

## CHILD SAFETY POLICY AND PROCEDURES

<b>Approving authority</b>	Executive Management Team (EMT)
<b>Purpose</b>	This policy and procedure has been developed to ensure that Oxford College appropriately manages the risks of child abuse in all school environments and to meet the Victorian Child Safe Standards, Ministerial Order 870 – Child Safe Standards - Managing the risk of child abuse in schools and Ministerial Order 1359 Managing The Risk Of Child Abuse In Schools And School Boarding Premises.
<b>Responsible Officer</b>	Principal
<b>Associated documents</b>	Governance charter Child safety code of conduct policy and procedures Child Safe Risk Management Policy and Procedures Critical incident policy and procedures Diversity, Cultural safety and Equity Policy And Procedure Anti-Discrimination and harassment policy and procedure Student behaviour management policy and procedures Younger Students and Homestay Policy and Procedures Mandatory Reporting Policy Responding to and reporting allegations of suspected child abuse policy and procedures Student Support & Services Policy & Procedures Curriculum Framework, Assessment, Mode of Delivery, Reporting And Record-Keeping Policy and Procedures Student Complaints and Appeals policy and procedures Human Resources Policy Contractor and Consultants policy and procedures Volunteer and Visitor policy and procedures Record Management Policy

### 1. RATIONALE

This policy has been developed to meet the Victorian Child Safe Standards, Ministerial Order 870 – Child Safe Standards - Managing the risk of child abuse in schools and Ministerial Order 1359 Managing The Risk Of Child Abuse In Schools And School Boarding Premises. All registered schools are required to manage the risks of child abuse in all school environments and comply with the Minimum Standards for a Child Safe Environment as set out in the Ministerial Orders.

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.

All Oxford College staff (as defined by the Ministerial Order) and volunteers involved in child connected work must comply with the College child safe policies. The Ministerial Orders 870 and 1359 define school staff as an individual working in the school environments who is:

- ⌚ directly engaged or employed by the College;
- ⌚ a contracted service provider (whether or not a body corporate or any other person is an intermediary) engaged to perform child-related work; or
- ⌚ a minister of religion, a religious leader or an employee or officer of a religious body associated with the school.

Child connected work means all work authorised by the governing school authority (the Principal) and performed by an adult in a school environment while children are present or reasonably expected to be present.

## 2. SCOPE

This policy and procedures applies to:

- ① the governing body members, the Executive management team
- ① staff directly engaged or employed by the Executive management team
- ① contracted staff ie. contracted service provider whether or not a body corporate or any other person is an intermediary) engaged to perform child-related work
- ① volunteers
- ① parents
- ① students; and
- ① the wider community.

This policy and procedures applies to all Oxford school environments. School environments means any of the following physical, online or virtual places, used during or outside school hours:

- ① A campus of the school;
- ① Online or virtual school environments made available or authorised by the school governing authority for use by a child or student (including email, intranet systems, software applications, collaboration tools, and online services); and
- ① Other locations provided by the school or through a third-party provider for a child or student to use including, but not limited to, locations used for:
  - o camps;
  - o approved homestay accommodation;
  - o delivery of education and training such as registered training organisations, TAFEs, non-school senior secondary providers or another school; or
  - o sporting events, excursions, competitions or other events.

## 3. POLICY

- 3.1 The College has zero tolerance to child abuse and is committed to the protection and wellbeing of all children in all of its school environments.
- 3.2 The Executive Management team is committed to providing a culturally safe environment where children and young people are safe and feel safe, and their voices are heard about decisions that affect their lives.
- 3.3 The College's vision and values are set out in the Governance charter. They include:
- ① **Unity** - We work together to achieve our vision, mission and objectives.
  - ① **Passion** - We are passionately committed to delivering quality educational experiences and expanding all learners' horizons.
  - ① **Excellence** - We strive for the highest quality in every aspect of our work
  - ① **Respect** - We respect all our clients and stakeholders by providing a caring Oxford community based on openness, fairness and friendship. At Oxford we recognize that with rights come responsibilities to ourselves, our clients and our stakeholders.
  - ① **Integrity** - We act responsibly and honestly in all we do.
  - ① **Diversity** - We promote intercultural awareness and understanding through authentic experiences both within the Oxford community and the broader Australian and global community.
- 3.4 The College principles that guide the school in developing policies and procedures to create and maintain a child safe school environment include:

