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Child Safety Procedure

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Purpose

All students enrolled at **Monivae College** have the right to feel safe and be safe. The wellbeing of children in our care will always be our first priority and we do not and will not tolerate child abuse. We aim to create a child-safe and child-friendly environment where children are free to enjoy life to the full without any concern for their safety. There is particular attention paid to the most vulnerable children, including Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children, children from culturally and/or linguistically diverse backgrounds, and children with a disability.

Our commitment to our students

- (a) We commit to the safety and wellbeing of all children and young people enrolled in our school.
- (b) We commit to providing children and young people with positive and nurturing experiences.
- (c) We commit to listening to children and young people and empowering them by taking their views seriously and addressing any concerns that they raise with us.
- (d) We commit to taking action to ensure that children and young people are protected from abuse or harm.

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- (e) We commit to teaching children and young people the necessary skills and knowledge to understand and maintain their personal safety and wellbeing.
- (f) We commit to seeking input and feedback from students regarding the creation of a safe school environment.

Our commitment to parents and carers

- (a) We commit to communicating honestly and openly with parents and carers about the wellbeing and safety of their children.
- (b) We commit to engaging with, and listening to, the views of parents and carers about our child-safety practice, policies and procedures.
- (c) We commit to transparency in our decision-making with parents and carers where it will not compromise the safety of children or young people.
- (d) We commit to acknowledging the cultural diversity of students and families and being sensitive to how this may impact on student safety issues.
- (e) We commit to continuously reviewing and improving our systems to protect children from abuse.

Our commitment to our school staff (school employees, volunteers, contractors and clergy)

- (a) We commit to providing all Monivae College staff with the necessary support to enable them to fulfil their roles. This will include regular and appropriate learning opportunities.
- (b) We commit to providing regular opportunities to clarify and confirm policy and procedures in relation to child safety and young people’s protection and wellbeing. This will include annual training in the principles and intent of the Child Safety Policy and Child Safety Code of Conduct, and staff responsibilities to report concerns.
- (c) We commit to listening to all concerns voiced by Monivae College staff, clergy, volunteers, and contractors about keeping children and young people safe from harm.
- (d) We commit to providing opportunities for Monivae College school employees, volunteers, contractors and clergy to receive formal debriefing and counselling arising from incidents of the abuse of a child or young person.

Scope

This procedure applies to school staff, including school employees, volunteers, contractors and clergy.

Legislative Context

- *Children, Youth and Families Act 2005 (Vic)*
- *Child Wellbeing and Safety Act 2005 (Vic)* and the Child Safe Standards (Vic)
- *Crimes Act 1958 (Vic)*
- *Education and Training Reform Act 2006 (Vic.)*
- *Equal Opportunity Act 2010 (Vic.)*
- *Privacy Act 1988 (Cth)*
- VRQA Guidelines to Minimum Standards 2015
- *Working with Children Act 2005 (Vic)*

Definitions

A complete list of definitions relevant to this procedure is contained within the Child Safety Policy.

Actions

Responsibilities and Organisational Arrangements

Everyone employed or volunteering at Monivae College has a responsibility to understand the important and specific role he/she plays individually and collectively to ensure that the wellbeing and safety of all students is at the forefront of all they do and every decision they make.

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The school has allocated roles and responsibilities for child safety as follows.

Responsibilities of School Leadership

The principal, the school governing authority and school leaders at Monivae College recognise their particular responsibility to ensure the development of preventative and proactive strategies that promote a culture of openness, awareness of and shared responsibility for child safety.

Responsibilities include:

- creating an environment for children and young people to be safe and to feel safe
- upholding high principles and standards for all staff, clergy, volunteers, and contractors
- promoting models of behaviour between adults and children and young people based on mutual respect and consideration
- ensuring thorough and rigorous practices are applied in the recruitment, screening and ongoing professional learning of staff
- ensuring that school personnel have regular and appropriate learning to develop their knowledge of, openness to and ability to address child safety matters
- providing regular opportunities to clarify and confirm legislative obligations, policy and procedures in relation to child and young people's protection and wellbeing
- ensuring the school meets the specific requirements of the Victorian Child Safe Standards as set out in [Ministerial Order No. 870](#).
- ensuring the school takes specific action to protect children from abuse in line with the three new criminal offences introduced under the Crimes Act 1958 (Vic.) and in line with the [PROTECT: Identifying and responding to all forms of abuse in Victorian schools](#).

