



# Child Protection and Safety Policy

**POLICY CATEGORY: CHILD PROTECTION**

## **POLICY CONTROL INFORMATION**

<b>POLICY RISK RATING</b>	<b>POLICY REFERENCE</b>	<b>VERSION</b>	<b>OWNER</b>
High	CHCP2021	1.0	Deputy Principal
<b>WORAWA ABORIGINAL COLLEGE APPROVER</b>	<b>COLLEGE APPROVAL DATE</b>	<b>BOARD APPROVAL DATE</b>	<b>NEXT REVIEW DATE</b>
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Internal/College Community/Public	Network Drive	Teams Policy	

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## 1. POLICY OBJECTIVE

The objective of this policy is to clearly outline policies applicable to Worawa Aboriginal College. This Policy is an overarching document that provides key elements of our approach to protecting children and young people from abuse. The Policy forms the foundation of the College's procedures, practices, decision making processes and ultimately the College's culture with respect to child safety. It is designed to be published on our public website as well as communicated through other mediums such as our annual report and in induction and welcome packs for College Board members, staff and volunteers. The College's Child Protection and Safety Policy has been approved and is regularly reviewed by the Board.

This policy provides the framework for:

- The development of work systems, practices, policies and procedures that promote child protection within the College;
- The creation of a positive and robust child protection culture;
- The promotion and open discussion of child protection issues within the College;
- Compliance with all laws, regulations and standards relevant to child protection in Victoria.

### 1.1. Scope

This policy applies to the following:

- Worawa Aboriginal College staff
- Students and boarders
- Partners, carers and guardians
- Visitors, volunteers and contractors
- Board of Directors and Committee Members

This policy applies to all College activities during and outside of school hours, all College school and co-curricular programs, excursions, camps, interstate and overseas travel. The policy applies to all College campuses, including Boarding Premises.

Our policies are grounded in core values, beliefs and assumptions:

- The Worawa Way pedagogy model is based on the Aboriginal values of Relationship, Responsibility, Respect and Rigour that inform all aspects of College operations. Aboriginal spiritual beliefs in relationship to land and responsibility for Caring for Country are expressed in campus care and development  
Along with the core academic program, emphasis is placed on nurturing and celebrating Aboriginal culture as a crucial aspect of student self-esteem and wellbeing. The cultural competence of staff is essential and includes knowledge of Aboriginal culture and respect for the beliefs, values and practices of Aboriginal people including respect for the role of Elders as the holders of knowledge wisdom
- Worawa Aboriginal College Board of Directors will set oversight and monitor policy that is necessary for it to meet all its obligations as the governing authority of our College
- A collaborative approach is employed with wide consultation with stakeholders at appropriate levels
- All policy development is designed to foster continuous development and improvement at Worawa Aboriginal College
- Worawa Aboriginal College will only develop policies that are necessary for implementation of its specific mission and remain mindful of the broader policy environment in which Worawa Aboriginal College exists

## **2. POLICY SECTION**

### **2.1. Statement of Commitment to Child Safety**

Worawa Aboriginal College is committed to providing a child safe and child friendly environment, where children and young people are safe and feel safe, and are able to actively participate in decisions that affect their lives. At the College we have a zero tolerance for child abuse and are committed to acting in children and young people's best interests and keeping them safe from harm.

The College is committed to the cultural safety of Aboriginal children and young people, and those from culturally and/or linguistically diverse backgrounds, and to providing a safe environment for students living with a disability.

The College regards its child protection responsibilities with the utmost importance and as such, is committed to providing the necessary resources to ensure compliance with all relevant child protection laws and regulations and maintain a child safe culture.

### **2.2. Guiding principles**

This Policy is based on the following principles:

1. Worawa Aboriginal College has zero tolerance for child abuse.
2. All children and young people have a right to feel safe and be safe at College, and have equal rights to protection from abuse.
3. The College is committed to the cultural safety of Aboriginal children and young people, and those from culturally and/or linguistically diverse backgrounds, and to providing a safe environment for students living with a disability.
4. The welfare and best interests of the child and young person are paramount.
5. Child protection is a shared responsibility.
6. The views of the child and young person and their privacy must be respected.
7. The College will consider the opinions of students and use their opinions to develop child protection policies and procedures.
8. Clear expectations for appropriate behaviour with children and young people are established in our College Child Safety Code of Conduct.
9. Child safety awareness is promoted in our College community.
10. Procedures are in place to screen all staff, volunteers, third party contractors and external education providers who have direct contact with children and young people.
11. Child protection training is mandatory for all College Board Members, staff and direct contact volunteers.
12. Procedures for responding to alleged or suspected incidents of child abuse are simple and accessible for all members of the College community.

