



Bellarine Secondary College

CHILD SAFE POLICY

Policy Number 2.1.9

RATIONALE

Bellarine Secondary College is committed to child safety. The safety, health and wellbeing of students is the first priority of all College staff. Bellarine Secondary College is an inclusive community where all young people are valued members of the community, all are empowered to speak up and all are heard. The Child Safety Policy provides an overview of the key elements of the College's approach to child safety.

PURPOSE

- To ensure all College community members have a clear understanding of the processes and practices of the College in place to ensure children are safe
- To provide guidance to community members on the actions they are expected to take if they become aware of a child's safety being at risk
- To clearly communicate the collective and individual responsibility staff have in maintaining a child safe environment

POLICY STATEMENT

- Bellarine Secondary College is committed to all children being safe, happy and empowered.
- All children have the right to be safe within their community
- The College supports and respects all children, as well as staff and volunteers.
- The College is committed to the safety, participation and empowerment of all children.
- Bellarine Secondary College has zero tolerance of child abuse, and all allegations and safety concerns will be treated very seriously and consistently with robust policies and procedures.
- All legal and moral obligations to contact authorities when concerns are raised about a child's safety will be followed rigorously.
- Bellarine Secondary College is committed to preventing child abuse and identifying risks early, and removing and reducing these risks.
- Bellarine Secondary College has robust human resources and recruitment practices for all staff and volunteers.
- Bellarine Secondary College is committed to regularly training and educating staff and volunteers on child abuse risks.
- The College is committed to the cultural safety of Aboriginal children, the cultural safety of children from culturally and/or linguistically diverse backgrounds, and to providing a safe environment for children with a disability.
- The College has specific policies, procedures and training in place that support the leadership team, staff and volunteers to achieve these commitments.

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



IMPLEMENTATION

Our children

This policy is intended to empower children who are vital and active participants in the college community. The College involves them when making decisions, especially about matters that directly affect them. Their views are listened to and staff respect what they have to say.

The College promotes diversity and tolerance, and people from all walks of life and cultural backgrounds are welcome. In particular Bellarine Secondary College:

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

Our staff and volunteers

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

All of staff and volunteers must agree to abide by the Bellarine Secondary 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.

Training and supervision

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

The College 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. Staff and volunteers are trained to identify, assess, and minimise risks of child abuse and to detect potential signs of child abuse.

Staff and volunteers are supported 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 the College'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 Bellarine Secondary College Duty of Care Policy Number 2.1.2, Child Protection and Child Safe Mandatory Reporting Policy Number 2.1.3 and Child Safe Code of Conduct Policy Number 4.4 that outlines the expectations of employees at Bellarine Secondary College). Any inappropriate behaviour will be reported through appropriate channels, including the Department of Health and Human Services, the Department of Education and Training and Victoria Police, depending on the severity and urgency of the matter.

Recruitment

The College takes all reasonable steps to employ skilled people to work with children. The staff selection process clearly demonstrates commitment to child safety and an awareness of the College's social and legislative responsibilities. Bellarine Secondary College understands that when recruiting staff and volunteers it has ethical as well as legislative obligations.



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The College welcomes applications from Aboriginal peoples, people from culturally and/or linguistically diverse backgrounds and people with a disability.

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.

Selection panels carry out reference checks and police record checks to ensure that appropriate people are recruited. Police record checks are used only for the purposes of recruitment and a copy is kept in the employees' confidential file for future reference. Selection Panels do retain records (but not the actual criminal record) if an applicant's criminal history affected the 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 prior to a decision being made.

Fair procedures for personnel

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

Allegations of abuse and safety concerns will be recorded in detail. Investigation updates will also be documented. All records are securely stored.

If an allegation of abuse or a safety concern is raised, the College provides updates to children and if appropriate families on progress and any actions taken.

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. The College has 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.

Legislative responsibilities

Bellarine Secondary College takes all 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.
- **Failure to protect:** College staff 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.¹
- Any personnel who are **mandatory reporters** must comply with their duties.

Risk management

In Victoria, organisations 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, Bellarine Secondary College proactively manages risks of abuse to children.

¹ 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>.



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The College has risk management strategies (refer to the Child Safe Risk Assessment template Appendix 1 to this policy) 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 in organisations on social media unless the administrative responsibilities are governed by the College and is integral to the student accessing the curriculum).

