

POLICY

SAFEGUARDING CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE



GUIDING VALUES

In keeping children and young people safe the following values are a mechanism for guiding our actions and assisting in decision-making, they are a reference to which personnel can refer, to ensure their responsibilities to children and young people are upheld;

- *Safeguarding children and young people is a shared responsibility, it is reliant on all individuals within our School to keep children and young people safe in our care.*
- *Any form of abuse or neglect towards children and young people will not be tolerated and immediate action will be taken upon report of any suspected harmful or abusive behaviours.*
- *The best interest of the child will be the primary consideration in all actions and decisions concerning the safety or wellbeing of a child or young person.*
- *We are accountable to the children and young people we work with by fostering high ethical standards in a culture of openness and transparency.*
- *We empower children by informing them of their rights and responsibilities and support them to speak up about any matters of importance to them, including if something goes wrong. We work to include the participation of children and young people in decision making regarding any matters affecting their welfare.*

PURPOSE

Scotch College has zero-tolerance towards abuse and neglect of children and young people. We are committed to the rights of all children and young people to feel safe and be safe when participating in our School's activities, services and programs.

The purpose of this policy is to outline the responsibilities, procedures and practices required of all personnel within Scotch College in relation to keeping children and young people free from abuse and neglect.

This policy ensures that Scotch College meets its Safeguarding Children and Young People obligations as legislated in the *Child Wellbeing and Safety Act 2005 (Vic) (including 2021 amendment)* incorporating the *Child Safe Standards* and the *Reportable Conduct Scheme*.

Our policies and procedures reflect child safe legislation and promote best practice and care for the children and young people within our School. Our School Council authorises our Safeguarding Children and Young People Policy.

We take seriously our responsibility to deliver a learning environment that is caring, nurturing and safe. We are committed to taking action in advancing the safety and wellbeing of children and young people and ensuring compliance with all requirements set out in this policy.

SCOPE

The Safeguarding Children and Young People Policy applies to all personnel including employees, casual staff, School Council members, volunteers and contractors involved with Scotch College.

This policy applies to all forms of abuse and neglect against a child or young person including sexual abuse, physical abuse, emotional or psychological abuse, neglect, and experiencing or witnessing family violence. (See Appendix 2 - Definitions Table).

This policy applies in all our operational environments and without fail wherever children and young people are participating in our School's activities, programs, services and / or facilities.

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RESPONSIBILITIES

Safeguarding children and young people is a shared responsibility within our School. It is the responsibility of all at Scotch College including the School Council, the School Executive, employees, volunteers and contractors to:

- protect children and young people from all forms of abuse and neglect by our people;
- be alert to incidents of child abuse and neglect occurring outside the scope of our operations and services that may have an impact on the children and young people to whom we provide a service; and
- create and maintain a child safe culture that is understood, endorsed and put into action by all the individuals who work for, volunteer, support or access our School activities, programs and services.

We expect all within our School, regardless of their role or level of responsibility, to act to safeguard children and young people from such harm by:

- adopting appropriate safeguarding practice and behaviour set within our policy and procedural guidelines, when carrying out their roles, and
- reporting any abuse and neglect of which they become aware through our internal reporting process and, if serious in nature, to the Principal who then becomes the point of contact if required for reporting to external authorities responsible for child protection or to the Police, regardless of whether that abuse is being perpetrated by personnel within our School, or by those outside our School including those from the child's family, extended family, their family's extended network or strangers.

We expect all within our School to promote equity and respect diversity by:

- actively anticipating children and young people's diverse circumstances and responding effectively to those with additional vulnerabilities
- informing children and young people of their rights and giving all children and young people access to information, support and complaints processes
- respecting the rights of children and young people to participate in decision-making, paying appropriate attention to the needs of the following groups:
 - Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islanders
 - Children and young people with a disability
 - Children and young people from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds
 - LGBTQI+ (Lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, queer and intersex)
 - Children and young people who are unable to live at home

The responsibility of each role in relation to the development and compliance of the Scotch College Safeguarding Children and Young People Policy is detailed on page 6 of this policy.

SAFEGUARDING GOVERNANCE

Our School has a safeguarding children and young people governance structure with robust systems in place which support personnel and service users to report safeguarding concerns and facilitate effective risk-based and informed decisions that ensure accountability to children and young people.

Our governance structure, including the Senior Executive, the Child Protection Officer who is responsible for managing the Safeguarding Program, and a Child Protection Committee, defines the roles and responsibilities associated with providing oversight, management and implementation of our commitment to safeguarding children and young people. The Council, in particular through its Risk Committee, provides governance oversight of safeguarding.

