



## **CHILD SAFE POLICY**

### **RATIONALE**

The Victorian Government, and the Prahran High School community, is committed to the safety and wellbeing of all children and young people. As part of the Victorian Government's commitment to implementing the recommendations of the [Betrayal of Trust](#) report, in 2016 compulsory [Child Safe Standards](#) were introduced. These were further refined in 2022 and this policy reflects these changes.

The Child Safe Standards are compulsory minimum standards for all Victorian schools, to ensure they are well prepared to protect children from abuse and neglect.

The Prahran High School Council and staff have zero tolerance for any, and all, examples of child abuse in any form. This commitment is led by the Prahran High School Council and implemented in word and action by the school Principal and staff.

Prahran High School is committed to developing clear and rigorous policies and procedures to create and maintain a child safe environment. Prahran High School is also committed to ongoing improvement in this area.

This policy is informed by the content of [Ministerial Order 1359](#) which sets out how the Victorian Child Safe Standards apply in school environments.

### **PURPOSE**

To maintain and strengthen Prahran High Prahran High School as a truly child safe organisation, in which all of the Child Safe Standards apply. The Standards are:

1. Culturally safe environments
2. Child safety and wellbeing is embedded in leadership, governance and culture
3. Child and student empowerment
4. Family engagement
5. Diversity and equity
6. Suitable staff and volunteers
7. Complaints processes
8. Child safety knowledge, skills and awareness
9. Child safety in physical and online environments
10. Review of child safety practices
11. Implementation of child safe practices

## 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 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 listed at the end of this policy

### **Key Definition: What is Child Abuse?**

The child safe standards aim to protect children from abuse in organisations. Under [the Children, Youth and Families Act 2005](#), child abuse includes four categories of abuse as outlined below.

While the standards apply specifically to child abuse, organisations should look to promote children's health and wellbeing in a broader sense.

### **Physical violence**

Physical violence occurs when a child suffers or is likely to suffer significant harm from a non-accidental injury or injuries inflicted by another person. Physical violence can be inflicted in many ways, including beating, shaking, burning or use of weapons (such as belts or paddles).

Possible physical indicators:

- Unexplained bruises
- Burns and/or fractured bones

Possible behavioural indicators:

- Showing wariness or distrust of adults
- Wearing long sleeved clothes on hot days (to hide bruising or other injury)
- Fear of specific people
- Unexplained absences
- Academic problems

### **Sexual offences**

Sexual offences occur when a person involves the child in sexual activity, or deliberately puts the child in the presence of sexual behaviours that are exploitative or inappropriate to his/her age and development. Child sexual abuse can involve a range of sexual activity including fondling, masturbation, penetration, voyeurism and exhibitionism. It can also include exposure to or exploitation through pornography or prostitution, as well as grooming behaviour.<sup>1</sup>

Possible physical indicators:

- Presence of sexually transmitted diseases
- Pregnancy
- Vaginal or anal bleeding or discharge

Possible behavioural indicators:

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<sup>1</sup> A new grooming offence commenced in Victoria on 9 April 2014. Further information is available here: [Grooming offence | Department of Justice and Community Safety Victoria](#)

- Displaying sexual behaviour or knowledge that is unusual for the child's age
- Difficulty sleeping
- Being withdrawn
- Complaining of headaches or stomach pains
- Fear of specific people
- Showing wariness or distrust of adults
- Displaying aggressive behaviour

Grooming is a criminal offence under the *Crimes Act 1958 (Vic)* and is a form of child abuse and sexual misconduct. This offence targets predatory conduct undertaken by an adult to prepare a child, under the age of sixteen, to engage in sexual activity at a later time. Grooming can include communicating (including electronically or through social media) and/or attempting to establish a relationship or other emotional connection with the child or their parent/carer beyond the boundaries of a professional relationship.

### **Serious emotional or psychological abuse**

Serious emotional or psychological abuse occurs when harm is inflicted on a child through repeated rejection, isolation, or by threats or violence. It can include derogatory name-calling and put-downs, or persistent and deliberate coldness from a person, to the extent where the behaviour of the child is disturbed or their emotional development is at serious risk of being impaired. Serious emotional or psychological abuse could also result from conduct that exploits a child without necessarily being criminal, such as encouraging a child to engage in inappropriate or risky behaviours.

Possible physical indicators:

- Delays in emotional, mental, or even physical development
- Physical signs of self-harming

Possible behavioural indicators:

- Exhibiting low self-esteem
- Exhibiting high anxiety
- Displaying aggressive or demanding behaviour
- Being withdrawn, passive and/or tearful
- Self-harming

### **Serious neglect**

Serious neglect is the continued failure to provide a child with the basic necessities of life, such as food, clothing, shelter, hygiene, medical attention or adequate supervision, to the extent that the child's health, safety and/or development is, or is likely to be, jeopardised. Serious neglect can also occur if an adult fails to adequately ensure the safety of a child where the child is exposed to extremely dangerous or life threatening situations, and includes exposure to family violence and its effects.

Possible physical indicators:

- Frequent hunger
- Malnutrition
- Poor hygiene
- Inappropriate clothing

Possible behavioural indicators:

- Stealing food
- Staying at Prahran High School outside of school hours

- Aggressive behaviour
- Misusing alcohol or drugs
- Academic issues

The definition of child abuse is broad and can include some student to student incidents and concerns, as well as behaviour committed by an adult.

Further Information about child abuse and possible indicators can be found on pages 14- 30 of the [ChildSafeStandard5\\_SchoolsGuide.pdf \(education.vic.gov.au\)](https://www.education.vic.gov.au/ChildSafeStandard5_SchoolsGuide.pdf)

## STATEMENT OF COMMITMENT TO CHILD SAFETY

1. Everyone connected to our Prahran High School has a role to play to help children be safe. Keeping children safe is everyone's responsibility. Every person at Prahran High School have roles and responsibilities for ensuring children's safety. These roles are clearly defined.
2. We promote positive, trusting and caring relationships between adults and students, and students and their peers.
3. We are committed to providing safe environments for all students, where their participation is valued, their views respected, and their voices heard about decisions that affect their lives.
4. We want children to be happy, safe and empowered, and we support and respect all children as well as our staff and volunteers.
5. We have zero tolerance for any abuse of children and are committed to child safety.
6. We have many policies and processes in place to proactively ensure the care, safety and welfare of children. As part of our commitment to continuous improvement, these will be strengthened all the time to ensure a zero tolerance approach to child abuse.
7. Particular care and attention is given to child safety needs of Aboriginal students, students from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds, students with disabilities, students unable to live at home, international students, children who identify as members of the LGBTIQ+ community and other vulnerable cohorts. 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.
8. Our school has robust human resources and recruitment practices for staff and volunteers.
9. Our school is committed to regular training and educating our staff and volunteers on child abuse risks and on the importance of developing and maintaining a positive school culture.

### Our children

This policy is intended to empower children who are vital and active participants in our school. We involve them when making decisions, especially about matters that directly affect them. We listen to their views and respect what they have to say.

We promote diversity and tolerance in our school, and people from all walks of life and cultural backgrounds are welcome. In particular, we:

- Promote the cultural safety, participation and empowerment of Aboriginal children
- Promote the cultural safety, participation and empowerment of children from culturally and/or linguistically diverse backgrounds

- Promote the safety, participation and empowerment of children with a disability and ensure they can do this equally
- Ensure that the safety of particularly young children are considered

## ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES

### School leadership team

Our school leadership team (comprising the Principal, Assistant Principal and Heads of School) 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 School Leadership 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 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
- identify and raise concerns about child safety issues in accordance with our Child Safety Responding and Reporting Obligations Policy and Procedures 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 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 an agenda item at school council meetings twice annually utilising PROTECT training materials
- undertake annual training on child safety
- 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.

### **The role of the Child Safety Officer**

Prahran High School has nominated a Child Safety Officer to support the Principal to implement our child safety policies and practices, including staff and volunteer training. The Child Safety Officer is the *Assistant Principal- Positive Climate for Learning*.

The responsibilities of the child safety champion include:

- promoting a child safe culture
- providing support and guidance in matters of child safety
- training and educating the school community
- monitor, review and report as related to matters to child safety

Our Child Safety Officer is the first point of contact for child safety concerns or queries and for coordinating responses to child safety incidents.

- *Assistant Principal- Positive Climate for Learning* is responsible for monitoring the school's compliance with the Child Safety and Wellbeing Policy. Anyone in our school community should approach the Child Safety Officer if they have any concerns about the school's compliance with the Child Safety and Wellbeing Policy.
- *Assistant Principal- Positive Climate for Learning* 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.

If the child safety concern or query involves the Child Safety Office, the Principal should be advised.

Our school has also established a Student Wellbeing and Engagement Team and is developing a Student Reference Group on child safety. The Student Wellbeing and Engagement Team meet regularly to identify and respond to any ongoing matters related to child safety and wellbeing. The Student Reference Group will provide 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 also includes processes to report inappropriate behaviour. It is published on Teams and on our school website.

