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# Child Safety and Wellbeing Policy

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College

# Child Safety and Wellbeing Policy

## Purpose

**Our Child Safety and Wellbeing Policy (Policy) demonstrates the strong commitment of Ilim College (College) to the care, safety and wellbeing of all students at our school and to creating and maintaining a child safe and child-friendly environment, where children are safe and feel safe, are cared for and nurtured. This Policy provides the framework of the policies, practices, actions and strategies that will be implemented to keep our students safe from abuse and all other forms of harm in our College environment.**

**This Policy takes into account the relevant Victorian legislative requirements, including the specific requirements of Ministerial Order 1359. It informs the College community about everyone's obligations to act safely and appropriately towards students and guides the policies, processes and practices for the care, safety and wellbeing of students across all areas of our work. The College's child safe processes and practices are set out in full in the College's Child Safe Program.**

**This Policy provides the framework for:**

- ▶ the implementation of the Victorian Child Safe Standards and Ministerial Order 1359;
- ▶ the development of work systems, practices, policies and procedures, consistent with PROTECT Four Critical Actions for Schools: Responding to Incidents, Disclosure and Suspicions of Child Abuse (PROTECT Four Critical Actions) and PROTECT Four Critical Actions for Schools: Responding to Student Sexual Offending (Four Critical Actions: Student Sexual Offending),

that promote child protection, safety and wellbeing within the College;

- ▶ the creation of a safe and supportive College environment and a positive and robust child safe culture;
- ▶ the promotion and open discussion of child safety issues within the College, and
- ▶ compliance with all laws, regulations and standards relevant to child safety and wellbeing, including child protection, in Victoria.

## Scope

This Policy applies to all adults in the College community, whether or not their work involves direct contact with students, including all College staff, volunteers, contractors and the members of the College Board.

This Policy applies in all College environments used by students during or outside of school hours, including all locations provided for a student's use.

## Definitions

Definitions of terms used in this Policy are set out in Annexure 1.

## Statement of Commitment to Child Safety and Wellbeing

The College is a child safe organisation which welcomes all children and their families. All children who come to the College have a right to feel and be safe.

We are committed to providing environments where children are safe and feel safe, are protected from abuse and all other forms of harm, and where their participation is valued, their views

# Child Safety and Wellbeing Policy

respected, and their voices are heard about decisions that affect their lives.

Our child safe policies, strategies and practices are inclusive of the needs of all children and students, with particular attention given to the child safety needs of students who may be experiencing risk or vulnerability due to their diverse backgrounds or personal circumstances. Inappropriate or harmful behaviour is not tolerated at our College, and any instances identified or reported will be addressed with appropriate consequences.

We have a zero tolerance for child abuse and other harm and take proactive steps to identify and manage any risks of harm to students in our College environments. We are committed to acting in students' best interests and keeping them safe from harm. When child safety concerns are raised or identified, we treat these seriously and respond promptly and thoroughly. We promote positive relationships between students and adults and between students and their peers. These relationships are based on trust and respect.

The College regards its child safety responsibilities with the utmost importance and as such is committed to providing the necessary resources to ensure compliance with all relevant child safety and wellbeing laws and regulations and maintaining a child safe culture.

Each member of the College community has a responsibility to understand the important and specific role that they play individually and collectively to ensure that the wellbeing and safety of all students is at the forefront of all that they do and every decision that they make. Child safety is a shared responsibility. Every person involved in our College has an important role in promoting child safety

and wellbeing and promptly raising any issues or concerns about a child's safety.

We are committed to regularly reviewing our child safe practices, and seeking input from our students, families, staff, and volunteers to inform our ongoing strategies.

## Embedding a Culture of Child Safety: Our Child Safe Program

Our Child Safe Program itself is one of the strategies employed by the College to embed a culture of child safety at the College.

Our Child Safe Program relates to all aspects of child safety and wellbeing and establishes work systems, practices, policies and procedures to create and maintain a child safe environment and culture at the College. It includes:

- ▶ the Child Safety Code of Conduct;
- ▶ clear information about what is child abuse and other harm and key indicators of child abuse and other harm;
- ▶ clear procedures, that are consistent with PROTECT Four Critical Actions and Four Critical Actions: Student Sexual Offending, for responding to and reporting child safety incidents or concerns internally to a Child Safe Officer, and for responding to incidents or allegations of child abuse or other harm;
- ▶ strategies to support, encourage and enable staff, volunteers, contractors, parents/carers and students to understand, identify, discuss and report child safety matters;