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OUR COMMITMENT

Scotch College is committed to ensuring the safety and wellbeing of all children and young people who access our activities, programs, services and / or facilities. Our policies and procedures seek to address risks to child safety and to establish a safeguarding culture and practices.

Our safeguarding policies and procedures are:

- publicly accessible, online and in forms that are easy to understand;
- informed by stakeholder consultation; and
- communicated to children, young people and their families, our personnel, our partners and contractors and the general public.

To inform and review our safeguarding policies, we seek feedback from all our services users and providers. We gain endorsement and advise stakeholders of any changes.

We are committed to safeguarding children and young people.

Through our Safeguarding Children and Young People Policy we document our clear commitment to safeguarding children and young people from abuse and neglect. We communicate our commitment to all of our personnel and ensure that a summary of important parts of our Safeguarding Children and Young People Policy is available in child-friendly versions that reflects the ages, developmental stage, diversity and abilities of the children and young people in our School and School activities.

We have a zero-tolerance approach towards child abuse and neglect and take seriously any raised concerns / incidents.

Our approach to risk management recognises the potential risks to children and young people associated with our School's programs, activities and facilities and considers online and physical or psychological environments, and any vulnerable or diverse circumstances of children and young people.

Our personnel know the behaviour we expect

We ensure that all personnel understand their role and the behaviour we expect in relation to safeguarding children and young people from abuse and neglect. We utilise position descriptions that clearly state relevant responsibilities and safeguarding requirements.

Our School requires all personnel to acknowledge, in writing, their commitment and adherence to our Safeguarding Children and Young People Policy.

We have a Child Safety Code of Conduct, which is authorised by the School Council that outlines our expectations for behaviour towards children and young people.

We monitor and supervise all personnel, including contractors and partner organisations, for appropriate practice and behaviour in the delivery of our service to children and young people.

Any failure to observe our behavioural guidelines is taken seriously, and we are committed to taking appropriate disciplinary and legal action wherever necessary.

We minimise the likelihood of recruiting a person who is unsuitable.

We have appropriate measures in place and require applicants to undergo extensive screening processes prior to appointment to minimise the likelihood that we, or an external recruitment agency or contractor, will recruit a person who is unsuitable to work / volunteer with children or young people. We have recruitment procedures that ensure:

- our safeguarding commitment is communicated to potential applicants for all positions
- interviews are held which include safeguarding-related questions and interviews are face-to-face wherever possible
- two professional reference checks are undertaken which include safeguarding-related questions
- screening checks are undertaken, including identity, National, and where applicable, International criminal history checks, working with children checks and qualification checks.

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We require our personnel to disclose criminal convictions or charges affecting their suitability to work with children and young people both prior and subsequent to their employment, and we review police records and Working With Children Check or equivalent periodically.

We comply with legislation regarding elimination of discrimination in the recruitment process, and strive for inclusion and equal opportunity, as per our Equal Opportunity Policy.

Induction and training is part of our commitment

We have an induction process ensuring all new personnel are informed and supported to understand our School's safeguarding policies, procedures and practices. Our personnel are provided with copies of our School's Safeguarding Children and Young People Policy, Child Safety Code of Conduct and Reporting Policies and where applicable Recruitment Policy.

Our induction process provides guidance relating to an individual's safeguarding responsibilities and offers opportunities to seek clarity in relation to the commitments and behavioural expectations set out in our safeguarding policies.

We have a Training plan that outlines how and when we support ongoing education for all our personnel in relation to how keeping children and young people safe will be fulfilled. Our School's plan includes training regarding children's rights, voices and participation, and cultural safety.

We encourage the involvement of children, young people and their families

We have processes for seeking and incorporating input and feedback from children, young people and their families. We respect diversity and seek to facilitate effective communication and engagement.

We promote participation and empowerment of young people and provide opportunity for their voice and ideas to be heard, and space to express their needs and concerns. We actively encourage children and young people to take part in the decision-making process, particularly on matters affecting them. We create opportunities for involvement and seek input and feedback to inform our policies, procedures and practices.

We involve children, young people, and their families in developing a safe, inclusive and supportive environment. We provide information to children, young people and their families through information evenings, the student Record Book and relevant documents about:

- our commitment and approach to upholding and safeguarding the rights of children and young people
- the behaviour we expect of our personnel
- the behaviour we expect from children, young people and their families
- our policy and mechanism for reporting abuse or concerns.

Our personnel understand their responsibility for reporting child abuse

Our policy for reporting and responding to child abuse is authorised, approved and endorsed from the highest levels of our School and applies to all our personnel. The policy states that:

- personnel must immediately report abuse or neglect and any concern with policies, practices or the behaviour of personnel
- personnel must meet any legislated mandatory reporting requirements
- personnel must follow a specified process when reporting abuse or neglect including who will receive reports
- failure to report is serious misconduct

Our personnel are given a copy of and have access to the policy and understand the implications of the policy for their role. We document any allegation, disclosure or concern regarding child abuse and monitor responses to all allegations, disclosures or concerns.

