

Child Protection and Safety Policy

Purpose and Scope

This policy is an overarching document that articulates The Knox School's approach to protecting children from child abuse. It is available through the School's website for the broader community, is referred to regularly with employees and parents / guardians, and forms part of our induction program for new staff. A commitment to child safety that aligns with this policy is included with the School's annual report.

Child abuse includes sexual offences, grooming, physical violence, serious emotional or psychological harm, serious neglect and a child's exposure to family violence. The Knox School is committed to the protection of all children from all forms of child abuse and demonstrates this commitment through the implementation of a comprehensive Child Protection Program designed to keep children safe.

At The Knox School we have a zero tolerance for child abuse and are committed to acting in children's best interests and in keeping them safe. The School regards its child protection responsibilities with the utmost importance and as such, is committed to providing the necessary resources to ensure compliance with all relevant child protection laws and regulations and maintain a child safe culture.

Responsibilities

As a part of The Knox School's induction process, all staff and direct contact volunteers are required to be aware of their expectations as identified by this policy and its associated documents identified elsewhere in this document.

All staff and direct contact volunteers (as well as members of The Board) are provided with additional, ongoing child protection training at least annually.

Staff and volunteers (direct and indirect) are supported and supervised by the School's Child Protection Officers to ensure that they are compliant with the School's approach to child protection.

Authorities

The Knox School believes that child protection is the responsibility of all adults. This policy is reviewed and maintained by the Wellbeing Committee.

Compliance

This child protection and safety policy meets the guidelines for compliance in accordance with Standard 2 of the Victorian Child Safe Standards.

Definitions

Victorian Child Safe Standards: A set of standards introduced in 2016 through Ministerial Order 870 in the wake of the findings from the Victorian Betrayal of Trust Royal Commission.

Child Protection Officer: A number of senior staff members are nominated as Child Protection Officers. Child Protection Officers receive additional specialised training with respect to child protection issues. They are the first point of contact for raising child protection concerns within the School. They are also responsible for championing child protection within the School and assisting in coordinating responses to child protection incidents.

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Child Protection Program: The Knox School's Child Protection Program relates to all aspects of protecting children from abuse and establishes work systems, practices, policies and procedures to protect children from abuse.

Child Protection and Safety Policy: This policy is an overarching document that articulates The Knox School's approach to protecting children from child abuse.

Child abuse: Child abuse is defined in section 3 of the Child Wellbeing and Safety Act 2005 (Vic) as including:

- any act committed against a child involving a sexual offence or a grooming offence listed in the Crimes Act 1958 (Vic);
- the infliction of physical violence, serious emotional or psychological harm; and
- the serious neglect of a child.

A child is defined by the Act as a person who is under the age of 18 years.

Code of Conduct: The Knox School's Child Safety Code of Conduct establishes acceptable and unacceptable behaviours by members of the School community. It creates professional boundaries for employees of the School, ethical behaviour and the parameters of acceptable and unacceptable relationships.

Staff: Including all teaching and non-teaching staff (including casual and relief staff) as well as all volunteers who could potentially have direct unsupervised contact with students during the normal course of providing the volunteer service (including sport coaches, contract cleaners, grounds staff and maintenance workers) ('Direct Contact Volunteers').

Policy

Child Safe Principles

The School's commitment to child safety is based on the following overarching principles that guide the development of our work systems, practices, policies and procedures to protect children from abuse.

1. All children have the right to be safe.
2. The welfare and best interests of the child are paramount.
3. The views of the child and a child's privacy must be respected.
4. Clear expectations for appropriate behaviour with children are established in our Child Safety Code of Conduct.
5. The safety of children is dependent upon the existence of a child safe culture.
6. Child safety awareness is promoted within our School community.
7. Procedures are in place to screen all staff and Direct Contact Volunteers.
8. Child safety and protection is everyone's responsibility.
9. Child protection training is mandatory for all members, staff and Direct Contact Volunteers.
10. Procedures for responding to alleged or suspected incidents of child abuse are simple and accessible for all members of the School community.
11. Children from culturally diverse backgrounds have the right to special care and support.
12. Children who have any kind of disability have the right to special care and support.

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Procedure

Our Child Protection Program provides detailed guidance for members of the School Board, staff and direct contact volunteers as to how to identify key risk indicators of child abuse and how to report child abuse concerns to one of our nominated Child Protection Officers. It also contains detailed procedures with respect to the reporting of child abuse incidents to relevant authorities.

Students, parents / guardians or other community members who have concerns that a child may be subject to abuse are asked to contact:

- Mr Cameron Bacholer, Vice Principal
- Ms Toni-Ann Bright, Head of Secondary School
- Ms Heather Ablett, Head of Junior School
- Mr Alex Wilson, Head of Sport

Communication will be treated confidentially on a “need to know basis”.

Whenever there are concerns that a child is in immediate danger the Police should be called on 000.

Associated Forms

The Child Protection and Safety Policy is a component of the Child Protection Program and its implementation is in conjunction with, and linked to, the following internal policies, documents and practices:

- Duty of Care – Crimes Act 1958 Vic Policy
- Mandatory Reporting
- Child Safety Code of Conduct
- Child Abuse Response Plan
- Staff and Student Appropriate Conduct Policy
- Human Resource practices

Further Information

This policy is reviewed by the Wellbeing Committee annually.

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