the Principal if they have any concerns about the College's compliance with the Child Safety and Wellbeing Policy.

The Principal is responsible for informing the school community about this policy, and making it publicly available.

Our school will also establish a Student Reference Group on child safety, which will meet on a needs basis. The Student Reference Group provides an opportunity for students to provide input into College's strategies for child safety and wellbeing.

6. 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 at our College.

7. Managing risks to child safety and wellbeing

Child Safety Risk Register

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.

To assist the College and staff to discharge their duty of care obligations, the College has developed a Child Safety Risk Register, which is separate from but forms a part of the whole of College Risk Register. The Child Safety Risk Register involves the consideration of the following factors:

- identifying the risk of harm, linked to the 11 Child Safe Standards;
- assessing the likely seriousness or consequence should the risk of harm arise;
- the existing controls in place to manage or reduce the risk and whether any further controls are needed; and
- the social utility or benefit to students of the activity that creates the risk of harm

The Principal and Board will, at least every two years, monitor and evaluate the effectiveness of the actions in the College's Risk Register, inclusive of its Child Safety Risk Register.

In addition, should an incident arise, the Principal and Board review the cause of child safety incident and monitor for repeat issues or systemic failures, and where appropriate, update any child safety policy, procedure or practice where gaps or improvements are identified.

Structured Workplace Learning

The College believes in creating agency and developing responsibility within students, where they are trusted as young people nearing adulthood and where they learn in an environment reflective of the way people best learn at work – through experiences, support, inclusion, collaboration and sharing knowledge.

The education programs at the College will therefore connect students to a range of experiences such as structured work placements (SWL).

SWL will for most students operate as a part of the College curriculum and be an important part of student learning. It enables students to undertake a work placement in an industry of interest, build skills and apply industry knowledge. Students will be supported by the College to access a suitable work placement. As a part of the arrangements the College will provide the employer a copy of this Child Safety and Wellbeing Policy and ensure that the structured workplace learning arrangement form is in place and signed before the SWL commences.

Student Travel during school time

The approach of the College to promote agency, responsibility and trust, extends to the use of public transport by students. At times during the school year, students will need to travel from their class to different locations for learning activities, or they may begin or end the school day at different locations from their usual class setting. In such circumstances, the College will not ordinarily arrange transportation for the students, such as a bus. Students will be shown and encouraged to use public transport, with the following matters addressed:

- The College will, as a part of the enrolment process, obtain prior written parent/guardian consent for their child to catch public transport in such circumstances;
- The College will provide instruction and guidance about using public transport and of expected behaviour
- Where possible, students will be encouraged to travel with at least one other student or in groups.

8. The Child Safe Standards in Action

The Victorian Government has established 11 Child Safe Standards that are applicable to the College – many of the standards relate to child safety and wellbeing. The sections below explain the Standards, and the actions that College will take to meet the Standards.

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.

At our 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 will 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 cultural safety in our school community:

- When an Aboriginal student enrolls at the College, the Principal will liaise with the student's family and/or elders to ensure it has tailored measures to respect the student's cultural identity
- We will use curriculum development to help explore both Muslim faith and Aboriginal culture
- The College will begin events with an Acknowledgement of Country as a standing agenda item
- The College will leverage its connection to the Richmond Football Club, and sport in general, to build awareness and understanding of staff and students about Aboriginal culture – for example, curriculum and experiences connected to the Dreamtime match
- The College will explore opportunities to undertake activities with MITS given the dual connection with Richmond Football Club
- The College's Engagement Policy and Bullying Prevention & Intervention Policy seeks to provide an environment that is culturally safe and establish controls to address racism, discrimination and bullying.

Standard 2 Child safety and wellbeing is embedded in organisational leadership, governance and culture.

The College is committed to student safety in both physical and online school environments. The Board will lead the development of a culture of student safety by taking the following measures:

- Ensure that the College has an effective framework for the development work systems, practices, policies and procedures that promote child protection within the College, and the creation of a positive and robust child protection culture;
- Listing as a KPI for the Principal, to provide an environment and culture that values the importance of student safety;
- Ensure that Child safety is a regular agenda item at Board meetings and reported on by the Principal;

- Record identified risks relating to child abuse in the Child Safety Risk Register (as a part of the overall Risk Register), including risk controls and treatments to reduce or remove the risks
- Ensure that the Board will complete annual training on child safety matters; and
- Conduct review of the Colleges child safety framework at least every two years to ensure that all policies, practices and procedures are current and effective.

Standard 3 Children and young people are empowered about their rights, participate in decisions affecting them and are taken seriously.

We encourage 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 at the College to ensure a sense of belonging, driven by one of our core values, being “Care”, where we look out for each other.

We inform students of their rights and seek to 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 let 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. We do this through our student induction sessions and orientation activities, where time will be used discuss these matters. As a small College with lower student numbers and a good student to staff ratio, we will also use in class activities to discuss students' rights and safety issues.

Students and families can also access information on how to report concerns through our student management system.

When the College 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 students and keep them (and their parents and carers, as appropriate) informed about progress.

