CHILD SAFETY POLICY

PURPOSE
The Braybrook College Child Safety Policy demonstrates our school's commitment to creating and maintaining a child safe and child-friendly organisation, where children and young people are safe and feel safe.
This policy provides an overview of our school's approach to implementing Ministerial Order 1359 which sets out how the Victorian Child Safe Standards apply in school environments.

It informs our school community of everyone's obligations to act safely and appropriately towards children and guides our processes and practices for the safety and wellbeing of students across all areas of our work.

SCOPE
This policy:
- Applies to all school staff, volunteers, and contractors who work in direct contact with students. It also applies to School Council members.
- Applies in all physical and online school environments used by students during or outside of school hours, including other locations provided for a student's use (for example, a school camp or a homestay) and those provided through third-party providers.
- Should be read together with our other Child Safety and Wellbeing policies, procedures, and codes (refer to the related school policies section towards the end of this policy).

DEFINITIONS
The following terms in this policy have specific definitions (described in Appendix 1)
- Child
- Child Safety
- Child Abuse
- Child-Connected work
- School Environment
- School Staff
- School Council
- Student
- Volunteer

Statement of Commitment to Child Safety
Braybrook College is a child safe organisation which welcomes all children, young people and their families.
We are committed to providing environments where our students are safe and feel safe, where their participation is valued, their views respected, and their voices are heard about decisions that affect their lives. Our Child Safety policies, strategies and practices are inclusive of the needs of all children and students.

We have zero tolerance for child abuse and take proactive steps to identify and manage any risks of harm to students in our school environments.

We promote positive relationships between students and adults and between students and their peers. These relationships are based on trust and respect.

We take proactive steps to identify and manage any risk of harm to students in our school environment. When child safety concerns are raised or identified, we treat these seriously and respond promptly and thoroughly.

Particular attention is given to the child safety needs of Aboriginal students, those from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds, international students (especially those living in homestays), students with disabilities, those unable to live at home, children and young people who identify as lesbian, gay, bisexual, trans and gender diverse, intersex and queer (LGBTIQA+) and other students experiencing risk or vulnerability. Inappropriate or harmful behaviour targeting students based on these or other characteristics, such as racism or homophobia, are not tolerated at our school, and any instances identified will be addressed with appropriate consequences.

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.

We are committed to regularly reviewing our child safe practices, and seeking input from our students, families, staff, and volunteers to inform our ongoing strategies.

Standard 1: Establishing a Culturally Safe Environment
At Braybrook College 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 student can have a positive experience in a safe environment. For Aboriginal students, we recognise the link between Aboriginal culture, identity and safety and actively create opportunities for Aboriginal students and the Aboriginal community to have a voice and presence in our school planning, policies, and activities.

We have developed the following strategies to promote cultural safety in our school community:
- Begin events and meetings with a Welcome to Country.
- Fly the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander flags.
- Make Aboriginal voice part of decision making in matters that affect Aboriginal students.
- Celebrate the local Aboriginal community in communications with students, staff, volunteers, and families.
- Share information through school newsletters, school assemblies, parent information nights.
- Promote safety and inclusion for all Aboriginal students and their families.
- Learn more about Aboriginal histories and cultures, both locally and across Australia.
- Speak with respect and confidence about Aboriginal culture, knowledge systems and people.
- Build school wide knowledge of Aboriginal histories, cultures, perspectives, values, skills, and attitudes.
- Acknowledge and draw on the existing knowledge of Aboriginal students and their families.
- Ask for feedback from Aboriginal students and their families about what the school does well, and what can be improved.
- Address racism from students, staff, volunteers, or visitors directly.
- Discuss racism and work to address unconscious bias and racism in the school community.
- Guide and train staff and volunteers to understand the importance of Aboriginal culture to the wellbeing and safety of Aboriginal students.
- Build knowledge of Aboriginal culture in school planning and curriculum.

Standard 2: Roles and Responsibilities

School Leadership Team
Our School Leadership Team (comprising the Principal, Assistant Principals and Leading Teachers) is responsible for ensuring that a strong child safe culture is created and maintained, and that policies and practices are effectively developed and implemented in accordance with Ministerial Order 1359.

Principal Class Officers will:
- Ensure effective Child Safety and Wellbeing governance, policies, procedures, codes and practices are in place and followed.
- Model a child safe culture that facilitates the active participation of students, families and staff in promoting and improving child safety, cultural safety and wellbeing.
- Enable inclusive practices where the diverse needs of all students are considered.
- Reinforce high standards of respectful behaviour between students and adults, and between students.
- Promote regular open discussion on Child Safety issues within the school community including at Leadership Team Meetings, Staff Meetings and School Council meetings.
- Facilitate Professional Learning for staff and volunteers (where appropriate) to build deeper understandings of child safety, cultural safety, student wellbeing and responding to abuse.
- Create an environment where Child Safety complaints and concerns are readily raised, and no one is discouraged from reporting an allegation of child abuse to relevant authorities.

School Staff and Volunteers
All Staff and Volunteers will:
- Participate in Child Safety and Wellbeing induction and training provided by the school or the Department of Education, and always follow the school's Child Safety and Wellbeing policies and procedures.
- Act in accordance with our Child Safety Code of Conduct (Appendix 2).
- Identify and raise concerns about child safety issues in accordance with our Child Safety Responding and Reporting Obligations Policy and Procedures (Appendix 6), including following the Four Critical Actions for Schools. (Appendix 3).
- Ensure students' views are taken seriously and their voices are heard about decisions that affect their lives.
- Implement inclusive practices that respond to the diverse needs of students.

School Council
In performing the functions and powers given to them under the *Education and Training Reform Act 2006*, School Council members will:
- Champion and promote a child safe culture with the broader school community.
- Ensure that Child Safety is a regular agenda item at School Council meetings [**Note** It is not necessary to discuss Child Safety at every School Council meeting, but child safety should be discussed at some meetings to ensure that a culture of child safety is being embedded and School Council members are informed and understand the issues].
- Undertake annual training on child safety. (Child Safe Standards School Council Training slide presentation can be used and is available on PROTECT.)
- Approve updates to, and act in accordance with the Child Safety Code of Conduct to the extent that it applies to School Council employees and members.
- Delegate employment powers and duties to the Principal who is bound by this policy.

Specific Staff Child Safety Responsibilities

Braybrook College has nominated a **Child Safety Champion [Wellbeing Coordinator]** to support the Principal to implement our Child Safety policies and practices, including staff and volunteer training.

The responsibilities of the Child Safety Champion are outlined at <u>Guidance for Child Safety Champions</u> (Appendix 4). In addition to these roles, our Child Safety Champion is also responsible to:

- Promote Child Safety and Wellbeing at staff and parent meetings, through newsletters and staff notices.
- Ensure the school's Child Safety policies and procedures are current and fit for purpose, are publicly accessible, and are known and implemented.
- Promote a culture of listening to students and families and acting on their child safety concerns.
- Support staff and volunteers to focus on the Child Safety needs of vulnerable students.
- Be a point of contact for Child Safety concerns for staff, volunteers and students.
- Work with Leadership to respond to Child Safety incidents.
- Provide Child Safety induction and training programs for new school staff, volunteers and School Council members.
- Ensure mandatory reporters complete the Mandatory Reporting training.
- Provide Child Safety updates and information to staff and volunteers, as needed.
- Record Child Safety complaints and concerns, and analyse trends as needed.
- Coordinate reviews following significant safety incidents and recommend improvements.
- Maintain the school's Child Safe Risk Register with the school Principal.
- Coordinate Child Safety policy and practice reviews in consultation with the school community.
- Maintain detailed, accurate, secure written records of concerns and referrals.

Our Principal and Wellbeing Coordinator are the first point of contact for Child Safety concerns or queries and for coordinating responses to Child Safety incidents.

- As the Wellbeing Coordinator is responsible for monitoring the school's compliance with the Child Safety Policy, anyone in our school community should approach the Wellbeing Coordinator if they have any concerns about the school's compliance with the Child Safety Policy.
- The Wellbeing Coordinator is responsible for informing the school community about this policy and making it publicly available.
- Other specific roles and responsibilities are named in other Child Safety policies and procedures, including the Child Safety Code of Conduct, Child Safety Responding and Reporting Obligations (including Mandatory Reporting) Policy and Procedures, and Child Safety Risk Register.

Our school has a Wellbeing Team and has established a Student Reference Group on Child Safety. The Wellbeing Team meet regularly to identify and respond to any ongoing matters related to Child Safety and Wellbeing. The Student Reference Group, within the Student Representative Council (SRC), provides an opportunity for students to provide input into school strategies.

Child Safety Code of Conduct

Our Child Safety Code of Conduct (Appendix 2) sets the boundaries and expectations for appropriate behaviours between adults and students and includes processes to report inappropriate behaviour.

Standard 3: Student Empowerment

To support Child Safety and Wellbeing at Braybrook College, school staff work to create an inclusive and supportive environment that encourages students and families to contribute to our child safety approach and understand their rights and their responsibilities.

Respectful relationships between students are reinforced and we encourage strong friendships and peer support in the school to ensure a sense of belonging through for example, implementing our whole school approach to Respectful Relationships, our student Code of Conduct, and our school values. Informed consent is also taught within this program and is imbedded in the curriculum.