### **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.

### **Suitable staff and volunteers**

At Prahran High 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. These processes and procedures are outlined in more detail in Standard 6- Suitable staff and volunteers.

#### **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.

#### **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 Policy (this document)
- the Child Safety Code of Conduct

- the Child Safety Responding and Reporting Obligations (including Mandatory Reporting) Policy and Procedures
- the Model for a Positive Climate for Learning and
- any other child safety and wellbeing information that school leadership considers appropriate to the nature of the role.

Contractors working within the school are verified using compliance software to ensure they meet child safe criteria and receive an induction prior to working onsite.

### **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 supported and coached to ensure their continuing suitability for child-connected work. This will be done by regular observation and feedback cycles, and performance development processes.

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.

### **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, and supervision and management.

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

At Prahran High School we are committed to establishing an inclusive and culturally safe school where the strengths of Aboriginal culture, values and practices are respected.

We recognise that due to our colonial history, Aboriginal students can face additional barriers to feeling safe, included and valued at school. 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.

Our approach to developing a culturally safe environment is outlined in Standard 1- Culturally Safe Environments.

### **Student empowerment**

To support child safety and wellbeing at Prahran High 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. Empowerment is a pillar of our Model for a Positive Climate for Learning, and we recognise the importance of student voice and agency within our school as a critical way to ensure student safety and wellbeing.

Respectful relationships between students are reinforced and we encourage strong friendships and peer support in the school to ensure a sense of belonging in various ways. Our school value of Character informs conversations with students and our Model for Learning. We foster an environment of restorative practice to resolve conflict, emphasising responsibility, forgiveness and healing. We incorporate Respectful Relationships curriculum



into our school across the year levels, and are developing our whole school response to this initiative. We have developed a Connecting Us Framework to build the capacity of teachers to foster positive, trusting relationships with students. Mentor Teachers play a vital role in establishing positive relationships with students also.

We inform students of their rights through 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 any time via emailing the leadership team.

When the school is gathering information in relation to a complaint about alleged misconduct or abuse of a child, we will listen to the student'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.

This is further elaborated in Standard 3- Child and Student Empowerment.

### **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 Prahran High School we are committed to providing families and the 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:

- Involving parents in review processes by establishing a working group
- Regularly surveying families in relation to child safe policies
- All of our child safety policies and procedures will be available for students and parents at on our website.
- Newsletters and 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

This is further elaborated in Standard 4- Family engagement.

### **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 Policy and our Inclusion Policy provides more information about the measures we have in place to support diversity and equity.

This standard is further elaborated in Standard 5- Diversity and Equity.

### **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.

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
- Prahran High School's child safety and wellbeing policies, procedures, codes and practices

## **Complaints and reporting processes**

Prahran High 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 Complaint Policy. The Complaints Policy can be found on Teams.

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. 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 and Bullying Prevention Policy cover complaints and concerns relating to student physical violence or other harmful behaviours.

## **Communications**

Prahran High 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 our school newsletter and via Compass
- ensuring that child safety is a regular agenda item at school leadership meetings, staff meetings and school council meetings.

## **Privacy and information sharing**

Prahran High 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: [Schools' Privacy Policy](#). We share information with authorised organisations in accordance with the [Child Information Sharing Scheme](#).

## **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 Prahran High 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:

- Bullying and Harassment Policy
- Child Safety Responding and Reporting Obligations Policy and Procedures
- Child Safety Code of Conduct
- Complaints Policy
- Digital Learning Policy
- Diversity and Inclusion 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 Assistant Principal 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 Prahran High School community.

<b>Most Recent Review</b>	February 2024 by Child Safety Officer, Shannan Roberts
<b>Next review</b>	March 2026
<b>Consultation</b>	School Council and Community
<b>Approved</b>	Nathan Chisholm Principal <b>March 2024</b>

## **Child Safe Standards – Standard One**

### **Culturally Safe Environments**

All staff at Prahran High School have a role to play in developing a culturally safe environment for our Aboriginal students and their families. A culturally safe environment is one where Aboriginal people feel welcome, cared for and comfortable, and where they can fully express aspects of their culture with the support of everyone within the school. Prahran High School acknowledges that the colonial history of Australia has caused significant and ongoing trauma to Aboriginal people and that schools play an important role in reconciliation.

The creation of a culturally safe environment promotes the full development of Aboriginal children and young people. It helps Aboriginal children and young people feel stronger and safer and can encourage them to report abuse and seek support. A culturally safe environment includes the following elements:

- Understanding how someone's Aboriginality impacts their identity and fostering this aspect of their identity. It requires a school to see each person as individuals, with unique histories, strengths and challenges.
- Respecting, acknowledging and sharing Aboriginal culture in appropriate and sensitive ways.
- Fostering a climate free of racism and racial abuse and ensuring that specific actions are taken to address it if it arises.

At Prahran High School, Aboriginal students are supported to express their culture and enjoy their cultural rights through processes, policies and approaches that are both school wide and individually applied.

#### **School wide processes, policies and approaches**

- Bullying Prevention Policy
- Student Wellbeing and Engagement policy
- Inclusion Policy
- Model for a Positive Climate for Learning
- Symbolic gestures, such as flying the Aboriginal flag, a visible acknowledgement of Traditional Owners on the doors at our school and on staff email signatures, artworks and murals in the school, and the regular use of the Acknowledgement of Country in whole school events reinforces our commitment to creating a culturally safe environment
- Whole staff training through our KESO on creating culturally safe environments
- Celebration of important events, such as NAIDOC Week
- Naming a school house after Eddie Mabo

#### **Individual processes, policies and approaches**

- Upon enrolment, families who identify as Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander are connected with the KESO for our school, and an Individual Education Plan is created in conjunction with them. These plans are updated each term.
- Each term, an Aboriginal families cuppa will be hosted by the school to strengthen connection with families and to act as a forum for feedback

## **Equipping the school community with knowledge and skills to develop a culturally safe environment**

Prahran High School acknowledges and appreciates the strengths of Aboriginal culture and its importance to the wellbeing and safety of Aboriginal students. To ensure our staff are continuously developing their knowledge and skills around building a culturally safe environment, professional learning is offered to them throughout the year. Cultural safety is also given deep consideration in our Model for a Positive Climate for Learning, which staff receive regular training on.

To build the knowledge and appreciation of Aboriginal culture amongst students, our curriculum and learning resources include Aboriginal perspectives and experiences. Our Impact9 program complete a term long First Nations project, our Science classes teach traditional knowledge systems and our Humanities programs centralise the experiences and voices of First Nations people. At Prahran High School Aboriginal perspectives are not an add on to a learning sequence- we provide meaningful, respectful and holistic ways for students to learn more about the first people of this country.

### **Measures in place to address racism**

- Bullying Prevention Policy
- Student Wellbeing and Engagement Policy
- Model for a Positive Climate for Learning
- Training for staff on responding to racism is provided annually

### **Active support for Aboriginal students and their families**

- Have smoking ceremony annually as part of Impact9 program
- Curriculum links that are meaningful throughout the school year and across all subjects
- Opportunities for staff to learn more about Aboriginal histories and culture- participation annually in training through KESO- CUST training
- Implementation of Marrung and the Koorie Education Plan

## **Child Safe Standards – Standard Two**

### **Child safety and wellbeing is embedded in leadership, governance and culture**

#### **Leadership in a child safe environment**

Working with children can be very rewarding and it brings additional responsibilities.

Prahran High School will protect children from abuse and build an environment where children feel respected, valued and encouraged to reach their full potential. We are committed to establishing a culture where child abuse and harm is not tolerated, and implement effective systems and processes to implement policies and manage risks.

The Assistant Principal- Positive Climate for Learning has the responsibility of working with School Council and staff to build and maintain a culture of transparency, inclusiveness and awareness.

Children and adults will know what to do if they observe or are subjected to abuse or inappropriate behaviour. Key responsibilities of the Assistant Principal- Positive Climate for Learning include:

- Acting as a source of support, advice and expertise to School Council, staff, students and parents
- Liaising with the principal and other school leaders to ensure a collaborative, transparent and unified approach to child safety
- Leading the development of the school's child safe culture including being a child safe champion and providing coordination in communicating, implementing, monitoring, enhancing and reporting on strategies to embed a culture of child safety.

#### **Governance in a child safe environment**

Overall, School Council has the responsibility of ensuring the safety and wellbeing of children in our school. The school's policies, events, activities and management practices will take into account the Child Safe standards. School council will receive training on our Child Safety Code of Conduct and Policy.

Raising awareness across the school including staff, students and teachers and others who come into contact with children in the school is crucial.

