



WHEELERS HILL
Secondary College

CHILD SAFETY POLICY – Effective July 1, 2022



Help for non-English speakers

If you need help to understand the information in this policy, please contact the College Office on 9561 5811

Purpose

This policy follows the **Ministerial Order 1359 - Implementing the Child Safe Standards - Managing the risk of child abuse in Schools and School Boarding Premises**.

This version of the Wheelers Hill Secondary College Child Safety Policy is an update that applies the New Child Safe Standards which are in effect from 1 July 2022.

The purpose of this updated Child Safety Policy is to provide a detailed plan of how WHSC provides a child-safe environment, where students are safe, where they can feel safe, and where their voices are heard, respected, and valued. This document details how WHSC meets the New Child Safe Standards.

Scope

This Child Safety Policy applies to all staff, students, visitors, contractors, and volunteers at WHSC, whether they have direct contact with students. This Child Safety Policy always applies on the premises of WHSC and applies to all activities associated with WHSC conducted outside the premises. It will further apply to any staff or volunteers representing WHSC.

In Victoria since 1 July 2017, and only specifically in relation to child abuse claims, there is a 'presumption of liability' for any organisation that exercises care, supervision or authority over children, including schools. This means that school staff need to prove that they took 'reasonable precautions' to prevent child abuse by an individual associated with the school, if the Department is to successfully defend a legal claim. This does not change existing duties that school staff already have, but instead reinforces the importance of ensuring that schools take reasonable precautions to minimise the risk of child abuse.

Executive Summary of New Child Safe Standards

New Child Safe Standards

New Child Safe Standard:	Obligations met by:
Standard 1: Culturally Safe Environments	Statement of Commitment Terms of Student Engagement
Standard 2: Child safety and wellbeing is embedded in organisational leadership, governance and culture.	Child Safety Code of Conduct Policy and Procedures - Strategies to embed a Child-Safe Culture Risk Assessment, Reduction and Management
Standard 3: Child and Student Empowerment	Listening to Children
Standard 4: Family Engagement	School Website contains <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Child Safety - Statement of Commitment ● Online Rules and Best Practice
Standard 5: Diversity and Equity	Statement of Commitment Principles
Standard 6: Suitable staff and volunteers	Human Resources Practices and Training Staff Recruitment Procedures Volunteers Policy
Standard 7: Complaints processes	Reporting Procedures Four Critical Actions Child Safety Responding and Reporting Obligations Policy and Procedures
Standard 8: Child safety knowledge skills and awareness	Human Resources Practices and Training
Standard 9: Child safety in physical and online environments	School Website contains <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Child Safety - Statement of Commitment ● Online Rules and Best Practice
Standard 10: Review of child safety practices	Policy Evaluation and Review
Standard 11: Implementation of child safe practices	Wheelers Hill Secondary College Child Safety Policy (this policy)

Contact List

Updated: 22 June 2022

Roles	Name	Phone
AT RISK OF IMMEDIATE HARM		
Victoria Police		000
NO RISK OF IMMEDIATE HARM		
Within Wheelers Hill Secondary College		
Victoria Police		000
Principal	Fern Brisbane (Acting)	0413 270 869
Assistant Principal Assistant Principal	Judy Anderson Jeremy Woods (Acting)	0409 178 123 0477 588 758
Employee Conduct Branch		03 9637 2595
DET Incident Support and Security Operations Centre		1800 126 126
Senior Education Improvement Leader	Eva MacMaster	0408 053 259
Within the Family or Community		
DHHS Child Protection	North Division	1300 664 977
	East Division	1300 360 391
Victoria Police		000
Principal	Fern Brisbane (Acting)	0421 613 730
Assistant Principal Assistant Principal	Judy Anderson Jeremy Woods (Acting)	0409 178 123 0477 588 758
Employee Conduct Branch		03 9637 2595
DET Incident Support and Security Operations Centre		1800 126 126

Senior Education Improvement Leader	Eva MacMaster	0408 053 259
Legal Advice - DET	Legal Division	03 9637 3146

[Refer to the Four Critical Actions for Schools](#)

[Responding to Suspected Child Abuse Template](#)

Definitions

Child

Child means any person under the age of 18.

Child Abuse

Child abuse includes:

- any act committed against a child involving:
 - a. a sexual offence; or
 - b. grooming; and
- the infliction, on a child, of:
 - a. physical violence; or
 - b. serious emotional or psychological harm; and
- serious neglect of a child.

Child-connected work

Child-connected work: work authorised by the school governing authority/provider of a school boarding services and performed by an adult in a school or school boarding premises environment while children are present or reasonably expected to be present.

Child-related work

Child-related work: As defined by the Worker Screening Act 2020 (Vic), child-related work is work that usually involves direct contact (including in person, over the phone, written and online communication) with a child that is a central part of that person's duties. It does not include work that involves occasional direct contact with children that is incidental to the work.

Child-related work means work at or for a service, body or place, or that involves an activity in education institutions, care centres and residential facilities used by children, accommodation services specifically provided for students, clubs, associations or movements, religious organisations, transport services, tuition services, counselling or other support services, overnight camps, and services for children.

Child safety

Child safety 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.

Closely related family member

Parent, carer, parent/carer's spouse or domestic partner, stepparent, parent/carer's mother or father in-law, grandparent, uncle or aunt, brother or sister, including step or half siblings.

School environment

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

- a campus of the school;
- Online or virtual school environments made available or authorised by the school governing authority for use by a child or student (including email, intranet systems, software applications, collaboration tools, and online services); and
- other locations provided by the school or through a third-party provider for a child or student to use (including, without limitation, locations used for camps, approved homestay accommodation, delivery of education and training such as registered training organisations,

TAFEs, non-school senior secondary providers, or another school; or sporting events, excursions, competitions or other events.)

School governing authority

In the case of WHSC, the Principal as authorised by WHSC School Council.

School staff

School staff means an individual working in a school environment who is:

- employed by the Department of Education and Training
- directly engaged or employed by a school council; or
- a volunteer or a contracted service provider (whether or not a body corporate or any other person is an intermediary) engaged by the school governing authority to perform child-related work.
- a pre-service teacher engaged to deliver programs or any other services for WHSC.

Student

Student, in the context of WHSC, is used interchangeably with the term “child”, as primarily the children of WHSC are students. However, this term respectfully includes ALL children and young people, regardless of student status.

Volunteer worker

A volunteer school worker is a person who voluntarily engages in school work or approved community work without payment or reward.

School work

School work means:

- Carrying out the functions of a school council
- Any activity carried out for the welfare of a school, by the school council, any parents’ club or association or any other body organised to promote the welfare of the school
- Any activity carried out for the welfare of the school at the request of the principal or school council
- Providing assistance in the work of any school or kindergarten
- Attending meetings in relation to government schools convened by any organisation which receives government financial support

This is a broad definition and means that volunteers who participate in school community activities, such as fundraising and assisting with excursions, are legally protected (i.e. indemnified) from action by others in the event of an injury or accident whilst they are performing volunteer school work in good faith.

Statement of Commitment

Our students matter.

Wheelers Hill Secondary College is committed to ensuring all students, children and young people are safe from harm; feel safe; and are listened to, heard, and valued.

We commit to providing a setting and experience that prioritises the safety of the students in our care. We foster a Child Safe culture amongst all who are associated with Wheelers Hill Secondary College.

We will never tolerate any form of child abuse, and we remain committed to review, improve, and develop new practices to ensure that students are safe from abuse.

WHSC welcomes students from all backgrounds, including students from Aboriginal backgrounds, students from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds, and students from special education settings. We commit to ensuring the personal and cultural safety of these students.

Whether personally and professionally, as a team, and as a network school every person involved at WHSC has a duty to understand and consistently adhere to our responsibilities and obligations regarding child safety, and we commit to ensuring that every person involved with the College is aware of, and fully understands, their legal and moral obligations, through induction, training and continual professional development processes.

Principles

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

1. Take a preventative, proactive and participatory approach to child safety;
2. Value and empower children to participate in decisions which affect their lives;
3. Foster a culture of openness that supports all persons to safely disclose risks of harm to children;
4. Respect diversity in cultures and child rearing practices while keeping child safety paramount;
5. Provide written guidance on appropriate conduct and behaviour towards children;
6. Engage only the most suitable people to work with children and have high quality staff and volunteer supervision and professional development;
7. Ensure children know who to talk with if they are worried or are feeling unsafe, and that they are comfortable and encouraged to raise such concerns;
8. Report suspected abuse, neglect or mistreatment promptly to the appropriate authorities;
9. Share information appropriately and lawfully with other organisations where the safety and wellbeing of children is at risk; and
10. Value the input of and communicate regularly with families and carers

Policy and Procedures

Strategies to embed a Child Safe Culture

Wheelers Hill Secondary College's culture encourages staff, students, parents and the school community to raise, discuss and scrutinise child safety concerns. This makes it more difficult for abuse to occur and remain hidden.