# Child Safety and Wellbeing Policy

- ▶ procedures for recruiting and screening members of the College Board, Executive Management Team and all other staff, volunteers and contractors;
- ▶ procedures for reporting to external agencies, that are consistent with PROTECT Four Critical Actions and Four Critical Actions: Student Sexual Offending, including Mandatory Reporting to the Department of Families, Fairness and Housing (Child Protection), Reportable Conduct to the Commission for Children and Young People (CCYP) and Reporting Child Sexual Abuse to Police;
- ▶ pastoral care strategies designed to empower students and keep them safe;
- ▶ strategies to support and encourage the participation and inclusion of Aboriginal students
- ▶ strategies to provide particular attention to the needs of students who may be experiencing risk or vulnerability due to their diverse backgrounds or personal circumstances;
- ▶ child safety training;
- ▶ information regarding the steps to take after a disclosure of abuse or other harm to protect, support and assist students;
- ▶ guidelines with respect to record keeping and confidentiality;
- ▶ policies to ensure compliance with all relevant laws, regulations and standards (including the Victorian Child Safe Standards and Ministerial Order 1359), and
- ▶ a system for continuous review and improvement.

## Roles and responsibilities

Child safety and wellbeing is everyone's responsibility. This part of the policy outlines the specific responsibilities for each role in relation to the development, compliance and implementation of this Policy at the College

### Campus Principals/Child Safe Officers

The Campus Principals are nominated as the College's Child Safe Officers.

Our Child Safe Officers receive additional specialised training with respect to child safety and wellbeing, including but not limited to child protection issues. They are a point of contact for raising child safety concerns within the College. They are also responsible for championing child safety within the College and assisting in coordinating responses to child safety incidents. The responsibilities of the Child Safe Officers, as child safety champions, are outlined at Guidance for child safety champions.

Our Child Safe Officers and their contact details are listed on our website at [www.ilimcollege.vic.edu.au](http://www.ilimcollege.vic.edu.au).

### Chief Executive Officer/Senior Child Safety Officer

The College has also appointed its Chief Executive Officer as the College's Senior Child Safety Officer.

The Senior Child Safety Officer has additional child safety responsibilities, such as being a first point of contact for all child safety concerns or queries for the

# Child Safety and Wellbeing Policy

wider community and coordinating the College's response to child safety incidents in consultation with the Executive Principal and Campus Principals, the Executive Management Team and the College Board.

In addition to these roles, the Chief Executive Officer/Senior Child Safety Officer is also responsible for:

- ▶ monitoring the College's compliance with this Policy. Anyone in our College community should approach the Senior Child Safety Officer if they have any concerns about the College's compliance with the Policy;
- ▶ informing the College community about this Policy, and making it publicly available;
- ▶ ensuring that all College staff, volunteers and contractors understand their obligations in accordance with this Policy and any other relevant policy and procedural documentation;
- ▶ ensuring that thorough and rigorous processes applied in the recruitment, screening, employment practices in relation to safeguarding children;
- ▶ upholding high principles and standards for all College staff, volunteers and contractors;
- ▶ ensuring the development and implementation of required internal policy/ procedures and guidelines are in place to support safeguarding children practices in accordance with the expectations of this Policy and the Child Safe Standards;
- ▶ ensuring review and update of this Policy and supporting resources in consultation with relevant stakeholders;
- ▶ monitoring and evaluating actions implemented by the College to manage identified risks to child safety and wellbeing;
- ▶ ensuring adequate resources are allocated to allow effective implementation of this Policy;
- ▶ ensuring that the College has in place appropriate risk management strategies and practices that focus on preventing, identifying and mitigating risks related to child safety and wellbeing in the school environment; and
- ▶ ensuring that the College monitors and reviews the risks related to child safety and wellbeing, including evaluating the effectiveness of the implementation of its risk controls, on an annual basis.

Other specific roles and responsibilities are named in other child safety policies and procedures, including the Child Safety Code of Conduct, Mandatory Reporting Policy and procedures, and the Child Safety Risk Register. The Senior Child Safety Officer together with the Compliance Manager monitor the Child Safety Risk Register.

## College Board

The Board is the College's "school governing authority" for the purposes of Ministerial Order 1359. In performing the functions and powers given to them under the *Education and Training Reform Act 2006*, the members of the Board will:

- ▶ ensure that child safety and wellbeing is embedded in school leadership, governance and culture and that action is taken to embed a