- Ensure the school's policies are known and used appropriately, particularly the obligations related to information sharing and record keeping.
- Ensure the school actions are reviewed as to the effectiveness of the strategies put into place and to revise accordingly.
- Ensure the school's child safety policy is reviewed in the context of school self-evaluation undertaken as part of the school accountability framework. This being incorporated into the Annual Implementation Plan, Strategic Plan and the 4 yearly Review process.
- Conduct regular briefing sessions for school staff members to ensure a high degree of awareness of The Standards and the school's Child Safe policy.
- Ensure the Child Safe Policy is available publicly and parents are aware of the fact that referrals about suspected abuse or neglect may be made and the role of the



school in this. The policy will be published online (school's website and social media platforms), and be available in a paper-based format on request.

- Encourage amongst staff a culture of listening to children and taking account of their wishes and feelings in any measures to protect them.

### **Record keeping**

Prahran High School ensures all records relevant to child safety and wellbeing are created, maintained and disposed of inline with the Public Record Keeping Standards. Staff use Compass to communicate and record any concerning presentations by students and to accurately record communication with external support services and agencies.

## Child Safe Standards – Standard Three

### Child and student empowerment

Empowering children and young people improves child safety. Children and young people are more likely to speak up when they feel respected and confident that they will be heard. Policies and practices that are shaped by young people's views can better prevent the risk of harm.

At Prahran High School we are committed to including student voice in every aspect of our school, and to ensuring that staff foster respectful and trusting relationships with students. Empowerment is a pillar of our Model of a Positive Climate for Learning, and we deeply believe in elevating the voices and experiences of our young people. We also recognise the importance of peer friendships in young people's lives, and these provide a great source of support, information and advice. Supporting students to raise concerns about the safety or wellbeing of their friends to encourage students to support their peers. We commit to developing a culture that encourages participation, elicits student contribution and supports them to make change in their school.

Students are empowered to contribute to school life through formal avenues, such as Student Representative Council and School Council, as well as regularly held focus groups around specific topics, such as Positive Behaviour Systems, uniforms and Senior School policy development. Students are surveyed about wellbeing themes regularly, and their responses inform programs delivered within our school. Peer to peer mentoring programs run where students support each other.

Our curriculum provides information about their rights through our implementation of Respectful Relationships. The Personal and Social Capability curriculum aims to develop knowledge, understandings and skills to enable students to:

- recognise, understand and evaluate the expression of emotions
- demonstrate an awareness of their personal qualities and the factors that contribute to resilience
- develop empathy for and understanding of others and recognise the importance of supporting diversity for a cohesive community

Students are taught practical protective strategies. Their school diaries have relevant support agencies listed within them.

## Child Safe Standards – Standard Four

### Family Engagement

At Prahran High School we aim to work in partnership with the families and communities our students belong to. Building trust with families requires creating and maintaining a atmosphere of trust, through transparency and accessibility. We recognise the central and significant role families play in the lives of their children and in monitoring child safety, and in helping the disclosure of concerns. We strive to involve parents in the development and review of policies and processes within our school.

Family participation in the decision making related to their child's wellbeing and safety is a central element of our response. We devote time to knowing our families, and ensuring that our families feel comfortable in our school. Our enrolment processes involve meeting with the family, touring our school together and planning the transition alongside a member of our leadership team. We host various parent evenings to encourage parents to be an active part of our school community and to feel comfortable visiting our school. We regularly communicate with families and our community via social media, send out a monthly newsletter and provide updates via Compass. We provide families with access to MySchool, an online platform with a large amount of resources related to parenting and issues young people face.

When working with Aboriginal families, we are cognisant of the additional challenges that can be present due to the colonial history of this country. We recognise that some families can be reticent to engage with schools and authority figures due to our past. We invest significant time and care into fostering these relationships, and ensure that we honour the varied forms families and support networks might take. This is also relevant for families who are blended, who belong to the LGBTIQ+ community, and sole parents. We ensure that we work with families closely to determine appropriate locations and times for meetings. We uphold our commitment to gender equity in our involvement with families, such as ensuring we avoid assumptions regarding parenting responsibilities and that all relevant family members are involved in the education of their child.

Prahran High School has a number of measures in place to communicate with families of children enrolled at the school. These measures are likely to include the school's website and Compass (online communication portal) for individual and group messages, school assemblies and information evenings to share information.

Communications strategies to inform families of the school's arrangements include:

- asking families to acknowledge they have read information sent to them with a reply email as required
- providing translations of key messages from the standards for families into one or more languages other than English, or providing an interpreter for conversations related to child safety, depending on the needs of the family

## **Child Safe Standards – Standard Five**

### **Diversity and equity**

At Prahran High School, we recognise that our students have a right to participate freely and equally in all aspects of their life, regardless of their background, characteristics or beliefs. We cherish the unique abilities, skills and life experiences of our students and their families, and know that their sense of individual identity and self is fundamental to their wellbeing. We acknowledge that some students are at higher risk of harm and ensure that we act responsibly and flexibly to ensure their safety.

Our Inclusion Policy outlines the various methods we employ to ensure that staff at our school understand the diverse circumstances of students, provide support and respond to vulnerable students. We provide access to information, support and complaints processes in ways that are easy to understand, and ensure we are communicating with families using methods they feel comfortable with. We have several Indigenous artworks throughout our school, and have a school house named for Eddie Mabo. We arrange interpreters as needed and acknowledge important cultural celebrations on our social media. For our students who identify as members of the LGBTIQ+ community, we develop gender affirmation plans, offer a Rainbow Room for support that meets weekly, and arrange preferred names and pronouns on Compass. We ensure that curriculum documents and marketing materials represent the diversity of our school community.

Our students with additional needs are comprehensively supported by all staff at our school. Learning Support deliver in class, small group and one to one support depending on the needs of the students. Various programs are offered to support students with trauma backgrounds, such as Martial Arts Therapy and Drumbeat, and for students with neurodivergence and those on the Autism spectrum, such as Connections. Student Support Groups are regularly held and Individual Education Plans are formed with families and additional support agencies as required.

Our Student Wellbeing and Engagement Policy outlines our responses to discrimination. We see these incidents as serious, significant and a learning opportunity. Restorative practices are implemented to rebuild after these incidents.

## Child Safe Standards – Standard Six

### Suitable staff and volunteers

#### Overview

In order to establish and maintain a child safe environment, it is essential that robust measures are in place to ensure the recruitment of appropriately qualified and of good character. Child safety and wellbeing are a key consideration when recruiting people at Prahran High School and employing quality people, who form positive trusting relationships with young people, helps enhance child safety. At Prahran High School we supervise staff and volunteers to ensure student safety is prioritised and we support them to understand their responsibilities. To empower students, we regularly have them sit on interview panels to provide their insight into staff suitability.

#### Recruitment

The table below outlines the steps that will be implemented to meet the requirements of Standard 6.

Requirement	Departmental action	School action
Job advertisements have clear statements about the jobs' requirements, duties and responsibilities regarding child safety and wellbeing and the essential or relevant qualifications, experience and attributes in relation to child safety and wellbeing.	The 'Recruitment in Schools' Guide requires that position descriptions for all new positions are to include the following standard 'Child safe environments' clause: "Victorian government schools are child safe environments. Our schools actively promote the safety and wellbeing of all students, and all school staff are committed to protecting students from abuse or harm in the school environment in accordance with their legal obligations including the Child Safe Standards. The school's Child Safety Code of Conduct is available on the school's website. "	Ensure that position descriptions for all new positions include the standard 'Child safe environments' clause as provided in the 'Recruitment in Schools' Guide.
Advise job applicants about the child safety practices of the school.	Position descriptions generated in Recruitment Online (ROL) will include a standard clause regarding child safety.	For existing staff, volunteers, contractors, the school will promote and embed the Child Safety Policy and Code of Conduct.
Make volunteers aware of the school's Child Safety Policy and Code of Conduct	The Principal Class Contract of Employment now includes the text italicized as below: Preamble: The aims of the Department include: " ... the provision of a child safe environment" Schedule B – Accountabilities of a principal – Student Support: "Pt 2) Plan, implement and monitor arrangements to ensure the care, safety, security and general well-being	Principal Class Contract of Employment references Child Safe Standards.

