

Assumption College Kilmore



CHILD PROTECTION AND SAFETY POLICY

INTRODUCTION

Assumption College has developed the following Child Protection and Safety Policy. This policy is an overarching document that provides key elements of our approach to protecting children from abuse. It is designed to be communicated through our public website as well as through other mediums such as newsletters, our annual report and in induction and welcome packs for staff and volunteers.

PURPOSE AND SCOPE

Child abuse includes sexual offences, grooming, physical violence, serious emotional or psychological harm, serious neglect and a child's exposure to family violence. Assumption College is committed to the protection of all children from all forms of child abuse and demonstrates this commitment through the implementation of a comprehensive Child Protection Program designed to keep children safe.

This policy provides the framework for:

- the development of work systems, practices, policies and procedures that promote child protection within the College;
- the creation of a positive and robust child protection culture;
- the promotion and open discussion of child protection issues within the College; and
- complying with all laws, regulations and standards relevant to child protection in Victoria

CHILD SAFE PRINCIPLES

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

1. All children have the right to be safe.
2. The welfare and best interests of the child are paramount.
3. The views of the child and a child's privacy must be respected.
4. Clear expectations for appropriate behaviour with children are established in our Child Safety Code of Conduct and Staff and Student Professional Boundaries Policy.
5. The safety of children is dependent upon the existence of a child safe culture.
6. Child safety awareness is promoted and openly discussed within our College community.
7. Procedures are in place to screen all staff, Direct Contact Volunteers** third party contractors and external education providers who have direct contact with children.
8. Child safety and protection is everyone's responsibility.
9. Child protection training is mandatory for all staff and Direct Contact Volunteers.
10. Procedures for responding to alleged or suspected incidents of child abuse are simple and accessible for all members of the College community.

11. Children from culturally or linguistically diverse backgrounds have the right to special care and support including those who identify as Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander.
12. Children who have any kind of disability have the right to special care and support.

****Direct Contact Volunteers** are those volunteers that are involved in providing support, guidance and supervision directly to students and could potentially have direct unsupervised contact with students during the normal course of providing the volunteer service.

Examples of Direct Contact Volunteer activities may include volunteers involved in College camps and excursions, coaching sporting teams or assisting in learning activities.

CHILD PROTECTION PROGRAM

Assumption College is committed to the effective implementation of our Child Protection Program and ensuring that it is appropriately reviewed and updated. We adopt a risk management approach by identifying key risk indicators and assessing child safety risks based on a range of factors including the nature of our College's activities, physical and online environments and the characteristics of the student body.

Our Child Protection Program relates to all aspects of protecting children from abuse and establishes work systems, practices, policies and procedures to protect children from abuse. It includes:

- clear information as to what constitutes child abuse and associated key risk indicators;
- clear procedures for responding to and reporting allegations of child abuse;
- strategies to support, encourage and enable staff, volunteers (direct and indirect), third party contractors, external education providers, parents and students to understand, identify, discuss and report child protection matters;
- procedures for recruiting and screening staff and Direct Contact Volunteers;
- pastoral care strategies designed to empower students and keep them safe;
- policies with respect to cultural diversity and students with disabilities;
- a child protection training program;
- information regarding the steps to take after a disclosure of abuse to protect, support and assist children;
- 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);
- As system for continuous improvement and review.

As a part of Assumption College's induction process, all staff and Direct Contact Volunteers are required to complete a selection of training modules on the content of our Child Protection Program.

All staff, Direct Contact Volunteers are provided with additional, ongoing child protection training at least annually.

Staff, volunteers (direct and indirect), third party contractors and external education providers are supported and supervised by the College's Child Safety Officers to ensure that they are compliant with the College's approach to child protection.

RESPONSIBILITIES

Society as a whole shares responsibility for promoting the safety and protection of children from abuse. In the College context, all members of the College community have their role to play – teachers, staff, administrators, parents/carers, volunteers and students. That said, the college's leadership team are committed to leading from the front and engaging in a preventative, proactive and participatory approach to child protection issues.

