



PURPOSE

The Child Safe Policy sets out Portland Secondary College's whole school approach to creating a child safe organisation where children and young people are safe and feel safe and provides the framework to embed and maintain a culture of 'zero tolerance' to child abuse. This policy shall comply with the requirements of the Education and Training Reform Act 2006 and Ministerial Order 870.

SCOPE

This policy applies to all staff, volunteers, contractors' whether or not they work in direct contact with children or young people and will be across a range of school forums eg. Camps, online technology and outside of school hours.

STATEMENT OF COMMITMENT AND PRINCIPLES

Portland Secondary College (Must Street & Victoria Parade Campuses) is committed to promoting and protecting the interests and safety of children. We have a zero tolerance for child abuse. Everyone working at Portland Secondary College (Must Street & Victoria Parade Campuses) is responsible for the care and protection of children and reporting information about child abuse. This school explicitly prohibits corporal punishment.

Portland Secondary College (Must Street & Victoria Parade Campuses) recognises the prevalence and impact of gender based discrimination and harassment and is committed to building a school culture that challenges the stereotypes, power differences and social norms that foster gender inequality. Portland Secondary College (Must Street & Victoria Parade Campuses) is committed to treating all members of the school community with dignity and respect regardless of their gender.

Portland Secondary College promotes the cultural safety of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children and children from culturally and/or linguistically diverse backgrounds and the safety of children who are vulnerable or have a disability.

DEFINITIONS

Child abuse includes:

- Any act committed against a child involving:
 - A sexual offence, or
 - An offence under section 49B(2) of the Crimes Act 1958 (grooming)
- The infliction, on a child, of:
 - Physical violence
 - Serious emotional or psychological harm
 - Serious neglect of a child

Child-connected work – means work authorised by the school governing authority and performed by an adult in a school environment while children are present or reasonable expected to be present.

Child Safety – encompasses 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 incidents or allegations of child abuse.



School environment – means any physical or virtual place made available or authorised by the school governing authority for use by a child during or outside school hours, including:

- A campus of the school
- Online school environments (including email and intranet systems)
- Other locations provided by the school for a child's use (including, without limitation, locations used for school camps, sporting events, excursions, competitions, and other events)

School Staff – an individual working in a school environment who is:

- Directly engaged or employed by a school governing authority
- A volunteer or a contracted service provider (whether or not a body corporate or any other person is an intermediary)
- A minister of religion

POLICY AND PROCEDURES

Policies and procedures outlining Portland Secondary College's approach to the Child Safe Standards are outlined below:

- Child Safety Officer
- Listening to Children
- Welfare and Wellbeing of the school community
- Acceptable/unacceptable behaviours
- Employment of New Personnel
- Risk Management
- Reporting
- Privacy
- Policy Evaluation and Review

Child Safety Officer

Portland Secondary College (Must Street & Victoria Parade Campuses) shall appoint an individual Child Safety Officer with specified 'child-safe' duties in their job description which includes:

- Being the designated person to hear or be informed about all allegations or concerns
- Providing support to other personnel
- Record and respond consistently and in line with Portland Secondary College's legal requirements and policies and procedures.

Listening to Children

The College has developed a safe, inclusive and supportive environment that involves and communicates with children, young people and their parents/carers. We encourage child and parent/carer involvement and engagement that informs safe school operations and builds the capability of children and parents/carers to understand their rights and their responsibilities.

When the College is gathering information in relation to a complaint about alleged misconduct with, or abuse of, a child the school will listen to the complainant's account of things and take them seriously, check understanding and keep the child (or their parent/carers) informed about progress.



Welfare and Wellbeing of the School Community

Portland Secondary College (Must Street & Victoria Parade Campuses) places a strong emphasis on the Welfare and Wellbeing of its school community. Its Mission Statement is to develop articulate, respectful and resourceful young people able to contribute positively to the global community. College Council, in conjunction with the College staff, believe students should be challenged and extended, offered success in worthwhile learning and given the chance to take increasing responsibility for their own education. The College promotes excellence in learning, positive relationships and personal growth. Our purpose is underpinned by the values of respect, success, resilience and creativity.

