Northside
Christian College

Child Safe Strategy Document

In producing the Child Safe Strategy Document information has been gathered from a diverse range of sources, including various College databases, internal and external reports.

This Northside Christian College Child Safe Strategy document was first prepared in June 2017 by Mr Michael Bond. This document has been updated to reflect consultation with the College community and the new Child Safe Standards in Victoria.

Feedback and Interpretation Requests

Northside Christian College values your feedback on our Child Safe Strategy Document. Please provide any feedback, interpreter requests or suggestions to the Business Manager at the undernoted address.

Public Availability

Copies of this report are available on the College Website. Please contact the Business Manager if you would like to request a hard copy.

Published by

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Note

Where the term 'Aboriginal' is used it refers to both Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples. Indigenous is retained when it is part of the title of a report, program or quotation. Throughout this paper we refer to 'Aboriginal peoples' rather than 'Aboriginal people' to reflect the plurality and diversity of Victorian Aboriginal communities.

Further Information and Support

A number of Wellbeing staff members have been nominated as the College's Child Protection Workers. Our Child Protection Workers receive additional specialised training with respect to child protection issues. They are the first point of contact for raising child protection concerns within the College. They are also responsible for championing child protection within the College and assisting in coordinating responses to child protection incidents.

Call the police on 000 if you have immediate concerns for a child's safety.

Information about child protection services can be found on the Department of Families, Fairness and Housing website https://services.dffh.vic.gov.au/reporting-child-abuse

Acknowledgement

The compilation of this document has been enhanced by the availability of resources from a wide variety of organisations including the State of Victoria Department of Families, Fairness and Housing State Government of Victoria; CompliSpace Pty Ltd; Moores Legal Pty Ltd, the Victorian Registration & Qualifications Authority (VRQA) and the Commission for Children and Young People.
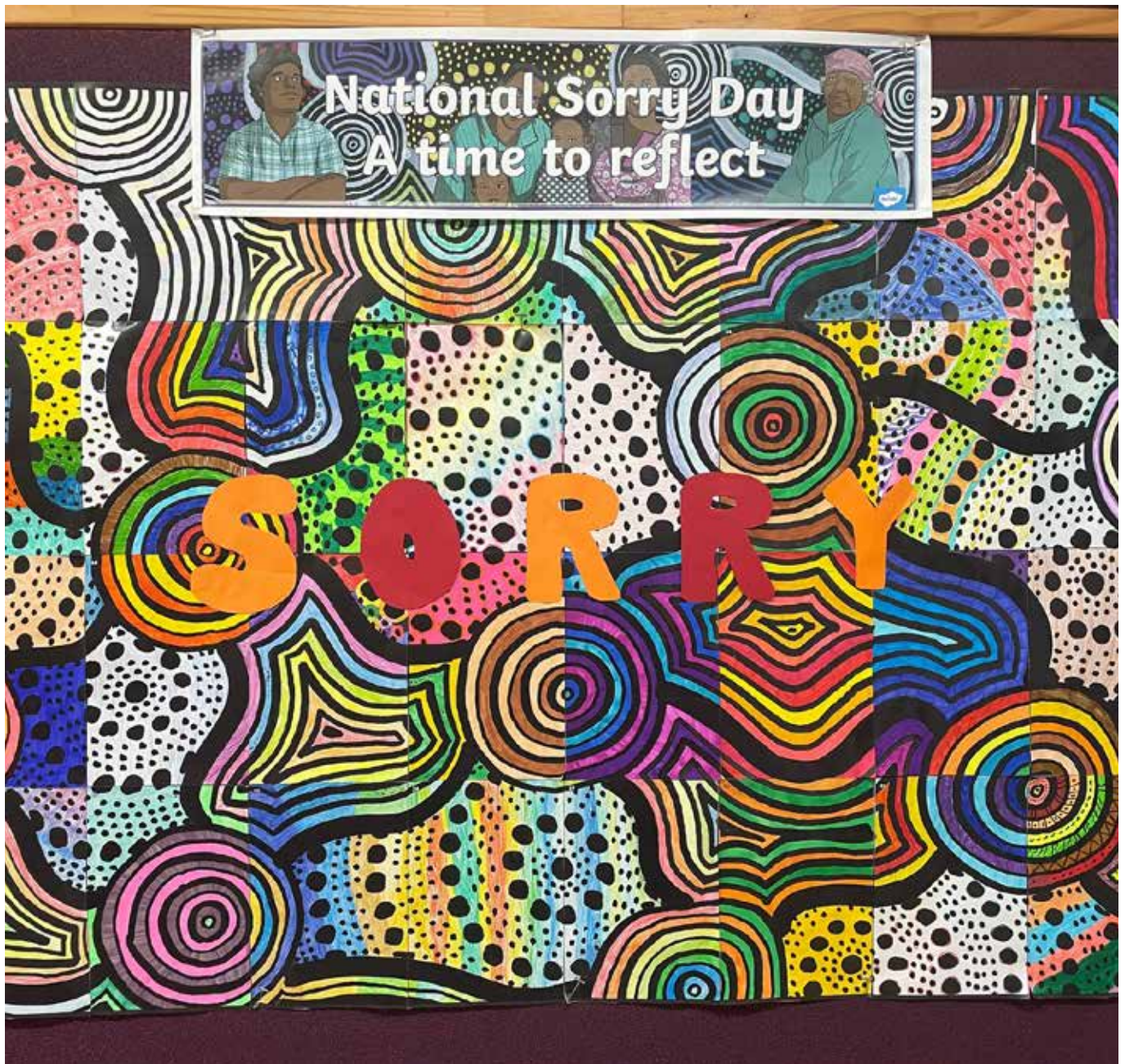
Acknowledgement of Traditional Stewards

Heavenly Father – we are thankful for our time together today and for the College community to which we belong. We pray we would be intentional about our words and actions and look for ways to express Faith, Hope, and Love as demonstrated by a sense of Community.

We acknowledge that God is sovereign over all land. Everything in Heaven and Earth belongs to God. We recognise God chose the Wurundjeri People of the Kulin Nation as the traditional stewards of the land upon which we meet at Northside Christian College, and we respect the relationship they have with their country.

We pay our respects to the Elders of Kulin Nation, past, present, and emerging. We acknowledge their cultural beliefs and wisdom are significant to the Wurundjeri People. We commit ourselves to pray and working for reconciliation with the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Island people.

Contents

Our Commitment

Northside Christian College is committed to developing a stronger culture around Child Safety.

Northside Christian College has developed a greater appreciation of the essential need for the practice of child-protection to become deeply embedded in the culture of the College community as a whole, in order to maintain effective duty of care for all children at all times in all learning environments. Legislation and compliance now demands all schools in Victoria take child safety much more seriously. The College recognises, "Never has the spotlight shone so brightly on the need for everyone to actively protect children from harm" (Commission for Children and Young People, 2015, p. 1). We are committed as a College community to doing our part to protect the children in our community.

We wish to highlight to our College community that we have high expectations that everyone in our College community is committed to child safety. A key Objective of the College is the provision of "… a safe and loving environment through a sense of belonging to the family of God." A safe environment includes developing a culture of child safety in the College, including a zero tolerance of child abuse.

The College has developed a deeper theoretical and working knowledge of the vital need to ensure that all child protection related policies are thoroughly operationalised in the day-to-day running of the College's operation and that all the necessary checks and balances, relative to child protection, are understood by staff, parents, students and volunteers.

The Victorian Government's commitment to implementing the recommendations of the Betrayal of Trust report created a new regulatory landscape surrounding child safety, underpinned by the Child Safe Standards. We all have been entrusted with an obligation to do the best we possibly can to keep our children safe from harm. The abuse of children should not be tolerated in our community.

Northside Christian College has developed a greater appreciation for the need to consistently and intentionally develop our staff's awareness, knowledge, understanding and skill – through ongoing professional development – in identifying, and confidently responding to, possible cases of child sexual abuse. Northside Christian College is fully supportive of the Victorian Government's adoption of mandatory Child Safe Standards. We have embraced the opportunity to strengthen the safety of our operations and aim to further develop a culture of child safety.

The Royal Commission into Institutional Responses to Child Sexual Abuse has addressed past and current child sexual abuse and related matters in organisations and institutions, and how institutions have responded to this abuse. Case Study No. 18 of the Royal Commission addressed "The response of the Australian Christian Churches and affiliated Pentecostal churches to allegations of child sexual abuse" including the historical allegations of child abuse that occurred at Northside Christian College between 1983 and 1993.

The Commissioners investigated where institutions and systems have failed and what the best practice is in responding to child sexual abuse. Northside Christian College is committed to implementing the recommendations of the final report of the Royal Commission. The College is committed to continually strengthening practices around child safety.

Northside Christian College acknowledges the importance of the United Nation's Convention on the Rights of the Child, including the 'best interests' principle in Article 3, which highlights that all institutions should act with the best interest of the child as a primary consideration.

During August 2014, theExecutive Team conducted an internal review of all the College's policies related to child welfare, using the 'Australian Children's Commissioners and Guardians (ACCG) Principles' eleven-point framework for Child Safety in Organisations as a source of reference. A wide range of policies and procedures were reviewed by the College and the Committee of Management between May 2015 and April 2016 and were approved for implementation.

During 2016 and 2017, the College has conducted an intensive internal review of a comprehensive suite of policy documents to further ensure compliance with the Ministerial Order No. 870 and the 'Guidelines to the minimum standards and other requirements for registration of schools including those offering senior secondary courses' as specified by the Victorian Registration and Qualifications Authority (VRQA), as a requirement of registration.

Time was spent throughout 2021 preparing for the updated Child Safe Standards, which came into effect on the 1st July 2022 after an amendment to the Child Wellbeing and Safety Act 2005 (Vic) was passed by the Victorian Parliament in June 2021.

During 2022, the College developed an awareness of Ministerial Order No. 1359. This Order came into operation on the 1st July 2022. The College reviewed a wide range of policies and procedures in order to ensure compliance with the new Ministerial Order.

A number of key policy documents have been updated to ensure children's safety and wellbeing is a priority and that the College is implementing procedures compliant with legislation. The following policies have been developed and reviewed on a cycle of review:

- Child Safety Policy Code of Conduct and Procedure (Policy No. 1)
- Employment Policy (Policy No. 2)
- Staff Induction Policy (Policy No. 9)
- Staff Contact with Students Policy (Policy No. 11)
- Pastoral Care Policy (Policy No. 12)
- Grievance and Complaints Management Policy (Policy No. 14)
- Student Anti-Harassment and Bullying Policy (Policy No. 20)
- Supervision Policy (Policy No. 22)
- Sexual Harassment Policy (Policy No. 23)
- ICT and Internet Acceptable Use Policy (Policy No. 24)
- Inclusive Education Policy (Policy No. 27)
- Volunteers Policy (Policy No. 29)
- Police Checks Policy (Policy No. 31)

- Visitors to the College Policy (Policy No. 32)
- Behaviour Management Policy (Policy No. 36)
- Student Travel in Staff Cars Policy (Policy No. 38)
- Whistle Blower Policy (Policy No. 39)
- Working with Children Policy (Policy No. 40)
- Risk Management Policy (Policy No. 42)
- Reportable Conduct Policy (Policy No. 49)
- Social Media Policy (Policy No. 51)
- Restrictive Intervention Policy (Policy No. 64)
- Teaching Staff Contact with Students by Phone Procedure (Policy No. 66)
- Mobile Phone Policy (Policy No. 70)
- Occupational Violence and Aggression Policy (Policy No. 71)
- Cultural Safety Policy (Policy No. 74)
- Child Safety Risk Management Strategy (Policy No. 75)
- Records Management Policy (Policy No. 76)

The College's Committee of Management reviews the Northside Christian College Child Safety Policy Code of Conduct and Procedure (Policy No. 1) annually. The Child Safety Policy and Code of Conduct and Procedure is a comprehensive and overarching document that provides an overview of the key elements of Northside Christian College's approach to creating a child safe organisation. The College's Policy complies with: Ministerial Order No. 1359.

It takes many components to build a child safe organisation. A key objective for Northside Christian College is to embed child safety practices into our culture. The work that is involved in building a child safe organisation is never completed. It is a dynamic, multifaceted and ongoing developmental process of learning, monitoring, implementing and reviewing. Maintaining a child safe organisation is not a one-off task. It must become part of our College's ongoing processes and be embedded into our culture.

The Committee of Management and Executive Team at Northside Christian College are committed to implementing the following minimum child safety standards:

Child Safe 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

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

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

Child Safe Standard 4: Families and communities are informed, and involved in promoting child safety and wellbeing

Child Safe Standard 5: Equity is upheld and diverse needs respected in policy and practice

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

Child Safe Standard 7: Processes for complaints and concerns are child focused

Child Safe 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

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

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

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

The widely quoted traditional African proverb states, "It takes a village to raise a child". The "village" has never been more necessary than it is today. We look forward to working with you to protect the children in our community. Please do not hesitate to contact the College if you have any questions about our Child Safe Strategy Document.

We wish to remind our College community to please call the police on 000 if you have immediate concerns for a child's safety.

Mission Statement

Transforming lives through Christ and the wonder of learning.

Vision Statement

To be an inspirational Christian learning community.

Our Core Values

"Three things will last forever—faith, hope, and love—and the greatest of these is love."

1 Corinthians 13:13

In establishing the College's core values, God directed us to 1 Corinthians 13:13 "Three things will last forever—faith, hope, and love— and the greatest of these is love." We adopted the "pebble in a pond" analogy with Love, Faith and Hope pulsing from the centre into the Northside Christian College community which, in turn, reflects God's Grace and is focused on Service to His kingdom; those within community are called to embrace the character qualities of Perseverance, Integrity and Humility.

Each ripple flows into the next. Everything is influenced by the core values; they shape and are seen in everything that we do. We hope that the College is known by the expression of Faith, Hope and Love as demonstrated by a sense of Community, Service and Grace. When our students leave the College, we want them to be young people hallmarked by Humility, Integrity and Perseverance.

Objectives

Northside Christian College aims to:

- Provide an education of a high academic standard that is based on an acceptance of the Lordship of Christ; and an acceptance of the Bible as the revealed and inspired Word of God;
- Cater for the individuality of the learner and their gifting in God; stress the function of the learner as a member of the Body of Christ and the College community;
- Train the learner in the moral and ethical standards of the Bible and assist them to acquire a Biblical world and life view and an appreciation of the rights of others to hold differing views;
- Develop the learner's creative capacity, critical thinking ability, leadership skills and ability to work interdependently with others to solve problems and serve the community;
- Foster self-discipline in the learner through goal setting, responsibility and self-motivation;
- Stress cooperation rather than competition and foster the development of the gifts, skills and abilities of the learner for the service of Jesus Christ in the Body of Christ and the community;
- Develop enhanced partnerships between parents, students, staff and the community with the intention to strengthen the teaching and learning process;
- Provide a safe and loving environment through a sense of belonging to the family of God;
- Develop a culture of continuous improvement, professional development and pastoral support among staff and the College community;
- Ensure effective stewardship of the assets and resources God has entrusted to the College;
- Effectively communicate with parents and the wider community.

Philosophy

Northside Christian College provides students with Primary and Secondary educational opportunities based on Christian values, designed to develop students' knowledge, skills, understanding and character.

We believe every student is made uniquely in the image of God. Therefore, the individual needs of each student are our greatest concern. Within a Christian context at Northside Christian College, we aim to nurture the growth and development of the whole person – intellectually, physically, emotionally, spiritually and socially. We believe that this growth should be firmly based on the student's growing personal relationship with God and other people.

The development of students at Northside Christian College takes place in community. Our College is built on shared foundations of Biblical faith, values and beliefs and a commitment to mutual care and respect. We see our role as forming partnerships with parents and carers to educate their children.

We believe that in order to develop students to their full potential the College must ensure that all aspects of the child's health and wellbeing are supported. We believe students should be nurtured in a supportive environment that has clear boundaries within mutual respect and a healthy working relationship between parents and carers, teachers and students. Respect involves treating other people as you would like to be treated yourself. The College implements a discipline program which aims for the restoration of relationships. We are committed to embedding a culture of child safety. We have a zero tolerance of child abuse in our school.

Northside Christian College aims to offer an education that encourages both academic learning and the development of Godly values and wisdom. These values help to form the foundations for life and are vitally important to the development of each student. The presentation of these values in the curriculum and their demonstration in the lives of our staff serve to reinforce what is taught at home and in the family church.

We encourage students to be active participants in their educational journey. The College is committed to supporting each student in a collaborative and differentiated approach in order to meet their learning needs.

Enactment of the College Philosophy

The College Vision, Mission, Values and Objectives are central to all practices within the College and form the basis of the College's Strategic Plan and Annual Action Plan.

The College Philosophy is communicated to the students, parents, staff and the College community through key documents and publications. These include but are not limited to:
- Annual Report
- College Website
- Handbooks
- Student Diary
- College newsletters

It is expected that all school improvement strategies and organisational practices relate to the College Philosophy in alignment with the Vision, Mission and Objectives of the College.

The Committee of Management review written policies on a continuing basis to ensure consistency with the College's Vision, Mission, Philosophy and Objectives. Policies are also reviewed and revised as a result of newly enacted state and/or federal legislation, as a result of research and/or policy development as presented by state and/or national organisations and agencies, or for other reasons as determined by the Committee of Management.

Statement of Democratic Principles

Northside Christian College was established in 1979 within the guidelines for the establishment of a school within the State of Victoria. The College is committed to compliance with State and Federal Law and adherence to the policies and expectations of legally appointed authorities that oversee the operation of educational institutions in the state of Victoria. In this regard, we recognise:

1. The principle of elected government at Federal, State and local levels of Government.
2. The rule of Law, and the right of the parliament and legal authorities to make and enforce compliance with that Law.
3. The equal rights of all people before the Law.
4. The freedom of religion
5. The freedom of speech and association
6. The values of openness, inclusion and tolerance

We further state that the College strongly supports and applauds the Government's recognition of the right of faith-based schools to actively teach and model the beliefs, tenents and practices of the faith and to employ staff who actively practice and live by them.

Royal Commission's Public Hearing into the Australian Christian Churches

The following is an extract from a letter sent by the College Principal, Mr Doug Holtam on the 22nd October 2014.

To our Community,

Last Friday marked the final day of the Royal Commission's public hearing into the Australian Christian Churches.

This case study has included examination of the abuse committed by Kenneth Sandilands at the College more than twenty years ago.

As the public hearings conclude, it is appropriate that we reflect upon the terrible suffering that continues for many of the victims of Kenneth Sandilands.

We reiterate the apology by Senior Pastor John Spinella of Encompass Church to those who were abused by Kenneth Sandilands.

Although these events occurred many decades ago, the devastating effects of that abuse continue to be felt.

What occurred should never have taken place and for that we are truly sorry.

Northside Christian College is a very different place today; all children here are in a safe environment where their wellbeing is our highest priority.

We have recently completed a review of our existing child protection policies and procedures to ensure that we continue to meet best practice in this regard.

Each and every student is further protected by all legislated requirements including mandatory reporting, with which Northside Christian College is fully compliant.

I would like to take this opportunity to thank you all for the care and compassion expressed and displayed for the victims of abuse.

Your support for the College during this time is also greatly appreciated and I thank you for your concern and care over these recent months.

Yours sincerely,

Doug Holtam
Principal

Timeline of the Child Safe Standards in Victorian Schools

2013
Betrayal of Trust Report

2013 - 2017
Royal Commission into Institutional Responses to Child Sexual Abuse

2016
Child Safe Standards first introduced in Victoria

2016
Ministerial Order 870 introduced in Victoria

2019
Review of Child Safe Standards and acceptance of National Child Safety Principles

2021
New Child Safe Standards introduced in Victoria

2022
Ministerial Order 1359 introduced in Victoria

2022
New Child Safe Standards commenced in Victoria on the 1st July

Royal Commission into Institutional Responses to Child Sexual Abuse

Northside Christian College continues to reflect on the recommendations documented in the final report of the Royal Commission into Institutional Responses to Child Sexual Abuse.

The Royal Commission into Institutional Responses to Child Sexual Abuse tabled its final report in December 2017. In Volume 13 relating to schools, the Royal Commission made several specific recommendations. The Committee of Management and Executive Team at Northside Christian College will continue to carefully consider the Report, its observations, conclusions, and recommendations and will continue to review our child protection policies and practices.

For more information on the Royal Commission into Institutional Responses to Child Sexual Abuse, please refer to: https://www.childabuseroyalcommission.gov.au/recommendations

Betrayal of Trust Inquiry into the Handling of Child Abuse by Religious and other Non-Government Organisations

The Betrayal of Trust Inquiry into the Handling of Child Abuse by Religious and other Non-Government Organisations examined processes by which religious and other non-government organisations respond to the criminal abuse of children by personnel within their organisations. The Terms of Reference included consideration of practices, policies and protocols for handling allegations, measures put in place by organisations in response to concerns and the exposure of abuse; how organisations can prevent criminal abuse; and the existence of systemic practices to preclude or discourage reporting of abuse. The Inquiry was charged with making recommendations for changes needed to help prevent or deal with allegations of abuse.

The Betrayal of Trust Report found that while the majority of children are safe in organisations and in the community, more work could be done to strengthen existing approaches to child safety. 15 recommendations were made in the Report. Key recommendations include reforms to the criminal law, improved access to civil litigation, establishment of independent redress mechanism, monitoring responses in the future and the creation of child safe environments.

The Child Safe Standards are part of the Victorian Government's response to the Betrayal of Trust Inquiry into the Handling of Child Abuse by Religious and other Non-Government Organisations.

Victoria's Reportable Conduct Scheme

In addition to the Child Safe Standards, there are other pieces of legislation that play a role

to help keep Victorian children safe from abuse. In accordance with the Reportable Conduct Scheme ('the Scheme'), operational from 1st July 2017, the Principal of Northside Christian College will ensure that the College has systems in place for all employees to meet obligations under the Scheme.

In order for Northside Christian College to comply with the Child Wellbeing and Safety Act 2005 (Vic) and the Reportable Conduct Scheme created under the Act, the College developed and approved the Reportable Conduct Policy (Policy No. 49).

The VRQA (2017) have highlighted that "Under the Scheme, a head of an organisation is required to notify the Commission for Children and Young People (CCYP) of all allegations of reportable conduct by employees and volunteers."

Reportable conduct is:
- a sexual offence (even prior to criminal proceedings commencing), sexual misconduct or physical violence committed against, with or in the presence of a child
- behaviour causing significant emotional or psychological harm
- significant neglect of a child.

A reportable allegation means information that leads a person to form a reasonable belief that a worker or volunteer has committed:
- reportable conduct or
- misconduct that may include reportable conduct.

The Commission for Children and Young People (2017) summarised the Scheme as follows:
- The Scheme requires some organisations to respond to allegations of child abuse (and other child-related misconduct) made against their workers and volunteers, and to notify us of any allegations
- It enables the Commission for Children and Young People to independently oversee those responses
- The Scheme facilitates information sharing between organisations, their regulators, Victoria Police, the Department of Justice and Regulation's Working With Children Check Unit and the Commission for Children and Young People.

Northside Christian College has developed a Reportable Conduct Policy (Policy No. 49) to assist in ensuring systems in place for all employees to meet obligations under the Scheme.

For more information on Victoria's Reportable Conduct Scheme, please refer to:
https://ccyp.vic.gov.au/child-safety/resources/reportable-conduct-scheme-information-sheets/.

Reportable Conduct Scheme Resources

The Commission for Children and Young People have published a wide range of information sheets to assist organisations in understanding and implementing the Reportable Conduct Scheme.

- Information sheet 1: About the Reportable Conduct Scheme
- Information sheet 2: What is reportable conduct?
- Information sheet 3: Responsibilities of the head of an organisation
- Information sheet 4: Investigation overview
- Information sheet 5: Other reporting obligations
- Information sheet 6: Child Safe Standards and Reportable Conduct Scheme
- Information sheet 7: Reporting to the Commission
- Information sheet 8: Investigation findings
- Information sheet 9: Sexual misconduct
- Information sheet 10: Physical violence
- Information sheet 11: Significant neglect
- Information sheet 12: Historical allegations
- Information sheet 13: Workers and volunteers
- Information sheet 14: Commission own motion investigations
- Information sheet 15: Identifying the head of an organisation
- Information sheet 16: Reviews of Reportable Conduct Scheme and Child Safe Standards decisions made by the Commission
- Information sheet 17: Reporting past harm or abuse as an adult
- Information sheet 18: Behaviour that causes significant emotional and psychological harm

For more information on the information sheets, please refer to:

https://ccyp.vic.gov.au/resources/reportable-conduct-scheme/reportable-conduct-scheme-information-sheets#TOC-19

Introduction to the Child Safe Standards

The Victorian Government introduced the Child Safe Standards to improve the way organisations that provide services for children prevent and respond to child abuse that may occur within their organisation.

The Commission for Children and Young People (2015, p.6) documented that in April 2012, the Victorian Government initiated an inquiry into the handling of child abuse allegations within religious and other non-government organisations. The inquiry's final report, *Betrayal of Trust*, made a number of recommendations that have been acted on by Victorian governments. These included:

- Criminal law reform – offences relating to grooming, failure to protect and failure to disclose.
- Creating child safe organisations – mandatory Child Safe Standards and a reportable conduct scheme. The standards are compulsory for all organisations working with children.
- Civil law reform – removal of the time limit on legal action. Legislation has removed the previous 12-year timeframe in which victims (including family members) needed to have commenced civil legal action for damages due to wrongful death (brought by dependants of a deceased victim) or personal injury resulting from child abuse. This reform applies to both past and future cases of child abuse.

The State of Victoria, Department of Health and Human Services (2015a, p.1) noted that the Child Safe Standards are compulsory for all organisations providing services to children. Furthermore, the Child Safe Standards aim to drive cultural change in organisations so that protecting children from abuse is embedded in the everyday thinking and practice of leaders, staff and volunteers. The Department highlighted that will assist organisations to:

- Prevent child abuse;
- Encourage reporting of any abuse that does occur;
- Improve responses to any allegations of child abuse.

The Department of Health and Human Services (2015a, p. 1) also reported, "The Child Safe Standards are a central feature of the Victorian Government's response to the Family and Community Development Committee of the Victorian Parliament's *Betrayal of Trust: Inquiry into the Handling of Child Abuse by Religious and Other Non-Government Organisations* (Betrayal of Trust Inquiry)."

For more information about the Betrayal of Trust implementation, please refer to:
https://www.justice.vic.gov.au/safer-communities/protecting-children-and-families/betrayal-of-trust-implementation

Further information about the failure to disclose offence is available on the Department of Justice and Regulation website:
https://www.justice.vic.gov.au/safer-communities/protecting-children-and-families/failure-to-disclose-offence

Further information about the failure to protect offence is available on the Department of Justice and Regulation website:
https://www.justice.vic.gov.au/safer-communities/protecting-children-and-families/failure-to-protect-a-new-criminal-offence-to-disclose-offence

Further information about the grooming offence is available on the Department of Justice and Regulation website:
https://www.justice.vic.gov.au/safer-communities/protecting-children-and-families/grooming-offence

Background to the Child Safe Standards

The State of Victoria, Department of Health and Human Services (2015a, p. 1) highlighted that the *Betrayal of Trust* report was tabled on the 13th November 2013. "It found that while the majority of children are safe in organisations, there are inadequate and inconsistent approaches to child safety in organisations across Victoria. It provided 15 recommendations, including the introduction of the Child Safe Standards in Victoria to ensure child safe environments in organisations that work with children" (p. 1).

The Victorian Government introduced the compulsory minimum standards that apply to organisations providing services for children to help protect children from abuse. Legislation to introduce the Child Safe Standards was passed by the Victorian Parliament on 26th November 2015. CompliSpace Pty Ltd. (2016, p. 5) noted that the new Child Safe Standards work from the "top-down" providing an overarching set of standards that must be implemented by all organisations providing services to children. It has been widely reported that the purpose of the Child Safe Standards is to drive cultural change within an organisation so that protecting children from abuse is embedded in the everyday thinking and practice of leaders, staff and volunteers.
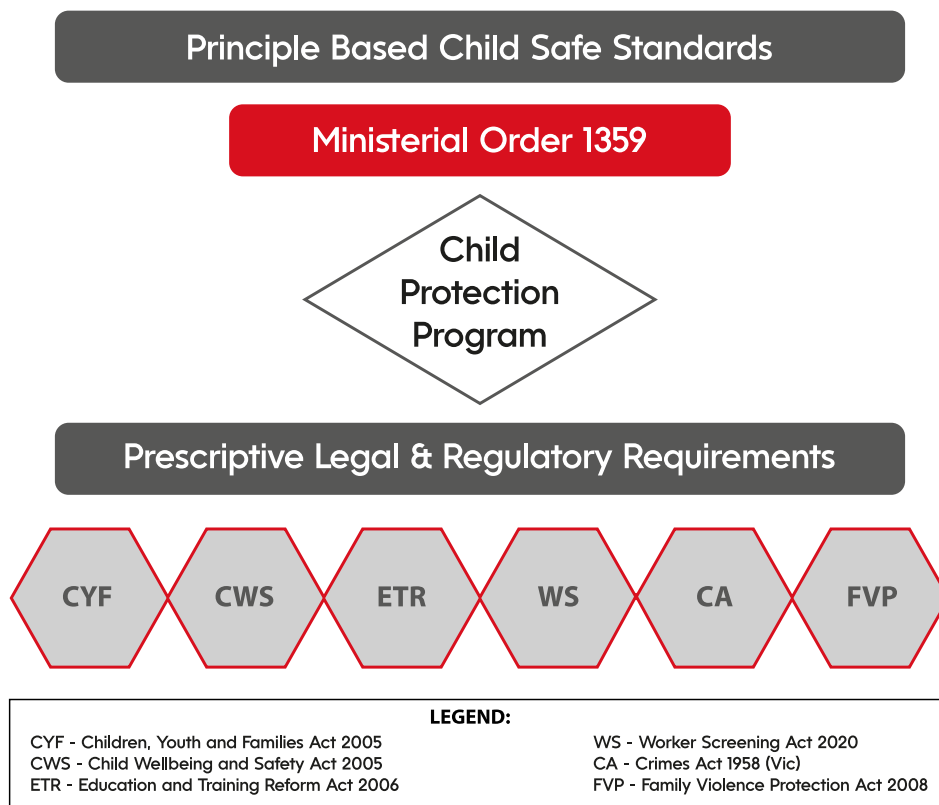
The Child Safe Standards apply to organisations from the 1st January 2016. To provide a higher level of guidance for schools the Victorian Education Minister issued Ministerial Order No. 870 on the 7th January 2016. All Victorian non-government schools must comply with the Ministerial Order from the 1st August 2016, as a requirement of registration.

