Collingwood English Language School Child Safety Code of Conduct

Collingwood English Language School is committed to the safety and wellbeing of children and young people. Our school community recognises the importance of, and a responsibility for, ensuring our school is a safe, supportive and enriching environment which respects and fosters the dignity and self-esteem of children and young people, and enables them to thrive in their learning and development.

This Code of Conduct aims to protect children and reduce any opportunities for child abuse or harm to occur. It also assists in understanding how to avoid or better manage risky behaviours and situations. It is intended to complement child protection legislation, Department policy, school policies and procedures and professional standards, codes or ethics as these apply to staff and other personnel.

The principal and Student Learning/Leadership team of Collingwood English Language School will support implementation and monitoring of the Code of Conduct, and will plan, implement and monitor arrangements to provide inclusive, safe and orderly schools and other learning environments. The principal and Student Learning/Leadership team of Collingwood English Language School will also provide information and support to enable the Code of Conduct to operate effectively.

All staff, contractors, volunteers and any other member of the school community involved in child-related work are required to comply with the Code of Conduct by observing expectations for appropriate behaviour below. The Code of Conduct applies in all school situations, including school camps and in the use of digital technology and social media.

Acceptable behaviour:

As staff, school councillors, volunteers, contractors, and any other member of the school community involved in child-related work individually, we are responsible for supporting and promoting the safety of children by:
- upholding the school's statement of commitment to child safety at all times and adhering to the school's child safe policy
- being visible to other school personnel and/or students when working 1:1 with a child

- treating students and families in the school community with respect both within the school environment and outside the school environment as part of normal social and community activities
- listening and responding to the views and concerns of students, particularly if they are telling you that they or another child has been abused or that they are worried about their safety/the safety of another child
- promoting the cultural safety, participation and empowerment of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students
- promoting the cultural safety, participation and empowerment of students with culturally and/or linguistically diverse backgrounds
- promoting the safety, participation and empowerment of students with a disability
- reporting any allegations of child abuse or other child safety concerns to the school's leadership and/or child safety officer
- understanding and complying with all reporting or disclosure obligations (including mandatory reporting) as they relate to protecting children from harm or abuse
- if child abuse is suspected, ensuring as quickly as possible that the student(s) are safe and protected from harm

Unacceptable behaviours

As staff, school councillors, volunteers, contractors, and any other member of the school community involved in child-related work <u>we must not</u>:

- ignore or disregard any concerns, suspicions or disclosures of child abuse
- develop a relationship with any student that could be seen as favouritism or amount to 'grooming' behaviour (for example, offering gifts)
- exhibit behaviours or engage in activities with students which may be interpreted as abusive and not justified by the educational, therapeutic, or service delivery context
- ignore behaviours by other adults towards students when they appear to be overly familiar or inappropriate
- discuss content of an intimate nature or use sexual innuendo with students, except where it occurs relevantly in the context of parental guidance, delivering the education curriculum or a therapeutic setting
- treat a child unfavourably because of their disability, age, gender, race, culture, vulnerability, sexuality or ethnicity
- communicate directly with a student through personal or private contact channels (including by social media, email, instant messaging, texting etc.)
- photograph or video a child in a school environment except in accordance with school policy or where required for duty of care purposes
- work with children or young people while under the influence of alcohol or illegal drugs

Evaluation:

This Code of Conduct was endorsed by School Council on 15th of August 2016.
The policy will be next reviewed in August 2020 or earlier if there are legislative or other changes required in the interim.

Collingwood English Language School Child Safety Policy

Our commitment to child safety

Collingwood English Language School is committed to child safety. We believe that all children should be safe, happy and empowered. We support and respect all children, as well as our staff and volunteers.

We practise zero tolerance of child abuse, and all allegations and safety concerns are treated very seriously and consistently with our policies and procedures.

We acknowledge and practise legal and moral obligations to contact authorities when we are concerned about a child's safety.

Collingwood English Language School is committed to preventing child abuse and early identification of risks and risk minimisation. Our human resources and recruitment practices for all staff and volunteers support child safety. We regularly train and educate our staff and volunteers on child abuse risks.

