



WAVERLEY CHRISTIAN COLLEGE

Child Safety Strategy





INTRODUCTION

On 1 July, 2022, the new Victorian Child Safe Standards for schools were implemented. Ministerial Order 1359 outlines the 11 new standards that schools must implement and comply with to ensure a safe environment for children and young people and to minimise the risk for any form of child abuse or neglect from occurring.

The College wholeheartedly supports the introduction of these new standards which now more closely align with the national standards that were developed as a result of the Royal Commission into Institutional Responses to Child Sexual Abuse.

The standards support the development of a culture where protecting children from abuse is part of everyday thinking and practice.

The new standards will strengthen the existing approaches that the College has in place for preventing and responding to child abuse and we look forward to the new initiatives that are associated with their implementation.



CHILD SAFE STANDARDS

The Victorian Registration and Qualifications Authority is responsible for regulating the compliance of schools with the Standards. Schools are required to comply with the Standards as part of the prescribed minimum standards for registration.

There are 11 Child Safe Standards:

1. Establish a culturally safe environment in which the diverse and unique identities and experiences of Aboriginal children and young people are respected and valued.
2. Ensure that child safety and wellbeing are embedded in school leadership, governance and culture.
3. Children and young people are empowered about their rights, participate in decisions affecting them and are taken seriously
4. Families and communities are informed and involved in promoting child safety and wellbeing.
5. Equity is upheld and diverse needs are respected in policy and practice.
6. People working with children and young people are suitable and supported to reflect child safety and wellbeing values in practice.
7. Processes for complaints and concerns are child focused.
8. Staff and volunteers are equipped with the knowledge, skills and awareness to keep children and young people safe through ongoing education and training.
9. Physical and online environments promote safety and wellbeing while minimising the opportunity for children and young people to be harmed.
10. Implementation of the Child Safe Standards is regularly reviewed and improved.
11. Policies and procedures that document how schools are safe for children, young people and students.

A photograph of two young women, one with blonde hair and one with dark hair, both smiling and playing violins. They are wearing school uniforms. The background is slightly blurred, showing what appears to be a school setting.

OUR RESPONSE

Child Safety is everyone's responsibility. Waverley Christian College has zero tolerance for child abuse.

The College is committed to providing a child safe environment where children and young people are safe and feel safe, and their voices are heard about decisions that affect their lives.

The College has an extensive pastoral care and wellbeing program that not only seeks to develop our children socially, emotionally, physically and spiritually, but also seeks to create an environment free from abuse.

Every person involved in Waverley Christian College has a responsibility to understand the important and specific role they play individually and collectively to ensure that the wellbeing and safety of all children and young people is at the forefront of all they do and every decision they make. Everyone connected to our College can help children be safe.

The College is fully supportive of the Victorian Government's new Child Safe Standards. We have embraced the opportunity to again strengthen the safety of our operations and to further develop a culture of child safety across our organisation.

We value your feedback. If you have any concerns, queries or feedback about the new Child Safe Standards, please don't hesitate to contact the Deputy Principal.



OUR COMMITMENT

Consistent with the recommendations provided to the Royal Commission by the Australian Children's Commissioners and Guardians (ACCG), Waverley Christian College, in its planning, decision-making and operations will:


- Take a preventative, proactive and participatory approach to child safety;
- Value and empower children to participate in decisions which affect their lives;
- Foster a culture of openness that supports all persons to safely disclose risks of harm to children;
- Respect diversity in cultures and child rearing practices while keeping child safety paramount;
- Provide written guidance on appropriate conduct and behaviour towards children;
- Engage only the most suitable people to work with children and have high quality staff and volunteer supervision and professional development;
- Ensure children know who to talk with if they are worried or are feeling unsafe, and that they are comfortable and encouraged to raise such issues;
- Report suspected abuse, neglect or mistreatment promptly to the appropriate authorities;
- Share information appropriately and lawfully with other organisations where the safety and wellbeing of children is at risk; and
- Value the input of and communicate regularly with families and carers.



