Child Safety Policy

1. Purpose

The VRQA child safe standards require organisations that provide services for children to have a child safety policy or a statement of commitment to child safety. This policy will be publicly available to ensure our school community understand the importance of child safety in our College and how we demonstrate our commitment to protecting children from abuse.

2. Our Commitment to Child Safety

2.1   Our College is committed to child safety.

2.2   We want children to be safe, happy and empowered. We support and respect all children, as well as our staff and volunteers.

2.3   We are committed to the safety, participation and empowerment of all children.

2.4   We have zero tolerance of child abuse, and all allegations and safety concerns will be treated very seriously and consistently with our robust policies and procedures.

2.5   We have legal and moral obligations to contact authorities when we are worried about a child's safety, which we follow rigorously.

2.6   Our College is committed to preventing child abuse and identifying risks early, and removing and reducing these risks.

2.7   Our College has robust human resources and recruitment practices for all staff and volunteers, including the requirement of current VIT registration for all teachers and a current Working With Children Check for all other staff and external contractors.

2.8   Our College is committed to regularly training and educating our staff on child abuse risks.

2.9   We support and respect all children, as well as our staff. We are committed to the safety of children from culturally and/or linguistically diverse backgrounds and Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children, and to providing a safe environment for children with a disability.

2.10   We have specific policies, procedures and training in place that support our leadership team and staff to achieve these commitments.

3. Our Students

3.1   Our College promotes diversity and tolerance in our school community, and people from all walks of life and cultural backgrounds are welcome. In particular we:

- promote the safety, participation and empowerment of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children, children from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds, children with disabilities and vulnerable children
- ensure that children with a disability are safe and can participate equally.

3.2   Our students are provided with clear expectations of behavior at our College. There are several strategies and policies in place for students to ensure they are supported and respected, and they in turn support and respect others.

4. Our Staff

This policy guides our staff on how to behave with students at our College. All of our staff must agree to abide by our code of conduct and Child Protection Policy which specify the standards of conduct required when working with children.

5. Training for Staff

5.1   Training and education is important to ensure that everyone in our College understands that child safety is everyone's responsibility.

5.2   Our workplace culture aims for all staff (in addition to parents/carers and children) to feel confident and comfortable in discussing any allegations of child abuse or child safety concerns. We train our staff to identify, assess, and minimise risks of child abuse and to detect potential signs of child abuse.

5.3   New employees will undergo an induction process to ensure they understand our College's commitment to child safety and that everyone has a role to play in protecting children from abuse.

5.4   Any inappropriate behaviour will be dealt with in the first instance by the College Principal.

6. Recruitment

6.1   Our College takes all reasonable steps to employ skilled people to work with children. We use Department specific selection criteria and role descriptions which clearly demonstrate our commitment to child safety and an awareness of our social and legislative responsibilities.

6.2   All people engaged in work at our College, including volunteers and external contractors, are required to hold a Working with Children Check and to provide evidence of this Check.

6.3   All teachers are required to be registered with the Victorian Institute of Teaching who carry out regular police checks as part of the registration and renewal processes.

6.4   We carry out reference checks (and police record checks for Education Support staff) to ensure that we are recruiting the right people. Police record checks are used only for the purposes of recruitment and are discarded after the recruitment process is complete.

6.5   If during the recruitment process a person's records indicate a criminal history then the person would not be employed.

7. Fair Procedures for Staff

7.1   The safety and wellbeing of children is our primary concern. We are also fair and just to personnel. The decisions we make when recruiting, assessing incidents, and undertaking disciplinary action will always be thorough, transparent, professional and based on evidence.

7.2   The Principal will record all allegations of abuse and safety concerns. All records are securely stored.

7.3   If an allegation of abuse or a safety concern is raised, the Principal will provide updates to the child/ren involved and families on progress and any actions taken by the College.

8. Privacy

All personal information considered or recorded will respect the privacy of the individuals involved, whether they be staff, volunteers, parents or students, unless there is a risk to someone's safety. We have safeguards and practices in place to ensure any personal information is protected.

