



# Oakleigh Grammar

<b>Policy Document Name</b>	<b>Child Safety and Wellbeing</b>
<b>Date Ratified by Board of Management</b>	July 2023
<b>Date for Review</b>	July 2024

## 1. Preamble

The Oakleigh Grammar Child Safety and Wellbeing Policy demonstrates our school's commitment to creating and maintaining a child safe and child-friendly organisation, where children and young people are safe and feel safe. Oakleigh Grammar has a **zero-tolerance approach to child abuse**.

The School must comply with the minimum standard for the care, safety and welfare of students as detailed in the Child Safe Standards specified by Ministerial Order No 1359 which sets out how the Victorian Child Safe Standards apply in school environments (see Appendix 1).

This policy provides an overview of our school's approach to implementing Ministerial Order 1359. Underpinning the information and procedures discussed in this policy is the *Children, Youth and families Act 2005*. It informs our school community of everyone's obligations to act safely and appropriately towards children and guides our processes and practices for the safety and wellbeing of students across all areas of our work.

## 2. Scope

This policy:

- applies to all school staff, visitors, volunteers and contractors whether or not they work in direct contact with students. It also applies to Board of Management members where indicated.
- applies in all physical and online school environments used by students during or outside of school hours, including other locations provided by for a student's use (for example, a school camp) and those provided through third-party providers (e.g. after school clubs, allied health services, homestay providers)
- should be read together with our other child safety and wellbeing policies including
  - Child Safety Code of Conduct
  - Child Safety Reporting Obligations & Procedures Policy (Incl. Mandatory Reporting)
  - Staff Conduct and Acceptable Behaviours Policy
  - ICT Acceptable Use and Social Media Policy
  - Student Welfare and Behaviour Management Policy

- Privacy Policy

### **3. Statement of Commitment**

*Oakleigh Grammar is a Child Safe School which welcomes all children, young people and their families.*

*We are committed to providing environments where our students are safe and feel safe, where their participation is valued, their views respected, and their voices are heard about decisions that affect their lives. Our Child Safety policies, strategies and practices are inclusive of the needs of all children and students.*

*We support and respect all children, as well as our teachers, non-teaching staff and volunteers. We are committed to the safety, participation and empowerment of all children and young people.*

*We have zero tolerance for child abuse and take proactive steps to identify and manage any risks of harm to students in our school environments.*

#### **To meet our commitment:**

We promote positive relationships between students and adults and between students and their peers. These relationships are based on trust and respect.

We take proactive steps to identify and manage any risk of harm to students in our school environments. When child safety concerns are raised or identified, we treat these seriously and respond promptly and thoroughly.

Particular attention is given to the child safety needs of Aboriginal students, those from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds, international students, students with disabilities, those unable to live at home, and other students experiencing risk or vulnerability. Inappropriate or harmful behaviour targeting students based on these or other characteristics, such as racism or homophobia, are not tolerated at our school, and any instances identified will be addressed with appropriate consequences.

Child safety is a shared responsibility. Every person involved in our school has an important role in promoting child safety and wellbeing and promptly raising any issues or concerns about a child's safety. Teachers and employees of the School, have a legal and moral responsibility to respond to situations involving:

- child abuse
- allegations of child abuse
- concern of potential child abuse
- managing the risk of child abuse

- providing support to a child at risk of child abuse and to actively maintain a safe school environment both during school hours and outside the school day

We have legal and moral obligations to contact authorities when we are worried about a child's safety, which we follow rigorously.

Our School has robust human resources and recruitment practices for all teachers, non-teaching staff and volunteers.

We regularly review our Child Safe practices, and seek input from our students, families, staff, and volunteers to inform our ongoing strategies.