# Child Safety and Wellbeing Policy

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- ▶ culture of 'no tolerance' for child abuse and any other harm;
  - ▶ ensure compliance with the Child Safe Standards as required to be implemented pursuant to Ministerial Order No. 1359 – *Implementing the Child Safe Standards – Managing the Risk of Child Abuse in Schools and School Boarding Premises*;
  - ▶ champion and promote a child safe culture within the College and the broader College community;
  - ▶ support a culture of openness and continued improvement and accountability to keeping children safe from abuse and all other forms of harm.
  - ▶ approve our Child Safe Program, including this Policy and the Child Safety Code of Conduct and support its review at a time required by law and as required by school learnings that promote a change to this Policy and all associated policies, procedures and other documentation;
  - ▶ ensure that child safety is a regular agenda item at College Board meetings;
  - ▶ undertake annual training on child safety;
  - ▶ undertake ongoing monitoring of compliance with the Policy and monitoring and evaluation of actions implemented by the College to manage identified risks to child safety and wellbeing;
  - ▶ act in accordance with the Child Safety Code of Conduct and comply with this Policy to the extent that it applies to College Board members;
  - ▶ ensure adequate resources are allocated to allow for the development, effective implementation, communication and continuous improvement of this Policy and effective implementation of Ministerial Order 1359 and our Child Safe Program;
  - ▶ ensuring that the College has in place appropriate risk management strategies and practices that focus on preventing, identifying and mitigating risks related to child safety and wellbeing in the school environment; and
  - ▶ ensuring that the school monitors and reviews the risks related to child safety and wellbeing, including evaluating the effectiveness of the implementation of its risk controls, on an annual basis.

## Executive and Campus Principals

The Executive Principal and Campus Principals are responsible, and will be accountable, for the operational management of the College, and the implementation of the Child Safe Program on their campus.

The Executive Principal and Campus Principals are responsible for:

- ▶ advocating and promoting child rights, empowering and engaging students in support of this Policy;
- ▶ taking all practical measures to ensure that this Policy, the College's Child Safe Program, together with child safety governance, policies, procedures, codes and practices are implemented effectively and followed;

# Child Safety and Wellbeing Policy

- ▶ ensuring that a strong and sustainable child safe culture is maintained within the College, including by:
  - modelling the Child Safety Code of Conduct, and reinforcing high standards of child safe and respectable behaviours between adults and students and between students;
  - facilitating the participation of students, families, staff and other members of the College community in promoting and improving child safety, cultural safety and wellbeing at the College;
  - promoting regular and open discussion of child safety and wellbeing issues within the College community including at leadership team meetings, staff meetings and Board meetings, to support a culture of continuous improvement and accountability of keeping children safe from abuse and all other forms of harm;
  - facilitating regular professional learning for staff and relevant volunteers and contractors (where appropriate) to build deeper understandings of child safety, cultural safety, student wellbeing and preventing and responding to child safety incidents and concerns;
  - creating an environment where child safety incidents, concerns and complaints are readily raised with the College and where no one is discouraged from reporting child safety incidents or concerns to Child Safe Officers or relevant external authorities;
  - ensuring that staff and relevant volunteers and contractors (where appropriate) are fully supported with any decision to initiate action to protect a child from abuse and all other forms of harm;
  - ensuring appropriate supports, such as counselling and formal debriefing, are provided for any staff and relevant volunteers and contractors involved in a matter relating to responding to a concern for the safety and wellbeing of a child; and
  - proactively sharing resources and experience in the development of child safe initiatives as they are identified.
- ▶ ensuring that all staff, visitors and contractors understand their obligations in accordance with this Policy and any relevant policy and procedural documentation; and
- ▶ ensure this Policy is implemented and adhered to amongst staff, visitors and contractors.

## Staff

All staff are “school staff” for the purposes of Ministerial Order 1359. All staff are required to comply with this Policy and Child Safety Codes of Conduct, be familiar with our Child Safe Program and understand their legal obligations with respect to the reporting of child abuse and other harm, obligations to the Victorian Institute of Teaching regarding registration and Working With Children clearances.

It is each individual’s responsibility to be aware of key indicators of child abuse and

# Child Safety and Wellbeing Policy

other harm, to be observant, and to raise all child safety incidents and concerns with one of the College's Child Safe Officers.

To meet these obligations, all staff must:

- ▶ advocate and promote child rights, empowering and engaging students in support of this Policy;
- ▶ maintain a full understanding of the commitments and expectations of this Policy, as well as the individual responsibilities in relation to child safety, and the wellbeing of children, including ways to prevent, identify and mitigate risks relating to child safety and wellbeing;
- ▶ participate in child safety and wellbeing induction and ongoing training provided or arranged by the College;
- ▶ always follow the College's child safety and wellbeing policies and procedures in the Child Safe Program;
- ▶ ensure compliance with this Policy, fully implementing and adhering to the commitments and expectations;
- ▶ act in accordance with the Child Safety Code of Conduct and adopt appropriate safeguarding practice and behaviour;
- ▶ identify and raise child safety incidents and concerns in accordance with our Procedures for Responding to and Reporting Child Safety Incidents or Concerns, and follow the PROTECT Four Critical Actions and Four Critical Actions: Student Sexual Offending;
- ▶ ensure students' views are taken seriously and their voices are heard when making decisions that affect them;
- ▶ take action to protect children from all forms of abuse and all other forms of harm;
- ▶ assist in creating and maintaining a child safe culture and a culture of inclusion and safety;
- ▶ support a culture of openness, continued improvement and accountability to children by engaging in regular review and discussion of College policies and practices and providing feedback to support improvement;
- ▶ seek guidance from a supervisor or manager if there is ever any lack of understanding in relation to the commitments and expectations as set out in this Policy.

