

# Child Safety and Wellbeing Complaints Process

- 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.
- 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

Brighton Grammar School (BGS) is fully committed to the protection of children and young people during all School activities and environments, both within and outside School hours. BGS will take all child safety and wellbeing complaints and concerns seriously and respond promptly, sensitively and thoroughly, with the safety and wellbeing of students as the priority.

Nothing in this procedure limits or replaces the School's obligations under Child Safe Standards, Ministerial Order 1359, or any legal and reporting obligations that apply when a person reasonably believes a child is at risk of harm.

The purpose of this Process is to set out clear, child-focused, culturally safe and accessible processes for:

- Receiving child safety and wellbeing complaints and concerns
- Responding promptly and thoroughly
- Supporting and protecting students connected to a complaint or concern
- Reporting to relevant authorities where appropriate, and cooperating with law enforcement
- Meeting recordkeeping, privacy and employment law obligations.

This Process supports students, staff, parents/carers and community members to raise or escalate child safety and wellbeing concerns and to understand what will happen next.

## Application

This Process applies to child safety and wellbeing complaints and concerns:

- Made by or about any BGS student; and
- Made by or about any person connected to the School environment, including but not limited to staff, volunteers, contractors, service providers, visitors and families.

Child safety and wellbeing complaints/concerns are alleged harm caused to children by adults and by other children/students. This may include but is not limited to:

- Physical abuse
- Sexual abuse
- Grooming
- Emotional/psychological abuse
- Neglect
- Family violence impacts on a child/student
- Bullying, cyberbullying, harassment, and other harm affecting a child's safety or wellbeing
- Breaches of the Child Safety Code of Conduct and other child safety policies.

This Process must be read in consultation with the Complaints Resolution Policy.

## **Key Principles**

- Complaints are taken seriously and responded to in a prompt and thorough manner.
- Staff, volunteers and contractors are not required to make a judgement about the truth of a child safety complaint or concern. Allegations, suspicions and disclosures must be taken seriously, acted on promptly, and escalated in accordance with this Process and relevant reporting obligations.
- External reporting is not discouraged; nothing in this Process prohibits or discourages staff, volunteers, students or families from reporting a child safety complaint or concern to a person or body external to the School.
- It is not the victim's responsibility to report.
- Records may be made and must be kept securely.

## **Roles and Responsibilities**

### **All staff, volunteers and contractors**

- Receive and respond to concerns respectfully and promptly
- Escalate child safety concerns immediately in line with this Process
- Cooperate with School actions and any external authority processes, including law enforcement where engaged
- Maintain privacy and confidentiality to the extent possible and lawful

### **Relevant School leaders**

- Support timely and child-focused management of complaints/concerns
- Ensure student support and risk controls are implemented
- Ensure appropriate documentation and handover to nominated complaint handler

### **Nominated complaint handler**

- Coordinate triage, response actions, communications and recordkeeping
- Ensure risks to students are identified and managed
- Ensure reporting pathways are followed where appropriate

### **School Psychologist (support role)**

- The School Psychologist may provide wellbeing support to students and professional advice to assist safety planning and the School's response.
- Decisions about reporting and escalation are made in accordance with the School's reporting obligations and do not depend on determining whether an allegation is "true".

## Making a Complaint

**If a child is in immediate danger or there is an urgent safety risk, call 000 and/or Victoria Police and notify the School as soon as it is safe to do so.**

### Complaints from Students

- Students may raise concerns with a trusted adult, including:
  - Class Teacher (Junior School), House Tutor, Head of House, Director of Students (Senior School)
  - Any staff member they trust
- Students may also email: [childsafety@brightongrammar.vic.edu.au](mailto:childsafety@brightongrammar.vic.edu.au)

To support accessibility:

- Complaints/concerns may be raised verbally, in writing or by email
- Students may raise concerns with multiple trusted staff members and are encouraged to speak up if anything makes them feel unsafe or uncomfortable
- Students are encouraged have a support person present at meetings/interviews
- Interpreter/translation and accessible formats can be arranged on request
- Anonymous complaints may be accepted; however, anonymity may limit BGS' ability to investigate and provide feedback

