Child Safety and Wellbeing Policy

Audience: School Community

Purpose

The St Paul's Anglican Grammar School 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 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 whether or not they work in direct contact with students. It also applies to School Board Directors 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

See Appendix 1

Statement of Commitment to Child Safety

St Paul's Anglican Grammar School 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

School Leadership Team

Our School Executive Team (comprising the Principal, Deputy Principal, Heads of School, School Chaplain, HR Manager, Director of ICT, Head of Marketing and Development and Business Manager) 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.

The Executive Team 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 Board 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 and always follow the school's child safety and wellbeing policies and procedures
- act in accordance with our Child Safety Code of Conduct
- identify and raise concerns about child safety issues in accordance with our Protecting Children – Reporting and other Legal Obligations Policy, including 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 Board

In performing the functions and powers given to them School Board Directors will:

- champion and promote a child safe culture with the broader school community

- ensure that child safety is a regular agenda item at School Board meetings
- undertake annual training on child safety
- approve updates to, and act in accordance with the Child Safety and Wellbeing Policy and the Child Safety Code of Conduct to the extent that it applies to School Board Directors
- Evaluate the potential and actual risks to child safety in the school on a regular basis and ensure that identified risks are satisfactorily addressed.
- At St Paul's, the responsibility for ensuring that selection, supervision, and management practices are child safe is delegated to the Principal who is bound by this policy.

Specific staff child safety responsibilities

St Paul's Anglican Grammar School has nominated the Deputy Principal, Heads of School and HR Manager as Child Safety Champions, to support the Principal to implement our child safety policies and practices, including staff and volunteer training.

The responsibilities of the Deputy Principal, Heads of School and HR Manager are outlined in Guidance for Child Safety Champions.

Our Principal and child safety champions are the first point of contact for child safety concerns or queries and for coordinating responses to child safety incidents.

- The Deputy Principal and the Heads of School are responsible for monitoring the School's compliance with the Child Safety and Wellbeing Policy. Anyone in our school community should approach the Deputy Principal or any Head of School if they have any concerns about the School's compliance with the Child Safety and Wellbeing Policy.
- The Deputy Principal 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 sub-school Staff Pastoral Care Team Meetings and Student Reference Groups on child safety. The Staff Pastoral Care Teams 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 and is a sub-committee of the Student Representative Council (SRC).

Our Executive Team and the School Board Risk Committee monitor 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 also includes processes to report inappropriate behaviour.

Managing risks to child safety and wellbeing

At St Paul's 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 Executive Leadership team will monitor and evaluate the effectiveness of the actions in the Child Safety Risk Register at least annually.

The School Board will review and evaluate the potential and actual risks to child safety in the school on a regular basis and ensure that identified risks are satisfactorily addressed, via the Board Risk Committee, at least annually.

Establishing a culturally safe environment

At St Paul's Anglican Grammar School, 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:

- All events and formal meetings begin with an Acknowledgement of Country.
- All campuses display (at Reception) the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander flags.
- Make Aboriginal voice part of decision making in matters that affect Aboriginal students. Be open to different ways of doing and expressing things.
- Build schoolwide 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.
- Put school leaders at the front of anti-racist action. Discuss racism and work to address unconscious bias and racism in the school community.
- Include statements of zero tolerance of racism and an expectation that all staff and volunteers act on incidents of racism to position descriptions and Volunteers Policy.
- 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.
- 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.
- 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.
- Recognise key events and anniversaries.
- Develop and implement an Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Reconciliation Action Plan.

These strategies form the basis of our Plan of Action (see Appendix 2). They are in progress. Completion will be reviewed and noted at School Operations and/or Executive meetings over time.

Student empowerment

To support child safety and wellbeing at St Paul's Anglican Grammar School, 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 our Student Code of Conduct, our School values, Circle Time, Trust Mapping and our Induction and Orientation Programs, Pastoral Care and Camp Programs.

We inform students of their rights through our Protective Behaviours and Pastoral Care Programs 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 Student Reception/Student Services and via the Complaints Handling Policy.

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.

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 St Paul's Anglican Grammar School we are committed to providing families and community with accessible information about our school's child safe policies and practices and involving them in our approach to child safety and wellbeing.

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:

- seeking input from families and the community through MyStPaul's, the Grammarian, via email, Friends of St Paul's (FOSP), at School Board level, and via student, staff, and parent meetings.
- all of our child safety policies and procedures being made available for students and parents on MyStPauls
- the Grammarian and email being used 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.
- having PROTECT Child Safety posters displayed across the school in staff rooms and at Student Services/Reception, as well as on MyStPauls.