We inform students of their rights through, our whole school approach to Respectful Relationships and give them the skills and confidence to recognise unsafe situations with adults or other students and to speak up and act on concerns relating to themselves or their peers. We ensure our students know who to talk to if they are worried or feeling unsafe and we encourage them to share concerns with a trusted adult at any time. Students also have the opportunity to join the Student Representative Council where they can voice and share their ideas around the school's approach to Child Safety and Wellbeing. Students and families can also access information on how to report concerns at the General Office.

When the school is gathering information in relation to a complaint about alleged misconduct or abuse of a child, we will listen to the complainant's account and take them seriously, check our understanding of the complaint, support the student, and keep them (and their parents and carers, as appropriate) informed about progress.

We:
- Inform students about their rights, including their rights to safety, information and participation.

- Recognise the importance of friendships and encourage support from peers, to help students feel safe and be less isolated.
- Ensure staff and volunteers:
    o are attuned to signs of harm. (Department of Education training).
    o facilitate child-friendly ways for students to express their views, participate in decision-making and raise their concerns.
- Develop a culture that encourages participation and responds to what students say.
- Give students opportunities to participate and respond to their contributions to strengthen confidence and engagement.
- Offer students access to sexual abuse prevention programs and related, age-appropriate information.
- Develop curriculum planning documents or other documentation that details how the school will address these requirements.

Standard 4: Family Engagement

Our families (including homestay providers) and the school community have an important role in monitoring and promoting Children's Safety and Wellbeing and helping children to raise any concerns.

To support family engagement at Braybrook College, we are committed to providing families and community with accessible information about our school's Child Safety Policies and practices and involve them in our approach to Child Safety and Wellbeing.

We will create opportunities for families to have input into the development and review of our Child Safety Policies and practices and encourage them to raise any concerns and ideas for improvement.

We will do this by:
- Seeking input from families and the community – for example, through the Compass Parent Portal, School Website, newsletters, other communications, School Council, Subcommittees of School Council, student, staff, and parent meetings etc.
- Providing all our Child Safety Policies and procedures on our College Website: www.braybrooksc.vic.edu.au (See 'School Policies' tab under 'About Braybrook').
- Updating Newsletters and Compass to inform families and the school community about any significant updates to our Child Safety Policies or processes, and strategies or initiatives that we are taking to ensure student safety.
- Displaying PROTECT Child Safety posters across the school and on our website.

Standard 5: Diversity and Equity

As a child safe organisation, we celebrate the rich diversity of our students, families and community and promote respectful environments that are free from discrimination. Our focus is on wellbeing and growth for all.
We recognise that every child has unique skills, strengths and experiences to draw on.

We pay particular attention to individuals and groups of children and young people in our community with additional and specific needs. This includes tailoring our Child Safe strategies and supports to the needs of:
- Aboriginal children and young people
- Children from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds
- Children and young people with disabilities
- Children unable to live at home or impacted by family violence
- International students
- Children and young people who identify as LGBTIQA+.

Our Student Wellbeing and Engagement Policy (Appendix 5) provides more information about the measures we have in place to support diversity and equity.

Standard 6: Suitable Staff and Volunteers

At Braybrook College, 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.

Staff recruitment
When recruiting staff, we follow the Department of Education's recruitment policies and guidelines, available on the Policy and Advisory Library (PAL) such as:
- Recruitment in Schools
- Suitability for Employment Checks
- School Council Employment
- Contractor OHS Management.

When engaging staff to perform child-related work, we:
- Sight, verify and record the person's Working with Children clearance or equivalent background check such as a Victorian Teaching Registration.

- Collect and record:
  - 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 job and working with children.

Staff induction
All newly appointed staff will be expected to participate in our Child Safety and Wellbeing Induction Program. The program will include a focus on:
- The Child Safety Policy (this document).
- The Child Safety Code of Conduct (Appendix 2)
- The Child Safety Responding and Reporting Obligations (including Mandatory Reporting) Policy and Procedures (Appendix 6) and
- Any other Child Safety and Wellbeing information that school leadership considers appropriate to the nature of the role.

Ongoing supervision and management of staff
All staff engaged in child-connected work will be supervised appropriately to ensure that their behaviour towards children is safe and appropriate.

Staff will be monitored and assessed to ensure their continuing suitability for child-connected work. This will be done by an annual performance review.

Inappropriate behaviour towards children and young people will be managed swiftly and in accordance with our school and department policies and our legal obligations. Child Safety and Wellbeing will be paramount.

Suitability of volunteers
All volunteers are required to comply with our Volunteers Policy which describes how we assess the suitability of prospective volunteers and outlines expectations in relation to Child Safety and Wellbeing Induction and training, and supervision and management.

Standard 7: Complaints and Reporting Processes
Braybrook College fosters a culture that encourages staff, volunteers, students, parents, and the school community to raise concerns and complaints. We have clear pathways for raising complaints and concerns and responding and this is documented in our school's Complaint Policy.

If there is an incident, disclosure, allegation or suspicion of child abuse, all staff and volunteers (including School Council Employees and Homestay Providers) must follow our Child Safety Responding and Reporting Obligations Policy and Procedures. (Appendix 6). Our policy and procedures 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.

As soon as any immediate health and safety concerns are addressed and relevant school staff have been informed, we will ensure our school follows:
- the Four Critical Actions For Schools (Appendix 3) 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 (refer hhttps://www.education.vic.gov.au/school/teacher/health/childprotection/Pages/stusexual.aspx).

Our Student Wellbeing and Engagement Policy (Appendix 5) and Bullying Prevention Policy (Appendix 7) cover complaints and concerns relating to student physical violence or other harmful behaviours.

Standard 8: Child Safety Knowledge, Skills and Awareness
Ongoing training and education are essential to ensuring that staff understand their roles and responsibilities and develop their capacity to effectively address Child Safety and Wellbeing matters.

In addition to the Child Safety and Wellbeing Induction, our staff will participate in a range of training and Professional Learning to equip them with the skills and knowledge necessary to maintain a child safe environment.

Staff Child Safety and Wellbeing training will be delivered at least annually and will include guidance on:
- Our 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.

Other Professional Learning and training on Child Safety and Wellbeing, for example, training for our volunteers, will be tailored to specific roles and responsibilities and any identified or emerging needs or issues.

School Council Training and Education
To ensure our School Council is equipped with the knowledge required to make decisions in the best interests of student safety and wellbeing, and to identify and mitigate Child Safety and Wellbeing risks in our school environment, the Council is trained at least annually. 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.
- Braybrook College Child Safety and Wellbeing Policies, Procedures, Codes and Practices.

Standard 9: Managing Risks to Child Safety and Wellbeing
At our school we identify, assess and manage risks to Child Safety and Wellbeing in our physical and online school environments. Our Child Safety Policy, practices and procedures enable school staff and volunteers to identify and mitigate risks without compromising a student's right to privacy, access to information, social connections and learning opportunities. It includes a statement on online conduct and online safety. These risks are further managed in our activity specific risk registers, such as those we develop for off-site overnight camps, adventure activities and facilities, homestays and services we contract through third party providers for student use.
Our Child Safety Risk Register is used to record any identified risks related to child abuse alongside actions in place to manage those risks. Additionally, we provide a Child Safe Incident Report (Appendix 8) that should be used to respond to suspected child abuse. Our school Principal and Wellbeing Coordinator will monitor and evaluate the effectiveness of the actions in the Child Safety Risk Register at least annually.

Standard 10: Review of Child Safety Practices
At Braybrook College we have established processes for the review and ongoing improvement of our Child Safety Policies, procedures, and practices.
We will:
- Review and improve our policy every two years or after any significant Child Safety incident.
- Analyse any complaints, concerns, and safety incidents to improve policy and practice.
- Act with transparency and share pertinent learnings and review outcomes with school staff and our school community.

Standard 11: Communications
Braybrook College is committed to communicating our Child Safety strategies to the school community through:
- Ensuring that key Child Safety and Wellbeing Policies are available on our website including the Child Safety Policy (this document), Child Safety Code of Conduct (Appendix 2) and the Child Safety Responding and Reporting Obligations (including Mandatory Reporting) Policy and Procedures (Appendix 6).
- Displaying PROTECT posters around the school.
- Providing updates in our school newsletter and the Compass Parent Portal.
- Ensuring that child safety is a regular agenda item at Leadership Team, Staff and School Council Meetings.

Privacy and Information Sharing
Braybrook College collects, uses, and discloses information about children and their families in accordance with Victorian privacy laws, and other relevant laws.

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 the Department of Education's policy: <u>Records Management – School Records</u>.

Related policies and procedures (which can be found on the College Website)

This Child Safety Policy is to be read in conjunction with other related school policies, procedures, and codes. These include our:

- Bullying Prevention Policy (Appendix 7)
- Child Safety Responding and Reporting Obligations Policy and Procedures (Appendix 6)
- Child Safety Code of Conduct (Appendix 2)
- Parents Complaints Policy and Procedures
- Digital Technology and Acceptable Use Policy
- Inclusion and Diversity Policy
- Student Wellbeing and Engagement Policy (Appendix 5)
- Visitors in School Policy
- Volunteers Policy.

Other Related Department of Education policies

- <u>Child and Family Violence Information Sharing Schemes</u>
- <u>Contractor OHS Management Policy</u>
- <u>Family Violence Support</u>
- <u>Protecting Children: Reporting Obligations Policy</u>
- <u>Policy and Guidelines for Recruitment in Schools</u>
- <u>Reportable Conduct Policy</u>
- <u>Supervision of Students Policy</u>
- <u>Working with Children and other Suitability Checks for School Volunteers and Visitors</u>.