- ⌚ We value the input of, consult with and communicate regularly with our students, staff (as defined by the Ministerial order) and families.
- ⌚ We have established and made accessible child safety policies, procedures, systems and practices that reflect the risks of the College.
- ⌚ We take a preventative, proactive and participatory approach to child safety.
- ⌚ We value and empower our students to participate in decisions which affect their lives including ensuring that they are comfortable and encouraged to speak up if they feel worried or unsafe.
- ⌚ We respect diversity in cultures while keeping child safety paramount.
- ⌚ We engage people who are suitable to work with children and have high quality staff and volunteer supervision and professional development.
- ⌚ We foster a culture of openness that supports all persons to safely disclose risks of harm to children and encourage the reporting of suspected abuse, neglect or mistreatment promptly to the appropriate authorities.
- ⌚ We support our students who disclose or are otherwise linked to suspected child abuse.
- ⌚ We will manage all child safety concerns in a sensitive, confidential, honest, responsible and timely manner.
- ⌚ We will ensure that staff and volunteers are supported to implement the child safe policies to the extent that it is applicable to their role and responsibilities
- ⌚ We ensure the procurement policies for facilities and services from third parties ensure the safety of students.
- ⌚ We will monitor compliance with and continuously improve the effectiveness of our child safe strategies.

3.5 The Executive Management Team is committed to the implementation of child safe strategies that:

- ⌚ Embed a culture of child safety, taking into account the diversity of all students and make 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, children with disabilities, and children who are vulnerable
- ⌚ Implement documented strategies, policies, procedures and practices that embed an organisational culture of child safety including:
  - o strategies to ensure child safety and wellbeing is embedded in leadership, governance and culture
  - o this child safety policy
  - o a child safety code of conduct
  - o procedures for screening, supervision, training, and other human resources practices that reduce the risk of child abuse
  - o procedures for responding to and reporting suspected child abuse
  - o strategies to identify and reduce or remove risks of child abuse
  - o strategies to promote child participation and empowerment
  - o strategies to establish culturally safe environments in which the diverse and unique identities and experiences of Aboriginal children, young people and students are respected and valued.
  - o strategies for family engagement
  - o strategies to ensure that equity is upheld, and diverse needs respected in policy and practice.
  - o processes for complaints and concerns are child focused
  - o processes to equip staff and volunteers with child safety knowledge
  - o strategies for child safety in physical and online environments
  - o processes for review of the implementation of child safety practices
- ⌚ Allocate roles and responsibilities for achieving the child safe strategies

- ⌚ Put the child safe strategies into practice, and inform the school community about these practices and allocated roles and responsibilities
  - ⌚ Manage all child safety concerns in a sensitive, confidential, honest, responsible and timely manners
  - ⌚ Support, enable and encourage school staff, parents and children to understand, identify, discuss and report child safety matters
  - ⌚ Support children in the school who disclose or are otherwise linked to suspected child abuse
  - ⌚ Monitor compliance to this policy
  - ⌚ Periodically review the effectiveness of the strategies put into practice and, if considered appropriate, revise the strategies.
- 3.6 The Executive Management Team is involved in the development of and endorses this child safety and wellbeing policy that sets out:
- o EMTs commitment to child safety;
  - o the actions the College takes to ensure a child safe culture is championed and modelled at all levels of the College
  - o the governance arrangements in place within the school or school boarding premises for ensuring implementation of the policy at all levels; and
  - o the process by which the EMT reviews its child safe practices.
- 3.7 As required by Ministerial Order 1359 Managing The Risk Of Child Abuse In Schools And School Boarding Premises, the policies and procedures and any other statements and records:
- o address all Child Safe Standards;
  - o are understood and implemented by all staff, the EMT and volunteers;
  - o are championed and modelled by the EMT and all College leaders;
  - o are documented and easy to understand; and
  - o are informed by best practice models and stakeholder consultation
  - o are reviewed after any significant child safety incident, or at least every two years, and improved where applicable.
- 3.8 The College's child safe policies have been based on:
- ⌚ the Victorian Department of Education and Training (DET) Guidance materials and website resources;
  - ⌚ the Commission for Children and Young People (CCYP) website resources
  - ⌚ the Victorian Regulation and Qualifications Authority (VRQA) website resources;
  - ⌚ the Victorian Department of Children, Youth and Families website resources; and
  - ⌚ the Victorian Department of Justice and Community safety fact sheets and website information.

## 4. PROCEDURES

- 4.1 The Executive Management Team (EMT) and all staff have a legal and/or moral responsibility in the prevention and reporting of child abuse and neglect. The following table identifies the roles of those who are responsible for this policy and the procedures.