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 upon.

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 Learning Policy provides more information about the measures we have in place to support diversity and equity.

The School's values of wisdom, integrity, compassion and respect, along with its Anglican ethos and tradition, foster a school culture of respect for all students and a valuing of diversity and inclusivity.

Suitable staff and volunteers

At St Paul's Anglican Grammar School 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 below:

- Recruitment Policy
- VIT registration Policy
- Working with Children Check Policy
- Contractor Management Policy

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 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 through an annual observation and performance appraisal process, as well as informally day-to-day and by responding to all student, parent or colleague concerns with investigations and appropriate action.

Inappropriate behaviour towards children and young people will be managed swiftly and in accordance with our school 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, as well as 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.

School Board Training and Education

To ensure our School Board 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 Board 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
- St Paul's Anglican Grammar School child safety and wellbeing policies, procedures, codes and practices

Complaints and reporting processes

St Paul's Anglican Grammar School 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 Complaints Policy.

If there is an incident, disclosure, allegation or suspicion of child abuse, all staff and volunteers (including School Board Directors and homestay providers) must follow our Child Safety Responding and Reporting Obligations Policy and Procedures. 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 Learning Policy and Bullying Prevention Policy cover complaints and concerns relating to student physical violence or other harmful behaviours.

Communications

St Paul's Anglican Grammar School 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 around the school
- updates in the Grammarian, via email and/or on MyStPauls
- ensuring that child safety is a regular agenda item at school leadership meetings, staff meetings and School Board meetings.

Privacy and information sharing

St Paul's Anglican Grammar School 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 the 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 Schools' Records Management Policy.

Review of child safety practices

At St Paul's Anglican Grammar School, 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.

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:

- Protecting Children – Reporting and Other Legal Obligations Policy and Procedures
- Child Safety Code of Conduct
- Staff Professional Boundaries Policy
- Bullying Prevention Policy
- Complaints Handling Policy
- ICT User Agreements
- Social Media Policy
- Inclusion and Diversity Policy
- Student Wellbeing and Learning Policy
- Visitors Policy
- Volunteers Policy
- Contractor Management Policy

Policy status and review

The School Executive Team is 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 school community.

Approval

Consultation	WSS/WJS/TSS/TJS FOSP groups May/June 2022
	WSS/WJS/TSS/TJS SRC groups June 2022
	School Board June 2022
Endorsed by	Chair of School Board
	Darren Jennings
Endorsed on	21/6/2022
Next review date	Every two years or after a significant child safety incident

Appendix 1

- 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:
    1. a sexual offence
    2. grooming offences under section 49M(1) of the Crimes Act 1958
  b) the infliction, on a child, of:
    1. physical violence
    2. serious emotional or psychological harm
  c) the serious neglect of a child including exposure to family violence and its effects

- Direct contact – Direct contact means providing support, guidance and supervision directly to students with the potential to have direct unsupervised contact with students during the normal course of providing school instruction.

- 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 governing authority for use by a child or student (including email, intranet systems, software applications, collaboration tools, 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 (iv) sporting events, excursions, competitions or other events.

- School staff - In a non-Government school, an individual working in a school environment who is:
  a) directly engaged or employed by a school governing authority
  b) a contracted service provider (whether or not a body corporate or any other person is an intermediary) engaged by the school governing authority to perform child-related work
  c) a minister of religion, a religious leader or an employee or officer of a religious body associated with the school.

- School Board - the governing body for a school (however described), as authorised by the proprietor of a school 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.

Appendix 2

Plan of Action – Establishing a culturally safe environment

Action	Who/How	Completed
All events and formal meetings begin with an Acknowledgement of Country.		
All campuses display (at Reception) the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander flags.		
Make Aboriginal voice part of decision making in matters that affect Aboriginal students. Be open to different ways of doing and expressing things.		
Build schoolwide 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.		
Put school leaders at the front of anti-racist action. Discuss racism and work to address unconscious bias and racism in the school community.		
Include statements of zero tolerance of racism and an expectation that all staff and volunteers act on incidents of racism to position descriptions and Volunteers Policy.		
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.		
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. 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.		
Recognise key events and anniversaries.		
Develop and implement an Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Reconciliation Action Plan.		