Other related documents

- <u>Identifying and Responding to All Forms of Abuse in Victorian Schools</u>
- <u>Four Critical Actions for Schools (Appendix 3)</u>
- <u>Identifying and Responding to Student Sexual Offending</u>
- <u>Four Critical Actions for Schools: Responding to Student Sexual Offending</u>
- <u>Recording your actions: Responding to suspected child abuse – A template for Victorian schools</u>.

Policy status and review

The Wellbeing Coordinator is responsible for reviewing and updating the Child Safety Policy at least every two years. The review will include input from students, parents/carers and the school community.

REVIEW CYCLE

This policy was last updated in May 2023 and is scheduled for review in May 2025.

(Appendix 1)   Definitions

Child - Child means a child or young person who is under the age of 18 years.

Child Safety – Child safety includes 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 suspicions, incidents, disclosures or allegations of child abuse.

Child Abuse - Child abuse includes:
a) any act committed against a child involving a sexual offence or grooming offences under section 49M(1) of the Crimes Act 1958
b) the infliction, on a child, of physical violence or serious emotional or psychological harm
c) the serious neglect of a child including exposure to family violence and its effects

Child Abuse (emotional) - Emotional child abuse occurs when a child is repeatedly rejected, isolated, or frightened by threats. It also includes hostility, derogatory name-calling and put-downs, and persistent coldness from a person to the extent that the child suffers, or is likely to suffer, emotional or psychological harm to their physical or developmental health.

Child Abuse (Physical) - Physical child abuse is any non-accidental infliction of physical violence on a child by any person. It can be inflicted in many ways, including beating, shaking or burning and assault with implements and female genital mutilation.

Child Abuse (Sexual) - Child sexual abuse is when a person uses power or authority over a child to involve them in sexual activity. It can include a wide range of sexual activity. Sexual offences are governed by the Crimes Act 1958 (Vic.)

Child-connected work – Child-connected work means:
a) work authorised by the School Council and performed by an adult in a school environment while children are present or reasonably expected to be present
b) for the purposes of a school boarding premises, work authorised by the provider of school boarding premises in a school boarding premises environment while children are present or reasonably expected to be present.
Note: Working with Children clearance is required by law only for people who engage in child-related work. Schools and school boarding premises may also choose to require suitability checks (including Working with Children clearance) for visitors and volunteers engaging in child-connected work.

School Environment – School environment means any of the following physical, online or virtual places, used during or outside school hours:
a) A campus of the school
b) Online or virtual school environments made available or authorised by the School Council for use by a child or student (including email, intranet systems, software applications and online services)
c) Other locations provided by the school or through a third-party provider for a child or student to use including, but not limited to, locations used for:
  1. camps
  2. approved homestay accommodation
  3. delivery of education and training such as registered training organisations, TAFEs, non-school senior secondary providers or another school; or sporting events, excursions, competitions or other events.

School Staff – school staff means:
An individual working in a school environment who is:
  1. employed under Part 2.3 or Part 2.4 of the ETR Act in the Government teaching service
  2. a contracted service provider (whether or not a body corporate or any other person is an intermediary) engaged by the School Council to perform child-related work.

School Council – School Council means:
a) the proprietor of a school, including a person authorised to act for or on behalf of the proprietor
b) the governing body for a school as authorised by the proprietor of a school or the ETR Act
c) the principal, as authorised by the proprietor of a school, the School Council, or the ETR Act.

Student – Student means a person who is enrolled at or attends the school or a student at the school boarding premises.

Volunteer - Volunteer means a person who performs work without remuneration or reward for the school or school boarding premises in the school environment or school boarding premises environment.

CHILD SAFETY CODE OF CONDUCT

PURPOSE

Our Child Safety Code of Conduct sets out the expected behaviour of adults with children and young people in our school.

All Braybrook College staff, volunteers, contractors, service providers, School Council members and any other adult involved in child-connected work must follow the Child Safety Code of Conduct.

The Child Safety Code of Conduct applies to all physical and online environments used by students. It also applies during or outside of school hours and in other locations provided by the school for student use (for example, a school camp).

Acceptable Behaviours

As Braybrook College staff, volunteers, contractors, and any other member of our school community involved in child-connected work, we are responsible for supporting and promoting the safety of children by:

- Upholding our Braybrook College commitment to child safety at all times and adhering to our Child Safety Policy.
- Treating students and families in our school community with respect in our school environment and outside our school environment as part of normal social and community activities.
- Listening and responding to the views and concerns of students, particularly if they disclose that they or another child or student has been abused or are worried about their safety or the safety of another child or student.
- Promoting the cultural safety, participation and empowerment of Aboriginal students, students with culturally and/or linguistically diverse backgrounds, students with a disability, international students, students who are unable to live at home and lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender and intersex (LGBTQIA+) students.
- Ensuring, as far as practicable, that adults are not alone with a student – one-to-one interactions between an adult and a student are to be in an open space or in line of sight of another adult.
- Reporting any allegations of child abuse or other child safety concerns to the Wellbeing Coordinator.
- Understanding and complying with all reporting and disclosure obligations (including Mandatory Reporting) in line with our Child Safety Responding and Reporting Policy and Procedures and the PROTECT Four Critical Actions.
- If child abuse is suspected, ensuring as quickly as possible that the student(s) are safe and protected from harm.
- Encouraging students to 'have a say' and participate in all relevant organisational activities where possible, especially on issues that are important to them.

Unacceptable Behaviours

As Braybrook College staff, volunteers, contractors and members of our school community involved in child-connected work, we must not:

- Ignore or disregard any concerns, suspicions or disclosures of child abuse or harm.
- Develop a relationship with any student that could be seen as favouritism or amount to 'grooming' behaviour (for example, by offering gifts).
- Display behaviours or engage with students in ways that are not justified by the educational or professional context.
- Ignore an adult's overly familiar or inappropriate behaviour towards a student.
- Discuss intimate topics or use sexualised language, except when needed to deliver the school curriculum or professional guidance.
- Treat a child or student unfavourably because of their disability, age, gender, race, culture, vulnerability, sexuality or ethnicity.
- Communicate directly with a student through personal or private contact channels (including by social media, email, instant messaging, texting etc) except where that communication is reasonable in all the circumstances, related to schoolwork or extra-curricular activities or where there is a safety concern or other urgent matter.
- Photograph or video a child or student in a school environment except in accordance with the Photographing, Filming and Recording Students policy or where required for duty of care purposes.
- Consume alcohol against school policy or take illicit drugs in the school environment or at school events where students are present.
- Have contact with any student outside of school hours except when needed to deliver the school curriculum or professional guidance and parental permission has been sought.
- Do things of a personal nature that a child can do for themselves, such as toileting or changing clothes.

- Engage in open discussions of a mature or adult nature in the presence of children (for example, personal social activities).
- Use inappropriate language in the presence of children.
- Express personal views on culture, race or sexuality in the presence of children.

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

Breaches to the Child Safety Code of Conduct

All Braybrook College staff, volunteers, contractors and any other member of the school community involved in child-connected work who breach this Child Safety Code of Conduct may be subject to disciplinary procedures in accordance with their employment agreement or relevant industrial instrument, professional code or terms of engagement.

In instances where a reportable allegation has been made, the matter will be managed in accordance with the Department of Education Reportable Conduct Scheme Policy and may be subject to referral to Victoria Police.

All breaches and suspected breaches of the Braybrook College Child Safety Code of Conduct must be reported to the Principal and the Wellbeing Coordinator.

If the breach or suspected breach relates to the Principal, contact the Wellbeing Coordinator.

REVIEW CYCLE

This policy was last updated in May 2023 and is scheduled for review in May 2025.

(Appendix 3)

FOUR CRITICAL ACTIONS FOR SCHOOLS

FOUR CRITICAL ACTIONS FOR SCHOOLS

Responding to Incidents, Disclosures and Suspicions of Child Abuse

As school staff member, you play a **critical role** in protecting children in your care.

YOU MUST TAKE ACTION

- You **must** act, by following the Four Critical Actions, as soon as you witness an incident, suspicions and disclosures of child abuse as soon as possible.
- You **must** act if you form a suspicion/ reasonable belief, even if you are unsure and have not directly observed child abuse (e.g. if the victim or another person tells you about the abuse).
- It is strongly recommended that you use the *Responding to Suspected Child Abuse template* to keep clear and comprehensive notes, even if you make a decision not to report.

A reasonable belief is a deliberately low threshold. This enables authorities to investigate and take action.

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1 RESPONDING TO AN EMERGENCY

If there is no risk of immediate harm go to **Action 2.**

If a child is at immediate risk of harm you **must** ensure their safety by:
- separating alleged victims and others involved
- administering first aid
- calling **000 for urgent medical and/ or police assistance** to respond to immediate health or safety concerns
- identifying a contact person at the school for future liaison with Police.

Where necessary you may also need to maintain the integrity of the potential crime scene and preserve evidence.

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2 REPORTING TO AUTHORITIES / REFERRING TO SERVICES

As soon as immediate health and safety concerns are addressed you **must** report all incidents, suspicions and disclosures of child abuse as soon as possible. Failure to report physical and sexual child abuse may amount to a criminal offence.

Q: Where does the source of suspected abuse come from?