Students are encouraged to take an active role in developing and maintaining a child safe environment at the College and are provided with opportunities to contribute and give feedback in the development of the College's policies and practices. Students are also made aware of the avenues available to them to report or disclose abuse or concerns for their safety or the safety of others.

Child protection is everyone's responsibility. At Assumption College all members of the Marist Schools Australia (MSA) Regional Council and the staff, as well as direct and indirect volunteers,

have a shared responsibility for contributing to the safety and protection of children. Specific responsibilities include:

MSA Regional Council:

Each member of the MSA Regional Council is required to ensure that appropriate resources are made available to allow the College's Child Protection and Safety Policy and the Child Protection Program to be effectively implemented within the College and are responsible for holding the Principal and leadership team accountable for effective implementation.

The MSA Regional Council is required to approve the College's Child Protection and Safety Policy and to ensure the Child Protection Program is being effectively implemented. Each member must:

- acquire and keep up-to-date knowledge of child protection matters;
- have an understanding of the nature of the College's operations and the child protection risks associated with these operations;
- ensure that the College has appropriate resources to effectively implement its Child Protection and Safety Policy and Child Protection Program;
- ensure that the College has appropriate processes for receiving and considering information regarding child protection issues and is able to respond in a timely way to that information;
- ensure that the College has and implements processes to ensure that the College is complying with its legal and regulatory obligations with respect to child protection; and
- ensure that the College has and implements processes to ensure ongoing monitoring to verify the provision and use of the resources that have been allocated to the management of child protection issues within the College and their effectiveness.

The Principal:

The Principal is responsible, and will be accountable for, taking all practical measures to ensure that this Child Protection and Safety Policy and the College's Child Protection Program are implemented effectively and that a strong and sustainable child protection culture is maintained within the College.

The Principal is ultimately responsible, and will be accountable for, taking all practical measures to ensure that:

- The College's Child Protection and Safety Policy and Child Protection Program are implemented effectively with available resources effectively deployed;
- appropriate College Child Safety Officers are appointed and trained;
- a strong and sustainable child protection culture is maintained within the College;
- any child protection incidents arising are dealt with professionally and in a timely manner;
- the MSA Regional Council receives regular reports with respect to child protection matters; and
- the College is complying with its legal and regulatory obligations with respect to child protection.

Child Safety Officers:

A number of senior staff members are nominated as the College's Child Safety Officers. Our Child Safety Officers receive additional specialised training with respect to child protection issues. They are the first point of contact for raising child protection concerns within the College. They are also responsible for championing child protection within the College and assisting in coordinating responses to child protection incidents.

Key responsibilities for the College's Child Safety Officers include:

- having a good working knowledge of the College's Child Protection and Safety Policy and Child Protection Program;
- promptly managing the College's response to an allegation or disclosure of child abuse, and ensuring that the allegation or disclosure is taken seriously;
- ensuring that the College's Child Protection and Safety Policy is clearly communicated to all key stakeholders including students, parents, staff and volunteers (direct and indirect);
- ensuring that the College's Child Protection Safety Policy and Child Protection Programs are being implemented effectively;

- ensuring that there are clear procedures to allow people to report child protection concerns within the College;
- review and assess the effectiveness of the College's response to a child protection incident;
- promoting child protection issues within the College community and responding to general queries with respect to the College's Child Protection and Safety Policy and Child Protection Program;
- acting as "Child Protection Champions" and ensuring a strong and sustainable child protection culture is embedded within the College;
- ensuring that all staff and Direct Contact Volunteers undertake child protection training so that they are able to identify signs of abuse, understand how to respond and when to make a referral either internally or to an external agency;
- being the first point of contact for staff, or other members of the College community, raising child protection concerns within the College;
- assisting the Principal and other senior staff members in coordinating appropriate responses to child protection incidents including liaising with the Police and other external agencies and responding to a child who makes, or is affected by, an allegation of child abuse; and
- ensuring the College's Child Protection and Safety Policy and Child Protection Program are reviewed on a regular basis by an appropriate member of staff.