#### 4. Definitions

The following terms in this policy have specific definitions referenced against Ministerial Order 1359:

- **child** - a child or young person who is under the age of 18 years.
- **child safety** - child safety includes matters related to protecting all children from child abuse, managing the risk of child abuse, providing support to a child at risk of child abuse, and responding to suspicions, incidents, disclosures or allegations of child abuse.
- **child abuse** - child abuse includes any act committed against a child involving a) a sexual offence or grooming offences, b) the infliction, on a child, of physical violence or serious emotional or psychological harm and, c) the serious neglect of a child including exposure to family violence and its effects
- **child-connected work** - work authorised by the school governing authority and performed by an adult in a school environment while children or youth are present or reasonably expected to be present
- **school environment** – any of the following physical, online or virtual places, used during or outside school hours: the campus of the school; online or virtual school environments made available or authorised by the school governing authority for use by a child or student; 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: camps, sport, excursions, TAFE providers, approved homestay accommodation.
- **school staff** - in a non-Government school, is an individual working in a school environment who is: directly engaged or employed by a school governing authority; a contracted service provider engaged by the school governing authority to perform child-related work; a minister of religion, a religious leader or an employee or officer of a religious body associated with the school.
- **school governing authority** – a) the proprietor of a school, including a person authorised to act for or on behalf of the proprietor, b) the governing body for a school
- **school governing body** - in relation to a non-Government school, the person or body responsible for the governance, conduct or management of the school
- **student** - a person who is enrolled at or attends the school

- **volunteer** - a person who performs work without remuneration or reward for the school or school boarding premises in the school environment or school boarding premises environment.

## **Definitions of Forms of Child Abuse**

**Physical Abuse** occurs when a person purposefully injures or threatens to injure a child. The abuse can take the form of slapping, punching, shaking, kicking, burning, shoving or grabbing. The injury may take the form of bruises, cuts, burns or fractures. This does not include reasonable discipline, although it may result from excessive or inappropriate discipline.

**Psychological/Emotional Abuse** occurs when a child is repeatedly rejected or frightened of threats. The abuse can involve name calling, being put down or continual coldness from a parent or caregiver to the extent where the behaviour of the child is disturbed or their emotional development is at serious risk of being impaired.

**Neglect** occurs when there is a failure to provide a child with the basic necessities of life, such as food, clothing, shelter, supervision, medical attention or care to the extent that the health, safety, or development of the child is significantly impaired or placed at risk.

**Sexual Abuse** occurs when a child is used by an adult, another child or adolescent for his or her own sexual stimulation or gratification. These can be contact or non-contact acts, including grooming by perpetrators, inappropriate touching, penetrative abuse, exposure to pornography and accessing child pornography.

**Exposure to Domestic Violence** occurs when a child witnesses or experiences the chronic domination, coercion, intimidation and victimisation of one person to another by physical, sexual or emotional means within a domestic relationship or in the home environment.

**Grooming** occurs when communication or conduct is linked to the intention of facilitating the involvement of a child in sexual behaviour with an adult, indicators include but are not limited to:

- developing special relationships with, favouring or giving gifts to a child
- inappropriate interactions with a child either in person or via forms of media and electronic devices
- asking a child to keep a secret of any aspect of their relationship
- testing of or ignoring professional boundaries or rules

Grooming behaviour typically involves a graduation from attention giving and non-sexual touching to increasingly more intimate and intrusive behaviours.

Grooming is not a single act of unprofessional or inappropriate conduct, but rather a pattern of behaviour where the trust of a child is gained and a 'special relationship' is developed between the adult and the child.

Grooming involves making the child feel important and special often by giving the child extra attention, privileges and gifts. In many cases, the child's family is engaged by the adult to gain access to the child outside of school hours and the child is encouraged to see the adult as a friend.

## **5. Roles and Responsibilities**

### **a. School Executive**

Our School Executive team (comprising the Principal, Deputy Principals and Business Manager) is responsible for ensuring that a strong child safe culture is created and maintained, and that policies and practices are effectively developed and implemented in accordance with Ministerial Order 1359.