Victorian organisations that provide services to children will be required under the Child Safety and Wellbeing Act to ensure that they implement the compulsory Child Safe Standards to protect children from harm.

For more information on the Child Safe Standards, please refer to:
http://www.dhs.vic.gov.au/about-the-department/documents-and-resources/policies,-guidelines-and-legislation/child-safe-standards

Victoria's New Child Protection Framework Overview

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│   Principle Based Child Safe Standards        │
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          │  Ministerial Order 1359  │
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                   ◇ Child
                     Protection
                     Program ◇

┌─────────────────────────────────────────────┐
│  Prescriptive Legal & Regulatory Requirements │
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⬡ CYF   ⬡ CWS   ⬡ ETR   ⬡ WS   ⬡ CA   ⬡ FVP

LEGEND:

CYF - Children, Youth and Families Act 2005	WS - Worker Screening Act 2020
CWS - Child Wellbeing and Safety Act 2005	CA - Crimes Act 1958 (Vic)
ETR - Education and Training Reform Act 2006	FVP - Family Violence Protection Act 2008

Adapted from Image Source: School Governance. (2016, March). *Child Protection Revolution: Are You Ready?* Retrieved from http://www.schoolgovernance.net.au/video-1/.

The Commission for Children and Young People (the Commission) (2021a) have promoted that the new Child Safe Standards are being introduced to better protect children and young people from abuse.

The new Child Safe Standards commenced in Victoria on the 1st July 2022. Ministerial Order No. 1359 provides clear guidance to schools on the implementation of the new Child Safe Standards. This Order came into operation on the 1st July 2022.

The eleven new Standards replaced Victoria's pre-existing seven standards and principles. The new standards are closely aligned with the National Principles for Child Safe Organisations.

Key changes include new requirements:
- To involve families and communities in organisations' efforts to keep children and young people safe.
- For a greater focus on safety for Aboriginal children and young people.
- To manage the risk of child abuse in online environments.
- For greater clarity on the governance, systems and processes to keep children and young people safe.

Changes have been made to support greater national consistency, reflecting the National Principles for a Child Safe Organisation developed following the Royal Commission into Institutional Responses to Child Sexual Abuse.

There are some unique features in the new Standards. A new standard focuses on cultural safety for Aboriginal children and young people and was recommended by Justin Mohamed, Commissioner for Aboriginal Children and Young People, after undertaking an Aboriginal-led development process.

'Creating organisations that properly include Aboriginal children, young people and their families, and that acknowledge and appreciate the strengths of Aboriginal culture, can make such a difference. Organisations will have requirements to ensure racism within the organisation is identified, confronted and not tolerated. We know that if Aboriginal children and young people feel safe to be themselves in an organisation, this better protects them from child abuse' reflected Justin Mohamed, Commissioner for Aboriginal Children and Young People.

The new Standards provide greater clarity for organisations on actions required to meet minimum standards. Victoria has over five years' experience of mandatory Child Safe Standards, so many organisations will have well developed child safety frameworks.

For more information on the new Child Safe Standards, please refer to:
https://ccyp.vic.gov.au/news/new-child-safe-standards-start-in-victoria-on-1-july-2022-to-better-protect-children/

New Child Safe Standards in Victoria

The new Standards set out minimum requirements and outline the actions organisations must take to keep children and young people safe. They provide more clarity for organisations and are more consistent with Standards in the rest of Australia.

Child Safe 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.

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

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

Child Safe Standard 4   Families and communities are informed, and involved in promoting child safety and wellbeing.

Child Safe Standard 5   Equity is upheld and diverse needs respected in policy and practice.

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

Child Safe Standard 7   Processes for complaints and concerns are child focused.

Child Safe 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.

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

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

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

Statement of Commitment to Child Safety

Northside Christian College is committed to promoting and protecting, at all times, the best interests of children involved in its programs.

All children, regardless of their gender, race, religious beliefs, age, disability, sexual orientation, or family or social background, have equal rights to protection from abuse.

Northside Christian College has zero tolerance for child abuse. Everyone working at Northside Christian College is responsible for the care and protection of the children within our care and reporting information about suspected child abuse.

Child protection is a shared responsibility between the Northside Christian College, all employees, workers, contractors and associates. It is a shared commitment by all members of the Northside Christian College community.

Northside Christian College will consider the opinions of children and use their opinions to develop child protection policies.

Northside Christian College supports and respects all children, staff and volunteers. Northside Christian College is committed to the cultural safety of Aboriginal children, and those from culturally and/or linguistically diverse backgrounds, and to providing a safe environment for children living with a disability.

Creating Culturally Safe Environments

Northside Christian College is committed to providing a safe environment for all students. This commitment is captured in the College's Student Code of Conduct, which is documented in the College's Behaviour Management Policy (Policy No. 36). Northside Christian College aims to strategically and practically build a culture which acknowledges, affirms and celebrates Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples, cultures, and traditions. Northside's commitment is further outlined in the College's Cultural Safety Policy (Policy No. 74).

The Child Safe Standards provide further guidance on the need for schools to support all students. Child Safe Standard 1 requires organisations to establish a culturally safe environment in which the diverse identities and experiences of Aboriginal children and young people are respected and valued. Child Safe Standard 5 states that school must maintain equity at all times. Furthermore, school communities need to respect the diverse needs of students in policy and practice.

The College acknowledges some students are particularly vulnerable, which was also addressed in Volume 6 of the Final Report of the Royal Commission into Institutional Responses to Child Sexual Abuse (p. 170). The College recognises careful attention should be given to:

- Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children and creating cultural safety.
- Children with disability and responses to disability.
- Children from diverse religious and cultural communities.
- Very young children.
- Children who have experienced trauma.
- Gender differences.
- The experiences of lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender and intersex children.
- Challenges for children living in remote locations.
- Students who cannot live at home (including international students).
- Refugee students who may have experienced prior trauma.
- Students who may have fewer connections to trusted adults and less confidence or ability to speak out, including children whose additional safety needs are not being addressed by adults around them.

Northside Christian College is committed to providing pastoral care to all students. We are reminded in Mark 12:31 to "Love your neighbour as yourself." At Northside, we aim to support all students to feel safe, connected, and supported within our College community to assist all students to flourish with their learning and wellbeing.

The College's ongoing commitment to maintaining culturally safe environments is also outlined in the College's Pastoral Care Policy (Policy No. 12), which notes "we promote and provide a supportive learning environment in which all students can expect to feel safe, supported and respected. We recognise the need for clear, transparent and explicit programs and policies to ensure students' physical, social, spiritual and emotional wellbeing" (p. 2).

The diversity of our school community has long been a feature and strength of Northside Christian College. Our policies and procedures support our growth and continuous development in this area. Northside Christian College is committed to providing a safe environment for all students. Obviously all of these policies and practices flow from our Biblical understanding of human flourishing and what will provide the best outcomes for young people.

Source: Commonwealth of Australia. (2017). *Final Report: Volume 6, Making institutions child safe*.https://www.childabuseroyalcommission.gov.au/sites/default/files/final_report_-_volume_6_making_institutions_child_safe.pdf

"For where two or three gather in my name, there am I with them."

Matthew 18:20

The article below was published by the College Principal in the August 2022 (p. 9) school newsletter.

A Culturally Safe Environment

Northside Christian College is continuing to review and update policy and procedures in response to the new Victorian Child Safe Standards. The College is committed to supporting child safety and the wellbeing for all students at Northside.

The new Child Safe Standards and the associated Ministerial Order build on the previous Child Safe Standards introduced in 2016. The Standards have always highlighted the importance of developing a culture of child safety for all students, with the first version articulating the importance of promoting the cultural safety of Aboriginal children, promoting the cultural safety of children from culturally and or linguistically diverse backgrounds, and promoting the safety of children with a disability.

The new Standards provide further guidance on the need for schools to support a diverse range of students. Child Safe Standard 1 in the new Standards requires organisations to establish a culturally safe environment in which the diverse identities and experiences of Aboriginal children and young people are respected and valued. Child Safe Standard 5 states that school must maintain equity at all times. Furthermore, school communities need to respect the diverse needs of students in policy and practice. In complying with Child Safe Standard 5, schools must demonstrate an awareness and attention to the needs of children and young people with disability, children and young people from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds, those who are unable to live at home, and lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender and intersex children and young people. The Standards require schools to support and respond to vulnerable students in our school communities.

In Romans 15:7, we are encouraged to be inclusive of all people. The Bible says, "Accept one another, then, just as Christ accepted you, in order to bring praise to God."

The diversity of our school community has long been a feature and strength of Northside Christian College. Our policies and procedures support our growth and continuous development in this area.

Northside Christian College is committed to providing a safe environment for all students. This commitment to safety is documented in the College's Student Code of Conduct in the College's Behaviour Management Policy (Policy No. 36) and in the student diary.

Recently, the College has commenced developing a Cultural Safety Policy, highlighting our desire to celebrate and affirm the cultural diversity within our College community, including Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples, cultures and traditions. The College welcomes input and feedback from the College community on this policy.

The College's Pastoral Care Policy (Policy No. 12) outlines our commitment to maintaining a safe environment for all students. This policy notes the desire of Northside to promote and provide a supportive environment for all students so they can expect to feel safe, supported and respected. We recognise the need for clear, transparent and explicit programs and policies to ensure students' physical, social, spiritual, and emotional wellbeing" (p. 2).

Obviously all of these policies and practices flow from our Biblical understanding of human flourishing and what will provide the best outcomes for young people.

We continue to work together to provide a safe environment for all students at Northside to support their wellbeing and to minimise the risk of child abuse.

Michael Bond
Principal

Northside Christian College's commitment to maintain a safe environment for all students is outlined in the College's Student Code of Conduct.

Student Code of Conduct

Don't let anyone look down on you because you are young, but set an example for the believers in speech, in life, in love, in faith and in purity. 1 Timothy 4:12

Principle 1
Students have the right to feel safe and secure within the College environment, free from intimidation, bullying and harassment, and to be treated with love, justice and equity according to the Scriptures. Students have the responsibility to behave in a considerate and thoughtful manner, and to treat others with love, justice and equity.

Principle 2
Students have the right to work and play in an environment free from interference or damage to personal property. Students have the responsibility to respect all property, including that of other students, and to do nothing that would harm another's well-being.

Principle 3
Each student has the right and responsibility to receive Biblical counsel and correction when needed from members of staff.

Principle 4
Each student has the right to be valued and treated with respect. Courtesy, consideration of others, co-operation and honesty are essential to the proper functioning of a Christian community. Each student has the responsibility to treat others with respect and courtesy, to be honest and co-operative in all aspects of College life, and to respect authority.

Principle 5
Each student has the right not to be exposed to harmful substances, influences or immoral behaviour in the College environment. Each student has the responsibility not to behave in a manner that could negatively influence others.

Principle 6
Parents have the right to expect that their child will be treated fairly, reasonably and consistently by the Principal and staff in the implementation of the Code of Conduct and to expect that their children will be educated in a loving and disciplined environment in which love for God and others is encouraged. Parents have the responsibility to support the College in its efforts to maintain a positive teaching and learning environment, and to provide a loving and disciplined home environment in which love for God and others is encouraged.

Principle 7
Each teacher has the right to be able to teach in an orderly and cooperative environment. Students have the right to learn in an orderly and cooperative environment and to be able to develop their God-given talents and abilities. Each teacher has the responsibility to maintain an orderly and co-operative environment. Students have the responsibility to develop their God-given talents and abilities for His glory and to do nothing that would prevent others from learning.

Child Safe Standard 1

Child Safe 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.

In complying with Child Safe Standard 1, an organisation must, at a minimum, ensure:

1.1 A child's ability to express their culture and enjoy their cultural rights is encouraged and actively supported.

1.2 Strategies are embedded within the organisation which equip all members to acknowledge and appreciate the strengths of Aboriginal culture and understand its importance to the wellbeing and safety of Aboriginal children and young people.

1.3 Measures are adopted by the organisation to ensure racism within the organisation is identified, confronted and not tolerated. Any instances of racism are addressed with appropriate consequences.

1.4 The organisation actively supports and facilitates participation and inclusion within it by Aboriginal children, young people and their families.

1.5 All of the organisation's policies, procedures, systems and processes together create a culturally safe and inclusive environment and meet the needs of Aboriginal children, young people and their families.

Source
Commission for Children and Young People. (2021a, July 1). *New Child Safe Standards start in Victoria on 1 July 2022 to better protect children.* https://ccyp.vic.gov.au/news/new-child-safe-standards-start-in-victoria-on-1-july-2022-to-better-protect-children/

Ministerial Order No. 1359

Culturally Safe Environments

5.1 Schools and school boarding premises must establish culturally safe environments in which the diverse and unique identities and experiences of Aboriginal children, young people and students are respected and valued.

5.2 In complying with clause 5.1, the school governing authority or school boarding premises governing authority must, at a minimum, ensure:

a. A child or student's ability to express their culture and enjoy their cultural rights is encouraged and actively supported.

b. Strategies are embedded within the school or school boarding premises which equip school staff or school boarding premises staff, students, volunteers and the school community or school boarding premises community to acknowledge and appreciate the strengths of Aboriginal culture and understand its importance to the wellbeing and safety of Aboriginal children and students.

c. Measures are adopted by the school or school boarding premises to ensure racism is identified, confronted and not tolerated, and any instances of racism within the school environment or school boarding premises environment are addressed with appropriate consequences.

d. The school or school boarding premises actively supports and facilitates participation and inclusion by Aboriginal children and students and their families.

e. All of the policies, procedures, systems and processes of the school or provider of school boarding services, taken together, create a culturally safe and inclusive environment and meet the needs of Aboriginal children and students and their families.

5.3 The school governing authority or school boarding premises governing authority must develop and endorse a policy or statement that details the strategies and actions the school or school boarding premises will take to implement clauses 5.1 and 5.2.

Explanatory notes:

1. *The term 'Aboriginal' in this Order includes Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples. It is important to be respectful of how individual children, students, their families and community refer to themselves, and use appropriate language when referring to individuals or communities.*

2. *This clause applies even if there are no children or students at a school or school boarding premises that identify as Aboriginal.*

3. *A statement can take the form of any written record, for example, a documented plan, posted on a website or online communication platform or a statement incorporated into an existing policy or other document.*

Background

The Review of Victoria's Child Safe Standards recommended cultural safety for Aboriginal children and young people be a stand-alone principle. This is reflected in the new Child Safe Standard 1.

While cultural awareness and sensitivity are important foundations, by themselves they do not necessarily ensure Aboriginal children and young people experience cultural safety within organisations. The new Child Safe Standard 1 requires organisations to create a culturally safe environment for Aboriginal children and young people. Organisations must meet this requirement regardless of whether or not they know that there are Aboriginal children and young people currently using their services or facilities. This includes measures for identifying and responding to instances of racism.

This new Child Safe Standard 1 means that most organisations will need to improve their current approach to creating a safe environment for Aboriginal children and young people and their families. Implementing this Standard will require ongoing effort, not just a once-off change.

Achieving a culturally safe organisation involves:

- Supporting Aboriginal children and young people to express their culture.
- Ensuring all staff and volunteers receive relevant cultural training so they have an understanding of Aboriginal culture, and an appreciation for culturally sensitive issues.
- Identifying and addressing incidences of racism with the involvement of Aboriginal children and young people, and their families.
- Ensuring the organisation's policies, procedures, systems, processes and measures create a culturally safe and inclusive environment for Aboriginal children and young people.

Source

Commission for Children and Young People. (2021b, July 1, p. 2). *What's changing?: Compare current and new Child Safe Standards.* https://ccyp.vic.gov.au/assets/resources/New-Standards/Whats-changing-comparison-of-current-and-new-Child-Safe-Standards.pdf

College Strategies

Northside Christian College has commenced implementing a range of strategies to assist in creating a culturally safe environment for Aboriginal children and their families. Some of the strategies already in place at the College include:

- Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander flags flying daily at the College.
- The Year 9 Cultural Challenge has provided an opportunity for staff and students to work closely with an Indigenous community in Esperance, Western Australia over a number of years supporting students to develop a greater awareness and respect for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people and their culture.
- National Reconciliation Week was celebrated at Northside in 2022. For more information, please refer to: https://www.facebook.com/NorthsideChristianCollegeVictoria/videos/during-todays-college-assembly-we-recognised-those-students-who-have-displayed-t/682094279488429
- National Sorry Day is recognised at Northside Christian College.
- The College has started events with an Acknowledgement of Country during recent years, including the College's Dedication Service and the National Reconciliation Week assembly.
- Uncle Ian Hunter, Traditional Wurundjeri Elder, has been invited to speak at College Dedication Services.
- Harmony Day is celebrated annually at Northside Christian College.
- The College has developed a Cultural Safety Policy (Policy No. 74).

Cultural Safety Policy

The College has developed a Cultural Safety Policy (Policy No. 74) during 2022. The policy outlines the College's commitment to establishing and maintaining culturally safe environments in which the diverse and unique identities and experiences of all students and members of the College community are respected and valued, including Aboriginal children, young people and students.

The College acknowledges that this policy applies even if there may not be any Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander children at the College.

> "For in him all things were created: things in Heaven and on Earth, visible and invisible, whether thrones or powers or rulers or authorities; all things have been created through Him and for Him. He is before all things, and in Him all things hold together."
>
> Colossians 1:16-17

The College has taken action to implement Foundation Steps as suggested by Rose, Fitzgerald, and Elleray (2022), which are outlined in the Action Items below.

Action Items

🟦 **Action:** Develop a public commitment to cultural safety of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children.

🟦 **Action:** Policies and procedures describe commitment to respecting and valuing Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children.

🟧 **Action:** Commitment to respecting and valuing Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children needs to be reflected in the College's Child Safety Code of Conduct and position descriptions

🟦 **Action:** Implement strategies to ensure racism is identified and addressed at Northside. Ensure there is specific reference to racism in the Behaviour Management Policy.

🟦 **Action:** Develop a plan of action setting out further steps to be taken by 1st July 2023 and gaps to be addressed.

Action Plan Key:

🟦 In Place　　🟧 Partially in Place　　🟥 Not in Place

The College will be working towards implementing the Further Steps as outlined by Rose, Fitzgerald, and Elleray (2022).

Further Steps

- Policies and procedures provide detailed guidance for staff, volunteers and leaders.
- Children receive information and encouragement about cultural rights.
- Culturally safe opportunities for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander families to participate.
- Community receives information on cultural rights, strengths of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander culture and connection between cultural safety and cultural safety.
- Strategies to prevent racism and appreciate strengths of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander culture.

Source:

Rose, S., Fitzgerald, P., & Elleray, M. (2022, May). *Victoria's new Child Safe Standards – what they mean in practice* [Webinar]. Moores Legal.

The College is exploring the Keeping Our Kids Safe resource to explore how we can take foundation steps towards building a culturally safe environment for Aboriginal children and young people.

https://www.snaicc.org.au/wp-content/uploads/2021/06/SNAICC-VACCA-OCS-ChildSafeReport-LR-with-alt-tags-May2021.pdf

Accessible Resources on College Website

Northside Christian College recognsies that we have students and families from a diverse range of language backgrounds. The College website has been set-up to ensure that most of our families can access the website in a language that they can easily understand.

Child Safe Standard 2

Child Safe Standard 2 – Child safety and wellbeing is embedded in organisational leadership, governance and culture.

In complying with Child Safe Standard 2, an organisation must, at a minimum, ensure:

2.1 The organisation makes a public commitment to child safety.

2.2 A child safe culture is championed and modelled at all levels of the organisation from the top down and bottom up.

2.3 Governance arrangements facilitate implementation of the child safety and wellbeing policy at all levels.

2.4 A Code of Conduct provides guidelines for staff and volunteers on expected behavioural standards and responsibilities.

2.5 Risk management strategies focus on preventing, identifying and mitigating risks to children and young people.

2.6 Staff and volunteers understand their obligations on information sharing and recordkeeping.

Source

Commission for Children and Young People. (2021, July 1). *New Child Safe Standards start in Victoria on 1 July 2022 to better protect children.* https://ccyp.vic.gov.au/news/new-child-safe-standards-start-in-victoria-on-1-july-2022-to-better-protect-children/

Ministerial Order No. 1359

Child safety and wellbeing is embedded in leadership, governance and culture

6.1 Schools and school boarding premises must ensure that child safety and wellbeing is embedded in school or school boarding premises leadership, governance and culture.

6.2 In complying with clause 6.1, the school governing authority or school boarding premises governing authority must, at a minimum:

  a. Develop, endorse and make publicly available a child safety and wellbeing policy that details:

   I. The commitment of the school or provider of school boarding services to child safety;

   II. the actions the school or school boarding premises proposes to take to ensure a child safe culture is championed and modelled at all levels of the school or school boarding premises;

   III. the governance arrangements in place within the school or school boarding premises for ensuring implementation of the policy at all levels; and

   IV. the process by which the school governing authority or school boarding premises governing authority will review its child safe practices.

Explanatory notes:

  1. *Making a policy or statement publicly available will generally mean to make it available on a public website. Where schools or school boarding premises are unable to publish the policy or statement on a website, the school or school boarding premises should consider how children, students and families can best access policies or statements (for example, through other methods such as an online communications platform or for inspection at the school or school boarding premises. In these circumstances, the school community or school boarding premises community must be provided with sufficient information on how to access the content (for example through regular school newsletter notices or an online parent platform).*

  2. *"Governance arrangements" refers to the specific systems, processes, roles, responsibilities and organisational arrangements that each school or school boarding premises puts in place to operationalise the policy.*

  b. Develop, endorse and make publicly available a Child Safety Code of Conduct that:

   I. has the objectives of promoting child safety and wellbeing in the school environment or school boarding premises environment;

   II. provides guidelines for school staff, school boarding premises staff and volunteers on expected standards of behaviour in relation to child safety and wellbeing;

   III. takes into account the needs of all children and students and is consistent with any relevant professional or occupational codes of conduct; and

   IV. is consistent with the child safety and wellbeing strategies, policies and procedures of the school or provider of school boarding services.

  c. Develop and implement risk management strategies that:

   I. focus on preventing, identifying and mitigating risks related to child safety and wellbeing in

   II. the school environment or school boarding environment; and

   III. take into account the nature of the school environment or school boarding environment, the activities expected to be conducted in those environments (including the provision of services by contractors or outside organisations), and the characteristics and needs of all children and students expected to be present in those environments.

  d. If the school governing authority or school boarding premises governing authority identifies risks of child abuse occurring in the school environment or school boarding premises environment, make a record of those risks and the actions that are taken or will be taken to reduce or remove the risks (risk controls and risk treatments).

  e. As part of its risk management strategy and practices, monitor and review the risks related to child safety and wellbeing annually, including evaluating the effectiveness of the implementation of its risk controls.

Explanatory notes:

1. *School governing authorities or school boarding premises governing authorities may record risks in various ways. Most commonly this would be through a risk register which describes the risks, and the risk mitigation strategies that will be used to manage the risks.*

2. *Different risk controls may be necessary for particular groups of children and students depending on the nature of the risk and the characteristics of children and students affected by the risk.*

3. *Processes to identify and mitigate risk are covered in various clauses in this Order (see clauses 6.2c, 6.2d, 6.2e, 10.2e, 11.3g, 12.2a and 13.2a). Taken together, these clauses help school staff, school boarding premises staff and volunteers to identify and mitigate risks in school environments and school boarding environments without compromising a child or student's right to privacy, access to information, social connections and learning opportunities consistent with Child Safe Standard 9.*

    f. Create, maintain and dispose of records relevant to child safety and wellbeing in accordance with Public Record Office Victoria Recordkeeping Standards, including minimum retention periods.

    g. Develop a policy or statement that details the processes the school or school boarding premises has in place to meet Public Record Office Victoria Recordkeeping Standards.

    h. Ensure that school and school boarding premises staff and volunteers understand their obligations on information sharing and recordkeeping.

Background

The new Child Safe Standard 2 reflects many aspects of former Child Safe Standards 1, 2 and 3.

Collectively, these actions reflect the organisation's commitment to child safety. In addition to referring to child safety, the new Child Safe Standard 2 includes reference to child wellbeing, requiring governance arrangements to implement child safety and wellbeing policy at all levels.

The new Child Safe Standard 2 also has a greater emphasis on the importance of information sharing and record keeping within an organisation, aimed at fostering a child safe culture at all levels. The management of risks to children is required to be embedded in organisational leadership, governance and culture.

Organisations will need to consider if the organisational environment, systems and processes effectively support the sharing of information at all levels about the risks to children and young people, and the extent to which all staff and volunteers understand their obligations in this regard.

While governance arrangements vary across organisations, they must support 'top down and bottom up' implementation of the child safe policy, with leaders actively modelling a child safe culture.

Source

Commission for Children and Young People. (2021b, July 1, p. 4). *What's changing?: Compare current and new Child Safe Standards.* https://ccyp.vic.gov.au/assets/resources/New-Standards/Whats-changing-comparison-of-current-and-new-Child-Safe-Standards.pdf

College Strategies

2.1 The organisation makes a public commitment to child safety.

Northside Christian College has developed a publicly accessible Child Safety Policy, Code of Conduct and Procedure (Policy No. 1), which is published on the College Website. This Child Safe Strategy Document also contains a public Statement of Commitment to Child Safety.

■ **Action:** Review and update the College's Child Safe Strategy to ensure that child safety and wellbeing is embedded in the College's leadership, governance and culture and addresses the requirements of Ministerial Order No. 1359.

Action Plan Key:

■ In Place   ■ Partially in Place   ■ Not in Place

2.2 A child safe culture is championed and modelled at all levels of the organisation from the top down and bottom up.

Commitment to good governance is essential for the success and ongoing planning of directions for any school. The strategic directions of the College have been determined through Committee of Management and Senior Staff discussions and ensure alignment between policy directions and the daily management and leadership of the College.

The essence of the Committee of Management's governance role at Northside Christian College is to oversee all aspects of the College, appoint the Principal, and ensure a strategic approach to the College's future by setting major objectives, policy frameworks and strategies. The Committee of Management must also monitor adherence to systems of risk management, ensure compliance with legal obligations and undertake periodic performance reviews. The Committee of Management is also committed to ensuring the financial security of Northside Christian College.

The College Executive Team developed a range of strategic priorities with short and long-term goals. These were presented, discussed and approved by the Committee of Management and form the basis of the College's Strategic Plan.

The Committee of Management is responsible for developing policies to reflect the College's values and support the College's broad direction, as outlined in the Strategic Plan. The Northside Christian College policies are documents that are made available to the College community as a means to clarify functions and responsibilities, manage change, promote consistency, meet standards and help ensure that decision-making is transparent. The Committee of Management are responsible for reviewing the College's policies on a regular cycle with some policies requiring review on an annual basis.

The College acknowledges that it is the responsibility, under the direction of the Committee of Management and the Executive Team to ensure that all policies, practices and procedures are adhered to, such that Northside Christian College can consistently and reasonably demonstrate that the organisation will:

- Safeguard against the risk of child abuse; and
- Respond effectively if abuse is suspected or confirmed.

The implementation of the Child Safe Standards and the guidelines outlined in Ministerial Order No. 870 was a key priority for the Committee of Management during the 2016 academic school year. The Committee of Management annually review the Child Safety Policy, Code of Conduct and Procedures and a wide range of supportive policies and documents to ensure that the College maintains a culture of child safety. A wide range of resources have been published on the College Website.

The College's Committee of Management have developed familiarity with Ministerial Order No. 1359 during 2022 to oversee the College's compliance with the Ministerial Order. This has resulted in a review of a wide range of policies and procedures in order to ensure compliance with the new Ministerial Order and the new Child Safe Standards. The Committee of Management has supported the opportunity to consult with the College community to support the College's approach to child safety.

A number of key policy documents have been updated by the Committee of Management to ensure childrens' safety and wellbeing is a priority and that the College is implementing procedures compliant with legislation. The following policies reviewed regularly by the Committee of Management:

- Child Safety Policy Code of Conduct and Procedure (Policy No. 1)
- Employment Policy (Policy No. 2)
- Staff Induction Policy (Policy No. 9)
- Staff Contact with Students Policy (Policy No. 11)
- Pastoral Care Policy (Policy No. 12)
- Grievance and Complaints Management Policy (Policy No. 14)
- Supervision Policy (Policy No. 22)
- Sexual Harassment Policy (Policy No. 23)
- Inclusive Education Policy (Policy No. 27)
- Volunteers Policy (Policy No. 29)
- Police Checks Policy (Policy No. 31)
- Visitors to the College Policy (Policy No. 32)
- Behaviour Management Policy (Policy No. 36)
- Student Travel in Staff Cars Policy (Policy No. 38)
- Whistle Blower Policy (Policy No. 39)
- Working with Children Policy (Policy No. 40)
- Risk Management Policy (Policy No. 42)
- Reportable Conduct Policy (Policy No. 49)
- Social Media Policy (Policy No. 51)
- Restrictive Intervention Policy (Policy No. 64)
- Teaching Staff Contact with Students by Phone Procedure (Policy No. 66)
- Child Safety Risk Management Strategy (Policy No. 75)
- Records Management Policy (Policy No. 76)

The Committee of Management has approved the Child Safety Policy Code of Conduct and Procedure (Policy No. 1). The Child Safety Policy Code of Conduct and Procedure is a comprehensive and overarching document that provides an overview of the key elements of Northside Christian College's approach to creating a child safe organisation.

