



## WERRIBEE SECONDARY COLLEGE

### Child Safe Policy- School Statement

Status: Approved

Date: 07/19

Review by: 07/22

Author: Curriculum and Management Committee  
**WERRIBEE SECONDARY COLLEGE**  
**DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION**

# WERRIBEE SECONDARY COLLEGE

## GUIDING STATEMENT

### **Our Motto**

Live worthily

### **Our Vision**

Werribee Secondary College is a leader in international education in the Victorian state education system. We implement the best quality educational practices evident throughout Australia and internationally.

The Werribee Secondary College community “lives worthily”. We are adaptable life-long learners, who are confident, creative and resilient individuals, empowered to shape the world in which we live.

### **Our Mission**

At Werribee Secondary College we strive for success in students’ chosen endeavours.

The College community provides a safe and caring environment where each student is valued. We celebrate achievements, success and growth for all students. Our programmes equip students with the skills, knowledge and attitudes needed for the dynamic world after secondary education.

College leaders, teachers and support staff adopt evidence-based best practice to generate a progressive 21st century educational setting. We enhance learning and develop digital literacy through the purposeful use of emerging technology. With a focus on realising optimal outcomes for learners, staff commit to continuous improvement through ongoing targeted professional development, peer collaboration and reflection.

At Werribee Secondary College we nurture the values of respect, cooperation, honesty, integrity, confidence, perseverance, resilience and responsibility. Driven by these ideals, the College community embraces cultural and social diversity. Students develop a strong sense of personal identity and global citizenship, enabling different cultural groups to interact, learn from each other and grow together.

## Purpose

The child safety policy sets out the school's approach to creating a child safe organisation where children and young people are safe and feel safe; and provides the policy framework for the school's approach to the Child Safe Standards."

This policy is intended to empower children who are vital and active participants in our school. We involve them when making decisions, especially about matters that directly affect them. We listen to their views and respect what they have to say.

We promote diversity and tolerance in our school, and people from all walks of life and cultural backgrounds are welcome. In particular, we:

- promote the cultural safety, participation and empowerment of Aboriginal children
- promote the cultural safety, participation and empowerment of children from culturally and/or linguistically diverse backgrounds
- ensure that children with a disability are safe and can participate equally.

## Scope

This policy guides our staff and volunteers on how to behave with children in our school.

All of our staff and volunteers must agree to abide by our Code of Conduct which specifies the standards of conduct required when working with children. All staff and volunteers, as well as children and their families, are given the opportunity to contribute to the development of the Code of Conduct.

### **Our commitment to child safety**

Werribee Secondary College is committed to child safety.

We want children to be safe, happy and empowered. We support and respect all children, as well as our staff and volunteers.

We are committed to the safety, participation and empowerment of all children.

We have zero tolerance of child abuse, and all allegations and safety concerns will be treated very seriously and consistently with our robust policies and procedures.

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

Werribee Secondary College is committed to preventing child abuse and identifying risks early, and removing and reducing these risks.

The College has robust human resources and recruitment practices for all staff and volunteers.

The College is committed to regularly training and educating our staff and volunteers on child abuse risks.

We support and respect all children, as well as our staff and volunteers. We are committed to the cultural safety of Aboriginal children, the cultural safety of children from a culturally and/or linguistically diverse backgrounds, and to providing a safe environment for children with a disability.

We have specific policies, procedures and training in place that support our leadership team, staff and volunteers to achieve these commitments.

If you believe a child is at immediate risk of abuse phone 000.

## Policy and procedures

Policies and procedures outlining school's approach to the Child Safe Standards are outlined below

### Training and supervision

Training and education is important to ensure that everyone in our organisation understands that child safety is everyone's responsibility.

Our school culture aims for all staff and volunteers (in addition to parents/carers and children) to feel confident and comfortable in discussing any allegations of child abuse or child safety concerns. We train our staff and volunteers to identify, assess, and minimise risks of child abuse and to detect potential signs of child abuse.

School leaders and managers will ensure that each person understands their role, responsibilities and behaviour expected in protecting children and young people from abuse and neglect. Staff will comply with the school's Code of Conduct

We also support our staff and volunteers through ongoing supervision to: develop their skills to protect children from abuse; and promote the cultural safety of Aboriginal children, the cultural safety of children from linguistically and/or diverse backgrounds, and the safety of children with a disability.

