

## Child Safety and Wellbeing Policy



### Help for non-English speakers

If you need help to understand this policy, please contact Narre Warren South P-12 College on 03 9704 3333

### Purpose

The Narre Warren South P-12 College Child Safety and Wellbeing 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](#) (PDF, 363KB) 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, visitors, and contractors whether or not they work in direct contact with students. It also applies to school council members where indicated.
- applies in all physical and online school environments used by students during or outside of school hours, including other locations provided by for a student's use (for example, a school camp) 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 below.

### Definitions

The following terms in this policy have [specific definitions](#):

- child
- child safety
- child abuse
- child-connected work
- child-related work
- school environment
- school boarding environment
- school staff

- school boarding premises staff
- school governing authority
- school boarding premises governing authority.
- student
- volunteer.

### **Statement of commitment to child safety**

Narre Warren South P-12 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 safe policies, strategies and practices are inclusive of the needs of all children and students.

We have no 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, 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 (LGBTIQ+) 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.

### **Roles and responsibilities**

#### **Universal**

Measures are in place to empower our school community to identify, report and address inappropriate and harmful behaviours such as racism, homophobia and other forms of discrimination or harassment.

#### **School leadership team**

Our school leadership team comprising of the principal, assistant principals, Leading Teachers, Learning Specialists and Student Engagement Leaders (SEs) are

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.

Principals and assistant principals 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 regular professional learning for staff and volunteers (where appropriate) to build deeper understandings of child safety, cultural safety, student wellbeing and prevention of 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 Training, and always follow the school's child safety and wellbeing policies and procedures
- act in accordance with our Child Safety Code of Conduct, which is available on the College's Website and a hard copy is available on request at the reception areas.
- identify and raise concerns about child safety issues in accordance with our **Child Safety Responding and Reporting Obligations Policy and Procedures**, which is available on the College's Website and a hard copy is available on request at the reception areas which includes following the [Four Critical Actions for Schools](#)
- 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, noting it is not always necessary to discuss child safety at every school council meeting. Child safety to be discussed at all meetings however to ensure that a culture of child safety is being embedded, school council members are informed and understand the issues.
- undertake annual training on child safety, Narre Warren South P-12 College will present to the school council members the Child Safe Standards School Council Training slide presentation 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.
- when hiring school council employees, ensure that selection, supervision, and management practices are child safe. At our school, school council employment duties are delegated to the principal who is bound by this policy.

### **Specific staff child safety responsibilities**

Narre Warren South P-12 College has nominated a child safety champion, the Assistant Principal of the Wellbeing team 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 [Guidance for child safety champions](#). In addition to these roles, our child safety champion is also responsible for:

- Overseeing and supporting the entire Well-being team and outside agencies.

The Student Engagement Leadership and Wellbeing team are the first point of contact for child safety concerns or queries and for coordinating responses to child safety incidents.

- The Wellbeing Team and the Manager of College Operations are responsible for monitoring the school's compliance with the Child Safety and Wellbeing Policy. Anyone in our school community should approach Manager of College Operations or the College Principal if they have any concerns about the school's compliance with the Child Safety and Wellbeing Policy.
- The Office Manager 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 also established a Child Safety and Wellbeing Team and a Student Reference Group on child safety. The Child Safety and Wellbeing Team meet regularly to identify and respond to any ongoing matters related to child safety and wellbeing. The Student Reference Group provides an opportunity for students to provide input into school strategies.

Our Risk Management Committee monitors the Child Safety Risk Register.

## Child Safety Code of Conduct

Our Child Safety Code of Conduct sets the boundaries and expectations for appropriate behaviours between adults and students. It also clarifies behaviours that are not acceptable in our physical and online environments.

We ensure that students also know what is acceptable and what is not acceptable so that they can be clear and confident about what to expect from adults in the school.

The Child Safety Code of Conduct, which is available on the College's Website and a hard copy is available on request at the reception areas which also includes processes to report inappropriate behaviour.

## 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. These risks are managed through our child safety and wellbeing policies, procedures, and practices, and in our activity specific risk registers, such as those we develop for off-site overnight camps, adventure activities and facilities 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. Our school leadership team will monitor and evaluate the effectiveness of the actions in the Child Safety Risk Register at least annually.

## Promote a culture of online and physical safety for all students

- Supervise students properly in all settings, including the playground, excursions and camps.
- Give particular attention to the safety, diverse needs, and vulnerabilities of students in each activity or setting. Consider whether there are any barriers that might prevent students from raising concerns.
- Inform students and their families about appropriate use of the school's technology, safety tools and how to seek help and report concerns including cyberbullying and online grooming.
- Keep up to date with current online safety issues and expert information from specialist government and non-government bodies including the Office of the e-Safety Commissioner, and eSmart Schools.
- Promote activities in the school community that connect schools and communities and raise awareness to prevent bullying and violence (e.g. [National Day of Action against Bullying and Violence](#)).
- Create a respectful, sensitive, and safe environment for people who may be experiencing family violence. Schools are required to align to the MARAM framework over time. [MARAM responsibility 1](#) requires schools to create a respectful, sensitive, and safe environment that enables a child or young person to feel comfortable to talk about their experiences of family violence and seek support.