2.3 Governance arrangements facilitate implementation of the child safety and wellbeing policy at all levels.
The Committee of Management take a number of steps to support the implementation of child safety and wellbeing policy at all levels at Northside Christian College. This is summarised below.

Develop Policies – The Committee of Management has developed a broad range of policy documents to support in the development of a child safe culture at Northside Christian College. Policies are developed to ensure compliance with a broad range of legislation and compliance requirements.

Policy Register – A Policy Register has been developed to monitor the date of development, review and scheduled review date. This assists the Committee of Management in maintaining an overall awareness of the policies in place to support the College community.

Policy Review Schedule – A three-year review cycle has been developed to support the Committee of Management in reviewing College policies. Some policies, such as the Child Safety Policy, are reviewed on an annual basis. This supports a cycle of continuous improvement as the Committee of Management aim to further strengthen a culture of child safety.

Training – The Committee of Management leads by example through engaging in child safety training on an annual basis. All employees of the College are also required to undertake annual training. Training is documented in a register. Customised briefings are also developed for staff, volunteers and contractors and are available for access in the staff Policy Portal on Seqta.

Monitor – The Committee of Management works closely with the Principal to develop accountability processes to support the monitoring of policies. The Committee of Management also monitors a child safety risk register to ensure appropriate policies and procedure remain in place at the College.

Strategy – The Committee of Management has developed and approved a Strategic Plan that endorses the significance of maintaining a child safe environment. The Strategic Plan provides a framework to support the operations of the College. The Committee of Management works closely with the Principal to monitor the implementation of the Strategic Plan.

"Let us not become weary in doing good,
for at the proper time we will reap a
harvest if we do not give up."

Galatians 6:9

2.4 A Code of Conduct provides guidelines for staff and volunteers on expected behavioural standards and responsibilities.

The Committee of Management at Northside Christian College have developed and approved a Child Safety Code of Conduct. The Code of Conduct has been published in the Child Safety Policy (Policy No. 1), document. Furthermore, it is also embedded into any new employment contracts at the College.

The Child Safety Code of Conduct incorporates the following:

    a. Has the objective of promoting child safety in the school environment;

    b. Sets standards about the ways in which school staff are expected to behave with children;

    c. Takes into account the interests of school staff (including other professional or occupational codes of conduct that regulate particular school staff), and the needs of all children; and

    d. Is consistent with the school's child safety strategies, policies and procedures as revised from time to time.

During 2022, the College is consulting with a range of stakeholder to review and update the College's Child Safety Code of Conduct.

Action items

■ **Action:** Review and update the College's Child Safety Code of Conduct to address the requirements of Ministerial Order No. 1359.

■ **Action:** Consult with the Committee of Management, teaching and non-teaching staff, volunteers, students, families, and the broader school community about the review of the College's Child Safety Code of Conduct.

■ **Action:** Create child-friendly versions of the Child Safety and Wellbeing Policy and Child Safety Code of Conduct.

Action Plan Key:
■ In Place   ■ Partially in Place   ■ Not in Place

Child Safety Code Of Conduct

1. Introduction

Northside Christian College (the College) is committed to protecting its students from all aspects of harm and has established strategies, practices, policies and procedures to uphold its public commitment to student safety and wellbeing.

The College takes a zero tolerance approach to any behaviours that jeopardise student safety and wellbeing (including child abuse and reportable conduct).

Accordingly, this Child Safety Code of Conduct:

- Clearly establishes a list of acceptable and unacceptable behaviours by members of the College community towards our students, with the ultimate aim of protecting such students from harm.
- Offers guidance to College staff and inform them considerations relevant to personal, professional and ethical decision making.
- Serves to protect our students, reduce any opportunities for abuse or harm to occur, and promote student safety and wellbeing in our School environment.
- Provides guidance on how to best support students and how to avoid or better manage difficult situations.

This Code is part of a broader culture of student safety and wellbeing that is woven into the fabric of Northside Christian College. As a community, our unified commitment to ensuring the safety and wellbeing of our students is paramount to our actions and decision making. As a College community, we are guided by a common commitment to what is acceptable and unacceptable behaviour to each other and when engaging with students.

This Code is a child safety code of conduct made in accordance with Ministerial Order No. 1359 – Implementing the Child Safe Standards – Managing the Risk of Child Abuse in Schools and the School Boarding Premises, and is part of the College's student safety and wellbeing framework.

The purpose of this Code is to promote child safety within all College Environments.

2. Application

This Code applies to all Committee of Management members, the Principal, employees, volunteers, contractors and other authorised personnel required to perform functions on the College's premises, or at College-organised activities and events. Collectively, these individuals are referred to as 'staff'.

This policy extends to any other person who is engaged in student-connected work at the College, or that otherwise has direct and regular contact with the College's students (whether supervised or not).

This Code is in addition to profession specific codes of conduct, such as the Victorian Institute of Teaching's (VIT) Standards of Professional Practice and Code of Conduct for teachers that outline behaviours expected by all teachers in Victoria. School staff must also comply with other policies and procedures at the College that apply to them, including the Child Safety Policy.

3. Acceptable Behaviours

All people involved in the care of children on behalf of, or in connection with, the College must:

a. contact the police if a child is at immediate risk of abuse (telephone '000');

b. adhere to the Child Safety Policy and Procedure and uphold the College's statement of commitment to child safety at all times;

c. take all reasonable steps to protect children from abuse;

d. conduct themselves in a manner consistent with their position as a staff member, director, volunteer or contractor of the College and as a positive role model to children and young people;

e. work towards the achievement of the aims and purposes of the organisation;

f. be responsible for relevant administration of programs and activities in their area;

g. maintain a duty of care towards others involved in these programs and activities;

h. establish and maintain a child-safe environment in the course of their work;

i. be fair, considerate and honest with others;

j. treat children and young people with respect and value their ideas, opinions and backgrounds;

k. promote the cultural safety, participation and empowerment of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Island children (for example, by never questioning an Aboriginal and Torres Strait Island child's self-identification);

l. promote the safety, participation and empowerment of children with culturally and/or linguistically diverse backgrounds (for example, by having a zero tolerance of discrimination);

m. promote the safety, participation and empowerment of children with a disability;

n. listen and respond to the views and concerns of children, particularly if they are telling you that they are or another child has been abused or that they are worried about their safety/the safety of another child;

o. seek input from families in relation to decisions impacting students, and act to reduce barriers to inclusion taking into account the diverse needs of students and their families;

p. inform and empower all students about their rights, including in relation to safety, information and participation;

q. in an online environment, identify and mitigate risks while ensuring students' rights to privacy, access to information, social connections and learning opportunities are upheld;

r. ensure (as far as practicable) that adults are not alone with a child;

s. comply with all reporting obligations as they relate to mandatory reporting and reporting under the Crimes Act 1958 (Vic);

t. raise concerns about suspected abuse with the Head of Student Wellbeing, Chaplain, Deputy Principal or Principal as soon as possible;

u. record and act upon all allegations or suspicions of abuse, discrimination or harassment;

v. if an allegation of child abuse is made, ensure as quickly as possible that the child(ren) are safe;

w. be professional in their actions;

x. maintain strict impartiality;

y. comply with the College's guidelines on contact with children, including via social electronic media;

z. respect confidentiality when sharing information about children in accordance with the Child Safety Policy and Procedure and your reporting obligations;

aa. maintain a child-safe environment for children and young people; and

ab. operate within the policies and guidelines of the College.

4. Unacceptable Behaviour

All people involved in the care of children on behalf of the College must not:

a. ignore or disregard any suspected or disclosed child abuse;

b. put a child at risk of abuse (for example, by locking doors for an improper reason);

c. speak to a child in a way that is or could be construed by any observer as harsh, threatening, intimidating, shaming, derogatory, demeaning, or humiliating. Some examples are:

    I. i. swearing or using inappropriate language in the presence of a child;

    II. ii. yelling at a child, except in an emergency situation where the child's safety may be in danger;

    III. iii. use of hurtful sarcasm.

d. discuss sexual activities with a child unless it is a specific job requirement and the person is trained to discuss these matters, or the child is a member of your family;

e. have contact with a student outside of the College without the consent of their parent or carer and, if the contact involves after hours tutoring, private instrumental/other lessons or sport coaching of a student (other than a member of your family), with the prior consent of the College. Accidental/incidental contact, such as:

    I. attending a friend's BBQ in which students are attending;

    II. attending church and/or church activities in which students are attending; and

    III. any other incidental contact that is outside of your professional relationship with the child and that is not for an improper purpose,

    is appropriate;

f. have any online contact with a child or their family outside of necessary contact, e.g. by providing e-newsletters, assisting students with their school work, on Schoology or by email;

g. use any personal communication channels/devices such as a personal email account to communicate with a child (unless the child is a member of your family);

h. exchange personal contact details such as phone number, social networking sites or email addresses with a child (unless the child is a member of your family);

i. use, possess, or be under the influence of alcohol while in the presence of or while supervising a child (unless the child is a member of your family or your contact with the child is accidental/incidental and you are not performing your professional obligations);

j. attend the College, or school-related activities and events, whilst under the influence of alcohol or illicit substances, or whilst affected by prescription medication to the extent that the ability to perform professional duties is impaired;

k. use, possess, or be under the influence of illegal drugs while in the presence of or while supervising a child;

l. provide or allow a child to consume alcohol or illegal drugs;

m. initiate unnecessary physical contact with a child or young person, or do things of a personal nature for them that they can do for themselves;

n. engage in rough physical games;

o. hold, massage, kiss, cuddle or touch a child in an inappropriate and or/culturally insensitive way;

p. engage in any sexual contact with a child. For the purposes of this Code, sexual contact is defined as vaginal intercourse, anal intercourse, oral intercourse or the touching of an erogenous zone of another (including but not limited to the thighs, genitals, buttocks, pubic region or chest) for the purpose of sexually arousing or gratifying either person;

q. take a child to their home or encourage meetings outside program activities (unless the child is a member of your family or written parental permission has been provided);

r. be naked in the presence of a child (unless the child is a member of your family);

s. possess sexually explicit printed materials (magazines, cards, videos, films, clothing, etc.) in the presence of children;

t. sleep in the same beds, sleeping bags, rooms or tents with a child (unless the child is a member of your family);

u. discriminate against any child, including because of age, gender identity, sex, race, culture, sexuality, or disability;

v. engage in any activity with a child that is likely to physically or emotionally harm them;

w. be alone with a child unnecessarily and for more than a very short time

x. develop a 'special' relationship with a specific child for their own needs

y. show favouritism through the provision of gifts or inappropriate attention

z. photograph or video a child without the consent of the child and his/her parents or guardians;

aa. post online any information about a student that may identify them such as their: name, age, email address, telephone number, residence, school, or details of any association, club or group they may be affiliated with;

ab. do anything in contravention of the College's policies, procedures or this Code of Conduct.

5. Physical Contact / Touching

Staff members, directors, volunteers, and contractors are prohibited from using physical discipline in any way for behaviour management of children. This prohibition includes spanking, slapping, pinching, hitting, or any other physical force as retaliation or correction for inappropriate behaviours by children.

Physical contact may be required in an emergency situation to remove children quickly from danger or threat of danger.

Appropriate contact between staff members, directors, volunteers, contractors, and children is part of normal human relationships. Some considerations and guidelines include the following:

a. consider the child's age, developmental level, maturity and level of care required, for example, touching a child to gain their attention, guiding or comforting a distressed child;

b. work in an open environment; for example, in confidential interviews or a one-to-one meeting, the door should be open with visual access. Exceptions apply for professions with strict confidentiality requirements;

c. be alert to cues from children about how comfortable they are in your proximity and respect their need for personal space;

d. be sensitive when interacting with children who may misinterpret your actions, such as those who may have been traumatised by abuse or adolescents seeking attention from a member of the opposite sex;

e. be aware of cultural norms that may influence the interpretation of your behaviour;

f. be cautious about physical contact in games or practical instruction. If you need to make physical contact for demonstrations, explain the activity and what you will do, maintain a safe and appropriate distance;

g. physical contact should be made in a way that makes children feel comfortable, for example, shaking hands, a congratulatory pat on the back or rub on the side of their arm for reassurance. Massaging a child or allowing a child to massage you is inappropriate physical contact (unless the child is a member of your family and you comply with all relevant legislation).

Physical contact with a child should be avoided where possible.

6. Transportation and off-site events

Other than in an emergency or other abnormal situation where no other option could be reasonably foreseen, it is not acceptable to transport children without written permission of their parent, carer or guardian.

It is prohibited to have unnecessary and/or inappropriate physical contact with children while in vehicles.

Children should be transported directly to their destination. No stops should be made other than those that are reasonably scheduled for meals or comfort stops. This obligation does not apply to children that are a member of your family.

It is prohibited to have children spend the night at the residence of a staff member, director, volunteer or contractor without parental/guardian prior approval.

Changing and showering facilities or arrangements for adults must be separate from facilities or arrangements for children (unless the child is a member of your family).

7. Pastoral Care

Subject to the above restraints, pastoral care of students at the College takes place within the context of relationships. The College values each person, without discrimination, and seeks to provide an environment of acceptance, encouragement, challenge, safety and care.

Teachers seek to develop strong relationships with students and their families, in order to provide emotional support and spiritual care. This is enabled in the classroom, in homeroom groups and during extra-curricular activities, such as whole school activities, camps, excursions, sporting events and information/parent evenings.

Teachers, acting in support of parents, seek to discipline students towards genuine Christ-like behaviour, modelling and encouraging mutual respect, integrity and accountability.

Students are given clear guidelines regarding behaviour and are expected to contribute towards a positive learning and social community. Guidance, correction and restoration are a part of pastoral care, and contribute to the development of community and good citizenship. In the terminology of Christian community, students are encouraged to become followers of Christ in His life and teaching.

Secondary Students

Secondary students are grouped in year levels and participate in morning Home Group classes where teachers and students share devotions, reflective of the College's Biblical Christian Worldview and core values, inclusive of life stories, anecdotes and strategies, in order to encourage further development of students' sense of value, reiterating the importance of being a part of the community. Home Group teachers mark rolls and check for uniform compliance.

Students also participate in specific skill and strategy development for social and emotional learning through the You Can Do It" and PeaceWise Programs.

Primary Students

Primary students meet with their classroom teachers during the first session of the day to mark rolls, for devotions and for both personal and group connections.

Students also participate in specific skill and strategy development for social and emotional learning through the Friendzy Program.

All homeroom and classroom teachers may refer students to the College's Head of Student Wellbeing, the Chaplain, or appropriate Director of Learning for additional pastoral care. Sub-school e-newsletters are sent home by sub-school leaders to keep families in touch with upcoming events and where outstanding achievements can be noted and celebrated.

In both the Primary and Secondary schools, classroom teachers are available for communication with parents in order to support the student and to build strong connections between home and the College. At times where students or parents are not happy with the pastoral support pathways for student complaint or grievances are outlined in the Grievance and Complaint Management Policy..

8. Confidentiality

Disclosing information to staff, directors, volunteers and contractors

When children are having a written or verbal interaction with staff, directors, volunteers and/or contractors of the College, that interaction is confidential to the organisation not to the individual. This means that a staff member, director, volunteer or contractor is able to talk to the Principal in a way that identifies the child. The guiding principle is, that where possible, the privacy of the child should be respected at all times. When considering breaching their privacy who and how many people are told should be based on what is believed to be in the best interests of the child.

Disclosing information to people external to the organisation

Staff, directors, volunteers and contractors should not discuss confidential matters about children with people outside the organisation in a way that identifies that child except when they have the express permission of the child or it complies with the College's Child Safety Policy, Code of Conduct and Procedure. In circumstances where staff, directors, volunteers and/or contractors believe that there is not enough knowledge within the organisation to provide the best possible assistance to a child, they are able to seek expertise external to the College. When communicating with people outside the College the child's identity should be protected.

Informing children

It is the responsibility of the College to communicate the limits of confidentiality in the College to children who are likely to have an ongoing relationship with the College. These guidelines should be published in an accessible place for children.

9. Cultural Safety

Northside Christian College is committed to providing culturally safe environments in which the diverse and unique identities and experiences of Aboriginal children, young people and students are respected and valued.

The College is committed to ensuring that racism is identified, confronted and not tolerated, and any instances of racism within the College are addressed with appropriate consequences.

10. Staff as Parents and Members of the College Community

The College recognises that many staff have children of their own, and in any case will socialise with other adults who have children.

While this Code is not intended to interfere with a staff member's right to a private life, working at the College requires a serious commitment to student safety and wellbeing.

Accordingly, in all aspects staff must conduct themselves in a way consistent with this Code, including by avoiding in private situations (including on social media) which could be perceived as contrary to this Code or involving a risk to student safety and wellbeing.

11. Report Concerns

Members of the College community (other than staff) who are aware of actual or suspect child abuse or reportable conduct, or who otherwise have concerns about a student's welfare, should immediately raise their concern directly with the College in accordance with the Child Safety Policy.

Other concerns can be raised in accordance with the College's Grievance and Complaints Management Policy.

Staff should report any concerns about potential breaches of this Code to the Principal (or the Committee of Management if the concern is about the Principal), and otherwise comply with the Child Safety Policy.

Whenever there are concerns that a student is in immediate danger, Victoria Police should be contacted on 000.

12. Responsibilities

Student safety and wellbeing is the responsibility of everyone at Northside Christian College. For further information, refer to the Child Safety Policy and Child Safe Strategy document.

13. Breach of this Code

Where a staff member breaches this Code, the College will take appropriate disciplinary action, including in the case of a serious breach, summary dismissal.

14. Communication

This policy is made publicly available on the College's website.

This document is available to staff as part of the College's and the Committee of Management's internal policies and procedures. Aspects of (and updates to) the College's Child Safety Policy, including this Code will be addressed in the College's professional development updates, training programs, and newsletters.

To properly implement this Code:
- The Committee of Management will ensure the procurement of policies of the College for facilities and services from third parties to ensure the safety of students.
- The Committee of Management will review this Code and the Colelge's student safe practices at least every two years (or more frequently after a significant student safety incident) and improve where applicable.
- Families and the College community will be afforded the opportunity to contribute to the review and development of the College's child safety practises (including this Code).
- Periodic training and refresher sessions on this Code are provided to all staff.
- All staff must ensure that they abide by this Code and assist the College with its implementation.

15. Related Documents

Legislation:
- *Worker Screening Act 2020* (Vic)
- *Education and Training Reform Act 2006* (Vic)
- *Child Wellbeing and Safety Act 2005* (Vic)
- *Children, Youth and Families Act 2005* (Vic)
- Ministerial Order No. 1359

Policies:
- Child Safe Standards - Document Quick Reference Guide
- Supervision Policy (Policy No. 22)
- Staff Contact with Students Policy (Policy No. 11)
- Student Travel in Staff Cars Policy (Policy No. 38)
- Staff Induction Policy (Policy No. 9)
- Employment Policy (Policy No. 2)
- Working with Children Check Policy (Policy No. 40)
- Police Checks Policy (Policy No. 31)
- Visitors to the College (Policy No. 3)
- Volunteers Policy (Policy No. 32)
- Grievance and Complaints Management Policy (Policy No. 14)
- Whistle Blower Policy (Policy No. 39)
- Reportable Conduct Policy (Policy No. 49)
- Social Media Policy (Policy No. 51)
- Parent Code of Conduct (Policy No. 56)
- Restrictive Intervention Policy (Policy No. 64)
- Privacy Policy (Policy No. 16)
- Records Management Policy (Policy No. 76)

Department of Families, Fairness and Housing – North Division Intake: 1300 664 977.

Child Protection Crisis Line – 24 Hours, seven days a week. Telephone: 13 12 78

DECLARATION

Declaration

Child Safety Code of Conduct

I agree to adhere to the Northside Christian College Child Safety Code of Conduct:

Name: ....

Signature: ....

Date: _____/_____/_____

Child Safety Policy, Code of Conduct and Procedure

I have read, understood and accepted the standards and expectations of the Northside Christian College, as detailed in each of the documents listed below.

☐ Child Safety Policy, Code of Conduct and Procedures (Policy No. 1)

Signature: ....

Date: _____/_____/_____

2.5 Risk management strategies focus on preventing, identifying and mitigating risks to children and young people.

The College has approved an overarching approach to risk management, which is documented in the College's Risk Management Policy (Policy No. 42). Risk management is also embedded into many other areas of our organisation.

During 2022, the College's Committee of Management developed the Child Safety Risk Management Strategy (Policy No. 75). This document summarises the College's approach to risk management and minimising the risk of child abuse in College environments.

Risk Management for Camps and Excursions

Northside Christian College aims to provide a diverse learning experience for students and to equip them with the necessary knowledge, skills, attitudes and beliefs to embrace life beyond school. The College's camping and excursions programs are distinctive, important and integral components of the curriculum.

The purpose of the Camps and Excursions Policy is to help ensure that all components of the camping and excursions programs at Northside Christian College are conducted in a consistent, organised, effective and efficient manner, with due attention being given to important aspects including (but not limited to) planning, preparation, approval, safety, risk management, communication, and regulatory compliance.

Northside Christian College has a duty of care for the safety and wellbeing of all students. Such duty of care may, at times, extend beyond the school day and College premises. Camps and excursions are examples of activities whereby the expected level of care needs to be sustained beyond the regular school day.

Other Strategies to Minimise Risks of Harm

Northside Christian College takes seriously its commitment in relation to the safety and protection of students. Northside Christian College has developed policies and procedures to manage risks of harm to students, which our College complies with, for example:

- **Supervision** – Northside Christian College manages the supervision of students appropriately to ensure that there is adequate supervision of students as detailed in the Supervision Policy (Policy No. 22).
- **Emergency** – Northside Christian College ensures that all employees are briefed to appropriately handle emergency situations and critical incidents in accordance with the College Emergency Management and Critical Incident Plan (Policy No. 10).
- **Online school environments** – Northside Christian College has developed and implemented an ICT and Internet Acceptable Use Policy (Policy No. 24) and a Social Media Policy (Policy No. 51). Safeguards are in place to minimise risks in this environment.
- **Visitors / Outsiders** – Northside Christian College has procedures in place for the management of visitors and other outsiders, including relevant signage and directions, together with a visitor sign in register and procedures for signing in and out of the College. Policy and procedure for visitors to Northside Christian College is documented in the Visitors to the College Policy (Policy No. 32).

What is a child safety risk management strategy?

The VRQA (2016, May) highlighted that a child safety risk management strategy is a formal and structured approach to managing risks associated with child safety. The strategy outlines how risk is managed, including who is responsible for the process (the school governing authority), and a description of the process itself. The process includes risk assessment, implementation of controls, and a monitoring and review process to ensure the currency of the risk management approach.

Managing risk typically involves the following steps and considerations.

1. Identify the school's child safety risks.

- What are the areas of concern or 'hot spots'?
- What could go wrong?

2. Identify any existing risk mitigation measures or internal controls.

- What strategies, practices, or procedures are in place to control the risk?
- Have they been fully implemented?
- Are staff, contractors, volunteers, parents and students aware of them?
- How effective are they?

3. Assess and rate the school's child safety risks given the existing controls in place, taking into account the likelihood of risk, and the likely consequence of the risk.

- What are the consequences?
- What is the likelihood of those consequences?

4. If the risk rating is more than the 'acceptable level', identify further risk management strategies through additional controls or other prevention, detection or mitigation strategies and then re-assess the risk.

- What is the 'acceptable level' of risk? For child safety, there should be little or no tolerance of risk.
- What strategies, practices, or procedures could be put in place to control or manage the risk?

The risk management process should be documented, recorded and reviewed periodically. Effective risk management strategies are dynamic and change over time as new risks arise and others may no longer be relevant.

During 2017, Northside Christian College developed a Risk Management Policy (Policy No. 42) to communicate the College's approach to the management of risk. The College's Committee of Management recognises that, together with the Principal and staff, they are responsible for instilling a strong risk-aware and control-conscious culture throughout the College.

Since 2018, the College has been further implementing a culture of risk minimisation. The College has worked towards:

- Promoting a leadership lead risk management culture.
- Robustly discuss risk and play devils advocate to stress test policy and procedure.
- Spread risk responsibility throughout the organization.
- Test the systems and processes that are in place.
- Ensure that Child Safety remains an ongoing point of discussion when discussing risk.

During 2022, the College's Committee of Management developed the Child Safety Risk Management Strategy (Policy No. 75).

Action items

■ **Action:** Review and update the College's child safety risk management strategy.

■ **Action:** Form a working group with students and staff to support and promote child safety.

■ **Action:** Develop a review schedule for the College's child safety risk management strategy.

Action Plan Key:

■ In Place   ■ Partially in Place   ■ Not in Place

2.6 Staff and volunteers understand their obligations on information sharing and recordkeeping.

The College implements a range of strategies to ensure that staff and volunteers are aware of their obligations on information sharing an record keeping. This includes the following:

- Obligations are documented within the College's Child Safety Policy document, which is published online on the College website for the College community.
- The College facilitates a Volunteer Induction Program. Child Safety is a key feature of the Volunteer Induction program. Volunteers are provided with information about their obligations, information sharing, and record keeping.
- A staff briefing is conducted annually for all employees at Northside Christian College to support staff in understanding the role they plan in embedding a culture of child safety. A copy of this presentation and additional resources are published for staff on the College's Policy Portal.
- Additional resources are published on the College's Child Safety webpage to support members of the College community in understanding their obligations on information sharing and record keeping. Please refer to https://www.ncc.vic.edu.au/child-safety

Information Sharing Schemes

The Victorian government has 3 interrelated reforms that are integral to reducing family violence and promoting child wellbeing or safety.

The Family Violence Information Sharing Scheme (FVIS), the Child Information Sharing Scheme (CISS) and the Family Violence Multi-Agency Risk Assessment and Management Framework

(MARAM) have been developed in response to several coronial inquests and independent inquiries.

The Family Violence and Child Information Sharing Schemes came in to effect in September 2018 and are aimed at removing barriers to information sharing to allow professionals to work together, across the service system, to make more informed decisions and better respond to the needs of children, families and other people, including those experiencing family violence.

The two information sharing schemes allow prescribed organisations and services to share information in addition to existing information sharing permissions available to them.

MARAM will guide information sharing under both information sharing schemes wherever family violence is present.

Together, these reforms create a more collaborative, integrated system that will help improve safety and wellbeing outcomes for all Victorian children and families, including victims of family violence.

From Term 2 2021, the CISS will apply to all Victorian schools and early childhood education and care services. Northside Christian College falls under the requirements and obligations under the schemes and the sharing of information is guided by appropriate frameworks. Schools can share confidential information which meets all of the threshold requirements.

For additional information about the information sharing schemes, please refer to:

- Child Information Sharing Scheme (CISS):
  https://www.vic.gov.au/child-information-sharing-scheme
- Family Violence Information Sharing Scheme (FVIS):
  https://www.vic.gov.au/family-violence-information-sharing-scheme
- Family Violence Multi-Agency Risk Assessment and Management Framework (MARAM):
  https://www.vic.gov.au/family-violence-multi-agency-risk-assessment-and-management

Requests for information from prescribed Information Sharing Entities related to the Child Information Sharing Scheme (CISS) or Family Violence Information Sharing Scheme (FVISS) should be made in writing to studentwellbeing@ncc.vic.edu.au where practicable.

Action items

■ **Action:** Review the Records Management Policy (Policy No. 75) to ensure compliance with Ministerial Order No. 1359.

Action Plan Key:

■ In Place   ■ Partially in Place   ■ Not in Place

Child Safe Standard 3

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

In complying with Child Safe Standard 3, an organisation must, at a minimum, ensure:

3.1 Children and young people are informed about all of their rights, including to safety, information and participation.

3.2 The importance of friendships is recognised and support from peers is encouraged, to help children and young people feel safe and be less isolated.

3.3 Where relevant to the setting or context, children and young people are offered access to sexual abuse prevention programs and to relevant related information in an age appropriate way.

3.4 Staff and volunteers are attuned to signs of harm and facilitate child-friendly ways for children and young people to express their views, participate in decision-making and raise their concerns.

3.5 Organisations have strategies in place to develop a culture that facilitates participation and is responsive to the input of children and young people.

3.6 Organisations provide opportunities for children and young people to participate and are responsive to their contributions, thereby strengthening confidence and engagement.

Source

Commission for Children and Young People. (2021, July 1). *New Child Safe Standards start in Victoria on 1 July 2022 to better protect children.* https://ccyp.vic.gov.au/news/new-child-safe-standards-start-in-victoria-on-1-july-2022-to-better-protect-children/

Ministerial Order No. 1359

Child and student empowerment

7.1 Schools and school boarding premises must ensure that children, young people and students are empowered about their rights, participate in decisions affecting them and are taken seriously.

