

Purpose

As a Christian school, Bayside Christian College (College) believes that each individual is made in the image of God and is to be valued and cared for. Children are a blessing, and it is the responsibility of all Staff of the College to work with the community to provide a safe Environment for the children in the College’s care.

This Child Safety and Wellbeing Policy demonstrates the College’s commitment to creating and maintaining a child safe and child-friendly organisation, where children and young people are safe and feel safe.

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

Application

This policy applies to all College Staff, volunteers, contractors and any other members of the College community who conduct work for, or are connected to, the College in a paid or unpaid capacity.

This policy applies to all College Environments which involve, result in or relate to contact with students.

Definitions

Word/s	Definition
Child / Children / Young Person	an individual who is under the age of 18 years of age or who is enrolled as a student at Bayside Christian College
Child Safety	includes 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 suspicions, incidents, disclosures or allegations of child abuse
Child Abuse	any action or inaction towards a child that harms or puts at risk their physical, psychological or emotional health or development. Child abuse can be a single incident or incidents that occur over time. Forms of child abuse can involve: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Physical abuse • Sexual abuse • Grooming • Emotional abuse

Word/s	Definition
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Neglect • Family violence • Online/cyber abuse
Child-connected work	<p>work authorised by the College Board and performed by an adult in a College Environment while children are present or reasonably expected to be present</p> <p>Note: Working with Children clearance is required by law only for people who engage in child-related work. The College may choose to require suitability checks (including Working with Children clearance) for visitors and volunteers engaging in child-connected work.</p>
Environment	<p>means any of the following physical, online or virtual places, used during or outside College hours:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A campus of the College • Other locations owned or provided by the College for a student's use, including locations used for College camps, sporting events, excursions, competitions and other events • Online College environments including approved social media groups set up for College communication, email, the learning management system, and intranet systems
Staff	<p>an individual working in the College Environment who is:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • directly engaged or employed by the College • a contracted service provider engaged by the College to perform child-related work • a minister of religion, a religious leader or an employee or officer of a religious body associated with the College • College Board
Concerns and Complaints	<p>A concern refers to any potential issue that could impact negatively on the safety and wellbeing of children.</p> <p>A complaint is an expression of dissatisfaction to the College related to one or more of the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • services or dealings with individuals • allegations of abuse or misconduct by a staff member, a volunteer or another individual associated with the College • disclosures of abuse or harm made by a child or young person • the conduct of a child or young person at the College • the inadequate handling of a prior concern

Word/s	Definition
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> general concerns about the safety of a group of children or activity.
Harm	Damage to the health, safety and wellbeing of a Child, including as a result of Child Abuse by adults or the conduct of other children. Harm can arise from a single act or event and can also be cumulative, that is, arising as a result of a series of acts or events over a period of time.
Student	a person who is enrolled at or attends the College
Volunteer	a person who performs work without remuneration or reward for the College in the College Environment

Statement of commitment to child safety

The College:

- is a child safe organisation that is committed to providing Environments where students are safe and feel safe, where their participation is valued, their views respected, and their voices heard about decisions that affect their lives. The College's child-safe policies, strategies and practices are inclusive of the needs of all children and students;
- has zero tolerance for Child Abuse and takes proactive steps to identify and manage any risks of harm to students in the College Environments;
- requires all members of staff, volunteers and those contracted to work with students to agree to abide by the College's Child Safety Code of Conduct that specifies the standards of conduct required when working with students;
- has a legal and moral obligation to contact authorities when there is reasonable belief to have a concern about a child's safety;
- has robust human resources and recruitment practices to reduce the risk of Child Abuse by new and existing staff and volunteers;
- has designated Child Safety Champions.

The College is committed to:

- preventing Child Abuse and identifying risks early, and removing and reducing these risks;
- regularly training and educating the College Board members, staff and volunteers on Child Abuse risks;
- promoting a safe Environment, cultural safety, participation and empowerment for all students, including Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students, students with a disability, and students with racial, ethnic, linguistic and gender diverse backgrounds.

Child safety is a shared responsibility. Every person who works at or with the College has an important role in promoting child safety and wellbeing and promptly raising any issues or concerns about a child's safety.

The College is committed to regularly reviewing its child safe practices, and seeking input from students, families, Staff, and volunteers to inform our ongoing strategies.

Roles and Responsibilities

College Leadership Team

The College Leadership Team (comprising the Principal, Deputy Principal, Heads of School, Business Manager and Directors) 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 College Leadership Team is responsible for:

- ensuring effective child safety and wellbeing governance, policies, procedures, codes and practices are in place and followed,
- modelling a child safe culture that facilitates the active participation of students, families and staff in promoting and improving child safety, cultural safety and wellbeing,
- enabling inclusive practices where the diverse needs of all students are considered,
- reinforce high standards of respectful behaviour between students and adults, and between students,
- promoting regular open discussion on child safety issues within the College community including at leadership team meetings, staff meetings and College Board meetings,
- facilitating regular professional learning for staff and volunteers (where appropriate) to build deeper understandings of child safety, cultural safety, student wellbeing, prevention of abuse, and responding to abuse,
- creating an Environment where child safety complaints and concerns are readily raised, and no one is discouraged from reporting an allegation of child abuse to relevant authorities,
- reviewing and updating the Child Safety Program to ensure it remains current.