All child safety documents, including this policy, the [Child Safety Code of Conduct](#), the school's [Child Safety Responding and Reporting Obligations Policy and Procedures](#), [Identifying and Responding to All Forms of Abuse in Victorian Schools](#) and the [Four Critical Actions for Schools](#) are readily available online and in hard copy at reception, for all staff and students to read at any time.

Child safety is everyone's responsibility. **All school staff** are required to:

- Act in accordance with the school's Child Safety [Code of Conduct](#), which clearly sets out the difference between appropriate and inappropriate behaviour
- Act in accordance with the [Child Safety Responding and Reporting Obligations Policy and Procedures](#) at all times, including following the [Four Critical Actions for Schools](#) where necessary
- Undertake annual guidance and training on child safety, including:
 - DET-required e-Module [Protecting Children – Mandatory reporting and other obligations](#)
 - Attend and participate in scheduled Child Safe training
 - Complete any additional training as required.
- Help keep the topic current. Child Safety is a standing agenda item for meetings; staff are required to actively contribute to discussions and reviews on a regular basis.
- Act in accordance with their legal obligations, including:
 - Failure to disclose offence (applies to all adults)
 - Duty of care (applies to all school staff)
 - Mandatory reporting obligations (applies to all mandatory reporters, including teachers, principals, registered psychologists, and registered doctors and nurses)
 - Failure to protect offence (applies to a person in a position of authority within the school)
 - Reportable conduct obligations (applies to all school staff in reporting conduct to the principal, and applies to the principal in reporting to Employee Conduct Branch)
 - Organisational duty of care (applies to the school as an organisation)
 - For more information on these obligations, see [Identifying and Responding to All Forms of Abuse in Victorian Schools](#).

As part of the College's child safe culture, **school leadership** (including members of School Council, the Principal Team, Leadership Team, Coordinators, and Facilitators) will:

- Consider the diversity of all children, including (but not limited to) the needs of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children, children from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds, children with disabilities, and children who are vulnerable, when implementing the Child Safe Standards
- Ensure that child safety is a regular agenda item at school leadership meetings and staff meetings

- Encourage and enable staff professional learning and training to build deeper understandings of child safety and prevention of abuse
- Ensure that no one is prohibited or discouraged from reporting an allegation of child abuse to a person external to the school or from making records of any allegation.

As part of the College's child safe culture, **school mandatory reporting staff** are required to:

- Complete the [Protecting Children – Mandatory reporting and other obligations](#) online module every year (DET requirement).
- Read the school's Child Safety Code of Conduct on induction, and maintain familiarity with that document
- Read the school's [Child Safety Responding and Reporting Obligations Policy and Procedures](#) on induction, and maintain familiarity with that document
- Read the school's Child Safety Policy (this document) on induction, and maintain familiarity with that document.

As part of the College's child safe culture, in performing the functions and powers given to them under the *Education and Training Reform Act 2006*, the **WHSC Staff**, and **School Council members** will:

- Consider the diversity of all children, including (but not limited to) the needs of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children, children from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds, children with disabilities, and children who are vulnerable, when making decisions regarding the Child Safe Standards
- Undertake annual guidance and training on child safety, such as the [Child Safe Standards School Council Training PowerPoint](#).
- Approve the Child Safety Code of Conduct to the extent that it applies to school council employees and members, and if updated, note the new document in its school council meeting minutes
- When hiring employees, ensure that selection, supervision and management practices are child safe

School leadership will maintain records of the above processes.

Child Safety Code of Conduct

Management, staff, volunteers and contractors at WHSC are required to abide by this Code of Conduct.

Under the direction of the Principal Team, the College leadership will:

1. Be responsible for the overall welfare and wellbeing of staff and volunteers;
2. Be accountable for managing and maintaining a duty of care towards staff and volunteers; and
3. Nominate a Child Protection Officer to provide information and support to all staff, volunteers, children, young people and their carers regarding child protection matters.

All people involved in the care of children on behalf of WHSC, at all times, will:

Be professional

1. Work towards the achievement of the aims and purposes of the organisation;
2. Be responsible for relevant administration of programs and activities in their area;
3. Act as positive role models in their conduct with children and young people.
4. Be professional in their actions;
5. Maintain strict impartiality;

Be respectful

1. Maintain a duty of care towards others involved in these programs and activities;
2. Be fair, considerate and honest with others;
3. Treat children and young people with respect and value their ideas and opinions;
4. Respect the privacy of children, their families and teachers/carers, and only disclose information to people who have a need to know;

Be Child-Safe

1. Establish and maintain a child-safe environment in the course of their work;
2. Comply with specific organisational guidelines on physical contact with children;
3. Maintain a child-safe environment for children and young people;

Follow procedure

1. Operate within the policies and guidelines of WHSC
2. Contact the police if a child is at immediate risk of abuse, phone 000.
3. Follow the reporting procedure as per the 'Four Critical Actions for Schools'
https://www.education.vic.gov.au/Documents/about/programs/health/protect/FourCriticalActions_ChildAbuse.pdf

Further, no person shall:

1. Shame, humiliate, oppress, belittle or degrade children or young people;
2. Unlawfully discriminate against any child;
3. Engage in any activity with a child or young person that is likely to physically or emotionally harm them;
4. Initiate unnecessary physical contact with a child or young person, or do things of a personal nature for them that they can do for themselves;
5. Be alone with a child or young person unnecessarily and for more than a very short time;
6. Develop a 'special' relationship with a specific child or young person for their own needs;
7. Show favouritism through the provision of gifts or inappropriate attention;
8. Arrange contact, including online contact, with children or young people outside of the organisation's programs and activities;
9. Photograph or video a child or young person without the consent of the child and his/her parents or guardians;
10. Work with children or young people while under the influence of alcohol or illegal drugs;
11. Engage in open discussions of a mature or adult nature in the presence of children;
12. Use inappropriate language in the presence of children; or
13. Do anything in contravention of the organisation's policies, procedures or this Code of Conduct.

Listening to Children

WHSC exists for its students. The College acknowledges that input from the students is critical in understanding the needs and viewpoints of the students and welcomes feedback and input from students on all issues. The College has committed to creating a safe space where students are able to communicate any concerns, complaints, feedback or other input, and are able to do this in multiple ways. WHSC commits to taking seriously any complaint, concern or feedback.

Terms of Student Engagement

		Individual			
Subjective	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> I am mindful and open to learning. I feel ready to learn. I will learn and grow as a student in my time here at WHSC. I have the right to feel safe and speak up for myself and express my culture. I have a responsibility to speak up for others. 			<ul style="list-style-type: none"> I will take on the challenges asked of me by the facilitators, my teachers and my peers and ask for help if I feel I need it. I will support the work of the staff by showing them, the facilities, and equipment respect. I am responsible for hurt or harm I cause and pay for damage done. I will actively support the participation and inclusion of Aboriginal students. 	Objective
	Seeing: Thinking, Feeling, Attitude, Knowledge, Beliefs	<i>i</i>	<i>it</i>	Actions, Energy, Communicating, Presentation: Going	
	Sharing: Culture, Shared Views, Communication	<i>we</i>	<i>its</i>	Systems, Processes, Environments, Groups : Checking	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> We respect our time together by respecting each other's culture, need for space, safety, and security. We support each other by equally contributing to the work, including others in the work, and sharing responsibility for the quality of the work. We trust each other by allowing others the freedom and space to learn. 				<ul style="list-style-type: none"> We will clean up after ourselves (learning space, toilets, canteen area). We will remember to take what we need during break times and not interrupt other learners. 	
		Collective			

Roles and Responsibilities for WHSC School Staff, Volunteers and Visitors

School leaders will ensure that each person understands their role, responsibilities and behaviour expected in protecting children and young people from abuse and neglect. Staff will comply with the school's Child Safety Code of Conduct, which sets out clearly the difference between appropriate and inappropriate behaviour.

Specific child safety responsibilities:

- The Principal is responsible for reviewing and updating the Child Safety Policy annually.
- The Principal is responsible for monitoring the school's compliance with the Child Safety Policy. The school community should approach the Director if they have any concerns about the school's compliance with the Child Safety Policy.
- The Principal is responsible for informing the school community about this policy, and making it publicly available.
- Other specific roles and responsibilities are named in WHSC's other child safety policies and procedures, including the Child Safe Code of Conduct; Child Safety Responding and Reporting Obligations Policy and Risk Assessment Register.