## **Manage risk in physical spaces**

- Identify and document the school's child safety risks in the school's risk register or equivalent and ensure strategies are in place to manage those risks.
- Consider the range of school environments and the nature of physical spaces including onsite buildings and grounds, classrooms, corridors, and pick-up and drop off areas.
- Consider off-site physical environments for student use and where reasonably possible, inspect these sites and venues for events, excursions, camps, and international student accommodation ahead of time.
- Consider risks arising from child-to-child and adult-to-child interactions in physical and online spaces.
- Consider cultural safety. Are there elements of the physical school environment that would be unwelcoming to Aboriginal people?
- Inform staff, volunteers, and students where appropriate of identified risks and risk management strategies.
- Keep records of risk management activities, including risk assessments for camps and excursions.
- Provide training and refresher training to staff and relevant volunteers on risk management policies and procedures.

## **Supervise appropriately**

- Be aware of risks posed by dark spaces, stairwells, private spaces and corners in school environments and develop strategies to address these risks.
- Inform students about spaces that are off limits, including out-of-bounds areas, storerooms, and staff rooms.
- Nominate ratios of staff and volunteers to students for different types of activities.
- Keep records of any court orders in place regarding access or intervention orders and communicate to staff who can collect students in these circumstances.
- Use observation aids when appropriate, such as observation windows, concave mirrors, CCTV and consider the balance between appropriate visibility and respecting staff and students' privacy.
- Undertake works to improve lighting in poorly lit areas.
- Let students know how to raise concerns and where to go if they need help.
- Organise professional learning to discuss risk and harm prevention and hazard awareness with staff, volunteers and school council members.
- Keep records of incidents that occur, including accidents and medical events.
- Review incidents against policies and procedures, including seeking student feedback on how incidents were handled and how safe they felt, and make improvements as needed.



## Promote student safety online

- Give students opportunities to learn, play, create, entertain, make new friends and stay connected.
- Facilitate age-appropriate ways to use the internet and social media for students utilising the whole school approach to Respectful Relationships and the [Resilience, Rights and Respectful Relationships resources](#), [School-wide Positive Behaviour Support Framework](#), [Safe Schools](#) and also [Office of the e-Safety Commissioner](#)
- Inform students about online safety risks, including:
  - cyberbullying and trolling
  - invasion of privacy or digital surveillance
  - inappropriate sharing of images
  - phishing, harvesting of personal information or data theft
  - identity theft
  - malevolent software (malware)
  - offensive images and messages
  - age-inappropriate online content
  - impersonation/catfishing
  - grooming.
- Outline acceptable use of personal devices for students.
- Prohibit the use of student email addresses to sign up to unauthorised third-party services and communicate this expectation to students and the school community.
- Use filtering software on school-based devices.
- Encourage parents to use parental controls on personal devices.
- Advise students on how they can seek help from a trusted adult if they are exposed to inappropriate imagery or content that upsets them.
- Monitor online activity and respond to breaches of the online policies and procedures with appropriate consequences.

## Promote acceptable behaviour by staff and volunteers

- Address acceptable and non-acceptable behaviour in online environments in the school's Child Safety Code of Conduct. Cover social media, email, instant messages, SMS, and other apps in your code.
- Outline acceptable use of personal devices by staff and volunteers.
- Have guidelines for taking, storing, and using images of children and students – including photos and video recordings.
- Deal with misuse of digital devices and unacceptable behaviour in accordance with school policy.
- Review communication protocols regularly, considering emerging services and technologies, such as disappearing message services.
- Uphold policies and report breaches in accordance with the school's complaints handling processes and Code of Conduct.
- Provide avenues for students, families, carers, communities, and staff to report online issues or concerns.
- Protect student privacy by supporting students to limit the amount of information provided online.

- Require school staff to undertake information security training to reduce the risk of online phishing or malware attacks.

### **Establishing a culturally safe environment**

At Narre Warren South P-12 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:

### **Build a strong school culture to support cultural inclusion**

- Begin events and meetings with a Welcome to Country or an Acknowledgement of Country as a standing agenda item. Use this as an opportunity to pause and reflect.
- Fly the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander flags on school grounds.
- Display plaques and signs to Acknowledge Country and Traditional Owners.
- Make Aboriginal voice part of decision making in matters that affect Aboriginal students. Be open to different ways of doing and expressing things.
- Celebrate the local Aboriginal community in communications with students, staff, volunteers and families. Share information through school newsletters, and school assemblies.
- Lead on 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 schoolwide knowledge of Aboriginal histories, cultures, perspectives, values, skills, and attitudes.

### **Provide a welcoming environment for Aboriginal children**

- 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.
- Implement the [Koorie Education Policy](#) to create a learning environment for all students that acknowledges, respects and values Aboriginal cultures and identities (Government schools).
- Use [Koorie Engagement Support Officers](#) (KESOs) to provide advice to government schools about creating culturally inclusive learning environments.
- Use the [Marrung Aboriginal Education Plan 2016–2026](#) to guide the school's support for Aboriginal self-determination.



## Actively address racism

- Express zero tolerance of racism in your statement of commitment to child safety included in your Child Safety and Wellbeing Policy and other documents.
- Address racism from students, staff, volunteers or visitors directly. Make sure racist speech or actions are always dealt with, and the culture of the school works to prevent incidents from occurring.
- Put school leaders at the front of anti-racist action. Discuss racism and work to address unconscious bias and racism in the school community.
- Encourage non-Aboriginal school leaders and teachers to commit to ways they can work as an effective ally to Aboriginal students, their families and communities.

## Guide and train staff and volunteers

- Train staff and volunteers to understand the importance of Aboriginal culture to the wellbeing and safety of Aboriginal students.
- Work with the local Aboriginal community to build staff, volunteer and student knowledge and respect for Aboriginal culture and to promote cultural inclusion.
- Arrange [Community Understanding Safety Training \(CUST\)](#) or equivalent for staff.

