

CHILD SAFE POLICY

Commitment to child safety:

- Keilor Downs College is committed to child safety, striving to ensure that all of our students are safe, happy and empowered at school and during all school-related activities.
- The College has zero tolerance of child abuse and all allegations and safety concerns will be treated seriously and consistently, within clear policies and procedures.
- The College fully accepts its legal and moral obligations to contact relevant authorities when any concerns about a student's safety are raised and will follow this rigorously.
- The College is committed to preventing child abuse by consistently identifying risks and removing or reducing these risks. This includes following clear human resources and recruitment practices for all staff and volunteers to prevent child abuse.
- We have specific policies, procedures and training in place that support our leadership team and staff to achieve these commitments.
- Practical application of this policy is described in the related **Child Safe Code of Conduct**

Empowerment of Students:

- This policy is intended to empower students and we commit to involving them when making decisions about matters that directly affect them, to listen to their views with respect and to rigorously follow up all safety concerns raised.
- The College promotes diversity and tolerance and supports the cultural safety, participation and empowerment of students from diverse backgrounds and ensuring that students with a disability are safe and can participate equally.

Responsibility of the School Community:

- All of our staff, students, families and volunteers must abide by the College Student Safety Code of Conduct which specifies the standards required when working with students at school or school-related events.
- The organisational culture of the College aims for all staff, volunteers, families and students to feel confident and comfortable in discussing any allegations of child abuse or child safety concerns.
- The Wellbeing and House structures and processes of the College must support staff to identify, assess and minimise risks of child abuse and to detect potential signs of child abuse.
- Any inappropriate behaviour will be reported to a member of the Principal Team, who are designated as the College's Child Safe Officers, and will report to the Department of Education & Training and Victoria Police, depending on the severity and urgency of the matter.

Recruitment processes:

- The College will take all reasonable steps to ensure that they employ people who comply with child safety requirements. Selection criteria and advertisements will include a commitment to child safety and an awareness of social and legislative responsibilities.
- All people engaged in child-related work, including volunteers, are required to hold a Working with Children Check and to provide evidence of this Check.
- All teachers must have current VIT registration, which includes a current Criminal Record Check. We will also carry out reference checks to ensure that we are recruiting appropriate people. If during the recruitment process a person's records indicate a criminal history then the person will be given the opportunity to provide further information and context.

Fair procedures for personnel:

- The safety and wellbeing of students is the primary concern of the College but we also strive to be fair and just to College personnel. The decisions made when recruiting, assessing incidents, and undertaking disciplinary action will always be thorough, transparent, and based on evidence.

- All allegations of child abuse will be handled with integrity, discretion and only disclosed to those with a direct interest or required to be involved by their role.
- All allegations of child abuse and safety concerns will be recorded using the specific incident reporting form and will be securely stored by the Principal.
- If an allegation of abuse or a safety concern is raised, the College will ensure that updates will be provided to students and families on progress and any actions the College takes.
- All personal information considered or recorded will respect the privacy of the individuals involved, whether they be staff, volunteers, parents or students, unless there is a risk to someone's safety. Personnel involved are entitled to know how this information is recorded, what will be done with it, and who will have access to it.

Allegations, concerns and complaints

- The College takes all allegations seriously and will endeavour to investigate thoroughly, discreetly and quickly.
- Wellbeing and Leadership staff are trained to deal appropriately with allegations and work to ensure all students, families, staff and volunteers are supported to report inappropriate behaviour.
- All adults working in any school environment have a responsibility to report an allegation of abuse if they have formed a 'reasonable belief' that an incident took place.
- Factors contributing to forming this 'reasonable belief' may be:
 - disclosure from a student that they or someone they know has been abused
 - behaviours consistent with that of an abuse victim is observed
 - someone else has raised a suspicion of abuse but is unwilling to report it
 - directly observing suspicious behaviour

Legislative responsibilities:

The College takes its legal responsibilities seriously, including:

- **Failure to disclose:** Reporting child sexual abuse is a community-wide responsibility. All adults in Victoria who have a reasonable belief that an adult has committed a sexual offence against a child under 16 have an obligation to report that information to the police. In school-related events, this responsibility will be delegated to the Principal who will contact relevant authorities.
- **Failure to protect:** All staff in our College will commit an offence if they know of a substantial risk of child sexual abuse and have the power or responsibility to reduce or remove the risk, but negligently fail to do so.
- **Mandatory Reporting:** All staff must also comply with DET mandatory reporting guidelines.

Risk management:

The College will strive to proactively manage risks of abuse to students.

The College will maintain risk management strategies to identify, assess and minimise child abuse risks posed by physical and online school environments

Regular review

This policy will be reviewed every three years and following significant incidents if they occur, ensuring that families and students have the opportunity to contribute.

References:

This policy is written in response to Ministerial Order No. 870

Definitions relevant to this policy:

Child means any child enrolled as a student at the school.

Child-connected work means work authorised by the College and performed by an adult in a school environment while students are present or reasonably expected to be present.

Child abuse includes:

- a) any act committed against a child involving—
 - (i) a sexual offence; or
 - (ii) an offence under section 49B(2) of the Crimes Act 1958 (grooming);
 and

- b) the infliction, on a child, of—
 - (i) physical violence; or
 - (ii) serious emotional or psychological harm;and
- c) serious neglect of a child.
(see Appendix 1 for more detailed information)

Child safety encompasses matters related to protecting all students from child abuse, managing the risk of child abuse, providing support to a child at risk of child abuse, and responding to incidents or allegations of child abuse.

School environment means any physical or virtual place made available or authorised by the School Council for use by a student during or outside school hours, including:

- (a) the school campus;
- (b) online school environments (including email and intranet systems); and
- (c) other locations provided by the school for student use (including, without limitation, locations used for school camps, sporting events, excursions, competitions, and other events).