Responsibilities of School Staff

Responsibilities of school staff (school employees, volunteers, contractors and clergy) include:

- treating children and young people with dignity and respect, acting with propriety, providing a duty of care, and protecting children and young people in their care
- following the legislative and internal school processes in the course of their work, if they form a reasonable belief that a child or young person has been or is being abused or neglected
- providing a physically and psychologically safe environment where the wellbeing of children and young people is nurtured
- undertaking regular training and education in order to understand their individual responsibilities in relation to child safety and the wellbeing of children and young people
- assisting children and young people to develop positive, responsible and caring attitudes and behaviours which recognise the rights of all people to be safe and free from abuse
- following the school's Child Safety Code of Conduct.

Organisational Arrangements

Monivae College commits to providing a safe and nurturing culture for all children and young people in our schools through:

1. Upholding the primacy of the safety and wellbeing of children and young people.
2. Empowering families, children, young people and staff to have a voice and raise concerns.
3. Implementing rigorous risk management and employment practices

The School governing authority will:

- a) develop strategies to embed a culture of child safety at the school;
- b) allocate roles and responsibilities for achieving the strategies;
- c) inform the school community about the strategies, and allocated roles and responsibilities;
- d) put the strategies into practice, and inform the school community about these practices; and
- e) periodically review the effectiveness of the strategies put into practice and, if considered appropriate, revise those strategies

The Deputy Principal assumes the role of Child Protection Officer at the school.

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Expectation of our School Staff – Child Safety Code of Conduct

At Monivae College community, we expect school employees, volunteers, contractors and clergy to proactively ensure the safety of students at all times and to take appropriate action if there are concerns about the safety of any child at the school.

All school staff must remain familiar with the relevant laws, the code of conduct, and policies and procedures in relation to child protection and to comply with all requirements.

We have developed a Child Safety Code of Conduct which recognises the critical role that school staff play in protecting the students in our care and establishes clear expectations of school employees, volunteers, contractors and clergy for appropriate behaviour with children in order to safeguard them against abuse and or neglect.

Our Code also protects school staff through clarification of acceptable and unacceptable behaviour.

Student Safety and Participation

At Monivae College we actively encourage all students to openly express their views and feel comfortable about giving voice to the things that are important to them.

We teach students about what they can do if they feel unsafe and enable them to understand, identify, discuss and report on child safety. We listen to and act on any concerns students, or their parents or carers, raise with us.

Monivae College currently provides a range of programs such as Pastoral Care, anti-bullying, cyber safety, sexuality and respectful relationships, retreats, Learning support programs and Positive Education.

Support is also provided through Counselling Services and partnerships with outside providers such as Headspace.

The school is considering a program “Keeping Them Safe” that is use by Catholic Education SA.

Reporting and Responding

Our school records any child safety complaints, disclosures or breaches of the Child Safety Code of Conduct and stores the records in accordance with security and privacy requirements. Our school complies with legal obligations that relate to managing the risk of child abuse under the *Children, Youth and Families Act 2005* (Vic.), the *Crimes Act 1958* (Vic.) and the recommendations of the [Betrayal of Trust](#) report.

Child protection reporting obligations fall under separate pieces of legislation with differing reporting requirements.

Our school’s Child Protection – Reporting Policy sets out the actions required under the relevant legislation when there is a reasonable belief that a child at our school is in need of protection or a criminal offence has been committed and provides guidance and procedures on how to make a report.

Our policy assists staff, volunteers and families to:

- identify the indicators of a child or young person who may be in need of protection
- understand how a ‘reasonable belief’ is formed
- make a report of a child or young person who may be in need of protection
- comply with mandatory reporting obligations under child protection law and their legal obligations relating to criminal child abuse and grooming under criminal law.

Our school has also established internal processes to ensure that appropriate action is taken to respond to concerns about the wellbeing and/or safety of a student.

Our complaints and disclosure processes are outlined and detailed in our:

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- Complaints and Grievances Policy and Procedures
- Pastoral Care and Wellbeing Policy and Procedures

Screening and Recruitment of School Staff

Monivae College will apply thorough and rigorous screening processes in the recruitment of employees and volunteers involved in child-connected work. Our commitment to child safety and our screening requirements are included in all advertisements for such employee, contractor and volunteer positions, and all applicants are provided with copies of the school’s Child Safety Code of Conduct and the Child Safety Policy.

When recruiting and selecting employees, contractors and volunteers involved in child-connected work, we make all reasonable efforts to:

- confirm the applicant’s Working with Children Check and National Police Check status and/or professional registration (as relevant)
- obtain proof of personal identity and any professional or other qualifications
- verify the applicant’s history of work involving children
- obtain references that address the applicant’s suitability for the job and working with children.

