



Child Safe Policy Statement

This Child Safe Policy Statement (**Policy Statement**) sets out the values, principles and strategies that will guide the College in developing policies and procedures to create and maintain a student safe environment.

The Policy Statement sets out the strategies the College has adopted, and the actions the College will take, to:

- Demonstrate its commitment to student safety and monitor compliance with the Policy Statement.
- Support, encourage and enable College staff, parents and students to understand, identify, discuss and report student safety matters.
- Support or assist students who disclose child abuse, or are linked to suspected child abuse.

The Policy Statement forms part of the College's Child Protection Program.

The Policy Statement is a child safety policy made in accordance with *Ministerial Order No. 870 - Child Safe Standards – Managing the Risk of Child Abuse in Schools*.

Definitions

Please refer to the *Child Protection Program Definitions* document for definitions of terms used in this document.

The College's commitment to student safety

The College is committed to providing a respectful, safe and supportive environment for students and adopts a student-centred approach to education where creativity, academic, emotional, spiritual, physical and life skills are nurtured.

The College recognises that any person in authority within, or in relation to the College has a statutory duty under section 490 of the *Crimes Act 1958* (Vic) to protect children studying at the College from any substantial risk that they will become the victim of a sexual offence committed by another person who is 18 years of age or more and associated with the College.

The College treats seriously its reporting obligations in relation to student safety matters, including to the Commission for Children and Young People and Victoria Police. The College recognises that whilst reporting obligations may differ depending on a person's position within the school, all staff are required to uphold the ethos of this policy by ensuring that student safety matters are reported internally, and externally where required.

The College accordingly takes a zero-tolerance approach to student safety risks and recognises that it has a pastoral, moral and legal responsibility to create a school environment where students are respected, their voices are heard and taken seriously, and where they are safe and feel safe. To achieve a student safety culture, we value and celebrate diversity, promote safe and respectful working environments, and are proactive in our approach to curriculum, practices policies and procedures.

At all times, the ongoing safety and wellbeing of students will be paramount in the College's decision-making.

The College's guiding values and principles

The College's commitment to student safety is based on the following overarching values and principles that guide the development and regular review of our strategies, practices, policies and procedures to create and maintain a student safe school environment.

All students have the right to be safe

Our primary focus in delivering care, education and through decision-making, is that all students are safe, feel safe, and are able to actively participate in decisions that affect their lives. We encourage students to talk openly and share their views, particularly about matters that directly impact them. The welfare and best interests of the student are paramount.



The College appreciates that a student safe environment looks different for every student, and in delivering this, respects the cultural safety of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students, students from culturally and/or linguistically diverse backgrounds, as well as the safety of students with a disability or who are otherwise vulnerable.

The College will promote its student safety practices to students in ways that are readily accessible, easy to understand and user-friendly.

The College will ensure that student safety awareness is promoted and openly discussed within the College community.

The College will ensure students (and their parents) are provided with the necessary skills and knowledge to understand and maintain their own personal safety and wellbeing, including:

- Understanding, identifying, discussing and reporting student safety matters.
- Standards of behaviour for students attending the College.
- Healthy and respectful relationships (including those relating to gender and sexuality).
- Resilience.

The College community should be empowered to raise student safety concerns

The College will ensure that procedures for raising and responding to student safety concerns are simple and accessible for all members of the College community.

The College has a *Reporting and Responding to Child Safety Concerns Policy Statement*, publicly available on the College's website, which sets out:

- How concerns about child abuse and reportable conduct may be raised with the College.
- How such concerns will be dealt with by the College (including by complying with any legislative reporting obligations).
- How the College will support or assist students who disclose such concerns, or who are otherwise linked to such concerns.

Effective employment practices are critical for fostering and sustaining a student safe culture

The College acknowledges that establishing and entrenching a strong student safe culture requires effective staff selection, supervision and management practices.

All positions at the College that involve child-connected work will have a position description, which clearly sets out:

- The position's requirements, duties and responsibilities regarding student safety.
- The occupant's essential or relevant qualifications, experience and attributes in relation to student safety.

