

# CHILD SAFE: STANDARD 1 ALLOCATION OF ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES



*Charles La Trobe College takes a zero-tolerance approach to child abuse and is fully committed to ensuring that its strategies, policies, procedures and practices meet all **Child Safety Standards as specified in Ministerial Order No. 870 (2015).***

Clear allocation of roles and responsibilities for the implementation and monitoring of Child Safe policies and procedures provides the foundation for, and commitment, to child safety in the School.

Ministerial Order No. 870 (2015) places accountability for managing the risk of child abuse with the School Governing Authority (SGA), which is responsible for developing and endorsing the School's child safe policies and practices.

The SGA must ensure that the School is taking the necessary steps for embedding an organisational culture of child safety.

## Roles and Responsibilities of the School Governing Authority

**Standard 1:** Strategies to embed an organisational culture of child safety, including through effective leadership arrangements. To comply with this Standard the SGA needs to:

- 1.1 document strategies to embed a culture of child safety at the School
- 1.2 allocate individual roles and responsibilities for achieving these strategies
- 1.3 inform the School community about the strategies and the allocated roles and responsibilities
- 1.4 implement the strategies and inform the School community about the implementation
- 1.5 periodically review the effectiveness of the strategies and continually improve them.

**Standard 2:** A child safe policy or statement of commitment to child safety. To comply with this Standard the SGA needs to:

- 2.1 clearly articulate the values and principles that guide it in developing a child safe school environment
- 2.2 set out the actions the School proposes to take to demonstrate its commitment to child safety matters; monitor its adherence to its child safety policy; support, encourage and enable school staff, parents and students to understand, identify, discuss and report child safety matters; support or assist students who disclose child abuse, or are otherwise linked to child abuse
- 2.3 make the policy or statement publicly available.

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**Standard 3:** A Code of Conduct that establishes clear expectations for appropriate behaviour with students. To comply with this Standard the SGA needs to

- 3.1 have the objective of promoting child safety in the School environment
- 3.2 set standards about the ways in which adults are expected to behave with students connected to the School
- 3.3 take into account the interests of school staff and other industry or professional codes that regulate certain staff
- 3.4 take into account the needs of students from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds and students with disabilities.

**Standard 4:** Screening, supervision, training and other human resources practices that reduce the risk of child abuse by new and existing personnel. To comply with this Standard the SGA needs to ensure that:

- 4.1 each job that involves child connected work has a clear statement of the job occupant's duties, responsibilities, essential qualifications, experience and attributes
- 4.2 job applicants are informed of the School's child safe practices
- 4.3 comprehensive pre-employment screening procedures are undertaken for potential staff and volunteers that go beyond Working with Children check clearances
- 4.4 specific procedures are implemented relating to child protection induction for staff and volunteers
- 4.5 staff are trained with respect to the School's policies, codes, practices and procedures governing child safety
- 4.6 ongoing procedures are in place to assess a person's performance in a job and their ongoing suitability for the role.

**Standard 5:** Processes for responding to and reporting suspected child abuse. To comply with this Standard the SGA needs to ensure that procedures:

- 5.1 comply with the Standards, the Ministerial Order and other legal obligations
- 5.2 cover all forms of child abuse as defined in the ETR Act (2006)
- 5.3 apply to all allegations or disclosures of child abuse made by, or in relation to, a student, staff, visitors or others connected to the School
- 5.4 identify people within the School who are responsible for promptly managing the School's response to an allegation or disclosure of child abuse, responding appropriately, and monitoring the School's overall compliance with reporting procedures (e.g. Child Safety Officer)
- 5.5 include a statement that fulfilling the roles and responsibilities contained in the procedures does not displace or discharge any other legal obligations that arise if a person reasonably believes that a student is at risk of child abuse
- 5.6 clearly describe the actions the School will take to respond to an allegation of child abuse

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- 5.7 do not prohibit or discourage staff from reporting an allegation of abuse to a person external to the School
- 5.8 do not state or imply that it is the victim's responsibility to report allegations to the police or other authorities
- 5.9 do not require staff to make a judgment about the truth of the allegation of child abuse
- 5.10 do not prohibit staff from making records in relation to an allegation or disclosure of child abuse
- 5.11 ensure that processes be widely available so that all school staff and the School community are aware of the actions the School will take in response to an allegation of child abuse.

**Standard 6:** Strategies to identify and reduce or remove risks of child abuse. To comply with this Standard the SGA needs to:

- 6.1 identify and mitigate the risk(s) of child abuse in the School environment
- 6.2 take into account the nature of the School environment
- 6.3 take into account the activities expected to be conducted within the School environment (including the provision of services by contractors or outside organisations)
- 6.4 take into account the characteristics and needs of all students expected to be present in that environment
- 6.5 include extensive record keeping procedures to record identified risks and specify the action(s) the School will take to reduce or remove the risks (risk controls)
- 6.6 monitor and evaluate the effectiveness and implementation of risk controls
- 6.7 include the provision of guidance and training to the SGA and staff at least annually, detailing individual and collective obligations and responsibilities for managing the risk of child abuse, child abuse risks in the School environment and the School's current child safety standards.

**Standard 7:** Strategies to promote the participation and empowerment of students. To comply with this Standard the SGA needs to:

- 7.1 develop strategies to deliver age appropriate education about standards of behaviour for students, healthy and respectful relationships (including sexual), resilience, and child abuse awareness and prevention
- 7.2 promote the child safety standards required by the Ministerial Order in ways that are readily accessible, easy to understand and user-friendly to students
- 7.3 recognise that students from culturally diverse backgrounds may require specific care and support regarding child safety issues, and implement strategies to achieve this
- 7.4 recognise that students who have any kind of disability may require specific care and support regarding child safety issues, and implement strategies to achieve this.