7.2 In complying with clause 7.1, the school governing authority or school boarding premises governing authority must, at a minimum, ensure:

    a. Children and students are informed about all of their rights, including to safety, information and participation.

    b. The importance of friendships is recognised and support from peers is encouraged, to help children and students feel safe and be less isolated.

    c. Staff and volunteers are attuned 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.

    d. Schools and school boarding premises have strategies in place to develop a culture that facilitates participation and is responsive to the input of children and students.

    e. Schools and school boarding premises provide opportunities for children and students to participate and are responsive to their contributions to strengthen confidence and engagement.

7.3 The school governing authority must ensure students are offered access to sexual abuse prevention programs and to relevant related information in an age-appropriate way.

7.4 Where relevant to the setting or context, the school boarding premises governing authority must ensure students are offered access to sexual abuse prevention programs and to relevant related information in an age-appropriate way.

7.5 The school governing authority or school boarding premises governing authority must develop curriculum planning documents or other documentation that details the strategies and actions the school or school boarding premises will take to implement clauses 7.1, 7.2, 7.3 and 7.4.

Explanatory notes:

The Convention on the Rights of the Child provides guidance on children's rights.
For further information see: https://humanrights.gov.au.

The Department of Education and Training also provides advice on equal opportunity and human rights for students at https://www2.education.vic.gov.au/pal/equal-opportunity- human-rights-students/policy.

Background

Under current Child Safe Standard 7, organisations are already required to employ strategies aimed at promoting the participation and empowerment of children and young people. These obligations are retained under the new Child Safe Standard 3.

The new Child Safe Standard 3 also requires organisations to inform children and young people about their rights such as those in the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (CRC) including:

- The right to participate and be heard.
- The right to be safe and not harmed by anyone.
- The right to live and grow up healthy.
- The right to express their views and have a say about decisions that affect them.
- The right to information, such as information about the policies and procedures that affect them.

Organisations must ensure that staff and volunteers receive appropriate training so that they understand their obligations and responsibility to support children and young people.

There are also new specific obligations on organisations to:

- Recognise the importance of friendships and encourage support from peers, to help children and young people feel safe and be connected.
- Equip staff and volunteers to identify the signs of harm to children.

Relevant training should equip staff and volunteers to communicate with children and young people in a way that is appropriate for their age, maturity and capability.

The Royal Commission into institutional responses to child sexual abuse recommended that, as part of a national strategy to prevent child abuse, sexual abuse prevention programs should be delivered through preschool, school and other community institutional settings to increase children's knowledge of child sexual abuse and self-protection strategies. Where relevant, organisations should ensure children and young people are offered programs of this kind.

Source
Commission for Children and Young People. (2021b, July 1, p. 9). *What's changing?: Compare current and new Child Safe Standards.* https://ccyp.vic.gov.au/assets/resources/New-Standards/Whats-changing-comparison-of-current-and-new-Child-Safe-Standards.pdf

College Strategies

3.1 Children and young people are informed about all of their rights, including to safety, information and participation.

A range of resources have been prepared to support students in being informed about their rights. This includes:

- The College has displayed Child Safety posters around the College.
- An extract of the Child Safety Policy is published in the College diary for students, including links to a range of supporting resources.
- A Child Safety webpage has been published on the College website, including resources that are targeted towards students. Please refer to: https://www.ncc.vic.edu.au/child-safety
- The College implements the Australian Curriculum and addresses safety in a number of curriculum areas including Health and Digital Technologies. The College also integrates the Personal and Social Capability across the curriculum. Students in the Secondary School in Years 7 -10 also have a Pastoral Care subject that addresses a broad range of topics.
- A wide range of wellbeing policies are published on the Policies page on the College website at: https://www.ncc.vic.edu.au/policies
- College Policies are also available at the Reception if a member of the College community would like access to a College policy document.

Action items
■ **Action:** Review and update the College's child safety poster.

Action Plan Key:
■ In Place   ■ Partially in Place   ■ Not in Place

3.2 The importance of friendships is recognised and support from peers is encouraged, to help children and young people feel safe and be less isolated.

The College recognises the importance of connectivity and the impact this has on student learning and wellbeing. A range of strategies are implemented to support students with developing relationships with others in the College community. This includes:

- Buddy programs
- Resiliency days
- Orientation programs
- House program
- Extra-curricular activities
- Clubs
- Social skills groups
- Authentic opportunities for group work

"Therefore encourage one another and build each other up, just as in fact you are doing."

I Thessalonians 5:11

3.3 Where relevant to the setting or context, children and young people are offered access to sexual abuse prevention programs and to relevant related information in an age appropriate way.

The College's Committee of Management is conducting a review and working closely with the Executive Team to update the College's Sex Education Scope and Sequence document. This resource will also document the sexual abuse prevention programs in place at the College.

Where relevant, students are offered access to child abuse (including sexual abuse) and reportable conduct prevention programs and other relevant information in an age-appropriate way.

Action items

🟧 **Action:** Document the sexual abuse prevention programs in place at Northside Christian College.

🟧 **Action:** Develop a plan to regularly review the sexual abuse prevention programs in place at Northside Christian College.

Action Plan Key:

🟩 In Place　　🟧 Partially in Place　　🟥 Not in Place

3.4 Staff and volunteers are attuned to signs of harm and facilitate child-friendly ways for children and young people to express their views, participate in decision-making and raise their concerns.

Staff and volunteers are trained to recognise the signs of harm. This is embedded into their annual training. Staff at the College complete the Protecting children: Mandatory reporting and other obligations training modules. This training is accessible on the Information Sharing and Multi-Agency Risk Assessment and Management (MARAM) Online Learning System and can be found at https://elearn.childlink.com.au.

The College recognises the "Process of Empowerment" model published by the Commission for Children and Young People (2021c).

3.4 Staff and volunteers are attuned to signs of harm and facilitate child-friendly ways for children andyoung people to express their views, participate in decision-making and raise their concerns.

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The College recognises the "Process of Empowerment" model published by the Commission for Children and Young People (2021c).

Source: Commission for Children and Young People. (2021c, p. 22).
For more information, please refer to: https://ccyp.vic.gov.au/assets/resources/Empowerment-and-Participation-Guide/CCYP-Empowerment-and-participation-guide-for-Web.pdf

3.5 Organisations have strategies in place to develop a culture that facilitates participation and is responsive to the input of children and young people.

Northside Christian College is committed to supporting our College community in developing and maintaining a culture of child safety. The voice of our students and staff are important and contribute significantly towards our child safe strategy.

The Commission for Children and Young People (2021c, p. 27) noted that for planned participation to be effective, organisations need to create the right conditions and deliver the activities in the right way. The resource below is helpful when considering strategies to engage staff and students.

For children and young people	For staff
Help young people understand why they are being asked to participate, and offer this information in age-appropriate ways.	Foster an environment that treats children and young people's participation as valuable.
Give them information and time to be able to decide how they think and feel about the topics to be discussed.	Show staff that their organisation values the opinions of young people.
Give them choices regarding how they can talk about issues.	Show staff that their organisation will respond to the views of young people.
Give them choices in what issues they discuss.	Give staff support to talk to children and young people in ways that are safe, appropriate and meaningful.
Prepare them to hear from other children and young people, and allow them to find a shared view.	Give staff access to resources that help children and young people express themselves.
Let them know that they can choose to stop participating at any time.	Allocate time and funding to support staff talking to young people.
Give genuine consideration and responses to their views, to build trust and show the organisation takes them seriously.	Consider whether parental consent is required or necessary for participation activities, or whether it could impede full and frank participation.

For more information, please refer to: https://ccyp.vic.gov.au/assets/resources/Empowerment-and-Participation-Guide/CCYP-Empowerment-and-participation-guide-for-Web.pdf

3.6 Organisations provide opportunities for children and young people to participate and are responsive to their contributions, thereby strengthening confidence and engagement.

The College has commenced implementing a range of strategies to consult with and engage children and young people. Below is a summary of some of the strategies being considered by the College.

- Small focus groups / student wellbeing workshops
- Suggestion box
- Surveys and questionnaires
- Student Representative Council
- EI Pulse
- Newsletter article seeking feedback from College community
- Buddy program for Prep students
- Mentoring program for Senior School students

Northside Christian College recognises that students need to be heard in order to be safe. We value the opportunity to hear insights from our students through a variety of forums. Furthermore, we recognise the importance of supporting students to understand their rights and to develop an awareness of unsafe situation.

Source:
Rose, S., Fitzgerald, P., & Elleray, M. (2022, May). *Victoria's new Child Safe Standards – what they mean in practice* [Webinar]. Moores Legal.

Child Safe Standard 4

Child Safe Standard 4 – Families and communities are informed, and involved in promoting child safety and wellbeing.

In complying with Child Safe Standard 4, an organisation must, at a minimum, ensure:

4.1 Families participate in decisions affecting their child.

4.2 The organisation engages and openly communicates with families and the community about its child safe approach and relevant information is accessible.

4.3 Families and communities have a say in the development and review of the organisation's policies and practices.

4.4 Families, carers and the community are informed about the organisation's operations and governance.

Source

Commission for Children and Young People. (2021, July 1). *New Child Safe Standards start in Victoria on 1 July 2022 to better protect children.* https://ccyp.vic.gov.au/news/new-child-safe-standards-start-in-victoria-on-1-july-2022-to-better-protect-children/

Ministerial Order No. 1359

Family Engagement

8.1 Schools and school boarding premises must ensure that families and communities are informed, and involved in promoting child safety and wellbeing.

8.2 In complying with clause 8.1, the school governing authority or school boarding premises governing authority must, at a minimum, ensure:

   a. Families participate in decisions related to child safety and wellbeing which affect their child.

   b. The school or school boarding premises engages and openly communicates with families and the school community or school boarding premises community about its child safe approach and relevant information is accessible.

   c. Families and the school community or school boarding premises community have a say in the development and review of policies and practices of the school or provider of school boarding services related to child safety and wellbeing.

   d. Families, carers and the school community or school boarding premises community are informed about the operations and governance of the school or school boarding premises related to child safety and wellbeing.

8.3 The school governing authority or school boarding premises governing authority must develop a policy, statement or other documentation that details the strategies and actions the school or school boarding premises will take to implement clauses 8.1 and 8.2.

Background

The new Child Safe Standard 4 highlights the importance of families and communities in promoting child safety and wellbeing. A number of the 'action areas' under the new Child Safe Standard 4 already exist as recommendations for good practice in the Guide for Creating a Child Safe Organisation.

The requirement to involve families and communities through a dedicated Standard supports consistent practice across organisations in this area and fosters a more open and transparent child safe culture for families and communities.

Under new Child Safe Standard 4, organisations must take action to ensure they:
- Seek the input of families and communities in decisions impacting children and young people.
- Involve families and communities in the development and review of their child safe policies and practices.
- Communicate effectively with families and communities about how to raise child safety concerns and how the organisation operates.
- Take into account the diversity of families and act to reduce barriers to inclusion.

By creating a safe and inclusive culture, children and young people, families and communities can feel their identity and culture are respected and valued. The new Child Safe Standard 4 also links with the new Child Safe Standard 1 (Aboriginal cultural safety) and new Child Safe Standard 5 (equity and diversity).

Source

Commission for Children and Young People. (2021b, July 1, p. 10). *What's changing?: Compare current and new Child Safe Standards.* https://ccyp.vic.gov.au/assets/resources/New-Standards/Whats-changing-comparison-of-current-and-new-Child-Safe-Standards.pdf

College Strategies

4.1 Families participate in decisions affecting their child.

At Northside Christian College, there is a significant focus on working collaboratively with parents to support the learning and wellbeing of students. The College recognises the importance of consulting with students and their parents to support in making decisions affecting students.

The College aims to be responsive to the needs of families and communities, including to cultural safety.

Student Support Group meetings are conducted when families express a desire to discuss specific strategies to support their child in flourishing at Northside. There is also an opportunity to discuss concerns, feedback, observations and other matters during Student Support Group meetings.

The College conducts Parent-Student-Teacher-Interviews in Semester 1 and 2 to support the learning and wellbeing of all students at Northside Christian College. Additional meetings can be scheduled during the year if required.

4.2 The Organization engages and openly communicates with families and the community about its child safe approach and relevant information is accessible.

The College proactively communicates with families about its approach to child safety through a range of formats including:

- Parent forums
- Parent information sessions
- Volunteer induction program
- Student Support Group (SSG) meetings
- Child Safety webpage on College website
- School newsletter articles
- Parent surveys
- Sub-school newsletters
- Updates from the Principal

The Northside Christian College website has been set up so it is accessible in multiple languages to reflect the diversity of the College community.

> "Let the wise listen and add to their learning, and let the discerning get guidance."
>
> **Proverbs 1:5**

Action Items

🟩 **Action:** Promote the College's updated Child Safe Strategy document to the College community in the school newsletter and on the College website.
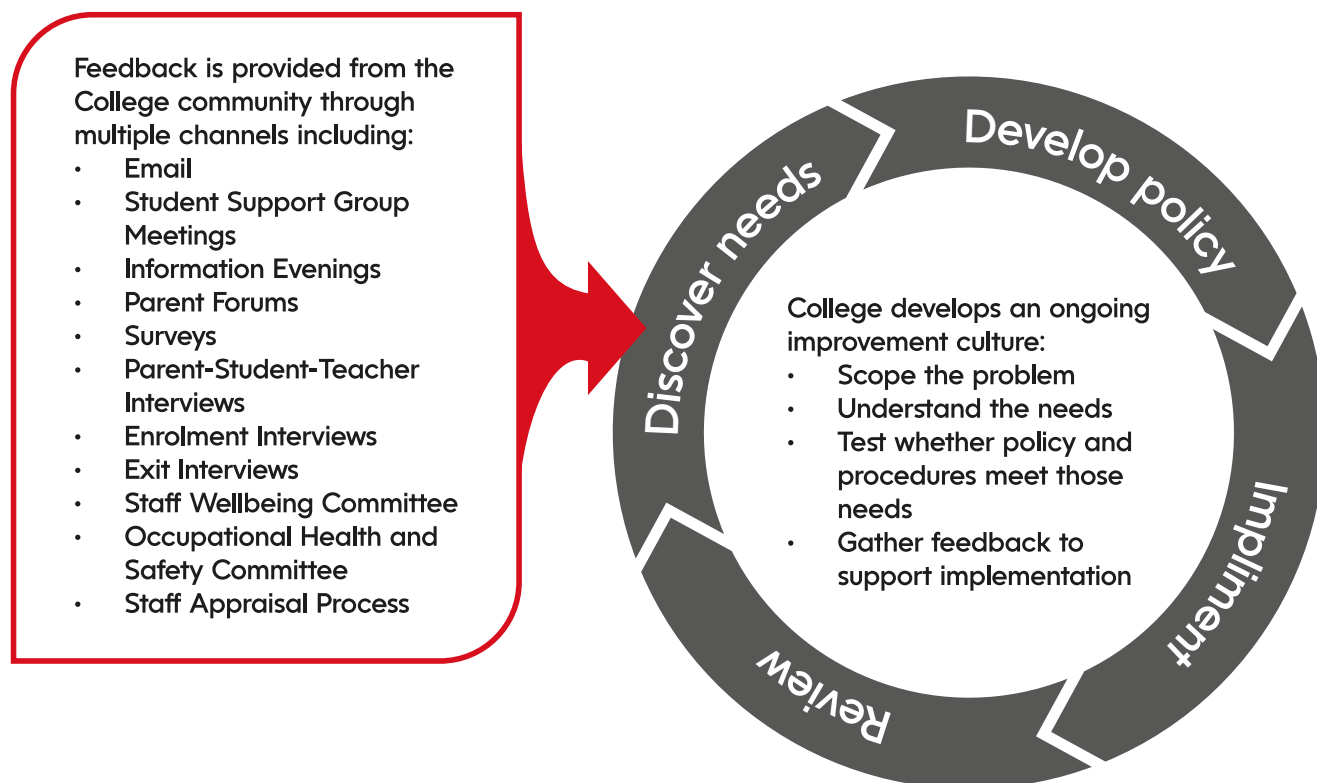
Action Plan Key:

🟩 In Place   🟧 Partially in Place   🟥 Not in Place

4.3 Families and communities have a say in the development and review of the organisation's policies and practices.

The College seeks feedback from families and communities on issues of child safety and wellbeing and incorporates this into their policies and practices. Feedback is gathered through a range of sources throughout the year.
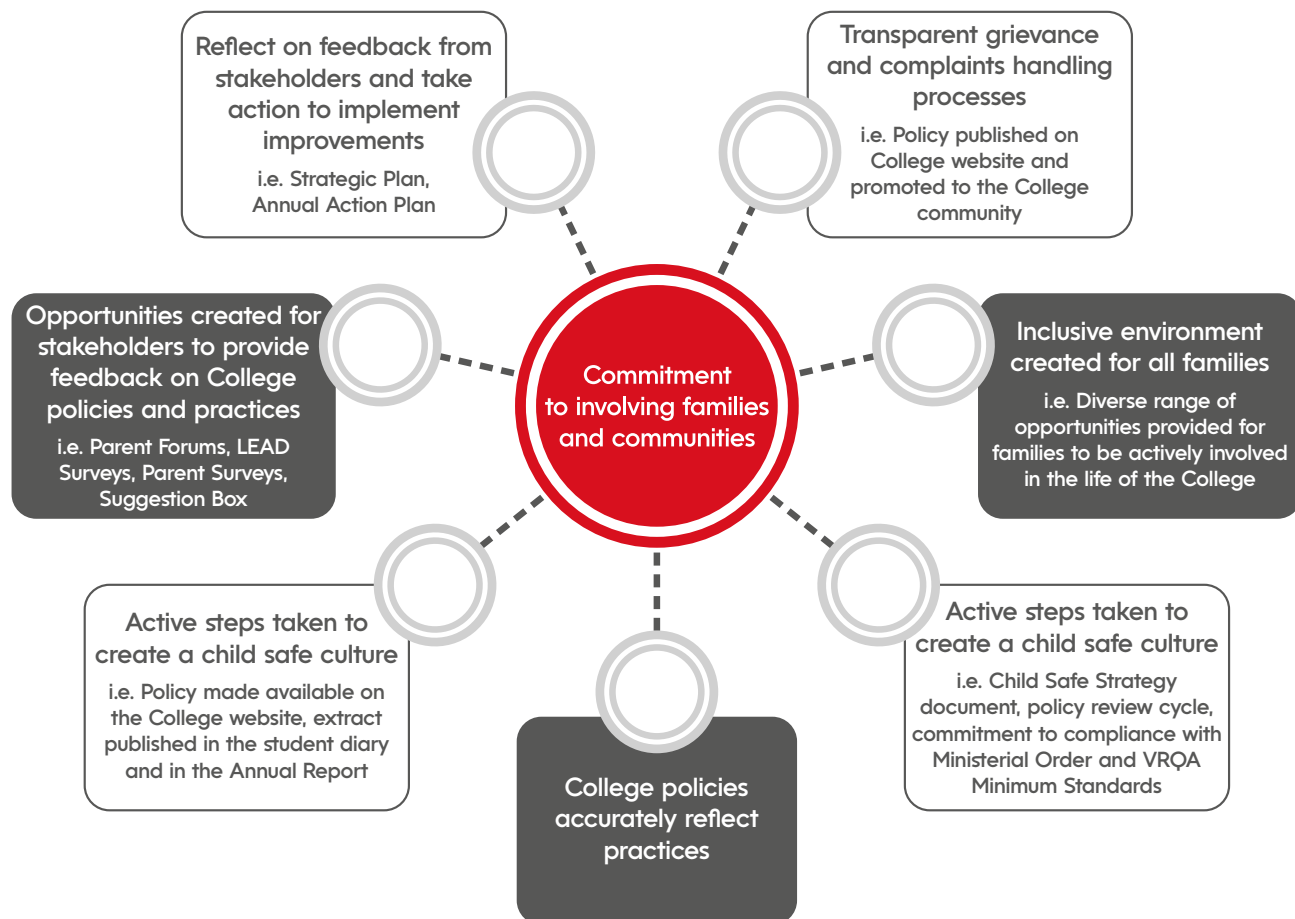
Feedback is provided from the College community through multiple channels including:
- Email
- Student Support Group Meetings
- Information Evenings
- Parent Forums
- Surveys
- Parent-Student-Teacher Interviews
- Enrolment Interviews
- Exit Interviews
- Staff Wellbeing Committee
- Occupational Health and Safety Committee
- Staff Appraisal Process

Develop policy

Discover needs

Impliment

Review

College develops an ongoing improvement culture:
- Scope the problem
- Understand the needs
- Test whether policy and procedures meet those needs
- Gather feedback to support implementation

4.4 Families, carers and the community are informed about the organisation's operations and governance.

Information about the College's operation and governance are outlined in detail on the College website. Please refer to the following resources:

- Committee of Management: https://www.ncc.vic.edu.au/committee-of-management
- College Annual Reports: https://www.ncc.vic.edu.au/annual-report

The College implements a diverse range of strategies to involve families and communities.

Reflect on feedback from stakeholders and take action to implement improvements
i.e. Strategic Plan, Annual Action Plan

Transparent grievance and complaints handling processes
i.e. Policy published on College website and promoted to the College community

Opportunities created for stakeholders to provide feedback on College policies and practices
i.e. Parent Forums, LEAD Surveys, Parent Surveys, Suggestion Box

Commitment to involving families and communities

Inclusive environment created for all families
i.e. Diverse range of opportunities provided for families to be actively involved in the life of the College

Active steps taken to create a child safe culture
i.e. Policy made available on the College website, extract published in the student diary and in the Annual Report

Active steps taken to create a child safe culture
i.e. Child Safe Strategy document, policy review cycle, commitment to compliance with Ministerial Order and VRQA Minimum Standards

College policies accurately reflect practices

Adapted from Rose, S., Fitzgerald, P., & Elleray, M. (2022, May). *Victoria's new Child Safe Standards – what they mean in practice* [Webinar]. Moores Legal.

Governance Structure

The following diagram is a visual representation of the governance structure of Northside Christian College and related entities. This diagram was published in the College's 2021 Annual Report, which is available online at College Annual Reports: https://www.ncc.vic.edu.au/annual-report
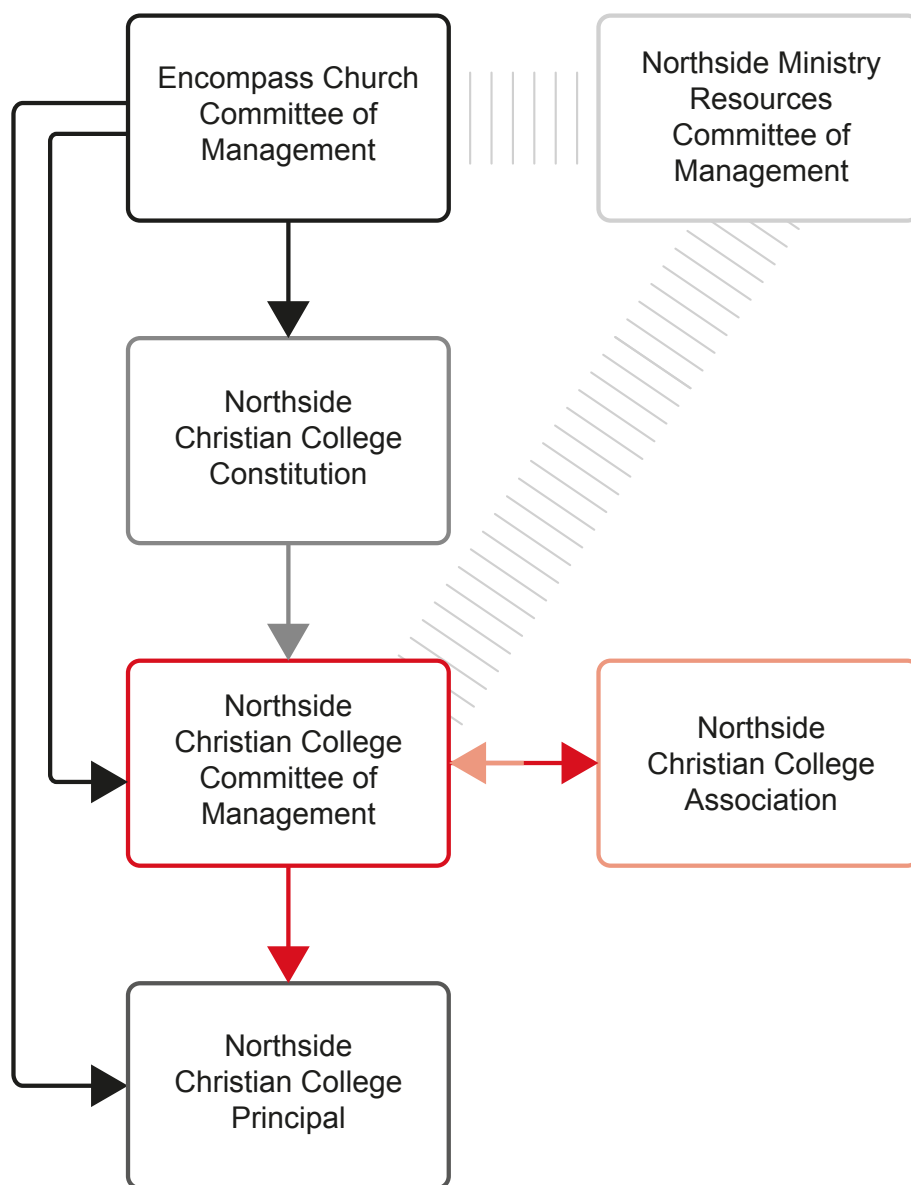
Encompass Church Committee of Management
(Northside Christian Church Inc trading as Encompass Church)
John Spinella, Chairperson
John Bezemer
Frank Chai
Mark Donato
Raffaele Marcucci
Loxly Mather
Jason Newcastle
Josie Skott

Changes to the Northside Christian College Constitution must not be altered except with the prior approval of the Church Board; and otherwise in accordance with the Australian Charities and Not-for-profits Commission Act 2012 (Cth).

Northside Ministry Resources Committee of Management
John Bezemer, Chairperson
John Spinella
Mabel Ong
Josie Skott
Daniel Tramontana

Northside Ministry Resources holds the property from which the Church and College conducts its activity.

Northside College Committee of Management
Church Appointed Committee of Management Members
Raff Marcucci, Chairperson
Jinu Abraham
Karen Burke
Henry Franck

Independent Committee of Management Members
Phil Johns
Nandika Mather

Ex-officio Committee of Management Members
Michael Bond, Principal
Leigh Adcock, Business Manager

During 2022, there were no subcommittees of the Northside College Committee of Management.

The Northside Christian College Association is made up of the members of the College's Committee of Management.

The Northside Christian College Association requires the prior written endorsement of the Encompass Church before appointing a school principal.

The day-to-day management and operations of the College are delegated from the College Committee of Management to the Principal. A Delegations Charter supports in documenting this process.

Action Items
■ **Action:** Publish the Governance Structure of Northside Christian College in the College's Annual Report.

Action Plan Key:
■ In Place   ■ Partially in Place   ■ Not in Place

Additional details about the College's Governance can be found in the Annual Report for Northside Christian College. Please refer to: https://www.ncc.vic.edu.au/annual-report

Child Safe Standard 5

Child Safe Standard 5 – Equity is upheld and diverse needs respected in policy and practice.

In complying with Child Safe Standard 5, an organisation must, at a minimum, ensure:

5.1 The organisation, including staff and volunteers, understands children and young people's diverse circumstances, and provides support and responds to those who are vulnerable.

5.2 Children and young people have access to information, support and complaints processes in ways that are culturally safe, accessible and easy to understand.

5.3 The organisation pays particular attention to the needs of children and young people with disability, children and young people from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds, those who are unable to live at home, and lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender and intersex children and young people.

5.4 The organisation pays particular attention to the needs of Aboriginal children and young people and provides/promotes a culturally safe environment for them.

Source

Commission for Children and Young People. (2021, July 1). *New Child Safe Standards start in Victoria on 1 July 2022 to better protect children.* https://ccyp.vic.gov.au/news/new-child-safe-standards-start-in-victoria-on-1-july-2022-to-better-protect-children/

Ministerial Order No. 1359

Diversity and equity

9.1 Schools and school boarding premises must ensure that equity is upheld, and diverse needs respected in policy and practice.

9.2 In complying with clause 9.1, the school governing authority or school boarding premises governing authority must, at a minimum, ensure:

   a. The school or school boarding premises, including staff and volunteers, understands the diverse circumstances of children and students, and provides support and responds to vulnerable children and students.

   b. Children, students, staff, volunteers and the school community or school boarding premises community have access to information, support and complaints processes in ways that are culturally safe, accessible and easy to understand.

   c. The school or school boarding premises pays 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.

   d. The school or school boarding premises pays particular attention to the needs of Aboriginal students and provides and promotes a culturally safe environment for them.

Explanatory notes:

There are many ways that school staff or school boarding premises staff can determine if a child or student is vulnerable. Vulnerable children and students may include, but are not limited to, children or students who:

   a. *Are deemed vulnerable by a government agency, funded family service or family violence service, or assessed as requiring education and care outside the family home.*

   b. *Are identified as vulnerable as a result of a referral from a government agency, funded family service or family violence service, homeless or youth justice service; or mental health or other health service.*

   c. *Self-identify or are identified by school staff or school boarding premises staff as a member of a vulnerable cohort (for example Aboriginal children and students; children and students with disability; children and students from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds; children and students who are unable to live at home or are in out- of-home care; international students; and children and students who are lesbian, gay, bisexual, trans and gender diverse, intersex and queer (LGBTIQ+).*

Schools and school boarding premises may also need to consider a range of other factors beyond those listed above when determining whether a child or student is vulnerable.