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We maintain and improve our policies and practices

Our School seeks to continuously review and improve our policies, procedures and practices to safeguard children and young people from abuse and neglect. The responsibility for implementing and reviewing our safeguarding children and young people approach is led by the School Executive in conjunction with the Child Protection Officer, the Human Resources Manager and the Child Protection Committee.

To identify any key improvements needed, our School incorporates findings from internal audits / reviews that assess our ongoing compliance with our responsibilities to keep children and young people safe, input and feedback received by children and young people and their families, feedback gained from communication with our personnel and feedback gained from 'complaints and compliments' received.

MONITORING AND REVIEW

This document will be reviewed by our School Executive and School Council at least every 3 years, after consultation. Some circumstances may trigger an early review, this includes but is not limited to legislative changes, School changes, incident outcomes and other matters deemed appropriate by the Executive or Council.

When there are any updates or changes to this Policy, they will be communicated to all personnel and stakeholders.

External audit and verification based on a sample, conducted by the Australian Childhood Foundation shall occur at 3 yearly intervals.

RECORDS AND DOCUMENTATION

We retain records that document each review undertaken. Records may include minutes of meetings and documentation of changes to policies and procedures that result from a review.

SUPPORTING RESOURCES

- Appendix 1 Child Protection Commitment Statement
- Appendix 2 Definitions
- Safeguarding Statements for Children and Young People
- Children and Young People voice statements developed by the Children and Young People articulating the standards expected of themselves and School staff
- Safeguarding Children and Young People Information for Parents and Care Givers

RELATED POLICIES AND DOCUMENTS

The following Scotch College policies must be considered in relation to this document:

- Child Safety Code of Conduct
- Safeguarding Reporting Policy
- Safeguarding Incident Management Policy
- Recruitment Policy
- Reportable Conduct Policy

RELATED FRAMEWORKS AND LEGISLATION

Our guidelines comply with relevant legislation.

This policy is in line with the following legislation and frameworks:

- Australian National Principles for Child Safe Organisations
- Victorian Child Wellbeing and Safety Act 2005 (and amendments 2021) incorporating the Victorian Child Safe Standards and the Reportable Conduct Scheme
- National Framework for Protecting Australia's Children 2009-2020

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ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES

The responsibilities of each role in relation to the development and compliance of the Scotch College Safeguarding Children and Young People Policy is detailed below;

Role	Responsibility
School Council	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Advocate and promote child rights, empowering and engaging children and young people in support of this Policy and its expectations. Promote commitment to this Policy and its expectations both internally and publicly. Authorise this Policy and support its review on a three year cycle as a minimum or at a time governed by legislation, regulations, or School learnings that promote a change to the Policy and all relevant policy or procedural guidelines. Monitor compliance with the Policy via an inbuilt mechanism for ongoing monitoring and review. Ensure adequate resources are allocated to allow for the development, effective implementation, communication and continuous improvement of this policy. Support a culture of openness and continued improvement and accountability to keeping children and young people safe from abuse and neglect
Principal/Bursar/Vice Principal/Head of Junior School/ Director of Human Resources/Child Protection Officer	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Advocate and promote child rights, empowering and engaging children and young people in support of this Policy. Ensure all Personnel understand their obligations in accordance with this Policy and any relevant policy and procedural documentation. Ensure this Policy is implemented and adhered to amongst personnel. Ensure the development and implementation of required internal policy/ procedures and guidelines are in place to support safeguarding children and young people practices in accordance with the expectations of this Policy. Ensure adequate resources are allocated to allow effective implementation of this Policy. Ensure personnel are fully supported with any decision to initiate action to protect a child from abuse and neglect. Ensure appropriate supports, such as counselling and formal debriefing, are provided for any Personnel involved in a matter relating to responding to a concern for the safety and wellbeing of a child or young person. Proactively share resources and experience in the development of child safe initiatives as they are identified. Develop opportunities for regular discussion and review at all levels to support a culture of continuous improvement and accountability of keeping children and young people safe from abuse and neglect. Ensure that all personnel are aware of the appropriate recruitment, screening and employment practice in relation to safeguarding children and young people.
Principal/Bursar/Vice Principal/Head of Junior School/ Director of Human Resources/Child Protection Officer	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Review and update this Policy and supporting resources in consultation with relevant stakeholders Support the coordination of the Safeguarding Children and Young People framework and its implementation Evaluate and analyse complaints, concerns and safety incidents relating to this Policy Provide training and advice in the application of this Policy
Employees / Volunteers / Contractors	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Advocate and promote child rights, empowering and engaging children and young people in support of this Policy. Maintain a full understanding of the commitments and expectations of this Policy, as well as all other policy relevant to safeguarding children and young people. Ensure compliance with this Policy, fully implementing and adhering to the commitments and expectations To undertake any induction and training anticipated in this Policy, in relation to policy and procedures relevant to safeguarding children and young people. To support a culture of openness, continued improvement and accountability to children and young people by engaging in regular review and discussion of School policies and practices and providing feedback to support improvement To seek guidance from a supervisor or manager if there is ever any lack of understanding in relation to the commitments and expectations as set out in this Policy. To adopt appropriate safeguarding practice and behaviour To take action to protect children and young people from all forms of abuse and neglect. To report any abuse committed by personnel within our School or by others. To assist in creating and maintaining a child safe culture and a culture of inclusion and safety.