The Principal and Deputy Principals will:

- ensure effective child safety and wellbeing governance, policies, procedures, codes and practices are in place and followed
- model a child safe culture that facilitates the active participation of students, families and staff in promoting and improving child safety, cultural safety and wellbeing
- enable inclusive practices where the diverse needs of all students are considered
- reinforce high standards of respectful behaviour between students and adults, and between students
- ensure that the selection, supervision, and management practices of all staff are child safe
- promote regular open discussion on child safety issues within the school community including at leadership team meetings, staff meetings and Board of Management meetings
- facilitate regular professional learning for staff and volunteers (where appropriate) to build deeper understandings of child safety, cultural safety, student wellbeing and prevention of responding to abuse
- create an environment where child safety complaints and concerns are readily raised, and no one is discouraged from reporting an allegation of child abuse to relevant authorities.
- oversee the regular review of the Child Safety Risk Registry

### **b. School staff and volunteers**

All staff and volunteers will:

- participate in child safety and wellbeing induction and training provided by the School and always follow the School's child safety and wellbeing policies and procedures
- act in accordance with our Child Safety Code of Conduct and Staff Conduct and Acceptable Behaviours Policy
- identify and raise concerns about child safety issues in accordance with our Child Safety responding and reporting obligations and procedures including following the Four Critical Actions for Schools
- ensure students' views are taken seriously and their voices are heard about decisions that affect their lives

- implement inclusive practices that respond to the diverse needs of students.
- wear their school lanyard and identification or 'school identification badge' at all times

### **c. Board of Management**

In performing the functions and powers of the School's Board of Management, members will:

- champion and promote a child safe culture with the broader school community
- ensure that child safety is a regular agenda item at Board of Management meetings
- undertake annual training on child safety, approve updates to, and act in accordance with the Child Safety Code of Conduct to the extent that it applies to Board of Management employees and members
- when appointing Board of Management members, ensure that selection, supervision, and management practices are child safe

### **d. Head of Admissions**

It is the responsibility of the Head of Admissions to ensure that all homestay checks have been completed before a student commences their homestay. All homestay providers and guardians will undergo a briefing and receive a copy of our Child Safety and Wellbeing Policy.

### **e. Specific Child Safety Responsibilities**

Oakleigh Grammar has nominated a Child Safety Officer (Deputy Principal – Student Wellbeing and Operations) to support the Principal to implement our child safety policies and practices, including staff and volunteer training. The responsibilities of the Child Safety Officer include to work with the school leadership team, teachers, students, volunteers and the school community to create a child safe environment in the school.

Our Principal and Deputy Principal – Student Wellbeing & Operations (Child Safety Officer) are the first point of contact for child safety concerns or queries and for coordinating responses to child safety incidents.

Together with the Principal, the Deputy Principal – Student Wellbeing & Operations (Child Safety Officer) is responsible for monitoring the School's compliance with the Child Safety and Wellbeing Policy. Anyone in our school community should approach the Deputy Principal – Student Wellbeing & Operations (Child Safety Officer) if they have any concerns about the school's compliance with the Child Safety and Wellbeing Policy.

The Deputy Principal – Student Wellbeing & Operations (Child Safety Officer) is responsible for informing the school community about this policy, and making it publicly available

#### **f. Checking of Visitors and Contractors**

All people engaged in work at Oakleigh Grammar including volunteers, external providers (e.g. visiting music teachers, allied health professionals etc.) and contractors are required to carry and wear a lanyard containing their Oakleigh Grammar visitor identification. Staff are to approach anyone not wearing their lanyard and direct them to the office.

All visitors to the campus must sign in at reception or at the ELC.

All volunteers, guests, contractors, external providers must show their Working with Children Certificate at reception before being allowed to enter the premises. Details of the WWC are to be recorded.

#### **g. Student Reference Group**

The Student Reference Group on child safety provides an opportunity for students to provide input into school strategies.

### **6. Child Safety Code of Conduct**

Oakleigh Grammar's Child Safety Code of Conduct sets the boundaries and expectations for appropriate behaviours between adults and students. It also clarifies behaviours that are not acceptable in our physical and online environments.