Requirement	Departmental action	School action
	of all students in attendance at the school including compliance with the Child Safe Standards “	
Screen school staff and volunteers by sighting, verifying and recording a Working with Children clearance or an equivalent background check such as VIT registration	The ‘Recruitment in Schools’ Guide advises that the Principal, prior to an external applicant person commencing employment, must be satisfied that the person: “meets the Child Safe Standards.” <a href="http://www.education.vic.gov.au/about/">http://www.education.vic.gov.au/about/</a> programs/health/protect/Pages/childsafestandards.aspx	Principals implement practices to ensure that they are satisfied an external applicant meets the Child Safe Standards prior to the applicant’s employment including: a) Interview processes b) Working with Children Check status, or similar check; c) proof of personal identity and any professional or other qualifications; d) the person’s history of work involving children; and e) references that address the person’s suitability for the job and working with children.
Collect and record proof of identity, qualifications, history of working with children and references		
Provide an induction to staff, volunteers and contractors engaged in child-related work, regarding child safety and wellbeing that is appropriate to the nature of their role		Induction completed at beginning of school year for new staff members  Induction completed as hoc for new staff members  Contractors and volunteers provided with information about CSS Code of Conduct, Wellbeing Policy and complaints procedures Policies stored on Teams for easy access by Staff
Ensure that the induction addresses the school’s Child Safety Code of Conduct, the Wellbeing Policy and procedures for managing complaints and concerns related to child abuse		
Ensure staff, governing body members and volunteers are aware	DET Induction portal to reflect Child Safe requirements for new and beginning teachers, mentors and buddies	All new or returning staff participate in an induction program based on DET’s induction portal

Requirement	Departmental action	School action
of their responsibilities for children and students, information sharing and reporting obligations and recording obligations	<a href="https://edugate.eduweb.vic.gov.au/edrms/keyprocess/teachers-induction/Pages/Home.aspx">https://edugate.eduweb.vic.gov.au/edrms/keyprocess/teachers-induction/Pages/Home.aspx</a>	Position descriptions (PD) for general volunteers helper roles are developed  PDs for contractors, sessional staff e.g. music teachers re their roles and school expectations

### **Training and induction**

Training and education is an important strategy to help people understand that child safety is everyone's responsibility.

Staff will receive induction and ongoing training in Child Safe standards. New staff will be provided with support and information when they begin their new role and existing staff will be provided with ongoing support to develop new skills and knowledge to meet the requirements of their positions.

Child Safety will be a standing item on staff and other team agendas with DET's PROTECT resources providing the basis for ongoing learning.

Employees and volunteers working with children will receive training in the following areas:

- Identifying, assessing and reducing or removing child abuse risks
- Prahran High School's policies and procedures (including the Code of Conduct and Child Safe Policy)
- Legislative requirements, such as obligations to protect and report child abuse, reduce and remove known risks of child abuse, and to hold Working with Children Checks where required
- How to handle a disclosure or suspicion of abuse, including your organisation's reporting guidelines
- Cultural awareness training through KESO

Training can be formal such as:

- Higher education training and accreditation
- Training offered by external organisations
- Training developed and delivered internally
- On-the-job training meeting key objectives
- Mentoring and coaching

The school will use a part of its mandated curriculum day at the commencement of each school year or a PD session within the first 2 weeks of the year to allow the staff to undertake the on-line learning module:

<http://www.elearn.com.au/det/protectingchildren/schools/>

### **Supervision**

Supervision of employees and volunteers is managed in a way that protects children from abuse and improves accountability and performance, without being onerous or heavy-handed. Staff receive regular formal observation and feedback on their performance. Our

building is also designed with high visibility, featuring many open spaces and glass windows. Staff should not be alone with students, out of sight.

### **Performance and development review**

A proactive performance development strategy is used to improve employees and volunteer's skills and knowledge on child safety. This is also an opportunity to improve knowledge and skills in working with children, as well as recognising and responding to suspected abuse.

Performance is measured against Department of Education and Training, Victorian Institute of Teaching and Prahran High School's standards of conduct and care to ensure that employees and volunteers meet expected outcomes. These standards align with those of the Code of Conduct and Child Safe Policy so everyone can be aware of the expectations of our school and appropriate behaviour.

### **Code of conduct and disciplinary procedures**

Disciplinary procedures are accessible and transparent and clearly demonstrate the consequences of breaches of the code of conduct. These procedures will be used if an allegation of child abuse is made, or a breach of the code of conduct is known or suspected.

Employees and volunteers will be made aware of reporting and disciplinary procedures and how to communicate concerns regarding the improper behaviour of any person within Prahran High School. Members of our school will also be made aware of their duty to raise concerns about the behaviour of any person who may present a risk of child abuse, without fear of repercussions.

Our Code of Conduct is to be publicly available. Children and their families will be encouraged to raise any concerns about the behaviour of any person, and can expect to be listened to and supported.

### **Communicating Child Safe Expectations to Visitors**

Visitors to Prahran High School form part of the school's community. Communication approaches include:

- providing advice on the website about what to expect if visiting the school
- ensuring visitors are notified at the Compass check in
- displaying clear notices about visitor and volunteer responsibilities in areas they are likely to frequent, such as the canteen, atrium or sports excursions



## Child Safe Standards – Standard Seven

### Complaints processes

At Prahran High School, we understand the important role that schools play in protecting children from abuse. All adults who work within our school have a duty of care and an obligation to act to prevent child abuse and must take steps to protect children and to report abuse. These steps include:

- Acting on concerns and/or suspicions of abuse as soon as practicable, seeking appropriate advice as necessary
- Reporting the suspected child abuse to appropriate authorities
- Sharing information with other school based staff and authorised agencies in a confidential and professional manner

We have a range of policies and measures in place to prevent child abuse from occurring at our school or during school activities.

All children should feel safe to speak to any staff member to raise concerns about their safety.

If a student doesn't know who to approach at Prahran High School they should start with their Mentor Teacher or Year Level Coordinator. Prahran High School display posters advising students of how to report child abuse to reinforce this message.

#### Identifying Child Abuse

Child abuse definitions and possible indicators can be found on page 2 of this document.

The definition of child abuse is broad and can include some student to student incidents and concerns, as well as behaviour committed by an adult. Staff have a duty of care towards all students involved in student sexual offending, including the alleged victim, assailant and any other students in the school who may have witnessed and/or been affected by the abusive behaviour.

In circumstances where you suspect a student over the age of 17 is subject to abuse you should still follow the below process, underpinned by the *Four Critical Actions for Schools: Responding to Incidents, Disclosures or Suspicions of Child Abuse*. Although DFFH Child Protection work with children under 17 they can still be contacted with concerns relating to students 17 and over for referral and advice.

To ensure we can respond in the best interest of students and families when complaints or concerns are raised, all staff and relevant volunteers must:

- Familiarise themselves with how to identify signs of child abuse and behavioural indicators of perpetrators (see page 2 of this document)
- Understand their legal obligations in reporting child abuse to relevant authorities (see below)
- Follow the below procedures for responding to complaints or concerns of child abuse, to ensure the best interests of the child are paramount and that we are adhering to legal and DET policy obligations.

**When identifying child abuse, it is critical to remember that:**

- The trauma associated with child abuse can significantly impact upon the wellbeing and development of a child
- All concerns about the safety and wellbeing of a child, or the conduct of a staff member, contractor or volunteer must be acted upon as soon as practicable.
- We take into account the individual needs and backgrounds of the diverse students and families we work with when considering or responding to child safety incidents or concerns
- Children and young people may not have all the details or information, or may not be willing or able to share them with you

**Procedures for responding to an incident, disclosure, allegation or suspicion of child abuse**

In responding to a child safety incident, disclosure, allegation or suspicion, Prahran High School will follow our process below, underpinned by:

- The Four Critical Actions for Schools for complaints and concerns relating to all forms of child abuse
- The Four Critical Actions: Student Sexual Offending for complaints and concerns related to student sexual offending
- Our Student Wellbeing and Engagement Policy and Bullying Prevention Policy for complaints and concerns relating to physical violence or other harmful student behaviours

If physical and/or behavioural indicators leads to a suspicion that a child has or is being abused, or is at risk of abuse, then you must respond as soon as practicable by following the Four Steps in the manner described below.

Whilst you may need to gather the information to make a report, remember it is not the role of school staff to investigate abuse, leave this to Victoria Police and/or DHHS Child Protection.

**School staff and volunteer responsibilities**

Below is a summary of the actions staff should take in responding to child abuse. Additional information can be found here: [ChildSafeStandard5\\_SchoolsGuide.pdf \(education.vic.gov.au\)](https://www.education.vic.gov.au/ChildSafeStandard5_SchoolsGuide.pdf)

**1. Immediate Action**

If a school staff member or volunteer witnesses an incident of child abuse, or reasonably believes, suspects or receives a disclosure or allegation that a child has been, or is at risk of being abused, they must:

- If a child is at immediate risk of harm, separate alleged victims and others involved, administer first aid (appropriate to their level of training) and call 000 for urgent medical or police assistance where required to respond to immediate health or safety concerns.
- Notify the Principal or Assistant Principal as soon as possible, who will ensure our school follows the steps in these procedures.
- When necessary, preserve the integrity of any crime scene

**NOTE for staff and volunteers:**

If you are uncertain if an incident, disclosure, allegation or suspicion gives rise to a concern about child abuse you must always err on the side of caution and report the concern to the Assistant Principal- Positive Climate for Learning.

If the Assistant Principal- Positive Climate for Learning is unavailable, the Assistant Principal- Teaching and Learning will take on this role.

If the concerns relates to the conduct of an Assistant Principal, notify the Principal who must then take on responsibility for ensuring our school follows these procedures.

Refer to Appendix A for guidance on how to respond to a disclosure of child abuse.

**2. Reporting to authorities and referring to services**

As soon as immediate health and safety concerns are addressed, and relevant school staff have been informed, the Assistant Principal- Positive Climate for Learning must report all incidents, suspicions and disclosures of child abuse as soon as possible.