All members of the school community will conduct themselves in a lawful, ethical, safe and responsible manner that recognises and respects the rights of others. Every member of the school community has a right to fully participate in an educational environment that is safe, supportive and inclusive. Everyone deserves to be treated with respect and dignity.

This shall be accomplished through:

- Providing quality educational experiences and teaching students how to be responsible for their own learning and behaviour
- Maximising student engagement by promoting learning in a stimulating, enjoyable, student centred context where risk taking and emotional resilience is actively encouraged
- Valuing the professionalism of staff to respond proactively to the learning and behavioural needs of students
- Developing a learning environment where students are taught positive learning behaviours that lead to academic and social and emotional success
- Fostering a strong sense of community where parents, teachers and students form productive partnerships and forge a spirit of responsibility, respect, tolerance and concern for each other.

Acceptable/Unacceptable Behaviours

When undertaking child-connected work the adult/child relationship shall be professional at all times. An adult's response to a child's behaviour or circumstance shall be commensurate with the child's age and vulnerability and the adult's responsibility for the care, safety and welfare of the child. An adult shall not be alone with a child unless there is a line of sight to other adults. An adult shall not initiate or seek physical contact with children outside school.

An unambiguous, widely disseminated and supported by supervision, professional development and training Code of Conduct establishing clear behavioural expectations and boundaries and acceptable and unacceptable adult/child relationships and behaviour for personnel interacting with children has been established. The Victorian Institute of Teaching (VIT) *Victorian Teaching Profession Codes of Conduct and Ethics* provides clarity regarding professional behaviour expected of teachers at all times. The code specifies behaviour unacceptable for a professional relationship between a teacher and a student.

'Teachers are always in a professional relationship with the students in their school, whether at school or not.'



All staff, volunteers and board/school council members are responsible for supporting the safety of children by:

- adhering to the school's child safe policy and upholding the school's statement of commitment to child safety at all times
- taking all reasonable steps to protect children from abuse
- treating everyone in the school community with respect
- listening and responding to the views and concerns of children, particularly if they are telling you that they or another child has been abused or that they are worried about their safety/the safety of another child
- promoting the cultural safety, participation and empowerment of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children
- promoting the cultural safety, participation and empowerment of children with culturally and/or linguistically diverse backgrounds
- promoting the safety, participation and empowerment of children with a disability
- ensuring as far as practicable that adults are not alone with a child
- reporting any allegations of child abuse to the school's leadership or child safety officer
- understanding and complying with all reporting obligations as they relate to mandatory reporting and reporting under the *Crimes Act 1958*
- reporting any child safety concerns to the school's leadership or child safety officer
- if an allegation of child abuse is made, ensuring as quickly as possible that the child(ren) are safe
- reporting to the Victorian Institute of Teaching any charges, committals for trial or convictions in relation to a sexual offence by a registered teacher, or certain allegations or concerns about a registered teacher.

Unacceptable behaviours

Staff and volunteers must not:

- ignore or disregard any suspected or disclosed child abuse
- develop any 'special' relationships with children that could be seen as favouritism
- exhibit behaviours with children which may be construed as unnecessarily physical
- put children at risk of abuse
- initiate unnecessary physical contact with children or do things of a personal nature that a child can do for themselves, such as toileting or changing clothes
- engage in open discussions of a mature or adult nature in the presence of children
- use inappropriate language in the presence of children
- express personal views on cultures, race or sexuality in the presence of children
- discriminate against any child, including because of age, gender, race, culture, vulnerability, sexuality, ethnicity or disability
- have contact with a child or their family outside of school without the school's leadership or child safety officer's knowledge and/or consent or the school governing authority's approval (for example, unauthorised after hours tutoring, private instrumental/other lessons or sport coaching). Accidental contact, such as seeing people in the street, is appropriate.