We ensure that students also know what is acceptable and what is not acceptable so that they can be clear and confident about what to expect from adults in the school.

The Child Safety Code of Conduct should be read in conjunction with the Staff Code of Conduct and Acceptable Behaviours Policy

### **7. Managing Risks to Child Safety and Wellbeing**

At Oakleigh Grammar we identify, assess and manage risks to child safety and wellbeing in our physical and online school environments. These risks are managed through our child safety and wellbeing policies, procedures and practices, and in our activity specific risk registers, such as those we develop for off-site overnight camps, adventure activities and facilities and services we contract through third party providers for student use.

Our Child Safety Risk Register is used to record any identified risks related to child abuse alongside actions in place to manage those risks.

Our school leadership team will monitor and evaluate the effectiveness of the actions in the Child Safety Risk Register annually and after any significant child safety incident.

## **8. Establishing a Culturally Safe Environment**

At Oakleigh Grammar, we are committed to establishing an inclusive and culturally safe school where the strengths of Aboriginal culture, values and practices are respected.

We think about how every student can have a positive experience in a safe environment. For Aboriginal students, we recognise the link between Aboriginal culture, identity and safety and actively create opportunities for Aboriginal students and the Aboriginal community to have a voice and presence in our school planning, policies, and activities.

We have developed the following strategies to promote cultural safety in our school community, examples include but not limited to:

- Acknowledgement of Country at the start of most meetings and large gatherings
- Display the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander flags in assemblies and at special events
- Display plaques to acknowledge the Traditional Owners
- Recognition of connections to Aboriginal perspectives in our curriculum
- Acknowledging events within the community, such as NAIDOC Week, Reconciliation Week Classes running yarning circles
- Availability of Aboriginal resources in our library that are made available to teachers and students
- Links to indigenous heritage in our House banners

At Oakleigh Grammar we encourage and actively support a child or student's ability to express their culture and enjoy their cultural rights in the following ways:

- equip staff, students, volunteers and the school community to acknowledge and appreciate the strengths of Aboriginal culture and understand its importance to the wellbeing and safety of Aboriginal children and students
- adopt measures to ensure racism is identified, confronted and not tolerated
- address any instances of racism within the school environment with appropriate consequences
- actively support participation and inclusion in the school by Aboriginal children, students and their families
- ensure school policies, procedures, systems and processes together create a culturally safe and inclusive environment and meet the needs of Aboriginal children, students and their families
- develop and endorse a policy or statement detailing the strategies and actions the school will take.

## **9. Student Empowerment**

To support child safety and wellbeing at Oakleigh Grammar, we work to create an inclusive and supportive environment that encourages students and families to contribute to our child safety approach and understand their rights and their responsibilities.



Respectful relationships between students are reinforced and we encourage strong friendships and peer support in the school to ensure a sense of belonging. The School Values are imbedded in our pastoral care programs and the Student Welfare and Behaviour Management Policy reinforces our belief that a cooperative school is a happy, secure place where everybody's needs are met and all have an opportunity to succeed.

We inform students of their rights to feel and be safe at school through assemblies, pastoral care sessions and during home group and give them the skills and confidence to recognise unsafe situations with adults or other students and to speak up and act on concerns relating to themselves or their peers. We ensure our students know who to talk to if they are worried or feeling unsafe and we encourage them to share concerns with a trusted adult at any time. Students and families can also access information on how to report concerns on our School website and student diary.

Strategies will be put in place to promote participation and empowerment of children.

Students will participate in clear and appropriate programs regarding empowerment of children including, for example, anti-bullying, cyber-safety, child-safety and resilience.

At the commencement of each year, the Deputy Principal – Professional Culture and Junior School, the Middle School Coordinator and Senior School Coordinator, will ensure that all students have had a briefing on child safety and the processes and procedures in place to support them. Age appropriate references will be made to the Child and Youth Safe Protect document that is published in the student diary.