In the event that one of the College's Child Safety Officer cannot perform their role, for example due to conflicts of interest or absence, these duties must be performed by either another College Child Safety Officer or the Principal.

Staff Members:

All staff are required to be familiar with the content of our Child Protection and Safety Policy, our Child Protection Program and their legal obligations with respect to the reporting of child abuse.

It is each individual's responsibility to be aware of key risk indicators of child abuse, to be observant, and to raise any concerns they may have relating to child abuse with one of the College's Child Safety Officers and/or with external agencies where required.

Direct Contact Volunteers:

All Direct Contact Volunteers, as defined in this policy, are required to be familiar with the content of our Child Protection and Safety Policy and our Child Safety Code of Conduct and their legal obligations with respect to the reporting of child abuse.

It is each individual's responsibility to be aware of key risk indicators of child abuse, to be observant, and to raise any concerns they may have relating to child abuse with one of the College's Child Safety Officers.

Direct Contact Volunteers are those volunteers that are involved in providing support, guidance and supervision directly to students and could potentially have direct unsupervised contact with students during the normal course of providing the volunteer service.

Examples of Direct Contact Volunteer activities may include volunteers involved in College camps or excursions, coaching sporting teams or assisting in learning activities.

Indirect Contact Volunteers:

Indirect Contact Volunteers (or 'indirect volunteers') are those volunteers who are involved in providing support and services whilst not directly assisting a specific group of students. Indirect contact volunteers are not responsible for supervising students and would not have "unsupervised" contact with students during the normal course of providing the volunteer service.

All indirect volunteers are responsible for contributing to the safety and protection of children in the College environment.

All indirect volunteers are required by the College to be familiar with our Child Protection and Safety Policy and our Child Protection Program.

Examples of Indirect Contact Volunteer activities may include assisting with College functions, or the College canteen and fundraising barbeque.

Third Party Contractors:

All Third Party Contractors (service providers) engaged by the College are responsible for contributing to the safety and protection of children in the College environment.

All service providers engaged by the College are required by the College to be familiar with our Child Protection and Safety Policy and our Child Protection Program.

The College may include this requirement in the written agreement between it and the service provider.

External Education Providers:

An external education provider is any organisation that the College has arranged to deliver a specified course of study that is part of the curriculum, to a student or students enrolled at the College.

The delivery of such a course may take place on College premises or elsewhere.

All external education providers engaged by the College are responsible for contributing to the safety and protection of children in the College environment.

All external education providers engaged by the College are required by the College to be familiar with our Child Protection and Safety Policy and our Child Protection Program.

Assumption College may include this requirement in the written agreement between it and the external education provider.

REPORTING CONCERNS

Our Child Protection Program provides detailed guidance for members of staff and Direct Contact Volunteers as to how to identify key risk indicators of child abuse and how to report child abuse concerns to one of our College's nominated Child Safety Officers. It also contains detailed procedures with respect to the reporting of child abuse incidents to relevant authorities.

Third party contractors, external education providers, indirect contact volunteers, students, parents/carers or other community members who have concerns that a child may be subject to abuse are asked to contact one of the College's Child Safety Officers.

Communication will be treated confidentially on a "need to know" basis.

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

RELATED POLICIES AND PROCEDURES

- Risk Management Program
- Compliance Program
- Human Resources Program
- Student Duty of Care Program
- Occupational Health and Safety Program
- Recruitment and Selection Procedures
- Induction Procedures

POLICY REVIEW

The Business Manager will conduct an annual review the College's Child Protection and Safety Policy and report the findings to a meeting of the Senior Leadership Team.

ENQUIRIES

If you would like further information about this policy, please contact the College Principal.