### **2.3. Child protection program**

The College is committed to the effective implementation of our Child Protection Program and ensuring that it is appropriately reviewed and updated. We adopt a risk management approach by identifying key risk indicators and assessing child safety risks based on a range of factors including the nature of our College's activities, physical and online environments and the characteristics of the student body. Our Child Protection Program relates to all aspects of protecting children and young people from abuse and establishes work systems, practices, policies and procedures to protect children and young people from abuse. It includes:

- Clear information as to what constitutes child abuse and associated key risk indicators;
- Clear procedures for responding to and reporting allegations of child abuse;
- Strategies to support, encourage and enable staff, volunteers, third party contractors, external education providers, parents/carers and students to understand, identify, discuss and report child protection matters;

- Procedures for recruiting and screening College Board members, staff, direct contact volunteers, third party contractors and external education providers;
- Procedures for reporting reportable conduct and/or misconduct;
- Pastoral care strategies designed to empower students and keep them safe;
- Policies with respect to cultural diversity and students with disabilities;
- A child protection training program;
- Information regarding the steps to take after a disclosure of abuse to protect, support and assist children and young people;
- Guidelines with respect to record keeping and confidentiality;
- Policies to ensure compliance with all relevant laws, regulations and standards (including the Victorian Child Safe Standards);
- A system for continuous review and improvement.

As part of the induction process, all staff and direct contact volunteers are required to complete a selection of training modules on the content of our Child Protection Program. Additional, ongoing child protection training is provided at least annually.

Staff, volunteers, third party contractors and external education providers are supported and supervised by the Head of Boarding to ensure compliance with the College's approach to child protection.

#### 2.4. Responsibilities

Meeting the requirements of 'Ministerial Order No. 870 – Child Safe Standards – Managing the risk of child abuse in colleges', is the direct responsibility of Worawa Aboriginal College's governing body, and the College Principal. At the College child protection is everyone's responsibility and the College Board and staff, as well as volunteers, have a shared responsibility for contributing to the safety and protection of children and young people. Specific responsibilities include:

ROLE	RESPONSIBILITIES
<b>The Board</b>	The Board is responsible for approving our Child Protection Program and ensuring that the College has appropriate resources to effectively implement our Child Protection Program.
<b>The Principal</b>	The Principal is responsible, and will be accountable for, the operational management of the College, and the Child Protection Program. The Principal is responsible for taking all practical measures to ensure that this Child Protection and Safety Policy and the College's Child Protection Program are implemented effectively and that a strong and sustainable child protection culture is maintained within the College.
<b>Senior Child Safety Officer</b>	The Head of Boarding has been appointed as our Senior Child Safety Officer. The Senior Child Safety Officer is responsible for the overall promotion and maintenance of a child protection culture at the College. The Head of Boarding receives additional specialised child protection training. They are a point of contact for raising child protection concerns within the College. They are also responsible for championing child protection within the College.
<b>Staff Members</b>	All staff are required to be familiar with the content of our Child Protection and Safety Policy and our Child Protection Program and their legal obligations with respect to the reporting of child abuse. It is each individual's responsibility to be aware of key risk indicators of child

