



Alkira
Secondary College

Personalised learning for all. Respect for the individual learner.

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CHILD SAFETY CODE OF CONDUCT Policy

Rationale (statement of commitment to child safety)

Child protection is a shared responsibility between all employees, workers, contractors, associates, and members of the Alkira SC community. The safety and wellbeing of our students form a central and fundamental responsibility of our College and compliments our vision and values of: Respect, Integrity, Care and Excellence.

We are committed to Zero tolerance of child abuse; including physical violence, sexual offences, serious emotional or psychological abuse and serious neglect. It is our moral and legal responsibility to create a nurturing school environment where children and young people are respected, their voices are heard and they are safe and feel safe. All children, regardless of their gender, race, religious beliefs, age disability, sexual orientation, or family or social background, have equal rights to protection from abuse. Alkira SC affirms our commitment towards-

- The support and respect all children, as well as our staff and volunteers.
- Actively working towards listening to and empowering children.
- Creating systems to protect children from abuse and will take all allegations and concerns seriously; having mechanisms in place to ensure consistency in line with school, DET and DHS protocols.
- Promoting cultural safety and safe learning environments for Aboriginal children, the disabled and children from culturally / linguistically diverse backgrounds.

Definitions:

(The following definitions are taken from *Ministerial Order No. 870* (Child Safe Standards- Managing the Risk of Child Abuse in Schools))

Child: A child enrolled as a student at the school.

Child abuse includes:

- (a) Any act committed against a child involving:
 - (i) A sexual offence
 - (ii) An offence under section 49B (2) of the **Crimes Act 1958** (grooming) and
- (b) The infliction, on a child, of-
 - (i) Physical violence; or
 - (ii) Serious emotional or psychological harm; and
- (c) Serious neglect of a child.

Child safety:

Encompasses matters related to protecting all children from child abuse, managing the risk of child abuse, providing support to a child at risk of child abuse, and responding to incidents or allegations of child abuse.

Child-Connected:

Means work authorised by the school governing authority and performed by an adult in a school environment while children are present or reasonably expected to be present.

School environment:

Any physical or virtual place made available or authorised by the school governing authority for use by a child during or outside school hours, including:

- (a) A campus of the school
- (b) On-line school environments (including email and intranet systems)
- (c) Other locations provided by the school for a child's use (including, without limitation, locations used for school camps, sporting events, excursions, competitions, and other events).

School staff:

- (a) In a Government school, an individual working in a school environment who is;
 - (i) Employed under Part 2.4 of the ETR Act in the government teaching service; or
 - (ii) Employed under a contract of service by the council of the school under Part 2.3 of the ETR Act; or
 - (iii) A volunteer or a contracted service provider

Aims:

- To demonstrate a strong commitment to the care, safety and wellbeing of all students at Alkira SC. To promote child safety within the school environment through ongoing development, implementation, monitoring and risk management evaluations in the protection of children against sexual, physical, psychological and emotional abuse and neglect.
- To respond to the recommendations of the *Betrayal of Trust Inquiry* by enacting Victorian legislative obligations mandated through **Ministerial Order No. 870** to address Child Safe Standards and to comply with VRQA registrations requirements.
- To identify and assess the school's child safety risks and to apply risk mitigation processes, policies and protocols.
- To provide guidance to staff, volunteers and contractors as to actions that should be taken where they suspect any abuse within or outside of the College.

Implementation:

- All people engaged or recruited for child-related work, including volunteers, are required to hold a current Working with Children Check and / or VIT teacher registration; proof of personal identity and any professional or other qualifications; etc. Evidence of such must be provided for College records by the individual or external agency (e.g. recruitment agency).
- To provide guidance to staff, volunteers and contractors as to actions that should be taken where they suspect any abuse within or outside of the College.
- All staff will be required to sign off that they have read and understood the Code of Conduct annually.
- All staff, contractors, volunteers and any other member of the school community involved in child-related work are required to comply with the Code of Conduct by observing expectations for appropriate behaviour (listed below). The Code of Conduct applies in all school situations, including school camps and in the use of digital technology and social media.
- At least annually, all staff and school counsellors must be provided appropriate guidance and training relating to the child safety standards and their obligations and responsibilities for managing and minimising the risk of child abuse.

- Processes are in place to ensure the continuing suitability of people engaged in child related work.
- New teachers will be inducted to school specific and over-arching DET / VQRA compliant policies and the staff manual that is available to all staff.
- Appropriate procedures will be implemented to provide protection and ongoing support for victims of child abuse.
- All staff will be expected to promote student empowerment and participation and to support appropriate education programs about expected standards of behaviour, healthy and respectful relationships (including sexuality), resilience and child abuse awareness and prevention.
- All students will be made aware of the College expectations and student responsibilities as outlined in the Student Code of Practice Policy.
- Any allegations of abuse and / or safety concerns and any subsequent school response will be promptly reported to appropriate authorities, documented and securely stored.
- The implementation of this policy does not replace any legislative or regulatory obligations or other professional codes of conduct required by those who teach or interact with students.
- This policy applies to all school staff, parents, student, volunteers, contractors or visitors to school.
- The Principal and school leaders of Alkira SC will support the implementation and monitoring of the Code of Conduct, and will plan, implement and monitor arrangements to provide inclusive, safe and orderly schools and other learning environments.
- A Child Safety Officer (Wellbeing Coordinator) will be appointed as contact for others who have questions or concerns or want to report an allegation of child abuse.
- The Principal and school leaders will also provide information and support to enable the Code of Conduct to operate effectively.
- All people engaged or recruited for child-related work, including volunteers, are required to hold a current Working with Children Check and / or VIT teacher registration; proof of personal identity and any professional or other qualifications; etc. Evidence of such must be provided for College records by the individual or external agency (e.g. recruitment agency).

