

Child Safety Policy

PURPOSE

Elevation Secondary College's Child Safety Policy sets out the school's commitment and approach to creating and maintaining a child safe organisation where children and young people are safe and feel safe, and provides the policy framework for the school's approach to the Child Safe Standards.

SCOPE

This policy applies to all staff, volunteers, and contractors in the school environment, whether or not they work in direct contact with children or young people.

The policy will apply to the school environment (see Definitions section). The policy covers both school hours and outside of school hours.

DEFINITIONS

Child abuse

Child abuse includes:

- any act committed against a child involving:
 - a sexual offence; or
 - grooming; and
- the infliction, on a child, of:
 - physical violence; or
 - serious emotional or psychological harm; and
- serious neglect of a child.

Child-connected work

Child-connected work means 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

Child safety encompasses 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 incidents or allegations of child abuse.

School environment

School environment means any physical or virtual place made available or authorised by the school governing authority for use by a child during or outside school hours, including:

- a campus of the school;
- online school environments (including email and intranet systems); and
- other locations provided by the school for a child's use (including, without limitation, locations used for school camps, sporting events, excursions, competitions, and other events).

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School staff

School staff means an individual working in a school environment who is:

- employed by the Department of Education and Training in the government teaching service;
- directly engaged or employed by a school governing authority;
- a volunteer or a contracted service provider (whether or not a body corporate or any other person is an intermediary); or
- a minister of religion.

STATEMENT OF COMMITMENT TO CHILD SAFETY AND CHILD SAFETY PRINCIPLES

Elevation Secondary College is committed to providing a Child Safe environment where children and young people are safe and feel safe. Particular attention will be paid to the cultural safety children from culturally and/or linguistically diverse backgrounds, Aboriginal children, children with physical and intellectual disabilities, as well as same sex attracted and gender diverse children.

A significant proportion of the community is made up of recent migrants to Australia. Data from Hume City Council identifies that as of the last census, while the main two ancestral backgrounds are described as English and Australian, the main cultural backgrounds are Indian, Italian, Turkish, Assyrian, Sri Lankan, Iraqi and Samoan.

Elevation Secondary College's values are Achievement, Acceptance, Responsibility and Community

- Achievement reflects the purpose of education in that, all students should be aiming to achieve their best at all times. Achievement means that students maintain a focus on their learning, improving their skills and knowledge and achieving their personal best.
- Acceptance shows that the school values each member of its community as they present themselves and wish to be seen. Acceptance promotes Respect, positive relationships and inclusion.
- Responsibility is a key value of the school as genuine learning, academic, social and emotional growth can only happen when students take Responsibility and ownership for their learning, actions and behaviours.
- Community is an important value to the school as the school is both a reflection of and contributor to its community. The school values input from the local community and looks to engage outwardly with various community, academic and corporate institutions.

Elevation Secondary College has zero tolerance for child abuse.

We are committed to providing a child safe environment where children and young people are safe and feel safe, and their voices are heard about decisions that affect their lives. Our child safe policies, procedures, strategies and practices will be inclusive of the needs of all children, particularly students who are vulnerable due to age, family circumstances, abilities, or indigenous, cultural, or linguistic background.

Every person involved in Elevation Secondary College has a responsibility to understand the important and specific role they play individually and collectively to ensure that the wellbeing and safety of all children and young people is at the forefront of all they do and every decision they make.

Students attending our school may present with additional and varied needs relating to safety and school staff will at all times be aware of the impact that any behaviours have on the health, safety and wellbeing of the individual student and others. Our staff will be appropriately trained in and familiar with our school and Department policies and guidance relating to students with disabilities as well

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student health, safety and wellbeing more generally, including policy and guidance on health and medical conditions, behaviour management support, supervision of students, restraint, emergency planning and management and the Child Safe Standards.

Where a student's behaviour poses a danger to themselves or others, our school will develop a Behaviour Support Plan, in consultation with relevant experts, which will be communicated to all relevant staff and reviewed on a regular basis. Supervision will be a key factor in supporting safety and our duty of care to students and our supervision arrangements will be reviewed on a regular basis and whenever required in relation to a specific incident individual student behaviour. Because of the proportionately higher number of students with high needs at our school, and our built environment has been specifically tailored to meet the safety needs of this cohort of students.

