St Leonard's College
An education for life.

Policy and Procedure Manual

Child Safe Policy

1. Rationale

This policy is an overarching document that provides key elements of our approach to protecting children from abuse. It is designed to be communicated through our public website as well as through other mediums such as newsletters, our annual report and in induction for College Council, staff and volunteers.

2. Objectives

This policy provides the framework for:

- the development of work systems, practices, policies and procedures (including procedures for responding to and reporting allegations of child abuse) that promote child safety within the College;
- the creation of a positive and robust child safe culture;
- the promotion and open discussion of child safety issues within the College; and
- complying with all laws, regulations and standards relevant to record keeping and information sharing relating to child protection in Victoria.

3. Statement of Commitment to Child Safety

Child abuse includes sexual offences, grooming, physical violence, serious emotional or psychological harm, serious neglect and a child's exposure to family violence. St Leonard's College is committed to the protection of all children from all forms of child abuse and demonstrates this commitment through the implementation of a comprehensive Child Safe Program designed to keep children safe.

At St Leonard's College we have a zero tolerance for child abuse and are committed to acting in children's best interests and keeping them safe from harm. The College regards its child protection responsibilities with the utmost importance and as such, is committed to providing the necessary resources to ensure compliance with all relevant child protection laws and regulations and maintain a child safe culture.

4. Child Safe Principles

The College's commitment to child safety is based on the following overarching principles that guide the development and regular review of our work systems, practices, policies and procedures to protect children from abuse.

1. All children have the right to be safe.
2. The welfare and best interests of the child are paramount.
3. The views of the child and a child's privacy must be respected.
4. Clear expectations for appropriate behaviour with children are established in our Child Safe Code of Conduct and Staff Student Boundaries Policy.
5. The safety of children is dependent upon the existence of a child safe culture.
6. Child safety awareness is promoted and openly discussed within our College community.
7. Procedures are in place to screen all staff, direct contact volunteers**and external education providers who have direct contact with children.

8. Child safety is everyone's responsibility.
9. A schedule of induction and ongoing training is implemented.
10. Procedures for responding to alleged or suspected incidents of child abuse are simple and accessible for all members of the College community.
11. Children from culturally, linguistically or gender diverse backgrounds have the right to special care and support including those who identify as Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander.
12. Children who have any kind of disability have the right to special care and support.

***Direct Contact volunteers are those volunteers that are involved in providing support, guidance and supervision directly to students and could potentially have direct unsupervised contact with students during the normal course of providing the volunteer service.*

Examples of Direct Contact volunteer activities may include volunteers involved in College camps and excursions, coaching sporting teams or assisting in learning activities.

5. Child Safe Program

St Leonard's College is committed to the effective implementation of our Child Safe Program (located in its totality, on CompliSpace on the College intranet) and to ensuring that it is appropriately reviewed and updated. The College uses a risk management approach by identifying key risk indicators and assessing child safety risks based on a range of factors including the nature of College activities, physical and online environments and the characteristics of the student body.

The Child Safe Program relates to all aspects of protecting children from abuse and establishes work systems, practices, policies and procedures to protect children from abuse. It includes:

- clear information as to what constitutes child abuse and associated key risk indicators;
- clear procedures for responding to and reporting allegations of child abuse;
- strategies to support, encourage and enable staff, volunteers (direct and indirect), external education providers, parents and students to understand, identify, discuss and report child protection matters;
- procedures for recruiting and screening College Council members, staff and direct contact volunteers;
- pastoral care strategies designed to empower students and keep them safe;
- principles with respect to cultural diversity, students with disabilities and gender diverse students;
- a child safe training program;
- information regarding the steps to take after a disclosure of abuse to protect, support and assist children;
- clear procedures for sharing information under the Child Information Sharing Scheme (CISS);
- guidelines with respect to record keeping and confidentiality;
- policies to ensure compliance with all relevant laws, regulations and standards, including the Victorian Child Safe Standards; and
- a system for continuous improvement and review.

6. Responsibilities

Child safety is everyone's responsibility. It is each individual's responsibility to be aware of key risk indicators of child abuse, to be observant, and to raise any concerns they may have relating to child abuse with one of the Child Protection Officers.

All people associated with direct contact with children at the College, Including College Council, are required to provide copies of an official Working with Children Check.

This can be one or more of the following: Employee Working with Children Check, Volunteer Working with Children Check or a Victorian Institute of Teaching (VIT) registration. When a VIT is provided, photo identification is also required.

Specific groups include:

College Council

The College Council is required to ensure that appropriate resources are made available to enable this Child Safe Policy and the Child Safe Program to be effectively implemented within the College and are responsible for holding the Principal and the Executive team accountable for effective implementation. All members of the College Council are required to complete annual child safety training.

The Principal

The Principal is responsible, and will be accountable for, taking all practical measures to ensure that this Child Safe Policy and the Child Safe Program are implemented effectively and that a strong and sustainable child protection culture is maintained within the College. The Director of Pastoral Care is appointed by the Principal to oversee the implementation of the Child Safe Policy and Program. They are required to complete annual child safety training.