### Complaints from parents/carers, community members, volunteers

Parents/carers, community members and volunteers should raise concerns as soon as practical via:

- The student's House Tutor (Senior School) or Classroom Teacher (Junior School) in the first instance; and/or
- By email: [childsafety@brightongrammar.vic.edu.au](mailto:childsafety@brightongrammar.vic.edu.au)

To assist a prompt response, provide:

- What happened (facts, dates/times, locations)
- Who was involved (if known)
- Impact on the student
- Any immediate safety concerns
- Any supporting material (screenshots, emails, notes)

## Complaints Handling Process

### Acknowledgement and initial triage (prompt response)

Upon receipt of a complaint, BGS will acknowledge this as soon as practicable (generally within 1–2 school days) and explain next steps, noting that timeframes may vary depending on complexity and external processes.

Initial triage will include:

- Checking immediate safety and wellbeing needs
- Identifying whether the concern involves child abuse or a reportable risk
- Implementing interim protective measures
- Determining who will manage the matter (including conflict checks)

### **Response actions (prompt and thorough)**

BGS will respond promptly and thoroughly. Actions may include:

- Meeting with the complainant and/or student (with a support person if desired)
- Gathering relevant information (accounts, documents, CCTV where applicable)
- Consulting relevant internal expertise (e.g. wellbeing staff) for student support planning
- Implementing protective measures and monitoring
- Determining whether and what reporting to authorities is required/appropriate
- Deciding outcomes and improvements
- BGS will keep the complainant informed at appropriate intervals. Where appropriate and lawful, BGS will provide feedback about outcomes. However, privacy and employment obligations may limit what can be shared, particularly regarding other students or staff

### **Supporting Students**

BGS will take reasonable steps to protect and support any child/student connected to a complaint or concern while the matter is being managed and after resolution, including:

- Checking immediate safety and arranging appropriate wellbeing support (e.g. School Psychologist support)
- Making reasonable adjustments to reduce risk and prevent further harm (for example supervision changes, separation strategies, modified arrangements where appropriate)
- Communicating in an age-appropriate, child-friendly way what will happen next and who will be informed, where appropriate
- Monitoring and follow-up until the matter is resolved and risks are managed

### **Alternate Process**

If the complaint or concern involves a person who would usually receive or manage child safety complaints (for example, a Head of School, member of leadership, the Psychologist or the Headmaster), the complaint must be escalated as outlined in the Whistleblower Policy, found on the BGS website.

### **Privacy, confidentiality and information sharing**

The School respects privacy and confidentiality for all parties. Information will be collected, used and disclosed only as necessary to respond to the complaint and manage risks, or where authorised/required by law, as per the Privacy Policy. The School may be limited in what it can share about actions involving other students, families or staff. It should be noted that confidentiality cannot be guaranteed where information must be shared to respond to the complaint, manage risks to children, meet legal or reporting obligations, or cooperate with external authorities.

## Recordkeeping

The School will keep secure records of:

- The complaint and key issues raised
- Actions taken, communications, and timeframes
- Decisions/outcomes and improvement actions

Complaint records are stored securely with access restricted to authorised staff and in accordance with the Records and Data Management Policy.

## Related Policies and Documents

- Students Anti-Bullying Policy
- Child Safety and Wellbeing Reporting Obligations Policy
- Child Safety Code of Conduct
- Child Safety and Wellbeing Complaints Process
- Child Safety and Wellbeing Staff Handbook
- Social Media Code of Conduct
- Whistleblower Policy
- EEO Discrimination, Harassment and Anti-Bullying Policy
- Behavioural Ownership Policy
- Staff Code of Conduct
- Student Code of Conduct
- Parent and School Community Code of Conduct
- Volunteers Policy
- Working with Children Check Policy and Procedure
- ELC Child Safety and Wellbeing Policy
- Procurement Policy
- POGS Compliance Manual
- Records and Data Management Policy

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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