

# Child Safety and Wellbeing Policy

- All of Brighton Grammar School's policies are intended to be up to date and be consistent with all relevant laws.
- Employees are expected to comply with all applicable policies.
- Various parts of the policies require managers and staff to exercise discretion and the policies are not intended to be applied in a legalistic or prescriptive manner.
- These policies may be varied by Brighton Grammar School from time to time, at its absolute discretion.
- Brighton Grammar School is fully committed to the protection of children and young people during all School activities and environments both within and outside of School hours.
- All Policies are fully reviewed and endorsed by the schools Governance and Risk Committee and the School Council.
- This is a whole of school policy and there may, from time to time, be variations in different parts of the School. In such circumstances, advice will be issued by the relevant Head of School

## Purpose

The Brighton Grammar School Child Safety and Wellbeing Policy demonstrates our school's commitment to creating and maintaining a child safe and child-friendly organisation, where children and young people are safe and feel safe.

This policy provides an overview of our school's approach to implementing [Ministerial Order 1359](#) which sets out how the Victorian Child Safe Standards apply in school environments.

It informs our school community of everyone's obligations to act safely and appropriately towards children and guides our processes and practices for the safety and wellbeing of students across all areas of our work.

## Scope

This policy:

- applies to all school staff, volunteers and contractors whether or not they work in direct contact with students. It also applies to school council members where indicated.
- applies in all physical and online school environments used by students during or outside of school hours, including other locations provided by for a student's use (for example, a school camp) and those provided through third-party providers
- should be read together with our other child safety and wellbeing policies, procedures, and codes – refer to the related school policies section at the end of this document.

## Statement of commitment to child safety

Brighton Grammar School is a child safe organisation which welcomes all children, young people and their families.

We are committed to providing environments where our students are safe and feel safe, where their participation is valued, their views respected, and their voices are heard about decisions that affect their lives. Our child safe policies, strategies and practices are inclusive of the needs of all children and students.

We have no tolerance for child abuse and take proactive steps to identify and manage any risks of harm to students in our school environments.

We promote positive relationships between students and adults and between students and their peers. These relationships are based on trust and respect.

We take proactive steps to identify and manage any risk of harm to students in our school environment. When child safety concerns are raised or identified, we treat these seriously and respond promptly and thoroughly.

Particular attention is given to the child safety needs of Aboriginal students, those from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds, international students, students with disabilities, those unable to live at home, children and young people who identify as lesbian, gay, bisexual, trans and gender diverse, intersex and queer (LGBTIQ+) and other students experiencing risk or vulnerability. Inappropriate or harmful behaviour targeting students based on these or other characteristics, such as racism or homophobia, are not tolerated at our school, and any instances identified will be addressed with appropriate consequences.

Child safety is a shared responsibility. Every person involved in our school has an important role in promoting child safety and wellbeing and promptly raising any issues or concerns about a child's safety.

We are committed to regularly reviewing our child safe practices, and seeking input from our students, families, staff, and volunteers to inform our ongoing strategies.

## **Roles and responsibilities**

### **School Senior Executive team**

Our School Senior Executive team is responsible for ensuring that a strong child safe culture is created and maintained, and that policies and practices are effectively developed and implemented in accordance with Ministerial Order 1359.

The Senior Executive will:

- ensure effective child safety and wellbeing governance, policies, procedures, codes and practices are in place and followed
- model a child safe culture that facilitates the active participation of students, families and staff in promoting and improving child safety, cultural safety and wellbeing
- enable inclusive practices where the diverse needs of all students are considered
- reinforce high standards of respectful behaviour between students and adults, and between students
- promote regular open discussion on child safety issues within the school community including at leadership team meetings, staff meetings and school council meetings
- facilitate regular professional learning for staff and volunteers (where appropriate) to build deeper understandings of child safety, cultural safety, student wellbeing and prevention of responding to abuse
- create an environment where child safety complaints and concerns are readily raised, and no one is discouraged from reporting an allegation of child abuse to relevant authorities.

### **School Staff and Volunteers**

All staff and volunteers will:

- participate in child safety and wellbeing induction and training provided by the school, and always follow the school's child safety and wellbeing policies and procedures
- act in accordance with our Child Safety Code of Conduct

- identify and raise concerns about child safety issues in accordance with our Reporting Obligations, Mandatory Reporting Policy and Child Safety and Wellbeing Staff Handbook
- ensure students' views are taken seriously and their voices are heard about decisions that affect their lives
- implement inclusive practices that respond to the diverse needs of students.