9.3 The school governing authority or school boarding premises governing authority must develop and endorse a policy, statement or curriculum document that details the strategies and actions the school or school boarding premises will take to implement clauses 9.1 and 9.2.

Background

The Child Safe Standards have always required organisations to recognise and respond to diversity and understand that some children are more vulnerable to abuse than others. This requirement is was previously captured in three overarching principles promoting the:

- Cultural safety of Aboriginal children.
- Cultural safety of children from culturally and/or linguistically diverse backgrounds.
- Safety of children with disability.

The new Child Safe Standard 5 has requirements for organisations that are similar to the current Standards to:

- Be aware of, and sensitive to, the diverse backgrounds, circumstances and needs of Aboriginal children and young people, culturally and/or linguistically diverse children and young people and children and young people with disability.
- Attend to any adjustments to provide equal protection for all children and young people.

However, the new Child Safe Standard 5 creates additional specific obligations on organisations, including their staff and volunteers, to:

- Give particular attention to the needs of children and young people who identify as lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender or intersex.
- Give particular attention to the needs of children and young people unable to live at home (for example children and young people in out of home care or custodial settings).

Given the new Standard's focus on understanding children's diverse circumstances, organisations will also need to give attention to the needs of non-binary and gender diverse children. Organisations must ensure they provide children and young people with access to information, support and complaints processes that are culturally safe and easy to understand.

Source

Commission for Children and Young People. (2021b, July 1, p. 3). *What's changing?: Compare current and new Child Safe Standards.* https://ccyp.vic.gov.au/assets/resources/New-Standards/Whats-changing-comparison-of-current-and-new-Child-Safe-Standards.pdf

College Strategies

5.1 The organisation, including staff and volunteers, understands children and young people's diverse circumstances, and provides support and responds to those who are vulnerable.

Northside Christian College has commenced implementing a range of strategies to support staff and volunteers in developing a greater awareness of the people's diverse circumstances, including students who are vulnerable.

Development of policy

i.e. Inclusive Education Policy, Student Anti-Harassment and Bullying Policy, Social Media Policy, Reportable Conduct Policy, etc.

Raising awareness

i.e. The Student Wellbeing Team support staff and volunteers in further developing an awareness of the diverse range of students at the College

Consultation with students

i.e. Student Support Group meetings, surveys, suggestion box

Strategies to support the understanding of students who are vulnerable

Training

i.e. Volunteer induction program, staff policy briefings, professional learning and development sessions

Roles and Responsibilities

i.e. In 2022 the College appointed a Director of Inclusive Education to the Executive Team

Engagement with parents and carers

i.e. Student Support Group meetings, surveys, newsletter articles, parent forums, information evenings

5.2 Children and young people have access to information, support and complaints processes in ways that are culturally safe, accessible and easy to understand.

The College's Grievance and Complaints Management Policy (Policy No. 24) is published on the College website. An extract is also published in the student diary.

Senior School students in Years 11 and 12 are supported by a member of staff who is a mentor.

Students have access to the Colleg's Student Wellbeing Team, including the Child Safety Officer.

Posters about the Colleg's Child Safety Officer and Child Protection Workers are displayed around the College.

Information about the College's Child Safety Policy and Grievance and Complaints Management Policy are published in the College diary for students.

Additional resources are published on the College website for student access.

5.3 The organisation pays particular attention to the needs of children and young people with disability, children and young people from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds, those who are unable to live at home, and lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender and intersex children and young people.

At Northside Christian College, a wide range of policies address the needs of children and young people with disability, children and young people from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds, those who are unable to live at home, and lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender and intersex children and young people.

Pastoral Care Policy

Child Safety Policy

Behaviour Management Policy

Student Anti-Harassment and Bullying Policy

Inclusive Education Policy
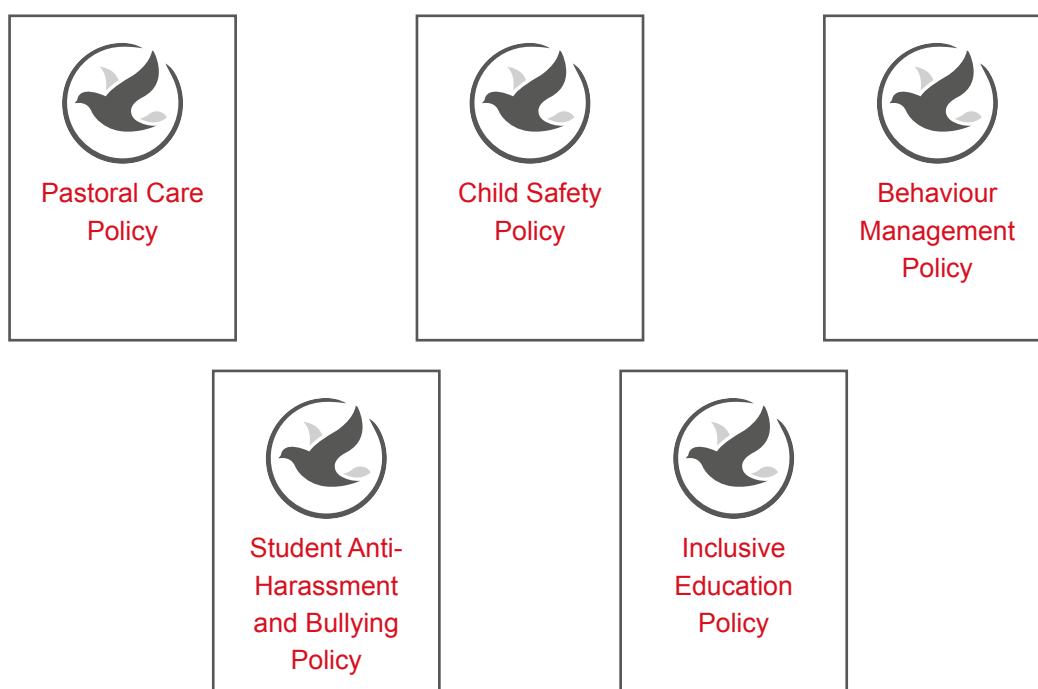
Action Items

■ **Action:** Consider additional ways to support lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender and intersex children and young people to feel safe and respected at Northside Christian College, including the development of supporting policies and procedures.

Action Plan Key:
■ In Place   ■ Partially in Place   ■ Not in Place

5.4 The organisation pays particular attention to the needs of Aboriginal children and young people and provides/promotes a culturally safe environment for them.

Northside Christian College is committed to strategically and practically building a culture which acknowledges, affirms and celebrates Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples, cultures and traditions.

Below are some of the strategies implemented to support with creating a culturally safe environment for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students at Northside.

Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Flags

The College flies the the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander flag at Northside to demonstrate our pride and respect for the histories, cultures and contributions of Australia's First Peoples. Flying or displaying the flags promotes a sense of community partnership and a commitment toward reconciliation.

Acknowledgement of Country

An Acknowledgement of Country is an act of respect for the continuing connection of Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander Traditional Owners and Custodians to the land on Northside Christian College stands. The College community is encouraged to share an Acknowledgement of Country at meetings and events throughout the year.

Cultural Safety Policy

The College has developed a Cultural Safety Policy (Policy No. 74) during 2022. The policy outlines the College's commitment to establishing and maintaining culturally safe environments in which the diverse and unique identities and experiences of all students and members of the College community are respected and valued, including Aboriginal children, young people and students. The College acknowledges that this policy applies even if there may not be any Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander children at the College.

Harmony Day

Harmony Day is celebrated annually at Northside Christian College. This event provided the College community with an opportunity to celebrate inclusiveness, respect and belonging for all Australians, regardless of cultural or linguistic background, united by a set of core Australian values. On Harmony Day, students, staff, and parents wear either the traditional dress of different nations or the colour orange.

Welcome to Country

Northside Christian College has recently commenced incorporating a Welcome to Country as part of the College's Dedication Service at the commencement of each school year. Protocols for welcoming visitors to Country have been a part of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander cultures for thousands of years. Incorporating these protocols into formal events and important occasions recognises Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples as the First Australians and Custodians of their Land.

For additional information about strategies to support with creating a culturally safe environment for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students at Northside please refer to www.narragunnawali.org.au

Image: Uncle Ian Hunter, Wurrundjeri elder, sharing with the College Community at a Dedication Service.

Action Items
- ■ **Action:** Consider the development of inclusive policies to address the needs of Aboriginal children and young people.

Staff in schools and early learning services should be aware of policies that refer specifically to improving educational outcomes for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people and increasing knowledge of, and respect for, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander histories and cultures in Australia. Planning how to ensure all staff comply with these policies in their daily practice is important. Where possible, internal policies should be reviewed and amended to ensure they are also inclusive of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people and increase knowledge of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander histories and cultures in Australia.

- ■ **Action:** Develop additional strategies to take action against racism.

Racism can have serious negative physical and psychological consequences for the people who experience it, and for wider society. Understanding racism is an essential first step in overcoming it. Schools and early learning services can take action to counter racism by building awareness of racism, its impacts, and how to respond effectively to racism.

- ■ **Action:** Provide professional learning opportunities for staff to develop cultural competence.

Schools and early learning services should reflect on their current level of cultural competence and provide staff with a range of opportunities to build and extend their knowledge and understanding of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander cultures.

Response: The College is currently investigating the resources published by Australian's Together, which is outlined in more detail at: https://australianstogether.org.au/professional-learning/

- ■ **Action:** Celebrate National Reconciliation Week.

There is an opportunity to celebrate National Reconciliation Week (NRW) from 27th May to 3rd June each year. NRW is a time to celebrate and build on the respectful relationships shared by Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people and the wider community. Talk about reconciliation in the classroom and staffroom, host and attend events and activities for everyone in your school or early learning service community.

Action Plan Key:
■ In Place   ■ Partially in Place   ■ Not in Place

Child Safe Standard 6

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

In complying with Child Safe Standard 6, an organisation must, at a minimum, ensure:

6.1 Recruitment, including advertising, referee checks and staff and volunteer pre-employment screening, emphasise child safety and wellbeing.

6.2 Relevant staff and volunteers have current working with children checks or equivalent background checks.

6.3 All staff and volunteers receive an appropriate induction and are aware of their responsibilities to children and young people, including record keeping, information sharing and reporting obligations.

6.4 Ongoing supervision and people management is focused on child safety and wellbeing.

Source

Commission for Children and Young People. (2021, July 1). *New Child Safe Standards start in Victoria on 1 July 2022 to better protect children*. https://ccyp.vic.gov.au/news/new-child-safe-standards-start-in-victoria-on-1-july-2022-to-better-protect-children/

Ministerial Order No. 1359

Suitable staff and volunteers

10.1 Schools and school boarding premises must ensure that people working with children and young people are suitable and supported to reflect child safety and wellbeing values in practice.

10.2 In complying with clause 10.1, the school governing authority or school boarding premises governing authority must, at a minimum, ensure:

   a. Recruitment advertisements for school staff or school boarding premises staff who will be engaged in child-connected work have a clear statement that sets out:

   I. the job's requirements, duties and responsibilities regarding child safety and wellbeing; and

   II. the job occupant's essential or relevant qualifications, experience and attributes in relation to child safety and wellbeing.

   b. All applicants for jobs that involve child-connected work for the school or school boarding premises must be informed about the child safety practices of the school or provider of school boarding services (including the code of conduct).

   c. When engaging volunteers to undertake child-connected work, volunteers are made aware of the child safety and wellbeing policy and child safety code of conduct of the school or provider of school boarding services.

   d. When engaging school staff or school boarding premises staff to perform child-connected work, the school governing authority or school boarding premises governing authority must:

   I. sight, verify and record the person's Working with Children clearance, if the person is required to have a clearance in accordance with the Worker Screening Act 2020, or any equivalent background check; and

   II. where the person will be engaged in child-related work, collect and record:
      a. proof of the person's identity;
      b. information about any essential or relevant professional or other qualifications;
      c. the person's history of work involving children; and
      d. references that address the person's suitability for the job and for working with children.

Explanatory note:

Please refer to the Worker Screening Act 2020 which establishes a process to screen persons engaging or intending to engage in child-related work through a screening check, and also sets out exemptions from that requirement for some volunteers, parents and others.

The school or provider of school boarding services may need to gather a range of information, including but not limited to a Working with Children clearance and qualifications relevant to the role being performed, to help ensure only suitable people work with children.

Registration with the Victorian Institute of Teaching is an equivalent background check.

    e. When engaging a volunteer to perform child-connected work, the school governing authority or school boarding premises governing authority must:

        I. sight, verify and record the person's Working with Children clearance, if the person is required to have a clearance in accordance with the Worker Screening Act 2020, or any equivalent background check; and

        II. consider the child safety risks relevant to the volunteer's role and, if reasonable and appropriate, collect and record:

            a.   proof of personal identity;

            b.   information about any essential or relevant professional or other qualifications;

            c.   the person's history of work involving children; and

            d.   references that address the person's suitability for the job and for working with children.

10.3 The school governing authority or school boarding premises governing authority need not comply with the requirements in clauses 10.2(d) and 10.2(e) if it has already undertaken these activities in relation to a particular individual within the previous 12 months.

10.4 In complying with clause 10.1, the school governing authority or school boarding premises governing authority must ensure that:

    a. School staff, school boarding premises staff, members of the governing body, and volunteers engaged in child-connected work, receive an induction regarding child safety and wellbeing that is appropriate to the nature of the role, and which includes:

        I. information on the child safety code of conduct; and

        II. where relevant to the role, the child safety and wellbeing policy and the procedures for managing complaints and concerns related to child abuse;

    b. School staff, school boarding premises staff, members of the governing body, and volunteers engaged in child-connected work, are aware of their responsibilities to children and students, information sharing and reporting obligations, and record keeping obligations.

    c. Ongoing supervision and people management of staff and volunteers focuses on child safety and wellbeing.

Background

The new Child Safe Standard 6 positions child safety and wellbeing as a primary consideration in all decisions regarding recruitment of individuals and engagement of volunteers.

Under previous Child Safe Standard 4, organisations were already required to develop and implement policies and procedures for recruitment processes, as well as supervision, training and performance management of staff and volunteers, to reduce the risk of child abuse.

These requirements include:

- Considering and promoting child safety in job descriptions, duty statements and job advertisements.
- Assessing the suitability of potential staff or volunteers through screening including identity checks, qualification verifications, work history checks and verbal referee checks.
- Conducting values-based interviews to assess the suitability of applicants and make sure they value and respect children's rights.
- Requiring Working with Children Checks and Police checks for relevant staff and volunteers.

Current Child Safe Standard 4 also requires organisations to undertake staff development, supervision and performance monitoring with a view to child safety. This is retained under the new Child Safe Standard 6.

In addition, the new Child Safe Standard 6 requires organisations to inform staff and volunteers about:

- The organisation's record keeping processes in relation to child safety and wellbeing information sharing and reporting obligations.

Source

Commission for Children and Young People. (2021b, July 1, p. 5). *What's changing?: Compare current and new Child Safe Standards.* https://ccyp.vic.gov.au/assets/resources/New-Standards/Whats-changing-comparison-of-current-and-new-Child-Safe-Standards.pdf

College Strategy

Northside Christian College acknowledges that it is important for organisations to have strong human resource practices to help protect children from abuse. Northside Christian College shall foster a culture of openness and inclusiveness, as well as be aware that people who may wish to harm children could target specific organisations. Robust human resources practices are a good way of reducing these risks. Human resources practices include the recruitment, training and supervision of all personnel.

To achieve this, Northside Christian College shall provide opportunities for employees and volunteers to develop and maintain skills to ensure child safety. This will support staff and volunteers to understand the importance of child safety and wellbeing, and enable them to consistently follow child safety policies and procedures.

The following policies are in place to support compliance with Ministerial Order No. 1359:

- Employment Policy (Policy No. 2)
- Staff Induction Policy (Policy No. 9)
- Staff Contact with Students Policy (Policy No. 11)
- Grievance and Complaints Management Policy (Policy No. 14)
- Volunteers Policy (Policy No. 29)
- Police Checks Policy (Policy No. 31)
- Student Travel in Staff Cars Policy (Policy No. 38)
- Whistle Blower Policy (Policy No. 39)
- Working with Children Policy (Policy No. 40)
- Reportable Conduct Policy (Policy No. 49)
- Restrictive Intervention Policy (Policy No. 64)
- Teaching Staff Contact with Students by Phone Procedure (Policy No. 66)
- Teacher Appraisal Policy (Policy No. 72)
- Records Management Policy (Policy No. 75)

The Employment Policy has been updated to ensure that Northside Christian College undertakes a comprehensive recruitment and screening process for all workers and volunteers, including:

- Working with Children Checks when required
- Police checks
- Face-to-face interviews where possible
- Interview questions to assess people's motives when working with children
- Referee checks that assess the quality of the applicant's previous experience
- Probation periods
- Appointments with the Principal after probation periods

All applicants for jobs that involve child-connected work for the College are informed about the College's child safety practices. The following statement is now published on the employment webpage for Northside Christian College:

> *Northside Christian College is committed to child safety. We have zero tolerance of child abuse. Our robust human resources, recruitment and vetting practices are strictly adhered to during the application and interviewing process. Applicants should be aware that we carry out working with children, police records and reference checks (as we see fit) to ensure that we are recruiting the right people.*

In accordance with the College's updated Working with Children Check Policy (Policy No. 40) and Employment Policy (Policy No. 2), the College will gather, verify and record the following information about a person whom it proposes to engage to perform child-connected work:

- Working with Children Check status, or similar check;
- Proof of personal identity and any professional or other qualifications;
- The person's history of work involving children; and
- References that address the person's suitability for the job and working with children.

Northside Christian College requires all workers / volunteers to pass through the College's recruitment and screening processes prior to commencing their engagement with Northside Christian College.

Persons applying for a role as a teacher with Northside Christian College must be registered with the Victorian Institute of Teaching.

Northside Christian College may require applicants to provide a police check in accordance with the law and as appropriate, before they commence working at Northside Christian College and during their time at Northside Christian College at regular intervals.

Northside Christian College will undertake thorough reference checks as per the approved internal procedure.

Once engaged, workers/volunteers must review and acknowledge their understanding of the Child Safe Policy and a wide range of College policy and procedure documents.

Northside Christian College has a comprehensive Staff Induction Program. The College recognises that effective induction is critical to ensuring that staff are able to contribute to the College's Vision and Mission, are aware of their legal obligations as members of staff of the College and are able to undertake their work roles quickly and effectively. The College is committed to providing induction to all new members of the College staff. The induction program provides an opportunity for new staff to be introduced to the College's policies, codes, practices, and procedures governing child safety and child-connected work.

Employees and volunteers working with children need to receive training in the following areas:
- Identifying, assessing and reducing or removing child abuse risks
- Northside Christian College's policies and procedures (including the Code of Conduct and Child Safe Policy)
- Legislative requirements, such as obligations to report child abuse, reduce and remove known risks of child abuse, and to hold Working with Children Checks where required
- How to handle a disclosure or suspicion of abuse, including Northside Christian College's reporting guidelines
- Cultural awareness training.

Training can be formal such as:
- Higher education training and accreditation
- Training offered by external organisations
- Training developed and delivered internally
- On-the-job training meeting key objectives.

Training can also be informal such as:
- Inviting other professionals to speak at meetings or functions
- Inviting local culturally and/or linguistically diverse community members to speak at meetings and events
- Internal mentoring and coaching.

The College is committed to monitoring and assessing a job occupant's continuing suitability for child-connected work.

Employees and volunteers are supported through the appointment of the College's Child Protection Workers with specified 'child-safe' duties in their job description, including being the designated person to hear or be informed about all allegations or concerns, and providing support to other personnel. This will assist Northside Christian College in ensuring that child safety is prioritised, and that any allegations of abuse or safety concerns are recorded and responded to consistently and in line with the College's legal requirements and policies and procedures. The designated Child Protection Workers also provides a single contact for children, parents and employees/volunteers to seek advice and support regarding the safety and wellbeing of children associated with our organisation.

Ongoing Monitoring of Staff

There are a wide range of policies and procedures in place at Northside Christian College to support the ongoing monitoring of staff and their suitability to work with children. The graphic below highlights that processes commence throughout the employment and induction process and continues throughout the time an employee is at the College. This is supported through the appraisal process for staff at the College and annual training and briefings for staff.
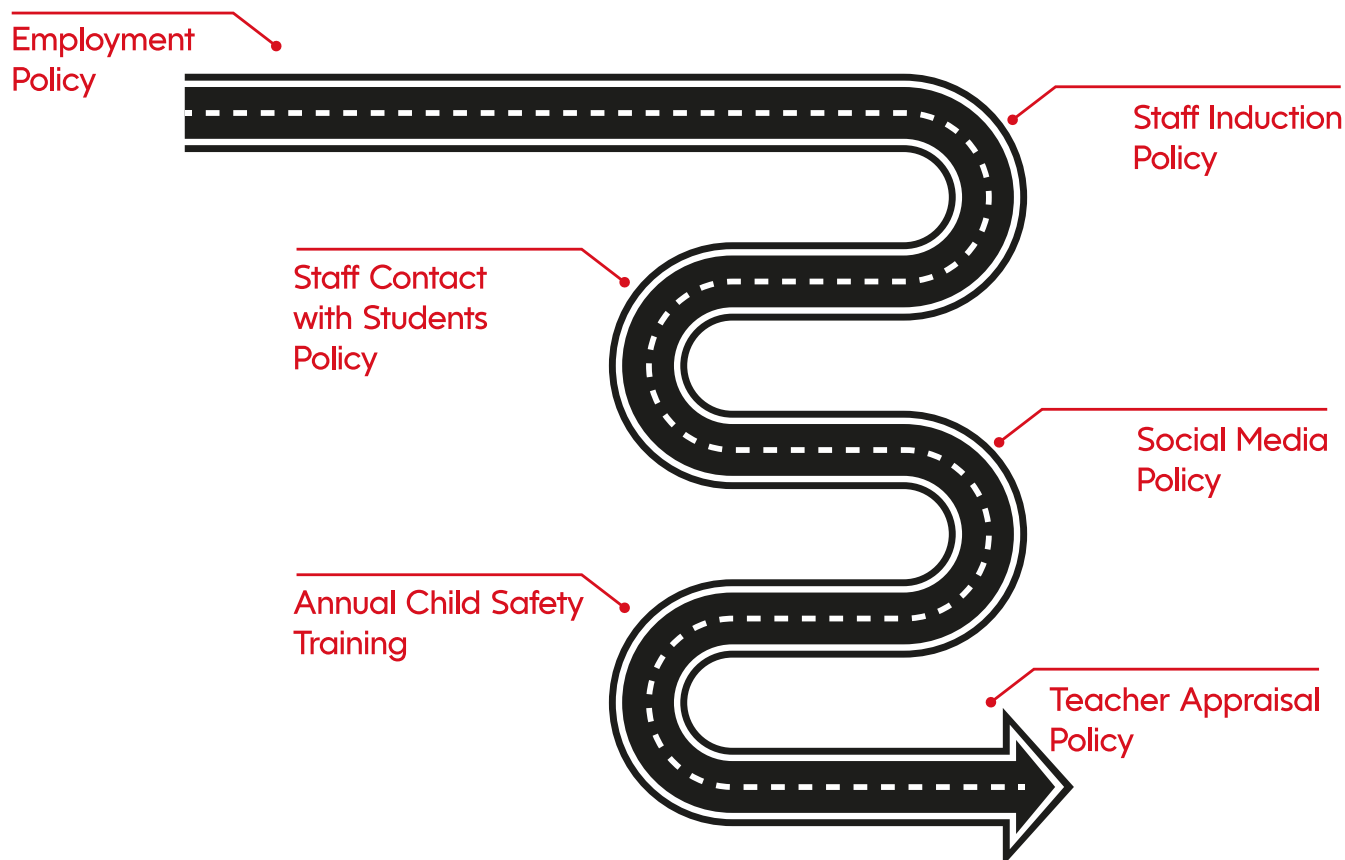
The graphic above references just some of the policies and procedures in place to support the ongoing monitoring of staff and their suitability to work with children.

Specific questions about child safety have been incorporated into the staff appraisal process. There is also a discussion about child safety as part of the six month performance review meeting for new staff at the College.

Supporting Provisionally Registered Teachers

The Victorian Institute of Teaching (VIT) require provisionally registered teachers to prepare a Professional Responsibilities Report. The Principal and Director of Teaching and Learning support provisionally registered teachers with this task.

The VIT (2022, p. 18) highlight:

It is the responsibility of all teachers to be aware of (and comply with) all laws, policies and regulations that pertain to their role and registration as a teacher. These requirements include mandatory reporting, failure to protect and failure to disclose, child safe standards, reportable conduct and duty of care.

As part of the Inquiry, you must have a professional conversation with your mentor about child safety and wellbeing as well as how you establish and maintain appropriate professional relationships with your learners. This is the third documented professional conversation.

Source

Victorian Institute of Teaching. (2022). Provisionally registered teacher guide: Moving from provisional to full registration. https://www.vit.vic.edu.au/sites/default/files/media/pdf/2022-02/Document_PRT_Guide_Moving_from_provisional_to_full_registration_0.pdf

Action Items

🟩 **Action:** Update the Employment Page on the College website to address section 10.2 on the Ministerial Order.

🟩 **Action:** Review procedures to ensure all staff training is documented on a register.

🟧 **Action:** Review training in place to support staff to assist students and families from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds.

Action Plan Key:
🟩 In Place   🟧 Partially in Place   🟥 Not in Place

Child Safe Standard 7

Child Safe Standard 7 – Processes for complaints and concerns are child focused.

In complying with Child Safe Standard 7, an organisation must, at a minimum, ensure:

7.1 The organisation has an accessible, child focused complaint handling policy which clearly outlines the roles and responsibilities of leadership, staff and volunteers, approaches to dealing with different types of complaints, breaches of relevant policies or the Code of Conduct and obligations to act and report.

7.2 Effective complaint handling processes are understood by children and young people, families, staff and volunteers, and are culturally safe.

7.3 Complaints are taken seriously, and responded to promptly and thoroughly.

7.4 The organisation has policies and procedures in place that address reporting of complaints and concerns to relevant authorities, whether or not the law requires reporting, and co-operates with law enforcement.

7.5 Reporting, privacy and employment law obligations are met.

Source

Commission for Children and Young People. (2021, July 1). *New Child Safe Standards start in Victoria on 1 July 2022 to better protect children.* https://ccyp.vic.gov.au/news/new-child-safe-standards-start-in-victoria-on-1-july-2022-to-better-protect-children/

Ministerial Order No. 1359

Complaints processes

11.1 Schools and school boarding premises must ensure that processes for complaints and concerns are child focused.

11.2 In complying with clause 11.1, the school governing authority or school boarding premises governing authority must, at a minimum:

a. Develop a complaint-handling policy that is made publicly available and that is accessible, child-focused, culturally safe and easily understood by the school community or school boarding premises community, and clearly outlines:

   I. the process for making a complaint about the school or school boarding premises or the behaviour of any person within the school or school boarding premises (for example staff, volunteers, contractors, families, children or students);

   II. the roles and responsibilities of leadership, school staff, school boarding premises staff, and volunteers in relation to handling complaints; and

   III. the process for dealing with different types of complaints, breaches of relevant policies or the code of conduct and obligations to act and report.

b. Ensure complaints are taken seriously and responded to promptly and thoroughly.

c. Have policies and procedures in place that address reporting of complaints and concerns to relevant authorities, whether or not the law requires reporting, and cooperate with law enforcement.

d. Ensure recordkeeping, reporting, privacy and employment law obligations are met when responding to complaints and concerns.

e. Have a clear procedure or set of procedures for responding to complaints or concerns relating to child abuse.

11.3 The procedures referred to in clause 11.2(e) must:

a. Cover all forms of child abuse.

b. Be sensitive to the diversity and characteristics of the school community or school boarding premises community.

c. Be made publicly available.

d. Be accessible to children, students, staff, volunteers and the school community or school boarding premises community.

e. Apply to complaints and concerns relating to child abuse made by or in relation to a child or student, school staff, school boarding premises staff, volunteers, contractors, service providers, visitors, or other persons while connected to a school environment or school boarding premises environment.

f. Identify the roles and responsibilities of school staff or school boarding premises staff and leadership to act and report on complaints and concerns relating to child abuse including:

   I. ensuring that the complaint or concern is taken seriously;

   II. promptly and thoroughly managing the response of the school or provider of school boarding services;

   III. responding appropriately to a child or student who raises or is affected by the complaint or concern;

   IV. monitoring overall compliance of the school or provider of school boarding services with the procedure; and

V. managing an alternative procedure for responding to the complaint or concern if any person allocated responsibility under clause 11.7(f) cannot perform their role.

g. Include a statement that fulfilling the roles and responsibilities in the procedure does not displace or discharge any other obligations that arise if a person reasonably believes that a child is at risk of child abuse.

h. Clearly describe the actions the school or provider of school boarding services will take to respond to a complaint or concern relating to child abuse, including actions to:

I. report allegations, suspicions or disclosures to relevant authorities, regardless of whether there is a legal obligation to report;

II. protect any child or student connected to the complaint or concern relating to child abuse until the complaint or concern is resolved; and

III. make, secure, and retain records of the complaint or concern and the response of the school or provider of school boarding services.

11.4 The procedures referred to in clause 11.2(e) must not:

a. Prohibit or discourage school staff, school boarding premises staff or volunteers from reporting a complaint or concern relating to child abuse to a person external to the school or school boarding premises.

b. State or imply that it is the victim's responsibility to inform the police or other authorities of an allegation relating to child abuse.

c. Require school staff, school boarding premises staff or volunteers to make a judgment about the truth of a complaint or concern relating to child abuse.

d. Prohibit school staff, school boarding premises staff or volunteers from making records in relation to a complaint or concern relating to child abuse.