## Volunteers and Contractors

A volunteer is someone who performs work for the College in a College environment without remuneration or reward. Volunteers may be family members of students, or from the wider College or local community. Volunteers are not "school staff" for the purposes of Ministerial Order 1359.

A contractor is someone engaged by the College to perform specific tasks. Contractors are not employees of the College. However, contractors who have direct contact with children are "school staff" for the purposes of Ministerial Order 1359. Contractors may include maintenance and building personnel, consultants, music tutors, sports coaches, and cleaners as well as external education providers (organisations that the College has arranged to deliver a specified course of study that is part of the curriculum, to a student or students

# Child Safety and Wellbeing Policy

enrolled at the College).

All volunteers and contractors at the College are responsible for contributing to the safety and protection of students in the College environment.

To meet these obligations:

- ▶ all volunteers and contractors must comply with this Policy and Child Safety Code of Conduct;
- ▶ Volunteers and contractors who have direct contact with children and, if required by the College, volunteers and contractors who are engaged in child-connected work' must:
  - provide a Working with Children clearance and other information considered reasonable and appropriate to their role;
  - participate in child safety and wellbeing induction and ongoing training provided by the College;
  - be aware of key indicators of child abuse and other harm;
  - understand their legal obligations with respect to the reporting of child abuse and other harm;
  - take action to protect children from abuse and all other forms of harm; and
  - raise all child safety concerns with one of the College's Child Safe Officers.

The College may include these requirements in the written agreement it has with volunteers or contractors

## Child Safe Standards

The College has also developed specific child safe principles and values relevant to its own specific circumstances that guide our work systems, practices, policies and procedures to protect students from abuse and harm.

There are 11 Victorian Child Safe Standards set out in Ministerial Order 1359. They are:

- ▶ 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 safety and wellbeing is embedded in organisational leadership, governance and culture.
- ▶ Children and young people are empowered about their rights, participate in decisions affecting them and are taken seriously.
- ▶ Families and communities are informed, and involved in promoting child safety and wellbeing.
- ▶ Equity is upheld and diverse needs respected in policy and practice.
- ▶ People working with children and young people are suitable and supported to reflect child safety and wellbeing values in practice.
- ▶ Processes for complaints and concerns are child focused.
- ▶ Staff and volunteers are equipped with the knowledge, skills and awareness to keep children and young people safe through ongoing education and training.
- ▶ Physical, virtual and online environments promote safety and wellbeing while minimising the

# Child Safety and Wellbeing Policy

opportunity for children and young people to be harmed.

- ▶ Implementation of the Child Safe Standards is regularly reviewed and improved.
- ▶ Policies and procedures document how the organisation is safe for children and young people.

## Ilim College's Child Safe Principles and Values

The College's commitment to child safety is based on the following overarching principles that guide the development and regular review of our work systems, practices, policies and procedures to protect children from abuse.

- ▶ All children have the right to be safe.
- ▶ The welfare and best interests of the child are paramount.
- ▶ The views of the child and a child's privacy must be respected.
- ▶ Clear expectations for appropriate behaviour with children are established in our Employee Code of Conduct, the Child Safety Code of Conduct and related policies and procedures.
- ▶ The safety of children is dependent upon the existence of a child safe culture.
- ▶ Child safety awareness is promoted and openly discussed within our College community.
- ▶ Procedures are in place to screen all applicants for jobs and volunteers to ensure only suitable people work with children.
- ▶ Child safety and protection is everyone's responsibility.
- ▶ Child protection training is mandatory for all College Board members, staff and volunteers and contractors who have direct contact with children or, if required by the College, who are engaged in 'child-connected work'.
- ▶ Procedures for responding to alleged or suspected incidents of child abuse are simple and accessible for all members of the College community.
- ▶ Children from culturally or linguistically diverse backgrounds, who are vulnerable or have diverse circumstances have the right to special care and support including those who identify as Aboriginal.
- ▶ Children who have any kind of disability have the right to special care and support.

# Child Safety and Wellbeing Policy

## Child Safety Code of Conduct

Our Child Safety Code of Conduct and our Employee Code of Conduct together set boundaries and expectations for appropriate behaviours between adults in our College community and students, including in physical, online and virtual environments.

We also have a Student Code of Conduct, which includes standards of behaviour for students.