Reporting Child Safety Concerns or Complaints

WHSC has clear expectations for all staff and volunteers in making a report about a child or young person who may be in need of protection. All staff must follow the school's [Child Safety Responding and Reporting Obligations Policy and Procedures](#), including following the [Four Critical Actions for Schools](#) (expanded below) if there is an incident, disclosure or suspicion of child abuse. Immediate actions should include reporting their concerns to DHHS Child Protection, Victoria Police and/or another appropriate agency and notifying the Principal or a member of the school leadership team of their concerns and the reasons for those concerns.

WHSC will never prohibit or discourage school staff from reporting an allegation of child abuse. The school will always take action to respond to a complaint in accordance with the school's [Child Safety Responding and Reporting Obligations Policy and Procedures](#). In accordance with Action 4 of the Four Critical Actions for Schools, WHSC will work with all stakeholders to provide ongoing support for students affected by child abuse.

Child Safety Responding and Reporting Obligations Policy and Procedures

Purpose

The purpose of this policy is to ensure that all staff and members of our school community understand the various legal and other reporting obligations related to child safety that apply to Wheelers Hill Secondary College. The specific procedures that are applicable at our school are contained in the Reporting Procedures section contained within this appendix.

Scope

This policy applies to all staff, students, visitors, contractors and volunteers at WHSC. It also applies to all staff and students engaged in any school events, activities, services - during program and community hours.

Policy

All children and young people have the right to protection in their best interests.

WHSC understands the important role our school plays in protecting children from abuse including:

- Physical abuse
- Sexual abuse (including sexual exploitation)
- Family violence
- Emotional abuse
- Neglect (including medical neglect)
- Grooming

The staff at WHSC are required by law to comply with various child safety reporting obligations. For detailed information about each obligation, please refer to [Identifying and Responding to All Forms of Abuse in Victorian Schools](#).

At WHSC we also recognise the diversity of the children and young people at our school and take account of their individual needs and backgrounds when considering child safety.

Mandatory Reporting

Principals, registered teachers, registered medical practitioners, nurses and all members of the police force are mandatory reporters under the *Children, Youth and Families Act 2005* (Vic). This will include registered psychologists from March 2019 and school-based counsellors from January 2020 (eg Welfare Officers, Chaplains).

All mandatory reporters must make a report to the Department of Health and Human Services (DHHS) Child Protection as soon as practicable if, during carrying out their professional roles and responsibilities, they form a belief on reasonable grounds that:

- a child has suffered, or is likely to suffer, harm because of physical abuse and/ or sexual abuse, and
- the child's parents have not protected, or are unlikely to protect, the child from harm of that type.

A mandatory reporter who fails to comply with this legal obligation may be committing a criminal offence. It is important for all staff at WHSC to be aware that they are legally obliged to make a mandatory report on each occasion that they form a reasonable belief that a child is in need of

protection and they must make a mandatory report even if the principal does not share their belief that a report is necessary.

At our school, all mandated school staff must undertake the [Mandatory Reporting and Other Obligations eLearning Module](#) annually. We also encourage other staff to undertake the module even though they are not mandatory reporters.

For more information about Mandatory Reporting see the Department's [School Policy and Advisory Guide: Child Protection – Reporting Obligations](#).

Child in need of protection

Any person can make a report to DHHS Child Protection (131 278 – 24 hour service) if they believe on reasonable grounds that a child is in need of protection. The policy of the Department of Education and Training (DET) requires **all staff** who form a reasonable belief that a child is in need of protection to report their concerns to DHHS and Victoria Police, and discuss their concerns with the school leadership team.

For more information about making a report to DHHS Child Protection, see the Department's *School Policy and Advisory Guide: [Child Protection – Making a Report and Four Critical Actions for Schools: Responding to Incidents, Disclosures and Suspicions of Child Abuse](#)*.

At WHSC we also encourage all staff to make a referral to Child FIRST when they have significant concern for a child's wellbeing. For more information about making a referral to Child FIRST see the [School Policy and Advisory Guide: Child Protection – Reporting Obligations](#).

Reportable Conduct

Reportable conduct relates to the additional reporting responsibilities that a school has if allegations are raised against Department of Education employees. The school must notify the Department's Employee Conduct Branch (9637 2594) if we become aware of any reportable conduct allegations involving current or former teachers, contractors, volunteers (including parents), allied health staff and school council employees (*staff employed through local payroll such as gardeners and maintenance*).

There is an allegation of reportable conduct where a person has formed a reasonable belief that there has been:

- A sexual offence (even prior to criminal proceedings commencing), sexual misconduct or physical violence committed against, with or in the presence of a child;
- Behaviour causing significant emotional or physical harm to a child;
- Significant neglect of a child; or
- Misconduct involving any of the above.

The Department, through the Employee Conduct Branch, has a legal obligation to inform the Commission for Children and Young People when an allegation of reportable conduct is made.

If school staff become aware of reportable conduct by any person in the above positions, they should notify the school Director immediately. If the allegation relates to the Director, they should notify the Senior Education Improvement Leader - Inner East.

For more information about Reportable Conduct see [the Department's School Policy and Advisory Guide: Reportable Conduct Scheme](#).

Failure to disclose offence

Reporting child sexual abuse is a community-wide responsibility. **All adults**, not just professionals who work with children, have a legal obligation to report to Victoria Police, as soon as practicable, where they form a 'reasonable belief' that a sexual offence has been committed by an adult against a child under the age of 16 by another person aged 18 years or over. *(The school must follow Department of Education policy and guidelines in the circumstances that the alleged offender is under the age of 18).*

Failure to disclose information to Victoria Police (by calling 000 or local police station) as soon as practicable may amount to a criminal offence unless a person has a 'reasonable excuse' or exemption from doing so.

"Reasonable belief" is not the same as having proof. A 'reasonable belief' is formed if a reasonable person in the same position would have formed the belief on the same grounds.

For example, a 'reasonable belief' might be formed when:

- A child states that they have been sexually abused
- A child states that they know someone who has been sexually abused (sometimes the child may be talking about themselves)
- Someone who knows a child states that the child has been sexually abused
- Professional observations of the child's behaviour or development leads a mandated professional to form a belief that the child has been sexually abused
- Signs of sexual abuse leads to a belief that the child has been sexually abused.

"Reasonable excuse" is defined by law and includes:

- Fear for the safety of any person including yourself or the potential victim (but not including the alleged perpetrator or an organisation)
- Where the information has already been disclosed, for example, through a mandatory report to DHHS Child Protection.

For more information about this reporting obligation, see the [Department's School Policy and Advisory Guide: Failure to disclose offence](#).

Failure to protect offence

This reporting obligation applies to school staff in a position of authority. This can include principals, assistant principals and campus principals. Any staff member in a position of authority who becomes aware that an adult associated with their school (such as an employee, contractor, volunteer or visitor) poses a risk of sexual abuse to a child under the age of 16 under their care, authority or supervision, must take all reasonable steps to remove or reduce that risk. This may include removing the adult (i.e. persons aged 18 years and over) from working with children pending an investigation and reporting your concerns to Victoria Police.

If a school staff member in a position of authority fails to take reasonable steps in these circumstances, this may amount to a criminal offence.

For more information about this reporting obligation, see the [Department's School Policy and Advisory Guide: Failure to protect offence](#).

Grooming

Grooming is a criminal offence under the *Crimes Act 1958* (Vic). This offence targets predatory conduct undertaken by an adult to prepare a child, under the age of 16, to engage in sexual activity at a later time. Grooming can include communicating and/or attempting to befriend or establish a relationship or other emotional connection with the child or their parent/carer.

For more information about this offence and reporting obligations see: [Child Exploitation and Grooming](#).

Reporting Procedures

For students

- All students should feel safe to speak or communicate to any staff member to raise any concerns about their safety or any other concerns that they have.
- If a student does not know who to approach at WHSC they should start with their facilitator.

Managing disclosures made by students

When managing a disclosure, you should:

- Listen to the student and allow them to speak
- Stay calm and use a neutral tone with no urgency and where possible use the child's language and vocabulary (you do not want to frighten the child or interrupt the child)
- Be gentle, patient and non-judgmental throughout
- Highlight to the student it was important for them to tell you about what has happened
- Assure them that they are not to blame for what has occurred
- Do not ask leading questions, for example gently ask, "What happened next?" rather than "Why?"
- Be patient and allow the child to talk at their own pace and in their own words
- Do not pressure the child into telling you more than they want to, they will be asked a lot of questions by other professionals and it is important not to force them to retell what has occurred multiple times
- Reassure the child that you believe them and that disclosing the matter was important for them to do
- Use verbal facilitators such as, "I see", restate the child's previous statement, and use non-suggestive words of encouragement, designed to keep the child talking in an open-ended way ("what happened next?")
- Tell the child in age appropriate language you are required to report to the relevant authority to help stop the abuse, and explain the role of these authorities if appropriate (for a young child this may be as simple as saying "I will need to talk to people to work out what to do next to help you").