All members of our community are supported and respected. We are committed to the safety of children from culturally and/or linguistically diverse backgrounds, Aboriginal children, those with disabilities, and Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender and Intersex (LGBTI) children.

Our children

This policy is intended to empower the children who are at the centre of our school. We involve them when making decisions, especially about matters that directly affect them. We listen to their views and respect what they have to say.

We promote diversity and tolerance in our community, and people from all walks of life and cultural backgrounds are welcome. In particular we:

• promote the cultural safety, participation and empowerment of children from culturally and/or linguistically diverse backgrounds

• promote the cultural safety, participation and empowerment of Aboriginal children

• promote the cultural safety, participation and empowerment of LGBTI children

• ensure that children with a disability are safe and can participate equally

As our students are newly arrived in Australia, with minimal English skills, we provide information though interpreters and modified information as relevant about child abuse, their rights and how they can raise concerns about abuse – e.g. through information sheets, websites and social media. We also assist children to understand their right to make decisions about their body and their privacy through age-appropriate training carried out by our staff.

We gather feedback from children about the school's child-safe policies and processes and seek input on whether they would feel safe to raise concerns.

Our staff and volunteers

This policy guides our staff and volunteers on how to behave with children in our school (see CELS Code of Conduct).

All of our staff and volunteers must agree to abide by our code of conduct which specifies the standards of conduct required when working with children. All staff, students and their families, are given the opportunity to contribute to the development and implementation of the Code of Conduct.

Training and supervision

Professional Learning is important to ensure that everyone in our school community understands that child safety is a shared responsibility.

Our organisational culture aims for all staff and volunteers (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 and volunteers to identify, assess, and minimise risks of child abuse and to detect potential signs of child abuse.

We also provide ongoing supervision support for our staff and volunteers to:

- Develop their skills to protect children from abuse

- Promote the cultural safety, safety, participation and empowerment of Aboriginal children

- Promote the cultural safety, safety, participation and empowerment of children from linguistically and/or diverse backgrounds

- Promote the safety, participation and empowerment of children with a disability

New employees and volunteers will be inducted to ensure they understand our organisation's commitment to child safety 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 (see CELS Code of Conduct).

Any inappropriate behaviour will be reported through appropriate channels, including the Department of Health and Human Services and Victoria Police, depending on the severity and urgency of the matter.

Recruitment

Collingwood English Language School has procedures in place to ensure that it employs skilled people to work with children. We develop selection criteria and advertisements which clearly demonstrate our commitment to child safety and an awareness of our social and legislative responsibilities. We understand that when recruiting staff and volunteers we have ethical as well as legislative obligations. We invite applications from Aboriginal peoples, people from culturally and/or linguistically diverse backgrounds and people with a disability.

All people engaged in child-related work, including volunteers, are required to hold a Working with Children Check and to provide evidence of this Check. Please see the Working with Children Check website <www.workingwithchildren.vic.gov.au> for further information

We carry out reference checks and police record checks to ensure that we are recruiting the right people. If during the recruitment process a person's records indicate a criminal history then the person will be given the opportunity to provide further information and context (see CELS Child Safety Recruitment and Personnel Policy).

Fair procedures for personnel

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, and based on evidence.

We record all allegations of abuse and safety concerns using our incident reporting form including investigation updates. All records are securely stored.

If an allegation of abuse or a safety concern is raised, we provide appropriate updates on progress and any actions we as an organisation take, as relevant.

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Privacy

All personal information considered or recorded will respect the privacy of the individuals involved, whether they be staff, volunteers, parents or children, unless there is a risk to someone's safety. We have safeguards and practices in place to ensure any personal information is protected. Everyone is entitled to know how this information is recorded, what will be done with it, and who will have access to it.

Legislative responsibilities

Our organisation takes our legal responsibilities seriously, including:

- **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 in our organisation 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. See also the CELS Mandatory Policy.

Risk management

At Collingwood English Language School we are required to protect children when a risk is identified (see information about failure to protect above). In addition to general occupational health and safety risks, we proactively manage risks of abuse to our children.