## School Council and Committees

In performing the functions and powers given to them under the *Education and Training Reform Act 2006*, school council and committee members will:

- champion and promote a child safe culture with the broader school community
- ensure that child safety is a regular agenda item at school council and committee meetings
- undertake annual training on child safety and wellbeing
- approve updates to, and act in accordance with the Child Safety Code of Conduct to the extent that it applies to school council members
- when nominating and electing school council members, ensure that selection and management practices are child safe

## Specific staff child safety responsibilities

Brighton Grammar School has nominated the Chief Operating Officer, Business Manager, School's Psychologist/Child Safety Officer, Compliance Coordinator and Director of Human Resources to support the Headmaster in implementation of our child safety policies and practices, including staff and volunteer training.

Our Headmaster and School Psychologists are the first point of contact for child safety concerns or queries and for coordinating responses to child safety incidents.

- The Chief Operating Officer, Business Manager and Compliance Coordinator are responsible for monitoring the school's compliance with the Child Safety and Wellbeing Policy. Anyone in our school community should approach the Compliance Coordinator in the first instance if they have any concerns about the school's compliance with the Child Safety and Wellbeing Policy.
- The Headmaster, Compliance Coordinator and School Psychologist are responsible for informing the school community about this policy
- Other specific roles and responsibilities are detailed in other child safety policies and procedures, including the Child Safety Code of Conduct, Mandatory Reporting Policy, Child Safety Procedures, and Child Safety Risk Register.

Our school has also established a Child Safety and Wellbeing Committee. The Child Safety and Wellbeing Committee meet regularly to identify and respond to any ongoing matters related to child safety and wellbeing. The Student Reference Group provides an opportunity for students to provide input into school strategies.

Our Risk and Governance Committee monitors the Child Safety Risk Register.

## Child Safety Code of Conduct

Our Child Safety Code of Conduct sets the boundaries and expectations for appropriate behaviours between adults and students. It also clarifies behaviours that are not acceptable in our physical and online environments.

We ensure that students also know what is acceptable and what is not acceptable so that they can be clear and confident about what to expect from adults in the school.

The Child Safety Code of Conduct also includes processes to report inappropriate behaviour.

## Managing risks to child safety and wellbeing

At Brighton Grammar School we identify, assess and manage risks to child safety and wellbeing in our physical and online school environments. These risks are managed through our child safety and wellbeing policies, procedures and practices, in our risk registers, and risk assessments detailed within Consent2go.

Consent2go is used for risk assessment incursion, excursions camps, events and services we contract through third party providers for student use.

The Child Safety Risk Register is used to record any identified risks related to child abuse alongside actions in place to manage those risks.

The Risk and Governance Committee will monitor and evaluate the effectiveness of the actions in the Child Safety Risk Register at least annually.

## **Establishing a culturally safe environment**

Brighton Grammar School is committed to establishing an inclusive and culturally safe school where the strengths of Aboriginal culture, values and practices are respected.

We recognise the link between Aboriginal culture, identity and safety and actively create opportunities for Aboriginal students and the Aboriginal community to have a voice and presence in our school planning, policies, and activities.

Our Child Safety and Wellbeing handbook outlines the measures we have in place to maintain an inclusive and culturally safe school for Aboriginal children and students

## **Student empowerment**

To support child safety and wellbeing at Brighton Grammar School we work to create an inclusive and supportive environment that encourages students and families to contribute to our child safety approach and understand their rights and their responsibilities.

Respectful relationships between students are reinforced and we encourage strong friendships and peer support in the school to ensure a sense of belonging through our whole school Child Safety programs that include age appropriate education on Child Safety and wellbeing educative sessions.

We inform students of their rights through our whole school Child Protection program and give them the skills and confidence to recognise unsafe situations with adults or other students and to speak up and act on concerns relating to themselves or their peers. We ensure our students know who to talk to if they are worried or feeling unsafe and we encourage them to share concerns with a trusted adult at any time. Students and families can also access information on how to report concerns on our website

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

## **Family engagement**

Our families and the school community have an important role in monitoring and promoting children's safety and wellbeing and helping children to raise any concerns.

To support family engagement, at Brighton Grammar School we are committed to providing families and community with accessible information about our school's child safe policies and practices and involving them in our approach to child safety and wellbeing.

We will create opportunities for families to have input into the development and review of our child safety policies and practices and encourage them to raise any concerns and ideas for improvement.