All prospective employees will be informed about the College's student safety practices, and be subject to child protection screening in accordance with the College's obligations under legislation (including *Ministerial Order No. 870 – Child Safe Standards – Managing the Risk of Child Abuse in Schools*).

The College will ensure appropriate procedures are in place to screen all staff (including volunteers, contractors, and External Education Providers) involved in child-related work. An overview of these procedures is outlined in the College's *Recruitment and Engagement Policy Statement*.

Appropriate induction regarding the College's student safety practices will follow any successful appointment or engagement, including training on the content of the College's Child Protection Program.

The College requires that staff act professionally, and in a way that upholds the College's commitment to student safety. The College has a *Child Safety Staff Code of Conduct (Code)*, publicly available on the College's website, which sets out appropriate and inappropriate behaviours by staff.

The College also has a *Staff and Student Professional Boundaries Policy Statement* specifically dealing with appropriate conduct in the context of crossing professional boundaries.



The College will take disciplinary action where a staff member is found to have acted contrary to the Code or the *Staff and Student Professional Boundaries Policy Statement*.

Staff will otherwise be subject to regular supervision, and periodic student safety checks, to ensure their ongoing suitability for child-connected work.

At least annually, the College will ensure that appropriate guidance and training is provided to Board members and staff about:

- Individual and collective obligations and responsibilities for managing the risk of child abuse.
- Child abuse risks in the school environment.
- The College's current student safety standards.

Effective risk management is critical for maintaining a student safe environment

The College recognises that it must have appropriate systems in place to identify and minimise risks in order to create and maintain a student safe environment.

The College will ensure that it has effective risk management strategies in place to identify and mitigate the risk(s) of child abuse and reportable conduct in school environments. These strategies will take into account the nature of the College's school environment, the activities expected to be conducted in that environment (including the provision of services by contractors or outside organisations), and the characteristics and needs of all students expected to be present in that environment.

Where the College identifies risks of child abuse or reportable conduct occurring in the school environment, it will make a record of those risks and determine the action(s) it will take to reduce or remove the risks (**risk controls**).

The College will monitor and evaluate the effectiveness of the implementation of its risk controls.

Continual improvement

The College is committed to continual improvement that is responsive to emerging thinking, evidence and practice, so as to eliminate (where practicable) the possibility of student safety risks occurring in the first place. Where the College can improve, it will strive to do so.

The College's Child Protection Program

The commitments contained in this document are reflected in the College's Child Protection Program, which contains the framework to be followed by staff regarding student safety. This Policy Statement underpins every other aspect of the Child Protection Program.

The College will ensure that the Child Protection Program (including the College's compliance with the principles in this Policy Statement) will be reviewed annually.

The Child Protection Program is accessible to all staff electronically, and key aspects of the program are published on the College website.

Communication

This document is available to the College community and public on the College website.

This document is available to staff as part of the Child Protection Program. The Child Protection Program forms part of the College's induction program for incoming staff, and aspects of (and updates to) the Child Protection Program will be addressed in the College's professional development updates, bulletins and newsletters.

Approval and review

The College's Board has endorsed this Policy Statement.



The Child Protection Program will be reviewed annually.

Related documents

This document forms part of the College's Child Protection Program and should be read in conjunction with its various policies and procedures, including the following:

- Child Safety Staff Code of Conduct
- Child Protection Program Definitions
- Child Safety Responsibilities Policy Statement
- Reporting and Responding to Child Safety Concerns Policy Statement

Revision History

Version	Date	Reviewed/Updated by (name)	Position/Title
1	12/04/2018	Kim Forward	Deputy Principal
1.1	08/05/2019	Kim Forward	Deputy Principal
	24/02/2020	College Board	No changes
1.2	08/05/2020	Kim Forward	Deputy Principal
2	02/09/2020	Amy Schembri	Compliance Manager
3	12/11/2020	Josie Crisara Amy Schembri College Board (together with RK Lawyers)	Principal Compliance Manager