IVANHOE GIRLS' GRAMMAR SCHOOL

OUR GIRLS SPEAK FOR THEMSELVES.

Policy Title	Prevention of Child Abuse Policy
Policy Owner	Principal
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Approved by	Board
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1. Purpose

1.1 Rationale

Schools and their communities have a vital role in supporting children and their families and in protecting students who may be at risk of harm due to neglect or child abuse, especially sexual abuse. This Policy, which supports the 2014 and 2015 amendments to the *Crimes Act 1958 (Vic)* as well as Ministerial Order 1359, is designed to ensure reasonable steps are taken so that students are safe from sexual and other forms of child abuse.

Our school community is diverse, encompassing families and children from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds, those who live with disabilities and those who are vulnerable through a range of circumstances. Every child and young person studying at Ivanhoe Girls' Grammar School ("the School") has a right to be safe. As such, the School also recognises its pastoral, moral and legal responsibility to create a nurturing and supportive school environment where children and young people are respected, valued and safe. Consequently, the School will strive for continual improvement that is responsive to emerging thinking, evidence and practice, so as to reduce the possibility of inappropriate behaviour that may compromise child safety or student wellbeing from occurring in the first place.

Additionally, the School recognises its legal responsibilities with regards to responding to child abuse.

This Policy seeks to outline many of the ways in which the processes, procedures and activities at the School aim to empower our students and work to prevent the risk of child abuse.

2. Definitions

The School	Ivanhoe Girls' Grammar School
School Environment	Any physical or virtual place made available or authorised by the School's governing authority for use during or outside school hours, including: · a campus of the School; · online school environments (including email, collaboration apps/platforms and intranet); and · other locations provided by the School wherever and whenever staff may be, as a result of their school duties (including, without limitation, locations used for school camps, sporting events, excursions, competitions, and other events).
Child Abuse	Includes: a) any act committed against a child involving – i. a sexual offence; or ii. an offence under section 49B(2) of the *Crimes Act 1958* (grooming); and b) the infliction, on a child, of – i. physical violence; or serious emotional or psychological harm; and serious neglect of a child.
Child Safety	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.

3. Policy

To fulfil its obligations regarding child safety and student wellbeing, the School makes the following commitments consistent with the above statement.

3.1 Engagement

Every person associated with Ivanhoe Girls' has a responsibility to understand and to ensure that the wellbeing and safety of all children and young people is of paramount concern. To create a school environment that promotes child safety and wellbeing, Ivanhoe Girls' will engage actively with the School Community, including families and volunteers. The process associated with connecting with all members of the School Community will be marked by collaboration, vigilance and proactive approaches across policies, procedures, curriculum and practices.

To support the combined effort to reduce the risk of child abuse, this Prevention of Child Abuse Policy is available to staff, parents, students and the School Community via the School's intranet, *hive*. Additionally, relevant aspects of this Policy will be raised at staff and student meetings and highlighted in some communications with the School community, such as in N*ewsletters*.

3.2 Education

The School will ensure children and young people are engaged and are active participants in child safety and student wellbeing processes, particularly those that have an impact on their personal safety and wellbeing. This means that the views of children and young people are taken seriously, and their concerns are addressed in a just and timely manner. Children and young people will also be empowered with the necessary education, including skills and knowledge, to understand and maintain their personal safety and wellbeing.

3.3 Implementing Effective Risk-Management

The School will systematically identify and assess risks to child safety and student wellbeing and will eliminate, where practicable, or otherwise, reduce the potential risk of all sources of harm. This effective risk management will be embedded in school life through policies, procedures and practices.

3.4 Employment Decisions

The School will fervently strive to use best practice standards in the recruitment of highly competent and professional staff who are committed to maintaining the safety of all students.

Safe recruitment practices will be assisted by ensuring all staff and volunteers have active Victorian Institute of Teaching (VIT) registration and/or a Working with Children Check (WWCC). All other recruitment practices will also be in line with current legislation. The Board has ensured that appropriate policies, processes and systems have been implemented that require school staff to sight, verify and record the WWCC details for all staff[1] that require them, and the VIT registration for all other staff. Staff that do not hold, or fail to maintain, the required accreditation are unable to perform work at the School in any capacity.