Child Protection Officers

A range of staff members are nominated as Child Protection Officers. The Child Protection Officers receive additional specialised training and are an important point of contact for raising child safety concerns within the College. They are also responsible for championing child protection and safety within the College and proactively raising issues of concern in relation to child safety. The College also nominates Lead Child Protection Officers (the College Counsellors and Principal) who take a lead role in responding to child protection incidents.

Staff Members

For the purpose of this policy Staff Members include Permanent Employees, Fixed Term Employees, Casual Employees and Third-Party Contractors.

All Staff members are required to be familiar with the content of this Child Safe Policy and their legal obligations with respect to the reporting of child abuse. It is everyone's responsibility to be aware of key risk indicators of child abuse, to be observant, and to raise any concerns they may have relating to child abuse with one of the Child Protection Officers.

Permanent and Fixed Term Employees are required to complete annual child safe training.

Casual Employees - All casual employees engaged by the College are required to be familiar with this Child Safe Policy, the Child Safe Code of Conduct, Staff Student Boundaries Policy and their legal obligations with respect to the reporting of child abuse. They sign and acknowledge their understanding of and responsibilities to the College Child Safe Program.

Third Party Contractors – These are service providers engaged by the College and are responsible for contributing to the safety and protection of children in the College environment.

All Third Party Contractors engaged by the College are required to be familiar with this Child Safe Policy, the Child Safe Code of Conduct, Staff Student Boundaries Policy and their legal obligations with respect to the reporting of child abuse.

The College will include this requirement in any written agreement between it and the Third-Party Contractor. The service provider must ensure each staff member who is engaged at the College signs and acknowledges their understanding of and responsibilities to the Child Safe Program.

Direct Contact Volunteers

Direct Contact volunteers, as defined in this policy, are required to be familiar with the content of this Child Safe Policy, the Child Safe Code of Conduct and their legal obligations with respect to the reporting of child abuse.

Direct Contact Volunteers are required to complete a registration process prior to undertaking volunteering activities.

External Education Providers

An external education provider is any organisation that the College has arranged to deliver a specified course of study, which is part of the curriculum, to a student or students enrolled at the College. The delivery of such a course may take place on College premises or elsewhere.

All external education providers engaged by the College are responsible for contributing to child safety and protection and are required to be compliant with the Victorian Child Safe Standards.

St Leonard's College will include this requirement in the written agreement between it and the external education provider.

Indirect Contact Volunteers

Indirect Contact Volunteers are those volunteers who provide support and/or services at the College whilst not directly assisting a specific group of students. Indirect Contact Volunteers are not responsible for supervising students and do not have "unsupervised" contact with students during the course of their volunteer service. Indirect volunteers contribute to the safety and protection of children in the College environment through their general responsibilities as members of the community.

Examples of Indirect Contact Volunteer activities include assisting with College functions, such as the annual Community Day Fair.

7. Reporting and Confidentiality

The Child Safe Program provides guidance in identifying indicators of child abuse and how to report child abuse concerns to one of the Child Protection Officers. It also contains specific procedures with respect to the reporting of child abuse incidents to relevant authorities.

Any staff, external education providers, direct or indirect contact volunteers, students, parents/carers or other community members who have concerns that a child may be subject to abuse are asked to contact one of the Child Protection Officers.

Communications will be treated confidentially on a "need to know basis".

Whenever there are concerns that a child is in immediate danger the Police should be called on 000.

8. Child Information Sharing Scheme

The Child Safe Program provides guidance and reference to the Child Information Sharing Scheme (CISS), which enables information sharing between authorised organisations to promote a child's wellbeing or safety.

9. Related Policies and Procedures

a) Privacy Policy

b) Child Safe Code of Conduct

c) Procedures for Responding and Reporting Allegations of Child Abuse

10. Communication of this Policy

This policy is communicated in the following ways –

Students

Reference to the Child Safe Policy is included in the Student Diary and the full policy is available on the Student Wellbeing Site on STL Link under Child Safety.

A list of Child Protection Officers is included in the annual Student Diary.

Staff

The Child Safe Policy is available to Staff on CompliSpace via the College intranet (STL Link), under Student Duty of Care.

The Child Safe Policy is included in new staff induction material.

The Child Safe Policy is included in the annual Teacher Planner.

A list of Child Protection Officers is included in the annual Teacher Planner.

College Community:

a) An annual notice is published in the College Newsletter advising the College community of the location of College policies.

b) The Child Safe Policy is available on the Intranet (STL Link) for parents.

c) The College Child Safe Policy is available on the College public website.

11. Prepared by

Director of Pastoral Care

12. Approved by

College Council

Jen Neate, Chair

_____ 24 June 2021
Signature *Date*

13. Reason for Revision

Interim review

This policy is subject to a two (2) year review cycle irrespective of any amendments made during this period.