## Build knowledge of Aboriginal culture in school planning and curriculum

- Find out about the Traditional Owners of the land/s where the school is situated at the [Map of Indigenous Australia](#) and learn about the importance of [acknowledging Traditional Owners](#).
- Include Aboriginal history and culture in professional learning for staff and volunteers and in curriculum planning for students.
- Develop a resource bank of digital, hardcopy print and other artefacts that support the inclusion of Aboriginal content across the curriculum.

## Partner with Aboriginal communities

- Support local Aboriginal businesses through school procurement.
- Engage with local Aboriginal communities via Traditional Owner groups, corporations, or the Registered Aboriginal Party to review cultural safety in school environment, systems and processes.
- Engage with the Local Aboriginal Education Consultative Group (LAECG) and/or the Victorian Aboriginal Education Association Incorporated (VAEAI).

## Student empowerment

To support child safety and wellbeing at Narre Warren South P-12 College, we 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 implementing our whole school approach to Respectful Relationships, our student Code of Conduct, our school values.

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 and families can also access information on how to report concerns at [nwsc.vic.edu.au](http://nwsc.vic.edu.au) or state at the College A Block reception.

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.

### **Inform students of their rights**

- Provide age appropriate and accessible information to students such as information about:
  - the school's Child Safety and Wellbeing Policy and Code of Conduct.
  - the Charter of Commitment under the [UN Convention on the Rights of the Child](#)
  - the work of the [Commission for Children and Young People](#)
  - how the adults in the school should behave.
- Inform students of their [rights and special protections](#) including the right to:
  - live and grow up healthy
  - have a say about decisions affecting them
  - get information that is important to them
  - be safe and not harmed by anyone.
- When sharing information under the [information sharing schemes](#):
  - work to build trust by being open and transparent about information sharing and keep the child and family informed each time their information is shared if it is appropriate, safe and reasonable to do so
  - seek and consider the views of the child (or the relevant family members) about sharing their confidential information if it is appropriate, safe and reasonable to do so
- Provide information through the curriculum via relevant subject areas to promote:
  - [Resilience, Rights and Respectful Relationships](#)
  - [School-wide Positive Behaviour Support Framework](#)
  - [Safe Schools](#)
  - [Bully Stoppers](#)
  - [Vic SRC's Introduction to Student Voice](#)
  - [eSmart](#).

## **Empower students to contribute to school life**

- Display visually engaging and easy-to-read posters promoting student voice and agency.
- Discuss commitment to student's voice at enrolment and organise orientation activities focused on activating student's voice.
- Conduct year-level meetings and form groups to discuss students' rights and safety issues.
- Invite students to provide feedback on school-wide decisions and take their views into account in school decision-making.
- Document student participation in activities that contribute to the life of the school.
- Involve students in consultation processes and inform them of their impact on decision-making.
- Demonstrate that the school takes students seriously by acting on their concerns, noting that what might seem unimportant to an adult may be important to a young person.
- We are a [VicSRC Partner School](#).
- Provide students who find it harder to speak up or be heard with multiple avenues for communicating, including writing, drawing, or physical forms of communication.

## **Empower students to raise their concerns**

- Provide students with information about complaints processes.
- Give students a variety of ways to raise concerns. For example:
  - provide an anonymous, year-level student suggestion box
  - distribute regular online surveys
  - display information about the adults who students can talk to if they have a concern.
- Highlight student views in your school community or public-facing documents, including quoting students where appropriate.
- Create opportunities for all student voices by being aware of discriminatory barriers and any overreliance on the input of student leaders.

## **Strengthen peer support for safety and wellbeing**

- Display posters acknowledging sexuality and gender diversity and identify safe spaces where students can go if they need support.
- Carry out regular whole school [wellbeing assessment surveys](#).
- Use the [Bully Stoppers survey tool](#) to assess bullying in your school.
- Establish Student Action Teams to investigate issues of inclusion and exclusion.
- Discuss healthy boundaries for friendships. Point out that the risk of harm can occur in child-to-child interactions, as well as adult-to-child interactions.
- Use school transition programs, like positive start program, to provide support for students entering the school.
- Provide buddying or mentoring programs for new students transitioning to the school mid-year or outside of the regular transition timeline.

## Establish protective factors

- Teach students practical protective strategies, including:
  - what to do when they feel unsafe
  - phrases they can use to raise an objection
  - pathways for raising safety concerns, and
  - online safety behaviours.
- Provide contact information for independent child and youth advocacy services or helplines.
- Provide a range of age-appropriate picture books, fiction and non-fiction that include:
  - children's rights and empowerment themes
  - cultural and linguistic diversity
  - neurodiverse characters and people with disability
  - diversity in sexual orientation and gender.
- Support all students to identify trusted adults and friends they can talk to about a concern at school, at home or in the community.
- Deliver age-appropriate curriculum content about respectful relationships, sexuality, consent and sexual abuse prevention through the [Resilience Rights and Respectful Relationships teaching and learning materials](#) as part of implementing the whole school approach to Respectful Relationships.
- Use the [School's Mental Health Menu](#) to support students in your school.
- Empower students with the knowledge that adults are accountable and that students have a right to safety.

## Communicate in a respectful and age-appropriate way

- Educate staff to uphold Aboriginal cultural safety and be respectful of identity and culture.
- Train staff and volunteers to facilitate child-friendly ways for students to express their views, participate in decision-making and raise their concerns.
- Educate staff and volunteers about children's rights, including the 4 guiding principles in the [Convention on the Rights of the Child](#).