The high-quality of staff appointments will continually be upheld through employment and staff review processes and practices. These reviews include one-on-one review sessions with staff at least annually and provide an opportunity for the staff member and/or the reviewer to raise any concerns or questions regarding obligations or compliance with child safety responsibilities. In support of these processes, the ongoing and regular reporting of any child safety matters to the most senior levels of the School, including the Board, ensure that any child safety concerns involving staff members or volunteers are identified and can be addressed in a timely and appropriate manner.

3.5 Policies and Procedures

The School will have policies and procedures in place to demonstrate its commitment to child safety. These policies and procedures will:

- ensure Ivanhoe Girls' staff and other school personnel, including volunteers, behave in a manner consistent with the Policy Statement of this Policy and the School's Code of Conduct;
- enable Ivanhoe Girls' parents and students to understand, identify, discuss and report child safety and reportable conduct concerns;
- enable Ivanhoe Girls' staff to respond to and report child abuse and reportable conduct concerns in accordance with their legal obligations and the School's policies and procedures, as outlined in the Responding to Child Abuse Policy;
- ensure support or assistance is provided to children who disclose child abuse or reportable conduct concerns, or who are otherwise linked to suspected child abuse or reportable conduct; and

[1] This applies also to contractors and volunteers

- ensure conflicts of interest are appropriately managed when concerns or complaints are made against Ivanhoe Girls' staff or other personnel.

The School will ensure that staff and other personnel receive appropriate induction and ongoing professional learning in relation to child safety and student wellbeing matters, including compliance with their legal obligations and the School's policies and procedures. In addition to the child safety and wellbeing induction at commencement of employment, our staff will annually participate in a range of training and professional learning to equip them with the skills and knowledge necessary to maintain a child safe environment. This will include briefings and professional development undertaken at Staff Days as well as online and face-to-face training conducted with external providers.

The policies and practices in place – including continual induction and education/awareness for staff and volunteers, the personalised and robust pastoral care structure established throughout the School, the support of senior executives and dedicated Child Safety Officers and the Board's ongoing oversight of child safety issues – empower staff and volunteers to identify and mitigate risks in the School environment without compromising a child or student's right to privacy, access to information, social connections and learning opportunities.

3.6 Confidentiality

Appropriate confidentiality will be always maintained when dealing with child safety and student wellbeing matters, with information only being provided to those who have a right or need to know.

To support the appropriate confidentiality of all members of the School Community, all documentation regarding allegations of child abuse, including:

- the initial incident report;
- the reporting to relevant authorities;
- reports of investigations by the School; and
- any other relevant documentation

will be stored confidentially and securely by the School's ROC system at a Level 3 or above file for the student/staff member. As such records are reasonably likely to be required for current or future legal proceedings, they will be retained permanently and will not be disposed or destroyed as per the Public Record Office Victoria's *Creating, Managing & Retaining Records for Current or Future Child Sexual Abuse Allegations*.

3.7 Compliance and Monitoring

The School will stay up to date on legislation relating to child safety matters and will meet its legislative obligations.

The members of the School's Executive Team will continually monitor the School's adherence to relevant legislation and to this Prevention of Child Abuse Policy.

3.8 Communication

The School will communicate its policies and procedures regarding child safety and student wellbeing matters to staff, students, parents and the wider school community. Communication of its policies and procedures will be conducted during the recruitment process, induction process and throughout ongoing professional development opportunities for staff. Families and the wider School Community will also receive information via the School's website, *hive* and notifications, N*ewsletters* and other published communications.

3.9 Child Safety Officers

The School has appointed the following Child Safety Officers to assist all members of the School Community, including students, staff, Board Members, contractors and volunteers with any child safety concerns.

Ivanhoe Girls' Child Safety Officers are:

- Director of the ELC
- Head of Junior School
- Director of Curriculum, Learning and Innovation (JS)
- Deputy Principal / Head of Senior School
- Director of Student Wellbeing
- School Counsellors (Registered psychologists)

CSOs are available to listen, appropriately discuss and clarify issues concerning individual staff, students or families in relation to child safety and student wellbeing matters. All CSOs may be contacted through the School's telephone **+61 3 9490 6222** or email **enquiries@ivanhoegirls.vic.edu.au**.

4. Related Policies

- Child Safety and Wellbeing Policy
- Code of Conduct
- Complaints and Grievances Policy
- Diversity Policy
- Privacy Policy
- Responding to Child Abuse Policy
- Student Anti-bullying and Anti-violence Policy
- Student Gender Diversity Policy
- Volunteers Policy
- Child Safety Records Keeping Policy