When managing a disclosure, you should AVOID:

- Displaying expressions of panic or shock
- Asking questions that are investigative and potentially invasive (this may make the child feel uncomfortable and may cause the child to withdraw)
- Going over the information repeatedly (you are only gathering information to help you form a belief on reasonable grounds that you need to make a report to the relevant authority)
- Making any comments that would lead the student to believe that what has happened is their fault
- Making promises to the child about what will occur next or that things will be different given the process can be unpredictable and different for each child depending on their circumstances (instead reassure them that you and others will do your best to help).

General procedures

Our school will follow the [Four Critical Actions for Schools: Responding to Incidents, Disclosures and Suspicions of Child Abuse](#) (Four Critical Actions) when responding to incidents, disclosures and suspicions of child abuse.

All staff at our school who believe that a child is in need of protection, even if it doesn't meet the threshold required for mandatory reporting or the staff member is not a mandatory reporter, should in the first instance, speak to a member of the leadership team or should make the required reports to DHHS Child Protection and/or Victoria Police as necessary.

At our school the director will be responsible for monitoring overall school compliance with this procedure.

Nothing in this procedure prevents a staff member or any other person from reporting to the relevant authorities if they form a reasonable belief that a child is at risk of abuse.

Reporting suspicions, disclosures or incidents of child abuse

Responsibilities of all school staff

If a school staff member reasonably suspects or witnesses an incident of child abuse or receives a disclosure of child abuse, they must:

- If a child is at immediate risk of harm, separate alleged victims and others involved, administer first aid and call 000.
- Speak to a member of the leadership team as soon as possible, who will follow the [Four Critical Actions](#).
- Make detailed notes of the incident or disclosure using the [Responding to Suspected Child Abuse: Template](#) and ensure that those notes are kept and stored securely in the principal's filing cabinet.
- If the staff member is a mandatory reporter and reasonably believes that a student has suffered physical and/or sexual abuse from which the child's parents have not protected the child, they must make a report to DHHS Child Protection.
- If the staff member has formed a 'reasonable belief' that a sexual offence has been against a child, they must make a report to Victoria Police.

- In circumstances where a member of the leadership team disagrees that a report needs to be made, but the staff member has formed a 'reasonable belief' that the child is in need of protection and/or has been the victim of sexual abuse, the staff member must still contact DHHS Child Protection and/or Victoria Police to make the report.

Responsibilities of Leadership Team Member

The Leadership Team Member is responsible for promptly managing the school's response to an incident, suspicion or disclosure of child abuse, and ensuring that the incident, suspicion or disclosure is taken seriously. The Leadership Team Member is also responsible for responding appropriately to a child who makes or is affected by an allegation of child abuse.

If the Leadership Team Member receives a report from a school staff member or member of the school community of a suspicion, disclosure or incident of child abuse, they must:

- Follow the [Four Critical Actions](#) as soon as possible, including:
 - Responding to an emergency
 - Reporting to authorities/referring to services
 - Contacting parents/carers and
 - Providing ongoing support.
- Make detailed notes of the incident or disclosure, including actions taken using the [Responding to Suspected Child Abuse: Template](#) and ensure that those notes are kept and stored securely in the College Safe Room and or locked filing cabinet as well as a secure drive. They are also responsible for ensuring that any staff member who reported the incident, disclosure or suspicion to them also makes and keeps notes of the incident.
- At WHSC, the Principal will be responsible for ensuring that there is a prompt response to the disclosure and that the child is appropriately supported. If the Principal/other nominated staff member responsible above is unavailable, another member of the leadership team will take on the role and responsibilities described in this section.
- Recordkeeping requirements are to be followed to ensure records are created and maintained in accordance with the Public Record Office Victoria. No records which are likely for civil action legal proceedings can be destroyed.

Duty of care and ongoing support for students

Fulfilling the requirements in this procedure does not displace or discharge any other obligations that arise if a person reasonably believes that a child is at risk of abuse.

All staff have a duty of care to take reasonable steps to prevent reasonably foreseeable harm to students. All staff must ensure that a member of the leadership team or other appropriate staff member is aware of any incidents, suspicions, or disclosures of child abuse as soon as possible after they occur. This will allow appropriate supports to be put in place for the student affected.

For school visitors, volunteers and school community members

All community members aged 18 years or over should be aware of their legal obligations – see Failure to disclose offence above, in this Policy.

Any person can make a report to DHHS Child Protection if they believe on reasonable grounds that a child needs protection. For contact details see the [Four Critical Actions](#).

There is no requirement for community members to inform the school if they are making a disclosure to DHHS Child Protection or the Victoria Police. However, where a community member is concerned about the safety of a child or children at the school, and where disclosure of that concern will not compromise any potential police investigation, the community member should report this concern to the Principal so that appropriate steps to support the student can be taken.

Recordkeeping requirements of incidents and allegations of child sexual abuse

We should ensure full and accurate records are created to document all aspects of the allegation and investigation. These records must be properly managed, protected and retained over time.

Carefully consider which records might reasonably be required in the case of an allegation being made in the future and ensure they are properly managed and retained. An allegation may be made many years after an incident. Being able to find and access authentic, informative and reliable records is likely to be critical to the investigation.

The sorts of records which are likely to be of importance:

- Personnel and work placement records, including results of Working with Children Checks.
- Records which could be used to provide information about the whereabouts of an alleged abuser or child within a particular timeframe (rosters, attendance sheets, sign on sheets, observation records, personnel records, student work placement records, leave records, records showing travel or visits, enrolment, attendance, absence records).
- Records outlining the program or service, what it involved and how it was managed. This might include policies, procedures or flyers outlining the program.
- Records detailing policies, guidelines, training programs and behavioural standards.

Examples of records which could form part of the allegation and investigation record are

- Letters or emails making allegations or in relation to allegations (if this occurs verbally, a record should be made of this).
- Incident reports, witness statements.
- Records, including notes, of meetings or discussions about the actual or alleged incident.
- Investigation records.
- Referrals to law enforcement authorities and briefs of evidence supporting cases, including evidence gathered for cases that do not proceed.
- Reports received from medical practitioners, health professionals, psychologists, teachers, coaches, social workers, legal officers, counsellors, chaplains and case officers in relation to actual or alleged incidents.
- Records documenting support and remedial action i.e. claims, assessments, support, counselling, compensation, redress.

- Records of cases or decisions by bodies, tribunals, courts.
- Rosters, sign on sheets, personnel records of employees and volunteers, records detailing student work placements.
- Enrolment, attendance and absence records of children.
- Permission forms from parents and carers.
- Surveillance images and footage.
- Program flyers, location maps, photographs of the environment.

FOUR CRITICAL ACTIONS FOR SCHOOLS

Responding to Incidents, Disclosures and Suspicions of Child Abuse

1 RESPONDING TO AN EMERGENCY

If there is no risk of immediate harm go to **Action 2**.

If a child is at immediate risk of harm you **must** ensure their safety by:

- separating alleged victims and others involved
 - administering first aid
 - calling **000 for urgent medical and/or police assistance** to respond to immediate health or safety concerns
 - identifying a contact person at the school for future liaison with Police.
- Where necessary, you may also need to maintain the integrity of the potential crime scene and preserve evidence.

2 REPORTING TO AUTHORITIES / REFERRING TO SERVICES

As soon as immediate health and safety concerns are addressed, you **must** report all incidents, suspicions and disclosure of child abuse as soon as possible. Failure to report physical and sexual child abuse may amount to a criminal offence.

← Q: Where does the source of suspected abuse come from? →

WITHIN THE SCHOOL

You **must** report all instances of suspected abuse to the school principal and/or school staff member, contractor, volunteer or visitor to Victoria Police.

You **must also** report **internally** to:

- **GOVERNMENT SCHOOLS**
 - School principal and/or leadership team
 - Employee Conduct Branch
 - DET Incident Support and Operations Centre
- **CATHOLIC SCHOOLS**
 - School principal and/or leadership team
 - Diocesan education office.
- **INDEPENDENT SCHOOLS**
 - School principal and/or school chairperson
 - Commission for Children and Young People on **1300 782 978**

WITHIN THE FAMILY OR COMMUNITY

DHHS CHILD PROTECTION You **must** report to DHHS Child Protection if a child is considered to be:

- in need of protection from child abuse
- at risk of being harmed (or has been harmed) and the harm has had or is likely to have, a serious impact on the child's safety, stability or development.