New employees and volunteers will be supervised regularly to ensure they understand our school's commitment to child safety and that everyone has a role to play in protecting children from abuse, as well as checking that their behaviour towards children is safe and appropriate (please refer to the College's Child Safe Code of Conduct (2019) to understand appropriate behaviour further). Any inappropriate behaviour will be reported through appropriate channels, including the Student Wellbeing Team, Principal Class, the Department of Health and Human Services and Victoria Police, depending on the severity and urgency of the matter.

### Recruitment

At Werribee Secondary College we take all reasonable steps to employ skilled people to work with children. We develop selection criteria and advertisements which clearly demonstrate our commitment to child safety and an awareness of our social and legislative responsibilities. The College understands that when recruiting staff and volunteers we have ethical as well as legislative obligations.

All people engaged in child-related work, including volunteers, are required to hold a Working with Children Check and to provide evidence of this Check. Please see the [Working with Children Check](http://www.workingwithchildren.vic.gov.au) website <[www.workingwithchildren.vic.gov.au](http://www.workingwithchildren.vic.gov.au)> for further information

We employ teachers who are registered with the Victorian Institute of Teaching; registration carries a requirement for a national criminal records check.

For other staff we carry out reference checks and police record checks to ensure that we are recruiting the right people.

Police record checks are used only for the purposes of recruitment and are discarded after the recruitment process is complete. We retain our own records (but not the actual criminal record) if an applicant's criminal history affected our decision making process.

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

### Fair procedures for personnel

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

We record all allegations of abuse and safety concerns using our incident reporting form<sup>1</sup>, including investigation updates. All records are securely stored.

If an allegation of abuse or a safety concern is raised, we provide updates to children and families on progress and any actions we as an organisation take.

### Privacy

All personal information considered or recorded will respect the privacy of the individuals involved, whether they be staff, volunteers, parents or children, unless there is a risk to someone's safety. We have safeguards and practices in place to ensure any personal information is protected. Everyone is entitled to know how this information is recorded, what will be done with it, and who will have access to it. For further information in relation to Privacy Legislation, please refer to

[https://www.cdpd.vic.gov.au/images/content/pdf/CPDP\\_Information\\_Sheet\\_-\\_Privacy\\_Legislation\\_in\\_Victoria.pdf](https://www.cdpd.vic.gov.au/images/content/pdf/CPDP_Information_Sheet_-_Privacy_Legislation_in_Victoria.pdf)

### Reporting a child safety concern or complaint

The school has clear expectations for staff and volunteers in making a report about a child or young person who may be in need of protection. Immediate action should include reporting their concerns to the DHHS Child Protection or another appropriate agency and notifying the principal or a member of the school leadership team of their concerns and the reasons for those concerns. The school will take action to respond to a complaint.”

- The school's policy and procedures for reporting a child safety concern or complaint can be found on the Reporting a Safety Concern or Complaint attachments.

### Legislative responsibilities

Werribee Secondary College takes our legal responsibilities seriously, including:

- **Failure to disclose:** Reporting child sexual abuse is a community-wide responsibility. All adults in Victoria who have a reasonable belief that an adult has committed a sexual offence against a child under 16 have an obligation to report that information to the police.<sup>2</sup>
- **Failure to protect:** People of authority in the College will commit an offence if they know of a substantial risk of child sexual abuse and have the power or responsibility to reduce or remove the risk, but negligently fail to do so.<sup>3</sup>
- Any personnel who are **mandatory reporters** must comply with their duties.<sup>4</sup>

<sup>1</sup> See resource seven in the Child Safe Toolkit.

<sup>2</sup> A person will not commit this offence if they have a reasonable excuse for not disclosing the information, including a fear for their safety or where the information has already been disclosed.

Further information about the failure to disclose offence is available on the [Department of Justice and Regulation website](http://www.justice.vic.gov.au/home/safer+communities/protecting+children+and+families/failure+to+disclose+offence) <www.justice.vic.gov.au/home/safer+communities/protecting+children+and+families/failure+to+disclose+offence>.

<sup>3</sup> Further information about the failure to protect offence is available on the [Department of Justice and Regulation website](http://www.justice.vic.gov.au/home/safer+communities/protecting+children+and+families/failure+to+protect+offence) <www.justice.vic.gov.au/home/safer+communities/protecting+children+and+families/failure+to+protect+offence>.