We have risk management strategies in place to identify, assess, and take steps to minimise child abuse risks, which include risks posed by physical environments (for example, any doors that can lock), and online environments (for example, no staff or volunteer is to have contact with a student on social media) (see CELS Child Safety Code of Conduct).

Regular review

This policy will be reviewed every two years and following significant incidents if they occur. We will ensure that families and children have the opportunity to contribute. Where possible we do our best to work with culturally and/or linguistically diverse communities, people with a disability and local Aboriginal communities.

Allegations, concerns and complaints

Collingwood English Language School takes all allegations seriously and has practices in place to investigate thoroughly and quickly. Our staff and volunteers are trained to deal appropriately with allegations.

We work to ensure all children, families, staff and volunteers know what to do and who to tell if they observe abuse or are a victim, and if they notice or experience inappropriate behaviour.

We all have a responsibility to report an allegation of abuse if we have a reasonable belief that an incident took place (see information about failure to disclose above).

If an adult has a **reasonable belief** that an incident has occurred then they must report the incident. 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[1]
- someone else has raised a suspicion of abuse but is unwilling to report it
- observing suspicious behaviour.

If you believe a child is at immediate risk of abuse phone 000.

A person will not commit this offence if they have a reasonable excuse for not disclosing the information, including a fear for their safety or where the information has already been disclosed.

Further information about the failure to disclose offence is available on the Department of Justice and Regulation website <www.justice.vic.gov.au/home/safer+communities/protecting+children+and+families/failure+to+disclose+offence>.

Further information about the failure to protect offence is available on the Department of Justice and Regulation website <www.justice.vic.gov.au/home/safer+communities/protecting+children+and+families/failure+to+protect+offence>.

Mandatory reporters (doctors, nurses, midwives, teachers (including early childhood teachers), principals and police) must report to child protection if they believe on reasonable grounds that a child is in need of protection from physical injury or sexual abuse.

See the Department of Health and Human Services website for information about how to make a report to child protection <www.dhs.vic.gov.au/about-the-department/documents-and-resources/reports-publications/guide-to-making-a-report-to-child-protection-or-child-first>.

Endorsed by School Council in August 2016.

Review date: 2020

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[1] For example behaviour, please see An Overview of the Victorian child safe standards: <www.dhs.vic.gov.au/__data/assets/word_doc/0005/955598/Child-safe-standards_overview.doc>

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Collingwood English Language School Child Safety Recruitment and Personnel Policy

Introduction

Collingwood English Language School has an important responsibility for keeping children safe and we recognise that we are required to meet child safety requirements for staff selection, supervision and management (clause 10 of Ministerial Order No. 870).

We acknowledge that:

1. Each position or category of positions for school staff that involve child connected work must have a clear statement that sets out:
   o the position's requirements, duties and responsibilities regarding child safety; and
   o the position occupant's essential or relevant qualifications, experience and attributes in relation to child safety.

2. All applicants for positions that involve child connected work for the school must be informed about our school's child safety practices (including the code of conduct).

3. In accordance with any applicable legal requirement or school policy, our school will gather, verify and record the following information about a person whom it proposes to engage to perform child connected work:
   a. Working with Children Check status, VIT status or similar check;
   b. proof of personal identity and any professional or other qualifications;
   c. the person's history of work involving children; and wherever possible
   d. references that address the person's suitability for the position and working with children.

4. The school will not need to make the checks outlined in (3) above about a particular individual if it has already done so within the previous 12 months.

5. The school must ensure that appropriate supervision or support arrangements are in place in relation to:
   a. the induction of new school staff into the school's policies, codes, practices, and procedures governing child safety and child connected work; and
   b. monitoring and assessing a position occupant's continuing suitability for child connected work.

6. The school must implement practices that enable the School Council to be satisfied that people engaged in child-connected work perform appropriately in relation to child safety.

Explanatory note: To be 'satisfied', it is not necessary that the School Council make each decision about the selection and supervision of school staff engaged in child-connected work. The School Council authority needs to be satisfied about the appropriateness of the school's arrangements that would regulate or guide other people who make such decisions for or on behalf of the school about child safety matters and child-connected work.

