



# Child Protection and Safety Policy

POLICY CATEGORY: CHILD PROTECTION

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**PUBLIC POLICY**  
**STATUS: APPROVED**

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## PURPOSE

This policy is an overarching document that forms the foundation of the School's commitment, procedures, practices, decision-making and culture with respect to child safety.

It is communicated on our public website, community and staff portals and provided on induction to all our School Board of Directors, staff, contractors, and volunteers.

## SCOPE

This policy applies to all Woodleigh School staff, visitors, volunteers, contractors and Board Directors.

This policy applies to all School activities during and outside of school hours. This includes School activities that are occurring on school campus, offsite, online, extracurricular, sport activities and programs, excursions, camps, interstate and overseas travel.

## STATEMENT OF COMMITMENT TO CHILD SAFETY

Woodleigh School is committed to protecting the students in our care. We are 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.

Woodleigh School is committed to the protection of children from all forms of child abuse and demonstrates this commitment through the implementation of a comprehensive Child Protection Program designed to keep children safe. Child abuse includes sexual offenses, grooming, physical violence, serious emotional or psychological harm, serious neglect and a child's exposure to family violence.

At Woodleigh School we have zero tolerance for child abuse and are committed to acting in the best interests of all children and keeping them safe from harm. The School 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 maintaining a child-safe culture.

## OBJECTIVE

This policy provides the framework for:

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

## APPLICATION

The policy is to be applied in conjunction with provisions in the Woodleigh School Child Safety Codes of Conduct and all other relevant child safety and protection policies and procedures.

## CHILD SAFE PRINCIPLES

The School's commitment to child safety is based on the following overarching principles that guide the development and regular review of our work systems, practices, policies and procedures to protect children from abuse.

1. All children have the right to be safe.
2. The welfare and best interests of the child are paramount.

3. The views of the child and a child's privacy must be respected.
4. Clear expectations for appropriate behaviour with children are established in the Woodleigh School Child Safety Code of Conduct.
5. The safety of children is dependent upon the existence of a child-safe culture.
6. Child safety awareness is promoted and openly discussed within our School community.
7. Procedures are in place to screen all staff, external education providers, contractors, and volunteers who have direct contact with children.
8. Child safety and protection is everyone's responsibility.
9. Child protection training is mandatory for all School Board Directors, staff and volunteers.
10. Procedures for responding to alleged or suspected incidents of child abuse are simple and accessible for all members of the School community.
11. Children from culturally or linguistically diverse backgrounds have the right to special care and support including those who identify as Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander.
12. Children who have any kind of disability have the right to special care and support.

## CHILD PROTECTION PROGRAM

Woodleigh School 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 School's activities, physical and online environments and the characteristics of the student body.

Our Child Protection Program relates to all aspects of protecting children from abuse and establishes work systems, practices, policies and procedures to protect children 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, students, parents and carers, external education providers, contractors and volunteers to understand, identify, discuss and report child protection matters.
- Procedures for recruiting and screening School Board of Directors, staff (including casual, emergency relief, part-time and full-time) and long-term contractors and volunteers.
- 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.
- 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, Ministerial Order 870 and Ministerial Order 706.
- A system for oversight, monitoring, continuous improvement and review.

As a part of the School induction process, all Board of Directors, staff and volunteers are required to complete training modules on the content of our Child Protection Program and additional ongoing training at least annually.

Staff, external education providers, contractors and volunteers are supported by the School's Leadership Team and our Child Safety Officers to ensure that they are compliant with the School's approach to child protection.

## RESPONSIBILITIES

Child protection is everyone's responsibility. At Woodleigh School, Board of Directors and staff, and volunteers, have a shared responsibility for contributing to the safety and protection of children. Specific responsibilities include:

**Board** The Board is Woodleigh School governing authority. The Board is responsible for endorsing this policy, ensuring this policy is reviewed and updated as needed and reviewing the School's compliance with this policy and child safety obligations, and is responsible for confirming this policy is consistent with Board guidelines.

**The Principal** The Principal is responsible for the School's compliance with this policy.

**Child Safety Officers** A number of staff members have been nominated as the School's Child Safety Officers. Our Child Safety Officers receive additional specialised training with respect to child protection issues. They can be a point of contact for raising child protection concerns within the School. In collaboration with all staff and volunteers, they are also responsible for championing child protection within the School.

**The Head of Wellbeing** has been appointed at our School 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 School.

**The Head of Wellbeing** oversees the programs for child protection including the culture, compliance, incident and reporting programs, and is the first point of contact for raising child protection concerns within the School.