9. Legislative Responsibilities

The College has a Child Protection Policy in place consistent with Department guidelines and legislation, which states the following:

• Failure to disclose: Reporting child sexual abuse is a community-wide responsibility. All adults in Victoria who have a reasonable belief that an adult has committed a sexual offence against a child under 16 have an obligation to report that information to the police.

• Failure to protect: People of authority at our College will commit an offence if they know of a substantial risk of child sexual abuse and have the power or responsibility to reduce or remove the risk, but

negligently fail to do so.
• Any personnel who are mandatory reporters must comply with their duties.
• The Organisational Duty of Care which requires schools to take reasonable precautions to prevent the abuse of a child (sexual or physical abuse) by an individual associated with the school while the child is under their supervision.
• The Reportable Conduct Scheme which requires Victorian education providers to notify the Commission for Children and Young People if there is an allegation of 'reportable conduct' made against one of its employees, contractors, volunteers or allied health staff members.

10. Risk Management
10.1   In addition to general occupational health and safety risks, our College proactively manages risks of abuse to our students.
10.2   Our College has risk management strategies in place to identify, assess, and take steps to minimise child abuse risks, which include risks posed by online environments (for example, no staff is to have contact with our students on social media – refer 'Social Media Policy').
10.3   A full risk assessment is attached to this policy (Appendix 1).
10.4   The College will monitor and evaluate the effectiveness of the implementation of the attached risk assessment at the end of each year.

11. Allegations, Concerns and Complaints
11.1   Our College takes all allegations seriously and has practices in place to investigate thoroughly and quickly.
11.2   Our staff are trained to deal appropriately with allegations.
11.3   We work to ensure all children, families and staff know what to do and who to tell if they observe abuse or are a victim, and if they notice inappropriate behaviour.

12. Evaluation
This policy will be reviewed annually or as required by changes to DE&T guidelines.

13. Appendices
Appendix 1 – Child Safe Standard 6: Risk Assessment

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APPENDIX 1

CHILD SAFE STANDARD 6: RISK ASSESSMENT

Risk Event or Environment	Existing risk management strategies or existing controls	Likelihood	Consequence	Current risk rating	New risk management strategies or treatments	Who is responsible?
Inappropriate behaviour is not reported and addressed	Child safety code of conduct Clear Child Protection Policy and reporting procedures Performance management procedures Refresher training for staff – see eLearning mandatory reporting module	Unlikely	Severe	Low	• Strategies to embed organisational culture of child safety are reviewed	Principal, School Council President
Unquestioning trust of long term employees and contractors or norms	Strategies developed to embed culture of child safety	Possible	Major	Low		Principal, School Council President

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Risk Event or Environment	Existing risk management strategies or existing controls	Likelihood	Consequence	Current risk rating	New risk management strategies or treatments	Who is responsible?
	Clear Child Protection Policy and reporting procedures Refresher training for all staff – see eLearning mandatory reporting module					
Recruitment of an inappropriate person	WWCC or Victorian Institute of Teaching registration Police records check for all support staff	Unlikely	Major	Low	Processes updated to require: • Pre-employment reference check includes asking about child safety awareness	Principal, School Council President
Engagement with children online	Child safety code of conduct Social Media Policy	Possible	Moderate	Low	• Train students to detect inappropriate behaviour	Principal, School Council President

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Risk Event or Environment	Existing risk management strategies or existing controls	Likelihood	Consequence	Current risk rating	New risk management strategies or treatments	Who is responsible?
	Strategies developed to embed culture of child safety Stringent IT controls on all student technologies at school					
Unknown people and environments at excursions and camps	Child safety code of conduct Strategies developed to embed culture of child safety Excursions Policy Camps Policy Clear Child Protection Policy and reporting procedures	Unlikely	Moderate	Medium	• Assessment of new or changed environments for child safety risks • Ensure Code and strategies apply in all school contexts	Principal, School Council President

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Risk Event or Environment	Existing risk management strategies or existing controls	Likelihood	Consequence	Current risk rating	New risk management strategies or treatments	Who is responsible?
	Camp provider must supply its risk management plan to the school					
Ad-hoc contractors on the premises	Child safe environments Information and awareness for visitors, staff, volunteers and contractors Adequate monitoring Visitors Policy	Unlikely	Moderate	Low	• WWCC sighted for frequent contractors	HR Manager