The following principles are those recommended and endorsed by VRQA (as acceptable and unacceptable) and will guide all adult behaviour when interacting with or undertaking child-connected work at Alkira SC-

Acceptable Behaviours

All staff, parents, contractors, visitors and volunteers are responsible for supporting the safety of children by:

- Adhering to the school's Child Safe Code of Conduct at all times; taking all reasonable steps to protect children from abuse;
- Treating everyone in the school community with respect;
- Vigilantly supervising students in all school environments;
- Listening and responding to the views and concerns of children, particularly if they are disclosing that they or another child has been abused or that they are worried about their safety / the safety of another child;
- Promoting the cultural safety, participation and empowerment of Aboriginal / Torres Strait Islander children;
- Promoting the cultural safety, participation and empowerment of children with culturally and / or linguistically diverse backgrounds;
- Promoting the safety, participation and empowerment of children with a disability;
- Promoting the safety, participation and empowerment of children living in Out-of-Home Care;
- Ensuring as far as practicable that adults are not alone with a child;
- Reporting any allegations of child abuse to the school's leadership team (Wellbeing Co-ordinator/Child Safety Officer, Principal, Assistant Principals);
- Understanding and complying with all reporting obligations as they relate to mandatory reporting and reporting under the *Crimes Act 1958*;

- Reporting any child safety concerns to the school's leadership (Wellbeing Co-ordinator/Child Safety Officer, Principal, Assistant Principals)
- If an allegation of child abuse is made, ensuring as quickly as possible that the child(ren) are safe; and
- Reporting to the Victorian Institute of Teaching any charges, committals for trial or convictions in relation to a sexual offence by a registered teacher, or certain allegations or concerns about a registered teacher.

Unacceptable Behaviours

Staff, parents, contractors, visitors and volunteers must not:

- Ignore or disregard any suspected or disclosed child abuse;
- Develop any 'special' relationships with children that could be seen as favouritism (for example, the offering of gifts or special treatment for specific children);
- Exhibit behaviours with children which may be construed as unnecessarily physical (for example inappropriate sitting on laps) or initiate unnecessary physical contact with children or do things of a personal nature that a child can do for themselves.
- Put children at risk of abuse;
- Use inappropriate language in the presence of children;
- Express personal views on cultures, race or sexuality in the presence of children;
- Discriminate against any child due to age, gender, race, culture, vulnerability, sexuality, ethnicity, physical appearance, or disability;
- Have any on-line contact with a child other than for school-related necessities. This includes social media, instant messaging, photo sharing technologies and / or provision of personal contact details (phone / personal email address details);
- Ignore behaviours by other adults towards students when they appear to be overly familiar or inappropriate;
- Photograph or video a child in a school environment except in accordance with school policy or where required for duty of care purposes;
- Consume alcohol contrary to school policy or take illicit drugs under any circumstances, within the school environment or at other school events where students are present.

(Samples adapted from VRQA website and A Guide for Creating a Child Safe Organisation- Commission for Children and Young People)

Contacts:

If an individual believes a child is at immediate risk of abuse phone 000. Other relevant numbers include:

- **DHHS - Child Protection:** South Division: 1300 655 795; Dandenong (03) 8765 5444; A/H: 13 12 78
- **Sexual Offences and Child Abuse Investigation Team:** (SOCIT) Dandenong: (03) 8769 2200
- **Regional Office:** Dandenong: (03) 8765 5600
- **(DET) Security Services Unit:** (03) 9589 6266
- **(DET): Student Incident and Recovery Unit:** (03) 9637 2934
- **Child First (Casey):** (03) 9705 3939 www.dhs.vic.gov.au
- **(Casey) Aboriginal children and families:** (03) 9794 5973
- **Victoria Police:** 000
- **eHeadspace** (online and a 9am-1am telephone support service) www.eheadspace.org.au or 1800 650 850
- **KidsHelp Line** on 1800 55 1800 or visit for 24-hour support
- Talk to your doctor, psychologist, social worker

- ** In the case of **international students**, the Principal must notify the International Education Division on (03) 9637 2990 to ensure that appropriate support is arranged for the student.
- ** In the case of **Koorie students**, the Principal must notify the Regional Office to ensure that the Regional Koorie support officer can arrange appropriate support for the student.

Relevant legislation:

- Child Safe Standards- Managing the risk of child abuse in schools
- Children, Youth and Families Act 2005 (Vic)
- Crimes Act 1958 (Vic)
- Working with Children Act 2005 (Vic)
- Education and Training Reform Act 2006 (Vic)
- Equal Opportunity Act 2010 (Vic)
- Privacy Act 1998 (Commonwealth)
- (VIT) Victorian Teaching Professional Codes of Conduct and Ethics (Vic)

Linked College policies:

- Working with Children's Check
- Visitors to School
- Student wellbeing
- Student Welfare
- Sexual Harassment
- Mandatory Reporting
- Learning
- Incursion
- Excursion
- Duty of Care
- Confidentiality
- Communication Protocol
- Community Grievances
- Bullying / Cyber-Bullying
- Anti-Discrimination
- Student Disclosure and Support Plan
- Transition
- Student Voice and Empowerment
- Student Engagement Plan
- Suicide and Self-Harm

Alkira SC is committed to continuous improvement in our child safety practices. We intend for this policy to be regularly reviewed to ensure its compliance to legislation, which may impact on the ordinary review period.

Evaluation:

This policy will be reviewed as part of the College's three-year review cycle.

This policy was last ratified by School Council in **July 2016**