



MELBOURNE  
GRAMMAR SCHOOL  
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# Policy

## Child Safety and Wellbeing Policy

### Purpose

It is the policy of Melbourne Grammar School that the learning and working environment is safe for all children in the School's care. The purpose of this policy is to outline the School's commitment to child safety and wellbeing whenever children are in the School's care.

This policy has been framed in response to Ministerial Order No. 1359: Implementing the Child Safe Standards – Managing the Risk of Child Abuse in Schools and School Boarding Premises, enacted from 1 July 2022.

In accordance with Melbourne Grammar School's governance structure, the School's governing body assigns the responsibility for the discharge of this policy to the Headmaster.

### Definitions

A **Child** means any student enrolled at MGS, including the Boarding Houses.

**Child connected work** means work authorised by the MGS governing body and performed by an adult in the School environment including the Boarding Houses where children are present or reasonably expected to be present.

**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 suspicions, incidents, disclosures or allegations of child abuse.

**Child wellbeing** encompasses actions that develop and support the physical, mental, social and emotional development of all children.

**Child Abuse** includes any act committed against a child involving:

- a sexual offence
- a grooming offence
- the infliction on a child of physical violence, serious emotional or psychological harm or serious neglect.

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

- a campus of the School
- School Boarding premises
- online or virtual school environments (including email, intranet systems, software applications and online services) made available or authorised by the School
- 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 School events and by local support providers engaged by the School).

**School staff** means an individual member of staff working for MGS who is:

- directly engaged or employed by the School's governing body for work performed in the School or the School's Boarding Houses
- a volunteer
- contracted service provider (whether or not they are employed through a body corporate or any other person as an intermediary, and whether or not they are employed in the School or the School Boarding Houses)
- a minister of religion.



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**School Council:** means the board of Directors of Melbourne Grammar School.

**Volunteer:** means a person who performs work without remuneration or reward in the School environment.

## Introduction – Melbourne Grammar School's Commitment to Child Safety and Wellbeing

Melbourne Grammar School:

- is committed to child safety and wellbeing
- is committed to the participation and empowerment of all its students
- is committed to ensuring it actively and openly communicates with families about our approach to child safety and wellbeing and supports their participation in decisions affecting their child, where appropriate
- supports and respects all students. The School is committed to the cultural safety of Indigenous students and students from culturally and/or linguistically diverse backgrounds, including their ability to express their culture, and enjoy their cultural rights
- provides a safe and inclusive environment for gender diverse students, students who identify as LGBTIQ+, neurodiverse students, students who are unable to live at home and students with disabilities
- will not tolerate child abuse, discrimination, harassment, sexual harassment, bullying and racial vilification, and all allegations and safety concerns will be treated very seriously and consistently with our policies and procedures
- has legal and moral obligations to contact authorities when we have reasonable concerns about a child's safety, which we follow rigorously
- is committed to preventing child abuse and identifying risks early, and/or removing and reducing these risks
- has comprehensive human resources and recruitment policies and practices for all staff
- has specific policies, procedures, action plans, and training in place that support our leadership team and staff to achieve these child safety and wellbeing commitments.

The School Council is committed to embedding a culture of child safety and wellbeing that promotes the identification and mitigation of risk and compliance with all child safety policies, procedures and practices.

### Our students

This policy is intended to protect and empower our students.

We welcome and promote diversity and tolerance in the School. We do this by acknowledging and celebrating people from all walks of life and cultural backgrounds. In particular, the School promotes the cultural safety, participation and empowerment of:

- Indigenous children and their families
- children and families from culturally and/or linguistically diverse backgrounds
- children and families who express a full range of sexual orientation and gender identity
- neurodiverse children, children with disabilities, and children who are vulnerable (including children unable to live at home) and their families

All the above ensures that children are safe and can participate to the fullest extent possible in everything Melbourne Grammar School has to offer.

Our students are also informed of their rights to participate in a safe and supportive educational environment, and have formal and informal avenues for feedback, confidential disclosure, and reporting.



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### Our staff

This policy is also intended to empower our staff. The School's Child Safe Code of Conduct and Child Safe Procedures provide guidance for staff on how to behave with children in Melbourne Grammar School.

All School staff members must agree to abide by the School's Child Safe Code of Conduct which specifies the standards of conduct required when working with children.

### Education and awareness

The School delivers education and ongoing awareness to members of the Melbourne Grammar School community to ensure they understand that child safety and wellbeing is everyone's responsibility.

Melbourne Grammar School aims for all staff, parents/guardians and children to feel confident and comfortable in discussing any allegations of child abuse or child safety concerns.

The School educates and assists its staff:

- to identify, assess, and minimise risks of child abuse and to detect potential signs of child abuse.
- on their obligations on information sharing and recordkeeping on matters relevant to child safety and wellbeing.