Regular review

This policy will be reviewed every three years and following significant incidents if they occur. Families and children will have the opportunity to contribute to the review. The College works with local Aboriginal communities, culturally and/or linguistically diverse communities and people with a disability wherever possible.

Allegations, concerns and complaints

Bellarine Secondary College takes all allegations seriously and has practices in place to investigate thoroughly and quickly. College staff and volunteers are trained to deal appropriately with allegations. (Refer to Appendices 2 and 3. Responding to allegations of child abuse)

The College works 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.

All members of the College staff and all volunteers have a responsibility to report an allegation of abuse if they form a reasonable belief that an incident took place (see information about failure to disclose above).

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 observed²
- someone else has raised a suspicion of abuse but is unwilling to report it
- observing suspicious behaviour.

APPENDICES

1. Child Safe Risk Assessment template
2. Child Safe Team
3. Responding to allegations of child abuse flowchart

² 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>



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REFERENCES

Ministerial Order No. 870 December 2015. Child Safe Standards – Managing the risk of child abuse

in schools. Education and Training reform Act 2006

Victorian Registrations and Qualifications Authority. Guidelines to the minimum standards and other requirements for registration of schools including those offering senior secondary courses

Duty of Care Policy Number 2.1.2

Child Protection and Child Safe Mandatory Reporting Policy Number 2.1.3

Child Safe Code of Conduct Policy Number 4.4

EVALUATION

This policy will be reviewed every three years or more frequently if necessary due to changes in regulations or circumstances.

Policy Number	2.1.9
Approval date	November 2016
Review date	November 2019
DET/VRQA required?	Yes

This policy has been developed in response to Ministerial Order 870 – Child Safe Standards.

Policy Consultation Process – The Bellarine Secondary College community (parents, students and staff) is invited to provide feedback regarding this draft policy.



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Appendix 1. Child Safe Risk Assessment template

Risk Event or Environment	Existing risk management strategies or existing controls	Likelihood	Consequence	Current risk rating	New risk management strategies or treatments	Who is responsible?	Target risk rating
No organisational culture of child safety – lack of leadership, public commitment and frequent messaging	Child safety code of conduct Strategies developed to embed culture of child safety	Possible	Severe	Extreme	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Strategies to embed organisational culture of child safety are reviewed Statement of commitment to child safety is publicly available 	Principal, College Council Chair	Low
Inappropriate behaviour is not reported and addressed	Child safety code of conduct Clear child safety reporting procedures Performance management procedures	Unlikely	Severe	High	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Strategies to embed organisational culture of child safety are reviewed Refresher training for staff – see eLearning mandatory reporting module 	Principal, College Council Chair	Low
Unquestioning trust of long term employees and contractors or norms	Strategies developed to embed culture of child safety Clear child safety reporting procedures	Possible	Major	High	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Refresher training for staff – see eLearning mandatory reporting module 	Principal, College Council Chair	Low
Recruitment of an inappropriate person	WWCC or Victorian Institute of Teaching registration	Unlikely	Major	Medium	Processes updated to require: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Criminal history search Pre-employment 	Principal, College Council Chair	Low



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Risk Event or Environment	Existing risk management strategies or existing controls	Likelihood	Consequence	Current risk rating	New risk management strategies or treatments	Who is responsible?	Target risk rating
					reference check includes asking about child safety		
Engagement with children online	Child safety code of conduct Strategies developed to embed culture of child safety	Possible	Moderate	Medium	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Train students and staff to detect inappropriate behaviour Ensure appropriate settings on all student technologies 	Principal, College Council Chair	Low
Unknown people and environments at excursions and camps	Child safety code of conduct Strategies developed to embed culture of child safety Clear child safety reporting procedures	Unlikely	Moderate	Medium	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Assessment of new or changed environments for child safety risks Ensure Code and strategies apply in all school contexts 	Principal, College Council Chair	Low
Ad-hoc contractors on the premises (eg maintenance)	Child safe environments Information and awareness for visitors, staff, volunteers and contractors Adequate monitoring	Unlikely	Moderate	Medium	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Refresher training for frequent contractors 	Principal, College Council Chair	Low



Appendix 2. Child Safe Team





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Appendix 3. Responding to allegations of child abuse