CHILD SAFETY PRINCIPLES

In its planning, decision-making and Elevation Secondary College will:

1. Take a preventative, proactive and participatory approach to child safety;
2. Value and empower children to participate in decisions which affect their lives;
3. Foster a culture of openness that supports all persons to safely disclose risks of harm to children;
4. Respect diversity in cultures and child rearing practices while keeping child safety paramount;
5. Provide written guidance on appropriate conduct and behaviour towards children;
6. Engage only the most suitable people to work with children and have high quality staff and volunteer supervision and professional development;
7. Ensure children know who to talk with if they are worried or are feeling unsafe, and that they are comfortable and encouraged to raise such issues;
8. Report suspected abuse, neglect or mistreatment promptly to the appropriate authorities;
9. Share information appropriately and lawfully with other organisations where the safety and wellbeing of children is at risk; and
10. Value the input of and communicate regularly with families and carers.

POLICY

A CHILD SAFE CULTURE

Elevation Secondary College culture encourages staff, students, parents and the school community to raise, discuss and scrutinise child safety concerns. This makes it more difficult for abuse to occur and remain hidden.

All child safety documents, including this policy, the Child Safety Code of Conduct, the school's Child Safety Reporting Obligations Policy and Procedures, [Identifying and Responding to All Forms of Abuse in Victorian Schools](#) and the [Four Critical Actions for Schools](#) are readily available online and in hard copy available at the School Front Office for all staff and students to read at any time.

Child safety is everyone's responsibility. **All school staff** are required to:

- Act in accordance with the school's Child Safety Code of Conduct, which clearly sets out the difference between appropriate and inappropriate behaviour.
- Act in accordance with the Child Safety Reporting Obligations Policy and Procedures at all times, including following the [Four Critical Actions for Schools](#) where necessary.
- Act in accordance with their legal obligations, including:
 - Failure to disclose offence (applies to all adults);

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- Duty of care (applies to all school staff);
- Mandatory reporting obligations (applies to all mandatory reporters, including teachers, principals, registered psychologists, and registered doctors and nurses)
- Failure to protect offence (applies to a person in a position of authority within the school);
- Reportable conduct obligations (applies to school leadership roles);
- Organisational duty of care (applies to the school as an organisation); and
- For more information on these obligations, see https://www.education.vic.gov.au/Documents/about/programs/health/protect/ChildSafeStandard5_SchoolsGuide.pdf.

As part of Elevation Secondary College's child safe culture, **school leadership** will:

- Ensure that child safety is a regular agenda item at school council meetings and staff meetings;
- Encourage and enable staff professional learning and training to build deeper understandings of child safety and prevention of abuse; and
- Ensure that no one is prohibited or discouraged from reporting an allegation of child abuse to a person external to the school or from making records of any allegation.

As part of Elevation Secondary College's child safe culture, **school mandatory reporting staff** are required to:

- Complete the [Protecting Children – Mandatory reporting and other obligations](#) online module every year;
- Read the school's Child Safety Code of Conduct on induction, and maintain familiarity with that document;
- Read the school's Child Safety Reporting Obligations Policy and Procedures on induction, and maintain familiarity with that document; and
- Read the school's Child Safety Policy (this document) on induction, and maintain familiarity with that document.

School leadership will maintain records of the above processes.

ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES

The school Principal and/or Vice Principal and school Leadership team will ensure that each person understands their role, responsibilities and behaviour expected in protecting children and young people from abuse and neglect. Staff will comply with the school's Child Safety Code of Conduct, which sets out clearly the difference between appropriate and inappropriate behaviour.

Specific child safety responsibilities:

- The Principal / Assistant Principal is responsible for reviewing and updating the Child Safety Policy every 3 years.
- The Principal / Assistant Principal is responsible for monitoring the school's compliance with the Child Safety Policy. The school community should approach the Principal / Assistant Principal if they have any ongoing concerns.
- The Principal / Assistant Principal is responsible for informing the school community about this policy, and making it publicly available.

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- Other specific roles and responsibilities are named Elevation Secondary College other child safety policies and procedures, including the school's Child Safety Code of Conduct, Child Safety Reporting Obligations Policy and Procedures, and Risk Assessment Register.

