

Child Safe Policy

Rationale

Yarra Hills Secondary College is committed to the safety of all members of our school community, in particular children. This includes a commitment to the cultural safety of all Aboriginal children, as well as those from linguistically diverse backgrounds and/or children with any form of disability. Yarra Hills Secondary College has zero tolerance to any form of child abuse or violence towards others. Through the many already established policies, we aim to have the necessary strategies to protect students and hopefully prevent such abuse. It is expected that the risk management strategies for all excursions and camps are in place prior to any event for the best interests and safety of all students. Yarra Hills Secondary College will continue to promote child safety within the school environment and actively work to empower students in our care. Our culture will foster openness so that everyone, in particular children, may feel safe to disclose concerns or risks of harm to children.

Responsibilities

Everyone has a role to play in the safety of all children. The Principal team will guide staff to create a culture of child safety within the school. It is the responsibility of all staff to abide by the policies in place to protect all members of the school community, in particular students, from harm. The policies, which are listed below, are regularly reviewed and updated and available on our College website. Staff will undertake regular Professional Development in the procedures for these policies at staff meetings to ensure their current awareness and understanding of the policies and process. New staff will be made aware of their responsibilities through the induction process. It is the responsibility of all members of the school community present on school grounds to protect students. Appropriate conduct and behaviour towards children is expected at all times.

Definition: Child abuse

Child abuse includes any act committed against a child involving:

- A sexual offence, or
- An offence under section 49B(2) of the Crimes Act 1958 (grooming)
- The infliction, on a child, of:
 - Physical violence
 - Serious emotional or psychological harm
 - Serious neglect of a child.

Reporting Concerns

Any concerns raised by a staff member, volunteer, parent or visitor in regard to the safety of a student are to be reported directly to the Campus Principal at the relevant campus. The Campus Principal will ascertain the necessary strategies to protect and support the student involved, including the possible involvement of relevant external support or authorities to deal with the issue. Any suspected or actual abuse of children will be reported promptly to the appropriate authorities. See *Mandatory Reporting Policy* for further information. Support and assistance will be provided to children who have suffered abuse and to their families. Students who have concerns for a fellow student must report to their Year Level Coordinator who will in turn report to the Campus Principal.

Failure to disclose

All adults, not just professionals who work with children, have a legal obligation to report to Victoria Police where they form a reasonable belief that a sexual offence has been committed by an adult

against a child under the age of 16. Failure to disclose the information may amount to a criminal offence unless you have a “reasonable excuse” or have an “exemption” from doing so.

To read more information about the ‘failure to disclose’ offence, see: [Department of Justice and Regulation – Failure to disclose offence](#)

Failure to protect

Any staff member in a position of authority, who becomes aware that an adult associated with their organisation (such as an employee, contractor, volunteer or visitor) poses a risk of sexual abuse to a child under the care, authority or supervision of the organisation, must take all reasonable steps to remove or reduce that risk. This may include, for example, removing the adult from child-related work pending investigation. If a staff member in a position of authority fails to take reasonable steps in these circumstances, this may amount to a criminal offence.

The offence applies only to adults in a position of authority within an organisation. In a school context, this may include Principals, Assistant Principals, and Campus Principals. To read more information about the ‘failure to protect offence’, see: [Department of Justice and Regulations – Failure to protect offence.](#)

Recruitment of new staff and Visitors

Yarra Hills Secondary College will implement recruitment processes that will assist in the effective selection of suitable personnel including staff, volunteers and contractors. These processes will ensure new and existing staff understand the importance of child safety and are aware of the policies and procedures currently in place. Each position advertised that involves child connected work will have a clear statement in addition to the jobs requirements, duties and responsibilities, regarding child safety including the essential qualifications, experience and attributes related to child safety. All new staff recruited to positions at Yarra Hills Secondary College will have the necessary screening and background checks for verifying and recording information about the person whom it proposes to engage in the child connected work. All contractors invited to the school for the purpose of maintenance and/or repair work will all have Working with Children Checks of which the school will have copies on file.

Any visitors such as guest speakers or invited guests who may not have Working with Children’s check will be under the supervision of staff throughout their time on school premises.

See *Visitors Policy* and *Volunteers and Working with Children Policy* for further information.

Personnel to assist

Yarra Hills Secondary College have many personnel in place to assist with concerns which may arise in regard to the safety of students.

Campus Principal: Will ascertain the issue and possibly refer to one or more of the following staff for their expertise and assistance. Other Government agencies already in place to protect children such as Department of Health and Human Services, Child Protection, Child First, Anglicare or Police may also be referred to.

Wellbeing Coordinator: Can assist with a variety of wellbeing concerns and if necessary refer student and families to a number of allied health professionals.

Koori Education Support Officer: Can assist with issues concerning our Koori students

English as a Second Language (EAL) Coordinator: Can assist with issues concerning our EAL students

Integration Coordinator: Can assist with issues concerning students with disabilities

Reducing the risks in child safety

Yarra Hills Secondary College have many policies and practices in place for early identification and responses to risks of abuse both in the physical and online environment, which include:

- Promote and support understanding the expectation of appropriate behaviour and conduct when interacting with students
- Provide ongoing training, education and support for all staff in relation to student safety, identifying risks and how to respond

Empowering students to be safe

Yarra Hills Secondary College will provide appropriate education to all students in regard to:

- Expected standard of behaviour of all students
- Respectful relationships within the school community
- Restorative practice techniques to resolve conflict
- Resilience
- Child abuse awareness and prevention
- Identifying and dealing with bullying and harassment

Yarra Hills Secondary College supports a culture that fosters openness where students feel confident and safe to disclose issues affecting their safety and/or wellbeing.

Related Policies

Mandatory Reporting Policy

Bullying and Harassment Policy

Code of Conduct Policy

Duty of Care Policy

On-Site Supervision Policy

Social Media Policy

Equal Opportunity Policy

Gender Equity Policy

Wellbeing Policy

Ratified by School Council Aug 2018