## Use sensitivity and build trust

- Provide training to staff and volunteers to be attuned to [signs of harm](#) and risk factors in students.
- Remind staff and volunteers to recognise that students might communicate in different ways, including through verbal and non-verbal cues, play, body language, facial expressions, drawings, or behaviours.
- Follow through on your commitments – show students that the leadership team and staff are trustworthy and take their worries or concerns seriously.

## Family engagement

Our families and the school community have an important role in monitoring and promoting children's safety and wellbeing and helping children to raise any concerns.

To support family engagement, at Narre Warren South P-12 College we are committed to providing families and community with accessible information about our school's child safe policies and practices and involving them in our approach to child safety and wellbeing.

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 do this by:

- seek input from families and the community through the parent portal (Compass), the College website, newsletters, other communications, school council, sub-committees of school council, student, staff, and parent meetings etc.
- Child safety policies and procedures will be available for students and parents on the College website or available in hard copy version at A Block reception.
- Newsletters / Compass will 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.
- PROTECT Child Safety posters will be displayed across the school. Posters are located within each of the College Blocks which will be visible to staff and students including the Wellbeing Centre, Library and Reception areas.

## **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 safety 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 LGBTIQ+.

Our Student Wellbeing and Engagement, which is available on the College's Website and a hard copy is available on request at the reception areas, and Inclusions and Diversity policies, also available provides more information about the measures we have in place to support diversity and equity.

## **Recognise the diverse backgrounds, needs and circumstances of students**

- Recognise the range of diverse student and family attributes. Pay attention to:
  - cultural safety for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students

- the needs of students with disability and responses to disability
- the needs of students from diverse religious and cultural communities
- the needs of very young students and children
- the impact of prior trauma
- gender differences
- the experiences of lesbian, gay, bisexual, trans and gender diverse, intersex, and queer (LGBTIQ+) students
- challenges for students who are in foster care, out of home care, living away from home or international students
- students experiencing pregnancy or who are young parents
- socio-economic factors (experiencing family homelessness, insecure employment or accommodation, individual or family contact with the justice system, poverty, addiction, low educational attainment, remote or regional isolation).
- Pay attention to diverse student cohorts and individuals in your community, recognising that they may have higher risk of harm.
- Normalise asking for and using people's pronouns and names for students.
- Use contemporary, culturally sensitive, and inclusive examples when discussing families, relationships or professions and vocations.

### **Identify and address challenges that students experience due to their diverse attributes**

- Communicate that discrimination and bullying are not tolerated – if incidents of bullying or discrimination occur, address the incident in line with school policy.
- Let students know they can raise concerns or report incidents that occurred at school and outside the school.
- Check in with vulnerable students and their families to confirm their needs are being met. This can occur at pick-up or drop-off, at parent teacher interviews or through informal discussions.
- Engage genuinely with students. Find out what matters to them, what they know and don't know about safety, and what they need to be safe and feel safe.
- Validate students' feelings. Students may feel that they have not been listened to or believed in the past.
- Offer buddying and mentoring for students who are at risk of social isolation.
- Discuss how students feel about discussing their personal circumstances and respect their wishes. Note that where staff or volunteers have formed a reasonable belief that sharing information is necessary to lessen or prevent a serious threat to an individual's life, health, safety, or welfare, they may be required to share information despite the wishes of the student that their information remain confidential.
- Take a holistic approach when responding to family violence.
- Respond to family violence in a way that is accessible, culturally responsive, safe, child-centred, inclusive, and non-discriminatory.



## **Put in place policies and strategies to help meet the diverse needs of students**

- Ensure school environments are welcoming and inclusive. For example:
  - display flags representing different cultures within the school community.
  - provide materials in different languages.
  - decorate the school with artistic expressions from students and young people.
- Provide child safety information in accessible, child-friendly language and formats.
- Accompany child safety information with the support materials needed to help students and families interpret it.
- Anticipate the needs of students from diverse backgrounds and life circumstances. Don't expect all students to be equally empowered to ask for what they need.
- Provide staff and volunteers with training to identify and address racism, bullying and discrimination.
- Create opportunities to remind staff and volunteers about student diversity and accommodating students and young people's needs.
- Seek out expert advice as needed to support inclusion, such as an occupational therapist, speech pathologist, provision planning.

## **Support diversity through school planning and resources**

- Recognise dates that connect with your school community, for example:
  - Cultural Diversity Week (March)
  - Hearing Awareness Week (1–7 March)
  - IDAHOBIT (International Day Against Homophobia, Biphobia, Intersexism and Transphobia, 17 May)
  - National Reconciliation Week (27 May–3 June)
  - Crazy Hair Day (Cystic Fibrosis Awareness, 26 July)
  - World Mental Health Day (10 October)
  - International Day of Persons with Disability (3 December)
- Compile a range of age-appropriate instructional materials for exploring differences and similarities in class and across the whole school community including:
  - Resilience Rights and Respectful Relationships resources
  - Books, and resources that reflect diverse views and perspectives
  - Speech and drama scripts that explore themes around diversity.
- Use images of students with diverse characteristics in school publications to reflect the school community.

## **Suitable staff and volunteers**

At Narre Warren South P-12 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 and Training's recruitment policies and guidelines, available on the Policy and Advisory Library (PAL) at:

- [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.
  - 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 and Wellbeing Policy (this document)
- the Child Safety Code of Conduct
- the Child Safety Responding and Reporting Obligations (including Mandatory Reporting) Policy and Procedures 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 –

- PDP Process
- Statement of Expectations
- Visual Observations
- Student Engagement Leaders
- Lunchtime clubs
- Learning Hub
- Wellbeing Centre
- Cultural Engagement Leaders
- MEAs

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.