Recruiting New Staff and Volunteers

When recruiting new staff or volunteers we consider the applicant's:

- motivation to work with children (personal or professional)
- relevant and verifiable child-related work experience
- understanding of professional boundaries
- communication skills.

We understand that specialist roles may present different child safety risks for the school.

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Staff Selection

We use the following checklist for staff selection to strengthen their focus on child safety in the staff recruitment and employment process and minimise the risk of appointing a person who poses a child safety risk.

Step 1 — Ensuring transparency and natural justice in the selection process

Questions

Has the school reviewed its position description to reflect the child safe standards?

Has the applicant been provided with a statement that sets out the position's requirements, duties and responsibilities regarding:
- child safety, and
- essential or relevant qualifications, experience and attributes in relation to child safety?

Has the applicant been informed about the school's child safety practices including the school's Child Safety Code Of Conduct?

Has the applicant been informed of their role in ensuring a child safe environment?

Step 2 — Verifying the Applicant's Identity, Suitability and Qualifications

Questions

Check at least two forms of personal identification eg driver's licence, passport? Is the name and address the same as those provided by the applicant?

Does the applicant have an original academic transcript or qualification/s that confirms their claims about their qualifications or registrations?

If the applicant is registered by the Victorian Institute of Teaching (VIT) have you verified the registration and ensured that it is current? (noting that a teacher registered with VIT does not need a Working with Children Check)

Sight and retain a copy of the applicant's current Working with Children Check?

Are there any unexplained gaps in the applicant's employment history? If so, are there satisfactory explanations such as travel, study leave, family leave?

Has the applicant nominated at least two referees including:
- the current or most recent employer, and
- direct supervisor/line manager.

Is there any personal relationship between the applicant and his or her previous supervisor/manager (this may affect the objectivity of the reference)?

Check with the referee that the work history and previous employment details the applicant has provided are accurate?

Has the referee(s) directly supervised the applicant and observed their work with children?

Would the referee(s) employ the person again?

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Did a referee(s) have any concerns about the applicant working directly with children?

Did a referee(s) have any concerns about the applicant's adherence to the organisation's Code Of Conduct?

Have you asked the referee(s) about a time when they observed the applicant managing the behaviour of a child?

If the reference is in writing, have you contacted the referee to confirm authenticity?

Does the applicant have experience working with children outside their employment (eg volunteering, private tutoring or coaching, non-commercial child-minding etc.)?

Further information

Victorian Registration and Qualifications Authority

Child safe standards website (all schools): www.vrqa.vic.gov.au/childsafe

Government Schools

Website: www.education.vic.gov.au/childhood/providers/regulation/Pages/childsafestandards

The Victorian Institute of Teaching

For *Victorian Teaching Profession Codes of Conduct and Ethics* and information about employer responsibilities to report action taken against registered teachers in response to allegations and concerns about registered teachers.

Website: www.vit.edu.au

Definitions

A full list of definitions for Ministerial Order No. 870 is available at www.vrqa.vic.gov.au/childsafe.

Child abuse includes—

- any act committed against a child involving—
    - o a sexual offence or
    - o an offence under section 49B(2) of the *Crimes Act 1958* (grooming)
- the infliction, on a child, of—
    - o physical violence or
    - o serious emotional or psychological harm
- serious neglect of a child.

Child-connected work means work authorised by the school governing authority and performed by an adult in a school environment while 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 incidents or allegations of child abuse.

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

- a campus of the school
- online school environments (including email and intranet systems)
- 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 events).

School staff means:

- in a government school, an individual working in a school environment who is:
- employed under Part 2.4 of the *Education and Training Reform Act 2006* (ETR Act) in the government teaching service or
- employed under a contract of service by the council of the school under Part 2.3 of the ETR Act or
- a volunteer or a contracted service provider (whether or not a body corporate or any other person is an intermediary).

Explanatory note: There is a wide variety of school governance arrangements. Depending on the way a school is constituted and operated, the governing body for a school may be the school board, the school council, or some other person or entity. The school governing authorities may share or assign responsibility for discharging the requirements imposed by this Order, in accordance with the school's internal governance arrangements.