WITHIN THE SCHOOL

VICTORIA POLICE
You **must** report all instances of suspected child abuse involving a school staff member, contractor, volunteer or visitor to Victoria Police.

You **must also** report **internally** to:

GOVERNMENT SCHOOLS
- School principal and/or leadership team
- Employee Conduct Branch
- DET Incident Support and Operations Centre.

CATHOLIC SCHOOLS
- School principal and/or leadership team
- Diocesan education office.

INDEPENDENT SCHOOLS
- School principal and/or school chairperson
- Commission for Children and Young People on **1300 782 978.**

All allegations of 'reportable conduct' **must** be reported as soon as possible to:

GOVERNMENT SCHOOLS
- Employee Conduct Branch

CATHOLIC SCHOOLS
- Diocesan education office

INDEPENDENT SCHOOLS
- Commission for Children and Young People on **1300 782 978.**

WITHIN THE FAMILY OR COMMUNITY

DHHS CHILD PROTECTION
You **must** report to DHHS Child Protection if a child is considered to be:
- in need of protection from child abuse
- at risk of being harmed (or has been harmed) and the harm has had, or is likely to have, a serious impact on the child's safety, stability or development.

VICTORIA POLICE
You **must also** report all instances of suspected sexual abuse (including grooming) to Victoria Police.

You **must also** report **internally** to:

GOVERNMENT SCHOOLS
- School principal and/or leadership team
- DET Incident Support and Operations Centre.

CATHOLIC SCHOOLS
- School principal and/or leadership team
- Diocesan education office.

INDEPENDENT SCHOOLS
- School principal and/or chairperson.

For suspected student sexual assault, please follow the Four Critical Actions: Student Sexual Offending.

OTHER CONCERNS

If you believe that a child is not subject to abuse, but you still hold **significant concerns** for their wellbeing you **must** still act. This may include making a referral or seeking advice from:
- Child FIRST/The Orange Door (in circumstances where the family are open to receiving support)
- DHHS Child Protection
- Victoria Police.

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3 CONTACTING PARENTS/CARERS

Your principal **must** consult with DHHS Child Protection or Victoria Police to determine what information can be shared with parents/carers. They may advise:
- **not to contact** the parents/carer (e.g. in circumstances where the parents are alleged to have engaged in the abuse, or the child is a mature minor and does not wish for their parent/carer to be contacted)
- **to contact** the parents/carers and provide agreed information (this must be done as soon as possible, preferably on the same day of the incident, disclosure or suspicion)
- **how to communicate** with all relevant parties with consideration for their safety.

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4 PROVIDING ONGOING SUPPORT

Your school **must** provide support for children impacted by abuse. This should include the development of a *Student Support Plan* in consultation with wellbeing professionals. This is an essential part of your duty of care requirements.

Strategies may include development of a safety plan, direct support and referral to wellbeing professionals and support.

You **must** follow the Four Critical Actions every time you become aware of a further instance or risk of abuse. This includes reporting new information to authorities.

CONTACT

DHHS CHILD PROTECTION

AREA
North Division **1300 664 977**
South Division **1300 655 795**
East Division **1300 360 391**
West Division (Rural) **1800 075 599**
West Division (Metro) **1300 664 977**

AFTER HOURS
After hours, weekends, public holidays **13 1278.**

CHILD FIRST
https://services.dhhs.vic.gov.au/ referral-and-support-teams

ORANGE DOOR
https://www.vic.gov.au/familyviolence/ the-orange-door.html

VICTORIA POLICE
000 or your local police station

DET INCIDENT SUPPORT AND OPERATIONS CENTRE
1800 126 126

INCIDENT MANAGEMENT AND SUPPORT UNIT
1800 126 126

EMPLOYEE CONDUCT BRANCH
(03) 9637 2595

DIOCESAN OFFICE
Melbourne **(03) 9267 0228**
Ballarat **(03) 5337 7135**
Sale **(03) 5622 6600**
Sandhurst **(03) 5443 2377**

INDEPENDENT SCHOOLS VICTORIA
(03) 9825 7200

THE LOOKOUT
The LOOKOUT has a service directory, information, and evidence based guidance to help you respond to family violence: http://www.lookout.org.au.
Family violence victims/survivors can be referred to **1800 Respect** for counselling, information and a referral service: **1800 737 732.**

PROTECT

GUIDANCE FOR CHILD SAFETY CHAMPION

Key Responsibilities
Child Safety Champions work with the School Leadership Team, teachers, students, volunteers and the school community to create a child safe environment in the school.

Child Safety Champions work to:
Promote Child Safety Culture
- Promote Child Safety and Wellbeing. For example, at Staff and Parent meetings, through newsletters and staff notices.
- Ensure the school's Child Safety Policies and Procedures:
  o are current and fit for purpose
  o are publicly accessible
  o are known and implemented.
- Promote a culture of listening to students and families and acting on their child safety concerns.
- Support staff and volunteers to focus on the child safety needs of vulnerable students.

Provide Support and Guidance
- Be a point of contact for child safety concerns for staff, volunteers and students.
- Provide guidance to students, staff and volunteers on Child Safety Policies and Procedures.
- Work with School Leadership to respond to child safety incidents.
- Maintain current skills and knowledge to support Child Safety and Wellbeing, including:
  o child-focused complaint processes, reporting obligations and the Four Critical Actions
  o student rights, participation and empowerment
  o Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander cultural safety and inclusive practices to meet students diverse needs
  o child safety risk management including online safety
  o child safety information sharing and record-keeping obligations
  o working with relevant agencies to refer students and families to appropriate support
  o keeping across emerging research and best practice guidance in child safety and wellbeing.

Train and Educate
- Provide Child Safety Induction Programs for new school staff, volunteers and School Council members.
- Provide Child Safety training for school staff, volunteers and School Council members.
- Ensure mandatory reporters complete the annual Mandatory Reporting training.
- Provide Child Safety updates and information to staff and volunteers, as needed.

Monitor, Review and Report
- Record Child Safety complaints and concerns, and analyse trends as needed.
- Coordinate reviews following significant safety incidents and recommend improvements.
- Maintain the school's Child Safety Risk Register with the School Leadership Team.
- Coordinate Child Safety Policy and Practice reviews in consultation with the school community.
- Maintain detailed, accurate, secure written records of concerns and referrals.

(Appendix 5)

STUDENT WELLBEING and ENGAGEMENT POLICY

PURPOSE
The purpose of this policy is to ensure that all students and members of our school community understand:
(a) our commitment to providing a safe, supportive and inclusive learning environment for students which is consistent with our school's value's
(b) expectations for positive student behaviour
(c) support available to students and families
(d) our school's policies and procedures for responding to inappropriate student behaviour.

SCOPE
This policy applies to all school activities, including camps and excursions.

CONTENTS
1. School Profile
2. School Values, Philosophy and Vision
3. Engagement Strategies
4. Identifying Students in Need of Support
5. Charter of Human Rights and Responsibilities
6. UN Convention on the Rights of the Child
7. Student Rights and Responsibilities
8. Student Behavioural Expectations
9. Engaging with Families
10. Evaluation

POLICY
1. School Profile
Braybrook College is a multicultural, single campus, Years 7-12 school largely serving the areas of Sunshine, Braybrook and Footscray. The college is located 30 minutes from Melbourne's Central Business District with ready access to all forms of public transport. At present, the college has 1,310 students and 43 International students mostly from Vietnam. Our motto is 'Pride in Achievement'. The college has a clear focus on student achievement in a disciplined, orderly and structured environment. Facilities are constantly being improved and upgraded to optimise student learning outcomes. Accelerated learning opportunities are available for students in Year 10 to study a VCE subject; Year 11 to study a Year 12 subject and Advanced Classes operate from Years 7-11.

2. School Values, Philosophy and Vision
VISION
At Braybrook College, we strive for excellence within a safe, inclusive and supportive environment. Diversity and equality are valued and students can develop the academic and social skills necessary to contribute to local and global communities as informed and active citizens.

MISSION STATEMENT
The core purpose of the College is to:
- Provide a challenging, engaging and inclusive curriculum that is locally and globally relevant
- Maximise literacy, numeracy and digital technology skills
- Provide academic and co-curricula opportunities which widen the breadth of experience and extend the range of knowledge and skills in each student
- Provide the learning opportunities and employability skills that enable students to access a variety of pathways locally, nationally and globally
- Encourage students to become independent learners by fostering a strong work ethic
- Prepare students for the future by developing resilience, physical and emotional wellbeing, initiative, self-confidence, communication and decision-making skills
- Develop cooperative, respectful relationships that foster a sense of belonging and promote understanding and acceptance of others
- Ensure students demonstrate intercultural sensitivity
- Ensure students develop environmental respect and responsibility
- Develop knowledge and an appreciation of First Nations people and cultures

We believe that in order for students to experience success it is necessary to have a partnership where students, parents/guardians, the staff and the wider community all make meaningful contributions to the College and grow together.