Where necessary these senior staff will ensure that materials are differentiated to support all students, especially younger students, people from culturally or linguistically diverse backgrounds and students with disabilities.

Throughout each school, there will be relevant displays that provide advice to students of different ages.

When the school is gathering information in relation to a complaint about alleged misconduct or abuse of a child, we will listen to the complainant's account and take them seriously, check our understanding of the complaint, support the student and keep them (and their parents and carers, as appropriate) informed about progress.

## **10. Family Engagement**

Our families and the school community have an important role in monitoring and promoting children's safety and wellbeing and helping children to raise any concerns.

To support family engagement, at Oakleigh Grammar we are committed to providing families and the community with accessible information about our school's child safe policies and practices and

involving them in our approach to child safety and wellbeing.

We will create opportunities for families to have input into the development and review of our child safety policies and practices and encourage them to raise any concerns and ideas for improvement. We do this by:

- Seeking input from families and the community
- Ensuring all of our child safety policies and procedures are available for students and parents on our website
- The Grammar News will inform families and the school community about any significant updates to our child safety policies or processes, and strategies or initiatives that we are taking to ensure student safety.
- PROTECT Child Safety posters will be displayed across the school

Versions of the policy written in other languages will be made available on request.

## **11. Diversity and Equity**

As a child safe organisation, we celebrate the rich diversity of our students, families and community and promote respectful environments that are free from discrimination. Our focus is on wellbeing and growth for all.

We recognise that every child has unique skills, strengths and experiences to draw on. We pay particular attention to individuals and groups of children and young people in our community with additional and specific needs. This includes tailoring our child safety strategies and supports to the needs of:

- Aboriginal children and young people
- children from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds
- children and young people with disabilities
- children unable to live at home or impacted by family violence
- international students
- other vulnerable students

Our Student Welfare and Behaviour Management provides more information about the measures we have in place to support diversity and equity.

## **12. Suitable Staff and Volunteers**

At Oakleigh Grammar we apply robust child safe recruitment, induction, training, and supervision practices to ensure that all staff, contractors, and volunteers are suitable to work with children.

### **a. Staff Recruitment**

Reasonable steps will be taken to ensure that Oakleigh Grammar engages the most suitable and appropriate people to work with children. When recruiting staff, we follow our Recruitment and Employment Policy.

When engaging staff to perform child-related work, we:

- sight, verify and record the person's Working with Children clearance or equivalent background check such as a Victorian teaching registration
- collect and record:
  - proof of the person's identity and any professional or other qualifications
  - the person's history of working with children
  - references that address suitability for the job and working with children.

If during the recruitment process a person's records indicate a criminal history then the person will be given the opportunity to provide further information and context.

### **b. Staff Induction**

All newly appointed staff will be expected to participate in our child safety and wellbeing induction program. The program will include a focus on:

- the Child Safety and Wellbeing Policy (this document)
- the Child Safety Code of Conduct
- Child Safety Reporting Obligations & Procedures Policy (Incl. Mandatory Reporting)
- any other child safety and wellbeing information that school leadership considers appropriate to the nature of the role e.g. Staff Code of Conduct and Acceptable Behaviours Policy and ICT Acceptable Use and Social Media Policy

### **c. Ongoing supervision and management of staff**

All staff engaged in child-connected work will be supervised appropriately to ensure that their behaviour towards children is safe and appropriate.

Staff will be monitored and assessed to ensure their continuing suitability for child-connected work. This will be overseen by the Deputy Principal -Teaching and Learning as part of the probation and regular performance review processes.

Inappropriate behaviour towards children and young people will be managed swiftly and in accordance with our school policies and our legal obligations. Child safety and wellbeing will be paramount.

## **13. Child safety knowledge, skills and awareness**

Ongoing training and education are essential to ensuring that staff understand their roles and responsibilities and develop their capacity to effectively address child safety and wellbeing matters.