Background

The new Child Safe Standard 7 emphasises the importance of processes for complaints being child focused and accessible to children and young people and their families, as well as staff and volunteers. Consistent with current Child Safe Standard 5, it requires organisations to have processes for responding to and reporting incidences of suspected child abuse.

The new Standard 7 makes explicit the obligations for organisations to:

- Take complaints seriously, and respond to them promptly and thoroughly.
- Co-operate with law enforcement agencies regarding complaints and concerns, and report to relevant authorities, regardless of legal obligation to report.
- Have child focused complaints handling policies and processes, and compliance with privacy laws, reporting obligations and employment law.
- Have complaints processes that are understood broadly (including by children young people, their families, staff and volunteers) and are culturally safe.

Source

Commission for Children and Young People. (2021b, July 1, p. 7). *What's changing?: Compare current and new Child Safe Standards.* https://ccyp.vic.gov.au/assets/resources/New-Standards/Whats-changing-comparison-of-current-and-new-Child-Safe-Standards.pdf

College Strategy

The Northside Christian College Committee of Management has approved the Child Safety Policy, Code of Conduct and Procedure (Policy No. 1), which has a clear set of procedures for responding to allegations of suspected child abuse in accordance with the Ministerial Order and other legal obligations, including criminal offences regarding grooming, failure to disclose and failure to report. The Child Safety Policy, Code of Conduct and Procedure (Policy No. 1) for reporting and responding to suspected child abuse apply to all staff involved in child-connected work at Northside Christian College, including outside of school hours.

The policies and procedures for reporting and responding to suspected child abuse at Northside Christian College enable individuals to take the appropriate course of action to protect the safety of students.

Northside Christian College has a clear procedure for responding to allegations of suspected child abuse in accordance with Ministerial Order No. 1359 and other legal obligations. The Fact Sheets on the next few pages document reporting procedures in a way that is accessible to children, volunteers and the wider community.

During 2017, the College Executive Team approved the College's Whistle Blower Policy (Policy No. 39). Northside Christian College is committed to achieving its business objectives while minimising the impact of significant risks that Northside Christian College can meaningfully and realistically control; protecting and enhancing its reputation; and behaving as a responsible and ethical corporate citizen. As such, the College recognises the value of transparency and accountability in its administrative and management practices, and supports the making of disclosures that reveal corrupt conduct, conduct involving a substantial mismanagement of resources, or that which involves substantial risk to public health and safety or the environment. It is policy at Northside Christian College that all staff, students, volunteers, parents and members of the College community shall be free to report concerns without fear of retaliation. They may wish to report activity occurring in College operations that they believe in good faith to be illegal, dishonest, unethical, fraudulent, or not in compliance with College policy.

Northside Christian College will:
- Continually equip staff and volunteers in how to report and identify signs of risk. Where possible, staff and volunteers will be directed towards accessible training materials.
- Publicise and make accessible avenues for reporting concerns for children and families.
- Institute feedback processes for staff, volunteers, children and families on organisational policies and procedures.
- Ensure children are safe, and that procedures for responding to alleged abuse are fair and focus on child safety, for example by suspending the alleged perpetrator or providing them with alternate duties pending investigation.
- Provide support and comfort to a child reporting abuse or safety concerns, and never blame or interrogate a child.
- Contact parents / carers as appropriate.
- Provide ongoing support (e.g. helping them understand their rights and processes that will follow), and/or make referrals for support (e.g. counselling).
- Review organisational child safe policies and procedures and organisational responses following an incident to help drive continuous improvement.

The College also has additional supporting policy documents:
- Grievance and Complaints Management Policy (Policy No. 14)
- Whistle Blower Policy (Policy No. 39)
- Reportable Conduct Policy (Policy No. 49)

Cultural / Language / Disability Barriers

The College is aware that some people from culturally and/or linguistically diverse backgrounds may face barriers in reporting allegations of abuse. For example, people from some cultures may experience anxiety when talking with police, and communicating in English may be a barrier for some. Our College community needs to be sensitive to these issues and meet people's needs where possible, such as having an interpreter present (who could be a friend or family member).

If an allegation of abuse involves an Aboriginal child, the College community will need to ensure a culturally appropriate response. A way to help ensure this could include engaging with parents of Aboriginal children, local Aboriginal communities or Aboriginal community controlled organisations to review policies and procedures.

Some children with a disability may experience barriers disclosing an incident.

PROTECT

THE EDUCATION STATE

VICTORIA State Government | Education and Training

cecv catholic education commission of victoria ltd

Independent Schools Victoria

Feeling Safe:
For Primary School Students

Get the facts

This fact sheet is about making sure you know how to keep safe. It gives you the facts about what to do if someone is hurting you or your friends or making you feel unsafe.

What are your rights?

- Everyone has the right to feel safe and be protected.
- No one is allowed to threaten you, hurt you or touch you in a way that makes you feel uncomfortable.
- No one should behave in a way that makes you feel unsafe or afraid, including anyone in your family, anyone at school or anywhere else in the community.

How do I know if something is wrong?

- Every relationship should be respectful.
- It is wrong for anyone to hurt you or make you feel unsafe, uncomfortable or afraid.
- Remember a person doesn't have to physically hurt or touch you to be doing the wrong thing.
- Even if you are not sure, if something doesn't feel right you should tell an adult who can help you.

What should I do if I feel unsafe?

- Tell an adult you trust – telling someone won't get you in trouble.
- If you feel threatened, unsafe, or if you feel uncomfortable about how someone is touching you, talking to you, or treating you, you should tell a trusted adult.
- You can tell a teacher or any adult at your school. They will be able to help you.
- You can also tell your parent, carer, or any family member or adult you trust.
- Even if the person who is making you feel like this has asked you not to tell anyone, you should still talk to an adult. It is more important that you are safe and protected.

What should I do if I am worried that someone I know is unsafe?

- Tell an adult you trust.
- You can tell a teacher or any adult at your school.
- They will be able to help your friend or the person you are worried about.
- You can also tell your parent, carer, or any family member or adult that you trust.
- Even if the person who you are worried about has asked you not to tell anyone, you should still talk to an adult. It is more important to make sure that your friend is safe and protected.

PROTECT

Feeling Safe:
For Secondary School Students

Get the facts

This fact sheet has been designed to give you the facts about child abuse. It includes advice on what to do if you have been abused, are being abused, or are at risk of being abused. This fact sheet also provides you with advice if you know someone who has been abused, or is at risk of being abused.

What are your rights?

- Everyone has the right to feel safe and be protected from abuse.
- No one is allowed to threaten you, hurt you, or touch you in a way that makes you feel uncomfortable, unsafe or afraid.
- This includes all adults, other teenagers and children – it includes everyone from family members, coaches, teachers, to friends and strangers.
- Every relationship should be respectful.
- No one should ever involve you in sexual activity without your consent, and no one should behave in a way that makes you feel unsafe or afraid.
- You don't have to deal with abuse on your own. Talk to a trusted adult. Teachers and other adults at your school can support you to get help.

What is child abuse?

- Child abuse includes physical abuse, sexual abuse, emotional or psychological harm, neglect, and family violence.
- Child abuse can also include grooming. This is behaviour where an adult tries to establish a relationship or other emotional connection with a child, to prepare them for a sexual relationship.
- Child abuse does not have to involve physical contact or force. It can include:
  - controlling a child through threats
  - exposing a child to sexual material and sexual acts
  - exposing a child to family violence.
- Child abuse can be perpetrated by any member of a community or a family member. Abuse can impact anyone and it is never the victim's fault.

For more information on sexual abuse and sexual assault visit Youth Central:
http://www.youthcentral.vic.gov.au/know-your-rights/sexual-assault .

PROTECT

Protecting Children from Abuse: For Parents and Carers

GET THE FACTS

As adults we all play a critical role in protecting children from harm.

As a parent or carer you have the primary responsibility for protecting and caring for your own children and supporting them to build relationships that are safe and respectful.

You also play a critical role in identifying and responding to suspected abuse within the community. In fact it may amount to a criminal offence if you fail to report suspected child sexual abuse.

- Parents and carers are also often in a position to protect the friends of their children. This is because children are most likely to disclose their experiences of abuse to their peers, who in turn may share this with their own parents and carers.
- If your child talks to you about their friend, and you suspect that the child is being abused or is at risk of being abused, you should act. You may be the only adult in a position to act and your response may be critical in protecting that child's safety.

REPORTING ABUSE

What should I do if I suspect that *my child* has been abused?

If you believe your child has been abused, or is at risk of being abused contact Victoria Police immediately via the local police station or on 000 if it's an emergency.

What should I do if I suspect that *another child* has been abused?

If you suspect a child has been abused, or is at risk of abuse (such as physical abuse, family violence or neglect) you should report immediately to the Department of Health and Human Services (DHHS) Child Protection (see contact details at the end of this fact sheet).

- If you suspect a child has been sexually abused, you must also report your concerns to the Victoria Police. You may be committing a criminal offence if you fail to do so
- You should report even if you're not sure. It is the role of authorities to investigate your concerns and determine if any further action needs to be taken.

What should I do if I suspect that a child is being abused and authorities have previously investigated and dismissed my report?

If you have new grounds for believing that a child is being abused, you should make another report to DHHS Child Protection or Victoria Police. Every report is critical to protecting a child as it builds evidence and helps authorities to gain a clearer understanding of risks to the child.

What happens to my child if someone at the school suspects that my child has been abused?

All staff members at your child's school are required to report suspected child abuse to DHHS, Child Protection and, in some circumstances, to Victoria Police.

Your child's school will contact you as soon as possible, unless they have been advised not to do so by DHHS, Child Protection and/or Victoria Police.

Where appropriate the school will work with you to ensure your child is provided with support, which may include referring them to wellbeing professionals.

PROTECT

Spotting the Warning Signs of Child Abuse: For School Staff

A REASONABLE BELIEF

What do I do if I suspect (form a reasonable belief) a child is being abused?

You MUST take action as soon as you witness an incident, receive a disclosure or suspect that a child has been, or is at risk of being abused. You MUST act whenever you form a reasonable belief which means acting even if you are unsure and have not directly observed the abuse. Failure to act can be a criminal offence.

You MUST follow the **Four Critical Actions for Schools: Responding to Incidents, Disclosures or Suspicions of Child Abuse**

When should I act?

You **MUST** act even if you are unsure and have not observed the abuse.

You **MUST** follow the Four Critical Actions for Schools: Responding to Incidents, Disclosures or Suspicions of Child Abuse. Failure to act can be a criminal offence.

What is child abuse?

Child abuse can include physical abuse, sexual abuse, grooming, emotional or psychological harm, neglect or family violence.

It doesn't have to involve physical contact or force. Child abuse can include:

- talking to a child in a sexually explicit way
- grooming a child for future sexual activity
- forcing a child to watch pornography
- being witness to family violence
- failing to provide a child with an adequate standard of nutrition, supervision or medical care to the extent that the development of the child is placed at serious risk, or is significantly impaired.

Who is most likely to be impacted by child abuse?

Any child can be victim to child abuse, however children who are vulnerable, isolated and/or have a disability are disproportionately abused.

Abuse is often committed by someone the child knows well such as a family member or someone within the school setting. In fact, child abuse can be committed by any member of the community.

Regardless of who the perpetrator or victim is the trauma of child abuse can have devastating impacts upon a child's wellbeing and development that can last for the rest of their life.

This is why it is critical that we respond immediately to any form of suspected abuse within our school communities.

PROTECT

Responding to Suspected Child Abuse: A Template for all Victorian Schools

When to use this template

School staff should use this template to document any incident, disclosure or suspicion that a child has been, or is at risk of being abused. This template should be used in conjunction with following the **Four Critical Actions For Schools: Responding to Incidents, Disclosures and Suspicions of Child Abuse**.

Completing this template should not impact on reporting times. If a child is in immediate danger school staff should report immediately to Victoria Police.

Whilst you may need to gather the information to make a report, remember it is not the role of school staff to investigate abuse, leave this to Victoria Police and/or DHHS Child Protection.

Why record this information?

When completing this template your aim should be to provide as much information as possible. This information will be critical to any reports and may be sought at a later date if the matter is the subject of Court proceedings. These notes may also later assist you if you are required to provide evidence to support any decisions.

It is a requirement under *Ministerial Order No. 870 – Child Safe Standards – Managing the risk of child abuse in schools* for schools to keep clear and comprehensive notes on all observations, disclosures and other details that led them to suspect the abuse.

This 14 page resource is published on the College website.

Child Safe Standard 8

Child Safe 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.

In complying with Child Safe Standard 8, an organisation must, at a minimum, ensure:

8.1 Staff and volunteers are trained and supported to effectively implement the organisation's child safety and wellbeing policy.

8.2 Staff and volunteers receive training and information to recognise indicators of child harm including harm caused by other children and young people.

8.3 Staff and volunteers receive training and information to respond effectively to issues of child safety and wellbeing and support colleagues who disclose harm.

8.4 Staff and volunteers receive training and information on how to build culturally safe environments for children and young people.

Source

Commission for Children and Young People. (2021, July 1). *New Child Safe Standards start in Victoria on 1 July 2022 to better protect children.* https://ccyp.vic.gov.au/news/new-child-safe-standards-start-in-victoria-on-1-july-2022-to-better-protect-children/

Ministerial Order No. 1359
Child safety knowledge, skills and awareness

12.1 Schools and school boarding premises must ensure that staff and volunteers are equipped with the knowledge, skills and awareness to keep children and young people safe through ongoing education and training.

12.2 In complying with clause 12.1, the school governing authority or school boarding premises governing authority must, at a minimum:

   a. Ensure that, at least annually, school staff or school boarding premises staff engaged in child-connected work receive training and information on child safety that includes:

      I. the child safety and wellbeing policy of the school or provider of school boarding services;

      II. the child safety code of conduct of the school or provider of school boarding services;

      III. the procedures referred to in clause 11.2(e);

      IV. guidance on recognising indicators of child harm including harm caused by other children and students;

      V. guidance on responding effectively to issues of child safety and wellbeing and supporting colleagues who disclose harm;

      VI. guidance on how to build culturally safe environments for children and students;

      VII. guidance on their information sharing and recordkeeping obligations; and

      VIII. 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.

   b. Ensure that volunteers engaged in child-connected work receive training and information that will equip them with the knowledge, skills and awareness required to keep children and students safe and that is appropriate to the nature and responsibilities of their role.

   c. When determining the type of training and information to provide to volunteers in accordance with clause 12.2(b), consider whether or not it is reasonable and necessary to include training and information on:

      I. the child safety and wellbeing policy of the school or provider of school boarding services;

      II. the child safety code of conduct of the school or provider of school boarding services;

      III. guidance on how to recognise indicators of child harm including harm caused by other children and students;

      IV. guidance on how to respond effectively to issues of child safety and wellbeing and support colleagues who disclose harm;

      V. guidance on how they can contribute to building culturally safe environments for children and students;

      VI. guidance on any obligations they have relating to information sharing and recordkeeping; and

      VII. guidance on how to identify and manage child safety risks relevant to the role the volunteer will undertake, without compromising a child or student's right to privacy, access to information, social connections and learning opportunities.

   d. Ensure that school staff, school boarding premises staff and volunteers are supported to implement the child safety and wellbeing policy of the school or provider of school boarding services to the extent that it is applicable to their role and responsibilities.

e. Ensure that, at least annually, appropriate training and guidance is provided to the members of the governing body about:

    I. individual and collective obligations and responsibilities for implementing the Child Safe Standards and managing the risk of child abuse;

    II. child safety and wellbeing risks in the school environment or school boarding premises environment; and

    III. the child safety policies, procedures and practices of the school or provider of school boarding services.

Background

The current Child Safe Standards already require that staff and volunteers are provided with relevant policies and procedures and training to support them to play a role in creating a safe environment for children.

The new Child Safe Standard 8 incorporates aspects of current Child Safe Standards (including current Child Safe Standards 4, 5 and 6). However, it is more prescriptive and makes explicit the requirements for organisations to provide training to staff and volunteers on:

- Implementing the child safety and wellbeing policy.
- Building culturally safe environments for children and young people.
- Recognising indicators of harm (including that caused by other children and young people).
- Responding effectively to child safety issues and concerns and supporting colleagues who disclose harm.

While organisations must provide staff and volunteers with appropriate training on commencement as part of an induction program (see new Child Safe Standard 6), the new Child Safe Standard 8 includes a clear requirement for organisations to provide ongoing education and training that is tailored to the relevant needs of staff and volunteers and factors in the complexity of the work with children and young people undertaken by the organisation.

Source

Commission for Children and Young People. (2021b, July 1, p. 6). *What's changing?: Compare current and new Child Safe Standards.* https://ccyp.vic.gov.au/assets/resources/New-Standards/Whats-changing-comparison-of-current-and-new-Child-Safe-Standards.pdf

College Strategy

8.1 Staff and volunteers are trained and supported to effectively implement the organisation's child safety and wellbeing policy.

The College supports staff and volunteers in gaining access to appropriate training and ongoing support with the implementation of the College's child safety and wellbeing policies.

A range of policy documents have been published on the College website at: https://www.ncc.vic.edu.au/policies

The College has also developed a Policy Portal to support staff in having ongoing access to training resources associated with College policies and procedures. This includes access to staff briefings related to child safety and student wellbeing.

Volunteers at Northside are supported with a comprehensive Volunteer Induction program. Volunteers are also assigned to a staff member who can provide ongoing support and assistance.

Volunteers at Northside can complete training modules accessible online at: https://www.ncc.vic.edu.au/volunteer-induction

Action Items

■ **Action:** Review and update the Online Volunteer Induction resources to ensure compliance with the updated Child Safe Standards.

■ **Action:** Review and update the College's Child Safety briefing for staff on the College's Policy Portal.

Action Plan Key:

■ In Place　　　■ Partially in Place　　　■ Not in Place

8.2 Staff and volunteers receive training and information to recognise indicators of child harm including harm caused by other children and young people.

College staff complete the Protecting Children - Mandatory Reporting and other Obligations (PROTECT) online training provided by the Department of Education and Training (the Department). This training has recently moved to the Information Sharing and Multi-Agency Risk Assessment and Management (MARAM) Online Learning System and can now be found at https://elearn.childlink.com.au.

Volunteers are provided with information training and information to recognise indicators of child harm including harm caused by other children and young people during the Volunteer Induction Program. Additional resources are also published on the College's Child Safety webpage.

The Victorian Department of Education and Training have also provided some additional resources to support staff and volunteers. This is available at: https://www.education.vic.gov.au/school/teachers/health/childprotection/Pages/identify.aspx

The signs of child abuse vary depending on the age of the child or adolescent, and not all children who display these symptoms have been abused.

Signs and symptoms of child abuse can include:

- physical injuries
- repetitive movements i.e. rocking, sucking, biting
- becoming withdrawn, anxious or clingy
- suddenly behaving differently
- depression or indifference
- delayed development
- aggressive, violent or disruptive behaviour
- emotional outbursts or problems dealing with emotions
- continence issues, including wetting the bed
- problems sleeping
- eating disorders or changes to eating patterns
- risk taking behaviours
- problems at school
- disengagement with friends, family and usual activities
- obsessive or compulsive behaviour
- using alcohol and other drugs
- self-harm or thoughts about suicide
- concerning sexual behaviours or sexual knowledge inconsistent for their age or development
- problems communicating or learning
- difficulty managing emotions
- distrust or fear of adults
- deliberately hurting other children or animals
- regressing in skills or development.

PROTECT

Spotting the Warning Signs of Child Abuse: For School Staff

A REASONABLE BELIEF

What do I do if I suspect (form a reasonable belief) a child is being abused?

You MUST take action as soon as you witness an incident, receive a disclosure or suspect that a child has been, or is at risk of being abused. You MUST act whenever you form a reasonable belief which means acting even if you are unsure and have not directly observed the abuse. Failure to act can be a criminal offence.

You MUST follow the **Four Critical Actions for Schools: Responding to Incidents, Disclosures or Suspicions of Child Abuse**

When should I act?

You **MUST** act even if you are unsure and have not observed the abuse.

You **MUST** follow the Four Critical Actions for Schools: Responding to Incidents, Disclosures or Suspicions of Child Abuse. Failure to act can be a criminal offence.

What is child abuse?

Child abuse can include physical abuse, sexual abuse, grooming, emotional or psychological harm, neglect or family violence.

It doesn't have to involve physical contact or force. Child abuse can include:

- talking to a child in a sexually explicit way
- grooming a child for future sexual activity
- forcing a child to watch pornography
- being witness to family violence
- failing to provide a child with an adequate standard of nutrition, supervision or medical care to the extent that the development of the child is placed at serious risk, or is significantly impaired.

Who is most likely to be impacted by child abuse?

Any child can be victim to child abuse, however children who are vulnerable, isolated and/or have a disability are disproportionately abused.

Abuse is often committed by someone the child knows well such as a family member or someone within the school setting. In fact, child abuse can be committed by any member of the community.

Regardless of who the perpetrator or victim is the trauma of child abuse can have devastating impacts upon a child's wellbeing and development that can last for the rest of their life.

This is why it is critical that we respond immediately to any form of suspected abuse within our school communities.

Source

Department of Education and Training. (2016). *Spotting the warning signs of child abuse: For school staff.*
https://www.education.vic.gov.au/Documents/about/programs/health/protect/ChildSafeStandard5_WarningSignsSchoolStaff.pdf

What are the signs that a child has been abused?

The most common physical and behavioural indicators of child abuse are outlined below. This is not an exhaustive list.

If you feel uncomfortable about a child's physical presentation or behaviour, but have not directly witnessed or been told about abuse, or risk of abuse, you should still act.

You can seek further advice and if you form a reasonable belief that a child has been abused, is being abused, or is at risk of abuse then you **MUST** follow the Four Critical Actions for Schools: Responding to Incidents, Disclosures or Suspicions of Child Abuse.

Common PHYSICAL indicators of child abuse

- bruises, welts, cuts/grazes or burns (especially those on back, bottom, legs, arms and inner thighs or in unusual configurations and may resemble an object)
- internal injuries and bone fractures not consistent with the explanation offered
- any injury to the genital or rectal area (e.g. bruising, bleeding, infection or anything causing pain to go to the toilet)
- wearing clothes unsuitable for weather conditions to hide injuries
- sexually-transmitted diseases and/or frequent urinary tract infections
- appearing consistently dirty and unwashed and/or inappropriately dressed for weather conditions
- being consistently hungry, tired and listless
- having unattended health problems and lack of routine medical care
- internal injuries.

Common BEHAVIOURAL indicators of child abuse

- disclosure of abuse and/or drawings or writing which depicts violence and abuse
- habitual absences from school without reasonable explanation
- significant and unexplained delays in emotional, mental or physical development
- regressive or unusual changes to behaviour (e.g. sudden decline in academic performance, nervousness, depression. withdrawal, hyperactivity, aggression, bedwetting)
- drug or alcohol misuse, suicide or self-harm, harm to others or animals
- an inconsistent or unlikely explanation for an injury, or inability to remember the cause
- reluctance to go home and/or a wariness or fear of a parent/carer
- unusual fear of physical contact with adults
- persistent and age-inappropriate sexual activity (e.g. excessive masturbation or rubbing genitals against adults, promiscuity)
- poor self-care or personal hygiene
- an unusually close connection with an older person
- possessing expensive gifts or money (e.g. a new mobile phone given to them by a "friend")
- taking on a caretaker role prematurely, trying to protect other family members.

What are the signs that an adult is perpetrating abuse?

The most common indicators that an adult is abusing a child are outlined below. This is not an exhaustive list.

If you feel uncomfortable in any way about a relationship between an adult and a child (or inappropriate relationships between children such as siblings) you **MUST** still act by following the Four Critical Actions for Schools: Responding to Incidents, Disclosures or Suspicions of Child Abuse.

Common indicators of adults abusing children

Family members (parents, siblings, extended family)

- attempts by one parent to alienate their child from the other parent
- overprotective or volatile relationships
- reluctance by the child to be alone with one or more of their family members
- a child and a sibling behaving like boyfriend and girlfriend (embarrassment if they are found alone together).

Other adults (e.g. school staff member, volunteers, coaches)

- touching a child inappropriately
- bringing up sexual material or personal disclosures into conversations with a child
- inappropriate contact with the child (e.g. calls, emails, texts, social media)
- obvious or inappropriate preferential treatment of the child (making them feel "special")
- giving inappropriate/expensive gifts to a child
- having inappropriate social boundaries (e.g. telling the child about their own personal problems)
- offering to drive a child to or from school
- inviting themselves over to their homes, calling them at night
- befriending the parents/carers of the child and making visits to their home
- undermining the child's reputation (so that the child won't be believed).

Where to go for further advice?

- Your Principal or a member of the leadership team
- DHHS Child Protection on **131 278**
- Your local police station

In addition, Catholic school staff can contact their local diocesan education office:

- Archdiocese of Melbourne: Student Wellbeing Information Line on **(03) 9267 0228**
- Diocese of Sale: Senior Education Consultant on **(03) 5622 6600**
- Diocese of Ballarat: Student Wellbeing on **(03) 5337 7135**
- Diocese of Sandhurst: Team Leader Pastoral Wellbeing on **(03) 5443 2377.**

Want to know more?

The advice contained within this factsheet is drawn from *Identifying and Responding to All Forms of Abuse in Victorian Schools* which can be found at www.education.vic.gov.au/protect

You must refer to this guidance to ensure you meet your obligations to protect children.

To familiarise yourself with this policy and to consider how it applies in different scenarios, visit www.education.vic.gov.au/protect.

8.3 Staff and volunteers receive training and information to respond effectively to issues of child safety and wellbeing and support colleagues who disclose harm.

An adult's response to a child or young person's disclosure of abuse can be central to a child or young person's ongoing safety and their recovery from the trauma of abuse. If an adult does not take action when there are suspicions that a child is being abused, it may place the child at serious risk of ongoing abuse and prevent the child's family from receiving the help they need. In summary, it is important to:

- Listen to and support the child or young person.
- Reassure the child or young person he or she did the right thing.
- Not make promises you can't keep.
- Contact the appropriate authorities.

The College is committed to supporting staff and volunteers who assist with disclosure of harm. The Executive Team and Student Wellbeing Team is committed to listening to and supporting a colleague who may have assisted a child or young person through a disclosure. The College recognises that this can be confronting and potentially distressing. Where possible, the College will encourage educators to seek internal or external support to debrief following a disclosure.

Source:

Australian Institute of Family Studies. (2015, March). *Responding to children and young people's disclosures of abuse.* https://aifs.gov.au/cfca/publications/responding-children-and-young-people-s-disclosures-abu

"Be shepherds of God's flock that is under your care, watching over them — not because you must, but because you are willing, as God wants you to be; not pursuing dishonest gain, but eager to serve."

1 Peter 5:2

Responding to children and young people's disclosures of abuse

Listen, reassure and respect

Listen

- Move to a suitable environment, free of distractions.
- Be calm and patient—allow for the child or young person to be heard.
- Let the child or young person use their own words—avoid asking leading questions.
- Avoid "quizzing" the child or young person about details of the abuse.
- Don't be afraid of saying the "wrong" thing. Listening supportively is more important than what you say.

Reassure

- Reassure the child or young person that it is OK that they have told you what's been happening.
- Address any concerns about the child or young person's safety.
- Reassure the child or young person that he or she is *not* at fault, and *not* the cause of any distress you may feel.

Respect

- Respect that the child or young person may only reveal some details.
- Acknowledge the child or young person's bravery and strength.
- Avoid making promises you can't keep—manage the child or young person's expectations.
- Explain to the child or young person that in order for them to be safe you will need to report their experience to someone else.

What happens next?

If a child or young person discloses abuse, you should report it to the relevant authorities.

Mandatory reporting requirements vary throughout Australian states and territories. For information about mandatory reporting requirements including who is mandated to report, see CFCA Resource Sheet *Mandatory Reporting of Child Abuse and Neglect* <**www3.aifs.gov.au/cfca/publications/mandatory-reporting-child-abuse-and-neglect**>

State and territory contact details for reporting abuse and neglect are available on the CFCA Resource Sheet *Reporting Abuse and Neglect: State and Territory Departments Responsible for Protecting Children* <**www3.aifs.gov.au/cfca/publications/reporting-abuse-and-neglect**>

Source

Australian Institute of Family Studies. (2015, March). *Responding to children and young people's disclosures of abuse.* https://aifs.gov.au/cfca/sites/default/files/disclosure-infographic.pdf

8.4 Staff and volunteers receive training and information on how to build culturally safe environments for children and young people.

The College recognises the following resources may be helpful in supporting training to build culturally safe environments for children and young people.