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## Roles and responsibilities of the Principal

Effective implementation of the School's policies and procedures provide the foundation for, and commitment to, embedding a culture child safety within the School. Implementation is delegated by the SGA to the Principal whose roles and responsibilities are:

- recognising his/her particular responsibility for ensuring the development of preventative and proactive strategies that promote a culture of openness, awareness of, and shared responsibility for, child safety
- creating a school environment where students are safe and feel safe
- promoting models of behaviour between adults and students based on mutual respect and consideration
- applying rigorous practices in the recruitment, screening and employment of staff and volunteers
- ensuring regular professional learning for staff and volunteers in order that they develop their knowledge of, openness to, and ability to address, child safety issues
- confirming that Child Safety is a standing agenda item for all staff meetings and regularly clarifying legislative obligations, as well as school policies and procedures, in relation to child safety
- allocating roles and responsibilities to achieve these strategies and informing the School community of these
- implementing a Child Safety Code of Conduct and publishing it - including the parent portal on the School website, Staff Handbook, and Parent Handbook
- ensuring that staff, volunteers, external providers/consultants, families and students know how to report abuse allegations and feel confident in doing so within a supportive environment
- ensuring that detailed procedures for responding to allegations of suspected child abuse are in place and followed
- implementing specific risk management practices and controls with respect to child safety
- ensuring that specific strategies are implemented to promote student empowerment and participation, including the provision of 'student friendly' information about child abuse awareness and prevention
- taking into account the diverse needs and characteristics of students including age, social and cultural background, abilities and other attributes or vulnerabilities in the context of child protection
- ensuring that the School implements all requirements of the Child Safe Standards as set out in Ministerial Order No. 870 (2015)
- reporting at each Board of Management meeting on the implementation of Child Safety policies and procedures and on any issues which have been, or need to be, addressed.

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## Roles and responsibilities of Staff, Volunteers, and External Providers/Consultants

School leadership has the responsibility for developing, communicating, and implementing Child Safe policies and procedures which recognise the critical role that all staff play in protecting students and establishes clear expectations of staff, volunteers and external providers/consultants for appropriate behaviour with students in order to safeguard them against abuse. These expectations include:

- treating students with respect and consideration, acting with propriety, providing a duty of care, and protecting all students at the School
- following all school policies and procedures in relation to the safety of students
- providing a physically and psychologically safe environment where the wellbeing of students is nurtured and protected
- undertaking regular training and education in order to understand their individual responsibilities in relation to child safety and the wellbeing of students
- encouraging and supporting students to develop positive, responsible and caring attitudes and behaviours which recognise the rights of all people to be safe and free from abuse
- taking immediate and appropriate action if there are concerns about the safety of any student at the School
- all staff members, volunteers and external providers/consultants need to be familiar with, and comply with, the relevant legislation and all school policies and procedures in relation to child safety and protection.

## Roles and Responsibilities of the Child Safety Officer

At some schools, the Principal may assume the roles and responsibilities of Child Safety Officer. Should this be the case, all allegations or concerns in relation to child abuse or neglect should therefore be directed to the Principal.

In the absence of the Principal, all members of the teaching staff are mandated to make the necessary notifications should an issue of child abuse or neglect arise.

The roles and responsibilities of the Child Safety Officer include the following:

- leading the School's child safety culture
- implementing and enhancing the School's child safety strategies
- proactively evaluating and reporting on the effectiveness of child safety strategies
- coordinating reviews of the child safety strategies
- communicating the School's child safety strategies to the school community

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- training staff and volunteers in the School's child safety strategies
- leading or delivering programs for students in relation to child safety strategies.

## Roles and Responsibilities of Students

At Charles La Trobe College all students are actively encouraged and expected to openly express their views and to feel confident in talking about the things that are important to them.

Students are taught explicitly about what they can do if they feel unsafe and are enabled to understand, identify, and talk about issues of child safety. Staff are committed to listen to, and act on, any concerns which students, or their parents or carers, may raise with them.

Participation of students in research and decision-making in matters concerning them is important in making an accurate assessment of their needs and also promotes their self-esteem, connectivity and sense of wellbeing.

## Roles and Responsibilities of Families and the School Community:

All members of the Charles La Trobe school community have a responsibility to ensure the safety of the students who are part of the School.

The importance of family involvement and responsibility, as well as that of the wider community, in ensuring the safety of students cannot be overstated. Locally relevant and targeted programs have proven to be effective in responding to the needs of families as they can gain a better understanding and insight into particular family situations and thus have a greater potential to respond effectively.

Collaborative program planning and delivery between various service sectors, such as education, health, employment and other community services, can provide efficient and cost-effective ways to achieve the best possible outcomes for families.

All members of the School and wider community must, through information sharing, be kept aware of risk factors for students both within and outside the family. These include parental attitudes and capacity, social conditions such as poverty and unemployment, relationship issues, substance abuse, domestic violence, mental health and social isolation.

## EVALUATION

This policy will be reviewed as part of the school's three-year review cycle, following an incident if it occurs or if guidelines change.

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## RATIFICATION

This policy was ratified by School Council on 15<sup>th</sup> August 2019.

## References:

Children, Youth and Families Act (CYF) 2005

Working with Children Act (WWC) 2005

Child Wellbeing and Safety Act (CWS) 2005

Crimes Act (CA) 1958 (Vic)

Education and Training Reform Act (ETR) 2006

Family Violence Protection Act (FVP) 2008

The New Victorian Child Safe Standards: CompliSpace 2016