

CHILD SAFETY AND WELLBEING PROCEDURE

This *Child Safety and Wellbeing Procedure* (Procedure) must be followed to support the implementation of the *Child Safety and Wellbeing Policy*.

1.0 PURPOSE

The purpose of this Procedure is to outline how St Michael's Catholic Primary School, Heyfield (the School) implements its *Child Safety and Wellbeing Policy* (Policy) by setting out clear roles, responsibilities and actions to prevent child abuse, respond to concerns, and promote the safety, wellbeing and inclusion of all children and students.

This Procedure supports compliance with Ministerial Order No. 1359 (Child Safe Standards) and ensures that child safety and wellbeing are embedded in everyday school practices and decision making.

2.0 SCOPE

This Procedure is informed by the *Child Safety and Wellbeing Policy*.

This Procedure applies to all school staff, volunteers, contractors, School Advisory Committee members, service providers and any other adults who work with or have contact with children and students at the School.

It applies across all school operations and environments, including on school premises, during school activities, camps and excursions, online and digital environments, and any other settings where the School has responsibility for child safety and wellbeing.

This procedure supports the implementation of the *School's Child Safety and Wellbeing Policy* and ensures compliance with Ministerial Order No. 1359 (Child Safe Standards).

3.0 CONTEXT

St Michael's Primary School, Heyfield is a Catholic primary school serving students from Foundation to Year 6 in a rural community. Drawing enrolments from Heyfield and surrounding areas, we are part of the St Michael's Heyfield–Cowwarr and St Mary's Maffra Parishes, with our other parish school being St Mary's Primary School, Maffra.

4.0 PROCEDURES

4.1 Child Safety Code of Conduct

- 4.1.1 The School provides students with a Child Safety Code of Conduct that clearly sets the boundaries and expectations for appropriate behaviour between adults and

students in all physical and online environments. (see Appendix 1)

- 4.1.2 The School provides parents and carers with a Child Safety Code of Conduct that outlines expected standards of behaviour for adults interacting with students and identifies behaviours that are not acceptable.
- 4.1.3 The School ensures that students are informed about what behaviours are acceptable and unacceptable, so they are clear and confident about what to expect from adults at the School.
- 4.1.4 The Child Safety Code of Conduct includes clear processes for reporting inappropriate behaviour, which are communicated to students, parents, carers, staff and volunteers.

4.2 Managing Risks to Child Safety and Wellbeing

- 4.2.1 The School identifies, assesses and manages risks to child safety and wellbeing across all physical and online school environments.
- 4.2.2 Identified risks are managed through the School's child safety and wellbeing policies, procedures and practices, and through activity-specific risk management processes.
- 4.2.3 Activity-specific risk registers are developed and maintained for higher-risk activities and settings, including but not limited to:
 - school camps and excursions
 - off-site activities
 - facilities, programs and services provided by third-party providers for student use.
- 4.2.4 The School maintains a Child Safety Risk Register to:
 - record identified risks related to child abuse and harm
 - document controls and actions implemented to manage those risks.
- 4.2.5 The School Leadership Team monitors and evaluates the effectiveness of risk controls recorded in the Child Safety Risk Register at least annually, and following any significant child safety incident or identified emerging risk.
- 4.2.6 Risks are identified through staff observations, student and family feedback, incident reports and regular review of school environments, including classrooms, playgrounds, toilets, online platforms and off-site settings.

The school takes steps to ensure the safety and inclusion of vulnerable students by implementing appropriate adjustments and supports.

4.3 Establishing a Culturally Safe Environment

- 4.3.1 The School embeds a culturally safe environment within leadership, governance and school culture by respecting and celebrating Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples' histories, cultures, values and practices through :Begin assemblies, liturgies and significant events with an Acknowledgement of Country, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander perspectives are incorporated across

curriculum areas and display Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander flags, artwork and signage in shared spaces and classrooms.