## **Actions to engage suitable staff and volunteers**

### **Robust recruitment and screening**

- Consider including students in the recruitment process to provide an authentic opportunity for them to have a say about decisions that impact them.

### **Advertising**

- Ensure recruitment advertisements for staff in child connected work contain:
  - the job's requirements, including expected knowledge of child development appropriate to the role
  - an outline of duties and responsibilities regarding child safety and wellbeing
  - essential or relevant qualifications, experience and attributes in relation to child safety and wellbeing.
- Provide all job applicants with the school's Child Safety and Wellbeing Policy and Child Safety Code of Conduct and links to child safety resources.

### **Screening**

- Include selection criteria relevant to the role, such as:
  - experience working with children, or particular groups of children, including children with a disability or Aboriginal children
  - engaging with families
  - child safety experience
  - cultural safety in their work.
- Screen all staff, volunteers, leaders and school governing board members for their suitability during recruitment.

### **Interviews**

- Think carefully about who will be on the interview panel and ensure panel members have the right skills, experience, and information to perform their role.
- Develop questions about child safety for job interviews.
- Seek referees for both staff and volunteers as appropriate, including their last employer, and overseas referees if they've worked overseas.
- Ask referees about the person's character and experience in working directly with children and young people.

### **Supervision and people management focused on child safety and wellbeing**

- Conduct a risk assessment (refer to [Standard 9](#)) to determine what level of ongoing supervision and management is necessary, considering the physical layout of your school, any concerns that may have been raised previously and other relevant risk factors
- School leaders regularly walk-around classrooms and the school yard.

- Set out standards for child safety performance in staff contracts and state how performance will be assessed. Include child safety and wellbeing goals in staff professional development plans.
- Include child safety and wellbeing as a regular agenda item for staff meetings at all levels. These items could focus on elements of the school's child safety framework, such as:
  - identifying grooming and other behaviour that could cause harm to a student. Government schools can use the [staff conduct case study](#) (login required) to help staff identify potential grooming behaviours
  - understanding what types of behaviour should be reported to school leaders
  - how to respond to an incident, disclosure, or suspicions of child abuse
  - identifying risks in the school's physical and online environment and who to report them to.
- Communicate regularly with staff and volunteers about the child safety and wellbeing, including promoting the school's Child Safety and Wellbeing Policy and Code of Conduct in newsletters and staff updates.
- Conduct formal and informal observations of staff working with children. Provide feedback to staff on how to support student's safety and wellbeing through regular check-ins or as appropriate.
- Assign a [child safety champion](#) (Assistant Principal of Wellbeing) the responsibility to support the school's implementation of a particular Standard (such as [Child Safe Standard 1](#))
- Ensure all school leaders know how to manage a staff member whose behaviour raises child safety concerns. This includes:
  - when to escalate concerns
  - what records of conversations to keep
  - how to follow up and monitor staff behaviour after immediate concerns have been addressed.
- Take early action to provide feedback to staff and correct any concerning or unsafe conduct to prevent harm before it occurs.
- Ensure systems are in place for recording information on staff conduct and any concerns raised.

### **Training and support to uphold child safety**

- Refer to [Standard 8](#) for further guidance on building child safety knowledge, skills and awareness.
- Nominate a child safety champion and support them to facilitate the induction and training programs for staff and volunteers.
- Provide induction that covers:
  - the Child Safety and Wellbeing Policy
  - the Child Safety Code of Conduct
  - how to contribute to identifying, removing, or reducing risks
  - recordkeeping and information sharing requirements
  - school values and philosophy
  - procedures for managing complaints
  - privacy and reporting protocols.

- Allocate a mentor to new staff for the first 12 months to provide guidance on teaching practices and professional conduct
- Train all staff and volunteers as appropriate to their roles, on topics such as:
  - child safety (including family violence)
  - mandatory reporting
  - responding to student sexual offending
  - human rights and the rights of children
  - diversity and inclusion
  - harassment and bullying
  - cultural safety
  - privacy and information sharing.
- Cover important topics in your child safety training, including:
  - risk factors and [signs of harm](#), including intentional and unintentional harm, physical or emotional harm, bullying or cyberbullying, abuse and neglect
  - how to identify and respond to child safety risks, especially for vulnerable students
  - how to facilitate child-friendly ways for students to express their views, participate in decision making and raise concerns
  - how to engage with families to support student's safety and wellbeing
  - how to appropriately handle or share sensitive information relating to a child's wellbeing health or safety.
- Deliver regular child safety briefings for all staff, for example through staff meetings, newsletters, year level briefings.
- For larger schools, consider implementing sub-school teams, with team leaders or child safety champions to observe school staff and discuss child safety.
- Inform staff and volunteers, as appropriate, of their responsibilities under the [information sharing and family violence reforms](#).

### **Make child safety a key part of recruitment processes**

- Provide role descriptions for staff and volunteers to clearly outline their duties and responsibilities regarding supervision, child safety and wellbeing, and diversity and inclusion. This may involve revising existing role descriptions.
- Make sure all staff, particularly those with mandatory reporting responsibilities, are aware of the up-to-date processes for making a report.
- Provide child safety champion/s with information to support their function relating to child safety, family violence and information sharing.
- Put a process in place to check staff and volunteers' working with children clearance status or equivalent background check on at least an annual basis.
- Include child safety in ongoing staff support, supervision and performance management processes.
- Align complaints processes with best practice, including the [PROTECT Four Critical Actions](#) and Reportable Conduct requirements.
- Declare and manage any potential conflicts of interest, such as family or business relationships or close friendships.
- Provide clear avenues for staff to report concerns.