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APPENDIX 1

CHILD PROTECTION COMMITMENT STATEMENT

As we grow as a School, we grow in our awareness of the ways in which we can best support our children and young people.

Scotch College exists for educational purposes in connection with the Presbyterian Church of Victoria, and Christian teachings are fundamental to all that we do. We value the independent spirit of each child and young person, and seek to equip all children and young people with an enduring empathy for the needs and views of others.

The School aims to develop the innate and acquired potential of each child and young person, and so prepare them for a place in the world and for a purpose greater than themselves. We seek to do this in an exciting, relational environment which nurtures self-expression and self-worth, while promoting the uniqueness of each child and young person's journey.

We want Scotch children and young people to feel a sense of belonging, of trust and of confidence in their immediate world, in themselves, and in their relationships.

We understand that when children feel cared for by adults who set clear boundaries, and who are sensitive, open and uncomplicated in their expectations, they feel safe. And it is within such an environment of safety that they are empowered to be their best.

All Scotch personnel are required to understand the important responsibility they have, to:

- protect children and young people from all forms of abuse, bullying and exploitation by people within the School's facilities, operations, services and activities;
- be alert to and report incidents of child abuse and neglect occurring both within and beyond the scope of our facilities, operations, services and activities, that may have an impact on the children and young people for whom we provide a service; and,
- create and maintain a child-safe culture that is understood, endorsed and put into action by all the individuals who work for, volunteer or access our programs and services.

This Commitment Statement and our Safeguarding Reporting Policy have been authorised by the School Council and adopted by the School. They articulate our commitment to the safeguarding of children, protecting them from abuse and neglect.

Safeguarding Scotch involves every member of our community: all members of staff, all visitors and volunteers, and all students and their families.

Our School community will not exploit, harm or abuse children and young people.

WE ACT IN THE BEST INTERESTS OF THE CHILD

For the purposes of this Commitment Statement, acting in the best interests of the child includes:

- reporting to Child Protection and/or the Police all allegations or disclosures of physical abuse, sexual abuse, emotional abuse and neglect;
- reporting to Child Protection when a belief is formed that a child is in need of protection where a child has been harmed or is at risk of being harmed;
- making the child's ongoing safety and wellbeing the primary focus of decision-making;
- sharing appropriate information, expertise and resources with other service providers supporting the child;
- protecting and respecting the cultural and spiritual wellbeing of a child, and his or her connection to family or community of origin;
- enabling the child and the child's family to access appropriate services in order to reduce the long-term effects of abuse or neglect; and
- keeping the School Council informed through the Risk Committee of safeguarding incidents rated high and critical (nature, frequency and response).

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WE ACT ON ALL CONCERNS RELATING TO CHILD PROTECTION IN OUR COMMUNITY

Any person who believes on reasonable grounds that a child is in need of protection may report their belief and the grounds to Child Protection or the Police. Requirements of Scotch College staff in relation to these matters are detailed in the School's Safeguarding Reporting Policy.

The grounds on which a child is in need of protection include:

- where the child has been abandoned by his or her parents or carers and, after reasonable enquiries, the parents or carers cannot be found, and no other suitable person can be found who is willing and able to care for the child;
- where the child has suffered or is likely to suffer significant harm as a result of physical injury or sexual abuse, and the child's parents or carers have not protected or are unlikely to protect the child;
- where the child has suffered or is likely to suffer emotional or psychological harm of such a kind that his or her emotional or intellectual development is, or is likely to be, damaged, and the child's parents or carers have not protected or are unlikely to protect the child;
- where the child's physical development or health has been or is likely to be significantly harmed, and the child's parents or carers have not arranged for, or are unlikely to arrange for, basic care or effective medical, surgical or other remedial care for the child; and,
- where a child has suffered or is likely to suffer significant harm of a physical, sexual, emotional, developmental or psychological nature as a consequence of activity perpetrated by a member of the school community.