VICTORIA POLICE

You **must also** report all instances of suspected sexual abuse (including grooming) to Victoria Police.

You **must also** report **internally** to:

- **GOVERNMENT SCHOOLS**
 - School principal and/or leadership team
 - DET Incident Support and Operations Centre
- **CATHOLIC SCHOOLS**
 - School principal and/or leadership team
 - Diocesan education office.
- **INDEPENDENT SCHOOLS**
 - School principal and/or chairperson.

YOU MUST TAKE ACTION

- You **must** act by following the Four Critical Actions, as soon as you witness an incident, receive a disclosure or form a reasonable belief* that a child has, or is at risk of being abused.

*A reasonable belief is a deliberately low threshold. This enables authorities to investigate and take action.

3 CONTACTING PARENTS/CARERS

Your principal **must** consult with DHHS Child Protection or Victoria Police to determine what information can be shared with parents/carers. They may advise:

- **not to contact** the parent/carer (e.g. parents are alleged to have engaged in the abuse or the child is a mature minor and does not wish for their parent/carer to be contacted)
- **to contact** the parents/carers and provide agreed information (this must be done as soon as possible, preferably on the same day of the incident, disclosure or suspicion)
- **how to communicate** with all relevant parties with consideration for their safety.

4 PROVIDING ONGOING SUPPORT

Your school **must** provide support for children impacted by abuse. This should include the development of a **Student Support Plan** in consultation with wellbeing professionals.

This is an essential part of your duty of care requirements. Strategies may include development of a safety plan, direct support and referral to wellbeing professionals and support.

You **must** follow the **Four Critical Actions** every time you become aware of a further instance or risk of abuse. This includes reporting new information to authorities.

OTHER CONCERNS

If you believe that a child is not subject to abuse but you still hold significant concerns, you **must** still act. This may include making a referral or seeking advice from:

- Child FIRST/The Orange Door (in circumstances where the family are open to receiving support)
- DHHS Child Protection
- Victoria Police.

CONTACT

DHHS CHILD PROTECTION

- **AREA**
 - North Division **1300 664 977**
 - South Division **1300 655 795**
 - East Division **1300 380 391**
 - West Division (Rural) **1800 075 599**
 - West Division (Metro) **1300 664 977**

AFTER HOURS

After hours, weekends, public holidays **19 12 78**

CHILD FIRST

<https://services.dhhs.vic.gov.au/referal-and-support-teams>

ORANGE DOOR

<https://www.vic.gov.au/familyviolence/the-orange-door.html>

VICTORIA POLICE

000 or your local police station

DET INCIDENT SUPPORT AND OPERATIONS CENTRE

1800 126 126

INCIDENT MANAGEMENT AND SUPPORT UNIT

1800 126 126

EMPLOYEE CONDUCT BRANCH

(03) 9637 2595

DIOCESAN OFFICE

Melbourne: (03) 9237 0228

Bairnsdale: (03) 5297 135

Sae: (03) 5827 6600

Sardulur: (03) 5443 2377

INDEPENDENT SCHOOLS VICTORIA

(03) 9825 7200

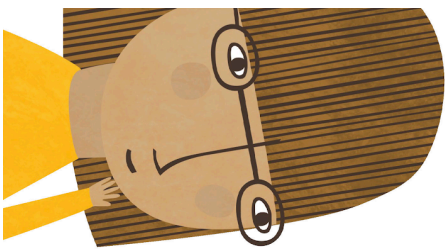
THE LOOKOUT

The LOOKOUT has a service directory, guidance to help you respond to family violence. <http://www.lookout.org.au>

Family reference website for victims of child abuse: **1800 060 060**

For counselling information and referral service: **1800 737 732**

Four Critical Actions



All allegations of reportable conduct **must** be reported as soon as possible to:

- **GOVERNMENT SCHOOLS**
 - Employee Conduct Branch
- **CATHOLIC SCHOOLS**
 - Diocesan education office
- **INDEPENDENT SCHOOLS**
 - Commission for Children and Young People on **1300 782 978**

You **must also** report **internally** to:

- **GOVERNMENT SCHOOLS**
 - School principal and/or leadership team
 - DET Incident Support and Operations Centre
- **CATHOLIC SCHOOLS**
 - School principal and/or leadership team
 - Diocesan education office.
- **INDEPENDENT SCHOOLS**
 - School principal and/or chairperson.



PROTECT

Responding to Suspected Child Abuse: A Template for all Victorian Schools

When to use this template

School staff should use this template to document any incident, disclosure or suspicion that a child has been, or is at risk of being abused. This template should be used in conjunction with following the **Four Critical Actions For Schools: Responding to Incidents, Disclosures and Suspicions of Child Abuse**.

Completing this template should not impact on reporting times. If a child is in immediate danger school staff should report immediately to Victoria Police.

Whilst you may need to gather the information to make a report, remember it is not the role of school staff to investigate abuse, leave this to Victoria Police and/or DHHS Child Protection.

Why record this information?

When completing this template your aim should be to provide as much information as possible. This information will be critical to any reports and may be sought at a later date if the matter is the subject of Court proceedings. These notes may also later assist you if you are required to provide evidence to support any decisions.

It is a requirement under *Ministerial Order No. 870 - Child Safe Standards - Managing the risk of child abuse in schools* for schools to keep clear and comprehensive notes on all observations, disclosures and other details that led them to suspect the abuse.



RESPONDING TO AN INCIDENT, DISCLOSURE OR SUSPICION OF CHILD ABUSE

PLEASE NOTE: IF YOU ARE MAKING A REPORT TO DHHS CHILD PROTECTION OR VICTORIA POLICE YOU MUST SEEK ADVICE BEFORE CONTACTING PARENTS/CARERS SO AS NOT TO COMPROMISE ANY INVESTIGATION OR PLACE A CHILD AT FURTHER RISK.

STAFF MEMBER LEADING THE RESPONSE

NAME:

OCCUPATION:

LOCATION (SCHOOL ADDRESS):

RELATIONSHIP TO CHILD:

CRITICAL ACTION 1: IMMEDIATE RESPONSE TO AN INCIDENT

If anyone is in immediate danger school staff should report immediately to Victoria Police on 000.

See Action 1 of Four Critical Actions For Schools: Responding to Incidents, Disclosures and Suspicions of Child Abuse

RESPONDING TO AN EMERGENCY

DID THE CHILD REQUIRE FIRST AID? PROVIDE DETAILS IF 'YES':

WHO ADMINISTERED THIS? (NAME AND TITLE)

DID THE CHILD REQUIRE FURTHER IMMEDIATE MEDICAL ASSISTANCE?

CURRENT LOCATION AND SAFETY STATUS:

E.G. ARE ALL IMPACTED STUDENTS SAFE AND NOT IN ANY IMMEDIATE DANGER?

IF A CHILD IS IN IMMEDIATE DANGER SCHOOL STAFF SHOULD REPORT IMMEDIATELY TO VICTORIA POLICE ON 000.

CHILD'S INFORMATION

PERSONAL DETAILS	
NAME:	GENDER:
YEAR LEVEL/CLASS:	DATE OF BIRTH:
RESIDENTIAL ADDRESS:	
PARENT/CARER NAME/S:	
PARENT/CARER CONTACT:	
LANGUAGE(S) SPOKEN BY CHILD:	
DISABILITIES, MENTAL OR PHYSICAL HEALTH ISSUES:	

CHILD'S BACKGROUND

CULTURAL STATUS AND RELIGIOUS BACKGROUND

IF THE CHILD IS OF ABORIGINAL OR TORRES STRAIT ISLANDER BACKGROUND, GOVERNMENT SCHOOLS MUST CONTACT THEIR KOORIE ENGAGEMENT SUPPORT OFFICER, AND CATHOLIC SCHOOLS MUST CONTACT THE DIOCESAN EDUCATION OFFICE TO ARRANGE CULTURALLY APPROPRIATE SUPPORT. IF THE CHILD IS AN INTERNATIONAL STUDENT YOU MUST NOTIFY THE INTERNATIONAL EDUCATION DIVISION ON (03) 9637 2990.