- have any online contact with a child (including by social media, email, instant messaging etc) or their family (unless necessary eg by providing families with e-newsletters or assisting students with their school work)
- use any personal communication channels/device such as a personal email account
- exchange personal contact details such as phone number, social networking sites or email addresses
- photograph or video a child without the consent of the parent or guardians
- work with children whilst under the influence of alcohol or illegal drugs

Employment of New Personnel

Portland Secondary College (Must Street & Victoria Parade Campuses) applies best practice standards in the recruitment and screening of staff, and shall take all reasonable steps to ensure that it engages the most suitable and appropriate people to work with children. We shall ensure that staff induction, education and training programs are a vital part of our commitment to safeguarding children and young people from abuse and neglect. All prospective staff and volunteers are required to undergo a National Criminal History Records check and maintain a valid Working with Children Check.

Job position descriptions will reflect the child safe standards and all applicants will be informed about the College's child safety practices including the College's Code of Conduct. Portland Secondary College requires all workers/volunteers to pass through the organisation's recruitment and screening processes prior to commencing their engagement with the College.

Persons applying for a role as a teacher with the College must be registered with the Victorian Institute of Teaching. Persons applying for other roles in the College must hold a valid Working with Children's Check. Copies of these documents must be provided,

Thorough reference checks as per the approved internal procedure will be undertaken. This includes checking applicants' motivation to work with children, relevant and verifiable child-related work experience, understanding of professional boundaries, and communication skills. Copies of academic transcripts will be requested when appropriate and the applicant will be subject to a background search using Facebook, Google or LinkedIn. Those providing referee reports will be questioned about their relationship with the applicant, whether they have directly supervised the applicant's work with children and whether they have any concerns about the applicant working directly with children or adhering to the College's Code of Conduct. Checks should also question the applicant's understanding and respect for Aboriginal culture, cultural and linguistic diversity and the needs of children with a disability.

Once engaged, workers/volunteers must review and acknowledge their understanding of this Policy.

The school's approach to human resources practice that ensure child safety can be found on our website. <http://www.portlandsc.vic.edu.au/>

Risk Management

The College believes the wellbeing of children and young people is paramount, and is vigilant in ensuring proper risk management processes. The College recognises there are potential risks to children and young people and will take a risk management approach by undertaking preventative measures.



The College will have a risk and compliance sub-committee comprised of the Student Welfare Co-ordinator, Principal and two Assistant Principals, committed to identify risks of child abuse. Risk and compliance sub-committee members will receive regular training in relation to child safety.

Reporting

The College has clear expectations for staff and volunteers in making a report about a child or young person who may be in need of protection. Immediate action should include reporting their concerns to the Student Welfare Co-ordinator, DHHS Child Protection or other appropriate agency, or police and notifying the Principal of their concerns and the reasons for those concerns. The school will take immediate action to respond to a complaint and an internal investigation may be conducted to ensure maximum risk management has been maintained. The College actively supports, encourages and enables school staff, parents and children to understand, identify, discuss and report child abuse and will support and assist children who disclose child abuse or are otherwise linked to suspected child abuse.

The College's policy and procedures for reporting a child safety concern or complaint can be found on the website <http://www.portlandsc.vic.edu.au/> and in the Mandatory Reporting Policy.

Confidentiality and Privacy

This school collects, uses and discloses information about particular children and their families in accordance with Victorian privacy law. The principles regulating the collection, use and storage of information is included in the School Privacy Policy.

FURTHER INFORMATION AND RESOURCES

- [Mandatory Reporting Policy.docx](#)
- [Child Safe Code of Conduct](#)

POLICY EVALUATION AND REVIEW

DATE	VERSION	RATIFIED BY	NEXT REVIEW
Oct 2018	2	Portland Secondary College School Council	Sept 2020