

1. Purpose & Rationale

This policy is required and informed by clause 8 of Ministerial Order No. 870 – Child Safe Standards – Managing the risk of child abuse in schools, which sets out what the Child Safe Standards mean in a school environment.

Sandringham College's Child Safety Policy sets out the school's commitment and approach to creating and maintaining a child safe organisation where children and young people are safe and feel safe, and provides the policy framework for the school's approach to the Child Safe Standards.

This policy applies to all staff, volunteers, and contractors in the school environment, whether or not they work in direct contact with children or young people. This policy also applies to school council members where indicated.

2. Policy Goals

Sandringham College is committed to the safety and wellbeing of all children and young people. This will be the primary focus of our care and decision-making.

Sandringham College has zero tolerance for child abuse.

We are committed to providing a child safe environment where children and young people are safe and feel safe, and their voices are heard about decisions that affect their lives. Our child safe policies, procedures, strategies and practices will be inclusive of the needs of all children, particularly Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children, children from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds, children with disabilities, and children who are vulnerable.

3. Implementation

3.1. Child safety principles

Every person involved in Sandringham College has a responsibility to understand the important and specific role they play individually and collectively to ensure that the wellbeing and safety of all children and young people is at the forefront of all they do and every decision they make.

In its planning, decision-making and operations, Sandringham College will:

- Take a preventative, proactive and participatory approach to child safety;
- Value and empower children to participate in decisions which affect their lives;
- Foster a culture of openness that supports all persons to safely disclose risks of harm to children;
- Respect diversity in cultures and child rearing practices while keeping child safety paramount;
- Provide written guidance on appropriate conduct and behaviour towards children;
- Engage only the most suitable people to work with children and have high quality staff and volunteer supervision and professional development;
- Ensure children know who to talk with if they are worried or are feeling unsafe, and that they are comfortable and encouraged to raise such concerns;
- Report suspected abuse, neglect or mistreatment promptly to the appropriate authorities;
- Share information appropriately and lawfully with other organisations where the safety and wellbeing of children is at risk; and
- Value the input of and communicate regularly with families and carers

3.2. Strategies to embed a child safe culture

Sandringham College's culture encourages staff, students, parents and the school community to raise, discuss and scrutinise child safety concerns. This makes it more difficult for abuse to occur and remain hidden.

Child safety is everyone's responsibility. **All school staff** are required to:

- Act in accordance with the school's Child Safety Code of Conduct, which clearly sets out the difference between appropriate and inappropriate behaviour
- Act in accordance with the Child Safety Responding and Reporting Obligations (including Mandatory Reporting) Policy and Procedures at all times. Undertake annual guidance and training on child safety
- Act in accordance with their legal obligations, including:
 - Failure to disclose offence (applies to all adults)
 - Duty of care (applies to all school staff)
 - Mandatory reporting obligations (applies to all mandatory reporters, including teachers, principals, registered psychologists, and registered doctors and nurses)
 - Failure to protect offence (applies to a person in a position of authority within the school)
 - Reportable conduct obligations (applies to all school staff in reporting conduct to the principal, and applies to the principal in reporting to Employee Conduct Branch)
 - Organisational duty of care (applies to the school as an organisation)

3.3. Responsibilities

3.3.1. School leadership

As part of Sandringham College's child safe culture, school leadership (including the principal and assistant principals) will:

- Consider the diversity of all children, including (but 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, when implementing the Child Safe Standards
- Ensure that child safety is a regular agenda item at school leadership meetings and staff meetings
- Encourage and enable staff professional learning and training to build deeper understandings of child safety and prevention of abuse
- Ensure that no one is prohibited or discouraged from reporting an allegation of child abuse to a person external to the school or from making records of any allegation.
- Appoint a child safe officer/leader from amongst the leadership team who will work to the role description as established by DET.

https://www.education.vic.gov.au/Documents/about/programs/health/protect/ChildSafeStandard1_SchoolChildSafetyOfficer.pdf

3.3.2. Mandatory reporting

As part of Sandringham College's child safe culture, **school mandatory reporting staff** are required to:

- Complete the [Protecting Children – Mandatory reporting and other obligations](#) online module every year
- Read the school's Child Safety Code of Conduct on induction, and maintain familiarity with that document
- Read the school's Child Safety Responding and Reporting Obligations (including Mandatory Reporting) Policy and Procedures on induction, and maintain familiarity with that document
- Read the school's Child Safety Policy (this document) on induction and maintain familiarity with that document.

3.3.3. School council

As part of Sandringham College's child safe culture, in performing the functions and powers given to them under the *Education and Training Reform Act 2006*, **school councils and school council members** will:

- Ensure that child safety is a regular agenda item at school council meetings [Note that there is no requirement to discuss child safety at every school council meeting, but it is best practice to have child safety on the agenda at some meetings to show that the school is embedding a culture of child safety and school council members are informed and understand the issues]
- Consider the diversity of all children, including (but 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, when making decisions regarding the Child Safe Standards
- Undertake annual guidance and training on child safety, such as the [Child Safe Standards School Council Training PowerPoint](#).
- Approve the Child Safety Code of Conduct to the extent that it applies to school council employees and members, and if updated, note the new document in its school council meeting minutes

3.3.4. Recruitment

Sandringham College follows the Departments Recruitment in Schools Guide to ensure child safe recruitment practices. When hiring employees, Sandringham College ensures that selection, supervision and management practices are child safe and maintains records of the processes.

3.3.5. Volunteers

All prospective volunteers are required to comply with our school's Volunteers Policy, including in relation to assessing the suitability of prospective volunteers and obtaining checks required under this policy.