<sup>4</sup> Mandatory reporters (doctors, nurses, midwives, teachers (including early childhood teachers), principals and police) must report to child protection if they believe on reasonable grounds that a child is in need of protection from physical injury or sexual abuse.

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See the Department of Health and Human Services website for information about [how to make a report to child protection](http://www.dhs.vic.gov.au/about-the-department/documents-and-resources/reports-publications/guide-to-making-a-report-to-child-protection-or-child-first) <[www.dhs.vic.gov.au/about-the-department/documents-and-resources/reports-publications/guide-to-making-a-report-to-child-protection-or-child-first](http://www.dhs.vic.gov.au/about-the-department/documents-and-resources/reports-publications/guide-to-making-a-report-to-child-protection-or-child-first)>.

## Risk Management

In Victoria, schools are required to protect children when a risk is identified (see information about failure to protect above). In addition to general occupational health and safety risks, we proactively manage risks of abuse to our children.

We have risk management strategies in place to identify, assess, and take steps to minimise child abuse risks, which include risks posed by physical environments (for example, any doors that can lock), and online environments (for example, no staff or volunteer is to have contact with a child at the College on social media).

## Regular review

This policy will be reviewed every two years and following significant incidents if they occur. We will ensure that families and children have the opportunity to contribute. Where possible we do our best to work with local Aboriginal communities, culturally and/or linguistically diverse communities and people with a disability.

## Allegations, concerns and complaints

Werribee Secondary College takes all allegations seriously and has practices in place to investigate thoroughly and quickly. Our staff and volunteers are trained to deal appropriately with allegations.

We work to ensure all children, families, staff and volunteers know what to do and who to tell if they observe abuse or are a victim, and if they notice inappropriate behaviour.

We all have a responsibility to report an allegation of abuse if we have a reasonable belief that an incident took place (see information about failure to disclose above).

If an adult has a **reasonable belief** that an incident has occurred then they must report the incident. Factors contributing to reasonable belief may be:

- a child states they or someone they know has been abused (noting that sometimes the child may in fact be referring to themselves)
- behaviour consistent with that of an abuse victim is observed<sup>5</sup>
- someone else has raised a suspicion of abuse but is unwilling to report it
- observing suspicious behaviour.

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<sup>5</sup> For example behaviour, please see [An Overview of the Victorian child safe standards:](http://www.dhs.vic.gov.au/__data/assets/word_doc/0005/955598/Child-safe-standards_overview.doc)  
<www.dhs.vic.gov.au/\_\_data/assets/word\_doc/0005/955598/Child-safe-standards\_overview.doc>

## Attachment A

### CHILD SAFE POLICY INCIDENT REPORT FORM (STAFF USE)

This document is treated as confidential when completed.

If you believe a child is at immediate risk of abuse phone 000.

The child safe standards require schools which provide services for children<sup>6</sup> to have processes for responding to and reporting suspected child abuse.<sup>7</sup> This Incident Report Form can be used by:

- our staff to record disclosures or
- a child or their family if they disclose an allegation of abuse or safety concern within the College

The form is available electronically via *Compass*, *StudentMonitor*, *MarkBooks* and the College website: [www.werribeesc.vic.edu.au](http://www.werribeesc.vic.edu.au); most boxes in this Form will expand as necessary when text is added. All incident reports must be stored securely.

Incidents must be reported to any of the following: Jessie Brautigan (2016 Child Safety Officer) or a member of the Principal Class, Student Wellbeing Team or Student Management Team.

Incident reporter wishes to remain anonymous? YES / NO (circle)

#### Incident details

Person Reporting the incident:	
Date of incident:	
Time of incident:	
Location of incident:	
Name(s) of child / children involved:	
Name(s) of staff / volunteer/s involved:	
Names of other people involved:	

<sup>6</sup> For a [list of the organisations in scope](#) for the child safe standards, please see the Department of Health and Human Services website: <[www.dhs.vic.gov.au/about-the-department/documents-and-resources/policies,-guidelines-and-legislation/in-scope-organisations-for-child-safe-standards](http://www.dhs.vic.gov.au/about-the-department/documents-and-resources/policies,-guidelines-and-legislation/in-scope-organisations-for-child-safe-standards)>.

<sup>7</sup> The child safe standards aim to protect children from abuse in organisations, including physical violence, sexual offences, serious emotional or psychological abuse and serious neglect. For further explanation of the different types of child abuse, please see see [An Overview of the Victorian child safe standards](#): <[www.dhs.vic.gov.au/\\_\\_data/assets/word\\_doc/0005/955598/Child-safe-standards\\_overview.doc](http://www.dhs.vic.gov.au/__data/assets/word_doc/0005/955598/Child-safe-standards_overview.doc)>.



