

# CHILD SAFE: STANDARD 7 STRATEGIES TO PROMOTE CHILD EMPOWERMENT, PARTICIPATION AND PROTECTION



*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)***

## BACKGROUND

All Victorian schools are required to meet the seven Child Safe Standards, to ensure that they are well prepared to protect children from abuse, family violence and neglect. Requirements for these standards are set out in [Ministerial Order 870](#) and compliance is monitored by the VRQA.

- Standards of behaviour for students attending the school
- Healthy and respectful relationships (including sexuality)
- Resilience
- Child abuse awareness and prevention

Charles La Trobe College is committed to delivering appropriate education in ways that are readily accessible, easy to understand and user-friendly to students about the following:

### Standards of behaviour for students attending the school

The right for students to learn and feel safe is underpinned by clearly articulated and well-promoted standards of behaviour.

Standards of behaviour extend across the school community (students, staff and parents/carers), setting a positive tone for safe and supportive relationships, articulating clear boundaries and supported pathways for students:

- impacted by the behaviour of others (ensuring students know when and how to seek help)
- who do not uphold the behaviour standards (ensuring that there is support for students to address and mitigate these behaviours and address any underlying factors).

Standards of behaviour also extend to online environments. Setting clear online standards of behaviour helps to prevent cyber-bullying and helps to keep students safe from predatory behaviours.

The process for setting, promoting and reviewing standards of behaviour for students is central to their success.

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Students are encouraged to take an active part in setting and embedding standards of behaviour, building their ownership of school culture and empowering them to seek support and make positive changes within their environment. There are many practical approaches for engaging students in this process, including the establishment of student action teams and the implementation of student-directed values education.

- Healthy and respectful relationships (including sexuality) and Resilience

The school is committed to delivering respectful relationships and resilience education, as well as sexuality education, in alignment within the learning standards under Personal and Social Capability and Health and Physical Education in the Victorian Education.

Social and emotional learning is a critical part of school education and research shows us that;

- equipping students with the skills to build positive relationships and communicate respectfully is essential preparation for productive and healthy adult lives
- building resilience (the ability to cope and thrive in the face of negative events, challenges or adversity) has a positive impact on both social and academic outcomes, and is particularly critical for students who may be impacted by abuse
- students who are well informed about sexuality are more likely to make positive and informed decisions and less likely to place themselves at risk in adolescence.

Both the school and parents/carers play an essential role in building students' social and emotional capabilities. Parents/carers and schools are critical partners. By equipping parents/carers with information about their child's learning, the school supports parents to continue learning within the home environment and build strong consistent messages.

Children learn in the context of their families and families are the primary influence on children's learning and development. For this reason, it is critical that school staff foster strong relationships with parents and families.

### Child abuse awareness and prevention

The primary objective of child abuse awareness and prevention education is to help to keep children safe from child abuse. School-based child abuse awareness and prevention programs have been found to increase children's capacity to disclose abuse.<sup>1</sup>

Students are supported best when the school:

- works in close partnership with parents/carers
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- ensures that parents/carers are provided with the information they need to continue learning within the home environment and build strong and consistent messages.

Knowing how to respond to disclosures of abuse is critical in keeping children safe and is set out within the [Identifying and Responding to All Forms of Child Abuse within Victorian Schools](#).

The Resilience, Rights and Respectful Relationships (RRRR)\* teaching and learning materials support schools in delivering critical elements of *child abuse awareness and prevention education*.

The RRRR materials are structured around eight learning topics, a number of which relate directly to child abuse awareness and prevention, including:

- **Topic One:** Emotional Literacy- students are supported to build their self-awareness of emotion, their emotional vocabulary and their capacity to identify when they feel safe or unsafe.
- **Topic Four:** Problem Solving- students are supported to build their capacity to respond to situations where they may be at risk of abuse or experiencing abuse and to avoid risk.
- **Topic Six:** Help Seeking- students are supported in their capacity to identify when problems are too large to solve alone, to establish a safety network and rehearse help-seeking strategies.
- **Topic Eight:** Positive Gender Relations- students are introduced to: the concept of No-Go-Tell (a three-step response to harm); body parts and safe and unsafe touching; and to the definitions of abuse. Students are also supported to identify 'good' and 'bad' secrets.

## EVALUATION

This policy will be reviewed as required and if guidelines change.

## RATIFICATION

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

## References:

*Resources to support standards of behaviour for school students*

- [Student Engagement Policy: Policy Requirements and Development](#)
- [Student Engagement and Inclusion Guidance](#)

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## *Resources to support healthy and respectful relationships*

- [Respectful Relationships](#)
- [Health Education Approaches](#)
- [About Sexuality Education](#)
- [Safe Schools](#)
- [Healthy Minds](#)
- [KidsMatter](#)
- [MindMatters](#)

## *Resources to support resilience*

- [Building Resilience](#)
- [Child Wise](#)

## *Other useful information for schools*

For information on the Child Safe Standards and how they apply to workplace learning/work experience, see [Workplace Learning](#)

## External links

- [Child Safe Standards in registered schools - VRQA](#)
- [Child Safe Standards Resources - DHHS](#)
- [Working with Children Check - Department of Justice and Regulation](#)

## *Information for students*

To download a poster on school community obligation and steps for students if they feel unsafe, see: [Protect poster](#)

For information for students, see: [Child Abuse and Sexual Exploitation](#)

## *Information for parents*

Parents have an important role to play in identifying signs of abuse in their children. For information to provide to parents, see [Child Protection](#).