Our Child Safety and Wellbeing handbook outlines the measures we have in place to maintain an inclusive and culturally safe school for Aboriginal children and students.

All of our child safety policies and procedures will be available for students and parents on the School's website.

## Diversity and equity

As a child safe organisation, we celebrate the rich diversity of our students, families and community and promote respectful environments that are free from discrimination. Our focus is on wellbeing and growth for all.

We recognise that every child has unique skills, strengths and experiences to draw on.

We pay particular attention to individuals and groups of children and young people in our community with additional and specific needs. This includes tailoring our child safety strategies and supports to the needs of:

- Aboriginal children and young people
- children from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds
- children and young people with disabilities
- children unable to live at home or impacted by family violence
- international students
- children and young people who identify as LGBTIQ+.

Our Child Safety and Wellbeing handbook outlines the measures we have in place to maintain an inclusive and diverse safe school environment.

## Suitable staff and volunteers

At Brighton Grammar School we apply robust child safe recruitment, induction, training, and supervision practices to ensure that all staff, contractors, and volunteers are suitable to work with children.

### Staff recruitment

When recruiting staff, we provide a detailed induction consisting of the following:

- School Induction
- Child Safety training including:
  - Child Safety and Wellbeing Policy
  - Child Safety and Wellbeing Code of Conduct
  - Child Safety and Wellbeing Staff Handbook
  - Face to Face training
- Mandatory Reporting (Government training program)
- OHS and Emergency Management training
- First Aid, CPR and Anaphylaxis

When engaging staff to perform child-related work, we:

- sight, verify and record the person's Working with Children clearance or equivalent background check such as a Victorian teaching registration
- collect and record:
  - proof of the person's identity and any professional or other qualifications
  - the person's history of working with children
  - references that address suitability for the job and working with children.
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## **Staff induction**

All newly appointed staff will be expected to participate in our child safety and wellbeing induction program. The program will include a focus on:

- the Child Safety and Wellbeing Policy (this document)
- the Child Safety Code of Conduct
- Mandatory Reporting Policy and Procedures
- the Child Safety and Wellbeing Staff Handbook
- any other child safety and wellbeing information that school leadership considers appropriate to the nature of the role.

## **Ongoing supervision and management of staff**

All staff engaged in child-connected work will be supervised appropriately to ensure that their behaviour towards children is safe and appropriate.

Staff will be monitored and assessed to ensure their continuing suitability for child-connected work. This will be done by twice yearly performance reviews and 360 feedback sessions.

Working with Children check validation reports are conducted each term break to ensure validity and VIT registration is reviewed yearly.

Inappropriate behaviour towards children and young people will be managed swiftly and in accordance with our school and department policies and our legal obligations. Child safety and wellbeing will be paramount.

## **Suitability of Volunteers**

All volunteers are required to comply with our Volunteer Policy which describes how we assess the suitability of prospective volunteers and outlines expectations in relation to child safety and wellbeing induction and training, and supervision and management.

All volunteers must provide a valid Working with Children Check sign in at the nearest reception upon arrival to the school. Volunteer Working with Children check details are added to the SAMS4School register by the Risk and Compliance team.

## **Suitability of Contractors**

All contractors are required to register on the School's compliance portal SAM4schools. SAM4schools requires contractors to supply a valid Working with Children check and up to date insurance documentation. When registering on SAM4schools all contractors must review and acknowledge the Schools Contractor Induction documents including Child Safety and Wellbeing Policies and Code of Conduct which outlines expectations in relation to child safety and wellbeing induction and training, and supervision and management.

All contractors must sign in at the nearest reception upon arrival to the school.

## Child safety knowledge, skills and awareness

Ongoing training and education are essential to ensuring that staff understand their roles and responsibilities and develop their capacity to effectively address child safety and wellbeing matters.

In addition to the child safety and wellbeing induction, our staff will participate in a range of training and professional learning to equip them with the skills and knowledge necessary to maintain a child safe environment.

Staff child safety and wellbeing training will be delivered twice annually and will include guidance on:

- our school's child safety and wellbeing policies, procedures, codes, and practices
- completing the [Protecting Children – Mandatory Reporting and Other Legal Obligations](#) online module annually
- recognising indicators of child harm including harm caused by other children and students
- responding effectively to issues of child safety and wellbeing and supporting colleagues who disclose harm
- how to build culturally safe environments for children and students
- information sharing and record keeping obligations
- how to identify and mitigate child safety and wellbeing risks in the school environment.