College staff and volunteers

All Staff and volunteers are responsible for:

- participating in child safety and wellbeing induction and training provided by the College and always follow the College's child safety and wellbeing policies and procedures,
- acting in accordance with the College's Child Safety Code of Conduct,
- raising concerns about Child Safety issues to the Child Safety Champions,
- ensuring students' views are taken seriously and their voices are heard about decisions that affect their lives,
- implement inclusive practices that respond to the diverse needs of students.

College Board

Members of the College Board are responsible for:

- championing and promoting a child safe culture with the broader College community,

- ensuring that child safety is a regular agenda item at Board Meetings,
- undertaking annual training on child safety and mandatory reporting training and other training as required by the College,
- approving updates to, and acting in accordance with all Child Safety policies,
- ensuring that selection, supervision, and management practices are child safe via delegated responsibility to the Principal.

Principal

The Principal is responsible for:

- monitoring the College's compliance with the Child Safety and Wellbeing Policy. Anyone in the College community should approach the Principal if they have any concerns about the College's compliance with the Child Safety and Wellbeing Policy.
- informing the College community about this policy and making it publicly available.

Child Safety Champions

The College has nominated Child Safety Champions (comprising the Deputy Principal, Head of Primary School, Head of Secondary School, Head of Learning Support and ELC Director) to support the Principal to implement child safety policies and practices, including staff and volunteer training.

The responsibilities of the Child Safety Champions are to:

- ensure that child safety is prioritised within the College, providing advice and raising awareness of child safety,
- receive reports of suspicion of child abuse,
- ensure an appropriate response to all child abuse allegations,
- keep their skills up to date in child safety.

The Principal and Child Safety Champions are the first point of contact for child safety concerns or queries and for coordinating responses to child safety incidents.

Child Safety Meetings

The College Leadership Team forms the Child Safety and Wellbeing Team. This group meets regularly to identify and respond to any ongoing matters related to child safety and wellbeing.

The Student Reference Group is assigned to the student leadership team and provides an opportunity for students to provide input into College strategies.

Student empowerment and participation

The College encourages and actively supports students who present ideas and improvements to the planning and delivery of services of the College.

The College ensures that the prevention approach it adopts for its students will be focused on initiatives that build their awareness and encourage them to disclose behaviours that make them feel unsafe. As delegated by the College Board, the Principal and Leadership

Team are responsible for developing strategies and initiatives to deliver age-appropriate education including, but not limited to:

- Standards of behaviour for students
- Healthy and respectful relationships (including sexual)
- Resilience
- Child Abuse awareness and prevention

College families and community engagement

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

To support family engagement, the College is committed to providing families and the community with accessible information about its child safe policies and practices and involving them in the approach to child safety and wellbeing.

The College provides opportunities for families to have input into the development and review of the child safety policies and practices and encourages them to raise any concerns and ideas for improvement.

Communication avenues include, but are not limited to:

- communicating and providing documentation through the parent portal, College website, newsletters, and other specific child safe communications via email,
- meetings of the College Board, subcommittees of the College Board, student leadership, Association meetings, and parent meetings.
- direct contact with College Staff.
- PROTECT Child Safety posters displayed at various locations across the College.

Establishing a culturally safe Environment

The College is committed to creating an environment where Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children, families and community members feel welcomed and included. Strategies to embed cultural safety include:

- an Acknowledgement of Country at College functions and events;
- consulting with families and members of the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander community to identify opportunities to promote their culture and practices at the College;
- providing opportunities for children to share their cultural identity and express their culture;
- supporting students who wish to explore their culture, including consulting with their family and relevant Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander organisations;
- providing training for staff on the strength of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander culture and its importance to the wellbeing and safety of their children;
- celebrating NAIDOC Week and acknowledging significant events including National Sorry Day and National Reconciliation Week;
- seeking feedback from Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students, families and communities on their experience at the College, particularly how safe they feel expressing their identity including their culture.

Valuing Diversity

The College celebrates the diversity of students, families and community and promotes respectful Environments that are free from discrimination. To achieve this, the College:

- provides training for all staff on understanding diversity and how to support inclusion and cultural safety,
- welcomes and supports participation of all students, including students with disability, students from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds, those who are unable to live at home, LGBTIQ+ students and Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children and their families,
- offers students and families through the College enrolment forms the opportunity to provide information about themselves,
- has zero-tolerance of racism and other forms of discrimination and takes action when discrimination or exclusion is identified,
- delivers services that reflect the diversity of our students, their interests and cultures,
- acknowledges important dates that celebrate and promote diversity,
- commits to ensuring facilities and activities, including online activities, promote the inclusion of children of varying abilities as reasonably practicable.