Together, the members of the Braybrook College Community strive
To learn to their full potential by:
- Actively engaging in, appreciating and enjoying learning
- Valuing learning as a life-long habit
- Developing strong work habits
- Recognising that everyone has something to offer and is capable of experiencing success
- Seeking, encouraging and valuing alternative perspectives
- Developing creativity, critical thinking and problem-solving skills
- Sharing knowledge, expertise and resources to continuously improve performance
- Embracing active collaboration through all facets of learning

To contribute to a nurturing environment by:
- Behaving responsibly and fairly, and treating all with mutual respect
- Demonstrating a sense of pride and commitment to the College
- Developing an inclusive culture by accepting and celebrating diversity
- Role modelling respectful, cooperative and positive relationships and being supportive towards each other
- Displaying responsible global citizenship across all aspects of life
- Encouraging others to reach their full potential

To learn to become successful members of society by:
- Recognising and understanding the rights and responsibilities involved in living in a community
- Developing a healthy lifestyle and a fulfilling life
- Developing self-confidence and learning to adapt to changing situations
- Building leadership and civic engagement skills and becoming active contributors
- Treating people respectfully, with sensitivity and compassion

3. Engagement Strategies

Braybrook College has developed a range of strategies to promote engagement, positive behaviour and respectful relationships for all students in our school. We acknowledge that some students may need extra social, emotional or educational support at school, and that the needs of students will change over time as they grow and learn.

A summary of the universal (whole of school), targeted (year group specific) and individual engagement strategies used by our school is included below:

Universal
- Holding high and consistent expectations of all staff, students and parents and carers
- Prioritising positive relationships between staff and students, recognising the fundamental role this plays in building and sustaining student wellbeing
- Creating a culture that is inclusive, engaging and supportive
- Welcoming all parents/carers and being responsive to them as partners in learning
- Analysing and being responsive to a range of school data such as attendance, Attitudes to School Survey, parent survey data, student management data and school level assessment data
- Delivering a broad curriculum including VET programs, VCE and Victorian Major and Victorian Pathways Certificate to ensure that students are able to choose subjects and programs that are tailored to their interests, strengths and aspirations
- Using a number of instructional framework models (E^5, GANAG, Gradual Release of responsibility (GRR) and Victorian Curriculum F-10) to ensure an explicit, common and shared model of instruction that is evidenced-based and incorporates high impact teaching practices (HITs)
- Adopting a broad range of teaching and assessment approaches to effectively respond to the diverse learning styles, strengths and needs of our students and follow the standards set by the Victorian Institute of Teaching
- Incorporating our school's Statement of Values into our curriculum and promoting to students, staff and parents so that they are shared and celebrated as the foundation of our school community
- Carefully planning transition programs to support students moving into different stages of their schooling
- Acknowledging positive behaviour and student achievement in the classroom, and formally in school assemblies and communication to parents
- Monitoring student attendance and implementing attendance improvement strategies at a whole-school, cohort and individual level
- Providing students with the opportunity to contribute to and provide feedback on decisions about school operations through the Student Representative Council and other forums including year group meetings and

Peer Support Groups. Students are also encouraged to speak with their teachers, Year Level Coordinator, Sub-School Leaders, Assistant Principal and Principal whenever they have any questions or concerns

- Creating opportunities for cross-age connections amongst students through school plays, athletics, music programs, peer support programs, Homework programs and leadership groups
- Encouraging self-referral to the Student Wellbeing Coordinator, Wellbeing Team, School Nurse, Doctor (DISS), Year Level Coordinators, Assistant Principal and Principal if students would like to discuss a particular issue or feel as though they may need support of any kind. We are proud to have an 'open door' policy where students and staff are partners in learning
- Engaging in school wide positive behaviour support with our staff and students, which includes programs such as:
  - o Respectful Relationships
  - o Safe Schools
  - o Breakfast Club
  - o SRC
  - o Peer Support
  - o eSmart
  - o Leaders of Leadership
  - o Equal Opportunity programs
  - o Koorie Support
  - o Programs to support resilience and academic performances
- Developing programs, incursions and excursions to address issue specific behaviour (i.e. anger management)
- Allowing opportunities for student inclusion (i.e. sports teams, drama and chess clubs, Links, Gardening Club, Social Skills groups, Homework and tutoring programs and recess and lunchtime activities including Numeracy Centre and Library activities)
- Assisting all students to develop a Career Action Plan, with targeted goals and support to plan for their future

Targeted
- The school is organised into three sub-schools offering a broad, comprehensive curriculum
- Each Sub School has a Sub School Leader who oversees two year levels, two Year Level Coordinators and two/one deputy coordinators. Furthermore, there is an attendance officer who assists with administration of attendance
- There is a well-established and effective transition program that helps students adjust from primary to secondary school, from junior to middle school and from middle school to senior school and beyond
- All students are involved in a Home Group program involving pastoral care activities designed to improve connectedness to school as well as study skills and personal goal setting and future pathways planning
- Middle school students (Years 9 and 10) have a Specialist Subject program, which is designed to enhance student engagement by giving students subject choice as well as offering core studies in English, Mathematics, Humanities and Science
- Students learning Mathematics at Year 10 are targeted to meet their learning needs
- Year 10 students are given the opportunity to undertake a VCE subject as an accelerated option and Year 9 students participate in City Cite
- All Koorie students are connected with a Koorie Engagement Support Officer
- All students in Out of Home Care are appointed a Learning Mentor, have an Individual Learning Plan and are referred to Student Support Services for an Educational Needs Assessment
- Our college assists students to plan their Year 10 work experience, supported by their Career Action Plan
- Wellbeing and health staff undertake health promotion and social skills development in response to needs identified by student wellbeing data, classroom teachers or other school staff each year
- Staff apply a trauma-informed approach to working with students who have experienced trauma
- Year 12 students are provided with mentors and Action Planning
- EAL students are supported in the classroom and beyond
- Integration students are supported in class and through Individual Education Plans
- All students are provided with numeracy and literacy support

Individual
- Student Support Groups
- Individual Learning Plan and Behaviour Support Plan
- Program for Students with Disabilities
- Referral to Student Wellbeing Coordinator and Student Support Services
- Referral to ChildFirst, Headspace
- Navigator
- Lookout

Braybrook College implements a range of strategies that support and promote individual engagement. These can include:
- Building constructive relationships with students at risk or students who are vulnerable due to complex individual circumstances
- Meeting with student and their parent/carer to talk about how best to help the student engage with school
- Developing an Individual Learning Plan and/or a Behaviour Support Plan
- Considering if any environmental changes need to be made, for example changing the classroom set up
- Referring the student to:
  - School-based wellbeing supports
  - Student Support Services
  - Appropriate external supports such as council-based youth and family services, other Allied Health professionals, Headspace, Child and Adolescent Mental Health Services or ChildFirst
  - Re-engagement programs such as Navigator

Where necessary, the school will support the student's family to engage by:
- Being responsive and sensitive to changes in the student's circumstances and health and wellbeing
- Collaborating, where appropriate and with the support of the student and their family, with any external Allied Health professionals, services or agencies that are supporting the student
- Monitoring individual student attendance and developing a Return to School Plan and Re-engagement Plan in collaboration with the student and their family
- Running regular Student Support Group meetings for all students:
  - with a disability
  - in Out of Home Care
  - with complex needs that require ongoing support and monitoring.

4. Identifying Students in Need of Support

Braybrook College is committed to providing the necessary support to ensure our students are supported intellectually, emotionally and socially. The Student Wellbeing Team plays a significant role in developing and implementing strategies to help identify students in need of support and enhance student wellbeing. Braybrook College utilises the following information and tools to identify students in need of extra emotional, social or educational support:
- Personal, health and learning information gathered upon enrolment and during the enrolment interview
- Attendance records
- Academic performance
- Observations by school staff and families such as changes in engagement, behaviour, self-care, social connectedness and motivation
- Detention and suspension data
- Engagement with families
- Self-referrals or referrals from peers and staff
- Referrals from and to the Doctor (Doctors In Schools Program)
- Referrals to and from Department of Family, Fairness and Housing (Department of Family Finance and Housing) and the Police

5. Charter of Human Rights and Responsibilities

We respect and promote the following four basic principles of human rights and responsibilities (under The Charter of Human Rights and Responsibilities Act 2006): Freedom, Respect, Equality and Dignity. When making decisions, we act compatibly with human rights and consider each of the following: the right not to be discriminated against; the right to privacy and reputation; the right to freedom of thought, conscience, religion and belief and cultural rights. Staff, students and parents/carers understand that with human rights comes a responsibility to respect the human rights of others.

6. UN Convention on the Rights of the Child

We are also committed to promoting the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child in all our policies, procedures and documentation.

7. Student rights and responsibilities

All members of our school community have a right to experience a safe and supportive school environment. We expect that all students, staff, parents and carers treat each other with respect and dignity. Our school's Mission Statement highlights the rights and responsibilities of members of our community.

Students have the right to:
- Participate fully in their education
- Feel safe, secure and happy at school
- Learn in an environment free from bullying, harassment, violence, discrimination or intimidation

- Express their ideas, feelings and concerns.
- Receive reasonable assistance to resolve school related problems
- Receive ongoing communication and feedback on their progress

Students have the responsibility to:
- Attend regularly and participate fully in their educational program
- Display positive behaviours that demonstrate respect for themselves, their peers, their teachers and members of the school community
- Respect the right of others to learn.
- Take care of the school environment
- Adhere to the Uniform and Supplementary Dress Policy
- Show respect for the property and environment of the college and others

Students who may have a complaint or concern about something that has happened at school are encouraged to speak to their parents/carers and approach a trusted teacher, Year Level Team or a member of the school leadership team.

8. <u>Student Behavioural Expectations</u>

Behavioural expectations of students, staff and families are grounded in our school's Mission Statement. Student bullying behaviour will be responded to consistently with Braybrook College's Anti Bullying and Harassment policy.

