

Child safety is a shared responsibility. Every person involved in our school has an important role in promoting child safety and wellbeing and promptly raising any issues or concerns about a child's safety. Teachers and employees of the School, have a legal and moral responsibility to respond to situations involving:

- x child abuse
- x allegations of child abuse
- x concern of potential child abuse
- x managing the risk of child abuse
- x providing support to a child at risk of child abuse and to actively maintain a safe

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through a third -party provider for a child or student to use including, but not limited to, locations used for: camps, sport, excursions, TAFE providers, approved homestay accommodation.

- x school staff - in a non-Government school, is an individual working in a school environment who is: directly engaged or employed by a school governing authority; a contracted service provider engaged by the school governing authority to perform child -related work; a minister of religion, a religious leader or an employee or officer of a religious body associated with the school.
- x school governing authority – a) the proprietor of a school, including a person

Exposure to Domestic Violence

x reinforce high standards of respectful behaviour between students and adults, and between students

x ensure that the selection, supervision, and management practices of all staff are child safe

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8. Establishing a Culturally Safe Environment

At Oakleigh Grammar, we are committed to establishing an inclusive and culturally safe school where the strengths of Aboriginal culture, values and practices are respected.

We think about how every

- x Aboriginal children and young people
- x children from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds
- x children and young people with disabilities
- x children unable to live at home or impacted by family violence
- x international students
- x other vulnerable students

Our Student Welfare and Behaviour Management provides more information about the measures we have in place to support diversity and equity.

12. Suitable Staff and Volunteers

At Oakleigh Grammar 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.

a. Staff Recruitment

Reasonable steps will be taken to ensure that Oakleigh Grammar engages the most suitable and appropriate people to work with children. When recruiting staff, we follow our Recruitment and Employment Policy.

When engaging staff to perform child -related work, we:

- x sight, verify and record the person's Working with Children clearance or equivalent background check such as a Victorian teaching registration
- x collect and record:
 - o proof of the person's identity and any professional or other qualifications
 - o the person's history of working with children
 - o references that address suitability for the job and working with children.

- x Child Safety Reporting Obligations & Procedures Policy(Incl. Mandatory Reporting)
- x any other child safety and wellbeing information that school leadership considers

X

Any inappropriate behaviour will be reported through appropriate channels, including the Department of Health and Human Services and Victoria Police, depending on the severity and urgency of the matter. It is the school's responsibility to report an allegation of abuse if we have a reasonable belief that an incident took place (refer Child Safety Reporting Obligations & Procedures Policy (Incl. Mandatory Reporting))

Factors contributing to reasonable belief may be:

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

Concerns are to be raised with the Principal, Child Safety Officer (Deputy Principal - Student Wellbeing & Operations) or member of the Senior Leadership Team in the first instance.

If any staff member believes a child is at risk of abuse/neglect they are to contact the Principal or Deputy Principal – Student Wellbeing & Operations (Child Safety Officer) or a member of the Senior Leadership Team (DPs Coordinators) and collectively make follow the Four Critical Actions for Schools . (See Appendix).

As soon as any immediate health and safety concerns are addressed, and relevant school staff have been informed, we will ensure our school follows:

- x the Four Critical Actions for complaints and concerns relating to adult behaviour towards a child
- x the Four Critical Actions: Student Sexual Offending for complaints and concerns relating to student sexual offending

The staff member should immediately contact Victoria Police if a child is at risk or a criminal offence may have been committed.

Where the student is over the age of 18 and discloses or is the alleged victim of any type of abuse, as outlined in this Policy, the School will provide support to the student and contact Child Protection and the Police immediately for further investigation.

In the case of a reportable conduct allegation i.e. employee misconduct involving the care, supervision and authority over children, the School will make a report to the Commission for Children and Young People (CCYP) and VIT.

14.1 Procedure for supporting our students

Actions to support or assist children who disclose child abuse or are otherwise linked to suspected child abuse include the following:

- Try and separate them from the other children discreetly and listen to them carefully.
- Let the child use their own words, at their own pace to explain what has occurred.
- Reassure the child that you take what they are saying seriously, and that it is not their fault and that they are doing the right thing. Don't dismiss what they say. It takes courage for a child to tell about abuse.
- Explain to them that this information may need to be shared with others, including their parent/carer and specific people in the School
- Do not make promises to the child such as promising not to tell anyone about the incident, except that you will do your best to keep them safe.
- Don't ask lots of questions.
- Make sure the child is safe and let them know you will do your best to stop them being harmed.
- Provide them with an Incident Report form to complete, or complete it together, if you think the child is able to do this.
- Do not leave the child in a distressed state. If they seem at ease in your company, stay with them. Take measures to protect the child until the allegation has been resolved.
- Explain to them what you will need to do next.
- Ensure ongoing support is in place. Ensure they understand who they may continue to speak with including counselling (individual and/or family), our School Chaplain, connection with a trusted staff member.

