

Child Protection Program

The Knox School Child Protection Program consists of work systems, practices, policies and procedures that maintain a child safe environment and embed an organisational culture of child safety within the School community. The Program specifically addresses issues of child protection and is designed to ensure compliance with the Victorian Child Safe Standards and related child protection laws.

Statement of Commitment to Child Safety

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 has zero tolerance for child abuse and 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.

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.

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 college 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.

Our Child Protection Program

The Knox School is committed to the effective implementation of our Child Protection Program and ensuring that it is appropriately reviewed and updated. We adopt a risk management approach by identifying key risk indicators and assessing child safety risks based on a range of factors including the nature of our School's activities, physical and online environments and the characteristics of the student body.

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Document responsibility

Vice Principal

Document Date (Version)

19 July 2016 (v.1)

Date Accessed/Printed

14 September 2016

Our 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. It includes:

- clear information as to what constitutes child abuse and associated key risk indicators;
- clear procedures for responding to and reporting allegations of child abuse;
- strategies to support, encourage and enable staff, volunteers, parents and students to understand, identify, discuss and report child protection matters;
- procedures for recruiting and screening staff and Direct Contact Volunteers;
- pastoral care strategies designed to empower students and keep them safe;
- policies with respect to cultural diversity and students with disabilities;
- a child protection training program;
- information regarding the steps to take after a disclosure of abuse to protect, support and assist children;
- guidelines with respect to record keeping and confidentiality;
- policies to ensure compliance with all relevant laws, regulations and standards; and
- a system for continuous improvement and review.

Child Protection Officers (CPOs)

Child Protection Officers are the first point of contact for reporting child protection issues within the School. They receive special training that allows them to deal with child protection concerns both sensitively and effectively. At The Knox School, the following staff hold the position of CPO:

- Mr Cameron Bacholer, Vice Principal Cameron.bacholer@knox.vic.edu.au
- Mr Alex Wilson, Head of Senior College alex.wilson@knox.vic.edu.au
- Mrs Toni-Ann Bright, Head of Middle School toni-ann.bright@knox.vic.edu.au
- Ms Heather Ablett, Head of Junior School heather.ablett@knox.vic.edu.au

The telephone number for all CPOs is 8805-3800.

At The Knox School, Child Protection Officers:

- communicate and promote child protection policies within the College community and responding to general queries with respect to the School's Child Protection and Safety Policy and Child Protection Programs
- promptly manage the School's response to an allegation or disclosure of child abuse, and ensuring that the allegation or disclosure is taken seriously
- serve as the first point of contact for staff, or other members of the College community, raising child protection concerns within the School.

How to Act

If you have a belief or suspicion that a child is being, or has been, subjected to any form of abuse you must contact the Victorian Child Protection Service or, where you need guidance on making a report or have questions regarding child safety, contact one of the School's appointed CPOs. Whenever there are concerns that a child is in immediate danger the police should be called on 000.

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