

CHILD SAFETY POLICY AND CHILD SAFETY CODE OF CONDUCT

Approving authority	Governing Board
Purpose	To confirm the Institute's commitment to Child Safety and outline relevant obligations and guidelines including the Child safe Code of Conduct.
Responsible Officer	Executive Director
Next scheduled review	December 2023
Document Location	http://www.ozford.edu.au/higher-education/policies-and-procedures/
Associated documents	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Child Safety Procedures • Younger Students Policy and Procedures • Student Support & Services Policy & Procedures • Complaints & Appeals Policy and Procedure • Critical Incident Policy and Procedures • Staff Recruitment and Selection Policy and Procedures • Staff Induction Policy and Procedures • Human Resources Policy

1. PRINCIPLES

Ozford Institute of Higher Education (OIHE) is a child safe organisation with zero tolerance for child abuse.

In fulfilling its commitment as a child safe organisation, this policy outlines the Institute's Child Safe obligations and responsibilities in facilitating a child safe environment.

2. SCOPE

This policy and procedures applies to all Institute staff.

Staff is defined very broadly under the Victorian Child Safe Standards and includes the governing and leadership team members, staff, voluntary position holders, students, and volunteers at all times whilst engaged in the Institute's business or otherwise representing the Institute that may interact with underage students in any manner in online or physical environments.

This encompasses visitors, affiliates, contractors and consultants, appointed or engaged by the Institute, to perform functions and/or recognised for their contribution to the Institute and other persons that underage students may interact with on activities organised by the Institute.

3. DEFINITIONS

Child

A child as defined by the Child Wellbeing and Safety Act 2016 is a person who is under the age of 18 years.

Child abuse

Child abuse includes:

- Any act committed against a child involving a sexual offence or an offence or an offence under section 49M(1) of the Crimes Act 1958; and
- The infliction, on a child, of
 - o physical violent or
 - o serious emotional or psychological harm; and
- The serious neglect of a child

Child connected work

Work authorised by OIHE and performed by an adult in the OIHE environment where children are likely to be present or engaged.

Child safety

Child safety encompasses matters related to protecting all children from all forms of child abuse, managing the risk of child abuse, providing support to a child at risk of child abuse, and responding to incidents or allegations of child abuse.

ESOS National Code

The ESOS National Code refers to the National Code of Practice for Providers of Education and Training to Overseas Students 2018 established under the Education Services for Overseas Students Act 2000.

HES Framework

Higher Education Standards Framework (Threshold Standards) 2015.

Learning Environment

Learning environments means any physical or virtual place made available by the Institute for use by a child for teaching and learning, including:

- the campus;
- Online learning environments (including email and intranet systems); and
- Other locations provided by the Institute for the purpose of teaching and learning

Reportable Conduct

As listed in the Child Wellbeing and Safety Act 2005, “reportable conduct” include:

- sexual offences (against, with or in the presence of, a child)
- sexual misconduct (against, with or in the presence of, a child)
- physical violence (against, with or in the presence of, a child)
- behaviour that causes significant emotional or psychological harm
- significant neglect.

Underage student

A student under the age of 18 years.

4. POLICY

- 4.1 OIHE has zero tolerance to child abuse and is committed to embed a culture of child safety within the organisation for protection and wellbeing of all children in its learning environment.
- 4.2 Recognising that the Institute’s enroll student cohort include a group of underage students between the ages of 17 and 18 years, OIHE is committed to provide a child safe environment where children and young people are safe and feel safe, and their voices are heard about decisions that affect their lives.
- 4.3 Child safety is a shared and collective responsibility of all OIHE staff, students, volunteers, contractors who interact with underage students. Every adult has a duty of care to children.
- 4.4 OIHE is committed to ensuring child safety is a focus within the organisation.
- 4.5 OIHE is committed to respond, report to all incidents, disclosure and suspicions of child abuse.
- 4.6 OIHE recognises the potential child safety risks and is committed to implement risk management strategies to minimise child safety risks.
- 4.7 The Governing Board has the overall responsibility for:
 - Embedding a culture of child safety in an inclusive approach, taking into account the diversity and making reasonable efforts to accommodate the needs of all children, including (but not limited to) the needs of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children, children from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds which include international students, children with disabilities, and children who are vulnerable
 - Upholding the values and principles to create and maintain a child safe environment

- Ensuring that the Institute develops, implements, promotes and periodically reviews the effectiveness of strategies to embed a culture of child safety.

