



# CHILD SAFE POLICY

## **BACKGROUND**

The Child Safe Standards are compulsory minimum standards that ensure that all Victorian early childhood services and schools are well prepared to protect children from abuse and neglect.

Compliance with the Child Safe Standards is required by law (through [Ministerial Order 870](#)), and all schools are required to demonstrate their compliance with the standards.

## **PURPOSE**

This policy sets out the school's approach to creating a child safe organisation where children and young people are safe and feel safe; and provides the policy framework for the school's approach to the Child Safe Standards. It applies to all staff, volunteers, contractors and community members whether or not they work in direct contact with children or young people, across a range of school forums (e.g. camps, online) and outside of school hours.

## **Statement of Commitment**

Auburn High School is committed to safety and wellbeing of all children and young people. This will be the primary focus of our care and decision-making. Auburn High School has zero tolerance for child abuse. Auburn High School is committed to providing 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. Particular attention will be paid to the cultural safety of Aboriginal children and children from culturally and/or linguistically diverse backgrounds, as well as the safety of children with a disability. Every person involved in Auburn High School has a responsibility to understand the important and specific role he/she plays individually and collectively to ensure that the wellbeing and safety of all children and young people is at the forefront of all they do and every decision they make.

## **PROCEDURES**

- The school's culture encourages staff and volunteers to raise, discuss and scrutinise concerns making it more difficult for abuse to occur and remain hidden.
- The school's plan for creating a child safe culture can be found in the following school policies – *Child Safe Code of Conduct*, *Child Safe Responding and Reporting obligations*.
- School leaders and managers will ensure that each person understands their role, responsibilities and behaviour expected in protecting children and young people from abuse and neglect. Staff and volunteers will comply with the school's Code of Conduct.
- The school applies best practice standards in the recruitment and screening of staff and volunteers, and will take all reasonable steps to ensure that it engages the most

suitable and appropriate people to work with children. We will ensure that staff induction, education and training programs are a vital part of our commitment to safeguarding children and young people from abuse and neglect. All prospective staff and volunteers are required to undergo National Criminal History Records check and maintain a valid Working with Children Check.

- The school has clear expectations for staff and volunteers in making a report about a child or young person who may be in need of protection. Immediate action should include reporting their concerns to the DHHS Child Protection or another appropriate agency and notifying the principal or a member of the school leadership team of their concerns and the reasons for those concerns. The school will take action to respond to a complaint.
- The School believes the wellbeing of children and young people is paramount, and is vigilant in ensuring proper risk management processes. The school recognises there are potential risks to children and young people and will take a risk management approach by undertaking preventative measures.
- The school has developed a safe, inclusive and supportive environment that involves and communicates with children, young people and their parents/carers. We encourage child and parent/carer involvement and engagement that informs safe school operations and builds the capability of children and parents/carers to understand their rights and their responsibilities.
- When the school is gathering information in relation to a complaint about alleged misconduct with, or abuse of, a child the school will listen to the complainant's account of things and take them seriously, check understanding and keep the child (or their parents/carers) informed about progress.
- This school collects, uses and discloses information about particular children and their families in accordance with Victorian privacy law. The principles regulating the collection, use and storage of information is included in the School Privacy Policy.

## **REVIEW PERIOD**

This policy was last updated in June 2019 and is scheduled for review in June 2021.

To ensure ongoing relevance and continuous improvement, this policy will be reviewed in the context of school self-evaluation undertaken as part of the school accountability framework. The review will include input from students, parents/carers and the school community.

### ***Definitions***

*Ministerial Order 870 provides definitions, including:*

#### ***Child abuse***

*Child abuse includes:*

- *any act committed against a child involving:*
  - *a sexual offence, or*
  - *an offence under section 49B(2) of the Crimes Act 1958 (grooming)*
- *the infliction, on a child, of:*
  - *physical violence*
  - *serious emotional or psychological harm*
  - *serious neglect of a child.*

### **Related policies and documents**

- [School Policy and Advisory Guide - Duty of Care](#)
- [School Policy and Advisory Guide - Child Protection Reporting Obligations](#)
- [DET Child Wellbeing and Safety Framework](#)
- [School Privacy Policy](#)