<b>Responsible for:</b>	<b>Who is responsible?</b>
Development of Strategies to embed an organisational culture of child safety including seeking feedback from staff, students and their families	The Executive management team
Development of a child safety policy framework including child safe policy, child safety code of conduct, screening, supervision, training, and other human resources policies, procedures for responding to and reporting suspected child abuse, strategies to identify and reduce or remove risks of child abuse and strategies to promote child participation and empowerment.	The Executive management team
Designated Child protection officer to support all staff and students with this policy	International Student Coordinator
Ensuring the Executive Management team and staff are appropriately screened and selected	Business owner and Principal
Coaching staff on risks and ensuring new and existing Executive Management team and staff are provided with regular professional development	Principal, High school coordinator and the International Student Coordinator
Complete all required professional development including in respect to cultural safety and comply with the College Child safe policies and code of conduct	Executive management team and all staff, visitors, volunteers and students
Monitoring staff suitability for child connected work	Principal, High school coordinator and the International Student Coordinator
Ensuring the College implements the child empowerment strategies	Principal, High school coordinator and the International Student Coordinator
Promptly managing the school's response to an allegation or disclosure and ensuring that it is taken seriously.	Primary: Principal Alternative: Other EMT members
Encouraging students to speak up and responding appropriately to a child who makes or is affected by an allegation of child abuse.	All staff.
Reporting an incident	All staff with support from the Designated Child protection officer
Protect any child connected to alleged child abuse until the allegation is resolved.	Primary: International Student Coordinator Alternative: Other EMT members
Monitoring school compliance with this policy.	Executive Management team including the Principal
Make, secure and retain records	All staff International Student Coordinator
Reviewing this policy	The Executive management team

#### 4.2 The actions the College takes to implement the child safe policy includes:

- ⌚ To monitor the school's adherence to its child safety policy the Executive Management team

- ⌚ support, encourage and enable school staff, parents, and children to understand, identify, discuss and report child safety matters; and
  - ⌚ (iii) support or assist children who disclose child abuse or are otherwise linked to suspected child abuse.
- 4.3 The College takes the following actions to promote child empowerment and participation to all students.
- ⌚ Developing a College culture where
    - o the diverse and unique identities and experiences of Aboriginal children, young people and students are respected and valued.
    - o strategies are developed to equip students to acknowledge and appreciate the strengths of Aboriginal culture and understand its importance to the wellbeing and safety of Aboriginal children and students.
    - o students are informed about all of their rights, including to safety, information and participation
    - o students are empowered about their rights, participate in decisions affecting them and are taken seriously
    - o there are opportunities for students to participate and staff are responsive to their contributions to strengthen confidence and engagement.
    - o the importance of friendships is recognised and support from peers is encouraged, to help children and students feel safe and be less isolated
  - ⌚ Developing child safe information that is accessible, culturally and age appropriate for students.
  - ⌚ publicly promoting the child safe policies on the College website
  - ⌚ making reference to the College child safe policies in Student pre-enrolment, orientation and other child safe information.
  - ⌚ ensuring that the orientation process includes specific reference to the College child safe policies.
  - ⌚ As part of student support strategies embedding the promotion of the child safe policies.
  - ⌚ ensuring all student's ability to express their culture and enjoy their cultural rights is encouraged and actively supported
  - ⌚ developing curriculum planning documents or other documentation that details the strategies and actions to ensure the students receive appropriate education about:
    - o the College policies
    - o standards of behaviour for students attending the school;
    - o the diverse circumstances of students and how the College provides support and responds to vulnerable children and students.
    - o the needs of Aboriginal students, students with disability, students from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds, students who are unable to live at home, international students, and lesbian, gay, bisexual, trans and gender diverse, intersex and queer (LGBTIQ+) students and how the College ensures there is a culturally safe environment for them.
    - o students are empowered about their rights as set out in the United National convention including
      - ⌚ be treated fairly
      - ⌚ have a say about decisions affecting them
      - ⌚ live and grow up healthy
      - ⌚ have people who do what is best for them



- ⌚ believe what they want to believe
- ⌚ privacy
- ⌚ find out information and express themselves
- ⌚ be safe no matter where they are
- ⌚ be cared for and have a home
- ⌚ education, play and cultural activities
- ⌚ help and protection if they want it
- o students are encouraged to participate in decisions affecting them and are taken seriously ie. there are opportunities for children and students to participate and are responsive to their contributions to strengthen confidence and engagement.
- o healthy and respectful relationships (including sexuality).
- o students are offered access to sexual abuse prevention programs and to relevant related information in an age-appropriate way
- o resilience;
- o the importance of friendships is recognised and support from peers is encouraged, to help children and students feel safe and be less isolated;
- o child abuse awareness and prevention.
- o access to information, support and complaints processes in ways that are culturally safe, accessible and easy to understand
- ⌚ Providing students that are 18 years of age with information about their obligations particularly students living in homestay arrangements with younger students.