- Involve staff in after-action reviews when a child safety incident has occurred.

### **Suitability of volunteers**

All volunteers are required to comply with our Volunteers Policy, which is available on the College's Website and a hard copy is available on request at the reception areas, 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.

### **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.

### **Induct new staff and volunteers to child safety requirements**

- Nominate a child safety champion (which could be anyone from the wellbeing team or nominated wellbeing representative) and support them to facilitate the induction and training programs for staff and volunteers.
- Provide an induction for new staff, volunteers, and new school council members on child safety, appropriate to the person's role that covers:
  - the Child Safety and Wellbeing Policy
  - the Child Safety Code of Conduct
  - the Child Safety Responding and Reporting Obligations (incl. mandatory Reporting) policy and procedures



- [signs of harm](#) and risk factors caused by peers or adults (including grooming and family violence) and the different ways young people express concerns or disclose harm
- building culturally safe environments
- privacy, information sharing and recordkeeping obligations
- how to facilitate child-friendly ways for students to express their views, participate in decision making and raise concerns

## **Provide ongoing education and training**

- Deliver regular child safety briefings for all staff, for example through staff meetings, newsletters, year level briefings.
- Require all staff with Mandatory Reporting obligations to refresh their [Protecting Children – Reporting and Other Legal Obligations \(Mandatory Reporting\)](#) training at least once a year.
- Inform staff and volunteers (as appropriate) of their responsibilities under the [information sharing and family violence reforms](#). These reforms support staff to meet their child safety obligations by enabling them to:
  - Maintain records of annual child safety programs including presentation materials, agenda, minutes and list of attendees.
  - Identify staff to attend [information sharing and family violence reforms training](#), available as online webinars or eLearning modules.
- Offer further training appropriate to staff and volunteers' level of involvement in the school community, on topics such as:
  - child safety (including family violence)
  - mandatory reporting
  - responding to student sexual offending
  - human rights and the rights of children
  - diversity and inclusion
  - harassment and bullying
  - cultural safety
  - privacy and information sharing.
- Offer a range of optional and compulsory education and training activities, including:
  - Staffroom briefings and 'toolbox talks'
  - Professional Learning Communities
  - Peer discussions, scenarios and worked examples
  - Presentations, seminars, or webinars
  - Training days
  - E-learning modules, for example the [National Principles for Child Safe Organisations modules](#).
- Remind staff regularly that they need to be alert for signs of harm and risk factors and aware of physical and online risks to child safety.
- Provide staff and relevant volunteers with up-to-date contact details for local support services for students and families.
- Consider staff needs when designing training, such as:
  - Cultural safety for the needs of staff and volunteers who are Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander

- Cultural sensitivity for staff and volunteers who are from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds
- Inclusivity of gender diversity and sexuality
- Accessibility for those with a disability, including individuals' mobility, visual or hearing impaired
- Accessibility to those who are rurally or remotely located or unwilling to attend physically.

### 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
- Narre Warren South P-12 College child safety and wellbeing policies, procedures, codes and practices

### Complaints and reporting processes

Narre Warren South P-12 College fosters a culture that encourages staff, volunteers, students, parents, and the school community to raise concerns and complaints. This makes it more difficult for breaches of the code of conduct, misconduct, or abuse to occur and remain hidden.

We have clear pathways for raising complaints and concerns and responding and this is documented in our school's Complaint Policy, which is available on the College's Website and a hard copy is available on request at the reception areas. 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, which is available on the College's Website and a hard copy is available on request at the reception areas. 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 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

Our Student Wellbeing and Engagement Policy, which is available on the College's Website and a hard copy is available on request at the reception areas. and Bullying Prevention Policy also available on the College's Website and a hard copy is available on request at the reception areas. cover complaints and concerns relating to student physical violence or other harmful behaviours.

## Communications

Narre Warren South P-12 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 and Wellbeing Policy (this document), Child Safety Code of Conduct, and the Child Safety Responding and Reporting Obligations (including Mandatory Reporting) Policy and Procedure
- displaying PROTECT posters displayed around the school –
  - Everyone has the right to be safe and be protected from abuse
  - It's everyone's responsibility
  - Feeling Safe: For Secondary School Students
  - Combination of Everyone has the right to be safe and be protected from abuse and it's everybody's responsibility
  - Images of the people used in the Protect Posters ) Prompters of reminders
- updates in our school newsletter / Compass notification
- ensuring that child safety is a regular agenda item at school leadership meetings, staff meetings and school council meetings.

## Privacy and information sharing

Narre Warren South P-12 College collects, uses, and discloses information about children and their families in accordance with Victorian privacy laws, and other relevant laws. For information on how our school collects, uses and discloses information refer to: [Schools' Privacy Policy](#).

## 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 and Training's policy: [Records Management – School Records](#)

## Review of child safety practices

At Narre Warren South P-12 College, we have established processes for the review and ongoing improvement of our child safe policies, procedures, and practices. We will:

- review and improve our policy every 2 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.

## Actions to support the review of child safety practices

Create and update child-safe policies

- Develop a register of existing child safe standard policies, noting the date the policy was approved, and schedule a review date every 2 years.

- When required, develop a work plan and establish a working group led by the [child safety champion](#), to review and update policies and procedures.
- Monitor and manage child safety risks using a risk register.
- Determine the causes of child safety incidents and monitor for repeat issues or systemic failures.
- Use complaints and incidents as a learning opportunity to inform continuous improvement.
- Identify ways to involve staff, volunteers, students, families and community members in review processes. Refer to Child Safe Standard 4 for actions on how to engage families and communities.