3.3.6. Reporting a child safety concern or complaint

The school has clear expectations for all staff and volunteers (including homestay providers) in making a report about a child or young person who may be in need of protection. All staff (including school council employees) must follow the school's Child Safety Responding and Reporting Obligations (including Mandatory Reporting) Policy and Procedures, if there is an incident, disclosure or suspicion of child abuse. Immediate actions should include reporting their concerns to DHHS Child Protection, Victoria Police and/or another appropriate agency and notifying the principal or a member of the school leadership team of their concerns and the reasons for those concerns.

Sandringham College will never prohibit or discourage school staff from reporting an allegation of child abuse. The school will always take action to respond to a complaint in accordance with the school's Child Safety Responding and Reporting Obligations (including Mandatory Reporting) Policy and Procedures. Sandringham College will provide ongoing support for students affected by child abuse.

3.3.7. Risk reduction and management

Sandringham College believes the wellbeing of children and young people is paramount, and is vigilant in ensuring proper risk management processes. The school recognises there are potential risks to children and young people and will take a risk management approach by undertaking preventative measures.

We will identify and mitigate the risks of child abuse in school environments by taking into account the nature of each school environment, the activities expected to be conducted in that environment and the characteristics and needs of all children expected to be present in that environment.

3.3.8. Listening to, communicating with and empowering children

Sandringham College has developed a safe, inclusive and supportive environment that involves and communicates with children, young people and their parents/carers. We encourage child and parent/carer involvement and engagement that informs safe school operations and builds the capability of children and parents/carers to understand their rights and their responsibilities.

Our school is committed to supporting and encouraging students to use their voice to raise and share their concerns with a trusted adult at any time of need. Students can access information on how to report abuse by speaking to their Year Level Leader or any member of the Wellbeing Team.

We recognise the diversity of all children, including (but 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. We provide dedicated staff to support these students including the Assistant Principal for Wellbeing and Inclusion, College Inclusion Leader and trained allied health staff in the form of Student Wellbeing Counsellors. Teaching and Education Staff are provided with professional learning around their obligations to support all students and to recognise the increased needs of priority cohorts within the school community.

When the school is gathering information in relation to a complaint about alleged misconduct with or abuse of a child, the school will listen to the complainant's account and take them seriously, check understanding and keep the child (and/or their parents/carers, as appropriate) informed about progress

The school will use its health and wellbeing programs to deliver appropriate education to its students about:

- standards of behaviour for students attending the school;
- healthy and respectful relationships (including sexuality);
- resilience; and
- child abuse awareness and prevention.

3.3.9. Confidentiality and privacy

This school collects, uses and discloses information about particular children and their families in accordance with Victorian privacy law. The principles regulating the collection, use and storage of information is included in the Department of Education and Training's [Schools' Privacy Policy](#).

4. Monitoring & Review

This policy was last updated on May 2020. Please refer to the Sandringham Policy Schedule for the next review date.

5. Definitions

DET – Department of Education and Training

Child abuse – Child abuse includes:

- any act committed against a child involving: a sexual offence; or grooming; and
- the infliction, on a child, of: physical violence; or serious emotional or psychological harm; and
- serious neglect of a child.

Child-connected work – Child-connected work means work authorised by the school, school council, or Secretary of the Department of Education and Training and performed by an adult in a school environment while children are present or reasonably expected to be present.

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

- a campus of the school;
- online school environments (including email and intranet systems); and
- other locations provided by the school for a child's use (including, without limitation, locations used for school camps, sporting events, excursions, competitions, homestays, and other school activities or events)

School staff – School staff means an individual working in a school environment who is:

- employed by the Department of Education and Training;
- directly engaged or employed by a school council; or
- a volunteer or a contracted service provider (whether or not a body corporate or any other person is an intermediary)

6. References

School Policy and Advisory Guide (<http://www.education.vic.gov.au>)

- Code of Conduct
- Child Safety Responding and Reporting Obligations (including Mandatory Reporting) Policy and Procedures
- Risk assessment register

[Identifying and Responding to All Forms of Abuse in Victorian Schools](#)

[Four Critical Actions for Schools](#)

[Recording your actions: Responding to suspected child abuse – A template for Victorian schools](#)

[Identifying and Responding to Student Sexual Offending](#)

[Four Critical Actions for Schools: Responding to Student Sexual Offending](#)

[School Policy and Advisory Guide – Duty of Care](#)

[School Policy and Advisory Guide – Child Protection Reporting Obligations.](#)

Policy Number	SC-OP-08	Last Approval Date	1 st May 2020
Policy Owner	Sandringham College	Approved By	School Council
Policy Reviewer	AP Wellbeing and Engagement Principal Team	Next Review Date	1 st May 2022
Review Frequency	Document Availability	Policy Delivery	
<input type="checkbox"/> 1 Year <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 2 Years <input type="checkbox"/> 3 Years <input type="checkbox"/> As Required <input type="checkbox"/> n/a	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> College Website <input type="checkbox"/> Student Compass <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Parent Compass <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Staff Compass <input type="checkbox"/> Staff Information Drive <input type="checkbox"/> Enrolment Pack	<input type="checkbox"/> Annual Staff Meeting <input type="checkbox"/> Annual Parent Meeting <input type="checkbox"/> Annual Student Meeting <input type="checkbox"/> Annual School Assembly <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Staff Handbook/Manual <input type="checkbox"/> College Newsletter <input type="checkbox"/> Staff DL	