RECRUITMENT

Elevation Secondary College follows the Department's Recruitment in Schools guide to ensure child safe recruitment practices, available on the Department's website at the following link: <https://www.education.vic.gov.au/hrweb/careers/Pages/recruitinsch.aspx>

All prospective volunteers are required to comply with our school's Volunteers Policy, including in relation to obtaining checks required under this policy.

Elevation Secondary College inclusion and diversity policy will support the recruitment of school staff to reflect the unique needs of our community, this includes the recruitment of Special Education trained staff.

TRAINING AND SUPERVISION

Training and education is important to ensure that everyone in the school understands that child safety is everyone's responsibility.

Our school culture aims for all staff and volunteers (in addition to parents/carers and children) to feel confident and comfortable in coming forward with any allegations of child abuse or child safety concerns. We train our staff and volunteers to identify, assess, and minimise risks of child abuse and to detect potential signs of child abuse. This training occurs annually or more often as required.

We also support our staff and volunteers through ongoing supervision to develop their skills to protect children from abuse, to promote the cultural safety of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children and children from linguistically and/or diverse backgrounds, and the safety of children with a disability. All staff will be trained in Inclusive Education and child safety practices.

Teaching staff will also be trained according to the Berry Street Education Model of Trauma informed learning. They will also be taught the Respectful Relationships program as well as being regularly briefed on the Child Safety responsibilities.

New employees and volunteers will be inducted into the school and supervised regularly to ensure they understand our school's commitment to child safety, and that their behaviour towards children is safe and appropriate. This includes information on support for students with additional needs and specific appropriate and inappropriate behaviours included in the development of Individual Learning Plans, Safety Plans and Positive Behaviour Support Plans (as required).

All employees of our school will be monitored and assessed via regular performance reviews to ensure their continuing suitability for child-connected work. Any inappropriate behaviour will be reported to the Principal or Assistant Principal and will be managed in accordance with Elevation Secondary College Child Safety Responding and Reporting Policy and Procedures where required.

REPORTING A CHILD SAFETY CONCERN OR COMPLAINT

The school has clear expectations for all staff and volunteers in making a report about a child or young person who may be in need of protection. All staff must follow the school's Child Safety Responding and Reporting Obligations Policy and Procedures, including following the [Four Critical Actions for](#)

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Schools if there is an incident, disclosure or suspicion of child abuse. Immediate actions should include reporting their concerns to DHHS Child Protection/Victoria Police or another appropriate agency and notifying the Principal and/or Assistant Principal or a member of the school Leadership Team of their concerns and the reasons for those concerns.

Elevation Secondary College will never prohibit or discourage school staff from reporting an allegation of child abuse. The school will always take action to respond to a complaint in accordance with the school's Child Safety Responding and Reporting Obligations Policy and Procedures. In accordance with Action 4 of the Four Critical Actions for Schools, Elevation Secondary College will provide ongoing support for students affected by child abuse.

The Child Safety Responding and Reporting Obligations Policy and Procedures can be found on the schools website.

RISK REDUCTION AND MANAGEMENT

Elevation Secondary College believes the wellbeing of children and young people is paramount, and is vigilant in ensuring proper risk management processes, found in the schools Risk Assessment Register. The school recognises there are potential risks to children and young people and will take a risk management approach by undertaking preventative measures.

We will identify and mitigate the risks of child abuse in school environments by taking into account the nature of each school environment, the activities expected to be conducted in that environment and the characteristics and needs of all children expected to be present in that environment.

Elevation Secondary College will ensure that it keeps, reviews and continually updates the school's Risk Assessment Register, including the actions the school will take to reduce or remove the identified risks.

Elevation Secondary College acknowledges that child safety incident involving a student with a disability as a key focus of the Child safety risk assessment. The school has outlined the following strategies:

- Individual Learning Plans (ILP) created for all students with additional needs through Student Support Groups which identifies specific strategies to protect the child.
- Employment of a Special Education trained teacher.
- Training for all staff in inclusive education and child safety.
- First Aid and accessible toilets located near staffed areas
- Creation of protocols for supervision of PSD students
- Training provided in Child Safety to all Integration Aides and Education Support staff.

LISTENING TO, COMMUNICATING WITH AND EMPOWERING CHILDREN

Elevation Secondary College has developed a safe, inclusive and supportive environment that involves and communicates with children, young people and their parents/carers. We encourage child and parent/carer involvement and engagement that informs safe school operations and builds the capability of children and parents/carers to understand their rights and their responsibilities. Our school is committed to supporting and encouraging students to use their voice to raise and share their concerns with a trusted adult at any time of need. Students can access information on how to report abuse at the school front office.