The following steps will ensure our school complies with the four critical actions as well as additional actions required under the Child Safe Standards.

The Assistant Principal- Positive Climate for Learning must ensure:

- all relevant information is reported to the Department of Families, Fairness and Housing (DFFH) Child Protection, Victoria Police or relevant services where required. Note that sexual abuse of a child, including grooming, must always be reported to Victoria Police.
- the incident is reported to the Department's eduSafe Plus portal or the Incident Support and Operations Centre (1800 126 126) in accordance with the severity rating outlined in the Managing and Reporting School Incidents Policy
- all reportable conduct allegations or incidents are reported by the Principal to the Department's Employee Conduct Branch (03 7022 0005) – where a reportable conduct allegation is made against the Principal, the Regional Director must be informed who will then make a report to Employee Conduct Branch

NOTE: In circumstances where staff members are legally required to report child abuse to DFFH Child Protection or Victoria Police and they are unable to confirm that the information has been reported by another person at the school, or the designated member of school staff does not agree that a report needs to be made, the staff member who has formed the reasonable belief must still contact DFFH Child Protection and Victoria Police to make the report.

If you believe that a child is not subject to abuse, but you still hold significant concerns for their wellbeing you must still act. This may include making a referral or seeking advice from Child FIRST or The Orange Door (in circumstances where the family are open to receiving support) via DFFH Child Protection or Victoria Police.

**3. Contacting parents or carers**

The Assistant Principal- Positive Climate for Learning must ensure parents and carers are notified unless advised otherwise by DFFH Child Protection or Victoria Police, or there are other safety and wellbeing concerns in relation to informing parents/carers.

Principals may contact the Department of Education and Training Legal Division for advice on notifying parents and carers, and where relevant, the wider school community.

For further guidance, refer to [Contacting parents and carers](#)

#### **4. Ongoing protection and support**

The Assistant Principal- Positive Climate for Learning must ensure appropriate steps are taken by the school to protect the child and other children from any continued risk of abuse. These steps must be taken in consultation with any relevant external agency or Department staff such as DFFH Child Protection, Victoria Police, Legal Division or Employee Conduct Branch. Ongoing protection will also include further reports to authorities if new information comes to light or further incidents occur.

At times, police or Child Protection may interview students at school. Students must be independently supported in this meeting. Often, this will be by a parent, however when that is not possible/appropriate, the Principal or delegate can play this role.

Appropriate, culturally sensitive and ongoing support must be offered and provided to all affected students. Ongoing support will be based on any available advice from the Department, parents and carers, health practitioners, and other authorities (such as DFFH or Victoria Police) and may include referral to wellbeing professionals, development of a safety plan, student support group meetings, and, for student to student incidents, behaviour management and support measures.

Disclosures of child abuse can cause stress to staff. Staff are encouraged to speak the leadership team or with the [Employee Assistance Program](#) if they need additional support.

#### **Additional information:**

- If the incident, suspicion or disclosure of child abuse relates to a former student, who is of school age, follow the four steps above.
- If the incident, suspicion or disclosure of child abuse relates to a former student, who is not of school age, report any allegations of abuse by contacting your local Victoria Police station and/ or by contacting the SANO Task Force at [sanotaskforce@police.vic.gov.au](mailto:sanotaskforce@police.vic.gov.au)
- If a student is alleged to be the perpetrator of sexual abuse of another student or child, this must be reported to the police. A report must also be made to DFFH Child Protection if the perpetrator is over the age of ten and under the age of fifteen.

#### **Recordkeeping**

The Assistant Principal- Positive Climate for Learning will ensure that:

- detailed notes of the incident, disclosure, allegation or suspicion are taken including, where possible, by the staff member or volunteer who reported the incident, disclosure, or suspicion to them
- detailed notes are taken of any immediate or ongoing action taken by the school to respond to the incident, disclosure, allegation or suspicion
- all notes and other records relating to the incident, disclosure, allegation or suspicion, including the schools immediate and ongoing actions, are stored securely in Compass using privacy settings appropriate to the situation.

#### **For school visitors and school community members**

All community members aged 18 years or over have legal obligations relating to reporting child abuse. These are outlined below and in the Child Safety Responding and Reporting Obligations.

Any person can make a report to DFFH Child Protection or Victoria Police if they believe on reasonable grounds that a child is in need of protection. For contact details, refer to the Four Critical Actions.

Members of the community do not have to inform the school if they are making a disclosure to DFFH Child Protection or the Victoria Police. However, where a community member is concerned about the safety of a child or children at the school, the community member should report this concern to the principal so that appropriate steps to support the student can be taken.

### **Additional requirements for all staff**

All staff play an important role in supporting student safety and wellbeing and have a duty of care to take reasonable steps to prevent reasonably foreseeable harm to students.

Fulfilling the roles and responsibilities in the above procedure does not displace or discharge any other obligations that arise if a person reasonably believes that a child is at risk of child abuse. This means that if, after following the actions outlined in the procedure, a staff member reasonably believes that a child remains at risk of abuse, they must take the following steps:

- if they are concerned that the school has not taken reasonable steps to prevent or reduce the risk, raise these concerns with the principal in the first instance, and escalate to the regional office if they remain unsatisfied.
- report the matter to the relevant authorities where they are unable to confirm that the information has been reported by another staff member

Staff must refer to the Child Safety Responding and Reporting Obligations for further information on their obligations relating to reporting to authorities.

### **Legal obligations relating to reporting child abuse**

The following information outlines the various legal obligations relating to the reporting of child abuse to relevant authorities.

It is important to note that the procedures outlined in the above policy ensure compliance with the below reporting obligations, and also include additional steps to ensure compliance with Department policy and our school's duty of care obligations.

### **Mandatory reporting to Department of Families, Fairness and Housing (DFFH) Child Protection**

The following individuals are mandatory reporters under the Children, Youth and Families Act 2005 (Vic):

- registered teachers and early childhood teachers (including principals and school staff who have been granted permission to teach by the VIT)
- school counsellors including staff who provide direct support to students for mental, emotional or psychological wellbeing, including (but not limited to) school health and wellbeing staff, primary welfare coordinators, student wellbeing coordinators, mental health practitioners, chaplains, and Student Support Services staff
- nurses

- registered psychologists
- police officers
- registered medical practitioners
- out of home care workers (excluding voluntary foster and kinship carers)
- early childhood workers
- youth justice workers
- people in religious ministry
- midwives

All mandatory reporters must make a report to the Department of Families, Fairness and Housing (DFFH) Child Protection as soon as practicable if, during the course of carrying out their professional roles and responsibilities, they form a belief on reasonable grounds that:

- a child has suffered, or is likely to suffer, significant harm as a result of physical abuse and/ or sexual abuse; and
- the child's parents or carers have not protected, or are unlikely to protect, the child from harm of that type.

A report should also be made to DFFH Child Protection in circumstances where, for example:

- The child is engaging in risk-taking behaviour and families are unable or unwilling to support them
- Female genital mutilation has occurred, or there is a risk of it occurring
- There is a risk to an unborn child
- A child or young person is exhibiting sexually-abusive behaviours
- There are indications that a child is being groomed.

A mandatory reporter who fails to comply with this legal obligation may be committing a criminal offence. It is important for all staff at Prahran High School to be aware that they are legally obliged to make a mandatory report on each occasion that they form a reasonable belief that a child is in need of protection and they must make a mandatory report even if the principal or any other mandatory reporter does not share their belief that a report is necessary.

If charged with not making a mandatory report, it may be a defence for the person charged to prove that they honestly and reasonably believed that all of the reasonable grounds for their belief had been the subject of a report to child protection made by another person.

The identity of a person who reports any protective concerns to DFFH Child Protection is protected by law. It is an offence for a person, other than the person who made the report, to disclose the name of the person who made a report or any information that is likely to lead to their identification.

At our school, all mandated school staff must undertake the Mandatory Reporting and Other Obligations eLearning Module annually. We also require/encourage all other staff to undertake this module, even where they are not mandatory reporters.

The policy of the Department of Education and Training (DET) requires all staff who form a reasonable belief that a child is in need of protection to discuss their concerns with the school leadership team and to report their concerns to DFFH and in some circumstances to Victoria Police, or to ensure that all the information relevant to the report has been made by another school staff member.

Any person can make a report to DFFH Child Protection (131 278 – 24 hour service) if they believe on reasonable grounds that a child is in need of protection, even if they are not a mandatory reporter listed above.

### **Reporting student wellbeing concerns to Child FIRST/Orange Door**

At Prahran High School we also encourage staff to make a referral to Child FIRST/Orange Door when they have significant concern for a child's wellbeing. For more information about making a referral to Child FIRST/Child FIRST see the Policy and Advisory Library: [Protecting Children – Reporting and Other Legal Obligations](#).

### **Reportable Conduct**

[The Reportable Conduct Scheme](#) is focussed on worker and volunteer conduct and how organisations investigate and respond to suspected child abuse. The scheme aims to improve organisational responses to suspected child abuse and to facilitate the identification of individuals who pose a risk of harm to children.