Our Child Safety Code of Conduct includes clear processes to report inappropriate behaviour. We publish our Child Safety Code of Conduct on our public website so that everyone can easily find out what behaviours are acceptable and unacceptable at our College and how to report inappropriate behaviour.

We also provide additional information to students and families about the Child Safety Code of Conduct, to ensure that they know what behaviours are acceptable and unacceptable and how to report inappropriate behaviour.

## Managing risks to child safety and wellbeing

At our College we identify, assess and manage risks to child safety and wellbeing in our physical, virtual and online College environments. These risks are managed through our child safety and wellbeing policies, procedures and practices, and in our activity specific risk registers, such as those we develop for off-site overnight camps, adventure activities and facilities and services we contract through third party providers for student use.

The College recognises the importance of a risk management approach to minimising the potential for child abuse or

harm to occur and we use this information to inform our policies, procedures and activity planning.

We have implemented a comprehensive Risk Management Program to assist in the identification, assessment and management of child safety risks in all College environments.

We identify, assess and manage child safety risks in all College environments, based on a range of factors including the nature of our College's activities, its physical, virtual and online environments and the characteristics of the student body. We use this information to inform our policies, procedures and activity planning.

We record identified risks to child safety and wellbeing in our Child Safe Risk Register, along with the actions in place at the College to manage these risks. The Board, the Chief Executive Officer and/or the Executive Management Team monitor and evaluate the effectiveness of these actions at least annually.

## Establishing a culturally safe environment

The College is committed to establishing an inclusive and culturally safe College where the strengths of Aboriginal culture, values and practices are respected.

We think about how every student can have a positive experience in a safe environment. For Aboriginal students, we recognise the link between culture, identity and safety and actively create opportunities for Aboriginal students, their families and their communities (including local Aboriginal communities relevant to the College) to have a voice and presence in our College's planning, policies, and activities.

# Child Safety and Wellbeing Policy

The specific strategies and measures that we have adopted maintain an inclusive and culturally safe school for Aboriginal children and students and to promote cultural safety in our College community are set out in our Child Safe Program

## Student Empowerment and Participation

The College is a child safe and child-centred organisation, and we work to create an inclusive and supportive environment that encourages students and families to contribute to our approach to child safety and wellbeing and understand their rights and their responsibilities.

We ensure that our physical, virtual and online environments are friendly and welcoming to all children.

We actively seek to include students in decisions that affect them. This includes decisions about organisational planning, delivery of services, management of facilities, and learning and assessment environments.

We ensure that students know about their rights to safety, information and participation. We actively seek to understand what makes students feel safe in our College and regularly communicate with students about what they can do if they feel unsafe.

We recognise the importance of friendships and encourage respectful relationships, strong friendships and support from peers to ensure a sense of belonging.

We inform students of their rights through the Child Safety and Wellbeing Policy (Student Version), the Primary Wellbeing and Engagement Policy and Secondary Behaviour and Wellbeing Policy and give

them the skills and confidence to recognise unsafe situations with adults or other students and to speak up and act on concerns relating to themselves or their peers. We ensure our students know who to talk to if they are worried or feeling unsafe and we encourage them to share concerns with a trusted adult at any time. Students and families can also access information on how to report concerns at [www.ilimcollege.vic.edu.au](http://www.ilimcollege.vic.edu.au) or by contacting a Child Safe Officer.

When the College is gathering information in relation to a complaint about alleged misconduct or abuse of a child, we will listen to the complainant's account and take them seriously, check our understanding of the complaint, support the student and keep them (and their parents and carers, as appropriate) informed about progress.

Other specific strategies that we have adopted to promote the participation of and empowerment of students, and to implement all of the above obligations, are set out in the Participation and Empowerment of Students section of our Child Safe Program.

## Parent/Carer, Family and Community Engagement

The College recognises that parents and carers have the primary responsibility for the upbringing and development of their children. We ensure that they participate in decisions affecting their children.

We ensure that families and relevant communities (Aboriginal communities, culturally and linguistically diverse communities, other communities that make up our staff and student cohort, and the local community in which our College operates) know about the College's operations and policies, including its

# Child Safety and Wellbeing Policy

Child Safety and Wellbeing Policy and the Child Safety Code of Conduct, record keeping practices, risk management, and complaints and investigation processes.

We actively seek to include families and relevant communities in decisions about organisational planning, delivery of services, management of facilities, and learning and assessment environments. We build cultural safety at the College through partnerships with relevant communities.

The specific strategies that we have adopted to promote the engagement of parents/carers, families, and relevant communities in child safety and wellbeing at the College, to make information about child safety and wellbeing available and accessible, and to implement all of the above obligations, are set out in the Family and Community Involvement section of our Child Safe Program.

