| Policy Name | Child Protection Policy |
|---|---|
| **Constructed by** | Corporate Services Manager |
| **Reviewed and Approved by** | Executive |
| **Review** | **Last Review:** November 2022<br>**Next Review**: November 2024 |

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## Introduction

Yarra Valley Grammar (the School) is committed to promoting and protecting the interests and safety of children. The School has no tolerance for child abuse. Everyone working at the School is responsible for the care and protection of children and for reporting information about child abuse.

If any person believes a




confidence to achieve

A CO-EDUCATIONAL SCHOOL IN THE ANGLICAN TRADITION – ELC TO YEAR 12

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(c) promote an organisational culture of child safety and provide a clear statement forbidding child abuse or harm;
(d) ensure all parties are aware of their responsibilities for identifying possible occasions for child abuse;
(e) establish controls and procedures for preventing child abuse or harm, and detecting it when it occurs in the School environment;
(f) provide guidance regarding action that should be taken should abuse be suspected within or outside of the School, or following a disclosure of abuse from a child;
(g) ensure everyone knows their responsibilities to prevent and report child abuse; and
(h) provide assurance that any and all suspected abuse will be reported and fully investigated.

## Definitions

"Child" is defined as a person under the age of 18 years, or as according to the applicable legislation.
"Commission" means the Commission for Children and Young People.
"CSOs" means Child Safety Officers.
"Mandatory reporter" means the Principal, registered teachers, registered nurses, registered

## Scope

This policy applies to all students (over the age of 18 years), employees, volunteers, contractors, and Board members of the School, whether or not they work face-to-face, online or remotely with children. This includes all Staff.

Other School community members, who are involved in child-connected work, and are associated with the School, may also be also be obliged to comply with this policy. For example, this may include homestay families and designated caregivers.

This policy applies to allegations, disclosures, suspicions and risks of child abuse, as well as to actual child abuse. In particular, it applies to allegations or disclosures of child abuse made by or in relation to a child, visitor or other person while connected to the School environment.

## Guiding principles

This policy is based on the following guiding principles:

(i) the School has no tolerance for child abuse;
(ii) the best interests of the child are paramount;
(iii) child protection is a shared responsibility of everyone in the School community;
(iv) all children have a right to feel safe and be safe at school, and have equal rights to protection from abuse and neglect;
(v) the School will consider the opinions of students and use their opinions to develop child protection policies and procedures;
(vi) the School is committed to providing a culturally safe environment in which the diverse and unique identities and experiences of Aboriginal children and young people are respected and valued;
(vii) the School is committed to understanding children and young people's diverse circumstances and providing support and responding to those who are vulnerable, including children with a disability, children from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds, those who are unable to live at home, lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender and intersex children;
(vii) the School will take into account the diversity of all children, including (but not limited to) by paying particular attention to the needs of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children, and children who are vulnerable, and make reasonable efforts to accommodate these matters;
(viii) everyone covered by this policy must also comply with the School's Child Safety Code of Conduct, which sets stringent standards for personal behaviour; and
(ix) all children, regardless of their gender, race, religious beliefs, age, disability, sexual orientation, or family or social background, have equal rights to protection from abuse.

## Responsibilities

The Board of the School has ultimate responsibility for the detection and prevention of child abuse and complying with the National Child Safe Principles, the Victorian Child Safe Standards and Ministerial Order 1359.

The Board's responsibilities include:

(a) ensuring appropriate and effective internal control systems are in place, including processes to respond to complaints, concerns, disclosures, with regular reviews. This includes reviewing the Child Safety Risk Register to identify causes and systemic failures and make recommendations regarding continuous improvement;
(b) implementing policies, procedures and codes of conduct to ensure Staff know how to protect and prevent child abuse, and report it when it occurs or is suspected; and
(c) championing and modelling a culture of child safety as leaders in the School.

The Principal of the School is responsible for:

(i) appointing an investigator to investigate reports of child abuse and ensuring that the investigation is carried out in accordance with legislative requirements;

(j) ensuring that all staff, contractors, and volunteers are aware of relevant laws, organisational policies and procedures, and the organisation's Code of Conduct;

(k) ensuring that all adults within the School community are aware of their obligation to report suspected child abuse or risk of abuse in accordance with these policies and procedures;

(l) ensuring that all staff, contractors and volunteers are aware of their obligation to observe the Code of Conductc e i e 3 3 3 3

The School will ensure its child safety practices and Child Safety Code of Conduct are communicated in an accessible manner and are easy to understand, particularly for:

(a) younger students, by discussing the documents in-person (and by any other method deemed appropriate and effective for the particular age of the student); and

(b) students living with a disability, by discussing the documents in-person (and by any other method deemed appropriate and effective for the particular type of disability that the student is living with);

(c) children from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds, by discussing the documents in-person, with the aid of a translator if required; and

(d) families and community members, so these procedures are easy to understand and allow families and .