ACTIONS

The school commits to take the following actions to ensure the integrity of the Child Protection Commitment Statement by:

- informing the School community annually of the statement, and making the statement publicly accessible;
- monitoring the School's adherence to the statement through the offices of the Vice Principal and Child Protection Officer, reporting to the School Executive;
- providing appropriate and regular guidance and training for all staff, designed to reinforce obligations and responsibilities in relation to child abuse, areas of potential risk and the standards of practice expected; and,
- ensuring that appropriate support is readily available for any child disclosing abuse or suspected of being a victim of abuse.

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APPENDIX 2

DEFINITIONS

The following definitions are applicable across all environments, including in-person and online.

Term	Definition
Bullying	<p>Bullying involves the inappropriate use of power by one or more persons over another less powerful person or group and is generally an act that is repeated over time. Bullying has been described by researchers as taking many forms which are often interrelated and include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Verbal (name calling, put downs, threats); • Physical (hitting, punching, kicking, scratching, tripping, spitting); • Social (ignoring, excluding, ostracising, alienating); and/or • Psychological (spreading rumours, stalking, dirty looks, hiding or damaging possessions).
Child or young person	<p>A person under the age of eighteen years.</p> <p>Extends to include persons over the age of 18 while enrolled at the School</p>
Code of Conduct	<p>The Child Safety Code of Conduct aims to identify and prevent behaviour that may be harmful to children and young people in our communities. The Child Safety Code of Conduct outlines what is, and what is not acceptable behaviour or practice when working with or engaging with children and young people.</p>
Emotional or psychological abuse	<p>Emotional or psychological abuse occurs when a child or young person does not receive the love, affection or attention they need for healthy emotional, psychological and social development. Such abuse may involve repeated rejection or threats to a child or young person. Constant criticism, teasing, ignoring, threatening, yelling, scapegoating, ridicule and rejection or continual coldness are all examples of emotional abuse. These behaviours continue to an extent that results in significant damage to the child or young person's physical, intellectual or emotional wellbeing and development.</p>
Family Violence	<p>Family violence occurs when children are forced to live with violence between people in their home. It is harmful to children. It can include witnessing violence or the consequences of violence. Family violence is defined as violence between members of a family or extended family or those fulfilling the role of family in a child or young person's life. Exposure to family violence places children and young people at increased risk of physical injury and harm and has a significant impact on their wellbeing and development.</p>
Grooming	<p>Grooming is a term used to describe what happens when a perpetrator of abuse builds a relationship with a child with a view to abusing them at some stage. There is no set pattern in relation to the grooming of children. For some perpetrators, there will be a lengthy period of time before the abuse begins. The child may be given special attention and, what starts as an apparently normal display of affection, such as cuddling, can develop into sexual touching or masturbation and then into more serious sexual behaviour. Other perpetrators may draw a child in and abuse them relatively quickly. Some abusers do not groom children but abuse them without forming a relationship at all. Grooming can take place in any setting where a relationship is formed, such as leisure, music, sports and religious activities, or in internet chatrooms, in social media or by other technological channels.</p>
Harm	<p>Harm to a child is any detrimental effect of a significant nature on the child's physical, psychological or emotional wellbeing. It is immaterial how the harm is caused. Harm can be caused by:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • physical, psychological or emotional abuse or neglect; • sexual abuse or exploitation; • a single act, omission or circumstance; and • a series or combination of acts, omissions or circumstances.
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Term	Definition
National Principles for Child Safe Organisations (National Principles)	The National Principles are designed to build capacity and deliver child safety and wellbeing in organisations, families and communities and prevent future harm. The Principles have been endorsed by all Commonwealth, state and territory governments. https://chidsafe.humanrights.gov.au/national-principles
Neglect	Neglect is the persistent failure or deliberate denial to provide the child or young person with the basic necessities of life. Such neglect includes the failure to provide adequate food, clothing, shelter, adequate supervision, clean water, medical attention or supervision to the extent that the child or young person's health and development is, or is likely to be, significantly harmed. Categories of neglect include physical neglect, medical neglect, abandonment or desertion, emotional neglect and educational neglect. The issue of neglect must be considered within the context of resources reasonably available.
Online environment	Anywhere online that allows digital communication, such as: social networks, text messages and messaging apps, email and private messaging, online chats, comments on live streaming sites and voice chat in games.
Personnel	All who work for the School whether in a paid or unpaid capacity, including employees, casual employees, volunteers, Council and Council committee members and contractors.
Physical abuse	Physical abuse occurs when a person subjects a child or young person to non-accidental physically aggressive acts. The abuser may inflict an injury intentionally or inadvertently as a result of physical punishment or the aggressive treatment of a child or young person. Physically abusive behaviour includes (but is not limited to) showing, hitting, slapping, shaking, throwing, punching, biting, burning, suffocating, excessive and physically harmful over training, and kicking. It also includes giving children and young people harmful substances such as drugs, alcohol or poison. Certain types of punishment, whilst not causing injury can also be considered physical abuse if they place a child or young person at risk of being hurt.
Risk management	In the context of creating safe environments for children and young people, risk management consists of assessing and taking steps to minimise the risks of harm to children and young people because of the action of an employee, volunteer, contractor or another child or young person. Risk management includes planning the work of the School to reduce or minimise situations where children and young people may be abused.
The Royal Commission into Institutional Responses to Child Sexual Abuse (Royal Commission).	An independent inquiry established in 2013 by the Australian Government to examine and report upon responses by institutions to instances and allegations of child sexual abuse in educational institutions, religious groups, sporting organisations, state institutions and youth organisations. The findings provide recommendations to the Government on how to improve laws, policies, structures and practices to prevent such harm from re-occurring. https://www.childabuseroyalcommission.gov.au/
Sexual abuse	Sexual abuse occurs when an adult or a person of authority (e.g. teacher, coach) involves a child or young person in any sexual activity. Perpetrators of sexual abuse take advantage of their power, authority or position over the child or young person for their own benefit. It can include making sexual comments to a child, engaging children to participate in sexual conversations over the internet or on social media, kissing, touching a child's genitals or breasts, oral sex or intercourse with a child. Encouraging a child to view pornographic magazines, websites and videos is also sexual abuse. Engaging children to participate in sexual conversations over the internet is also considered sexual abuse.
Sexual exploitation	Sexual exploitation is a form of sexual abuse where offenders use their power, (physical, financial or emotional) over a child or young person, or a false identity, to sexually or emotionally abuse them. It often involves situations and relationships where children and young people receive something (food, accommodation, drugs, alcohol, cigarettes, affection, gifts, money etc.) in return for participating in sexual activities. Sexual exploitation can occur in person or online, and sometimes the child or young person may not even realise they are a victim.
United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child	Is an international agreement setting out the civil, political, economic, social and cultural rights of every child, regardless of their race, religion or abilities. https://www.ohchr.org/en/professionalinterest/pages/crc.aspx

