



## Child Safety Policy

### Purpose

The Keilor Downs College Child Safety Policy demonstrates our school's commitment to creating and maintaining a child safe and child-friendly organization, 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 for student use (for example, a school camp) and those provided through third-party providers
- should be read together with our other child safety policies, procedures, and codes (listed in the related school policies section below).

### Statement of commitment to child safety

Keilor Downs College is a child safe organization which welcomes all young people and their families.

We are committed to providing an environment 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 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 environment. When child safety concerns are raised or identified, we treat these seriously and respond promptly and thoroughly.

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

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 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 leadership team

Our school leadership team, comprising the Principal and Assistant Principals, 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 Principal Team 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 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 or the Department of Education and Training, and always follow the school's child safety 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 Child Safety Responding and Reporting Obligations Policy and Procedures
- 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

In performing the functions and powers given to them under the *Education and Training Reform Act 2006*, School Council 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 meetings
- undertake annual training on child safety
- act in accordance with the Child Safety Code of Conduct where it applies to School Council employees and members
- when hiring School Council employees, ensure that selection, supervision and management practices are child safe

### Specific staff child safety responsibilities

Keilor Downs College has nominated its Assistant Principals as child safety champions to support the Principal to implement our child safety policies and practices, including staff and volunteer training.

Our Principal Team are the first point of contact for child safety concerns or queries and for coordinating responses to child safety incidents.

- The Principal Team is responsible for monitoring the school's compliance with the Child Safety Policy. Anyone in our school community should approach them if they have any concerns about the school's compliance with the Child Safety Policy.
- The Principal is responsible for informing the school community about this policy, and making it publicly available

## **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 our school we identify, assess and manage risks to child safety in our physical and online school environments. These risks are managed through our child safety policies, procedures and practices, and in our activity specific risk registers, such as those we develop for off-site overnight camps and adventure activities.

Our Child Safety Risk Register is used to record any identified risks related to child abuse alongside actions in place to manage those risks. Our school leadership team will monitor and evaluate the effectiveness of the actions in the Child Safety Risk Register at least annually.

## **Establishing a culturally safe environment**

At Keilor Downs College, we are committed to establishing an inclusive and culturally safe school where the strengths of Aboriginal culture, values and practices are respected.

We think about how every student can have a positive experience in a safe environment. For Aboriginal students, we recognise the link between Aboriginal culture, identity and safety and actively create opportunities for Aboriginal students to have a voice and presence in relevant school planning, policies, and activities.

## **Student empowerment**

To support child safety at Keilor Downs College, 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 Houses and home groups, wellbeing programs and our social curriculum.

We inform students of their rights through the Respectful Relationships components of our social curriculum 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 report concerns through Houses, the Wellbeing Team, the front office or with the Principal Team.

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 Keilor Downs College 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.

We do this by:

- Ensuring all of our child safety policies and procedures will be available for students and parents on Compass and the school website.
- Use Compass posts to inform families and the school community about any significant updates to our child safety policies or processes, and strategies or initiatives that we are taking to ensure student safety.
- PROTECT Child Safety posters will be displayed across the school in appropriate places such as the Houses and Wellbeing.

## **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+.

## **Suitable staff and volunteers**

At Keilor Downs College, 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 follow the Department of Education and Training's recruitment policies and guidelines.

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 Institute of Teaching (VIT) 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.

### **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 Policy
- the Child Safety Code of Conduct
- the Child Safety Responding and Reporting Obligations Policy and Procedures

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 ensuring that Working with Children Checks and teacher registration (VIT) requirements, including police checks, are kept current.

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 this policy and will be required to provide a current Working With Children check and will undergo child safety induction and appropriate supervision and management.

## 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 training will be delivered at least annually and will include guidance on:

- our school's child safety policies, procedures, codes, and practices
- completing mandatory reporting online module annually
- recognising indicators of child harm including harm caused by other students
- responding effectively to issues of child safety and supporting colleagues who disclose harm
- how to build culturally safe environments for children and students
- information sharing and recordkeeping obligations
- how to identify and mitigate child safety and wellbeing risks in the school environment.

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

## School Council training and education

To ensure our School Council is equipped with the knowledge required to make decisions in the best interests of student safety and to identify and mitigate child safety and wellbeing risks in our school environment, the Council is 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 risks in our school environment
- child safety policies, procedures, codes and practices

## Complaints and reporting processes

Keilor Downs College 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.

If there is an incident, disclosure, allegation or suspicion of child abuse, all staff and volunteers (including School Council employees and homestay providers) must follow our [Child Safety Responding and Reporting Obligations Policy and 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

Our Student Wellbeing Policy covers complaints and concerns relating to student physical violence or other harmful behaviours.

## Communications

Keilor Downs College 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 and Compass, including the Child Safety Policy, Child Safety Code of Conduct and the Child Safety Responding and Reporting Procedure
- displaying PROTECT posters in Houses and Wellbeing
- providing any updates by Compass posts
- ensuring that child safety is a regular agenda item at school leadership meetings, staff meetings and School Council meetings.

## Privacy and information sharing

Keilor Downs College collects, uses, and discloses information about children and their families in accordance with Victorian privacy laws, and other relevant laws.

## Records management

We acknowledge that good records management practices are a critical element of child safety and manage our records in accordance with DET policy.

## Review of child safety practices

At Keilor Downs College, 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 two 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 Council.

## Policy status and review

The Principal Team is responsible for reviewing and updating the Child Safety Policy at least every two years. The review will include input from students, parents/carers and School Council.

## Approval

<b>Created date</b>	<b>August 14, 2024</b>
<b>Consultation</b>	Consultation with School Council 18 <sup>th</sup> September 2024. Parents have been invited to have their say on this and other policies through Compass posts.
<b>Endorsed by</b>	Principal
<b>Endorsed on</b>	18/9/24 (by School Council)
<b>Next review date</b>	August 2026



### Help for non-English speakers

If you need help to understand this policy, please contact our office on 9365 8000.

## Appendix A: Links to related DET definitions, policies and documents

### Definitions

The following terms in this policy have [specific definitions](#) which can be found at [Child Safe Standards - definitions | Victorian Government \(www.vic.gov.au\)](#).

- child
- child safety
- child abuse
- child-connected work
- child-related work
- school environment
- school boarding environment
- school staff
- school boarding premises staff
- school governing authority
- school boarding premises governing authority
- student
- volunteer.

### Related Department of Education and Training policies

The Department of Education has an extensive suite of related policies available online. There are links to all of these policies below:

- [Bullying Prevention and Response Policy](#)
- [Child and Family Violence Information Sharing Schemes](#)
- [Complaints Policy](#)
- [Contractor OHS Management Policy](#)
- [Digital Learning in Schools Policy](#)
- [Family Violence Support](#)
- [Protecting Children: Reporting Obligations Policy](#)
- [Policy and Guidelines for Recruitment in Schools](#)
- [Reportable Conduct Policy](#)
- [Student Wellbeing and Engagement Policy](#)
- [Supervision of Students Policy](#)
- [Visitors in Schools Policy](#)
- [Volunteers in Schools Policy](#)
- [Working with Children and other Suitability Checks for School Volunteers and Visitors](#)

### Other related documents

- [Identifying and Responding to All Forms of Abuse in Victorian Schools](#)
- [Four Critical Actions for Schools](#)
- [Identifying and Responding to Student Sexual Offending](#)
- [Four Critical Actions for Schools: Responding to Student Sexual Offending](#)
- [Recording your actions: Responding to suspected child abuse – A template for Victorian schools](#)