**The Head of Wellbeing** is responsible for championing child protection within the School and assisting in coordinating responses to child protection incidents, including overseeing compliance with all mandatory reporting.

**Staff Members** All staff (including teaching, non-teaching, casual and emergency relief teachers, sporting coaches, staff employed for co-curricular activity provision, tutors and instrumental music teachers) are required to be familiar with the content of our Child Protection and Safety Policy, Child Safety Code of Conduct 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 abuse, to be observant, and to raise any concerns they may have relating to child abuse with one of the Child Safety Officers.

All staff must raise any concerns they may have relating to child abuse with the Principal or Deputy Principals, the Head of Wellbeing, and/or one of the School's Child Safety Officers. Where the concern relates to the Principal or Deputy Principal, report to the Chair of the Board.

**Volunteers** All Volunteers are required to be familiar with the content of our Child Protection Program, particularly this Child Protection and Safety Policy, the Woodleigh School Child Safety Code of Conduct, and their legal obligations with respect to the reporting of child abuse.

We do not distinguish between direct and indirect volunteers as all volunteers on our School premises may have contact with students giving rise to a duty of care to protect our students. Volunteers should not be left alone with students but our policy and procedures will be designed assuming this may inadvertently occur.

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 Deputy Principal, or Head of Wellbeing or one of the School's Child Safety Officers. Where the concern relates to the Principal or Deputy Principal, report to the Chair of the Board.

**Contractors** All contractors engaged by the School are responsible for contributing to the safety and protection of children in the School environment. Contractors include, for example, outsourced maintenance and building services, consultants, catering providers and School cleaners.

This also includes music teachers and other extra-curricular teachers and instructors who are engaged by students and their families directly, rather than the School, but have an agreement with the School to use the School's facilities.

**All contractors engaged** by the School are required to be familiar with our Child Protection and Safety Policy and the Woodleigh School Child Safety Code of Conduct

The School will also include this requirement in the written agreement between it and the third-party contractors.

**External Education Providers** An external education provider is any organisation that the School has arranged to deliver a specified course of study that is part of the curriculum, to a student or students enrolled at the School.

The delivery of such a course may take place on School premises or elsewhere.

All external education providers engaged by the School are responsible for contributing to the safety and protection of children in the School environment.

All external education providers engaged by the School are required by the School to be familiar with our Child Protection and Safety Policy and the Woodleigh School Child Safety Code of Conduct.

Woodleigh School will include this requirement in the written agreement between it and the external education provider.

## SUPPORTING OUR SCHOOL COMMUNITY

Key principles that we must apply in the design of policy, procedure, interventions, support and reporting in our child protection program are to ensure we take account of the diversity of all children, including (not not limited to) the needs of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Children, children from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds, children with disabilities, and children who are vulnerable.

## REPORTING CHILD PROTECTION CONCERNS

Our Child Protection Program provides detailed guidance for members of the Board, staff and volunteers as to how to identify key risk indicators of child abuse and how to report child abuse concerns to one of our nominated Child Safety Officers. It also provides detailed procedures with respect to the reporting of child abuse incidents to relevant authorities.

Staff, students, parents and carers, external education providers, contractors, volunteers or other community members who have concerns that a child may be subject to abuse are asked to contact their Head of Campus or Head of Wellbeing.

All communications will be treated on a need-to-know basis.

Whenever there are concerns that a child is in immediate danger please call 000 without delay.

## SUPPORT FOR AFFECTED STUDENTS

Ensuring a student feels safe and supported following an incident is of critical important to our School. The School will work closely with the student, parents and carers, and our wellbeing team to provide all additional support services that are available. Each matter will be a case-by-case basis an individual may be supported with:

- Referral to our School counselling team.
- Referral to external specialist agencies.
- Family counselling.
- Academic support.

## POLICY BREACH

A breach of this policy or procedure may lead to disciplinary action which is outlined further in our:

- Consequence and Breach Policy (*in development*)

All breaches, near misses and risks related to this policy should be reported to a member of the SLT

Compliance with this policy will be monitored by the Principal and the SLT and this may include independent audits and reviews.

## RELEVANT POLICY AND REFERENCES

This policy provides the overarching foundation for our Child Protection Program.

Key relevant policies to support our program include:

- Woodleigh School Child Safety Code of Conduct
- Woodleigh School Mandatory Reporting Policy & Procedures

This policy should be read in conjunction with:

- Key definitions and legislation landscape for our Child Protection Program

### Related legislative instruments

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); and
- Child Wellbeing and Safety Act 2005 (Vic).

## REVIEW

This policy is to be reviewed, approved and endorsed annually. Next review date is 20<sup>th</sup> July 2022.