In addition to the child safety and wellbeing induction, our staff will participate in a range of training and professional learning to equip them with the skills and knowledge necessary to maintain a child safe environment.

Staff child safety and wellbeing training will be delivered at least annually and will include guidance on:

- our school's child safety and wellbeing policies, procedures, codes, and practices
- completing the Protecting Children – Mandatory Reporting and Other Legal Obligations online module annually
- recognising indicators of child harm including harm caused by other children and students
- responding effectively to issues of child safety and wellbeing and supporting colleagues who disclose harm
- how to build culturally safe environments for children and students
- information sharing and recordkeeping obligations
- how to identify and mitigate child safety and wellbeing risks in the school environment.

At the commencement of each year, all staff will complete an annual declaration that they have read and understand the relevant Child Safety and Wellbeing, Child Safety Reporting Obligations & Procedures Policy (Incl. Mandatory Reporting), Staff Conduct & Professional Boundaries and ICT Acceptable Use and Social Media Policies and Code of Conduct.

Other professional learning and training on child safety and wellbeing, for example, training for our volunteers, will be tailored to specific roles and responsibilities and any identified or emerging needs or issues.

### **Board of Management training and education**

To ensure our Board of Management is equipped with the knowledge required to make decisions in the best interests of student safety and wellbeing, and to identify and mitigate child safety and wellbeing risks in our school environment, the Board is trained at least annually. Training includes guidance on:

- individual and collective obligations and responsibilities for implementing the Child Safe Standards and managing the risk of child abuse
- child safety and wellbeing risks in our school environment
- Oakleigh Grammar child safety and wellbeing policies, procedures, codes and practices

### **14. Complaints and Reporting Processes**

Oakleigh Grammar fosters a culture that encourages staff, volunteers, students, parents, and the school community to raise concerns and complaints. This makes it more difficult for breaches of the code of conduct, misconduct or abuse to occur and remain hidden.

We have clear pathways for raising complaints and concerns and responding and this is documented in our school's Complaints Policy.

If there is an incident, disclosure, allegation or suspicion of child abuse, all staff and volunteers (including Board of Management members and homestay providers) must follow our Child Safety Reporting Obligations & Procedures Policy (Incl. Mandatory Reporting)

Our policy and procedures address complaints and concerns of child abuse made by or in relation

to a child or student, school staff, volunteers, contractors, service providers, visitors or any other person while connected to the school.

Any inappropriate behaviour will be reported through appropriate channels, including the Department of Health and Human Services and Victoria Police, depending on the severity and urgency of the matter. It is the school's responsibility to report an allegation of abuse if we have a reasonable belief that an incident took place (refer Child Safety Reporting Obligations & Procedures Policy (Incl. Mandatory Reporting))

Factors contributing to **reasonable belief** may be:

- a child states they or someone they know has been abused (noting that sometimes the child may in fact be referring to themselves)
- behaviour consistent with that of an abuse victim is observed
- someone else has raised a suspicion of abuse but is unwilling to report it
- observing suspicious behaviour.

Concerns are to be raised with the Principal, Child Safety Officer (Deputy Principal - Student Wellbeing & Operations) or member of the Senior Leadership Team in the first instance.

If any staff member believes a child is at risk of abuse/neglect they are to contact the Principal or Deputy Principal – Student Wellbeing & Operations (Child Safety Officer) or a member of the Senior Leadership Team (DPs, Coordinators) and collectively make follow the **Four Critical Actions for Schools**. (See Appendix).

As soon as any immediate health and safety concerns are addressed, and relevant school staff have been informed, we will ensure our school follows:

- the Four Critical Actions for complaints and concerns relating to adult behaviour towards a child
- the Four Critical Actions: Student Sexual Offending for complaints and concerns relating to student sexual offending

**The staff member should immediately contact Victoria Police if a child is at risk or a criminal offence may have been committed.**

Where the student is over the age of 18 and discloses or is the alleged victim of any type of abuse, as outlined in this Policy, the School will provide support to the student and contact Child Protection and the Police immediately for further investigation.