ANY KNOWN PREVIOUS HISTORY OF SUSPECTED ABUSE

(PRIOR TO THIS INCIDENT, DISCLOSURE OR SUSPICION OR INVOLVEMENT WITH AGENCIES):

FAMILY BACKGROUND

FAMILY COMPOSITION (IF KNOWN):

LIST PARENTING OR CARE ARRANGEMENTS AND SIBLING NAMES AND AGES

ANY OTHER PEOPLE LIVING WITH THE CHILD (IF KNOWN):

FAMILY BACKGROUND

DISABILITY, MENTAL OR PHYSICAL HEALTH ISSUES IN FAMILY (IF KNOWN):

LIKELY REACTION TO A REPORT BEING MADE (IF KNOWN):

DETAILS OF THE INCIDENT, DISCLOSURE OR SUSPICION

GROUNDS FOR YOUR BELIEF THAT A CHILD HAS BEEN, OR IS AT RISK OF ABUSE

INDICATORS OR INSTANCES WHICH LED YOU TO BELIEVE A CHILD/CHILDREN ARE
SUBJECT TO CHILD ABUSE, OR AT RISK OF ABUSE:

*DETAIL ANY DISCLOSURES OR INCIDENTS OR SUSPICIONS (INCLUDING NAMES, TIMES AND DATES DOCUMENTING
A CHILD'S EXACT WORDS AS FAR AS POSSIBLE). INCLUDE SPECIFIC DETAIL HERE ON WHAT LED YOU TO FORM A
REASONABLE BELIEF THAT A CHILD HAS BEEN, OR IS AT RISK OF BEING ABUSED*

ANY PHYSICAL INDICATORS OF ABUSE:

ANY BEHAVIOURAL INDICATORS OF ABUSE:

ANY PATTERNS OF BEHAVIOUR OR PRIOR CONCERNS LEADING UP TO AN INCIDENT,
DISCLOSURE OR SUSPICION:

**DETAILS OF PERSONS ALLEGED TO HAVE
COMMITTED THE ABUSE (IF KNOWN)**

NAME:

GENDER:

DATE OF BIRTH:

RELATIONSHIP TO CHILD:

NOTING IF THEY ARE WITHIN THE SCHOOL OR WITHIN THE FAMILY AND COMMUNITY (THIS WILL IMPACT WHO YOU REPORT TO)

ADDRESS:

CONTACT DETAILS:

CRITICAL ACTION 2: REPORTING

See Action 2 of **Four Critical Actions For Schools: Responding to Incidents, Disclosures and Suspicions of Child Abuse**

REPORTING TO AUTHORITIES

TICK THE AUTHORITIES YOU HAVE REPORTED TO:

- VICTORIA POLICE
- DHHS CHILD PROTECTION
- CHILD FIRST
- DECISION NOT TO REPORT

IF YOU'VE DECIDED NOT TO REPORT, LIST YOUR REASONS HERE. ALSO INCLUDE ANY FOLLOW-UP ACTIONS UNDERTAKEN BY YOU BELOW:

PROVIDE DETAILS OF YOUR REPORT:

DATE:

TIME:

AUTHORITY:

OUTCOMES FROM THE REPORT:

REPORTING INTERNALLY

PROVIDE DETAILS OF YOUR DISCUSSION WITH SCHOOL LEADERSHIP:

TIME:

DATE:

NAMES:

DISCUSSION OUTCOMES:

PROVIDE DETAILS OF YOUR INTERNAL DISCUSSIONS TO EITHER OF THE FOLLOWING:

GOVERNMENT SCHOOL STAFF MUST REPORT TO SECURITY SERVICES UNIT AND ALSO TO THE EMPLOYEE CONDUCT BRANCH IF THE INCIDENT, DISCLOSURE OR SUSPICION INVOLVES A STAFF MEMBER, CONTRACTOR OR VOLUNTEER

CATHOLIC SCHOOL STAFF MUST REPORT TO THEIR CATHOLIC DIOCESAN EDUCATION OFFICE

TIME:

DATE:

NAMES:

DISCUSSION OUTCOMES:

CRITICAL ACTION 3: CONTACTING PARENTS/CARERS

See Action 3 of **Four Critical Actions For Schools: Responding to Incidents, Disclosures and Suspicions of Child Abuse**

ACTIONS TAKEN

PROVIDE DETAILS OF YOUR DISCUSSION WITH PARENTS/CARERS (IF APPROPRIATE):

SCHOOL STAFF MUST CONSULT WITH VICTORIA POLICE AND/OR DHHS CHILD PROTECTION TO DETERMINE IF IT IS APPROPRIATE TO CONTACT PARENTS. IF IT IS, PARENTS MUST BE CONTACTED AS SOON AS POSSIBLE (PREFERABLY ON THE SAME DAY OF THE INCIDENT, DISCLOSURE OR SUSPICION).

HAVE YOU SOUGHT ADVICE FROM DHHS CHILD PROTECTION OR VICTORIA POLICE?

- NO
 YES

IS IT APPROPRIATE TO CONTACT PARENT/CARER?

- NO
 YES

LIST REASONS IF IT IS NOT APPROPRIATE TO CONTACT PARENT/CARER:

IF CONTACTING PARENT/CARER, PROVIDE THE FOLLOWING DETAILS:

NAME OF STAFF MEMBER MAKING THE CALL:

NAME OF PARENT/CARER RECEIVING THE CALL:

DISCUSSION OUTCOMES:

CRITICAL ACTION 4: PROVIDING ONGOING SUPPORT

See Action 4 of **Four Critical Actions For Schools: Responding to Incidents, Disclosures and Suspicions of Child Abuse**

PLANNED ACTIONS

INCLUDE DETAIL ON WHAT FOLLOW-UP ACTIONS HAVE OCCURRED TO SUPPORT THE STUDENT (FOR EXAMPLE REFERRAL TO WELLBEING PROFESSIONALS AND OTHER SPECIALISED SERVICES, THE CONVENING OF A STUDENT SUPPORT GROUP AND DEVELOPMENT OF SUPPORT PLANS):

FOLLOW-UP ACTIONS:

SUPPORT:

REFERRAL(S):

PROCESS OF REVIEW

COMPLETE THIS SECTION BETWEEN 4- 6 WEEKS AFTER AN INCIDENT, SUSPICION OR DISCLOSURE OF ABUSE IN CONJUNCTION WITH YOUR SCHOOL LEADERSHIP TEAM.

THIS WILL SUPPORT YOU AND YOUR SCHOOL TO CONTINUE TO PROTECT CHILDREN IN YOUR CARE AND TO REFLECT ON YOUR PROCESSES AND THE NEED FOR ANY FOLLOW-UP ACTIONS.

SAFETY AND WELLBEING

CURRENT SAFETY AND WELLBEING OF THE CHILD

IS THE CHILD SAFE FROM ABUSE AND HARM?

- NO
- YES

IF NOT CONSIDER THE NEED TO MAKE A FURTHER REPORT.

DOES THE CHILD HAVE ANY WELLBEING ISSUES THAT ARE NOT CURRENTLY BEING ADDRESSED?

- NO
- YES

IF SO, CONSIDER HOW THESE CAN BE ADDRESSED AND CAPTURED WITHIN A STUDENT SUPPORT PLAN.

CURRENT WELLBEING OF OTHER CHILDREN WHO MAY BE IMPACTED BY THE ABUSE

ARE THERE ANY OTHER CHILDREN WHO MAY BE IMPACTED BY THE ABUSE?

- NO
- YES

IF SO HAVE THEIR WELLBEING NEEDS BEEN MET?

- NO
- YES

CURRENT WELLBEING OF IMPACTED STAFF MEMBERS

DOES THE STAFF MEMBER WHO MADE THE REPORT/WITNESSED AN INCIDENT, FORMED A SUSPICION OR RECEIVED A DISCLOSURE REQUIRE ANY SUPPORT?

- NO
- YES

IF SO HAS THIS BEEN RECEIVED?

- NO
- YES

REVIEW OF ACTIONS TAKEN

HAVE SCHOOL STAFF FOLLOWED THE FOUR CRITICAL ACTIONS FOR SCHOOLS: RESPONDING TO INCIDENTS, DISCLOSURES OR SUSPICIONS OF CHILD ABUSE?

WAS AN APPROPRIATE DECISION MADE
IN RELATION TO WHEN TO ACT?

- NO
- YES

COULD THE SUSPECTED ABUSE HAVE BEEN
DETECTED EARLIER?

- NO
- YES

ACTION 1

DID THE SCHOOL TAKE APPROPRIATE ACTION
IN AN EMERGENCY?

- NO
- YES

ACTION 2

WAS A REPORT MADE TO THE APPROPRIATE
AUTHORITIES AND INTERNALLY?

- NO
- YES

WERE SUBSEQUENT REPORTS MADE IF
NECESSARY?

- NO
- YES

ACTION 3

DID THE SCHOOL CONTACT THE
PARENTS/CARERS ASAP?