Standard 4 Families and communities are informed and involved in promoting child safety and wellbeing.

Our families and the College community have an important role in monitoring and promoting child safety and wellbeing and helping students to raise any concerns.

To support family engagement, we are committed to providing families and community with accessible information about our College’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 will do this by:

- providing information about child safety matters in welcome/induction packs and welcome/induction sessions;

- ensuring all of our child safety policies and procedures are available for students and parents through our student management system, or by providing a hard copy upon request;
- obtaining feedback through regular student/parent and teacher meetings;
- Using notices and emails to inform families and the school community about any significant updates to our child safety policies or processes, and strategies or initiatives that we are taking to ensure student safety;
- PROTECT Child Safety posters will be displayed digitally

Standard 5 Equity is upheld and diverse needs respected in policy and practice.

As a child safe organisation, we respect the diversity of our students, families and community and promote respectful environments that are free from discrimination.

We recognise that every child has unique skills, strengths and experiences to draw on. We pay attention to individuals and groups of children and young people in our community with additional and specific needs. This may include tailoring our child safety strategies and supports to the needs of:

- Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children and young people
- children from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds
- children and young people with disabilities or learning needs
- children unable to live at home or impacted by family violence
- children and young people who identify as LGBTQIA+.

Our Student Inclusion and Diversity Policy provides more information about some of the measures we have in place to support diversity and equity.

Standard 6 People working with children and young people are suitable and supported to reflect child safety and wellbeing values in practice.

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. When engaging staff to perform child-related work we ensure we:

- sight, verify and record the person's Working with Children clearance, Police Check or equivalent background check such as a Victorian Institute of Teaching registration;
- collect and record proof of the person's identity and any professional or other qualifications, the person's history of working with children and references that address suitability for the job and working with children.

All newly appointed staff will be required to participate in our child safety and wellbeing training as a part of their induction. The will include a focus on:

- this Child Safety and Wellbeing Policy;
- our Child Safety Code of Conduct;
- our Child Safety Responding and Reporting Obligations (including Mandatory Reporting) Policy and Procedures; and

- any other child safety and wellbeing information that school leadership considers appropriate to the nature of the role

All staff will be monitored and assessed to ensure their continuing suitability for child-connected work. This will be done by regular performance reviews and training. Inappropriate behaviour towards children and young people will be managed swiftly and in accordance with our College and department policies and our legal obligations. Child safety and wellbeing will be paramount. All volunteers are required to comply with all of our policies relating to child safety.

Further information on these matters is set out in our Staff & Volunteers Policy.

Standard 7 Processes for complaints and concerns are child-focused.

Our College fosters a culture that encourages staff, volunteers, students, parents, and the College 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. We have clear pathways for raising complaints and concerns and responding, as documented in our Complaints Policy.

The Complaints Policy can be found on the College's student management system and website. If there is an incident, disclosure, allegation or suspicion of child abuse, all staff and volunteers must follow our Child Safety – Responding and Mandatory Reporting Policy, also found on our student management system and 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 College. As soon as any immediate health and safety concerns are addressed, and relevant College staff have been informed, we will ensure our College follows:

- the [FourCriticalActions_ChildAbuse.pdf \(education.vic.gov.au\)](#) for complaints and concerns relating to adult behaviour towards a child
- the Four Critical Actions: Student Sexual Offending [Identify and respond to student sexual offending \(education.vic.gov.au\)](#) for complaints and concerns relating to student sexual offending

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.

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:

- our 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.

To ensure the College 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 College 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
- our child safety and wellbeing policies, procedures, codes and practices

Standard 9 Physical and online environments promote safety and wellbeing while minimising the opportunity for children and young people to be harmed.

At our College we identify, assess and manage risks to child safety and wellbeing in our physical and online College environments. These risks are managed through our child safety and wellbeing policies, procedures and practices. The college has policies on bullying prevention and intervention, mobile use and social media, student behaviour management, student code of conduct, student engagement, and parents' respectful behaviour, that explain staff, student and parent responsibilities and strategies in place to minimise the risk of harm to students.

Standard 10 Implementation of the Child Safe Standards is regularly reviewed and improved

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

- review our at least every two years or after any significant child safety incident;
- 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 College community.

Standard 11 Policies and procedures document how the organisation is safe for children and young people.

The College collects, uses, and discloses information about children and their families in accordance with Victorian privacy laws, and other relevant laws. The Privacy Policy of the College explains how we school collect, use, disclose and keep information.

We acknowledge that good records management practices are a critical element of child safety and wellbeing. We will keep and manage relevant information on a student's file through our student management system, as specified in policies managing this area, particularly with respect to mandatory reporting obligations.

9. Policy status and review

The Principal is responsible for reviewing and updating this Child Safety and Wellbeing Policy at least every two years. Once the College is established, the review will include input from students, parents/carers, the Board and the College community.

10. Policy History

Consultation	Date(s)	Summary of Consultation

Version	Policy Owner	Approval Date	Summary of Changes
1	Principal	20/6/23	First Adopted