When a student acts in breach of the behaviour standards of our school community, Braybrook College will institute a staged response, consistent with the Department's Student Engagement and Inclusion Guidelines. Where appropriate, parents will be informed about the inappropriate behaviour and the disciplinary action taken by teachers and other school staff.

Disciplinary measures may be used as part of a staged response to inappropriate behaviour in combination with other engagement and support strategies to ensure that factors that may have contributed to the student's behaviour are identified and addressed. Disciplinary measures at our school will be applied fairly and consistently. Students will always be provided with an opportunity to be heard.

Disciplinary measures that may be applied include:
- Warning a student that their behaviour is inappropriate
- Teacher controlled consequences such as moving a student in a classroom or other reasonable and proportionate responses to misbehaviour
- Withdrawal of privileges
- Referral to the Year Level Coordinator/Team
- Restorative practices
- Detentions
- Behaviour reviews
- Suspension
- Expulsion

Suspension and expulsion are measures of last resort and may only be used in particular situations consistent with Department policy, available at:
http://www.education.vic.gov.au/school/principals/spag/participation/pages/engagement.aspx

Corporal punishment is prohibited in our school and will not be used in any circumstance.

9. <u>Engaging with Families</u>

Braybrook College values the input of parents and carers, and we will strive to support families to engage in their child's learning and build their capacity as active learners. We aim to be partners in learning with parents and carers in our school community.

We work hard to create successful partnerships with parents and carers by:
- Ensuring that all parents have access to our school policies and procedures, available on our school website
- Maintaining an open, respectful line of communication between parents and staff, supported by our Communication Policy
- Involving families with homework and other curriculum-related activities
- Coordinating resources and services from the community for families
- Including families in Student Support Groups and developing Individual Learning Plans for students
- Providing opportunities for parents to attend information sessions and Parent/Teacher Interviews
- Inviting parents to celebrate their children's achievements
- Encouraging parents to participate in decision/policy making to bring about positive change.

10. Evaluation

Braybrook College will collect data each year to understand the frequency and types of wellbeing issues that are experienced by our students so that we can measure the success or otherwise of our school-based strategies and identify emerging trends or needs.

Sources of data that will be assessed on an annual basis include:

- Student and Parent survey data
- Incidents data
- School reports
- Case management
- CASES21
- SOCS
- On Demand testing
- NAPLAN data
- GAT
- VCE results

FURTHER INFORMATION AND RESOURCES

Other relevant College Policies

- Critical Incident Policy
- Suicide Prevention Policy
- Occupational Health and Safety Policy
- Drug Education Policy
- Admissions Policy
- Anaphylaxis Policy
- Anti-Harassment and Anti Bullying Policy
- Child Safety Policy
- Critical Drug Policy
- Duty of Care Supervision Policy
- Excursion Policy
- First Aid Policy
- International Student Policy
- Out of Class Policy
- Parent Complaint Policy and Procedure
- Photograph and Video Images Policy
- School Medication Policy
- Sexual Harassment Policy
- Student Awards Policy
- Uniform and Supplementary Dress Policy
- Visitors in the School Policy

Appendix 1 - CHILD SAFE STANDARDS

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.
2. Child safety and wellbeing is embedded in organisational leadership, governance and culture.
3. Children and young people are empowered about their rights, participate in decisions affecting them and are taken seriously.
4. Families and communities are informed and involved in promoting child safety and wellbeing.
5. Equity is upheld and diverse needs respected in policy and practice.
6. People working with children and young people are suitable and supported to reflect child safety and wellbeing values in practice.
7. Processes for complaints and concerns are child-focused.
8. Staff and volunteers are equipped with the knowledge, skills and awareness to keep children and young people safe through ongoing education and training.
9. Physical and online environments promote safety and wellbeing while minimising the opportunity for children and young people to be harmed.
10. Implementation of the Child Safe Standards is regularly reviewed and improved.
11. Policies and procedures document how the organisation is safe for children and young people.

REVIEW CYCLE

This policy was last updated August 2022 and is scheduled for review in August 2024.

CHILD SAFETY RESPONDING AND REPORTING OBLIGATIONS POLICY and PROCEDURES

PURPOSE

The purpose of this policy is to outline the procedures our school has in place to respond to complaints or concerns relating to child abuse and to ensure that all staff and members of our school community understand and follow the various legal obligations that apply to the reporting of child abuse to relevant authorities.

SCOPE

This policy applies to complaints and concerns relating to 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 (physical and online).

DEFINITIONS

Child abuse

Child abuse includes:
- physical violence inflicted on a child
- sexual offences committed against a child
- grooming of a child by an adult
- family violence committed against or in the presence of a child
- serious emotional or psychological harm to a child
- serious neglect of a child.

The definition of child abuse is broad and can include student to student incidents and concerns, as well as behaviour committed by an adult.

Grooming

Grooming is a criminal offence under the *Crimes Act 1958* (Vic) and is a form of child abuse and sexual misconduct. This offence targets predatory conduct undertaken by an adult to prepare a child, under the age of 16, to engage in sexual activity at a later time. Grooming can include communicating (including electronic communications) and/or attempting to befriend or establish a relationship or other emotional connection with the child or their parent or carer.

School Staff Member

For the purpose of this policy, a school staff member includes Teaching staff, Educational Support staff and a contractor engaged by the school or School Council to perform child-related work.

POLICY

Braybrook College understands the important role our school plays in protecting children from abuse. We have a range of policies and measures in place to prevent child abuse from occurring at our school or during school activities.

Information for Students

- All students should feel safe to speak to any staff member to raise any concerns about their safety or any other concerns that they have
- If a student does not know who to approach at Braybrook College, they should start with the Year Level Coordination Team

Identifying Child Abuse

To ensure we can respond in the best interests of students when complaints or concerns relating to child abuse are raised, all staff must:
- understand how to identify signs of child abuse and behavioural indicators of perpetrators
- understand their various legal obligations in relation to reporting child abuse to relevant authorities – for detailed information on the various legal obligations refer to Appendix A (on Page 22)
- follow the below procedures for responding to complaints or concerns relating to child abuse, which ensure our school acts in the best interests of students and complies with both our legal and Department policy obligations.

At Braybrook College we recognise the diversity of the children, young people, and families at our school and take account of their individual needs and backgrounds when considering and responding to child safety incidents or concerns.

Procedures for responding to an incident, disclosure, allegation or suspicion of child abuse

In responding to a child safety incident, disclosure, allegation or suspicion, Braybrook College will follow:

- the Four Critical Actions for Schools (Appendix 3) for complaints and concerns relating to all forms of child abuse
- our Student Wellbeing and Engagement Policy and Bullying Prevention Policy for complaints and concerns relating to student physical violence or other harmful student behaviours.

School Staff and Volunteer Responsibilities

1. Immediate action

If a school staff member or volunteer witnesses an incident of child abuse, or reasonably believes, suspects or receives a disclosure or allegation that a child has been, or is at risk of being abused, they must:

- If a child is at immediate risk of harm, separate alleged victims and others involved, administer first aid (appropriate to their level of training) and call 000 for urgent medical or police assistance where required to respond to immediate health or safety concerns
- Notify the Wellbeing Coordinator as soon as possible, who will ensure our school follows the steps in these procedures

NOTE for Staff and Volunteers:

- if you are uncertain if an incident, disclosure, allegation or suspicion gives rise to a concern about child abuse you must always err on the side of caution and report the concern to the Wellbeing Coordinator
- If the Wellbeing Coordinator is unavailable, the Principal or an Assistant Principal will take on this role
- If the concerns relate to the conduct of the Wellbeing Coordinator, notify the Principal who must then take on responsibility for ensuring our school follows these procedures

Refer to Appendix B (on Page 24) for guidance on how to respond to a disclosure of child abuse.

2. Reporting to Authorities and Referring to Services

As soon as immediate health and safety concerns are addressed, and relevant school staff have been informed, the Wellbeing Coordinator **must** report all incidents, suspicions and disclosures of child abuse as soon as possible.

The following steps will ensure our school complies with the Four Critical Actions For Schools.
as well as additional actions required under the Child Safety Standards.
The Wellbeing Coordinator must ensure:

- all relevant information is reported to the Department of Families, Fairness and Housing (DFFH) Child Protection, Victoria Police or relevant services where required
- the incident is reported by the Principal to the Department's eduSafe Plus portal or the Incident Support and Operations Centre (1800 126 126) in accordance with the severity rating outlined in the Managing and Reporting School Incidents Policy
- all reportable conduct allegations or incidents are reported by the Principal to the Department's Employee Conduct Branch (03 7022 0005) – where a Reportable Conduct allegation is made against the Principal, the Regional Director must be informed who will then make a report to Employee Conduct Branch

NOTE: In circumstances where staff members are legally required to report child abuse to DFFH Child Protection or Victoria Police and they are unable to confirm that the information has been reported by another person at the school or the designated member of school staff does not agree that a report needs to be made, the staff member who has formed the reasonable belief must still contact DFFH Child Protection and Victoria Police to make the report.

If you believe that a child is not subject to abuse, but you still hold significant concerns for their wellbeing you must still act. This may include making a referral or seeking advice from Child FIRST or The Orange Door (in circumstances where the family are open to receiving support) DFFH Child Protection or Victoria Police.

3. Contacting Parents or Carers

The Wellbeing Coordinator must ensure parents and carers are notified unless advised otherwise by DFFH Child Protection or Victoria Police, or there are other safety and wellbeing concerns in relation to informing parents/carers.

