



CHILD SAFE POLICY

Drafted by	Risk and Compliance Officer	Date of Last Review	December 2019
Responsibility	Head of Schools; Principal	For Distribution	Staff, Students and Parents

Source of Obligation

Ministerial Order 870 - Child Safe Standards – Managing the Risk of Child Abuse in Schools.

Guiding Principles

This policy provides the framework for:

- The development of school practices, policies and procedures that promote child protection within the School;
- The creation of a positive and robust child protection culture;
- The promotion and open discussion of child protection issues within the School; and
- Compliance with all laws, regulations and standards relevant to child protection in Victoria.

Statement of Commitment to Child Safety

Child abuse includes sexual offences, grooming, physical violence, serious emotional or psychological harm, serious neglect and a child's exposure to family violence. Westbourne Grammar School is committed to the protection of all children from all forms of child abuse and demonstrates this commitment through the implementation of a comprehensive Child Safe Program designed to keep children safe.

At Westbourne Grammar School, we have a zero tolerance for child abuse and are committed to acting in a child's best interest and in keeping them safe from harm. The School regards its child protection responsibilities with the utmost importance and as such, is committed to providing the necessary resources to ensure compliance with all relevant child protection laws and regulations and maintain a child safe culture.

Child Safe Principles

The School's commitment to child safety is based on the following overarching principles that guide the development and regular review of our school practices, policies and procedures to protect children from abuse.

1. All children have the right to be safe.
2. The welfare and best interests of the child are paramount.
3. The views of the child and a child's privacy must be respected.
4. Clear expectations for appropriate behaviour with children are established in our Child Safety Code of Conduct.
5. The safety of children is dependent upon the existence of a child safe culture.
6. Child safety awareness is promoted and openly discussed within our school community.
7. Procedures are in place to screen all staff, Homestay families and Direct Contact Volunteers including third- party contractors and external providers who have direct contact with children.

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8. Child safety and protection is everyone's responsibility.
9. Child Safe training is mandatory for all Westbourne staff, Board Directors and Homestay families.
10. Child Safety Guidelines are established for Direct Contact Volunteers, Contractors and Visitors.
11. Procedures for responding to alleged or suspected incidents of child abuse are simple and accessible for all members of the School community.
12. Children from culturally or linguistically diverse backgrounds have the right to special care and support including those who identify as Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander.
13. Children who have any kind of disability have the right to special care and support.

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

The Working with Children Act 2005 (Vic) defines 'direct contact' as any contact between a person and a child (aged under 18 years) that involves:

- physical contact; or
- face to face contact; or
- contact by post or other written communication; or
- contact by telephone or other oral communication; or
- contact by email or other electronic communication.

Examples of Direct Contact Volunteer activities may include volunteers involved in School camps and excursions, coaching sporting teams or assisting in learning activities.

****Homestay families are those families where international students reside and are involved in providing support, guidance and supervision directly to students and could potentially have direct unsupervised contact with students.*

Child Safe Program

Westbourne Grammar School is committed to the effective implementation of our Child Safe Program and ensuring that it is appropriately reviewed and updated. We adopt a risk management approach by identifying key risk indicators and assessing child safety risks based on a range of factors including the nature of our school's activities (on campus or at other locations) physical and online environments and the characteristics of the student body.

Our Child Safe Program relates to all aspects of protecting children from abuse and establishes practices, policies and procedures to protect children from abuse. It includes:

- Clear information as to what constitutes child abuse and associated key risk indicators;
- Clear procedures for responding to and reporting allegations of child abuse;
- Strategies to support, encourage and enable staff, homestay families, volunteers (direct and indirect), parents and students to understand, identify, discuss and report child protection matters.
- Procedures for recruiting and screening staff, homestay families and Direct Contact Volunteers;
- Procedures for reporting reportable conduct and/or misconduct;

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- Protective behaviour strategies designed to empower students and keep them safe;
 - Policies with respect to cultural diversity and students with disabilities;
 - A child protection training program;
 - Information regarding the steps to take after a disclosure of abuse to protect, support and assist children;
 - Guidelines with respect to record keeping and confidentiality;
 - Policies to ensure compliance with all relevant laws, regulations and standards (including the Victorian Child Safe Standards); and
- A system for continuous improvement and review.