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DEFINITION REFERENCE AND SOURCES

Australian Institute of Health and Welfare (AIHW), 2018
World Health Organization, (2006)
Child Family Community Australia (CFCA), (2016).
Australian eSafety Commissioner, (2020).

Reference	Date approved	Date last amended	Date of next review	Status
	Endorsed by: Risk Committee of Council 26 th August 2021		August 2024	Endorsed by ACF 25 th May 2021 Approved by: School Council 04/10/2021

OUR COMMITMENT

Scotch College is committed to ensuring the safety and wellbeing of all children and young people who access our activities, programs, services and / or facilities. Our policies and procedures seek to address risks to child safety and to establish a safeguarding culture and practices.

Our safeguarding policies and procedures are:

- publicly accessible, online and in forms that are easy to understand;
- informed by stakeholder consultation; and
- communicated to children, young people and their families, our personnel, our partners and contractors and the general public.

To inform and review our safeguarding policies, we seek feedback from all our services users and providers. We gain endorsement and advise stakeholders of any changes.

We are committed to safeguarding children and young people.

Through our Safeguarding Children and Young People Policy we document our clear commitment to safeguarding children and young people from abuse and neglect. We communicate our commitment to all of our personnel and ensure that a summary of important parts of our Safeguarding Children and Young People Policy is available in child-friendly versions that reflects the ages, developmental stage, diversity and abilities of the children and young people in our School and School activities.

We have a zero-tolerance approach towards child abuse and neglect and take seriously any raised concerns / incidents.

Our approach to risk management recognises the potential risks to children and young people associated with our School's programs, activities and facilities and considers online and physical or psychological environments, and any vulnerable or diverse circumstances of children and young people.

Our personnel know the behaviour we expect

We ensure that all personnel understand their role and the behaviour we expect in relation to safeguarding children and young people from abuse and neglect. We utilise position descriptions that clearly state relevant responsibilities and safeguarding requirements.

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Any failure to observe our behavioural guidelines is taken seriously, and we are committed to taking appropriate disciplinary and legal action wherever necessary.

We minimise the likelihood of recruiting a person who is unsuitable.

We have appropriate measures in place and require applicants to undergo extensive screening processes prior to appointment to minimise the likelihood that we, or an external recruitment agency or contractor, will recruit a person who is unsuitable to work / volunteer with children or young people. We have recruitment procedures that ensure:

- our safeguarding commitment is communicated to potential applicants for all positions
- interviews are held which include safeguarding-related questions and interviews are face-to-face wherever possible
- two professional reference checks are undertaken which include safeguarding-related questions
- screening checks are undertaken, including identity, National, and where applicable, International criminal history checks, working with children checks and qualification checks.