- NO
- YES

HAVE THE PARENTS CONTINUED TO BE
ENGAGED IF APPROPRIATE?

- NO
- YES

ACTION 4

HAS THE SCHOOL PROVIDED ADEQUATE
SUPPORT FOR THE STUDENT?

- NO
- YES

HAS A STUDENT SUPPORT PLAN BEEN
ESTABLISHED, IMPLEMENTED & REVIEWED?

- NO
- YES

HAS A STUDENT SUPPORT GROUP
BEEN ESTABLISHED?

- NO
- YES

WAS THE STUDENT APPROPRIATELY
SUPPORTED IN ANY INTERVIEWS?

- NO
- YES

HAVE ANY COMPLAINTS BEEN RECEIVED?

- NO
- YES

HAVE THE COMPLAINTS BEEN RESOLVED?

- NO
- YES

OTHER LEARNINGS

Risk Assessment, Reduction and Management

Wheelers Hill Secondary College believes the wellbeing of children and young people is paramount, and is vigilant in ensuring proper risk management processes, found in the school’s Risk Assessment Register. The school recognises there are potential risks to children and young people and will take a risk management approach by undertaking preventative measures.

We will identify and mitigate the risks of child abuse in school environments by considering the nature of each school environment, the activities expected to be conducted in that environment and the characteristics and needs of all children expected to be present in that environment.

WHSC monitors and evaluates the effectiveness of the actions it takes to reduce or remove risks to child safety; more information can be found in the school’s Risk Assessment Register.

Risk Assessment Register

Identified Risk	Non-child safe school culture
Description of Risk	Risk the school does not develop a culture of child safety
Existing Controls	Child Safe Policy has been developed <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● is available to all staff ● has been developed with staff input ● staff are offered training and refreshers each year ● is available on the school’s website
Effectiveness of Existing Controls	Effective Acceptable Needs Improvement Ineffective
Risk Consequence	Severe Major Moderate Minor Insignificant
Risk Likelihood	Almost certain Likely Possible Unlikely Rare
Risk Rating	Extreme (Unacceptable) High (Tolerable) Medium (Tolerable) Low (Acceptable)
Controls to be Implemented	<input type="checkbox"/> ensure staff selection, supervision, and management practices are in place <input type="checkbox"/> policy is reviewed each year <input type="checkbox"/> child safety is embedded in the school’s practices
Revised Risk Rating	Low (Acceptable)

Identified Risk	Child abuse is not reported
Description of Risk	Risk that the school does not report child safety concerns
Existing Controls	Key strategies are embedded

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • roles and responsibilities are allocated • school community is informed • strategies reviewed regularly • contact information at hand • key documents collated • reporting templates made available
Effectiveness of Existing Controls	Effective Acceptable Needs Improvement Ineffective
Risk Consequence	Severe Major Moderate Minor Insignificant
Risk Likelihood	Almost certain Likely Possible Unlikely Rare
Risk Rating	Extreme (Unacceptable) High (Tolerable) Medium (Tolerable) Low (Acceptable)
Controls to be Implemented	<input type="checkbox"/> Discussion protocol - "Today I noticed" / "This week I noticed students from a partner school suggesting ..." <input type="checkbox"/> Staff are informed of Child Safety Policy <input type="checkbox"/> Staff receive training re: Child Safety <input type="checkbox"/> Provide easy access to contact details and forms
Revised Risk Rating	High (Tolerable)

Identified Risk	Child safety incident due to a child being unsupervised
Description of Risk	Risk of incident when unsupervised including during recreational activities
Existing Controls	Clear division of responsibility between school teachers, facilitators, pre-service, and other staff.
Effectiveness of Existing Controls	Effective Acceptable Needs Improvement Ineffective
Risk Consequence	Severe Major Moderate Minor Insignificant
Risk Likelihood	Almost certain Likely Possible Unlikely Rare
Risk Rating	Extreme (Unacceptable) High (Tolerable) Medium (Tolerable) Low (Acceptable)
Controls to be Implemented	<input type="checkbox"/> Advise teachers of our expectations and that the duty of care is on them as the supervising teacher <input type="checkbox"/> Employ VIT qualified teachers as facilitators (where possible) <input type="checkbox"/> Observe supervising teachers to ensure high risk areas of the Tech School are actively supervised
Revised Risk Rating	Medium (Tolerable)

Identified Risk	Unsafe online environment
Description of Risk	Risk of a child safety incident in an online environment
Existing Controls	<p>Booking processes ensure:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Teachers book using email or telephone rather than just a web-form. • Follow-up with teachers if it is their first time engaging with MTS online <p>Online remote learning processes ensure:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Provide the Online Rules and Best Practice webpage
Effectiveness of Existing Controls	Effective Acceptable Needs Improvement Ineffective
Risk Consequence	Severe Major Moderate Minor Insignificant
Risk Likelihood	Almost certain Likely Possible Unlikely Rare
Risk Rating	Extreme (Unacceptable) High (Tolerable) Medium (Tolerable) Low (Acceptable)
Controls to be Implemented	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> Privacy Impact Assessment has been completed for online platforms <input type="checkbox"/> Staff have a pilot / co-pilot arrangement <input type="checkbox"/> Debriefs and staff meetings where issues are raised <input type="checkbox"/> Working to ensure teachers are online and aware of their duty of care
Revised Risk Rating	Medium (Tolerable)

Identified Risk	Contractors in the premises commit abuse
Description of Risk	Risk that contractors commit abuse
Existing Controls	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Students are under observation at all times. • Where possible work must be undertaken before or after program delivery times such as school holiday periods. • Contractors have limited access to the space and are required to sign in and out at each visit. • Contractors do not typically complete work in the same areas where students are.
Effectiveness of Existing Controls	Effective Acceptable Needs Improvement Ineffective
Risk Consequence	Severe Major Moderate Minor Insignificant
Risk Likelihood	Almost certain Likely Possible Unlikely Rare

Risk Rating	Extreme (Unacceptable) High (Tolerable) Medium (Tolerable) Low (Acceptable)
Controls to be Implemented	<input type="checkbox"/> General Office is staffed at all times <input type="checkbox"/> Contractors are highly visible and challenged if staff are unaware of their presence <input type="checkbox"/> Works are organised outside of program hours unless in emergency
Revised Risk Rating	Medium (Tolerable)

Identified Risk	School staff member, pre-service teacher or volunteer commits abuse
Description of Risk	Risk that staff, pre-service teacher or volunteer commits abuse
Existing Controls	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Staff utilise separate bathrooms from students and in case of emergency, two staff will be necessary. • Staff, pre-service and volunteers do not engage with individual or small groups of students in confined, closed off or otherwise private spaces. • During programs, staff update each other when they are moving locations.
Effectiveness of Existing Controls	Effective Acceptable Needs Improvement Ineffective
Risk Consequence	Severe Major Moderate Minor Insignificant
Risk Likelihood	Almost certain Likely Possible Unlikely Rare
Risk Rating	Extreme (Unacceptable) High (Tolerable) Medium (Tolerable) Low (Acceptable)
Controls to be Implemented	<input type="checkbox"/> Induction for staff, PSTs, and volunteers are clear on risk management and duty of care <input type="checkbox"/> Discussion at staff meetings around Child Safe
Revised Risk Rating	Medium (Tolerable)

Identified Risk	Child safety incident at excursions, open days, school-based events, community event or camps
Description of Risk	Risk of a child safety incident occurring during outside the school premises, during a school activity
Existing Controls	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Risk-assessments are completed per event and discussed as part of the project management framework. • Ensure pre-briefing covers incident management.