**Does the child identify as Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander?**

*(Mark with a '✓' as applicable)*

No

Yes, Aboriginal

Yes, Torres Strait Islander

**Please categorise the incident**

Physical violence

Sexual offence

Serious emotional or psychological abuse

Serious neglect

<input type="checkbox"/>
<input type="checkbox"/>
<input type="checkbox"/>
<input type="checkbox"/>

**Please describe the incident**

<b>When did it take place?</b>	
<b>Who was involved?</b>	
<b>What did you see?</b>	

<b>Other information</b>	
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**Has the incident been reported to?**

<b>Child protection</b> Department of Health and Human Services (DHHS): 1300 664 977 Child First: 1300 775 160		Details:
<b>Police: 000</b> (imminent risk)  <b>Werribee: 9742 9444</b> (non-imminent risk)		Details:
<b>Another third party (please specify):</b>		Details:

**Incident reporter signature:**

..... Date: .....

**Office use:**

<b>Date incident report received:</b>	
<b>Staff member managing incident:</b>	
<b>Follow-up date:</b>	
<b>Incident ref. number:</b>	

## Attachment B

### CHILD SAFE POLICY INCIDENT REPORT FORM (CHILD / CARER USE)

This document is treated as confidential when completed.

If you believe a child is at immediate risk of abuse phone 000.

The child safe standards require schools which provide services for children<sup>8</sup> to have processes for responding to and reporting suspected child abuse.<sup>9</sup> This Incident Report Form can be used by:

- our staff to record disclosures or
- a child or their family if they disclose an allegation of abuse or safety concern within the College

The form is available electronically via *Compass*, *StudentMonitor*, *MarkBooks* and the College website: [www.werribeesc.vic.edu.au](http://www.werribeesc.vic.edu.au); most boxes in this Form will expand as necessary when text is added. All incident reports must be stored securely.

Incidents must be reported to any of the following: Jessie Brautigan (2016 Child Safety Officer) or a member of the Principal Class, Student Wellbeing Team or Student Management Team.

Incident reporter wishes to remain anonymous? YES / NO (circle)

Does the child identify as Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander?

(Mark with a '✓' as applicable)

No  Yes, Aboriginal  Yes, Torres Strait Islander

Please categorise the incident

Physical violence

  


Sexual offence

<sup>8</sup> For a [list of the organisations in scope](#) for the child safe standards, please see the Department of Health and Human Services website: <[www.dhs.vic.gov.au/about-the-department/documents-and-resources/policies,-guidelines-and-legislation/in-scope-organisations-for-child-safe-standards](http://www.dhs.vic.gov.au/about-the-department/documents-and-resources/policies,-guidelines-and-legislation/in-scope-organisations-for-child-safe-standards)>.

<sup>9</sup> The child safe standards aim to protect children from abuse in organisations, including physical violence, sexual offences, serious emotional or psychological abuse and serious neglect. For further explanation of the different types of child abuse, please see see [An Overview of the Victorian child safe standards](#): <[www.dhs.vic.gov.au/\\_\\_data/assets/word\\_doc/0005/955598/Child-safe-standards\\_overview.doc](http://www.dhs.vic.gov.au/__data/assets/word_doc/0005/955598/Child-safe-standards_overview.doc)>.

Serious emotional or psychological abuse


Serious neglect

**Please describe the incident**

<b>When (date and time) did the incident take place?</b>	
<b>Who was involved?</b>	
<b>What did you see?</b>	
<b>Other information</b>	

**Has the incident been reported to?**

<p><b>Child protection</b>  <b>Department of Health and Human Services (DHHS): 1300 664 977</b>  <b>Child First: 1300 775 160</b></p>		<p>Details:</p>
<p><b>Police: 000</b> (imminent risk)   <b>Werribee: 9742 9444</b> (non-imminent risk)</p>		<p>Details:</p>
<p><b>Another third party (please specify):</b></p>		<p>Details:</p>

**Incident reporter signature:**

..... Date: .....

**Office use:**

<p><b>Date incident report received:</b></p>	
<p><b>Staff member managing incident:</b></p>	
<p><b>Follow-up date:</b></p>	
<p><b>Incident ref. number:</b></p>	