- 4.3.2 The School implements practices that recognise and support the relationship between culture, identity and cultural safety for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students through : Staff building inclusive classroom environments that respect and affirm students' cultural identities, incorporate discussions about identity, respect and diversity into Religious Education and Wellbeing programs, building positive relationships with students and families to understand and respect individual backgrounds.
- 4.3.3 The School supports students to express their cultural and spiritual identity in a safe and inclusive manner through : Providing opportunities for students to share their culture through class activities, presentations or storytelling, encourage student voice through SRC to promote inclusion and respect.
- 4.3.4 The School provides opportunities for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students, families and local Aboriginal communities to participate in and influence school planning procedures and activities through : Engaging families in school events and encourage their voice in planning and feedback, seek opportunities to connect with local Aboriginal organisations or networks .
- 4.3.5 The School has developed the following strategies to promote cultural safety in our school community:
 - embedding respectful and safe behaviours as core school expectations, explicitly teaching inclusion, respect and diversity through wellbeing and learning programs, promoting student voice and participation.

4.4 Student Voice and Empowerment

- 4.4.1 The School creates and maintains an inclusive and supportive environment that encourages students and families to contribute to the School's child safety approach and understand their rights and responsibilities through Explicitly teaching the school wide expectations and values such as respect for self, others and the environment, and linking these to safe behaviours. Delivering wellbeing and child safety lessons through programs such as Inform and Empower and Resilience Project, and including topics like speaking up, trusted adults and respectful relationships#.
- 4.4.2 The School implements strategies to ensure that all student voices are heard, including the voices of students who may find it harder to speak up or be heard through regular SRC meetings where students raise ideas, concerns and feedback about school life, differentiated support for students, creating a classroom culture where all contributions are valued and respected
- 4.4.3 The School supports students to feel safe and confident to speak up by recognising and responding to diverse forms of communication, including verbal and non-verbal cues, behaviour, play, drawings and body language.
- 4.4.4 The School empowers all students to express their views, contribute to school life and provide feedback on school-wide decisions through Student leaders helping to run assemblies, establishing student leadership roles, student suggestion box, buddy program, celebrating student contributions to positive behaviour and

inclusion at assembly.

- 4.4.5 The School considers student views when making decisions, including during the development and implementation of child friendly policy and procedures.
- 4.4.6 The School reinforces respectful relationships between students and promotes peer support and a sense of belonging through whole-school approaches such as behaviour support frameworks, codes of conduct and school values .
- 4.4.7 The School informs students of their rights and builds their skills and confidence to recognise unsafe situations, speak up and act on concerns relating to themselves or their peers through the use of student-friendly posters and visuals, linking learning to the school wide positive behaviour values.
- 4.4.8 The School ensures students know who to speak to if they feel worried or unsafe and provides accessible information to students and families about how to report concerns through student-created child safety posters, explicitly teaching students how to report concerns or ask for help, including child safety and reporting information in newsletters and communication with families, class meetings.
- 4.4.9 When responding to complaints or concerns, the School listens to and takes seriously the complainant's account, checks understanding, supports the student, and keeps the student and their parents or carers informed of progress, as appropriate.
- 4.4.10 Participation in child safety awareness initiatives, including Child Safety Week activities and the Australia's Biggest Child Safety Lesson.

4.5 Family Engagement

- 4.5.1 The School's families and the school community have an important role in monitoring and promoting children's safety and wellbeing, and helping children to raise any concerns.
- 4.5.2 To support family engagement, at the School we are committed to providing families and community with accessible information about our school's child safe policies and practices, and involving them in our approach to child safety and wellbeing.
- 4.5.3 The School creates opportunities for families to have input into the development and review of its child safety policies and practices and encourages them to raise any concerns and ideas for improvement.
- 4.5.4 The School does this by:

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Newsletters, email update, School Advisory Committee

- 4.5.5 Ensuring all our child safety policies and procedures will be available for students and parents/guardians/carers at <https://www.stmheyfield.catholic.edu.au/> and Reception
- 4.5.6 Newsletters and emails inform families and the school community of any significant updates to the School's child safety policies or processes and strategies

or initiatives that we are taking to ensure student safety.

4.5.7 PROTECT Child Safety posters are displayed across the school in the front foyer, staff room, reception area, teacher office.

4.5.8 We engage families and communities in our child safety approach sharing our school values and behaviour expectations, discussing wellbeing during Parent Teacher meetings and Parent Support Group meetings.

4.6 Diversity and Equity

4.6.1 As a child safe organisation, the School celebrates the rich diversity of its students, families and community, and promotes respectful environments that are free from discrimination by embedding school values of respect for self, others and the environment across all settings and explicitly teaching inclusion, respect and diversity through wellbeing programs. The School's focus is on wellbeing and growth for all.