In the case of a reportable conduct allegation i.e. employee misconduct involving the care, supervision and authority over children, the School will make a report to the Commission for Children and Young People (CCYP) and VIT.

#### **14.1 Procedure for supporting our students**

Actions to support or assist children who disclose child abuse or are otherwise linked to suspected child abuse include the following:

- Try and separate them from the other children discreetly and listen to them carefully.
- Let the child use their own words, at their own pace to explain what has occurred.
- Reassure the child that you take what they are saying seriously, and that it is not their fault and that they are doing the right thing. Don't dismiss what they say. It takes courage for a child to tell about abuse.
- Explain to them that this information may need to be shared with others, including their parent/carer and specific people in the School
- Do not make promises to the child such as promising not to tell anyone about the incident, except that you will do your best to keep them safe.
- Don't ask lots of questions.
- Make sure the child is safe and let them know you will do your best to stop them being harmed.
- Provide them with an Incident Report form to complete, or complete it together, if you think the child is able to do this.
- Do not leave the child in a distressed state. If they seem at ease in your company, stay with them. Take measures to protect the child until the allegation has been resolved.
- Explain to them what you will need to do next.
- Ensure ongoing support is in place. Ensure they understand who they may continue to speak with including counselling (individual and/or family), our School Chaplain, connection with a trusted staff member.

In consultation with the school counsellor, Deputy Principal - Student Wellbeing & Operations and Deputy Principal – Professional Culture & Junior School/ Middle School Coordinator/Senior School Coordinator and external wellbeing professionals, a *Student Support Plan* will be developed for any student that discloses child abuse or are otherwise linked to suspected child abuse. This may involve direct support or referral to external professionals.

The roles and responsibilities of staff members in supporting children may include the following:

- Acting as a support person for the child or young person.
- Attending DHHS Child Protection interviews
- Observing and monitoring the child's behaviour in an ongoing basis
- Liaising with professionals.

## **14.2 Protecting the Student**

Following a report, it is important to protect confidentiality and the interests of the child and family at all times.

It is important to note that:

- DHHS will only interview the student if he/she is agreeable
- The family will not be contacted until it is believed there is a case and the student is at risk
- If the incident which caused the report to be made has occurred in the past - the student may be seen to be no longer at risk and no further action may be taken
- 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 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. DHHS, the police or the Commission) is the responsibility of that authority.

### **14.3 Fair Procedures for Personnel**

The safety and wellbeing of children is our primary concern. We are also fair and just to our personnel. The decisions we make when recruiting, assessing incidents, and undertaking disciplinary action will always be thorough, transparent, and based on evidence.

We record all allegations of abuse and safety concerns using our incident reporting form, including investigation updates. All records are securely stored in a child's central file. If an allegation of abuse or a safety concern is raised, we provide updates to children and families on progress and any actions we as an organisation take.

### **15. Victorian Reportable Conduct Scheme**

The Victorian Reportable Conduct Scheme is aimed at improving a school's response to an allegation of child abuse and/or neglect by an employee or volunteer. The Commission for Children and Young People (CCYP) is responsible for administering the scheme.

The Reportable Conduct Scheme has been designed to ensure that the CCYP will be aware of any allegation of employee misconduct involving the care, supervision and authority over children. The CCYP is able to share information with the WWC Unit, VIT and Police, to better prevent and protect children from abuse.

**Reportable Conduct** is any information that leads a person to form a **reasonable belief** that an employee of the school [including volunteers and contractors] has committed any of the conduct below [or has committed misconduct which may involve any of the following] against a child:

- **Sexual offences** committed against, with or in the presence of a child;
- **Sexual misconduct** committed against, with or in the presence of a child;

- **Physical violence** against, with or in the presence of a child;
- Any behaviour that causes **significant emotional or psychological harm** to a child;
- **Significant neglect** of a child

Reportable Conduct is not limited to sexual abuse.