The School also supports its staff through ongoing professional development to:

- develop their skills to protect children from abuse
- promote the cultural safety of Indigenous children
- promote the cultural safety of children from linguistically and/or diverse backgrounds
- promote the safety of students with same sex orientation and gender diverse students
- promote the safety of children who are neurodiverse
- promote the safety of children with a disability

Additionally, new staff will be provided at induction with information to ensure they understand the School's commitment to child safety and wellbeing and that everyone has a role to play in protecting children from abuse, as well as checking that their behaviour towards children is safe and appropriate (please refer to the School's Child Safe Code of Conduct). Any inappropriate behaviour will be reported as per the School's Child Safe Procedures.

### Recruitment

Melbourne Grammar School takes all reasonable steps to employ skilled and qualified people who are suitable to work with students. The School develops selection criteria and advertisements which clearly demonstrate the School's commitment to child safety and wellbeing and an awareness of the School's social and legislative responsibilities.

The School understands that when recruiting staff, contractors and volunteers, there are ethical as well as legislative obligations with respect to child safety. All staff engaged in child-related work adhere to legislative guidelines in terms of holding VIT registration or a Working with Children Check and can provide documentary evidence of this Check.

The School carries out reference checks on prospective employees to ensure that we are recruiting appropriately with respect to qualifications and child safety.

### Privacy

All personal information relevant to child safety and wellbeing considered or recorded will be dealt with in accordance with the School's Privacy Policy and applicable legislation. Staff must respect individuals' privacy and limit sharing or disclosing information when it is not necessary to comply with reporting obligations, this policy, or to support a student.



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### Legislative responsibilities

- *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 (this includes grooming).
- *Failure to protect:* People of authority in the School 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.
- All members of staff who are designated mandatory notifiers must comply with their duties under the applicable legislation.

### Risk management

Melbourne Grammar School has risk management strategies in place to identify, assess, and take steps to minimise child abuse risks.

### Regular review

This policy will be reviewed every year and following significant incidents of child abuse if they occur.

### Allegations, concerns and complaints

Melbourne Grammar School takes all allegations seriously and has practices in place to investigate thoroughly and quickly. The School's staff are aware of the policy and procedures to deal appropriately with allegations.

The School works to ensure all students, staff and families know what to do as per the School's Child Safety Procedures if they observe abuse or are a victim, and if they notice inappropriate behaviour.

All members of the School community have a responsibility to report an allegation of child abuse as per the School's Child Safe Procedures.

If an adult has a reasonable belief that a child abuse incident has occurred, then they must report the incident as per the School's Child Safe procedures. Factors contributing to reasonable belief may be:

- a child states they or someone they know has been abused (noting that sometimes the child may in fact be referring to themselves)
- behaviour consistent with that of an abuse victim is observed
- someone else has raised a suspicion of abuse but is unwilling to report it
- observing suspicious behaviour.

### Victorian Reportable Conduct Scheme

The Victorian Reportable Conduct Scheme has been established by the Child Wellbeing and Safety Act 2005 and seeks to improve organisations' responses to allegations of child abuse and neglect by their workers and volunteers.

Melbourne Grammar School is committed to fulfilling its obligations under the Scheme, which requires the Headmaster to:

- notify the Commission for Children and Young People (CCYP) within three working days of becoming aware of a reportable allegation
- investigate the allegation, advise the CCYP who is undertaking the investigation and manage risks to children
- provide detailed information to the CCYP about the reportable allegation and any action taken within 30 days
- notify the CCYP of the investigation findings and disciplinary action (or why no action taken).



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### Procedures for Reporting and Responding

Procedures for reporting and responding are outlined in the School's Child Safe Procedures document.

### Applicable Legislation

The legislation relevant to the concepts discussed in this policy includes:

- Children, Youth and Families Act 2005 (Vic)
- Crimes Act 1958 (Vic)
- Working with Children Act 2005
- Education and Training Reform Act 2006 (Vic)
- Crimes Act Amendment (Protection of Children) 2014
- Child Wellbeing and Safety Act 2005

### Related MGS Policies and Documents

- Child Safe Code of Conduct
- Child Safe Standards: Roles and Responsibilities
- Child Safe Human Resources Procedures
- Child Safe Standards Staff Training Procedure
- Mandatory Reporting of Child Abuse Policy
- Child Safety: Procedures for Responding to Allegations of Suspected Child Abuse
- Historical Sexual Abuse Policy
- Equal Opportunity & Respectful Workplace Policy
- Privacy Policy
- ICT Responsible Use Agreement
- Social Media Policy
- Student Passenger Policy
- Billeting and Student Exchange Guidelines

### Breaches of this Policy

The School expects that any School staff member who becomes aware of a breach of these instructions and policy by another School staff member will advise the relevant Head of School, Deputy Headmaster/Head of Senior School or the Headmaster without delay. The School will consider each breach of these procedures in the context in which it has occurred and will determine if the matter is a minor breach or a serious breach. In the case of School employees, a serious breach may result in disciplinary action, up to and including termination of employment. In relation to volunteers and contracted service providers, a breach may result in the termination of the person's engagement with MGS and the withdrawal of permission for them to be on the School premises. [Mandatory reporting guidelines will also be enacted.](#)

### Further Information

Further information concerning any aspect of this policy may be directed to the Headmaster or the Deputy Headmaster.

### Policy Sign Off & Acceptance

Reviewed by: Director of Human Resources