4.6.2 The School recognises that every child has unique skills, strengths and experiences to draw on.

4.6.3 The School pays particular attention to individuals and groups of children and young people in our community with additional and specific needs. This includes tailoring our child safety strategies and supports to the needs of:

- Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children and young people
- children from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds
- children unable to live at home or impacted by family violence
- international students
- children and young people who identify as LGBTIQ+.

4.6.4 Other school strategies and actions for diversity and equity are working closely with the DOSCEL supports system in relation to identifying and supporting students with diverse backgrounds, regular staff Whole School Approach to Positive Behaviour Support Professional Development.

4.7 Suitable School Staff and Volunteers

4.7.1 At the School, we apply robust child safe recruitment, induction, training, and supervision practices to ensure that all school staff, contractors, and volunteers are suitable to work with children.

4.7.2 School Staff Recruitment

4.7.3 When recruiting school staff, the School follows the Recruitment and Engagement Policy, Procedure and associated guidelines.

4.7.4 When engaging school staff to perform child-related work, the School:

- ensures Child Safety is a key focus in the selection and employment process
- sights, verifies and records the person's Working with Children clearance (previously called a Working with Children Check or WWCC) evidence or

equivalent background check such as a Victorian Institute of Teaching (VIT) registration

- collects and records:
 - proof of the person’s identity and any professional or other qualifications
 - the person’s history of working with children
 - references that address suitability for the position and working with children.

4.7.5 School Staff Induction

4.7.6 All newly appointed school staff will be expected to participate in the School’s Child Safety and Wellbeing induction program. The program will include a focus on the following:

- *Child Safety and Wellbeing Policy* (this document)
- *Child Safety Code of Conduct*
- *Protection of Children Policy and Procedure*
- *Mandatory Reporting Policy*
- *Guide to Reporting Conduct under the Reportable Conduct Scheme*
- *Child and Family Violence Information Sharing Schemes Policy and Procedure*
- Any other child safety and wellbeing information that DOSCEL and/or school leadership considers appropriate to the nature of the role.

4.7.7 Ongoing Supervision and Management of School Staff

4.7.8 All school staff engaged in child-connected work are supervised appropriately to ensure that their behaviour towards children is safe and appropriate. Where it is not practical or desirable for school staff such as teachers to be directly supervised in their classrooms, the school has strategies in place to provide support and supervision of these school staff.

4.7.9 School staff are monitored and assessed to ensure their continued suitability for child-connected work. This is by maintaining up-to-date WWCC/VIT registration and compliance requirements and Annual Review meetings.

4.7.10 Inappropriate behaviour towards children and young people is managed promptly and in accordance with the School’s and DOSCEL’s policies and our legal obligations. Child safety and wellbeing are paramount.

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4.7.11 Suitability of Volunteers

4.7.12 All volunteers comply with the Recruitment and Engagement Policy which describes how schools must assess the suitability of prospective volunteers and outlines expectations in relation to child safety and wellbeing induction and training, and supervision and management.

4.8 Child Safety Knowledge, Skills and Awareness

4.8.1 Ongoing training and education are essential to ensuring that school staff understand their roles and responsibilities and develop their capacity to effectively

address child safety and wellbeing matters.

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

4.8.3 School staff child safety and wellbeing training is delivered at least annually and includes guidance on:

- the School'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
- how to identify and mitigate child safety and wellbeing risks in the school environment.

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

4.8.5 The school further supports staff to build their knowledge, skills and awareness of child safety and wellbeing through: staff briefings and updates on child safety, including emerging issues and school-based procedures, opportunities for staff to engage in scenario-based discussions and case studies to strengthen confidence in responding to concerns, participation in relevant external training or network opportunities where appropriate.

4.9 School Advisory Committee training and education

4.9.1 The School Advisory Committee is trained at least annually, to ensure it is equipped with the knowledge required to support the Principal in making decisions in the best interests of student safety and wellbeing, and to identify and mitigate child safety and wellbeing risks in our school environment. 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 school environment
- the School's child safety and wellbeing policies, procedures, codes and practices.

4.10 Complaints and Reporting Processes

4.10.1 The School fosters a culture that encourages school staff, volunteers, students,

parents/guardians/carers and the school community to raise concerns and complaints. This makes it more difficult for breaches of the code of conduct, misconduct or abuse to occur and remain hidden.