In consultation with the school counsellor, Deputy Principal - Student Wellbeing & Operations and Deputy Principal – Professional Culture & Junior School/ Middle School Coordinator/Senior School Coordinator and external wellbeing professionals, a Student Support Plan will be developed for any student that discloses child abuse or are otherwise linked to suspected child abuse. This may involve direct support or referral to external professionals.

The roles and responsibilities of staff members in supporting children may include the following:

- xActing as a support person for the child or young person.
- xAttending DHHS Child Protection interviews
- xObserving and monitoring the child's behaviour in an ongoing basis

x Liaising with professionals.

14.2 Protecting the Student

Following a report, it is important to protect confidentiality and the interests of the child and family at all times.

It is important to note that:

- x DHHS will only interview the student if he/she is agreeable
- x The family will not be contacted until it is believed there is a case and the student is at risk
- x If the incident which caused the report to be made has occurred in the past - the student may be seen to be no longer at risk and no further action may be taken
- x The identity of the person making a notification will be kept confidential (except when that information is required in a court case) unless that person gives permission for the information to be divulged. Such confidentiality should also be requested by the Child Safety Officer and any other person who may become aware that a notification is to be, or has been, given

Throughout the entire process of observation, discussion and reporting, the interests of the student and their family should be protected from unnecessary disclosure of information concerning abuse

Following the making of a report, any investigation that takes place by that external authority (i.e. DHHS, the police or the Commission) is the responsibility of that authority.

14.3 Fair Procedures for Personnel

The safety and wellbeing of children is our primary concern. We are also fair and just to our

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, including investigation updates. All records are securely stored in a child's central file.

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.

15. Victorian Reportable Conduct Scheme

The Victorian Reportable Conduct Scheme is aimed at improving a school's response to an allegation of child abuse and/or neglect by an employee or volunteer. The Commission

for Children and Young People (CCYP) is responsible for administering the scheme.

The Reportable Conduct Scheme has been designed to ensure that the CCYP will be aware of any allegation of employee misconduct involving the care, supervision and authority over children. The CCYP is able to share information with the WWC Unit, VIT and Police, to better prevent and protect children from abuse.

Reportable Conduct

18. Records Management

We acknowledge that good records management practices are a critical element of child safety and wellbeing and manage our records in accordance with our Records and Archives Management policy.

Records which are reasonably likely to be needed for current or future legal proceedings, including any civil or criminal proceeding or any inquiry in which evidence may be given before a court or person acting judicially such as a Royal Commission or Board of Inquiry, cannot be destroyed. Even if the minimum requirement set out in a RDA has passed.

This retention and disposal authority covers records concerning allegations and incidents of child sexual abuse. It includes reporting, inquiring and investigation of allegations, as well as the provision of support and redress to individuals.

It also includes the development, implementation and review of organisational policy and guidelines in relation to the prevention, identification, and response to child sexual abuse incidents and allegations. This includes records o

21. Other Related Documents

x Four Critical Actions

22. Policy Status and Review

The Principal and Executive Leadership Team are responsible for reviewing and updating the Child Safety and Wellbeing Policy annually and after any major incident. The review will include input from students, parents/carers and the school community.

Appendix 1:

The Child Safe Standards

Standard 1: 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.

Standard 2: Child safety and wellbeing is embedded in organisational leadership, governance and culture.

Standard 3: Children and young people are empowered about their rights, participate in decisions affecting them and are taken seriously.

Standard 4: Families and communities are informed and involved in promoting child safety and wellbeing.

Standard 5: Equity is upheld and diverse needs respected in policy and practice.

Standard 6: People working with children and young people are suitable and supported to reflect child safety and wellbeing values in practice.

Standard 7: Processes for complaints and concerns are child-focused.

Standard 8: Staff and volunteers are equipped with the knowledge, skills and awareness to keep children and young people safe through ongoing education and training.

Standard 9: Physical and online environments promote safety and wellbeing while minimising the opportunity for children and young people to be harmed.

Standard 10: Implementation of the Child Safe Standards is regularly reviewed and improved.

Standard 11: Policies and procedures document how the organisation is safe for children and young people.