#### Implement current child safe policies and procedures

- Keep records of documentation, such as board meeting papers and minutes, outlining recommendations on how child safe practices can be improved and implemented.
- Develop an audit log (that is appropriately secured and has version control) of complaints and concerns, demonstrating appropriate responses and mitigations.
- Review complaints received and incidents reported for gaps, weaknesses or failures in policies.
- Make review findings and recommendations easy to access and understand.
- Include findings from child safety reviews in child safety training for staff and volunteers.
- Communicate review outcomes to students in age-appropriate ways.
- Inform the school community of any child safety policy changes were relevant or applicable.
- Use surveys, focus groups and discussions to review the accessibility and level of awareness of child-safe policies and procedures by students, families, staff and volunteers.

#### **Related policies and procedures**

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

- Bullying Prevention Policy
- Child Safety Responding and Reporting Obligations Policy and Procedures
- Child Safety Code of Conduct
- Complaints Policy
- Digital Learning Policy
- Inclusion and Diversity Policy
- Student Wellbeing and Engagement Policy
- Visitors Policy
- Volunteers Policy

#### **Related Department of Education and Training policies**

- [Bullying Prevention and Response Policy](#)
- [Child and Family Violence Information Sharing Schemes](#)
- [Complaints Policy](#)

- [Contractor OHS Management Policy](#)
- [Digital Learning in Schools Policy](#)
- [Family Violence Support](#)
- [Protecting Children: Reporting Obligations Policy](#)
- [Policy and Guidelines for Recruitment in Schools](#)
- [Reportable Conduct Policy](#)
- [Student Wellbeing and Engagement Policy](#)
- [Supervision of Students Policy](#)
- [Visitors in Schools Policy](#)
- [Volunteers in Schools Policy](#)
- [Working with Children and other Suitability Checks for School Volunteers and Visitors](#)

### Other related documents

- [Identifying and Responding to All Forms of Abuse in Victorian Schools](#)
- [Four Critical Actions for Schools](#)
- [Identifying and Responding to Student Sexual Offending](#)
- [Four Critical Actions for Schools: Responding to Student Sexual Offending](#)
- [Recording your actions: Responding to suspected child abuse – A template for Victorian schools](#)

### Policy status and review

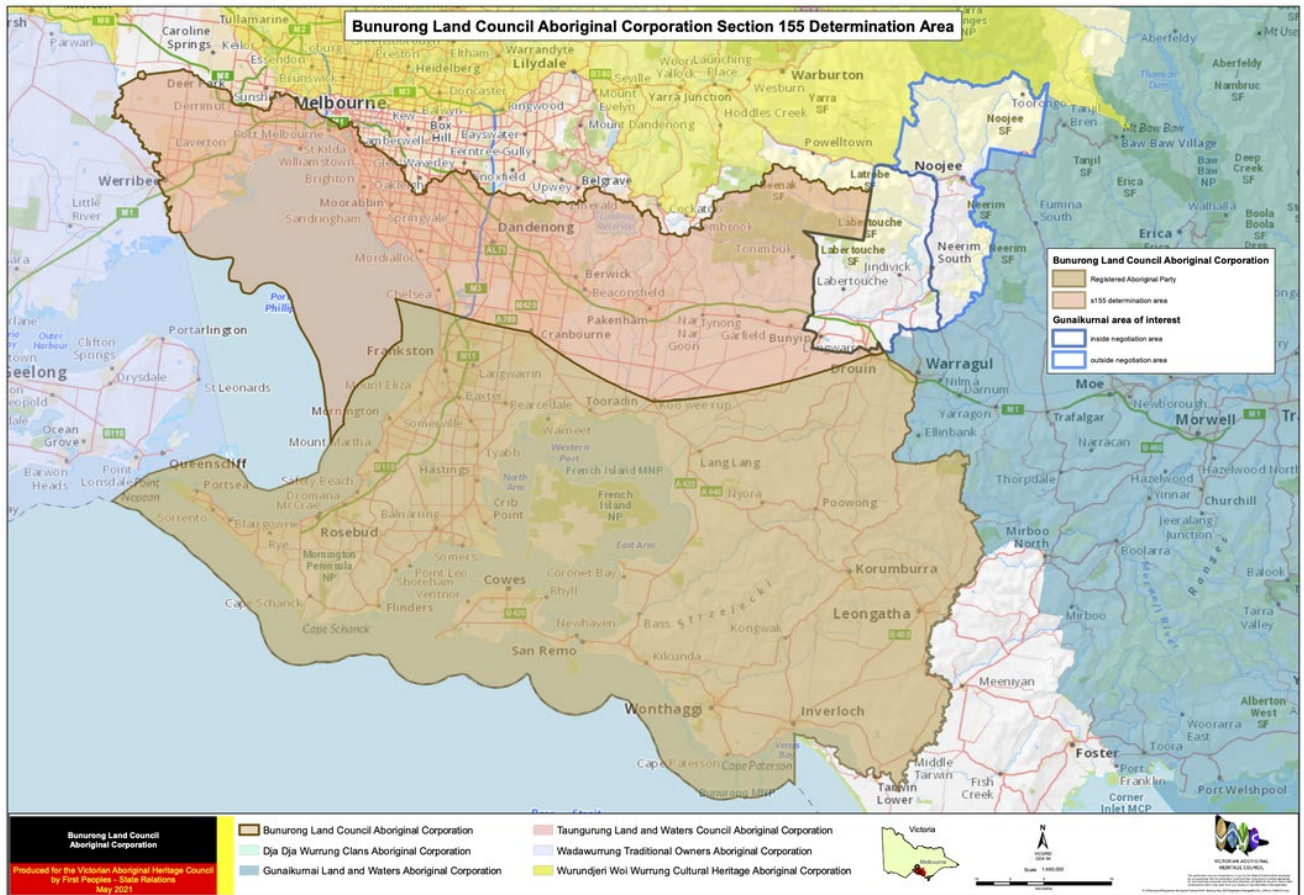
The Manager of College Operations and the Wellbeing Team are responsible for reviewing and updating the Child Safety and Wellbeing Policy at least every two years. The review will include input from students, parents/carers and the community.