ROLE	RESPONSIBILITIES
	<p>abuse, to be observant, and to raise any concerns they may have relating to child abuse with the Principal and/or the Head of Boarding.</p>
<p><b>Direct Contact Volunteers</b></p>	<p>All Direct Contact Volunteers, as defined in this policy, are required to be familiar with the content of our Child Protection Program, particularly this Child Protection and Safety Policy and the Child Safety Code of Conduct and their legal obligations with respect to the reporting of child abuse.</p> <p>It is each individual's responsibility to be aware of key risk indicators of child abuse, to be observant, and to raise any concerns they may have relating to child abuse with the Principal or delegate, and one of the College's Head of Boarding.</p>
<p><b>Indirect Contact Volunteers</b></p>	<p>Indirect Contact Volunteers are those volunteers who are involved in providing support and services whilst not directly assisting a specific group of students. All Indirect Contact Volunteers are responsible for contributing to the safety and protection of children and young people in the College environment.</p> <p>All Indirect Contact Volunteers are required by the College to be familiar with our Child Protection and Safety Policy and the Child Safety Code of Conduct. Examples of Indirect Contact Volunteer activities may include assisting with College administrative functions.</p>
<p><b>Third Party Contractors</b></p>	<p>All Third Party Contractors engaged by the College are responsible for contributing to the safety and protection of children and young people in the College environment. Third Party Contractors include, for example, maintenance and building personnel, consultants, casual teachers, tutors, sports coaches and the College cleaners.</p> <p>This also includes music teachers and other extra-curricular teachers and instructors who are engaged by students and their families directly, rather than the College, but have an agreement with the College to use the College's facilities.</p> <p>All Third Party Contractors engaged by the College are required by the College to be familiar with our Child Protection and Safety Policy and Child Safety Code of Conduct.</p>
<p><b>External Education Providers</b></p>	<p>An External Education Provider is any organisation that the College has arranged to deliver a specified course of study that is part of the curriculum, to a student or students enrolled at the College.</p> <p>The delivery of such a course may take place on College premises or elsewhere. All External Education Providers engaged by the College are responsible for contributing to the safety and protection of children and young people in the College environment.</p> <p>All External Education Providers engaged by the College are required by the College to be familiar with our Child Protection and Safety Policy, the Child Safety Code of Conduct.</p>

## **2.5. Reporting Child Abuse Concerns**

The Worawa Aboriginal College Child Protection Policy provides detailed guidance for the College Board, staff and Direct Contact Volunteers as to how to identify key risk indicators of child abuse. It identifies how to report child abuse concerns to the Principal and/or the Deputy Principal and/or the Head of Boarding.

It also contains detailed procedures with respect to the reporting of child abuse incidents to relevant authorities.

Staff, Third Party Contractors, External Education Providers, volunteers, students, parents/carers and other community members who have concerns that a child and young person may be subject to abuse or grooming, are asked to contact the College's Senior Child Safety Officer or the Deputy Principal on

03 5962 4344 or emailing [executivedirector@worawa.vic.edu.au](mailto:executivedirector@worawa.vic.edu.au). Communications will be treated confidentially on a 'need to know basis'. Whenever there are concerns that a child and young person is in immediate danger, the Police must be called on 000.

## **2.6. Privacy and Confidentiality**

As much as is reasonably possible, an individual's right to privacy is to be protected. Both those who are making reports and those about whom accusations are being made are entitled to privacy. Where there is suspected abuse or misconduct, employees, volunteers and contractors must not disclose or make use of the information in a manner that breaches confidentiality, other than to report and act consistent with the Child Protection Policy and Procedure, and relevant statutory requirements.

## **3. POLICY COMPLIANCE**

### **3.1. Policy Breach**

A breach of this policy or procedure may lead to disciplinary action. All breaches, near misses and risks related to this policy should be reported to the Business Manager.

### **3.2. Policy Compliance monitoring**

Compliance with this policy will be monitored by the Principal, Business Manager and the Head of Boarding and this may include independent audits and reviews.

## **4. RELATED POLICIES, PROCEDURES AND LEGISLATION**

### **4.1. Worawa Aboriginal College policy and procedure linkage**

- Privacy Policy
- Child Safety Code of Conduct
- Mandatory Reporting Policy
- Child Protection Training Policy
- Obligations to Report and Protect Policy

### **4.2. Related legislation**

The following legislation, standards and regulations apply and this policy aligns with these mandated requirements:

- Ministerial Order 870;
- Education and Training Reform Act 2006 (Vic);
- Child Wellbeing and Safety Act 2005 (Vic);
- Privacy and Data Protection Act 2014 (Vic);
- Children, Youth and Families Act 2005 (Vic);
- Crimes Act 1958 (Cth).

#### **4.3. Further information**

Further information on this policy can be obtained from the Deputy Principal.

### **5. POLICY REVIEW AND APPROVAL**

This Policy is rated high risk. This Policy will be reviewed on an annual basis or more frequently, if required, to keep up-to-date with changes to laws and government policies.

This Policy is to be reviewed by the Board.