Other professional learning and training on child safety and wellbeing, for example, training for our volunteers, will be tailored to specific roles and responsibilities and any identified or emerging needs or issues.

## School Council and Committee training and education

To ensure our school council and other committees are equipped with the knowledge required to make decisions in the best interests of student safety and wellbeing, and to identify and mitigate child safety and wellbeing risks in our school environment, they will be trained at least annually. Training includes guidance on:

- individual and collective obligations and responsibilities for implementing the Child Safe Standards and managing the risk of child abuse
- child safety and wellbeing risks in our school environment
- Brighton Grammar School child safety and wellbeing policies and procedures

## Complaints and reporting processes

Brighton Grammar School fosters a culture that encourages staff, volunteers, students, parents, and the school community to raise concerns and complaints. This makes it more difficult for breaches of the code of conduct, misconduct or abuse to occur and remain hidden.

We have clear pathways for raising complaints and concerns and responding and this is documented in our school's Complaint Policy. The Complaints Policy can be found on the BGS website.

If there is an incident, disclosure, allegation or suspicion of child abuse, all staff and volunteers, including school council employees and sports coaches must follow our Child Safety Mandatory Reporting Policy and associated Procedures. Our policy and procedures address complaints and concerns of child abuse made by or in relation to a child or student, school staff, volunteers, contractors, service providers, visitors or any other person while connected to the school.

As soon as any immediate health and safety concerns are addressed, and relevant school staff have been informed, we will ensure our school follows:

- the [Four Critical Actions](#) for complaints and concerns relating to adult behaviour towards a child
- the [Four Critical Actions: Student Sexual Offending](#) for complaints and concerns relating to student sexual offending

Our Student Mental Health & Wellbeing policy, and anti-bullying policy cover complaints and concerns relating to student physical violence or other harmful behaviours.

## Communication

Brighton Grammar School is committed to communicating our child safety strategies to the school community through:

- Ensuring that key child safety and wellbeing policies are available on our website including the Child Safety and Wellbeing Policy (this document), Child Safety Code of Conduct, and the Mandatory Reporting Policy and Procedure
- Body Safety rules posters in the Junior School Classrooms
- Updates in our school newsletter and via the BGS APP
- Crowther parent webinars and information evenings
- Crowther position papers
- ensuring that child safety is a regular agenda item at school leadership meetings, staff meetings and school council meetings.

## Privacy and information sharing

Brighton Grammar School collects, uses, and discloses information about children and their families in accordance with Victorian privacy laws, and other relevant laws. For information on how our school collects, uses and discloses information refer to the School's Privacy Policy.

## Records management

We acknowledge that good records management practices are a critical element of child safety and wellbeing and manage our records in accordance with the School's Records & Data Retention Policy, and the Records Retention and Disposal Schedule for Non-Government Schools.

## Review of child safety practices

At Brighton Grammar School we have established processes for the review and ongoing improvement of our child safe policies, procedures, and practices.

We will:

- review and improve our policy every 2 years or after any significant child safety incident
- analyse any complaints, concerns, and safety incidents to improve policy and practice
- act with transparency and share pertinent learnings and review outcomes with school staff and our school community.

## Related policies and procedures

This Child Safety and Wellbeing Policy is to be read in conjunction with other related school policies, procedures, and codes. These include our:

- Anti - Bullying Prevention Policy
- Child Safety Mandatory Reporting Policy
- Child Safety Code of Conduct
- Complaints Policy
- Social Media Code of Conduct
- Inclusion and Diversity Policy
- Student Discipline Process
- Student Welfare Policy
- Visiting Students at home Policy
- Transporting Students Policy
- Volunteers Policy
- Contractor Induction Policy
- Working with Children Check Policy and Procedure



- Child Safety and Wellbeing Staff Handbook

### Other related documents

- Child Safety and Wellbeing Policy
- Child Safety and Wellbeing code of conduct
- Mandatory reporting Policy
- Mandatory reporting template

## Policy status and review

The Risk and Compliance Coordinator in consultation with the Business Manager, Chief Operating Officer, Headmaster and Child Safety Officer is responsible for reviewing and updating the Child Safety and Wellbeing Policy at least every two years. The review will include input from students, parents/carers and the community.

This Policy is a controlled document. Any printing of this document is uncontrolled. Please refer to the school portal for the latest version of this policy	
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