Evaluation:

This policy was endorsed by School Council on 15th of August 2016.
The policy will be next reviewed in August 2020 or earlier if there are legislative or other changes required in the interim.

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Collingwood English Language School Procedures for Response to Child Abuse

Collingwood English Language School adopts the following processes when responding to and reporting suspected child abuse.

If a child discloses an incident of abuse:

• Try and separate them from the other children discreetly and listen to them carefully.

• Let the child use their own words to explain what has occurred.

• Reassure the child that you take what they are saying seriously, and it is not their fault and that they are doing the right thing.

• Explain to them that this information may need to be shared others, such as with their parent/carer, specific people in your organisation, or the police.

• Do not make promises to the child such as promising not to tell anyone about the incident, except that you will do your best to keep them safe.

• Do not leave the child in a distressed state. If they seem at ease in your company, stay with them.

• Complete an incident report form.

• As soon as possible after the disclosure, record the information using the child's words and report the disclosure to the CELS Principal/Assistant Principal/Campus Coordinator, Student Well-being coordinators, police or child protection (Child First or Department of Human Services).

• If in an Outpost or Visiting setting as soon as possible after the disclosure, record the information using the child's words and report the disclosure to the Outpost or Visiting setting /Assistant Principal, police or child protection (Child First or Department of Human Services).

• Maintain confidentiality about the disclosure other than relevant personnel as described above or as directed.

• Ensure the disclosure is recorded accurately, and that the record is stored securely at school.

If a parent/carer says their child has been abused in the school or raises a concern

• Explain the school has processes to ensure all abuse allegations are taken very seriously.

• Where possible include the CELS Principal/Assistant Principal/ Campus Coordinator in the discussion.

• Ask about the wellbeing of the child.

• Advise the parent/carer that you will take notes during the discussion to capture all details.

• Allow the parent/carer to talk through the incident in their own words.

• Explain to them the information may need to be repeated to authorities or others, such as the Principal, the police or child protection.

• Do not make promises at this early stage, except that you will do your best to keep the child safe.

• Provide them with an incident report form to complete, or complete it together.

• Ask them what action they would like to take and advise them of what the immediate next steps will be.

• Thank the parent/carer for making the report.

• Ensure the report is recorded accurately, and that the record is stored securely at school and provided to the CELS principal, and if an Outpost or Visiting setting Host Principal, mainstream Principal and CELS Principal as relevant. See Appendix A for the report format.

There needs to be awareness that some people from culturally and/or linguistically diverse backgrounds may face barriers in reporting allegations of abuse. For example, people from some cultures may experience anxiety when talking with police, and communicating in English may be a barrier for some. You need to be sensitive to these issues and meet people's needs where possible, such as having an interpreter present (who could be a friend or family member). It is preferable to engage a trained interpreter if possible.

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If an allegation of abuse involves an Aboriginal child, you will need to ensure a culturally appropriate response. A way to help ensure this could include engaging with parents of Aboriginal children, local Aboriginal communities or an Aboriginal community controlled organisations to review policies and procedures.

Some children with a disability may experience barriers disclosing an incident. For example, children with hearing or cognitive impairments may need support to help them explain the incident, including through sign language interpreters. Advice on [communicating with people with a disability](#) can be found on the Department of Health and Human Services website <www.dhs.vic.gov.au/for-business-and-community/community-involvement/people-with-a-disability-in-the-community/communicate-and-consult-with-people-with-a-disability/communication-with-people-with-disabilities>.

If you believe a child is at immediate risk of abuse phone 000.

Legal responsibilities

Every adult who reasonably believes that a child has been abused, whether in their organisation or not, has an obligation to report that belief to authorities.

The **failure to disclose** criminal offence requires all adults (aged 18 and over) who hold a reasonable belief that a sexual offence has been committed in Victoria by an adult against a child under 16 to disclose that information to police (unless they have a reasonable excuse not to, for example because they fear for their safety or the safety of another).

More information about [failure to disclose](#) is available on the Department of Justice and Regulation website [www.justice.vic.gov.au/home/safer+communities/protecting+children+and+families/failure+to+disclose+offence](#) While failure to disclose only covers child sexual abuse, all adults should report other forms of child abuse to authorities. Failure to disclose does not change mandatory reporting responsibilities.