We require our personnel to disclose criminal convictions or charges affecting their suitability to work with children and young people both prior and subsequent to their employment, and we review police records and Working With Children Check or equivalent periodically.

We comply with legislation regarding elimination of discrimination in the recruitment process, and strive for inclusion and equal opportunity, as per our Equal Opportunity Policy.

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We have a Training plan that outlines how and when we support ongoing education for all our personnel in relation to how keeping children and young people safe will be fulfilled. Our School's plan includes training regarding children's rights, voices and participation, and cultural safety.

We encourage the involvement of children, young people and their families

We have processes for seeking and incorporating input and feedback from children, young people and their families. We respect diversity and seek to facilitate effective communication and engagement.

We promote participation and empowerment of young people and provide opportunity for their voice and ideas to be heard, and space to express their needs and concerns. We actively encourage children and young people to take part in the decision-making process, particularly on matters affecting them. We create opportunities for involvement and seek input and feedback to inform our policies, procedures and practices.

We involve children, young people, and their families in developing a safe, inclusive and supportive environment. We provide information to children, young people and their families through information evenings, the student Record Book and relevant documents about:

- our commitment and approach to upholding and safeguarding the rights of children and young people
- the behaviour we expect of our personnel
- the behaviour we expect from children, young people and their families
- our policy and mechanism for reporting abuse or concerns.

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Our personnel understand their responsibility for reporting child abuse

Our policy for reporting and responding to child abuse is authorised, approved and endorsed from the highest levels of our School and applies to all our personnel. The policy states that:

- personnel must immediately report abuse or neglect and any concern with policies, practices or the behaviour of personnel
- personnel must meet any legislated mandatory reporting requirements
- personnel must follow a specified process when reporting abuse or neglect including who will receive reports
- failure to report is serious misconduct

Our personnel are given a copy of and have access to the policy and understand the implications of the policy for their role. We document any allegation, disclosure or concern regarding child abuse and monitor responses to all allegations, disclosures or concerns.

We maintain and improve our policies and practices

Our School seeks to continuously review and improve our policies, procedures and practices to safeguard children and young people from abuse and neglect. The responsibility for implementing and reviewing our safeguarding children and young people approach is led by the School Executive in conjunction with the Child Protection Officer, the Human Resources Manager and the Child Protection Committee.

To identify any key improvements needed, our School incorporates findings from internal audits / reviews that assess our ongoing compliance with our responsibilities to keep children and young people safe, input and feedback received by children and young people and their families, feedback gained from communication with our personnel and feedback gained from 'complaints and compliments' received.

MONITORING AND REVIEW

This document will be reviewed by our School Executive and School Council at least every 3 years, after consultation. Some circumstances may trigger an early review, this includes but is not limited to legislative changes, School changes, incident outcomes and other matters deemed appropriate by the Executive or Council.

When there are any updates or changes to this Policy, they will be communicated to all personnel and stakeholders.

External audit and verification based on a sample, conducted by the Australian Childhood Foundation shall occur at 3 yearly intervals.

RECORDS AND DOCUMENTATION

We retain records that document each review undertaken. Records may include minutes of meetings and documentation of changes to policies and procedures that result from a review.

SUPPORTING RESOURCES

- Appendix 1 Child Protection Commitment Statement
- Appendix 2 Definitions
- Safeguarding Statements for Children and Young People
- Children and Young People voice statements developed by the Children and Young People articulating the standards expected of themselves and School staff
- Safeguarding Children and Young People Information for Parents and Care Givers

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RELATED POLICIES AND DOCUMENTS

The following Scotch College policies must be considered in relation to this document:

- Child Safety Code of Conduct
- Safeguarding Reporting Policy
- Safeguarding Incident Management Policy
- Recruitment Policy
- Reportable Conduct Policy

RELATED FRAMEWORKS AND LEGISLATION

Our guidelines comply with relevant legislation.