4.8 The Executive Management Team has the responsibility for :

- Promoting child safety in the operations of the Institute, taking zero tolerance approach to child abuse and requiring all staff to uphold the Child Safe commitment.
- Implementing strategies and practices - taking into account and making reasonable efforts to respect, embrace and accommodate the diversity of all children - to promote and manage a culture of child safety in operations, including informing the wider community about the strategies, processes for responding to and reporting suspected child abuse and allocated roles and responsibilities.
- Managing all child safety concerns including allegations or disclosure of suspected child abuse in a sensitive, confidential, honest, responsible and timely manners
- Respond and report to allegation and incidents including reporting any allegations of “reportable conduct” to the Commission for Children and Young People (the Commission)
- Supporting, enabling and encouraging staff, parents and underage students to understand, identify, discuss and report child safety matters
- Respecting, embracing and supporting underage students in the Institute who disclose or are otherwise linked to suspected child abuse
- Monitoring compliance to all Child Safe related policy and effectiveness of the child safe strategies put in practice and if considered appropriate, revise the strategies to reduce or remove the risks of child abuse
- Implementing and monitoring appropriate human resource practices and other strategies to minimize child safety risks and reduce the risk of child abuse
- Empowering and promoting underage student participation, particularly on matters that affect them including safety.

4.9 All staff, contractors, volunteers, care giver/homestay providers and students over the age of 18 years must undertake an induction and understand their role in keeping children safe, comply with the Institute’s Child Safe Policy and code of conduct and be aware of their reporting obligations.

Child Safety Code of Conduct

4.10 All adults working for or connected to the OIHE environment have a moral and legal obligation and a Duty of Care to protect any child under their care from foreseeable harm and prevent child abuse and neglect.

4.11 The Institute’s Child Safety Code of Conduct requires all persons interacting with the Institute’s students in all environments to:

- Observe child safety principles and manage child safety concerns in a sensitive, confidential, honest, responsible and timely manner
- Model appropriate conduct and maintain professional relationships with underage students.
- As far as practical, ensure there are minimum two adults in presence when interacting with a single underage student. Where left with the responsibility of a single underage student, adults should ensure they are in an open space in view of others.
- Listen and respond to the views and concerns of underage students, particularly if they are telling you that they or another child has been abused or that they are worried about their safety/the safety of another child
- Promote the general and cultural safety, participation and empowerment of:
 - Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students

- students with culturally and/or linguistically diverse backgrounds including international students
- students with a disability
- As far as practical, not request and withhold underage students' personal items directly. If required, always request students to hand the items to you. Only take items directly from students in circumstances where there are safety concerns.
- Exercise caution when physical contact with an underage student is a necessary. All contact must be appropriate and acceptable (i.e. when assessing a student who is injured or ill may necessitate touching the student). As far as practical, adults are required to advise the underage student of what you intend doing and seek their consent.
- Respond and report appropriately where there is an incident, allegation or a suspicion is formed that an underage student is victim to a child abuse and/or another individual has committed child abuse
- If child abuse is suspected, report and respond appropriately so the underage student(s) are safe and protected from harm as soon as possible. Phone emergency services on 000 if you believe the student is in immediate danger, followed by a report to the Institute.

4.12 The Institute's Child Safe Code of Conduct prohibits all persons interacting with the Institute's students in all environments to:

- Develop a relationship with any underage student that is, or that can be interpreted as having a personal rather than professional interest in the student
- Ignore behaviours by other adults towards students when they appear to be overly familiar or inappropriate
- Treat a student unfavourably because of their disability, age, gender, race, culture, vulnerability, sexuality or ethnicity.
- Discuss content of an intimate nature or use sexual innuendo with students, except where it occurs relevantly in the context of parental guidance, delivering the education curriculum or a therapeutic setting
- Communicate directly with a student through personal or private contact channels (including by social media, email, instant messaging, texting etc) except where that communication is reasonable in all the circumstances, related to teaching and learning activities or where there is a safety concern or other urgent matter

5. QUALITY ASSURANCE

To ensure that policy is fit for purpose and meet the requirements of the HES Threshold Standards the policy will be;

- 5.1 internally endorsed by the Executive Management Team on development or review, prior to approval by Governing Board, or the Academic Board or other delegated authority;
- 5.2 externally reviewed as part of any independent review of the HES Threshold Standards approved by the Governing Board;
- 5.3 internally reviewed by the Responsible Officer every three years from the date of approval (if not earlier);
- 5.4 referenced to the applicable HES threshold Standard and/or other legislation/regulation.

6. FEEDBACK

Feedback or comments on this policy is welcomed by the listed Responsible officers of the Institute.

7. ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

This policy has initially been developed based on good practice in other higher education providers.

8. VERSION CONTROL

Version	Date approved	Description	Approved by
1.0	December 2020	Initial issue	GB
Related legislation/ regulation/standard	The Victorian Child Safe Standards Child Wellbeing and Safety Act 2005 Children, Youth and Families Act 2005 Occupational Health and Safety Act 2004		