Suitable staff and volunteers

The College applies robust child safe recruitment, induction, training, and supervision practices to ensure that all staff, contractors, and volunteers are suitable to work with children.

The College's recruitment practices enable the College to be satisfied that people who work for the College perform appropriately in relation to child safety. These recruitment processes ensure:

- new and existing staff, volunteers and contractors understand the importance of child safety and are aware of the College's policies and procedures,
- selection criteria and advertisements clearly demonstrate the College's commitment to child safety and an awareness of social and legislative responsibilities,
- the College understands that when recruiting staff and volunteers, there are ethical as well as legislative obligations,
- compliance with College policies for recruitment and selection of staff for obtaining, verifying and recording information about a person whom it proposes to engage, including processes for screening and background checks such as Working with Children Check, police record checks and Victorian Institute of Teaching (VIT) registration,
- the induction of new staff, volunteers and contractors into the College's policies, codes, practices and procedures governing child safety and student-related work.

Child safety knowledge, skills and awareness

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

In addition to the child safety and wellbeing induction, College Staff will participate in regular training and professional learning to equip them with the skills and knowledge necessary to maintain a child safe Environment.

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

- the College's child safety and wellbeing policies, procedures, codes, and practices
- completing the 'Protecting Children – Mandatory Reporting and Other Legal Obligations' online module annually
- completing other professional development related to child safety and wellbeing
- 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
- how to identify and mitigate child safety and wellbeing risks in the college 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.

College Board training and education

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 the College Environment, the Board is to participate in training 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 the College Environment
- College child safety and wellbeing policies, procedures, codes and practices

Records management

The College acknowledges that good records management practices are a critical element of child safety and wellbeing and manages records in accordance with the College's Records Management Policy.

Privacy and information sharing

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

Managing risks to child safety and wellbeing

Child safety and wellbeing risks managed through the College's Child Safety Program and risk assessments prepared for out of routine or extra-curricular activities, such as off-site overnight camps, adventure activities, excursions, and incursions.

The Child Safety Program documents the College's strategies to support the Ministerial Order 1359 and encompasses the College's child safety risk register. This document is reviewed regularly by the College's Leadership Team throughout the year to ensure strategies are current, risks identified are included in the risk register and risk controls are up to date and are working towards being As Low As Reasonably Practicable (ALARP).

Processes for Responding to and Reporting Suspected Child Abuse

The College takes all allegations seriously and has clear and comprehensive practices in place for reporting and responding to suspected and reported Child Abuse. All College staff and volunteers are trained to deal appropriately with allegations.

The College will continually work to improve practices and workplace systems to ensure all students, families, Staff, volunteers and contractors know what to do and who to tell if they observe abuse or are a victim, and if they notice inappropriate behaviour.

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

The College's practices are based on the following:

- Compliance with mandatory reporting laws and obligations imposed by the criminal law to report a belief that Child Abuse may have occurred including reporting to the Victoria police and relevant authorities.
- Ensuring any situation is handled appropriately, and that any parties involved in an allegation of Child Abuse are provided with support and treated fairly and consistently.
- Clarity as to who should be notified of any Concerns or Complaints, and what processes should be followed during and after an investigation.
- Ensuring continuous review and improvement of processes and that they are easily accessible for all persons within the College community including an easy-to-understand process for students.

The College will support and assist children who disclose Child Abuse, or are otherwise linked to suspected Child Abuse, by:

- ensuring they have access to College support personnel, such as Child Safety Champions,
- ensuring their situation is treated confidentially and with sensitivity,
- providing such other support or assistance as may be reasonable including due consideration for and necessary adjustments in the curriculum and co-curriculum programmes.

Regular Review

This policy will be reviewed every two years or following a significant child safety incident or change of legislation.

Related policies and procedures

- Child and Family Violence Information Sharing Schemes Policy
- Child Safety Code of Conduct
- Child Safety Program
- Cybersafety Policy
- Mandatory Reporting Policy
- Responding to Suspected and Reported Child Abuse Procedure
- Privacy Policy
- Recruitment Policy
- VIT Check procedure
- Working with Children Check Procedure
- Complaints and Grievance Policy
- Student Wellbeing and Engagement Policy
- Visitors Policy
- Volunteers Policy
- Records Management Policy
- Risk Management Framework

Related Legislation

- Child Wellbeing and Safety Act 2005 (Vic) (including Child Safe Standards)
- Children, Youth and Families Act 2005 (Vic) (including reporting to Child Protection)
- Crimes Act 1958 (Vic) (including Failure to Protect and Failure to Disclose offences)
- Wrongs Act 1958 (Vic) (including Part XIII – Organisational liability for child abuse)
- The Victorian Institute of Teaching - Teaching Profession Code of Conduct
- Victorian Government – Working With Children Check
- Working with Children Act 2005 (Vic)
- Disability Act 2006 (Vic)
- Privacy Act 1988

Approver College Board

Authoriser College Board