## Diversity and Equity

We will ensure that all persons within our College uphold equity and respect diversity by:

- ▶ ensuring that the College, including its staff and volunteers, understand our student's diverse circumstances and provide support and respond to those with vulnerabilities;
- ▶ informing students of their rights and giving all students access to information, support and complaints processes;
- ▶ respecting the rights of students to participate in decision-making, and paying particular attention to the needs of students who may be experiencing risk or vulnerability due to their diverse backgrounds or personal circumstances.

The specific strategies that we have adopted to promote equity and respect diversity at the College are set out in the Family and Community Involvement, Cultural Safety and Equity/Diversity section of our Child Safe Program.

## Suitable Staff, Volunteers and Contractors

At the College, we apply robust child safe recruitment, induction, training, and supervision practices to ensure that all staff, contractors, and volunteers are suitable to work with children. The specific human resources management strategies that we have adopted at the College to promote child safety and wellbeing are set out in the Child Safe Human Resources Management section of our Child Safe Program. This includes the following:

### Recruitment and Screening

The College applies best practice standards in the recruitment and screening of staff, volunteers and contractors to engage the most suitable and appropriate people to work with our students. When engaging staff to perform child-related work, our practices include:

- ▶ requiring all staff and relevant volunteers and contractors to maintain a valid VIT Registration or Working with Children clearance;
- ▶ sighting, verifying and recording VIT Registration or Working with Children clearances, including collecting and recording:
  - proof of the person's identity and any professional or other qualifications;
  - the person's history of working with children;

# Child Safety and Wellbeing Policy

- references that address suitability for the job and working with children, and
  - references that address suitability for the job and working with children.
  - ▶ ensuring that all staff and relevant volunteers and contractors undergo child safety induction, and ongoing education and training;
  - ▶ ensuring that we provide staff, and relevant volunteers and contractors who engage with students, with regular supervision and performance monitoring by their manager or a senior member of staff, and
  - ▶ ensuring that professional development programs for staff include child safety education and training programs.
- (including mandatory reporting, reporting to police and reportable conduct obligations);
- ▶ our policies and procedures for information sharing and record keeping about child safety incidents and concerns, and
  - ▶ Working with Children clearances and other child safety and wellbeing human resources practices.

The College provides all visitors to the College with information about the Child Safety Code of Conduct and how to report child safety incidents or concerns to the College and to relevant external authorities.

## Ongoing Supervision, Support and management of Staff

All staff engaged in 'child-connected work' will be supervised appropriately to ensure that their behaviour towards children is safe and appropriate. Staff will be monitored and assessed to ensure their continuing suitability for 'child-connected work'. This will be done as part of regular performance reviews and classroom observations.

Inappropriate behaviour towards children will be managed swiftly and in accordance with our school and department policies and our legal obligations. Child safety and wellbeing will be paramount.

The College also provides staff, relevant volunteers and contractors with support and regular supervision by their manager, the College's Child Safe Officers and/or the relevant Executive Management Team member(s) to ensure that they are compliant with the College's approach to child safety and wellbeing.

## Staff and Volunteer Induction

As a part of the College's induction process, all staff, as well as relevant volunteers and contractors, are required to complete induction training on our child safety policies, practices and procedures.

All staff, as well as relevant volunteers and contractors also receive refresher and ongoing child safety training at least annually.

Our child safety induction and ongoing training program includes information about:

- ▶ this Policy;
- ▶ the Child Safety Code of Conduct;
- ▶ recognising child abuse and other harm and identifying key indicators;
- ▶ our policies and procedures for responding to and reporting child safety incidents or concerns

# Child Safety and Wellbeing Policy

## Child Safety Knowledge, Skills and Awareness

### Staff training and education

Ongoing training and education are essential to ensuring that staff understand their roles and responsibilities and develop their capacity to effectively address child safety and wellbeing matters.

In addition to the child safety and wellbeing induction, our staff will participate in a range of training and professional learning to equip them with the skills and knowledge necessary to maintain a child safe environment.

Staff child safety and wellbeing training will be delivered at least annually and will include guidance on:

- ▶ our College's child safety and wellbeing policies, procedures, codes, and practices;
- ▶ completing the Protecting Children – Mandatory Reporting and Other Legal Obligations online module annually;
- ▶ recognising indicators of child harm including harm caused by other children and students;
- ▶ responding effectively to issues of child safety and wellbeing and supporting colleagues who disclose harm;
- ▶ how to build culturally safe environments for children and students;
- ▶ information sharing and recordkeeping obligations; and
- ▶ how to identify and mitigate child safety and wellbeing risks in the school environment.

Other professional learning and training on child safety and wellbeing, for example, training for our volunteers, will be tailored to specific roles and responsibilities and any identified or emerging needs or issues.