Principals may contact the Department of Education Legal Division for advice on notifying parents and carers, and where relevant, the wider school community.

4. Ongoing Protection and Support

The Wellbeing Coordinator and the Principal must ensure appropriate steps are taken by the school to protect the child and other children from any continued risk of abuse. These steps must be taken in consultation with any relevant external agency or Department staff such as DFFH Child Protection, Victoria Police, Legal Division or Employee Conduct Branch. Ongoing protection will also include further reports to authorities if new information comes to light or further incidents occur.

Appropriate, culturally sensitive and ongoing support must be offered and provided to all affected students. Ongoing support will be based on any available advice from the Department, parents and carers, health practitioners, and other authorities (such as DFFH or Victoria Police) and may include referral to wellbeing professionals, development of a safety plan, student support group meetings, and, for student-to-student incidents, behaviour management and support measures.

5. Recordkeeping

The Wellbeing Coordinator will ensure that:
- detailed notes of the incident, disclosure, allegation or suspicion are taken including, where possible, by the staff member or volunteer who reported the incident, disclosure, or suspicion to them
- detailed notes are taken of any immediate or ongoing action taken by the school to respond to the incident, disclosure, allegation or suspicion
- all notes and other records relating to the incident, disclosure, allegation or suspicion, including the school's immediate and ongoing actions, are stored securely in a sealed envelope in the student's folder in the General Office

For School Visitors and School Community Members

All community members aged 18 years or over have legal obligations relating to reporting child abuse – refer to Appendix A for detailed information.

Any person can make a report to DFFH Child Protection or Victoria Police if they believe on reasonable grounds, that a child is in need of protection. For contact details, refer to the Four Critical Actions For Schools.

Members of the community do not have to inform the school if they are making a disclosure to DFFH Child Protection or the Victoria Police. However, where a community member is concerned about the safety of a student at the school, the community member should report this concern to the Principal so that appropriate steps to support the student can be taken

Additional Requirements for all Staff

All staff play an important role in supporting student safety and wellbeing and have a duty of care to take reasonable steps to prevent reasonably foreseeable harm to students.

Fulfilling the roles and responsibilities does not displace or discharge any other obligations that arise if a person reasonably believes that a student is at risk of child abuse. This means that if, after following the actions outlined in the procedure, a staff member reasonably believes that a student remains at risk of abuse, they must take the following steps:
- if they are concerned that the school has not taken reasonable steps to prevent or reduce the risk, raise these concerns with the Principal in the first instance, and escalate to the regional office if they remain unsatisfied
- report the matter to the relevant authorities where they are unable to confirm that the information has been reported by another staff member

Staff must refer to Appendix A for further information on their obligations relating to reporting to authorities.

COMMUNICATION

This policy will be communicated to our school community in the following ways:
- Available publicly on our school's website
- Included in Staff Induction processes and annual staff training
- Included in Volunteer Induction processes and training for relevant volunteers
- Discussed at Annual Staff Briefings or Meetings
- Hard copy available from the General Office

FURTHER INFORMATION AND RESOURCES

The following Department of Education policies and guidance are relevant to this policy:
- Child Safety Standards
- Protecting Children — Reporting and Other Legal Obligations
- Managing and Reporting School Incidents
- Reportable Conduct
- Restraint and Seclusion
- Identify child abuse

- [Report child abuse in schools (including four critical actions)](#)
- [Identify and respond to student sexual offending](#)

The following school policies are also relevant to this policy:
- Child Safety Policy
- Child Safety Code of Conduct
- Statement of Values and School Philosophy
- Student Wellbeing and Engagement Policy
- Volunteer Policy
- Duty of Care Policy
- Equal Opportunity Policy

REVIEW CYCLE

This policy was last updated in May 2023 and is scheduled for review in May 2025.

APPENDIX A: LEGAL OBLIGATONS RELATING TO REPORTING CHILD ABUSE

The following information outlines the various legal obligations relating to the reporting of child abuse to relevant authorities.

It is important to note that the procedures outlined in the above policy ensure compliance with the below reporting obligations, and also include additional steps to ensure compliance with Department policy and our school's duty of care obligations.

Mandatory Reporting to Department of Families, Fairness and Housing (DFFH) Child Protection

The following individuals are mandatory reporters under the *Children, Youth and Families Act 2005* (Vic):
- Registered teachers and early childhood teachers (including Principals and school staff who have been granted permission to teach by the VIT)
- School Counsellors including staff who provide direct support to students for mental, emotional or psychological wellbeing, including (but not limited to) School Health and Wellbeing Staff, primary welfare coordinators, Student Wellbeing Coordinators, Mental Health Practitioners, Chaplains, and Student Support Services staff
- Nurses
- Registered Psychologists
- Police Officers
- Registered Medical Practitioners
- Out of Home Care Workers (excluding voluntary foster and kinship carers)
- Early Childhood Workers
- Youth Justice Workers
- People in religious ministry
- Midwives

All mandatory reporters must make a report to the Department of Families, Fairness and Housing (DFFH) Child Protection as soon as practicable if, during the course of carrying out their professional roles and responsibilities, they form a belief on reasonable grounds that:
- a child has suffered, or is likely to suffer, significant harm as a result of physical abuse and/ or sexual abuse; and
- the child's parents/carers have not protected, or are unlikely to protect the child from harm of that type.

A mandatory reporter who fails to comply with this legal obligation may be committing a criminal offence. It is important for all staff at Braybrook College to be aware that they are legally obliged to make a mandatory report on each occasion that they form a reasonable belief that a child is in need of protection and they must make a mandatory report even if the Principal or any other mandatory reporter does not share their belief that a report is necessary. At Braybrook College staff are asked to report concerns to the Wellbeing Coordinator, or the Principal, who makes the mandatory report.

If charged with not making a mandatory report, it may be a defence for the person charged to prove that they honestly and reasonably believed that all of the reasonable grounds for their belief had been the subject of a report to child protection made by another person.

The identity of a person who reports any protective concerns to DFFH Child Protection is protected by law. It is an offence for a person, other than the person who made the report, to disclose the name of the person who made a report or any information that is likely to lead to their identification.

At our school, all mandated school staff must undertake the *Mandatory Reporting and Other Obligations eLearning Module* annually.

The policy of the Department of Education requires **all staff** who form a reasonable belief that a child is in need of protection to discuss their concerns with the Wellbeing Coordinator (or Principal in Wellbeing Coordinator's absence) and in some circumstances to Victoria Police, or to ensure that all the information relevant to the report has been made by another school staff member.

Any person can make a report to DFFH Child Protection (131 278 – 24 hour service) if they believe on reasonable grounds that a child is in need of protection even if they are not a mandatory reporter listed above.

Reportable Conduct

The Reportable Conduct Scheme is focussed on worker and volunteer conduct and how organisations investigate and respond to suspected child abuse. The scheme aims to improve organisational responses to suspected child abuse and to facilitate the identification of individuals who pose a risk of harm to children.
There are five types of 'Reportable Conduct' listed in the *Child Wellbeing and Safety Act 2005:*
- sexual offences against, with or in the presence of, a child
- sexual misconduct (which includes grooming) against, with or in the presence of, a child
- physical violence against, with or in the presence of, a child
- behaviour that causes significant emotional or psychological harm to a child
- significant neglect of a child

A Reportable Conduct allegation is made where a person makes an allegation, based on a reasonable belief, that a worker or volunteer has committed Reportable Conduct or misconduct that *may* involve Reportable Conduct.

If school staff or volunteers become aware of Reportable Conduct by any current or former employee, contractor or volunteer, they must notify the Principal immediately. If the allegation relates to the Principal, they must notify the Regional Director.

The Principal or Regional Director must notify the Department's Employee Conduct Branch of any Reportable Conduct allegations involving current or former employees of the school (including Department, allied health, casual and School Council employees), contractors and volunteers (including parent volunteers).

- Employee Conduct Branch: 03 7022 0005 or employee.conduct@education.vic.gov.au

The Department's Secretary, through the Manager, Employee Conduct Branch, has a legal obligation to inform the Commission for Children and Young People when an allegation of Reportable Conduct is made.

For more information about Reportable Conduct see the Department's *Policy and Advisory Library*: Reportable Conduct and the Commission for Children and Young People's website.

Failure to disclose offence

Reporting child sexual abuse is a community-wide responsibility. All adults (ie persons aged 18 years and over), not just professionals who work with children, have a legal obligation to report to Victoria Police, as soon as practicable, where they form a 'reasonable belief' that a sexual offence has been committed by an adult against a child under the age of 16 in Victoria.
Failure to disclose information to Victoria Police (by calling 000, local police station or the Police Assistance Line 131 444) as soon as practicable may amount to a criminal offence unless a person has a 'reasonable excuse' or exemption from doing so.

"Reasonable belief" is not the same as having proof. A 'reasonable belief' is formed if a reasonable person in the same position would have formed the belief on the same grounds.

For example, a 'reasonable belief' might be formed when:
- a child states that they have been sexually abused
- a child states that they know someone who has been sexually abused (sometimes the child may be talking about themselves)
- someone who knows a child states that the child has been sexually abused
- professional observations of the child's behaviour or development leads a mandated professional to form a belief that the child has been sexually abused
- signs of sexual abuse leads to a belief that the child has been sexually abused.