4.10.2 The School has clear pathways for raising complaints and concerns and responding, and this is documented in the DOSCEL Complaints and Grievances Management Policy and the school complaint-handling process. The Complaints and Grievances Management Policy and the school complaint-handling process can be found at <https://www.stmheyfield.catholic.edu.au/our-school/policies/>

4.10.3 If there is an incident, disclosure, allegation or suspicion of child abuse, all school staff and volunteers (including School Advisory Committee members) follow DOSCEL policies to address complaints and concerns of child abuse made by or in relation to a child or student, school staff, volunteers, contractors, service providers, visitors or any other person while connected to the school. DOSCEL policies followed by school staff are the:

- *Protection of Children Policy and Procedure*
- *Mandatory Reporting Policy*
- *Guide to Reporting Conduct under the Reportable Conduct Scheme*
- *Child and Family Violence Information Sharing Schemes Policy and Procedure.*

4.10.4 As soon as any immediate health and safety concerns are addressed, and relevant school staff have been informed, the School follows:

- the Four Critical Actions for complaints and concerns relating to adult behaviour towards a child
- the Four Critical Actions: Student Sexual Offending for complaints and concerns relating to student sexual offending.
- The Anti-Bullying and Prevention Policy
<https://www.stmheyfield.catholic.edu.au/our-school/policies/> covers complaints and concerns relating to student physical violence or other harmful behaviours.

4.11 Review of Child Safety Practices

4.11.1 The School reviews and improves its policy every two years or after any significant child safety incident.

4.11.2 The School analyses any complaints, concerns, and safety incidents to improve policy and practice

4.11.3 The School acts with transparency and shares pertinent learnings and review outcomes with school staff and the school community.

4.11.4 The School reflects on incidents, concerns and feedback to inform improvements.

5.0 ROLES, RESPONSIBILITIES AND ACCOUNTABILITIES

ROLE	RESPONSIBILITY	ACCOUNTABILITY
DOSCEL Board	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Provide governance oversight for child safety and wellbeing • Ensure child safety is embedded in strategic planning and decision-making • Participate in annual child safety training 	Accountable for oversight and assurance that the School complies with Ministerial Order No. 1359
Principal	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Lead the implementation of the Child Safety and Wellbeing Policy and Procedure • Ensure systems, resources and practices support compliance with the Child Safe Standards • Respond to and manage child safety concerns in accordance with legal and policy requirements 	Accountable for day-to-day compliance with Ministerial Order No. 1359
School Leadership Team	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Implement child safety strategies across school operations • Identify, assess and manage child safety and wellbeing risks • Monitor and review the effectiveness of child safety controls 	Accountable to the Principal for effective implementation and monitoring
Child Safety Officer / Designated Staff Member	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Act as a point of contact for child safety concerns • Support reporting, record-keeping and information sharing processes • Provide advice to staff and students on child safety matters 	Accountable to the Principal for operational child safety support
School Staff	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Uphold the Child Safety Code of Conduct • Participate in child safety training and supervision • Identify and report concerns, suspicions or disclosures of child abuse or harm 	Accountable to the Principal for complying with policies, procedures and legal obligations
Volunteers and Contractors	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Comply with the Child Safety Code of Conduct and school procedures • Participate in induction and supervision as required • Report child safety concerns to the School 	Accountable to the Principal or delegate for compliance with child safety requirements
Students	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Engage respectfully with others • Participate in student voice and empowerment opportunities • Raise concerns about safety for themselves or others 	Supported by the School to exercise their rights safely

ROLE	RESPONSIBILITY	ACCOUNTABILITY
Parents / Carers and Families	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Support the School's child safety approach • Engage with policies and procedures • Raise concerns or complaints where required 	Shared responsibility for promoting child safety and wellbeing
Diocese of Sale Catholic Education Limited	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Provide policies, procedures, guidance and training • Support schools to meet legal and regulatory obligations 	Accountable for system-level support and compliance

6.0 COMMUNICATION

This Procedure is available on the School website and provided to parents upon request.

This Procedure is available to staff through staff portal and staff are annually upskilled in support of the child safety obligations.

7.0 PROCEDURE INFORMATION

Procedure Owner	St Michael's Catholic Primary School, Heyfield
Approving Authority	Principal
Risk Rating	Medium
Implementation	March 2026
Review Date	2028