### Board training and education

To ensure our College Board is equipped with the knowledge required to make decisions in the best interests of student safety and wellbeing, and to identify and mitigate child safety and wellbeing risks in our College environment, the Board is trained at least annually. Training includes guidance on:

- ▶ individual and collective obligations and responsibilities for implementing the Child Safe Standards and managing the risk of child abuse;
- ▶ child safety and wellbeing risks in our College environment, and
- ▶ College child safety and wellbeing policies, procedures, codes and practices.

## Complaints and Reporting Processes: The College's Response to Child Safety Incidents or Concerns

The College fosters a culture that encourages everyone in the College community to raise concerns and complaints about child safety and wellbeing. This makes it more difficult for breaches of the code of conduct, misconduct or abuse to occur and remain hidden.

Our processes for raising complaints and concerns, and the procedures that all staff, volunteers and contractors must follow whenever they witness, suspect or

# Child Safety and Wellbeing Policy

receive a complaint about a child safety incident or concern involving a student, a staff member, a volunteer, a contractor or the College, are set out in the Child Safe Procedures, at section 19 below. The College will take appropriate, prompt action in response to all child safety incidents or concerns, including all complaints, allegations or disclosures of abuse or other harm, when staff, volunteers, contractors, students, parents/carers or anyone else reports these to the College.

The College's response will include:

- ▶ externally reporting all matters that meet the required relevant thresholds to Child Protection (Mandatory Reports), the Police (Mandatory Reporting of Child Sexual Abuse), the CCYP (Reportable Conduct), and/or the Victorian Institute of Teaching (Teacher Misconduct), depending on the issues raised and consistent with PROTECT Four Critical Actions and Four Critical Actions: Student Sexual Offending;
- ▶ fully cooperating with any resulting investigation by an external agency;
- ▶ protecting any student connected to the child safety incident or concern until it is resolved and providing ongoing support to those affected;
- ▶ taking particular measures in response to child safety incidents or concerns about an Aboriginal student or students who may be experiencing risk or vulnerability due to their diverse backgrounds or personal circumstances;
- ▶ sharing information with, or requesting information from, external people or agencies as permitted or required under the

Child Information Sharing Scheme and/or the Family Violence Information Sharing Scheme;

- ▶ securing and retaining records of the child safety incident or concern and the College's response to it; and
- ▶ taking broader actions to improve child safety at the College (including systemic reviews and resulting improvements).

## Privacy and Information Sharing

The College collects, uses and discloses information about students and their families in accordance with Victorian privacy laws and other relevant laws, including laws that permit the College to disclose information about child safety and wellbeing to external people and agencies. For information about how the College collects, uses and discloses this information, refer to our Privacy Policy.

## Records management

The College is committed to best practice record keeping about child safety incidents and concerns. We acknowledge that good records management practices are a critical element of child safety and wellbeing.

The College records all internal and external reports of child safety incidents and concerns, as well as any other responses by the College using [PROTECT Recording your actions: Responding to suspected child abuse - A Template for Victorian Schools.](#)

When keeping records of child safety incidents or concerns, the College maintains confidentiality and privacy for students and families in accordance with federal and state privacy legislation.

# Child Safety and Wellbeing Policy

## Review of Child Safe Program and Practice

The College is committed to the continuous improvement of the policies and procedures making up our entire Child Safe Program and of our child safety and wellbeing practices. The Program as a whole is reviewed annually (or earlier if a significant child safety incident occurs at the College or legislation changes) for overall effectiveness and to ensure compliance with all child safety and wellbeing related laws, regulations and standards.

When undertaking these reviews, the College:

- ▶ actively seeks, actions, and incorporates feedback from students, families, the wider College community, staff, volunteers and contractors;
- ▶ analyses any complaints and child safety incidents that may have occurred;
- ▶ communicates any learnings, adjustments or amendments to policy and practice widely throughout the College community.

## Child Safe Procedures

### Reporting Child Safety Incidents or Concerns to the College

Whenever there are concerns that a child or young person is in immediate danger the Police should be called on 000.

Any person, including all Staff, Volunteers, Contractors, parents/carers and students, can at any time report concerns about the wellbeing of a child aged under 17 to Child Protection by:

- ▶ during business hours (8:45am-5:00pm, Monday to Friday), contacting the Child Protection intake service for the local government area where the child resides.
  - North Division Intake 1300 664 977
  - South Division Intake 1300 655 795
  - West Division Intake- Rural and Regional Only 1800 075 599
  - West Division Intake- Metropolitan Only 1300 664 977
- ▶ after hours, telephoning 13 12 78

### Staff

Our Child Safe Program provides detailed guidance for Senior Leadership Team members, staff, volunteers and contractors on how to identify key indicators of child abuse and other harm and how to report child safety incidents or concerns internally at the College.