"Reasonable excuse" is defined by law and includes:
- fear for the safety of any person including yourself or the potential victim (but not including the alleged perpetrator or an organisation)

- where the information has already been disclosed to Victoria Police and you have no further information to add (for example, through a mandatory report to DFFH Child Protection or a report to Victoria Police from another member of school staff).

Failure to Protect Offence

This reporting obligation applies to school staff in a position of authority. This can include Principals, Assistant Principals and Campus Principals. Any staff member in a position of authority who becomes aware that an adult associated with their school (such as an employee, contractor, volunteer or visitor) poses a risk of sexual abuse to a child under the age of 16 under their care, authority or supervision, must take all reasonable steps to remove or reduce that risk.

This may include removing the adult (ie persons aged 18 years and over) from working with children pending an investigation and reporting your concerns to Victoria Police.

If a school staff member in a position of authority fails to take reasonable steps in these circumstances, this may amount to a criminal offence.

Further information

For more information about the offences and reporting obligations outlined above refer to: Protecting Children — Reporting and Other Legal Obligations.

APPENDIX B: MANAGING DISCLOSURES OF CHILD ABUSE
Important information for staff
When Managing a Disclosure Relating to Child Abuse you should*:*
- Listen to the student and allow them to speak
- Stay calm and use a neutral tone with no urgency and where possible use the student's language and vocabulary (you do not want to frighten the child or interrupt the child)
- Be gentle, patient and non-judgmental throughout
- Highlight to the student it was important for them to tell you about what has happened
- Assure them that they are not to blame for what has occurred
- Do not ask leading questions, for example gently ask, "What happened next?" rather than "Why?"
- Be patient and allow the student to talk at their own pace and in their own words
- Do not pressure the student into telling you more than they want to, they will be asked a lot of questions by other professionals, and it is important not to force them to retell what has occurred multiple times
- Reassure student that you believe them and that disclosing the matter was important for them to do
- Use verbal facilitators such as, "I see", restate the student's previous statement, and use non-suggestive words of encouragement, designed to keep the child talking in an open-ended way ("What happened next?")
- Tell the student in age-appropriate language you are required to report to the relevant authority to help stop the abuse, and explain the role of these authorities if appropriate (for a young child this may be as simple as saying "I will need to talk to people to work out what to do next to help you")
- Take prompt action in relation to following the procedures outlined below.

When Managing a Disclosure you should AVOID*:*
- Displaying expressions of panic or shock
- Asking questions that are investigative and potentially invasive (this may make the student feel uncomfortable and may cause the student to withdraw)
- Going over the information repeatedly (you are only gathering information to help you form a belief on reasonable grounds that you need to make a report to the relevant authority)
- Making any comments that would lead the student to believe that what has happened is their fault
- Making any promises you will keep the information the student provided confidential
- Making promises to the student about what will occur next or that things will be different given the process can be unpredictable and different for each child depending on their circumstances (instead reassure them that you and others will do your best to help).

BULLYING PREVENTION POLICY

RATIONALE

Braybrook College's student code of conduct emphasises that all members of the school community have a right to feel safe. Bullying may lead to school members feeling frightened, unsafe, embarrassed, angry or unfairly treated. This can affect people's work and their ability to concentrate. Relationships and self-esteem may deteriorate. Braybrook College prides itself on providing an environment where all individuals can feel safe and happy. Also, the College is protective of and responsive to any person who encounters harassment of any kind.

Bullying is often repeated and may include, but is not limited to:
- Physical violence such as hitting, pushing, punching or spitting on others
- Interfering with another's property by stealing, hiding, damaging or destroying it
- Teasing, using put-downs, writing or saying offensive things about others either in person or online, including messaging or sharing offensive videos
- Making degrading comments about another's gender, culture, religious or social backgrounds or sexuality
- Hurtfully excluding others from a group
- Making suggestive comments or other forms of sexual harassment/assault
- Ridiculing another's appearance
- Forcing others to act against their will

OBJECTIVES

To maintain an atmosphere of caring and concern in the school as demonstrated by:
- Staff acting as appropriate role models
- Staff being alert and responsive to any episodes of bullying behaviour
- Students refusing to be involved in bullying situations
- Students exhibiting upstander behaviour
- Students reacting to bullying with non-violent preventative action
- Students having the confidence to seek support when confronted with bullying

GUIDELINES

Preventative Actions
- Supervision by teachers on yard duty, around the school and in classrooms is critical to preventative behaviour
- Student anti-harassment and anti-bullying programs are important foci for positive student behaviour. These programs also educate students on the dangers of being a bystander and teach them how to exhibit safe upstander
- Homegroup sessions include activities around bullying and respectful relationships issues
- A curriculum that values all contributions and that builds self-esteem is essential; in particular, programs like the peer support program, sport, camps, amongst many others encourage a sense of self-worth in many students
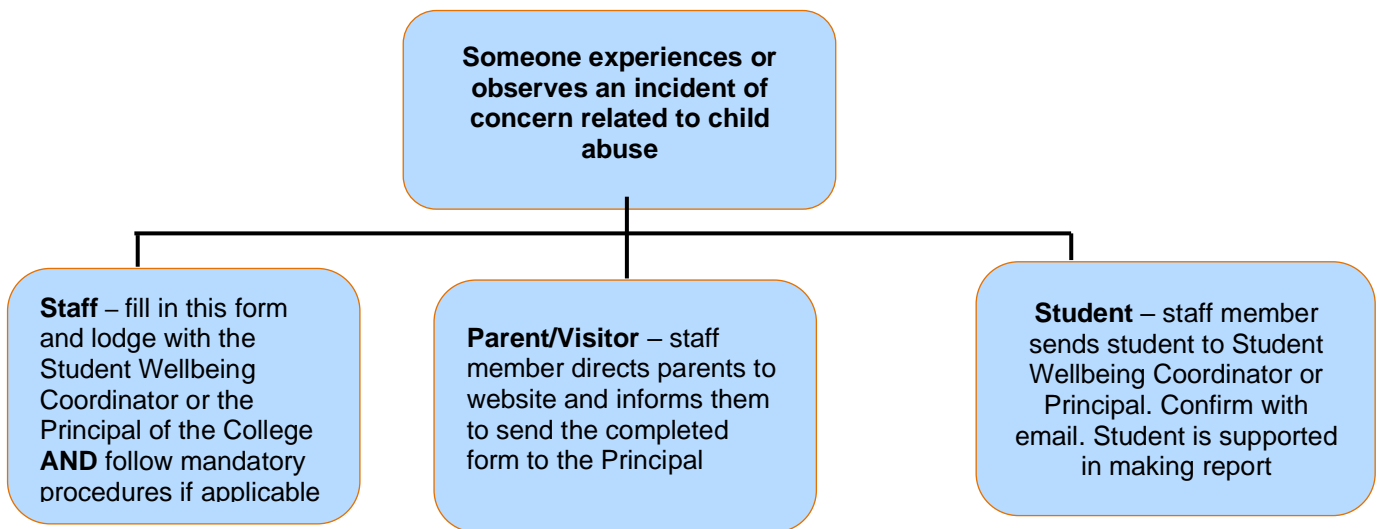
Intervention Actions
- The Harassment Contact Person, in consultation with Year Level Coordinators/Sub-School Leaders, will manage a program of support, counselling and sanctions
- Unacceptable behaviour will be dealt with promptly
- Offenders will be counselled and punished, as appropriate
- Victims will be offered counselling to develop strategies to enhance resilience
- Repeat offenders may need further intervention which way involve the Wellbeing Team, Assistant Principal or other support, eg. an "Anger Management" program

Punishment
All bullying incidents are in contravention of school rules and will be dealt with in accordance with the processes and procedures outlined in the school's codes of conduct.

Braybrook College

Child Safety Incident Report

Someone experiences or observes an incident of concern related to child abuse

Staff – fill in this form and lodge with the Student Wellbeing Coordinator or the Principal of the College **AND** follow mandatory procedures if applicable

Parent/Visitor – staff member directs parents to website and informs them to send the completed form to the Principal

Student – staff member sends student to Student Wellbeing Coordinator or Principal. Confirm with email. Student is supported in making report

The Child Safe Standards require organisations that provide services for children to have processes for responding to and reporting suspected child abuse.

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

All incident reports must be stored securely in a sealed envelope marked 'Student Wellbeing Coordinator/Principal Only' in the student's official enrolment folder at the General Office. The Student Wellbeing Coordinator/Principal are responsible for overseeing overall compliance of the reporting process and all Child Safe matters at the school.

Incident details:

Date of Incident:	
Time of Incident:	
Location of Incident:	
Name(s) of child/ren involved:	
Name(s) of staff/volunteer involved	

Do any of the children identify as Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander?

	Tick below
No	
Yes, Aboriginal	
Yes, Torres Strait Islander	

Please categorise the incident:

	Tick below
Physical violence	
Sexual offence	
Serious emotional or psychological abuse	
Serious neglect	
Adult not following Child Safe Code of Conduct	

Please describe the incident:

Who was involved?	
What did you see?	
Other information? (Other witnesses etc)	

Office use:

Date incident report received:	
Staff member managing incident:	
Follow-up date:	

Has the incident been reported to?

	Circle:	Complete:
Child Protection	Yes / No	Date:
Police	Yes / No	Date:
Another third party (please specify()):	Yes / No	Who?

Incident reporter wishes to remain anonymous?

Yes/No?	
Reporter's name:	
Reporter's Phone number:	