Effectiveness of Existing Controls	Effective Acceptable Needs Improvement Ineffective
Risk Consequence	Severe Major Moderate Minor Insignificant
Risk Likelihood	Almost certain Likely Possible Unlikely Rare
Risk Rating	Extreme (Unacceptable) High (Tolerable) Medium (Tolerable) Low (Acceptable)
Controls to be Implemented	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> Ensure compliant levels of supervision <input type="checkbox"/> Clear roles and responsibilities are defined <input type="checkbox"/> All staff / volunteers / external stakeholders are checked <input type="checkbox"/> Designation of spaces are clear <input type="checkbox"/> Staff are not to congregate together <input type="checkbox"/> All students are to be visible at all times <input type="checkbox"/> Bathrooms are pre-identified and monitored
Revised Risk Rating	High (Tolerable)

Identified Risk	Overnight Camp
Description of Risk	Risk of a child safety incident occurring during an overnight Camp
Existing Controls	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Consider the need for overnight camps ● Risk-assessments are completed per
Effectiveness of Existing Controls	Effective Acceptable Needs Improvement Ineffective
Risk Consequence	Severe Major Moderate Minor Insignificant
Risk Likelihood	Almost certain Likely Possible Unlikely Rare
Risk Rating	Extreme (Unacceptable) High (Tolerable) Medium (Tolerable) Low (Acceptable)
Controls to be Implemented	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> Setting of child to adult ratios based on government advice for overnight stays. <input type="checkbox"/> Presence of male and female staff at all times to handle different kinds of issues. <input type="checkbox"/> Provision of a variety of contacts and contact methods. (Phone, clearly labelling staff rooms, map of grounds highlighting staff rooms) <input type="checkbox"/> Seek guidance on the students sharing rooms. <input type="checkbox"/> Ensure clear rules and expectations are set prior to the camp, and parents and students co-sign an agreement -

	allowing for students to be picked-up and sent home for mis-behaviour.
Revised Risk Rating	High (Tolerable)

Identified Risk	Template
Description of Risk	
Existing Controls	
Effectiveness of Existing Controls	Effective Acceptable Needs Improvement Ineffective
Risk Consequence	Severe Major Moderate Minor Insignificant
Risk Likelihood	Almost certain Likely Possible Unlikely Rare
Risk Rating	Extreme (Unacceptable) High (Tolerable) Medium (Tolerable) Low (Acceptable)
Controls to be Implemented	<input type="checkbox"/> a <input type="checkbox"/> b <input type="checkbox"/> c
Revised Risk Rating	

		INSIGNIFICANT	MINOR	MODERATE	MAJOR			SEVERE		
CONSEQUENCE										

Acceptability Chart:

	Extreme	Unacceptable	Executive Oversight
	High	Tolerable	Ongoing Management Review
	Medium	Tolerable	Frequent Risk Owner Review
	Low	Acceptable	Periodic Review

The purpose of the risk profile is to:

- provide a snapshot of all risk assessments
- indicate treatment priorities
- confirm the relative severity of identified risks

Using a title which best represents each risk, plot all assessed risks onto the profile. Plot each risk according to the likelihood and consequence considering the rating of the effectiveness of the controls.

This should be used in conjunction with the Risk Register template.

Human Resources Practices and Training

Staff

WHSC follows the Department's Recruitment in Schools guide to ensure child safe recruitment practices, available on the [Department's website](#).

WHSC is committed to ensuring applicants are thoroughly screened before being offered employment. This includes addressing child safety within selection criteria, interview questioning techniques, thorough background, referee, and Working with Children checks. All staff are required to hold a current Working with Children card, VIT registration with WHSC listed.

Induction and ongoing professional development programs provide comprehensive training in Child Safe practices, and obligations and expectations of staff and volunteers.

WHSC fosters a Child Safe culture, continually monitoring and reviewing practices and procedures to ensure that all students are safe and feel safe. WHSC is committed to the safety and wellbeing of all students.

Volunteers

All prospective volunteers are required to comply with our school's Volunteer Policy, including in relation to assessing the suitability of prospective volunteers and obtaining and maintaining a valid Working with Children Check, with listed, as required under this policy.

Training

Training and education are important to ensure that everyone in the school understands that child safety is everyone's responsibility.

Our school culture aims for all staff and volunteers (in addition to parents/carers and children) to feel confident and comfortable in coming forward with any allegations or suspicions of child abuse or child safety concerns. We train our staff and volunteers to identify, assess, and minimise risks of child abuse and to detect potential signs of child abuse. This training occurs annually or more often as required.

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

New employees and volunteers will be inducted into the school, including by being referred to the Child Safety Policy (this document), the [Child Safety Code of Conduct](#), and the [Child Safety Responding and Reporting Obligations Policy and Procedures](#) on the school website. They will also be supervised regularly to ensure they understand WHSC's commitment to child safety, and that their behaviour towards children is safe and appropriate. All employees of our school will be monitored and assessed via regular performance review to ensure their continuing suitability for child-connected work. Any inappropriate behaviour will be reported by school staff to the Director or Senior Education Improvement Leader and will be managed in accordance with WHSC'S Child Safety Responding and Reporting Obligations Policy and Procedures where required.

Staff Recruitment Procedures

The Principal, as the delegated authority, must be satisfied that the prospective employee is suitable for child-connected work. Accordingly, the following procedures have been enacted at WHSC.

Position Description Inclusion

WHSC has a strong commitment to child safety. This role requires your commitment to ensuring Child Safe policies are adhered to and the safety of children is paramount.

Child Safe Standards Statement

WHSC is committed to the Child Safe standards, and continuously working to ensure that our students feel safe and are safe.

Victorian government schools are child safe environments. Our schools actively promote the safety and wellbeing of all students, and all school staff are committed to protecting students from abuse or harm in the school environment, in accordance with their legal obligations including child safe standards. The school's Child Safe Code of Conduct is available on the Department of Education and Training's website.

Selection Criteria

SC1. Demonstrated knowledge of appropriate Child Safe Standard behaviours when engaging with children and young people.

Selection Criteria Assessment

Look for: Child Safe Standards being adhered to. An awareness of what is appropriate. Consideration of risks.					
Not Shown	Very Low	Low	Neutral	High	Very High
0	1	2	3	4	5

Interview Questions

The panel reserves the right to ask supplementary questions to the standard set of interview questions where a candidate has not adequately provided a written answer for SC1.

Referee Reports

As part of contacting referees, they are invited to comment on the applicant in relation to their suitability with working in a school environment - specifically with children - and whether there have been incidents in the past that have raised concerns. The selection panel seeks referee reports either verbally (by telephone, teleconferencing), in person or in written form. The selection panel accurately records both written and verbal referee comments.

If the panel is not satisfied that the person is a fit and proper person suited for child-connected work due to inconsistency or the disclosure of concerning information, a criminal record check and a Working with Children Check or search of the VIT register is conducted prior to raising the matter with the WHSC Leadership Team

Retention of Selection Documents

Selection documentation from WHSC:

Volunteers Policy

See College Website

Confidentiality and Privacy

This school collects, uses and discloses information about particular children and their families in accordance with Victorian privacy law. The principles regulating the collection, use and storage of information is included in the Department of Education and Training's [Schools' Privacy Policy](#).

Policy Evaluation and Review

On an annual basis, when directed to by law, and where a review is otherwise deemed necessary, this Child Safety Policy will be reviewed to ensure relevance, compliance, and best practice. At each review, this Child Safety Policy will be provided to all staff and volunteers, be made available at WHSC, and on the WHSC website.

Policy last reviewed	July 2022
Consultation	College Council
Approved by	School Council, Principal: Fern Brisbane (Acting)
Next scheduled review date	July 2024

Related Policies and Documents

Related policies and documents include:

- [Identifying and Responding to All Forms of Abuse in Victorian Schools](#)
- [Four Critical Actions for Schools](#)
- [Recording your actions: Responding to suspected child abuse – A template for Victorian schools](#)
- [Identifying and Responding to Student Sexual Offending](#)
- [Four Critical Actions for Schools: Responding to Student Sexual Offending](#)
- [School Policy and Advisory Guide – Duty of Care](#)
- [School Policy and Advisory Guide – Child Protection Reporting Obligations.](#)

Online Form Template

Title	Reporting suspected Child Abuse. Call 000 if you have immediate concerns for a child's safety.
Name(s) of Child/Children Involved:	
Gender/s:	
Year Level/Class:	
Enrolled School:	
Does the child identify as Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander:	No Yes, Aboriginal Yes, Torres Strait Islander
Your Name:	
Your Contact Details:	
Relationship to Child/Children:	
Details of Persons alleged to have committed the abuse (if known):	
Please Categorise the Incident	Physical violence Sexual offence Serious emotional or psychological abuse Serious neglect

Where, when and and at what time did the incident take place?	
Who else was involved?	
What did you see?	
I have informed the following authorities (tick):	The School Principal Police DHHS Child Protection Child First Department of Education Employee Conduct Branch
Provide details of your report:	

References

Ministerial Order No 1359

https://www.education.vic.gov.au/Documents/about/programs/health/protect/Ministerial_Order.pdf

New Child Safe Standards for Schools

<https://www.vic.gov.au/new-child-safe-standards-schools>

<https://edugate.eduweb.vic.gov.au/edrms/keyprocess/cp/SitePages/SchoolPoliciesDetail.aspx?Cid=66>

Final report recommendations: Royal commission into institutional responses to child sexual abuse -

https://www.childabuseroyalcommission.gov.au/sites/default/files/final_report_-_recommendations.pdf

Child protection - Reporting obligations -

<https://www.education.vic.gov.au/school/principals/spag/safety/Pages/childprotectobligation.aspx>