A reportable conduct allegation is made where a person makes an allegation, based on a reasonable belief, that a worker or volunteer has committed reportable conduct or misconduct that may involve reportable conduct.

There are five types of 'reportable conduct' listed in the Child Wellbeing and Safety Act 2005:

- sexual offences against, with or in the presence of, a child
- sexual misconduct (which includes grooming) against, with or in the presence of, a child
- physical violence against, with or in the presence of, a child
- behaviour that causes significant emotional or psychological harm to a child
- significant neglect of a child.

If school staff or volunteers become aware of reportable conduct by any current or former employee, contractor or volunteer, they must notify the school principal immediately. If the allegation relates to the principal, they must notify the Regional Director.

The principal or regional director must notify the Department's Employee Conduct Branch of any reportable conduct allegations involving current or former employees of the school (including Department, allied health, casual and school council employees), contractors and volunteers (including parent volunteers). The relevant contact details are Employee Conduct Branch: 03 7022 0005 or [employee.conduct@education.vic.gov.au](mailto:employee.conduct@education.vic.gov.au)

The Department's Secretary, through the Manager, Employee Conduct Branch, has a legal obligation to inform the Commission for Children and Young People when an allegation of reportable conduct is made.

For more information about reportable conduct see the Department's Policy and Advisory Library: Reportable Conduct and the Commission for Children and Young People's website.

### **Failure to disclose offence**

Reporting child sexual abuse is a community-wide responsibility. All adults (ie persons aged 18 years and over), not just professionals who work with children, have a legal obligation to report to Victoria Police, as soon as practicable, where they form a 'reasonable belief' that a

sexual offence has been committed by an adult against a child under the age of 16 in Victoria.

Failure to disclose information to Victoria Police (by calling 000, local police station or the Police Assistance Line 131 444) as soon as practicable may amount to a criminal offence unless a person has a 'reasonable excuse' or exemption from doing so.

'Reasonable belief' is not the same as having proof. A 'reasonable belief' is formed if a reasonable person in the same position would have formed the belief on the same grounds. For example, a 'reasonable belief' might be formed when:

- a child states that they have been sexually abused
- a child states that they know someone who has been sexually abused (sometimes the child may be talking about themselves)
- someone who knows a child states that the child has been sexually abused
- professional observations of the child's behaviour or development leads a mandated professional to form a belief that the child has been sexually abused
- signs of sexual abuse leads to a belief that the child has been sexually abused.

'Reasonable excuse' is defined by law and includes:

- fear for the safety of any person including yourself or the potential victim (but not including the alleged perpetrator or an organisation)
- where the information has already been disclosed to Victoria Police and you have no further information to add (for example, through a mandatory report to DFFH Child Protection or a report to Victoria Police from another member of school staff).

### **Failure to protect offence**

This reporting obligation applies to school staff in a position of authority. This can include principals, assistant principals and campus principals. Any staff member in a position of authority who becomes aware that an adult associated with their school (such as an employee, contractor, volunteer or visitor) poses a risk of sexual abuse to a child under the age of 16 under their care, authority or supervision, must take all reasonable steps to remove or reduce that risk.

This may include removing the adult (ie persons aged 18 years and over) from working with children pending an investigation and reporting your concerns to Victoria Police.

If a school staff member in a position of authority fails to take reasonable steps in these circumstances, this may amount to a criminal offence.

### **Further information**

For more information about the offences and reporting obligations outlined in this fact sheet refer to: Protecting Children – Reporting and Other Legal Obligations.



## **Child Safe Standards – Standard Eight**

### **Child safety knowledge, skills and awareness**

Schools are places of learning, and this includes for the staff that work within them. At Prahran High School we provide the knowledge and skills to our staff and volunteers to help them build awareness around child safety and the confidence to act upon any safety concerns. Training occurs in a whole school setting, small teams or individually. It takes the form of briefings, professional development sessions, coaching, induction processes and online learning. Staff and volunteers are regularly supervised by more senior teachers and school leadership to ensure that they are upholding our Child Safety Code of Conduct as well as strengthening relationships with students and creating culturally safe environments.

Staff undergo professional learning annually in the following areas:

- Our Child Safe Policy and Code of Conduct
- Awareness on the signs of child abuse and how to respond
- The complaints process for reporting suspicions on child abuse
- Our Model for a Positive Climate for Learning, which includes an emphasis on establishing strong relationships, empowering students and creating safe environments
- Record keeping, information sharing and confidentiality

This training is delivered via:

- Whole school professional learning sessions
- The required Mandatory Reporting DET module
- A one on one induction process
- Support for graduates via the VIT process
- CUST training through our KESO, and other specialist training (such as Minus 18 and headspace)

## Child Safe Standards – Standard Nine

### Child safety in physical and online environments

Risk identification and management is an important part of keeping students safe at school. The online domain is increasingly becoming a space which schools need to actively manage risk. At Prahran High School we ensure that Standard Nine is upheld in the following ways:

- Maintaining a clear supervision schedule by teachers of the physical locations of our school, including bathrooms and before and after school
- Excursions and camps require a multi-chain approval to ensure supervision ratios are appropriate according to activity and cohort attending. This is managed through our Risk Assessment process.
- The development of our Digital Technologies, Internet and Social Media policy
- Promoting the safe and responsible use of online platforms through the delivery of Respectful Relationships curriculum and specific wellbeing programs throughout the year levels
- The maintenance of a Risk Register related to our physical environment
- Physical reminders of correct stair use in the form of signage
- The use of portable air purifiers in our school building
- Where appropriate, visiting sites that will be used in an ongoing manner (such as for Year 9 or 10 Healthy Body Healthy Mind) prior to beginning learning sessions there
- Students with Access Restrictions are flagged in Compass
- CCTV footage is in use across the building and outdoor areas
- Our Code of Conduct outlines safe methods for online communication between staff and students
- Parents indicate approval for the use of images in marketing and social media upon enrolment
- Procurement policies and processes for facilities and services from third parties support child safety

The following VIT Code of Conduct principles are of particular relevance when using social media tools:

Principle 1.5: Teachers are always in a professional relationship with the students in their school whether at school or not. Teachers hold a unique position of influence and trust that should not be violated or compromised. They exercise their responsibilities in ways that recognise that there are limits or boundaries to their relationships with students.

Principle 1.7: Teachers work in collaborative relationships with students' families and communities.

Principle 2.1: The personal conduct of a teacher will have an impact on the professional standing of that teacher and on the profession as whole.

While teachers can be friendly with students, parents and communities their relationship must always remain professional and should never be on a personal footing. It is important for teachers to consider the consequences of their actions. The world of social media can seriously damage reputations and propel bullying to new levels. Even with security settings in place, issues may still arise.

## **Child Safe Standards – Standard Ten**

### **Review of child safety practices**

Schools are in a consistent state of change and growth and reviewing child safe practices is essential to keeping our environment safe. Reviews should be conducted regularly, and should involve participation from a variety of stakeholders in the school community. Analysis of child safety incidents and sharing data with the community ensures that child safety is taken seriously and ensures that our organisation learns from its mistakes, always putting child safety first.

After an incident involving child safety, a timely review is conducted involving the relevant stakeholders.

Child safety data is shared with School Council annually. Data from our Attitudes to School Survey is shared with the school community more broadly.

## **Child Safe Standards – Standard Eleven**

### **Implementation of child safety practices**

Clear communication and documentation of what we do at Prahran High School is imperative to the safety of the students who are part of our school community. It ensures that all adults involved with our students are aware of their role in child safety, and that staff have clear processes to follow. At Prahran High School we:

- Prepare written documentation in line with DET guidelines for all matters of Child Safety
- Publish this information on our Teams- All Staff platform for staff to access
- Publish this information on our website
- Utilise these policies in induction processes
- Provide training to staff, including school council, on these policies and procedures
- Seek feedback from staff, students, families and community members in the creation of policies



## **CHILD SAFE CODE OF CONDUCT**

### **RATIONALE**

The purpose of this Code of Conduct is to set out the expected behaviour of adults with children and young people in our school to provide a child safe environment. A child safe environment is essential to preventing and responding to child abuse. To support this, Prahran High School has developed this Code of Conduct in line with DET Guidelines.

The Code of Conduct is consistent with school policies related to student supervision, duty of care, volunteers, camps and excursions, anti-bullying policy and disciplinary procedures described in the Student Wellbeing and Engagement Policy. The Child Safe Standards require organisations that provide services for children to have a code of conduct that establishes clear expectations for appropriate behaviour with children. This code of conduct helps the Prahran High School community enforce appropriate behaviour with children in this school.

### **What is a Code of Conduct?**

The Prahran High School Child Safe Code of Conduct outlines expected standards for appropriate behaviour with and in the company of children, including online conduct.