Responsibilities

Child protection is everyone's responsibility. At Westbourne Grammar School, all members of the School Board, Staff, and homestay families as well as Direct Contact Volunteers have a shared responsibility for contributing to the safety and protection of children. Specific responsibilities include:

School Board

Each member of the School Board is required to ensure that appropriate resources are made available to allow the School's Child Safe Policy and the Child Safe Program to be effectively implemented within the School and are responsible for holding the Principal and Executive team accountable for effective implementation.

The Principal

The Principal is responsible and will be accountable for, taking all practical measures to ensure that this Child Safe Policy and the School's Child Safe Program are implemented effectively and that a strong and sustainable child protection culture is maintained with the School.

Child Safety Officers

A number of Senior staff members have been appointed as the School's Child Safety Officers. Child Safety Officers receive additional specialised training with respect to child protection issues. They are the first point of contact for raising child protection concerns within the School. They are also responsible for championing child protection with the School and assisting in coordinating responses to child protection incidents.

Staff Members

All staff are required to be familiar with the content of our Child Safe Policy, Child Safety Code of Conduct, Staff and Student Professional Boundaries, our Child Safe Program and their legal obligations with respect to the reporting of child abuse. It is each individual's responsibility to be aware of key risk indicators of child abuse, to be observant and to raise any concerns they may have relating to child abuse with one of the School's Child Safety Officers.

Homestay Families

All Homestay families are required to undergo a Child Safe Induction Program and are required to be familiar with the content of our Child Safe Policy and our Child Safety Code of Conduct, and their legal obligations with respect

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Direct Contact Volunteers

All Direct Contact Volunteers, as defined in this policy, are required to be familiar with the content of our Child Safe Policy and our Child Safe Code of Conduct (as per Child Safety Guidelines), and their legal obligations with respect to the reporting of child abuse.

It is each individual's responsibility to be aware of key risk indicators of child abuse, to be observant, and to raise any concerns they may have relating to child abuse with one of the School's Child Safety Officers.

Indirect Contact Volunteers

Indirect Contact Volunteers (or 'Indirect Volunteers') are those volunteers who are involved in providing support and services whilst not directly assisting a specific group of students.

All Indirect Contact Volunteers are responsible for contributing to the safety and protection of children in the School environment.

All Indirect Contact Volunteers are required by the School to be familiar with our Child Safe Policy and our Child Safety Code of Conduct, and are provided with the School's Child Safe Guidelines brochure.

Third-Party Contractors

All Third-Party Contractors (service providers) engaged by the School are responsible for contributing to the safety and protection of children in the School environment.

Third-Party Contractors include, for example, consultants, casual teachers, tutors, sports coaches and school cleaners.

This also includes music teachers and other extra-curricular teachers and instructors who are engaged by students and their families directly, rather than the School, but have an agreement with the School to use the School's facilities.

External Education Providers

An External Education Provider is any organisation that the School has arranged to deliver a specified course of study that is part of the curriculum, to a student or students enrolled at the School.

The delivery of such a course may take place on school premises or elsewhere.

All External Education Providers engaged by the School are responsible for contributing to the safety and protection of children in the School environment.

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All External Education Providers engaged by the School are required by the School to be familiar with our Child Safe Policy and our Child Protection Program.

The School may include this requirement in the written agreement between it and the External Education Provider.

It is each individual's responsibility to be aware of key risk indicators of child abuse, to be observant, and to raise any concerns they may have relating to child abuse with one of the School's Child Safety Officers.

Reporting Concerns

Our Child Safe Program provides detailed guidance for Directors of the Board, staff and Homestay families as to how to identify key risk indicators of child abuse and how to report child abuse concerns to one of our nominated Child Safety Officers. It also contains detailed procedures with respect to the reporting of child abuse incidents to relevant authorities.

Staff, Third Party Contractors, External Education Providers, Volunteers, students, parents/guardians and other community members who have concerns that a child may be subject to abuse or grooming are asked to contact the School's Child Safety Officers (relevant Head of Campus/ Director of Year level, Deputy Head of School or Head of School). Communications will be treated confidentially on a "need to know basis".

Whenever there are concerns that a child is in immediate danger, the Police should be called on 000.

Implementation

This policy will be implemented through:

- Effective communication of the School's Child Safe Program;
- Staff training;
- Effective child protection incident reporting procedures;
- Effective records management procedures; and
- Initiation of corrective actions where required.

Breach of Policy

The School will consider each breach of this policy in the context in which it has occurred and will determine the relevant severity of the breach. A serious breach may result in disciplinary action, up to and including termination of employment.