### Approval

<b>Created date</b>	February 10 <sup>th</sup> 2023
<b>Consultation Committee</b>	February 2023
<b>Student Voice</b>	N/A
<b>School Council</b>	22 February 2023
<b>Community</b>	3 March 2023
<b>Endorsed by Principal</b>	February 2023
<b>Next review date - 2 years</b>	Feb 2025



## APPENDIXES



### Robust recruitment and screening

- Consider including students in the recruitment process to provide an authentic opportunity for them to have a say about decisions that impact them.

### Advertising

- Ensure recruitment advertisements for staff in child connected work contain:
  - the job's requirements, including expected knowledge of child development appropriate to the role
  - an outline of duties and responsibilities regarding child safety and wellbeing
  - essential or relevant qualifications, experience and attributes in relation to child safety and wellbeing.
- Provide all job applicants with the school's Child Safety and Wellbeing Policy and Child Safety Code of Conduct and links to child safety resources.

### Screening

- Include selection criteria relevant to the role, such as:



- experience working with children, or particular groups of children, including children with a disability or Aboriginal children
- engaging with families
- child safety experience
- cultural safety in their work.
- Screen all staff, volunteers, leaders and school governing board members for their suitability during recruitment.

## **Interviews**

- Think carefully about who will be on the interview panel and ensure panel members have the right skills, experience and information to perform their role.
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- Conduct a risk assessment (refer to [Standard 9](#)) to determine what level of ongoing supervision and management is necessary, considering the physical layout of your school, any concerns that may have been raised previously and other relevant risk factors
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- Ensure all school leaders know how to manage a staff member whose behaviour raises child safety concerns. This includes:
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  - how to follow up and monitor staff behaviour after immediate concerns have been addressed.
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- Ensure systems are in place for recording information on staff conduct and any concerns raised.

### Training and support to uphold child safety

- Refer to [Standard 8](#) for further guidance on building child safety knowledge, skills and awareness.
- Nominate a child safety champion and support them to facilitate the induction and training programs for staff and volunteers.
- Provide induction that covers:
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  - the Child Safety Code of Conduct
  - how to contribute to identifying, removing or reducing risks
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  - procedures for managing complaints
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- Allocate a mentor to new staff for the first 12 months to provide guidance on teaching practices and professional conduct
- Train all staff and volunteers as appropriate to their roles, on topics such as:
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  - responding to student sexual offending
  - human rights and the rights of children
  - diversity and inclusion
  - harassment and bullying
  - cultural safety
  - privacy and information sharing.
- Cover important topics in your child safety training, including:
  - risk factors and [signs of harm](#), including intentional and unintentional harm, physical or emotional harm, bullying or cyberbullying, abuse and neglect
  - how to identify and respond to child safety risks, especially for vulnerable students
  - how to facilitate child-friendly ways for students to express their views, participate in decision making and raise concerns
  - how to engage with families to support student's safety and wellbeing

- how to appropriately handle or share sensitive information relating to a child's wellbeing health or safety.
- Deliver regular child safety briefings for all staff, for example through staff meetings, newsletters, year level briefings.
- For larger schools, consider implementing sub-school teams, with team leaders or child safety champions to observe school staff and discuss child safety.
- Inform staff and volunteers, as appropriate, of their responsibilities under the [information sharing and family violence reforms](#).

#### Make child safety a key part of recruitment processes

- Provide role descriptions for staff and volunteers to clearly outline their duties and responsibilities regarding supervision, child safety and wellbeing, and diversity and inclusion. This may involve revising existing role descriptions.
- Make sure all staff, particularly those with mandatory reporting responsibilities, are aware of the up-to-date processes for making a report.
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- Include child safety in ongoing staff support, supervision and performance management processes.
- Align complaints processes with best practice, including the [PROTECT Four Critical Actions](#) and Reportable Conduct requirements.
- Declare and manage any potential conflicts of interest, such as family or business relationships or close friendships.
- Provide clear avenues for staff to report concerns.
- Involve staff in after-action reviews when a child safety incident has occurred.

#### Appendix 2

##### Recognise key events and anniversaries

- 2008 National Apology to the Stolen Generations
  - 13 February
- Close the Gap Day
  - 18 March
- Harmony Day
  - 21 March
- Sorry Day and Anniversary the 2017 Uluru Statement of the Heart
  - 26 May
- Anniversary of the 1967 Referendum
  - 27 May

- Reconciliation Week
  - 27 May to 3 June
- Mabo Day
  - 3 June
- Anniversary of the 1988 Barunga Statement
  - 11 June
- Coming of the Light
  - 1 July
- NAIDOC week
  - First week of July
- National Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Children's Day
  - 4 August
- International Day of Indigenous People
  - 9 August
- 1963 Yirrkala Bark Petition to Parliament anniversary
  - 14 August
- Anniversary of the UN Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples
  - 13 September
- Redfern Address
  - 10 December