Australians Together. (n.d.). *Exploring 'culture' online course.* https://australianstogether.org.au/professional-learning/
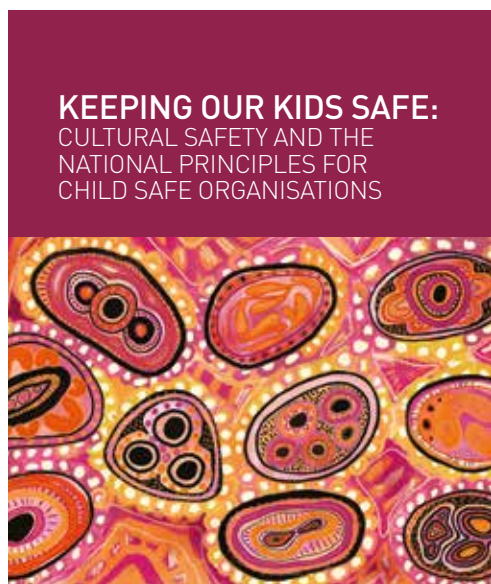
Commonwealth of Australia. (2021). *Keeping our kids safe: Cultural safety and the national principles for child safe oganisations.* https://childsafety.pmc.gov.au/sites/default/files/2021-06/final-keeping-our-kids-safe.pdf

Racism. It Stops with Me: Racism takes many forms and can happen in many places. It includes prejudice, discrimination or hatred directed at someone because of their colour, ethnicity or national origin. Led by the Australian Human Rights Commission, this resource links to information about the What You Say Matters and Racism It Stops With Me campaign. https://itstopswithme.humanrights.gov.au

Yarn Safe is the first youth led national Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander mental health campaign. This website was launched in local communities across Australia with a range of material and merchandise distributed across headspace centres. https://headspace.org.au/yarn-safe/

Cultural safety for Aboriginal children

Artwork by Eileen Harrison – Coming Home (Acrylic on canvas, 2014)

"Keeping our children and youth connected to their communities and strong in their identity and culture is essential to their wellbeing and the cornerstone of resilience."[1]

Andrew Jackomos, Commissioner for Aboriginal Children and Young People

It is the right of every Aboriginal child to be immersed in their culture. The right to culture which includes the inherent right to kin, community, cultural practices and identity relates to and impacts upon the enjoyment of every other human right. It is about connections, relationships and experiences and it is the greatest source of resilience for Aboriginal children. Section 19 of the Charter of Human Rights states that Aboriginal people hold distinct rights and must not be denied the right to enjoy their identity and culture, to maintain their kinship ties and to maintain their distinctive spiritual, material and economic relationship with the land and waters with which they have connection under traditional laws and customs.[2]

For Aboriginal people "culture is about family networks, Elders and ancestors. It's about relationships, languages, dance, ceremony and heritage. Culture is about spiritual connection to our lands and waters. It is the way we pass on stories and knowledge to our babies and children; it is how we greet each other and look for connection. It is about all the parts that bind us together." [3] (Jackomos 2015)

What is cultural safety?

Cultural safety is "an environment that is safe for people: where there is no assault, challenge or denial of their identity, of who they are and what they need. It is about shared respect, shared meaning, shared knowledge and experience, of learning, living and working together with dignity and truly listening." [4] (Williams, R. 2008)

For Aboriginal people "cultural safety and security requires the creation of:

- Environments of cultural resilience within Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities
- Cultural competency by those who engage with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities." [5] (AHRC Social Justice Report 2011)

Every Aboriginal person, every Aboriginal child, needs to feel that their sense of self and their identity is "valued in some way by the people and environments that surround them." [6] (VACCA 2010)
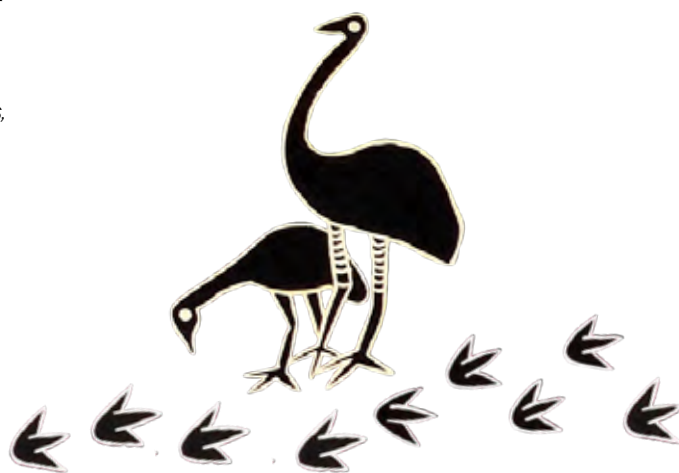
1   Commission for Children and Young People, Annual Report 2013-14, September 2014

2   Section 19, Charter of Human Rights and Responsibilities (Vic) 2006

3   Commission for Children and Young People Annual Report 2014-15, October 2015

4   Williams, R. (2008), Cultural safety; what does it mean for our work practice? Australian and New Zealand Journal of Public Health, 23(2):213-214

5   The Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Social Justice Commissioner Social Justice Report 2011

6   Victorian Aboriginal Child Care Agency (VACCA), (2010), This is Forever Business – a framework for maintaining and restoring cultural safety in Aboriginal Victoria

COMMISSION FOR CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE

LEVEL 18/570 Bourke Street Melbourne 3000 – DX210229 – www.ccyp.vic.gov.au

Source

Commission for Children and Young People. (n.d.). *Cultural safety for Aboriginal children: Tip Sheet: Child Safe Organisations*. https://ccyp.vic.gov.au/assets/resources/tipsheet-cultural-safety-aboriginal-children.pdf

Cultural safety for Aboriginal children

How can our organisation create a culturally safe environment?

Talk with Aboriginal people

Creating a culturally safe environment is about relationships and actively creating opportunity for Aboriginal voice and presence in an organisation's planning, policies and activities. Consult with local Aboriginal people, Aboriginal Community Controlled Organisations (ACCOs) and local organisations with Reconciliation Action Plans or Aboriginal Inclusive policies for guidance on how your organisation can become culturally safe. Cultural safety is about how your organisation is experienced by Aboriginal people and in particular by Aboriginal children.

Find out who the Traditional Owner groups or Registered Aboriginal Party is in your area

There are approximately 47,000 Aboriginal people currently living in Victoria, representing 0.9 per cent of the total population with government projections expecting this number to rise to over 80,000 people by 2021. The Victorian Aboriginal population is young and growing, with more than half being under the age of 25 years, and 36 per cent being children aged 0-14 (ABS 2012). No matter where you live in Victoria, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people will be living in your community, with a Traditional Owner Group known within your region. There are a number of websites that contain information about local and regional Aboriginal populations and Traditional Owners. Please visit: <http://www.mav.asn.au/policy-services/social-community/indigenous/Pages/default.aspx> <http://www.dpc.vic.gov.au/index.php/aboriginal-affairs/registered-aboriginal-parties)>

Recognising the impact of the past

Child safe standards in your organisation must address the continuing negative impacts of past Government policies and practices on Aboriginal peoples. This can be achieved by acknowledging that Aboriginal people are the First Peoples who have an ongoing connection to this country beyond 40,000 years. Also encouraged is knowledge of key events, like observance of the National Government Apology to Australia's Indigenous People for the forced removal of Aboriginal children (Sorry Day), and NAIDOC Week which celebrates Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander cultures each July. Also important is knowledge of pivotal reports like the Royal Commission into Aboriginal Deaths in Custody (RCIADIC, 1987–1991) and the Closing the Gap National Indigenous Reform Agreement.

Respect and embrace Aboriginal culture in every aspect of your organisation

Respect of Aboriginal cultures, values and practices is at the heart of creating a culturally safe organisation. Every organisation should create a physical environment that is respectful of Aboriginal culture as a first step.

To create a sense of identity and belonging select culturally appropriate symbols, images and objects in consultation with the families of Aboriginal children involved in your organisation. Aboriginal peoples are diverse and the cultural significance of items will vary throughout the State. There are over 30 language areas in Victoria.[7] (Clarke 1996)

One thing you may do is purchase or create a plaque or poster acknowledging the Traditional Owners where your organisation is physically located. Below is an example from AnTAR.<https://antar.org.au/>

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7   Clarke, Ian (1996) *Aboriginal Language areas in Victoria - A reconstruction*

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Cultural safety for Aboriginal children

A significant amount of work has been done through Reconciliation Victoria with local Councils that will provide guidance to you and also information about Reconciliation Week and other significant events and celebrations. <http://www.reconciliationvic.org.au/>

Finding out more

The process of finding out more by reading, talking with people and visiting places builds your organisation's capacity to be a culturally safe organisation. Knowing what questions to ask is a good way to start conversations with your board, volunteers, membership and staff. The Victorian Government developed the Aboriginal Inclusion Framework to assist with this, posing questions that relate to Leadership, Policy, Programs, and Communications. The Framework is available on the Aboriginal Affairs' website <http://www.dpc.vic.gov.au/index.php/aboriginal-affairs/aboriginal-affairs-policy/aboriginal-inclusion>

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Child Safe Standard 9

Child Safe Standard 9 – Physical and online environments promote safety and wellbeing while minimising the opportunity for children and young people to be harmed

In complying with Child Safe Standard 9, an organisation must, at a minimum, ensure:

9.1 Staff and volunteers identify and mitigate risks in the online and physical environments without compromising a child's right to privacy, access to information, social connections and learning opportunities.

9.2 The online environment is used in accordance with the organisation's Code of Conduct and child safety and wellbeing policy and practices.

9.3 Risk management plans consider risks posed by organisational settings, activities, and the physical environment.

9.4 Organisations that contract facilities and services from third parties have procurement policies that ensure the safety of children and young people.

Source
Commission for Children and Young People. (2021, July 1). *New Child Safe Standards start in Victoria on 1 July 2022 to better protect children.* https://ccyp.vic.gov.au/news/new-child-safe-standards-start-in-victoria-on-1-july-2022-to-better-protect-children/

Ministerial Order No. 1359

Child safety in physical and online environments

13.1 Schools and school boarding premises must ensure that physical and online environments promote safety and wellbeing while minimising the opportunity for children, young people and students to be harmed.

13.2 In complying with clause 13.1, the school governing authority or school boarding premises governing authority must, at a minimum:

   a. Ensure that the child safety and wellbeing policies, procedures and practices of the school or provider of school boarding services enable school staff, school boarding premises staff, and volunteers to identify and mitigate risks in school environments and school boarding premises environments without compromising a child or student's right to privacy, access to information, social connections and learning opportunities.

   b. Develop and endorse a policy or statement on online conduct and online safety that is consistent with the child safety and wellbeing policy and practices and child safety code of conduct of the school or provider of school boarding services.

   c. Ensure the procurement policies of the school or provider of school boarding services for facilities and services from third parties ensure the safety of children and students.

Explanatory note:

Schools and school boarding premises procure a wide range of goods and services, some of which may be obtained at no cost. Child safe procurement policies apply regardless of the value of the product or service.

Background

Under current Child Safe Standard 6, organisations already need to have strategies aimed at identifying, reducing or removing the risk of abuse of children and young people.

The new Child Safe Standard 9 is different to the current Standard in that:

- It places a positive responsibility on ensuring relevant environments promote child safety and wellbeing (not just on identifying and removing possible harm in those environments), including addressing risks from adult to child and child to child interactions.
- It emphasises online environments in addition to physical environments, which is important given the way many services have shifted to online delivery during the COVID-19 pandemic.
- It specifically requires that procurement policies ensure the safety of children and young people if the organisation contracts facilities and services from third parties.

The COVID-19 pandemic has focused attention on how important it is for organisations to update their policies, procedures and practices to make sure they keep up with the changing risks to children and young people and properly manage the risks in online environments.

Source

Commission for Children and Young People. (2021b, July 1, p. 8). *What's changing?: Compare current and new Child Safe Standards.* https://ccyp.vic.gov.au/assets/resources/New-Standards/Whats-changing-comparison-of-current-and-new-Child-Safe-Standards.pdf

College Strategy

9.1 Staff and volunteers identify and mitigate risks in the online and physical environments without compromising a child's right to privacy, access to information, social connections and learning opportunities.

During 2022, the College's Committee of Management developed the Child Safety Risk Management Strategy (Policy No. 75). This document summarises the College's approach to risk management and minimising the risk of child abuse in College environments.

Child
Safety Risk
Management
Strategy

The Northside Christian College Committee of Management understands its obligations concerning Ministerial Order No. 1359 and is committed to ensuring that the College meets its compliance and regulatory obligations.

Northside Christian College is committed to implementing a Risk Management Approach to support the College's commitment to embedding a culture of child safety. The Victorian Government (2018) highlighted a Risk Management Approach requires the development and implementation of policies and procedures to support the identification of risks and implementation of strategies. Furthermore, it is essential to have measures in place to ensure these strategies are understood and implemented to reduce risk.

Some of the key policies in place to support with the implementation of the College's Risk Management Approach to reduce the risk of child abuse include the following:

- Child Safety Policy Code of Conduct and Procedure (Policy No. 1)
- Risk Management Policy (Policy No. 42)

A number of key policy documents are reviewed regularly to ensure children's safety and wellbeing is a priority and that the College is implementing procedures compliant with legislation.

9.2 The online environment is used in accordance with the organisation's Code of Conduct and child safety and wellbeing policy and practices.

The College has developed a range of policies and procedures to support the safety of children in online environments. They include the following:

ICT and Internet Acceptable Use Policy	Child Safety Policy	Behaviour Management Policy	Social Media Policy
Mobile Phone Policy	Online Instrumental Music Procedure	Student Anti-Harassment and Bullying Policy	Teaching Staff Contact with Students by Phone Procedure
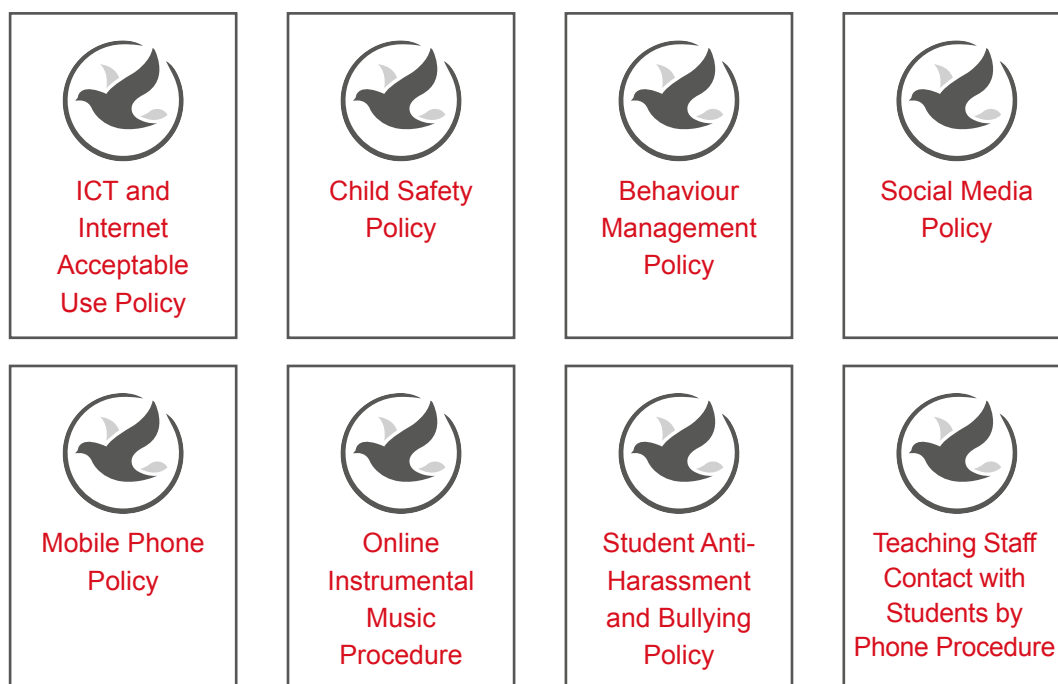
ICT and Internet Acceptable Use Policy

Northside Christian College provides access to the Internet for students and staff. The College provides ICT facilities for its students essentially for educational purposes related directly to their courses of study. The College's ICT facilities are not provided for social or recreational purposes. This is not the role or responsibility of the College. In choosing to use the College's ICT facilities, students are on trust to adhere to the principles outlined in the College's ICT and Internet Acceptable Use Policy. Further, no student may ever use College ICT facilities for illicit purposes, for purposes of fraud or deception, or to create or access material that could give offence.

Behaviour Management Policy

The Behaviour Management Policy at Northside Christian College outlines the College's expectations for all students to behave in an appropriate and acceptable manner. We believe that the quality of children's learning and the quality of life in the College will be enhanced and enriched through the promotion and maintenance of high standards of behaviour.

We aim to establish a caring and supportive environment where all members of the College community feel secure, respected and valued. The development of personal qualities and social skills, and the fostering of socially acceptable behaviour, are an integral aspect of the College curriculum.

We expect children to take responsibility for their own actions, be aware of the needs and rights of others and so increasingly display self-discipline in all aspects of College life. The maintenance of an orderly community where children show consideration for others, and are courteous and caring, will be afforded the highest priority.

A primary aim of the College is to encourage, within each student, the development of Christian character. Rules, and the means to enforce those rules, have been established to assist in this development. The rules and their enforcement are also intended to help each student accept responsibility for personal actions, and to ensure the safety and welfare of other members of the College community.

Clear guidelines, communicated with students and consistently enforced by all staff, add greatly to the effective maintenance of a College culture, which supports a safe environment for all students, and a positive classroom atmosphere.

Social Media Policy

It is not the intent of the Social Media Policy to prohibit the use of social media by members of the College community, but rather to establish clear standards and guidelines in relation to the use of social media where such use potentially impacts adversely upon the operations, interests or reputation of the College; and/or upon individual members of the College community; and/or upon relationships with or between members of the College community.

This policy relates to the use of social media during school hours and/or on College premises, and also outside school hours and/or away from College premises where such activity may impact adversely upon the College or members of the College community.

Mobile Phone Policy

The purpose of this policy is to outline the requirements of Northside Christian College relating to students using mobile phones during school hours. Northside Christian College takes the safe and responsible use of digital technologies, student safety and wellbeing, and the development of social skills and positive behaviour very seriously.

Whilst the College acknowledges that we live in a technology-rich world where mobile phones are an important communication tool, research has found that mobile phones can be disruptive in classrooms and open to misuse at school . The unregulated presence of mobile phones in classrooms can undermine students' capacity to think, learn, remember, pay attention, and regulate emotion.

Mobile phones may be mis-used to breach privacy of others by use of the camera function. They may also be used to bypass the College's Internet filters/Firewalls and inappropriate content and communication may be accessed.

At Northside Christian College, we highly value the opportunities that exist at recess and lunchtime for students to communicate with each other face-to-face or be involved in physical activity, rather than students being focused on a mobile phone, particularly when they are using it to engage with social media.

This College policy acknowledges that technology is increasingly affecting how students learn and communicate. Therefore, when a student has been given explicit permission to access and use such devices to enhance learning by the classroom teacher, mobile phones will be permitted for that specific purpose. For a small number of students with health and wellbeing needs, an exception to the policy may also be granted.

This policy will remove a major distraction from our classrooms, so that teachers can teach, and students can learn in a more focused, positive, safe and supported environment.

Northside Christian College is committed to maintaining a culture of child safety. The College is dedicated to implementing the Victorian Child Safe Standards and Ministerial Order No. 1359. The College's Mobile Phone Policy supports Northside Christian College's efforts to manage the risk of child abuse in online environments. Primary School students in particular are vulnerable to abuse in online environments (Carr-Gregg, et al., 2018).

Online Instrumental Music Procedure

In order to provide continuity of service for Northside Christian College private instrumental students during the pandemic, instrumental teachers supported the delivery of video conference lessons by Zoom. This provided an opportunity to continue lessons while restrictions and physical distancing requirements impacted face to face lessons. Zoom lessons supported instrumental students to continue to make musical progress and provide a sense of structure during this time.Instructions for parents, guardians and instrumental teachers on how lessons will be facilitated are included in this document.

Student Anti-Harassment and Bullying Policy

Northside Christian College is committed to maintaining a work and student environment that reflects Christian relational values and practices. We expect every member of the College, from the youngest to the oldest student, all our staff and the wider community to give and receive respect.

At Northside Christian College, we do not tolerate bullying in any form. All members of our College community are committed to ensuring a caring and safe environment, which promotes personal growth and a positive self-esteem.

We believe all members of our College community have the expectation and right to a safe environment and to be treated fairly with respect and courtesy. We believe these rights have concurrent responsibilities that include accepting others and treating them with dignity and respect. The Student Code of Conduct further highlights these expectations.

Teaching Staff Contact with Students by Phone Procedure

The College acknowledges that at times it may be necessary to contact a student by phone at their home to support them with their learning and wellbeing. The most preferred methods of communication with students after hours are email and Seqta messaging. The Teaching Staff Contact with Students by Phone Procedure document provide clear guidance for teachers at Northside Christian College.

Action Items

■ **Action:** Review the College's policies to ensure that physical and online environments promote safety and wellbeing while minimising the opportunity for children, young people and students to be harmed.

Action Plan Key:
■ In Place   ■ Partially in Place   ■ Not in Place

9.3 Risk management plans consider risks posed by organisational settings, activities, and the physical environment.

Northside Christian College will develop and implement risk management strategies regarding student safety online and in the physical school environment without compromising a student's right to privacy, access to information, social connections and learning opportunities.

These strategies will identify, control, remove and otherwise focus on preventing and reducing, the risk(s) of child abuse, reportable conduct and otherwise, risks to student safety and wellbeing by taking into account the nature of the 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 actual or suspected child abuse or reportable conduct occurring in the online or physical school environment, it will make a written record of those risks and determine the action(s) it will take to remove or otherwise reduce the risks (risk controls and risk treatments).

The College will monitor, review and evaluate the effectiveness of the implementation of its risk controls annually, and update these where required.

The College's Child Safety Risk Management Strategy (Policy No. 75) considers a diverse range of risks.

The types of risks that the College will analyse include, but is not limited to:

- A culture of not reporting issues.
- Children alone with one other person unsupervised.
- Recruitment of an inappropriate person.
- Harassment via email, SMS, or other social media.
- Ad-hoc contractors on the premises for maintenance, etc.
- Vulnerability of staff and students due to unknown personal details.
- Unknow people and environments at excursions and/or camps.

Parkinson and Cashmore (2017), in research commissioned by the Royal Commission into Institutional Responses

to Child Sexual Abuse highlighted the four dimensions of risk of child sexual abuse, which are illustrated below.

Image: Dimensions of Risk

Situational risk refers to opportunities for abuse to occur in organisational environments (e.g. nature of activities, physical facilities/environments, opportunities to be alone with a child, to engage in grooming behaviour, to cross boundaries and to engage in abuse). Child safety can be improved when organisations proactively minimise situational risks.

Vulnerability risk relates to characteristics of children and young people which may increase the risk of abuse. All children and young people are inherently vulnerable to abuse, however additional factors, such as disability, age, language barriers, lack of parental supervision/support, previous experience of abuse and cultural background, may increase a child or young person's vulnerability to abuse.

Propensity risk is characterised by an increased probability of some adults to engage in behaviours that may pose a risk to children and young people (e.g. those who have a sexual interest in children, those with anti-social tendencies, those who have previously engaged in sexual misconduct or abuse).

Institutional risk refers to characteristics of an organisation (as distinct from the activities that it runs) that impede prevention efforts, where child safety is not prioritised and where organisational culture (or structures) contribute to or promote misconduct (e.g. an organisational culture that turns a 'blind eye' or condones abuse).

Northside Christian College maintains a risk register that highlights the College's approach to addressing risks in the online and physical environment to support in strengthening the College's approach to child safety.

9.4 Organisations that contract facilities and services from third parties have procurement policies that ensure the safety of children and young people.

Northside Christian College engages with some external providers to support the teaching and learning program at College. Some of the most common ways the College engages with external providers includes Vocational Education and Training (VET) and Work Experience. Below is a summary about the strategies in place to support child safety within these arrangements.

Vocational Education and Training (VET)

VCE VET courses are delivered externally by different training providers in partnership with the Northern Melbourne VET Cluster and are conducted in venues across the region. Northside Christian College is a member of the Northern Melbourne VET Cluster, and students can choose to complete VET studies during Years 11 and 12.

The College use the Standard VET Purchasing Contract for Independent Schools when engaging external providers to provide VET courses for Northside Christian College students. VET Purchasing/Access/Agreements/ Contracts set out the requirements and the minimum obligations for the delivery of VET programs for students. These documents, when completed with all of the relevant information regarding VET course delivery (e.g. student details, VET program details, trainer details, reporting details etc.) must be signed by representatives from both the Home and the Host school, with each retaining a copy.

The VRQA have developed Guidelines for VET Providers. The VRQA Guidelines for VET Providers outline six key areas to provide for a nationally consistent approach to VET regulation:

- Trainers, assessors and individuals working under supervision must hold the relevant training and assessment qualifications.
- Registered training organisations (RTOs) must have a written agreement with third parties they engage and notify us and relevant students of any such agreement.
- RTOs are explicitly required to determine an appropriate amount of training for each student.
- To deliver a training and assessment qualification, RTOs are required to have their assessment independently validated, and trainers are required to hold the appropriate training and assessment competencies.
- RTOs are required to provide us with an annual declaration of compliance with the standards.
- RTOs that deliver, or intend to deliver, services to persons under 18 years of age are required to comply with the Child Safe Standards.

Source

Victorian Registration and Qualifications Authority. (2022, June). *VRQA Guidelines for VET Providers.* https://www.vrqa.vic.gov.au/VET/Pages/standards-and-guidelines-for-training-organisations.aspx

Work Experience

Northside Christian College acknowledges that all work experience arrangements in Victoria or in a Reciprocating State must be made using the Work Experience Arrangement Form attached to Ministerial Order No. 382. All sections of this form must be completed and signed before the work experience commences.

The Arrangement Form must be signed by:

- the employer;
- the student;
- the parent/guardian of the student (if the student is under 18 years of age); and
- the Principal or Acting Principal (this authority cannot be delegated to a Deputy Principal or other member of staff).

A copy of the Arrangement Form signed by the Principal must be provided to each party. The Principal or their delegate should retain the original copy.

Prior to the Principal approving a work experience arrangement, the employer must provide certified copies of their Child Employment Permit and the nominated supervisor/s valid Working with Children Check.

The College will ensure that the employer has received a copy of the Work Experience Guidelines for Employers, which are available at:
http://www.education.vic.gov.au/school/teachers/teachingresources/careers/work/Pages/workexperi ence.aspx

The College will also make arrangements to provide the employer with a copy of the Fact Sheet for Employers: Child Safe Standards and Workplace Learning, available at:
http://www.education.vic.gov.au/school/teachers/teachingresources/careers/work/Pages/default.aspx

The Work Experience Arrangement Form can be downloaded from the Department's website at:
http://www.education.vic.gov.au/school/teachers/teachingresources/careers/work/Pages/workexperi ence.aspx
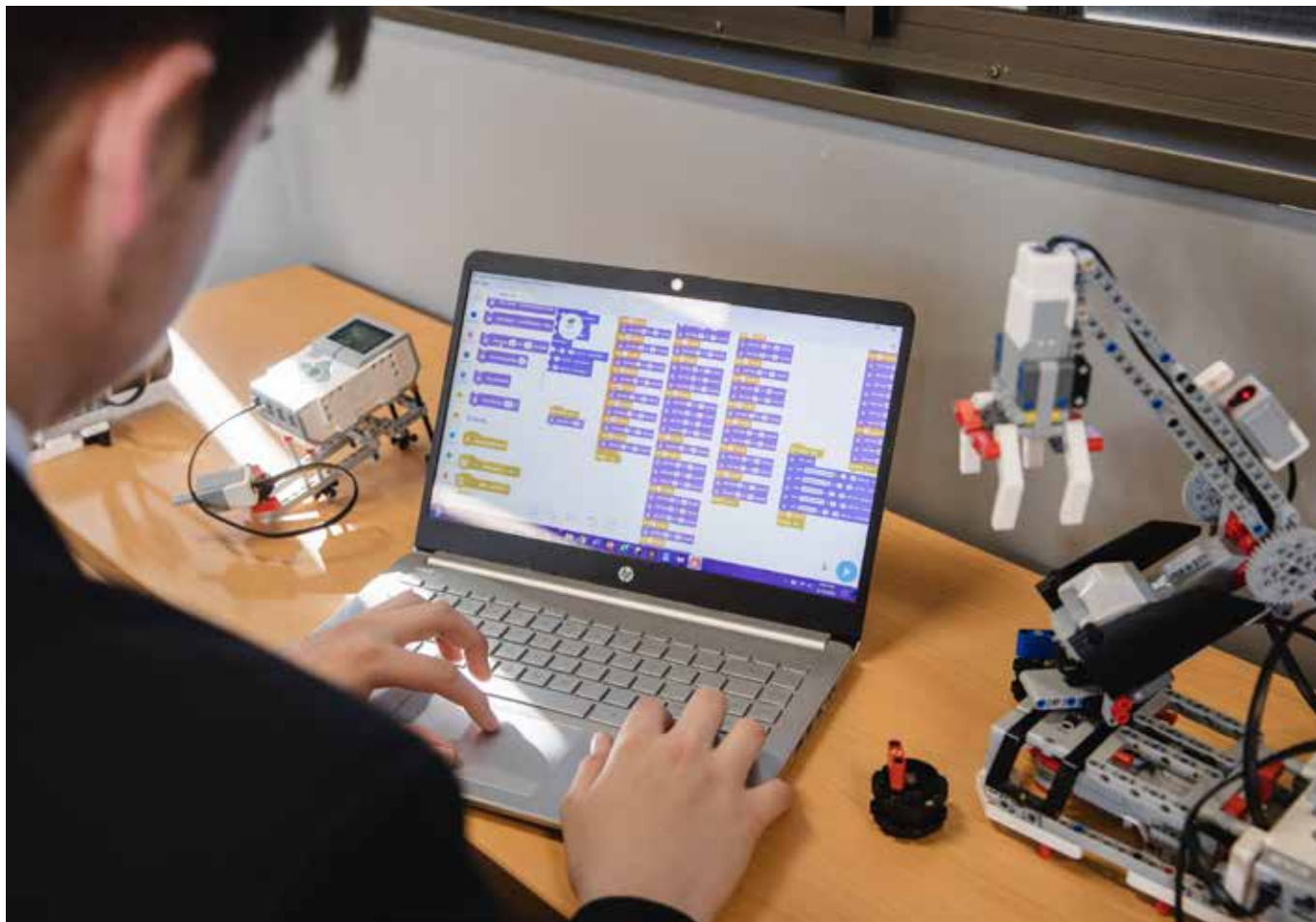
Child Safe Standard 10

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

In complying with Child Safe Standard 10, an organisation must, at a minimum, ensure:

10.1 The organisation regularly reviews, evaluates and improves child safe practices.

10.2 Complaints, concerns and safety incidents are analysed to identify causes and systemic failures to inform continuous improvement.