Our Child Safe Code of Conduct should be read in conjunction with our Child Safe policy. This Code of Conduct will be used at our Prahran High School:

- as part of induction training for new leadership members, staff and volunteers
- as part of refresher training for existing leadership members, staff and volunteers
- to inform parents/carers and other persons associated with Prahran High Prahran High School of the behaviour they can expect from the Prahran High School's leadership, staff and volunteers
- to support and inform organisational protocols and reporting procedures should breaches of the code be suspected or identified
- As a reference in employment advertisements and contracts to ensure compliance.

### **CODE OF CONDUCT**

Prahran High School is committed to the safety and wellbeing of children and young people. Our school community recognises the importance of, and a responsibility for, ensuring our school is a safe, supportive and enriching environment which respects and fosters the dignity and self-esteem of children and young people, and enables them to thrive in their learning and development. We recognise the importance of our roles in schools in preventing child abuse and work to develop trusting, positive relationships with students to support this.

This Code of Conduct aims to protect children and reduce any opportunities for child abuse or harm to occur. It also assists in understanding how to avoid or better manage risky behaviours and situations.

It is intended to complement child protection legislation, Department policy, school policies and procedures and professional standards as these apply to staff and other personnel.

The Principal and school leaders will support implementation and monitoring of the Code of Conduct, and will plan, implement and monitor arrangements to provide inclusive, safe and orderly schools and other learning environments. The Principal and school leaders will also provide information and support to enable the Code of Conduct to operate effectively.

All staff, contractors, volunteers and any other member of the school community involved in child-related work are required to comply with the Code of Conduct by observing expectations for appropriate behaviour below. The Code of Conduct applies in all school situations, including school camps and in the use of digital technology and social media. All staff, volunteers and school council members of Prahran High School are required to observe child safe principles and expectations for appropriate behaviour towards and in the company of children, as noted below.

### **Embedding the Code of Conduct**

To ensure the Code is fully appreciated, understood and applied by all school staff (employees, contractors and volunteers) and parents the following actions will be taken:

- Ensure that all school staff (employees, contractors and volunteers) and parents are aware of the code and how it applies;
- Inclusion of the Code as part of the induction for new staff;
- Inclusion of the Code in induction for all pre-service teachers;
- Inclusion of the Code as part of annual training for existing school staff (employees, contractors and volunteers);
- Discussion of the Code at staff meetings; communication of the Code through school communication channels including email, Compass, intranet, shared drive, team meetings and Consultative Committee meetings; as well as shared spaces including the staff room and office areas
- Informing parents/carers and other persons associated with the school of the expected behaviour for the school's leadership, staff, contractors and volunteers via the school website;
- Using the school's and the Department's reporting procedures should breaches of the Code be suspected or identified;
- Including the Code in employment advertisements and service contractors to ensure compliance;
- Communication to students in an appropriate way regularly

### **Acceptable behaviours**

As staff, volunteers, contractors, and any other member of the school community involved in child-related work individually, we are responsible for supporting and promoting the safety of children by:

- Upholding the school's statement of commitment to child safety at all times and adhering to the school's child safe policy.
- Treating students and families in the school community with respect both within the school environment and outside the school environment as part of normal social and community activities.
- Utilising internal school supports such as the Model for a Positive Climate for Learning and the Connecting Us Framework to foster safe, trusting and positive relationships between students and school staff
- Listening and responding to the views and concerns of students, particularly if they are telling you that they or another child has been abused or that they are worried about their safety/the safety of another child

- Promoting the cultural safety, participation and empowerment of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students
- Promoting the cultural safety, participation and empowerment of students with culturally and/or linguistically diverse backgrounds
- Promoting the safety, participation and empowerment of students with a disability
- Promoting the safety, participation and empowerment of students belonging to the LGBTIQ+ community
- Promoting the safety, participation and empowerment of young children
- Reporting any allegations of child abuse or other child safety concerns to the school's leadership or Child Safety Leader.
- Understanding and complying with all reporting or disclosure obligations (including mandatory reporting) as they relate to protecting children from harm or abuse, in line with our Child Safety Responding and Reporting Policy and Procedure.
- If child abuse is suspected, ensuring as quickly as possible that the student(s) are safe and protected from harm.
- Ensuring comprehensive documentation of any allegations is conducted in a timely manner, and that information is stored confidentially and shared only as required by the [Child Information Sharing Scheme](#)

### **Unacceptable behaviours**

As staff, volunteers, contractors, and any other member of the school community involved in child-related work we must not:

- Ignore or disregard any concerns, suspicions or disclosures of child abuse
- Develop a relationship with any student that could be seen as favouritism or amount to 'grooming' behaviour (for example, offering gifts). Please see [Grooming](#) for more information.
- Exhibit behaviours or engage in activities with students which may be interpreted as abusive and not justified by the educational, therapeutic, or service delivery context
- Ignore behaviours by other adults towards students when they appear to be overly familiar or inappropriate
- Discuss content of an intimate nature or use sexualised language with students, except where it occurs relevantly in the context of parental guidance, delivering the education curriculum or a therapeutic setting
- Treat a child unfavourably because of their disability, age, gender, race, culture, vulnerability, sexuality or ethnicity.
- Communicate directly with a student through personal or private contact channels (including by social media, email, instant messaging, texting etc.) except where that communication is reasonable in all the circumstances, related to school work or extra-curricular activities, is consented to by the parent or carer, or where there is a safety concern or other urgent matter
- Photograph or video a child in a school environment except in accordance with school policy or where required for duty of care purposes. Written consent is sought at the beginning of each school year from parent/carers. This applies for excursions and school activities.
- In the school environment or at other school events where students are present, consume alcohol or take illicit drugs under any circumstances.
- Have contact with students outside of school hours except when needed to deliver the school curriculum or professional guidance and parental permission has been sought.

### **Making a professional judgement**

Adults at Prahran High School will:

- Make judgements about their behaviour in order to secure the best interests and welfare of the child
- Discuss any misunderstandings, accidents or threats with a member of School Leadership or Child Safe Leader
- Be aware of their position of trust and ensure an unequal balance of power is not used for their own or others personal advantage or gratification
- Not use their position to intimidate, bully, humiliate, threaten, coerce or undermine children
- Maintain appropriate professional boundaries and avoid behaviour which might be misinterpreted by others
- Not promote relationships which create a personal friendship or are of an inappropriate nature.

### **Personal/living space**

Adults at Prahran High School will:

- Not invite a child into their home or any home or domestic setting frequented by them, unless the reason for this has been firmly established and agreed with parents and School Leadership or the home has been designated as a work place e.g. childminders, foster carers
- Be vigilant in maintaining their own privacy and mindful of the need to avoid placing themselves in vulnerable situations
- Not ask children to undertake personal jobs or errands
- Maintain professional boundaries.

### **Gifts, rewards and favouritism**

Adults at Prahran High School will:

- Be aware of the Department of Education and Training's policy on the giving and receiving of gifts
- Ensure that gifts received or given in situations that may be misconstrued are declared
- Gift giving to an individual as part of a reward system should be avoided, instead, be based on collective or team based positive reinforcement.
- Ensure that if operating reward/award systems, methods and criteria for selection of children for awards are fair and transparent.

### **Infatuations**

Adults at Prahran High School will:

- Deal with infatuations sensitively and appropriately to maintain the dignity and safety of all concerned
- Make sure their own behaviour is beyond reproach
- If they become aware of an infatuation developing or any indications that it may, record it and discuss it with a School Leadership member or the Child Safe Leader so that action can be taken to avoid any hurt, distress or embarrassment.

### **Communication (including the use of technology)**

Adults at Prahran High School will:

- Ensure communication takes place within clear and explicit professional boundaries. This includes the wider use of technology such as mobile phones, text messaging, e-mails, digital cameras, videos, web-cams, websites, and blogs.
- Not share any personal information with a child

- Not request, or respond to, any personal information from a child, other than that which may be appropriate as part of their professional role
- Not give their personal contact details to children, including their mobile number, home phone or personal e-mail address, unless the need to do so is agreed with School Leadership and parents
- Only use equipment e.g. mobile phones or school devices, provided by their organisation to communicate with children, making sure that parents/carers have given permission for this form of communication to be used
- Only make contact with children for professional reasons and in accordance with school policy
- Only use text messaging as a last resort when no other forms of communication are possible
- Not use internet, web-based or social media communication channels (such as Snapchat, Instagram etc) to send messages, except through the school account where necessary for the safety of a child
- Use internal e-mail systems in accordance with the school's policy.

### **Social Contact**

Adults at Prahran High School will:

- Not have social contact with children unless the reason for this has been firmly established and agreed with School Leadership
- Not have secret social contact with children and/or their parent(s);
- Always approve any planned social contact with children with School Leadership
- Advise School Leadership or Child Safe Leader of any social contact that has occurred which may raise concern
- Report and record any situation which may place a child at risk or may compromise the organisation or their own professional standing.