These reports can be made to a Child Safe Officer/Campus Principal.

Where the incident or concerns involves a Child Safe Officer/Campus Principal or the Executive Principal or a College Board member, internal reports should be made to the Senior Child Safe Officer/Chief Executive Officer. Where the incident or concerns involves the Senior Child Safe Officer/Chief Executive Officer, internal reports should be made to the Chair of the College Board.

Our Child Safe Program also contains detailed guidance for staff, volunteers and contractors about when and how to report child safety incidents or concerns to relevant external authorities.

# Child Safety and Wellbeing Policy

We recognise that some individuals, particularly vulnerable and younger children, face additional vulnerabilities to child abuse and other harm, as well as additional barriers to disclosing child safety incidents or concerns. Our Child Safe Program provides guidance on identifying additional vulnerabilities and barriers, and contains strategies for supporting these individuals to participate in the College community and enabling them to disclose child safety incidents or concerns to the College.

## **Students, Parents/Carers and Community Members**

The College provides students at the College with information about and encourages them to use multiple pathways to raise child safety incidents or concerns about or at the College. We explain these in our Complaints Management policy, and they include informal and formal ways, an ‘anonymous’ way, and through external child advocacy or child safety organisations.

Parents/carers, family members and other community members who have child safety concerns or who suspect that a child or young person associated with the College may be subject to abuse or other harm can contact a Child Safe Officer.

Where the incident or concerns involves a Child Safe Officer/Campus Principal or the Executive Principal or a College Board member, internal reports should be made to the Senior Child Safe Officer/Chief Executive Officer. Where the incident or concerns involves the Senior Child Safe Officer/Chief Executive Officer, internal reports should be made to the Chair of the College Board.

Our Child Safe Officers and their contact

details are listed on our website at [www.ilimcollege.vic.edu.au](http://www.ilimcollege.vic.edu.au).

Communications will be treated confidentially on a ‘need to know basis’.

## **The College’s Response to and External Reporting of Child Safety Incidents or Concerns**

Our Child Safe Program sets out the procedures, consistent with PROTECT Four Critical Actions and Four Critical Actions: Student Sexual Offending, that the College will follow for any child safety incident or concern involving a student, College staff, volunteer, contractor or visitor, or other person connected to the College or the College environment.

It also provides guidance for all staff, volunteers and contractors on their obligations to respond to and report, to relevant external authorities, child safety incidents and concerns.

## **Support for Students, Families and Staff Following Child Safety Incident or Disclosure**

Child safety incidents or concerns can cause trauma and significantly impact on the mental health and wellbeing of children, as well as on their families. In addition to reporting and referral to the relevant authorities, the College plays a central role in addressing this trauma and has a duty of care to ensure that students feel safe and supported at College.

The College employs a range of measures to support students affected by a child safety incident or concern depending on the particular circumstances of the matter and of the student and their family, including but not limited to:

- ▶ Child Safe Officers will work with the student and their family to develop a plan to support the student; and

# Child Safety and Wellbeing Policy

- ▶ support strategies that could be considered for students and/or their families might include offering or organising referrals to internal or external support, such as the College counsellor/psychologist, bi-cultural workers and/or translators, or an external support agency and/or child advocacy organisation which specialises in supporting children impacted by abuse or other harm.

The College offers former students who may disclose historical child safety incidents or concerns from their time at the College similar support.

Witnessing a child safety incident or receiving a disclosure of abuse or other harm can be a distressing experience for staff, volunteers and contractors involved. The College assists impacted staff, volunteers and contractors to access necessary support.

## Implementation and Communication

This Policy is published on our College's public website.

It is provided to new staff and relevant volunteers and contractors at their induction or prior to them commencing their work at the College.

All visitors to the College, including casual volunteers and casual contractors, are provided with information about the Child Safe Policy (including in particular the Child Safe Codes of Conduct and how to report child safety incidents or concerns to the College and to relevant external authorities).

## Breach of the Child Safety Policy

The College enforces this Policy and our Child Safety Code of Conduct. In the event of any non-compliance, we will instigate a review that may result in a range of measures including (depending on the severity of the breach) remedial education, counselling, increased supervision, the restriction of duties, suspension or in the case of serious breaches, termination of employment, contract or engagement/appointment.

## Source of Obligation

This Policy implements, and is to be read and understood in conjunction with Victorian Child Safe Standards, Standard 2, and Ministerial Order 1359, Clause 6.

## Policy Review

A review of this Policy is conducted annually or earlier if required, such as if a significant child safety incident occurs at the College or due to changes in legislation. The Board is responsible for ensuring that this Policy is reviewed and updated as needed and or approving this Policy.