10.3 The organisation reports on the findings of relevant reviews to staff and volunteers, community and families and children and young people.

Source

Commission for Children and Young People. (2021, July 1). *New Child Safe Standards start in Victoria on 1 July 2022 to better protect children.* https://ccyp.vic.gov.au/news/new-child-safe-standards-start-in-victoria-on-1-july-2022-to-better-protect-children/

Ministerial Order No. 1359

Review of child safety practices

14.1 Schools and school boarding premises must ensure that implementation of this Order is regularly reviewed and improved.

14.2 In complying with clause 14.1, the school governing authority or school boarding premises governing authority must, at a minimum:

  a. Review and evaluate the child safety and wellbeing policies, procedures and practices of the school or provider of school boarding services after any significant child safety incident, or at least every two years, and improve where applicable.

  b. Ensure complaints, concerns and safety incidents are analysed to identify causes and systemic failures and inform continuous improvement.

  c. Report on the outcomes of relevant reviews to school staff, school boarding premises staff, volunteers, the school community or school boarding premises community, and families and students.

Background

Under section 23 of the Child Wellbeing and Safety Act 2005, the Commission already promotes continuous improvement by organisations so that the safety of children is promoted, child abuse is prevented and allegations of child abuse are properly responded to.

The new Child Safe Standard 10 emphasises the importance of continuous improvement in child safe practices. It contains new obligations for organisations to:

- Analyse complaints, concerns and safety incidents to identify causes and systemic failures to inform continuous improvement
- Report on the findings of relevant reviews of child safe practices to staff and volunteers, community and families and children and young people.

Source

Commission for Children and Young People. (2021b, July 1, p. 11). *What's changing?: Compare current and new Child Safe Standards.* https://ccyp.vic.gov.au/assets/resources/New-Standards/Whats-changing-comparison-of-current-and-new-Child-Safe-Standards.pdf

College Strategy

10.1 The organisation regularly reviews, evaluates and improves child safe practices.

The Northside Christian College policies are documents that are made available to the College community as a means to clarify functions and responsibilities, manage change, promote consistency, meet standards and help ensure that decision-making is transparent. The Committee of Management are responsible for reviewing the College's policies on a regular cycle with some policies requiring review on an annual basis.

The Committee of Management annually review the Child Safety Policy, Code of Conduct and Procedures and a wide range of supportive policies and documents to ensure that the College maintains a culture of child safety.

Northside Christian College needs to have in place processes for regularly reviewing and refining policies and procedures to ensure that our organisation is compliant with:

- All mandatory processes for responding to and reporting suspected child abuse;
- Any new child safety standards (as this area is regularly evolving); and
- Any other legislative changes surrounding child safety.

10.2 Complaints, concerns and safety incidents are analysed to identify causes and systemic failures to inform continuous improvement.

Northside Christian College takes all allegations or disclosures of suspected child abuse and reportable conduct seriously, and responds to such allegations and disclosures promptly and thoroughly.

This Child Safety Policy at Northside Christian College will be reviewed as part of the College's three-year review cycle. Following every reportable incident, a review shall be conducted to assess whether the College's child protection policies or procedures require modification to better protect the children under the College's care.

The College's Child Safety Risk Management Strategy (Policy No. 75) highlights that the Committee of Management is committed to ensuring potential risks and the management of risks are continually monitored and reviewed to ensure a proactive approach to managing risks occurs as new risks emerge and existing risks change. This includes reviewing the effectiveness of risk controls and treatments.

The College's Child Safety Risk Management Strategy (Policy No. 75) will be reviewed annually as part of the College's three-year review cycle.

Action Items

■ **Action:** Review the College's procedures for managing complaints, concerns and safety incidents and how they are analysed to identify causes and systemic failures to inform continuous improvement.

Action Plan Key:
■ In Place   ■ Partially in Place   ■ Not in Place

10.3 The organisation reports on the findings of relevant reviews to staff and volunteers, community and families and children and young people.

Northside Christian 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 will report on the outcomes of any relevant review to the College community.

Child Safe Standard 11

Child Safe Standard 11 – Policies and procedures document how the organisation is safe for children and young people.

In complying with Child Safe Standard 11, an organisation must, at a minimum, ensure:

11.1 Policies and procedures address all Child Safe Standards.

11.2 Policies and procedures are documented and easy to understand.

11.3 Best practice models and stakeholder consultation informs the development of policies and procedures.

11.4 Leaders champion and model compliance with policies and procedures.

11.5 Staff and volunteers understand and implement policies and procedures.

Source

Commission for Children and Young People. (2021, July 1). *New Child Safe Standards start in Victoria on 1 July 2022 to better protect children.* https://ccyp.vic.gov.au/news/new-child-safe-standards-start-in-victoria-on-1-july-2022-to-better-protect-children/

Ministerial Order No. 1359

Implementation of child safety practices

15.1 Schools and school boarding premises must have policies and procedures that document how schools and school boarding premises are safe for children, young people and students.

15.2 In complying with clause 15.1, the school governing authority or school boarding premises governing authority must, at a minimum, ensure:

   a. That the school or provider of school boarding services implements practices for a child-safe environment in accordance with this Order.

   b. That the policies and procedures and any other statements and records this Order requires:

   I.   address all Child Safe Standards;
   II. are understood and implemented by all relevant school staff, school boarding premises staff, the governing body and volunteers;
   III. are championed and modelled by leaders;
   IV. are documented and easy to understand; and
   V.   are informed by best practice models and stakeholder consultation.

Background

The current Child Safe Standards already require organisations to have policies and procedures that support implementation of child safe practices. Organisations already have to develop and implement a child safe policy or statement of commitment to child safety, a code of conduct and processes for responding to and reporting suspected child abuse.

The new Child Safe Standard 11 makes explicit requirements that all eleven of the Child Safe Standards are incorporated in the policies and procedures of organisations. Organisations will need to consider their current policies and procedures to ensure they reflect all of the new Standards. The new Child Safe Standard 11 also requires organisations to consider the accessibility of their policies and procedures to staff and volunteers and ensure they understand them. Policies and procedures must also be made accessible and able to be understood by children and young people. A broader range of material may need to be produced and shared in different formats, including child-friendly, plain language, accessible and translated versions to ensure everyone can understand child safe policies and procedures.

The development, implementation and review of policies and procedures should be done in consultation with relevant stakeholders, including children and young people. Policies and procedures should be accessible to all, championed by leaders, well understood by those they apply to and implemented effectively.

Source

Commission for Children and Young People. (2021b, July 1, p. 12). *What's changing?: Compare current and new Child Safe Standards.* https://ccyp.vic.gov.au/assets/resources/New-Standards/Whats-changing-comparison-of-current-and-new-Child-Safe-Standards.pdf

College Strategy

11.1 Policies and procedures address all Child Safe Standards.

Northside Christian College has developed a publicly accessible Child Safety Policy, Code of Conduct and Procedure (Policy No. 1), which is published on the College Website. This Child Safe Strategy Document also contains a public statement of commitment to child safety.

The Northside Christian College Committee of Management has approved the Child Safety Policy Code of Conduct and Procedure (Policy No. 1). The Child Safety Policy is an overarching document that provides key elements of the College's approach to becoming child safe. It sets out the processes for reporting and responding to concerns and allegations, and refers people to where these processes can be found. The Child Safe Policy also contains the Child Safety Code of Conduct, which provides specific guidelines on appropriate behaviour with children.

A number of key policy documents have been updated to ensure children's safety and wellbeing is a priority and that the College is implementing procedures compliant with legislation. The following policies have been developed and reviewed on a cycle of review:

- Child Safety Policy Code of Conduct and Procedure (Policy No. 1)
- Employment Policy (Policy No. 2)
- Staff Induction Policy (Policy No. 9)
- Staff Contact with Students Policy (Policy No. 11)
- Pastoral Care Policy (Policy No. 12)
- Grievance and Complaints Management Policy (Policy No. 14)
- Student Anti-Harassment and Bullying Policy (Policy No. 20)
- Supervision Policy (Policy No. 22)
- Sexual Harassment Policy (Policy No. 23)
- ICT and Internet Acceptable Use Policy (Policy No. 24)
- Inclusive Education Policy (Policy No. 27)
- Volunteers Policy (Policy No. 29)
- Police Checks Policy (Policy No. 31)
- Visitors to the College Policy (Policy No. 32)
- Behaviour Management Policy (Policy No. 36)
- Student Travel in Staff Cars Policy (Policy No. 38)
- Whistle Blower Policy (Policy No. 39)
- Working with Children Policy (Policy No. 40)
- Risk Management Policy (Policy No. 42)
- Reportable Conduct Policy (Policy No. 49)
- Social Media Policy (Policy No. 51)
- Restrictive Intervention Policy (Policy No. 64)
- Teaching Staff Contact with Students by Phone Procedure (Policy No. 66)
- Online Instrumental Music Procedures (Policy No. 68)
- Mobile Phone Policy (Policy No. 70)
- Cultural Safety Policy (Policy No. 74)
- Child Safety Risk Management Strategy (Policy No. 75)

11.2 Policies and procedures are documented and easy to understand.

The College has attempted to keep the policy documents as accessible as possible. The College website provides scope for some content to be accessible in multiple languages that reflects the diversity of the College community.

Extracts of some policy documents are published in the College diary for access by students, parents, and teachers.

11.3 Best practice models and stakeholder consultation informs the development of policies and procedures.

The College seeks feedback from families and communities on issues of child safety and wellbeing and incorporates this into their policies and practices. Feedback is gathered throughout a range of sources throughout the year.

Feedback is provided from the College community through multiple channels including:
- Email
- Student Support Group Meetings
- Information Evenings
- Parent Forums
- Surveys

College develops an ongoing improvement culture:
- Scope the problem
- Understand the needs
- Test whether policy and procedures meet those needs
- Gather feedback to support implementation

Discover needs

Develop policy

Impliment

Review

Additional feedback is gathered from students throughout the year via the Student Representative Council (SRC). The SRC provides a mechanism for students to share their feedback. Student leaders are encouraged to be the voice of their peers in this forum.

Staff satisfaction was regularly monitored through personal interviews with members of the College Executive Team. Staff meetings together with evaluation processes enable diverse opportunities for staff to express openly and collegially levels of satisfaction and dissatisfaction with areas of the College and specific operations. The College has also introduced a Wellbeing Committee.

Satisfaction amongst parents, teachers and students is continually measured through a variety of means. Feedback from parents is welcomed through formal and informal meetings and interviews. A number of surveys have been conducted within the College community during the past few years and the data collected has provided the basis for new projects and initiatives and also supports the justification of existing programs.

11.4 Leaders champion and model compliance with policies and procedures.

The Child Safety Policy, Code of Conduct and Procedures (Policy No. 1) document outlines the key roles and responsibilities for achieving the strategies.

Committee of Management

The Committee of Management of Northside Christian College has ultimate responsibility for the detection and prevention of child abuse and is responsible for ensuring that appropriate and effective internal control systems are in place. The Committee of Management is also responsible for ensuring that appropriate policies and procedures and a Child Safety Code of Conduct are in place.

Furthermore, the Committee of Management is responsible for:

- Establishing and reviewing policies on risk management.
- Advocating and promoting child rights, empowering and engaging children and young people in support of he College's Child Safety Policy and its expectations.
- Identifying and evaluating significant risks faced by Northside Christian College.
- Undertaking an annual audit of effectiveness of the control systems for managing risk.
- Setting the tone and influencing the expectations and culture in respect of risk management within the College.
- Monitoring the management protocols for significant risks in order to reduce the likelihood of unwelcome events/incidents.
- Satisfy itself that less significant risks are being actively managed and not ignored.
- Northside Christian College acknowledge that the Victorian Occupational Health and Safety Act 2004 highlights that it is incumbent on the employer to provide a workplace which is safe and without risk to health.

Principal

The Principal of Northside Christian College is responsible for:

- Dealing with and investigating reports of child abuse;
- Ensuring that all staff, contractors, and volunteers are aware of relevant laws, College policies and procedures, and the College's Child Safety Code of Conduct;
- Ensuring that all adults within the Northside Christian College community are aware of their obligation to report suspected sexual abuse of a child in accordance with these policies and procedures;
- Ensuring that all staff, contractors and volunteers are aware of their obligation to observe the Code of Conduct (particularly as it relates to child safety);
- Providing support for staff, contractors and volunteers in undertaking their child protection responsibilities.

Directors of Learning / Heads of School

All Directors of Learning / Heads of School must ensure that they:

- Promote child safety at all times;
- Assess the risk of child abuse within their area of control and eradicate / minimise any risk to the extent possible;
- Educate employees about the prevention and detection of child abuse; and
- Facilitate the reporting of any inappropriate behaviour or suspected abusive activity.

The Executive Team should be familiar with the types of abuse that might occur within their area of responsibility and be alert to any indications of such conduct.

All Staff / Volunteers / Contractors

All staff / volunteers / contractors share in the responsibility for the prevention and detection of child abuse, and must:

- Familiarise themselves with the relevant laws, the Code of Conduct, Northside Christian College's policy and procedures in relation to child protection, and comply with all requirements;
- Report any reasonable belief that a child's safety is at risk to the relevant authorities (such as the Police and / or the State- based child protection service) and fulfill their obligations as mandatory reporters;
- Report any suspicion that a child's safety may be at risk to their supervisor (or, if their supervisor is involved in the suspicion, to a responsible person at the College); and
- Provide an environment that is supportive of all childrens' emotional and physical safety.

Mr Jared Stocks
College Chaplain
chaplain@ncc.vic.edu.au

Mrs Heather Cootee
Child Safety Officer
Head of Student Wellbeing
wellbeing@ncc.vic.edu.au

Child Safety Officer

Northside Christian College has appointed Mrs Heather Cootee as the College's Child Safety Officer. She is a contact person for children, young people, parents, employees and volunteers to seek advice and support regarding the safety and wellbeing of children and young people within our College.

The role requires the officer to take action when child protection concerns are reported, including the provision of support to those within the community who have been affected, with an understanding and respect for cultural diversity.

Additionally, constant review of policies and procedures for responding to allegations and disclosures are required. Teaching and non-teaching staff will continue to be provided with advice and support regarding mandatory reporting obligations and procedures so that effective and safe communication skills can be used when responding to a disclosure.

The Child Safety Officer will also have the ability to identify and respond to child protection risks within the College in order to enhance our child protection culture.

The College's Child Protection Workers are Mrs Heather Cootee, Head of Student Wellbeing and Mr Jared Stocks, College Chaplain.

11.5 Staff and volunteers understand and implement policies and procedures.

Annual safety training is mandatory for all members of the College's Committee of Management, the Principal, staff, and anyone else otherwise engaged by the College in relation to student-connected work.

If the training or briefing session is recorded, a copy of the recording and/or module will be provided to the staff member, who must confirm they have viewed and completed the content. Otherwise, the College must arrange for the staff member to complete the training or briefing on an alternate date, as soon as practicable.

Copies of the Northside Christian College Child Safety Policy Code of Conduct and Procedure (Policy No. 1), supporting documents and resources are made available to students, parents, volunteers, and staff members on the College website.

Ongoing staff are reminded of the requirements and protocols of this policy on an annual basis, which may be in the form of periodic training and refresher sessions.

Details of the requirements and protocol are part of induction procedures for new staff to ensure that all staff members are aware of the policy, and acknowledge their commitment to comply with the policy.

Volunteers are provided with a comprehensive Volunteer Induction.

The Executive Team monitor the implementation of Child Safe and student wellbeing policies. The Principal reports progress back to the Committee of Management.

Action Plan

This Action Plan is designed to help Northside Christian College assess our progress in meeting the updated Child Safe Standards and becoming a stronger Child Safe organisation during 2022 and beyond. This Action Plan needs to be reviewed annually in order to ensure the College is embedding a culture of child safety.

Activity	In Place	Partially In Place	Not In Place	Action Required	Timeframe for Actions
Develop a public commitment to cultural safety of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children	■			The College has developed a Cultural Safety Policy (Policy No. 74). The College is committed to the implementation and ongoing review of this policy.	Ongoing
Policies and procedures describe commitment to respecting and valuing Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children	■			The College has developed a Cultural Safety Policy (Policy No. 74). The College is committed to the implementation and ongoing review of this policy. The Committee of Management and Executive Team will consider additional strategies to highlight our commitment to respecting and valuing Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children	Ongoing
Commitment to respecting and valuing Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children needs to be reflected in the College's Child Safety Code of Conduct and position descriptions		■		The College has highlighted our commitment to respecting and valuing Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander in the Child Safe Strategy document and other College policies. Position descriptions are being updated to reflect this commitment.	Ongoing
Implement strategies to ensure racism is identified and addressed at Northside. Ensure there is specific reference to racism in the Behaviour Management Policy.	■			The College Behaviour Management Policy (Policy No. 36) has been updated to specifically address racism. The College's commitment to developing and maintaining a culturally safe environment is also outlined in the Cultural Safety Policy (Policy No. 74)	Ongoing

Activity	In Place	Partially In Place	Not In Place	Action Required	Timeframe for Actions
Develop a plan of action setting out further steps to be taken by 1st July 2023 and gaps to be addressed.	■			The College's Child Safe Strategy document highlights actions the College is aiming to take. Additional documentation will be developed by the Executive Team.	Ongoing
Policies and procedures describe commitment to respecting and valuing Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children		■		The College has developed a Cultural Safety Policy (Policy No. 74). The College is committed to the implementation and ongoing review of this policy. The Committee of Management and Executive Team will consider additional strategies to highlight our commitment to respecting and valuing Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children	Ongoing
Commitment to respecting and valuing Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children needs to be reflected in the College's Child Safety Code of Conduct and position descriptions		■		The College has highlighted our commitment to respecting and valuing Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander in the Child Safe Strategy document and other College policies. Position descriptions are being updated to reflect this commitment.	Ongoing
Implement strategies to ensure racism is identified and addressed at Northside. Ensure there is specific reference to racism in the Behaviour Management Policy.	■			The College Behaviour Management Policy (Policy No. 36) has been updated to specifically address racism. The College's commitment to developing and maintaining a culturally safe environment is also outlined in the Cultural Safety Policy (Policy No. 74)	Ongoing
Develop a plan of action setting out further steps to be taken by 1st July 2023 and gaps to be addressed.		■		The College's Child Safe Strategy document highlights actions the College is aiming to take. Additional documentation will be developed by the Executive Team.	Ongoing

Activity	In Place	Partially In Place	Not In Place	Action Required	Timeframe for Actions
Review and update the College's Child Safe Strategy to ensure that child safety and wellbeing is embedded in the College's leadership, governance and culture and addresses the requirements of Ministerial Order 1359.	■			An updated Child Safe Strategy document has been prepared in collaboration with a diverse range of stakeholders. The implementation of this plan will be an ongoing endeavour of the College community under the leadership of the Committee of Management and the College's Executive Team.	Ongoing
Review and update the College's Child Safety Code of Conduct to address the requirements of Ministerial Order 1359.	■			The Code of Conduct was updated during May 2022 as part of the College's preparations for the New Child Safe Standards. The Code of Conduct will need to be approved by the College's Committee of Management.	Ongoing
Consult with the Committee of Management, teaching and non-teaching staff, volunteers, students, families, and the broader school community about the review of the College's Child Safety Code of Conduct.	■			Newsletter article published in June 2022 seeking community feedback.	Ongoing
Create child-friendly versions of the Child Safety and Wellbeing Policy and Child Safety Code of Conduct.		■		The College is collaborating with a graphic designer to update this resource during 2022. This resource will be updated as required.	
Review and update the College's child safety risk management strategy.	■			The College Principal is consulting with a range of stakeholders during Semester 1 2022 to review and update the College's child safety risk management strategy.	Ongoing

Activity	In Place	Partially In Place	Not In Place	Action Required	Timeframe for Actions
Form a working group with students and staff to support and promote child safety.			■	The Principal will consult with the Head of Student Wellbeing to develop a working group.	Ongoing
Develop a review schedule for the College's child safety risk management strategy.	■			The Principal has updated the Committee of Management Policy Planning Calendar to ensure this strategy is regularly reviewed by the College's Committee of Management.	Ongoing
Review the Records Management Policy (Policy No. 75) to ensure compliance with Ministerial Order No. 1359.	■			This policy document was reviewed an updated during September 2022 to ensure compliance with the Ministerial Order. The College will continue to review this policy on a three year review cycle.	Ongoing
Review and update the College's child safety poster.	■			The College is collaborating with a graphic designer to update this resource for 2022. This will be reviewed and updated regularly.	Ongoing
Document the sexual abuse prevention programs in place at Northside Christian College.		■		The College's Committee of Management is conducting a review and working closely with the Executive Team to update the College's Sex Education Scope and Sequence document. This resource will also document the sexual abuse prevention programs in place at the College.	Ongoing
Develop a plan to regularly review the sexual abuse prevention programs in place at Northside Christian College.		■		The College's Sex Education Program will be reviewed annually by the Executive Team.	Ongoing
Promote the College's updated Child Safe Strategy document to the College community in the school newsletter and on the College website.	■			The College's Child Safe Strategy document is widely promoted to the College community, including through the newsletter, website, and training.	Ongoing

Activity	In Place	Partially In Place	Not In Place	Action Required	Timeframe for Actions
Publish the Governance Structure of Northside Christian College in the College's Annual Report.	■			Additional details about the College's Governance can be found in the Annual Report for Northside Christian College. Please refer to: https://www.ncc. vic.edu .au/annual-report	Ongoing
Consider additional ways to support lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender and intersex children and young people to feel safe and respected at Northside Christian College, including the development of supporting policies and procedures.	■			The College is implementing a range of policies to support lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender and intersex children and young people to feel safe and respected at Northside Christian College. The College will continue to consider strategies to strengthen our approach to student safety and wellbeing.	Ongoing
Consider the development of inclusive policies to address the needs of Aboriginal children and young people.	■			The College developed a Cultural Safety Policy during 2022. The College will continue to explore scope for developing additional policies to support in developing a more inclusive school environment.	Ongoing
Develop additional strategies to take action against racism	■			The College Behaviour Management Policy (Policy No. 36) has been updated to specifically address racism. The College's commitment to developing and maintaining a culturally safe environment is also outlined in the Cultural Safety Policy (Policy No. 74)	Ongoing
Provide professional learning opportunities for staff to develop cultural competence.		■		The College has identified a range of resources to support staff in developing cultural competence. Several resources have been document in the Child Safe Strategy document. The Executive Team will explore ways to facilitate and document training for all staff.	Ongoing

Activity	In Place	Partially In Place	Not In Place	Action Required	Timeframe for Actions
Celebrate National Reconciliation Week		■		The College's Director of Teaching and Learning is investigating how the College can celebrate National Reconciliation Week in 2022.	Ongoing
Update the Employment Page on the College website to address section 10.2 on the Ministerial Order.	■			The College updated https://www. ncc.vic.edu .au/employment to ensure all applicants are made aware of the College's approach to Child Safety, including access to a range of resources.	Ongoing
Review procedures to ensure all staff training is documented on a register.	■			The Principal's Personal Assistant maintains a register documenting staff training.	Ongoing
Review training in place to support staff to assist students and families from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds.		■		The College has identified a range of resources to support staff to develop a deeper understanding about how they can assist students and families from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds. Resources have been documented in the Child Safe Strategy document.	Ongoing
Review and update the Online Volunteer Induction resources to ensure compliance with the updated Child Safe Standards.		■		Arrangements have been made to update the Volunteer Induction modules to reflect the new Child Safe Standards. The College will continue to update this resource as required.	Ongoing
Review and update the College's Child Safety briefing for staff on the College's Policy Portal.	■			The College has made arrangements to update this resource during 2022.	Ongoing

Activity	In Place	Partially In Place	Not In Place	Action Required	Timeframe for Actions
Review the College's policies to ensure that physical and online environments promote safety and wellbeing while minimising the opportunity for children, young people and students to be harmed.	■			The Principal in partnership with the Executive Team and the College's Committee of Management have commenced reviewing a range of policies.	Ongoing
Review the College's procedures for managing complaints, concerns and safety incidents and how they are analysed to identify causes and systemic failures to inform continuous improvement.	■			Further guidance has been provided in the Child Safety Risk Management Strategy.	Ongoing

Glossary and Acronyms

Aboriginal	The term 'Aboriginal' in this guide is inclusive of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples.
Child	The words 'child' and 'children' in this guide refers to children and young people up to the age of 18 years.

Child abuse	Child abuse has the same meaning as it has in the Child Wellbeing and Safety Act 2005. Child abuse includes:
	
	a. any act committed against a child involving -
	   I. (i) a sexual offence; or
	   II. (ii) an offence under section 49M(1) of the Crimes Act 1958; and
	
	b. the infliction, on a child, of –
	   I. (i) physical violence; or
	   II. (ii) serious emotional or psychological harm; and
	
	c. the serious neglect of a child.

Child connected work	child-connected work means: a. work authorised by the school governing authority and performed by an adult in a school environment while children are present or reasonably expected to be present; or b. for the purposes of a school boarding premises, work authorised by the provider of school boarding services in a school boarding premises environment while children are present or reasonably expected to be present.
Children from culturally and / or linguistically diverse backgrounds	child or young person who identifies as having particular cultural or linguistic affiliations by virtue of their place of birth, ancestry or ethnic origin, religion, preferred language or language spoken at home or because of their parents' identification on a similar basis.
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 safe organisation	In the context of the Child Safe Standards, a child safe organisation is one that meets the Child Safe Standards by proactively taking measures to protect children from abuse.
Cultural safety for Aboriginal children	The positive recognition and celebration of cultures. It is more than just the absence of racism or discrimination, and more than cultural awareness and cultural sensitivity.
Children with a disability	A disability can be any physical, sensory, neurological disability, acquired brain injury or intellectual disability or developmental delay that affects a child's ability to undertake everyday activities. A disability can occur at any time in life. Children can be born with a disability or acquire a disability suddenly through an injury or illness. Some disabilities may be obvious while others are hidden.
CYCP	CYCP means the Commission for Children and Young People.

Glossary and Acronyms continued...

Mandatory Reporter	Mandatory reporter has the meaning given to it by section 182 of the CYF Act. It includes but is not limited to registered teachers (including early childhood teachers), staff with post-secondary qualifications employed in the care, education or minding of children, school principals, registered nurses, students in training to become teachers (who have been granted permission to teach under relevant legislation), registered psychologists, out of home care workers, early childhood workers and any other person referred to in section 182 of the CYF Act.
Grooming	Grooming is defined in the Crimes Act 1958 (Vic) and refers to communication, by words or conduct, between an adult and a child with the intention of facilitating the commission of a sexual offence involving the child. Grooming may be identified by attempts being made at establishing an intimate relationship with, befriending or influencing a child (or, in some circumstances, members of the child's family). In this respect, grooming involves psychological manipulation that is usually very subtle, drawn out, calculated, controlling and premeditated (Victorian Parliamentary Inquiry 2013).
Organisation	The *Child Safety and Wellbeing Act 2005* (the Act) will provide that the standards apply to 'applicable entities', which are defined in the Act as: • an incorporated body or association • an unincorporated body or association (however structured) • an individual who carries on a business and engages contractors, employees or volunteers to assist in the business in providing services or facilities.
Reportable Conduct	Reportable conduct means: • A sexual offence committed against, with or in the presence of, a child. • Sexual misconduct, committed against, with or in the presence, of a child. • Physical violence committed 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. In the above definition, 'child' has the meaning given in the CWS Act.
School environment	School environment means any of the following physical, online or virtual places, used during or outside school hours: a. a campus of the school; b. 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 c. 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; — approved homestay accommodation; —delivery of education and training such as registered training organisations, TAFEs, non-school senior secondary providers or another school; or — sporting events, excursions, competitions or other events.

Student-connected work	Student-connected work means work authorised by the School and performed by an adult in a school environment while children or young people are present or reasonably expected to be present.
Volunteer	Volunteer means 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.
VIT	VIT means the Victorian Institute of Teaching.
VRQA	VRQA means the Victorian Registration & Qualifications Authority.
WWCC	WWCC means Working with Children Check.

For further explanation or definitions please refer Ministerial Order No. 1359.

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Document History

Drafted: 2nd June 2017

Northside Christian College developed a draft Child Safe Strategy document in response to the Victorian Child Safe Standards and Ministerial Order No. 870.

Updated: 11th October 2017

Updated the Action Plan in the document to reflect the College's implementation of the Ministerial Order and the Child Safe Standards.

Updated: 8th November 2017

Reference to Victoria's Reportable Conduct Scheme.

Updated: 31st August 2021

Re-written to align with updated Child Safe Standards.

Updated: 10th May 2022

Following Principal attendance at a Moores Legal Briefing.

Updated: 29th June 2022

Following Principal attendance at a VRQA Child Safe Standards Briefing.

Updated: 19th August 2022

Updated to reflect consultation with staff at Northside Christian College.

Updated: 13th September 2022

Document updated to reflect consultation and collaboration with the College's Committee of Management.

Updated: 24th November 2022

The document was updated after the College's Committee of Management provided additional feedback.

Updated: 1st December 2022

The Principal consulted with the College's Parents and Friends Committee about the updated Child Safe Standards and the College's new Child Safe Strategy document.

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