A person does not need to be charged with, or found guilty of, a criminal offence for their behaviour to be reportable conduct.

## **16. Communications**

Oakleigh Grammar is committed to communicating our child safety strategies to the school community through:

- ensuring that key child safety and wellbeing policies are available on our website including the Child Safety and Wellbeing Policy, Child Safety Code of Conduct, and the Child Safety Reporting Obligations & Procedures Policy (Incl. Mandatory Reporting)
- displaying PROTECT around the school
- updates in the Grammar News
- ensuring that child safety is a regular agenda item at Executive, Senior Leadership, school staff and Board of Management meetings

## **17. Privacy and Information Sharing**

Oakleigh Grammar collects, uses, and discloses information about children and their families in accordance with Victorian privacy laws, and other relevant laws. For information on how our school collects, uses and discloses information refer to our school's Privacy Policy.

## **18. Records Management**

We acknowledge that good records management practices are a critical element of child safety and wellbeing and manage our records in accordance with our Records and Archives Management policy.

Records which are reasonably likely to be needed for current or future legal proceedings, including any civil or criminal proceeding or any inquiry in which evidence may be given before a court or person acting judicially such as a Royal Commission or Board of Inquiry, cannot be destroyed. Even if the minimum requirement set out in a RDA has passed.



This retention and disposal authority covers records concerning allegations and incidents of child sexual abuse. It includes reporting, inquiring and investigation of allegations, as well as the provision of support and redress to individuals.

It also includes the development, implementation and review of organisational policy and guidelines in relation to the prevention, identification, and response to child sexual abuse incidents and allegations. This includes records of this nature created through an agency's reporting, oversight or regulatory relationships with other agencies.

## **19. Review of Child Safety Practices**

At Oakleigh Grammar, we have established processes for the review and ongoing improvement of our child safe policies, procedures, and practices.

We will:

- review and improve our policy annually or after any significant child safety incident
- analyse any complaints, concerns, and safety incidents to improve policy and practice
- act with transparency and share pertinent learnings and review outcomes with school staff and our school community.

## **20. Related policies and procedures**

This Child Safety and Wellbeing Policy is to be read in conjunction with other related school policies, procedures, and codes. These include our:

- Child Safety Reporting Obligations & Procedures Policy (Incl. Mandatory Reporting)
- Child Safety Code of Conduct
- Complaints Policy
- ICT Acceptable Use and Social Media Policy
- Staff Code of Conduct and Acceptable Behaviours Policy
- Student Welfare and Behaviour Management Policy
- Recruitment and Employment Policy

## **21. Other Related Documents**

- Four Critical Actions

## **22. Policy Status and Review**

The Principal and Executive Leadership Team are responsible for reviewing and updating the Child Safety and Wellbeing Policy annually and after any major incident. The review will include input from students, parents/carers and the school community.



## **Appendix 1: The Child Safe Standards**

**Standard 1:** Organisations establish a culturally safe environment in which the diverse and unique identities and experiences of Aboriginal children and young people are respected and valued.

**Standard 2:** Child safety and wellbeing is embedded in organisational leadership, governance and culture.

**Standard 3:** Children and young people are empowered about their rights, participate in decisions affecting them and are taken seriously.

**Standard 4:** Families and communities are informed and involved in promoting child safety and wellbeing.

**Standard 5:** Equity is upheld and diverse needs respected in policy and practice.

**Standard 6:** People working with children and young people are suitable and supported to reflect child safety and wellbeing values in practice.

**Standard 7:** Processes for complaints and concerns are child-focused.

**Standard 8:** Staff and volunteers are equipped with the knowledge, skills and awareness to keep children and young people safe through ongoing education and training.

**Standard 9:** Physical and online environments promote safety and wellbeing while minimising the opportunity for children and young people to be harmed.

**Standard 10:** Implementation of the Child Safe Standards is regularly reviewed and improved.

**Standard 11:** Policies and procedures document how the organisation is safe for children and young people.