More information about [mandatory reporting](#) is available in the *Child protection manual* [<www.cpmanual.vic.gov.au/advice-and-protocols/advice/intake/mandatory-reporting>.](#)

Mandatory reporters (teachers (including early childhood teachers), principals, doctors, nurses, midwives, and police) must report to child protection if they believe on reasonable grounds that a child is in need of protection from physical injury or sexual abuse.

See the Department of Health and Human Services website for information about [how to make a report to child protection](#) <www.dhs.vic.gov.au/about-the-department/documents-and-resources/reports-publications/guide-to-making-a-report-to-child-protection-or-child-first>.

The **failure to protect** criminal offence (commenced on 1 July 2015) applies where there is a substantial risk that a child under the age of 16 under the care, supervision or authority of a relevant organisation will become a victim of a sexual offence committed by an adult associated with that organisation. A person in a position of authority in the organisation will commit the offence if they know of the risk of abuse and have the power or responsibility to reduce or remove the risk, but negligently failed to do so.

Further information about [failure to protect](#) can be found on the Department of Justice and Regulation website [<www.justice.vic.gov.au/home/safer+communities/protecting+children+and+families/failure+to+protect+offence,](#) [and the Department of Health and Human Services website>.](#)

Registered schools can contact the Department of Education and Training: [child.safe.schools@edumail.vic.gov.au](#)

Early childhood services operating under the *National Quality Framework* or *Children's Services Act 1996* should contact: [licensed.childrens.services@edumail.vic.gov.au](#)

Licensed children's services enquiry line: 1300 307 415

Collingwood English Language School Child Safety Incident Report Form

All incident reports must be stored securely.

Incident details

Date of incident:	
Time of incident:	
Location of incident:	
Name(s) of child/children involved:	
Name(s) of staff/volunteer involved:	

If you believe a child is at immediate risk of abuse phone 000.

Does the child identify as Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander?

(Mark with an 'X' as applicable)

No ☐   **Yes, Aboriginal** ☐   **Yes, Torres Strait Islander** ☐

Nature of alleged abuse

Physical violence	☐
Sexual offence	☐
Serious emotional or psychological abuse	☐
Serious neglect	☐

Please describe the incident (to be completed by staff member in consultation with child/parent/carer where appropriate)

When did it take place?	
Who was involved?	
What happened?	
Other information	

Parent/carer/child use

Date of incident:	
Time of incident:	
Location of incident:	
Name(s) of child/children involved:	
Name(s) of staff/volunteer involved:	

Office use:

Date incident report received:	
Staff member managing incident:	
Follow-up date:	
Incident ref. number:	

Has the incident been reported?

Child protection	
Police	
Another third party (please specify):	

Incident reporter wishes to remain anonymous?

(Mark with an 'X' as applicable)

Yes ☐   **No** ☐

Further information

Further information on child safe standards can be found on the Department of Health and Human Services' website <www.dhs.vic.gov.au/about-the-department/plans,-programs-and-projects/projects-and-initiatives/children,-youth-and-family-services/creating-child-safe-organisations>.

Licensed children's services enquiry line: 1300 307 415

Collingwood English Language School Child Safety Screening, Supervision and Training

Collingwood English Language School has human resources practices in place to help protect children from abuse.

We foster a culture of openness and inclusiveness, while continuing to be aware that child safety is paramount in all schools. Our human resources practices are a way of reducing risks to the safety of children. Human resources practices include the recruitment, training and supervision of all personnel.

We provide opportunities for staff and volunteers to develop and maintain skills to ensure child safety. This will enable staff and volunteers to understand the importance of child safety and wellbeing, and consistently follow child safety policies and procedures.

Child Safety Officer

At Collingwood English Language School, staff and volunteers are supported through the appointment of an individual child safety officer with specified 'child-safe' duties in their job description. In this school this role is performed by the Principal, Assistant Principal and Campus Coordinator. Duties of this role include being the designated person(s) to hear or be informed about all allegations or concerns, and providing support to other personnel. This role also provides a clear contact for children, parents and employees/volunteers to seek advice and support regarding the safety and wellbeing of children associated with the school.