### **Sexual Contact**

Adults at Prahran High School will:

- Not engage in sexual activity with or in the presence of a child, or cause or incite a child to engage in or watch sexual activity. To do so would be considered a criminal offence;
- Not have any form of communication which could be interpreted as sexually suggestive or provocative or make sexual remarks to, or about a child either verbally, written or electronically
- Not discuss their own sexual relationships with or in the presence of children
- Ensure relationships take place within boundaries of respect and professionalism
- Ensure language, attitudes and demeanour do not give rise to comment or speculation
- Be aware that consistently displaying special attention and favour upon a child might be construed as part of a grooming process, and as such will give rise to concerns about behaviour.

### **Physical Contact**

Adults at Prahran High School will:

- Be aware that even well intentioned physical contact may be misconstrued by the child, an observer or by anyone to whom this action is described
- Only have physical contact with a child when it is necessary and in ways which are appropriate to their professional or agreed role and responsibilities. Never touch a child in a way which may be considered indecent
- Be aware of the child's reactions or feelings and, as far as possible, only use a level of contact which is acceptable to the child and for the minimum time necessary
- Seek permission from the child or the parent, if the child is very young, before physical contact is made and agree what contact is acceptable;



- Not assume that when a child is distressed they seek physical comfort;
- Always be prepared to report and explain actions and accept that all physical contact is open to scrutiny
- Always encourage children, where possible to undertake self-care tasks independently
- Be aware of cultural or religious views about touching and be sensitive to issues of gender
- Where there is regular physical contact needed, the nature of this must be agreed with School Leadership and the parent as part of a formally agreed plan
- Where a child initiates inappropriate physical contact, you must sensitively deter them and help them understand the importance of personal boundaries.

### **Behaviour Management**

Adults at Prahran High School will:

- Not use any form of degrading treatment towards a child
- Not use sarcasm, demeaning or insensitive comments
- Ensure any sanctions and rewards are part of an agreed behaviour management policy
- Try to defuse situations before they escalate
- Never use corporal punishment
- Follow the behaviour policy and only use physical intervention in exceptional circumstances and as a last resort, when other behaviour management strategies have failed and where there is a risk of physical injury or serious damage to property
- When using physical intervention, use the minimum force necessary and techniques in line with recommended policy and practice and always report and document the incident
- Be mindful of other factors which may be impacting on a child's behaviour, i.e. bullying, changes in home circumstances

*Note: the use of unwarranted physical force is likely to constitute a criminal offence.*

### **Personal/Intimate Care**

Adults at Prahran High School will:

- Adhere to the schools Code of Conduct
- Make other staff aware of the task being undertaken
- Explain to the child what is happening;
- Carefully and sensitively observe the emotional responses of the child, and record and report any concerns to School Leadership and parents, if appropriate
- Respect children's privacy at all times
- Avoid any physical contact when children are in a state of undress, other than as part of an agreed care plan
- Not change, in the same place as children
- Not shower or bathe with children
- Not assist with any personal care task which a child can undertake themselves.

### **One to one situations/home visits**

Adults at Prahran High School will:

- Ensure that, when lone working is an integral part of their role, full and appropriate risk assessments have been agreed
- Avoid meetings with a child in secluded areas

- Always inform colleagues and/or parents about one to one contact beforehand, assessing the need to have them present or close by
- Avoid the use of 'engaged' or equivalent signs, where ever possible, as these create an opportunity for secrecy or the interpretation of secrecy
- Carefully consider the need of the child when in one to one situation and always report any situation where the child becomes distressed or angry towards you
- Gain approval from school leadership for any home visit ensuring it is integral part of your role
- Never put yourself into a one to one situation when little or no information is available about the child.

### **Transporting**

Adults at Prahran High School will:

- Ensure requirements specific to seat belts and car seats are adhered to
- Not offer lifts outside normal working duties unless this has been brought to the attention of school leadership and been agreed with parents
- Ensure they are fit to drive and free from any drugs, alcohol or medicine that is likely to impair judgement or ability to drive
- Record details of the journey in accordance with agreed DET procedures
- Ensure that there are proper procedures in place for vehicle, passenger and driver safety, including appropriate insurance;
- Ensure that any impromptu or emergency lifts are recorded and can be justified if questioned.

### **Excursions and Camps**

Adults at Prahran High School will:

- Recognise that they are in a position of trust and ensure that their behaviour remains professional at all times and stays clearly within defined boundaries
- Ensure staff/child ratios and gender mix are appropriate
- Always have another adult present in out of work activities
- Ensure risk assessments are undertaken
- Have parental consent to the activity
- Never share beds with children
- Not share bedrooms unless it is a dormitory situation and the arrangements have been agreed with a school leadership, parents and children.

### **Photography and Videos**

Adults at Prahran High School will:

- Be clear about the purpose of any activity involving photography and what will happen to the images when the activity is concluded
- Be able to justify the reason for having images of children in their possession
- Avoid making images in one to one situations or situations that may be construed as secretive or which show a single child with no surrounding context
- Only use equipment provided or authorised by their school
- Immediately report any concerns if any inappropriate or intrusive images are found
- Have parental consent to take, display and/or distribute any images of children
- Not use images that may cause distress or offence

### **Access to inappropriate images and internet usage**

Adults at Prahran High School will:

- Not access, make or store indecent images of children on the internet, to do so would be illegal and lead to a criminal investigation
- Not make or store images of children, gathered as a result of their work, on personal equipment
- Follow their school's guidance on the use of ICT equipment
- Ensure that children are not exposed to unsuitable material through ICT
- Ensure that any materials shown to children are age appropriate
- Immediately report any concerns, if any inappropriate or intrusive images are found, to the school leadership and follow mandatory reporting policy.

### **Reporting and raising concerns**

Adults at Prahran High School are accountable for:

- Reporting and raising concerns about staff/volunteer/contractor conduct
- Failing to Protect and/or Disclose allegations or suspicions of child abuse, or offences against children

### **Breaches to the Child Safety Code of Conduct**

All Prahran High School staff, volunteers, contractors and any other member of the school community involved in child-connected work who breach this Child Safety Code of Conduct may be subject to disciplinary procedures in accordance with their employment agreement or relevant industrial instrument, professional code or terms of engagement.

In instances where a reportable allegation has been made, the matter will be managed in accordance with the Department of Education and Training or Victoria Police as required.

Reportable Conduct Scheme Policy and may be subject to referral to Victoria Police.

All breaches and suspected breaches of the Prahran High School Child Safety Code of Conduct must be reported to the principal and the Child Safety Officer (Assistant Principal- Positive Climate for Learning).

If the breach or suspected breach relates to the principal, contact the Child Safety Officer (Assistant Principal- Positive Climate for Learning).

## **POLICY STATUS AND REVIEW**

<b>Most Recent Review</b>	February 2024 by Child Safety Officer, Shannan Roberts
<b>Next review</b>	March 2026
<b>Consultation</b>	School Council and Community
<b>Approved</b>	School Council Principal <b>March 2024</b>

## Definitions

A full list of definitions for Ministerial Order No. 1359 is available [here](#).

**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

**Child-connected work** work authorised by the school governing authority and performed by an adult in a school environment while children are present or reasonably expected to be present.

**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.

**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** means:

a) in a government school, an individual working in a school environment who is:

- employed under Part 2.4 of the ETR Act in the Government teaching service
- employed under Part 2.3 of the ETR Act
- 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

## APPENDIX A: MANAGING DISCLOSURES OF CHILD ABUSE

### Important information for staff

#### ***When managing a disclosure relating to child abuse you should:***

- listen to the student and allow them to speak
- stay calm and use a neutral tone with no urgency and where possible use the child's language and vocabulary (you do not want to frighten the child or interrupt the child)
- be gentle, patient and non-judgmental throughout
- highlight to the student it was important for them to tell you about what has happened
- assure them that they are not to blame for what has occurred
- do not ask leading questions, for example gently ask, "What happened next?" rather than "Why?"
- be patient and allow the child to talk at their own pace and in their own words
- do not pressure the child into telling you more than they want to, they will be asked a lot of questions by other professionals, and it is important not to force them to retell what has occurred multiple times
- reassure the child that you believe them and that disclosing the matter was important for them to do
- use verbal facilitators such as, "I see", restate the child's previous statement, and use non-suggestive words of encouragement, designed to keep the child talking in an open-ended way ("what happened next?")
- tell the child in age appropriate language you are required to report to the relevant authority to help stop the abuse, and explain the role of these authorities if appropriate (for a young child this may be as simple as saying "I will need to talk to people to work out what to do next to help you")
- Take prompt action in relation to following the procedures outlined below.

#### ***When managing a disclosure you should AVOID:***

- displaying expressions of panic or shock
- asking questions that are investigative and potentially invasive (this may make the child feel uncomfortable and may cause the child to withdraw)
- going over the information repeatedly (you are only gathering information to help you form a belief on reasonable grounds that you need to make a report to the relevant authority)
- making any comments that would lead the student to believe that what has happened is their fault
- making any promises you will keep the information the student provided confidential
- making promises to the child about what will occur next or that things will be different given the process can be unpredictable and different for each child depending on their circumstances (instead reassure them that you and others will do your best to help).