We have processes for monitoring and assessing the continuing suitability of school staff to work with children, including regular reviews of the status of Working with Children Checks and staff professional registration requirements such as Victorian Institute of Teaching (VIT) registration.

Child Safety – Education and Training for School Staff

Monivae College provides employees, volunteers and clergy with regular and appropriate opportunities to develop their knowledge of, openness to and ability to address child safety matters.

This includes induction, ongoing training and professional learning to ensure that everyone understands their professional and legal obligations and responsibilities, and the procedures for reporting suspicion of child abuse and neglect.

Risk Management

At Monivae College we are committed to proactively and systematically identifying and assessing risks to student safety across our whole school environment and reducing or eliminating (where possible) all potential sources of harm.

We document, implement, monitor and periodically review our risk management strategies for child safety and ensure that the strategies change as needed and as new risks arise.

Breach of Policy

Where an **employee** is suspected of breaching any obligation, duty or responsibility within this Policy, Monivae College may start the process under clause 13 of the *Victorian Catholic Education Multi Enterprise Agreement 2013* (VCEMEA) for managing employment concerns. This may result in disciplinary consequences.

Where the **principal** is suspected of breaching any obligation, duty or responsibility within this policy, the concerned party is advised to contact the parish priest or the employer. Relevant notification should also be made to Catholic Education Melbourne (Office of Professional Conduct, Ethics and Investigation).

Where any **other member of the school community** is suspected of breaching any obligation, duty or responsibility within this policy, the school is to take appropriate action, including in accordance with: **Child Protection – Reporting Obligations, Complaints Resolution Policy** and/or contact Catholic Education Melbourne (Office of Professional Conduct, Ethics and Investigation).

Monitoring and Review

At Monivae College we are committed to continuous improvement of our child safety systems and practices.

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We intend this policy to be a dynamic document that will be regularly reviewed to ensure it is working in practice and updated to accommodate changes in legislation or circumstance.

Supporting Documents

- Child Safety Procedure
- Child Protection – Reporting Obligations
- Risk Management Policy
- Pastoral Care and Wellbeing Policy
- Digital Technology Policy
- Duty of Care Policy
- Complaints and Grievances Policy
- Professional Learning – Performance and Development Culture
- Code of Conduct
- Reducing or Removing the Risks of Child Abuse

References

- BDSAC Child Protection Policy 2017
- BDSAC Complaints Policy 2017
- BDSAC Pastoral Care Policy 2016
- BDSAC Guidelines for Behaviour Support 2016
- CEOB Police and Department of Health and Human Services Interview Protocols March 2017
- [CECV Whole School Approaches to Supporting Positive Behaviour](#)
- [Policy 2.19: Child Protection – Reporting Obligations](#)
- Catholic Education Commission of Victoria Ltd (CECV) 2016, [Commitment Statement to Child Safety: A safe and nurturing culture for all children and young people in Catholic schools](#).
- Catholic Education Commission of Victoria Ltd (CECV) 2013, [Victorian Catholic Education Multi Enterprise Agreement 2013](#), CECV.
- Congregation for Catholic Education 1997, [The Catholic School on the Threshold of the Third Millennium](#), Vatican.
- Department of Education, 2016, [PROTECT: Identifying and responding to all forms of abuse in Victorian schools](#)
- Safe Schools Hub 2014, [National Safe Schools Framework Glossary](#), Australian Government Department of Education and Training.
- State of Victoria 2016, [Child Safe Standards – Managing the Risk of Child Abuse in Schools: Ministerial Order No. 870](#), Education & Training Reform Act 2006, Victorian Government Gazette No. S2.
- Victorian Government Department of Justice 2016, [Betrayal of Trust Implementation](#).
- Parliament of Victoria, Family and Community Development Committee, 2013, [Betrayal of Trust](#)

Responsibility

- The Board Directors (*as the Approval Authority*) are responsible for monitoring the implementation, outcomes and scheduled review of this procedure.
- The Deputy Principal (*as the Policy Sponsor*) is responsible for maintaining the content of this procedure as delegated by the above title.
- The Compliance and Risk Manager is responsible for the administration support for the maintenance of this procedure as directed by the above title.

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Promulgation

The Child Safety Procedure will be communicated throughout the School community in the form of:

1. Policies section of the Monivae website to alert the School-wide community of the approved Policy;
2. distribution of e-mails to all staff.

Implementation

The Child Safety Procedure will be implemented throughout the School via:

1. Policies section of SIMON knowledge banks to alert the School-wide community of the approved Policy;
2. Staff briefing sessions
3. Training sessions

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