Training and induction

Child safety is everyone's responsibility. Employees and volunteers (in addition to parents/guardians and children) need to be supported to discuss child protection issues and to detect signs of potential child abuse.

Staff receive induction and ongoing training. New staff receive support and information when they begin their new role, and existing staff are given opportunities to develop new skills and knowledge to meet the requirements of their positions and expand their career options.

Training and support ensures that appropriate standards of care are met by employees and volunteers to ensure that the school meets its duty of care when providing services to children.

All staff commit to promoting the safety and wellbeing of children by acknowledging the school's Code of Conduct. Professional learning is focused on enhancing the skills and knowledge of staff and volunteers, in order to reduce exposure to risks.

Staff and volunteers receive training in the following areas:

• identifying, assessing and reducing or removing child abuse risks
• School policies and procedures (including the Code Of Conduct and Child Safety Policy)
• legislative requirements, such as obligations to report child abuse, reduce and remove known risks of child abuse, and to hold VIT or Working with Children Checks where required
• how to handle a disclosure or suspicion of abuse, including your organisation's reporting guidelines
• cultural awareness training

Formal professional learning includes:

• higher education training and accreditation
• training offered by external organisations
• training developed and delivered internally
• in house training meeting key objectives

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Informal professional learning includes:

• inviting other professionals to speak at meetings or functions
• inviting local Aboriginal Elders, Aboriginal community controlled organisations and community members to speak at meetings and events as relevant
• inviting local culturally and/or linguistically diverse community members to speak at meetings and events as relevant
• internal mentoring and coaching

Supervision of Staff

New staff and volunteers are routinely supervised to ensure they understand their role and learn skills, as well as to check that their behaviour towards children is appropriate. Any warning signs are reported to the Principal/Assistant Principal, the Department of Health and Human Services (child protection), or police if a child is believed to be at imminent risk.

Performance and Development Review

The Performance and Development Review cycle provides an opportunity to improve knowledge and skills in working with children, as well as ensuring that all staff meet the school's standards of conduct and care.

Risk Management

CELS has a Risk Management Program which includes a process designed to evaluate risks posed to children, taking into account the school's activities, size and resources, and the types of children we work with. The Principal, Assistant Principal and Campus Coordinator take responsibility for risk management and regularly discuss child protection and any incidents/reports that have been made with an aim of assessing and limiting/eliminating any ongoing risk. This includes:

• Removing risks to children where possible (e.g. terminate staff/ volunteers who are not suitable to work with children – seek legal advice before terminating such a relationship).
• Removing physical risks to children.
• Always learn from past lessons and talk about incidents/complaints to ensure that learnings are shared and benefited from across the organisation.

Code of Conduct and disciplinary procedures

Disciplinary procedures will be used if an allegation of child abuse is made, or a breach of the code of conduct is known or suspected (see CELS Child Safety Code of Conduct)

Employees and volunteers are aware of reporting and disciplinary procedures and how to communicate concerns regarding the improper behaviour of any person within the organisation. Staff are also aware of their duty to raise concerns about the behaviour of any person who may present a risk of child abuse, without fear of repercussions.

Our code of conduct is publicly available. Children and their families are encouraged to raise any concerns about the behaviour of any person, and can expect to be listened to and supported.

Further information

Further information on child safe standards can be found on the Department of Health and Human Services' website <www.dhs.vic.gov.au/about-the-department/plans,-programs-and-projects/projects-and-initiatives/children,-youth-and-family-services/creating-child-safe-organisations>.

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Additional resources for organisations in the child safe standards toolkit can be found on the [Department of Health and Human Services website](): <www.dhs.vic.gov.au/about-the-department/documents-and-resources/policies,-guidelines-and-legislation/child-safe-standards>. In particular, **[An Overview to the Victorian child safe standards]()**, has information to help organisations understand the requirements of each of the child safe standards, including examples of measures organisations can put in place, a self-audit tool and a glossary of key terms: <www.dhs.vic.gov.au/__data/assets/word_doc/0005/955598/Child-safe-standards_overview.doc>