OUR STRATEGIES

In order to ensure that Waverley Christian College continues to provide a child-safe environment and to comply with the new Child Safe Standards as outlined in the Ministerial Order 1359, the College has undertaken/will continue to undertake the following:

- Established a Cultural Understanding and Awareness Group that is responsible, in conjunction with the Wurundjeri Woi-wurrung Cultural Heritage Aboriginal Corporation (WS Campus) and the Bunurong Land Council Aboriginal Corporation (NWS Campus), for the development of a Reconciliation Action Plan, amongst other initiatives, that will support greater appreciation and acknowledgement of the strengths of Aboriginal culture and its importance to the wellbeing and safety of Aboriginal students. The initiatives and strategies will also ensure active support for the participation and inclusion of Aboriginal children and students and their families, that they have the ability to express their culture and enjoy their cultural rights, and that any form of racism is not tolerated; it is identified, confronted, and addressed with appropriate consequences
- Developed a new Child Safety Policy and an associated new Student Wellbeing Policy that details our commitment to child safety, outlines the actions the College is taking to ensure a child safe culture is championed and modelled across our campuses
- Enhanced our Pastoral Care, Wellbeing and Learning Support programs to support staff to understand the diverse circumstances of children and young people and provide support and respond to vulnerable students and students of higher risk
- Updated our Child Safety Code of Conduct and our Staff-Student Professional Boundaries policies to outline expected behaviour of adults towards children and young people in our communities
- Updated our Child Safety Risk Register to be consistent with the new standards and reviewed our existing risks in light of the new register to mitigate risks related to child safety and wellbeing in both the physical and online school environment

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- **Developed a new Child Safety Responding and Reporting Policy and ensure parents and students have access to a an easy to use and clear complaints process**
 - **Strengthen the role of the College's Child Safety Coordinator and established a new role at each campus, Child Safety and Wellbeing Champions – Students to support greater empowerment for children and young people**
 - **Established Student Child Safety and Wellbeing Teams in each of our sub-schools and a Child Safety and Wellbeing Committee with representation from all five sub-schools across the College to support the ongoing review of situational and vulnerability risks across the College and to improve age-appropriate understanding of child safety and develop better communication channels**
 - **Implemented new Staff and Volunteer Child Safety and Wellbeing training packages and improved our staff, contractor, volunteer and visitor induction programs**
 - **Review our other existing polices related to the safety and wellbeing of our students both in the physical and online environments**
 - **Improved our College Child Safety and Wellbeing webpage and updated our internal Waverley Engage and Waverley Learn intranet pages**
 - **Review our child safety and wellbeing curriculum to ensure it includes age-appropriate sexual abuse prevention programs**
 - **Purchased access to the Institute of Positive Education's Positive Education curriculum with a view to implementing this with a biblical perspective across the College to further support the development of wellbeing, relationships and resilience**
 - **Improved visibility and accessibility of information related to child safety and wellbeing and in particular the ability for young people and parents to bring complaints or concerns**
 - **Seek to engage more regular feedback from parents through newsletters, reviews, surveys and focus groups**
 - **Tightened recruitment practices further to ensure suitability and appropriateness to child- related work**
 - **Strengthened the governance arrangements for implementation of our Child Safe Policies, ensuring that appropriate processes are in place for their regular review**



ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS AND RESOURCES

Waverley Christian College acknowledges the support of the following organisations in relation to not only the development of this Child Safety Strategy Document, but a number of other documents prepared in relation to the Child Safe Standards.

The Ministerial Order 1359

<https://content.sdp.education.vic.gov.au/media/ministerial-order-1359-975>

Victorian Registration and Qualifications Authority (VRQA):

<https://www.vic.gov.au/child-safe-standards-education-providers>

The Department of Education and Training:

<https://www.vic.gov.au/child-safe-standards-schools-guidance>

Independent Schools Victoria (ISV)

<https://is.vic.edu.au/iscomply/> (member login required)

The Commission for Children and Young People:

<https://ccyp.vic.gov.au/child-safe-standards/>



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