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The School have an Empowerment and Participation Policy that is written in age-appropriate language to give students information about their rights, including their right to safety.

There are two iterations to aim to ensure all students have access to information they understand:

- Years 10-12; and
- Years 4-6.

The School strives to create an environment where students are empowered about their rights, participate in decisions affecting them and are taken seriously. This is reflected in the Reporting Procedure.

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The School supports Staff to ensure families participate in decisions related to child safety and wellbeing which affect their child by:

(a) hosting parent-teacher interviews regularly;
(b) establishing student support groups and consulting with families regarding behaviour support plans or safety plans; and
(c) consulting with families regarding any reasonable adjustments that may be required for their child.

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The School pays particular attention to the needs of children and students:

(a) who are Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander;
(b) with disabilities;
(c) from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds;
(d) are unable to live at home (international students, family violence, out of home care, youth justice, homeless);
(e) are gender or sexually diverse (LGBTIQ+); and/or
(f) are otherwise vulnerable.

The School's Diversity and Inclusion Policy includes strategies to School implements to:

(a) establish culturally safe environments in which the diverse and unique identities and experiences of Aboriginal children are respected and valued; and
(b) ensure the School provides support and responds to vulnerable children and students.

## References and related policies

YVG Staff Code of Conduct
YVG Child Safety Code of Conduct
YVG Privacy Policy
YVG Records Management Policy
YVG Empowerment and Participation Policy
YVG Diversity and Equality Policy
YVG Social Media Policy
YVG Bullying and Violence Policy
Ministerial Order 1359 and the Victorian Child Safe standards

This policy must be read in conjunction with:

(a) the law of the Commonwealth or of Victoria; and
(b) the School's Child Safety Code of Conduct.

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Internally: All Staff members **are strongly encouraged** to discuss any concerns, suspicions, allegations or disclosures of child abuse or harm with a CSO. As per the Child Protection Policy, Staff must complete an Incident Report. A CSO can help staff members follow this procedure. However, staff members are NOT required to consult with the School prior to making a report. Staff can also refer to the Whistleblower Policy for anonymous reports.

Mandatory reporters (including teachers, psychologists, Principal): Staff members who, in the course of carrying out their duties, form a belief on reasonable grounds that a child is in need of protection because they have suffered or are likely to suffer from significant harm as a result of physical injury or sexual abuse, and the child's parents cannot or will not protect the child **must** disclose that information to the police to DFFH if they are a **mandatory reporter**.

Criminal obligations: Any adult who forms a belief on reasonable grounds that a **sexual offence** has been committed in Victoria against a child under the age of 16, by an adult, **must** make a report to police as soon as practicable. This is a criminal offence to not report. A sexual offence includes rape, indecent assault, grooming, sexual penetration of a child (under the age of 16), threat to commit a sexual offence, causing a child to be present during a sexual activity and attempting a sexual offence against a child.

Any adult who is in a position of authority or control (such as a supervisory role) and who is aware of a substantial risk that a child will become a victim of a sexual offence committed by an adult associated with the School (such as a Staff member or volunteer) must not negligently fail to reduce or remove that risk. It is a criminal offence to negligently fail to reduce or remove this risk. Reporting to DFFH or police is one way to reduce or remove the risk.

Reports **must** be made **each time** a person becomes aware of further ground for their belief a child may have suf(f)0.5 0.002 Tc 0.0e

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| Ring DFFH at the East Division on 1300 360 391. Ask for Child Protection. | Ring the police on 000. |

- The identity of the person making a notification will be kept confidential (except when that information is required in a court case) unless that person gives permission for the information to be divulged. Such confidentiality should also be requested by the Child Safety Officer / Head of Student Wellbeing and any other person who may become aware that a notification is to be, or has been, given;

- Throughout the entire process of observation, discussion and reporting, the interests of the student and their family should be protected from unnecessary disclosure of information concerning abuse;

- Following the making of a report, any investigation that takes place by that external authority (i.e., DFFH, the police or the Commission) is the responsibility of that authority.

Information sharing schemes

The School is an Information Sharing Entity (ISE) under the Family Violence Information Sharing Scheme and Child Information Sharing Scheme (Schemes). This means the School can sha information with, or request information from over ISEs for the purpose of protecting children or addressing family violence.

These Schemes:

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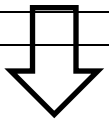
If an employee, volunteer, contractor, or Board member is uncertain as to whether they should make a report to an external authority in relation to the safety of a child, they can speak to a CSO for guidance and information. Ultimately, it is a personal decision of the employee, volunteer, contractor, or Board member whether they choose to make a report to an external authority or not.



Step 8: Evaluation

The School Board will be notified and policies and procedures may need to be reviewed if this is considered a significant child safety incident.