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When the school is gathering information in relation to a complaint about alleged misconduct with or in relation to abuse of a child, the school will listen to the complainant's account of things and take them seriously, check understanding and keep the child (or their parents/carers, where appropriate) informed about progress.

The school will promote the [Child Safe Standards](#) in ways that are readily accessible, easy to understand, and user-friendly to children, including:

- all of our child safety policies and procedures will be available for the students at Elevation Secondary College to read;
- PROTECT Child Safety posters [PROTECT Poster](#) will be displayed across the school;
- School newsletters will inform students and the school community about the school's commitment to child safety, and strategies or initiatives that the school is taking to ensure student safety;
- share with and teach the school values and expected behaviours with members of the community regularly and through a variety of forums including, assemblies, newsletters, school council;
- explicitly teach positive education and trauma informed strategies in the curriculum via Mentor Group and Personal Development classes;
- engage all teaching staff in professional learning around positive education and trauma informed practice;
- promote positive psychology and positive education principles with the entire school community;
- develop and implement a School Wide Positive Behaviour model; and
- regularly celebrate students with values and behavioural awards at assemblies.

The school will use its health and wellbeing programs to deliver appropriate education to its students about:

- standards of behaviour for students attending the school;
- healthy and respectful relationships (including sexuality);
- resilience; and
- child abuse awareness and prevention.

The school will deliver learning about standards of behaviour, values respectful relationships, resilience, child abuse awareness and prevention in various areas of the curriculum, but mainly through the Personal Development subject, taught by the Mentor Group teacher.

Aspects will be taught through the Health strands of PE Health. Some aspects will be covered in English and Humanities.

The main aspect of the curriculum will be taught through Personal Development. The Personal Development subject is taught by the Mentor Group teacher, who meets with the group each morning and is the primary contact for students. This means that students will be taught this curriculum by the teacher they have the most frequent contact and strongest relationship with.

The specific curriculum taught will be based on the Berry Street Education Model of Trauma informed learning, Respectful Relationships program and informed by the Personal and Social and Intercultural Capabilities strands of Victorian Curriculum.

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Teaching staff will also be trained according to the Berry Street Education Model of Trauma informed learning. They will also be taught the Respectful Relationships program as well as being regularly briefed on the Child Safety responsibilities.

IDENTIFYING STUDENTS WITH ADDITIONAL SUPPORT NEEDS

Depending on the needs of the student, child safety risk mitigation and information will be included in the development of Individual Learning Plans, Safety Plans and Positive Behaviour Support Plans (as required).

COMMUNICATIONS

This school is committed to communicating our child safety strategies to the school community through:

- ensuring that the school's Child Safety Policy (this document), Code of Conduct, and the Child Safety Responding and Reporting Obligations Policy and Procedure are available on the school website;
- ensuring that child safety is a regular agenda item at school council meetings and staff meetings for discussion.
- Translation of key child safety policies and procedures as required.

CONFIDENTIALITY AND PRIVACY

This school collects, uses and discloses information about particular children and their families in accordance with Victorian privacy law. The principles regulating the collection, use and storage of information is included in the Department of Education and Training's Schools' Privacy Policy available at the following link: <https://www.education.vic.gov.au/Pages/schoolsprivacypolicy.aspx>

RELATED POLICIES AND DOCUMENTS

Related policies and documents include:

- Appendix 1: Strategy to Embed a Culture of Child Safety
- Code of Conduct
- Child Safety Responding and Reporting Obligations Policy and Procedures
- Risk assessment register
- [Identifying and Responding to All Forms of Abuse in Victorian Schools](#)
- [Four Critical Actions for Schools](#)
- [Recording your actions: Responding to suspected child abuse – A template for Victorian schools](#)
- [Identifying and Responding to Student Sexual Offending](#)
- [Four Critical Actions for Schools: Responding to Student Sexual Offending](#)
- [School Policy and Advisory Guide – Duty of Care](#)
- [School Policy and Advisory Guide – Child Protection Reporting Obligations.](#)

POLICY EVALUATION AND REVIEW

This policy was last updated on 02.08.2019 and is scheduled for review in August, 2023.