4.4 The College takes the following actions to demonstrate its commitment to child safety and ensure families and communities are informed and involved in promoting child safety and wellbeing and to understand, identify, discuss and report child safety matters:

- ⌚ publicly promoting the child safe policy and procedures on the College website.
- ⌚ in developing and reviewing this policy being sensitive to the diversity and characteristics of the school community which mainly consists of families from culturally diverse backgrounds.
- ⌚ making reference to this policy in Student pre-enrolment, orientation and other child safe information.
- ⌚ advising parent(s)/guardians) and homestay carers about the policy and where it can be accessed in school communications.
- ⌚ seeking feedback from families and the community on the College policies and incorporating that feedback in policy review processes so the community have a say in the development and review of policies and practices related to child safety and wellbeing.
- ⌚ ensures that families participate in decisions related to child safety and wellbeing which affect their child.

4.5 The College takes the following actions to support, encourage and enable school staff to understand, identify, discuss and report child safety matters:

- ⌚ College strategies are developed to
  - o equip staff to acknowledge and appreciate the strengths of Aboriginal culture, understand its importance to the wellbeing and safety of Aboriginal children and students and pays particular attention to the needs of Aboriginal students to enable the College to provide and promote a culturally safe environment for them

- o equip staff to understand the diverse circumstances of students and provide support and responds to vulnerable students and pay particular attention to the needs of students with disability, students from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds, students who are unable to live at home, international students, and lesbian, gay, bisexual, trans and gender diverse, intersex and queer (LGBTIQ+) students
- o attune staff to signs of harm and facilitate child-friendly ways for children and students to express their views, participate in decision-making and raise their concerns.
- o facilitate participation and responsiveness to the input of students
- ⌚ Ensuring applicants for roles are informed about College's child safety practices (including the code of conduct).
- ⌚ When engaging volunteers to undertake child-connected work, volunteers are made aware of the child safety policy and child safety code of conduct of the College.
- ⌚ Ensuring new staff (a defined by the Ministerial order) and volunteers receive an induction that includes:
  - o the school's policies, codes, practices, and procedures governing child safety and child-connected work including:
    - information on the child safety code of conduct
    - the child safety policy and
    - Student complaints and appeals policy and procedures
    - Responding to and reporting allegations of suspected child abuse policy and procedures
  - o making them aware of their responsibilities to children and students, information sharing and reporting obligations, and record keeping obligations
- ⌚ Ensuring staff in supervision roles coach and support staff in development of their understanding of child safe risks and the College policies and procedures.
- ⌚ Ensuring supervision and people management of staff and volunteers focuses on child safety and wellbeing
- ⌚ At least annually, ensuring that appropriate guidance and training is provided to the individual members of the school governing authority and school staff about:
  - o individual and collective obligations and responsibilities for managing the risk of child abuse including:
    - the school's strategy and approach to implementation of the child safe standards
    - guidance on responding effectively to issues of child safety and wellbeing and supporting colleagues who disclose harm
    - guidance on how to build culturally safe environments for children and students
    - guidance on their information sharing and recordkeeping obligations
  - o child safety and wellbeing risks in the school environment including:
    - guidance on how to identify and mitigate child safety and wellbeing risks in the school environment without compromising a child or student's right to privacy, access to information, social connections and learning opportunities
    - guidance on recognising indicators of child harm including harm caused by other children and students
  - o the College's child safety policies, procedures and practices including:
    - Child Safety Policy and Procedures



- Child Safe Risk Management Policy and Procedures
- Younger Students Policy and Procedures
- Mandatory Reporting Policy
- Responding to and reporting allegations of suspected child abuse policy and procedures
- Student Support & Services Policy & Procedures
- Homestay Policy and Procedures
- Human Resources Policy

4.6 Child safety and wellbeing is embedded in the leadership, governance and culture. The Executive Management team:

- ⌚ The child safe policies are championed and modelled by the Executive Management team.
- ⌚ engages in professional development
- ⌚ proactively engages in the identification, mitigation and monitoring of the effectiveness of the child safety risk management of child safe risks in all environments.
- ⌚ has child safety as a standing item
- ⌚ ensures the College undertakes reviews of its child safe strategies and practices annually.
- ⌚ Ensures that as part of the review process:
  - o There is review and evaluation of the child safety and wellbeing policies, procedures and practices after any significant child safety incident, or at least every two years, and improve where applicable.
  - o Complaints, concerns and safety incidents are analysed to identify causes and systemic failures and inform continuous improvement.
- ⌚ Ensures that the College reports on the outcomes of relevant reviews to staff, volunteers, the school community, and families and students.

## 5. FEEDBACK

Feedback or comments on this policy and procedure is welcomed by the listed responsible officer.