This policy is in line with the following legislation and frameworks:

- Australian National Principles for Child Safe Organisations
- Victorian Child Wellbeing and Safety Act 2005 (and amendments 2021) incorporating the Victorian Child Safe Standards and the Reportable Conduct Scheme
- National Framework for Protecting Australia's Children 2009-2020

ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES

The responsibilities of each role in relation to the development and compliance of the Scotch College Safeguarding Children and Young People Policy is detailed next page;

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Role	Responsibility
School Council	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Advocate and promote child rights, empowering and engaging children and young people in support of this Policy and its expectations. • Promote commitment to this Policy and its expectations both internally and publicly. • Authorise this Policy and support its review on a three year cycle as a minimum or at a time governed by legislation, regulations, or School learnings that promote a change to the Policy and all relevant policy or procedural guidelines. • Monitor compliance with the Policy via an inbuilt mechanism for ongoing monitoring and review. • Ensure adequate resources are allocated to allow for the development, effective implementation, communication and continuous improvement of this policy. • Support a culture of openness and continued improvement and accountability to keeping children and young people safe from abuse and neglect
Principal/Bursar/Vice Principal/Head of Junior School/ Director of Human Resources/Child Protection Officer	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Advocate and promote child rights, empowering and engaging children and young people in support of this Policy. • Ensure all Personnel understand their obligations in accordance with this Policy and any relevant policy and procedural documentation. • Ensure this Policy is implemented and adhered to amongst personnel. • Ensure the development and implementation of required internal policy/ procedures and guidelines are in place to support safeguarding children and young people practices in accordance with the expectations of this Policy. • Ensure adequate resources are allocated to allow effective implementation of this Policy. • Ensure personnel are fully supported with any decision to initiate action to protect a child from abuse and neglect. • Ensure appropriate supports, such as counselling and formal debriefing, are provided for any Personnel involved in a matter relating to responding to a concern for the safety and wellbeing of a child or young person. • Proactively share resources and experience in the development of child safe initiatives as they are identified. • Develop opportunities for regular discussion and review at all levels to support a culture of continuous improvement and accountability of keeping children and young people safe from abuse and neglect. • Ensure that all personnel are aware of the appropriate recruitment, screening and employment practice in relation to safeguarding children and young people.
Principal/Bursar/Vice Principal/Head of Junior School/ Director of Human Resources/Child Protection Officer	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Review and update this Policy and supporting resources in consultation with relevant stakeholders • Support the coordination of the Safeguarding Children and Young People framework and its implementation • Evaluate and analyse complaints, concerns and safety incidents relating to this Policy • Provide training and advice in the application of this Policy
Employees / Volunteers / Contractors	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Advocate and promote child rights, empowering and engaging children and young people in support of this Policy. • Maintain a full understanding of the commitments and expectations of this Policy, as well as all other policy relevant to safeguarding children and young people. • Ensure compliance with this Policy, fully implementing and adhering to the commitments and expectations • To undertake any induction and training anticipated in this Policy, in relation to policy and procedures relevant to safeguarding children and young people. • To support a culture of openness, continued improvement and accountability to children and young people by engaging in regular review and discussion of School policies and practices and providing feedback to support improvement • To seek guidance from a supervisor or manager if there is ever any lack of understanding in relation to the commitments and expectations as set out in this Policy. • To adopt appropriate safeguarding practice and behaviour • To take action to protect children and young people from all forms of abuse and neglect. • To report any abuse committed by personnel within our School or by others. To assist in creating and maintaining a child safe culture and a culture of inclusion and safety.

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APPENDIX 1

CHILD PROTECTION COMMITMENT STATEMENT

As we grow as a School, we grow in our awareness of the ways in which we can best support our children and young people.

Scotch College exists for educational purposes in connection with the Presbyterian Church of Victoria, and Christian teachings are fundamental to all that we do. We value the independent spirit of each child and young person, and seek to equip all children and young people with an enduring empathy for the needs and views of others.

The School aims to develop the innate and acquired potential of each child and young person, and so prepare them for a place in the world and for a purpose greater than themselves. We seek to do this in an exciting, relational environment which nurtures self-expression and self-worth, while promoting the uniqueness of each child and young person's journey.

We want Scotch children and young people to feel a sense of belonging, of trust and of confidence in their immediate world, in themselves, and in their relationships.

We understand that when children feel cared for by adults who set clear boundaries, and who are sensitive, open and uncomplicated in their expectations, they feel safe. And it is within such an environment of safety that they are empowered to be their best.

All Scotch personnel are required to understand the important responsibility they have, to:

- protect children and young people from all forms of abuse, bullying and exploitation by people within the School's facilities, operations, services and activities;
- be alert to and report incidents of child abuse and neglect occurring both within and beyond the scope of our facilities, operations, services and activities, that may have an impact on the children and young people for whom we provide a service; and,
- create and maintain a child-safe culture that is understood, endorsed and put into action by all the individuals who work for, volunteer or access our programs and services.

This Commitment Statement and our Safeguarding Reporting Policy have been authorised by the School Council and adopted by the School. They articulate our commitment to the safeguarding of children, protecting them from abuse and neglect.

Safeguarding Scotch involves every member of our community: all members of staff, all visitors and volunteers, and all students and their families.

Our School community will not exploit, harm or abuse children and young people.

WE ACT IN THE BEST INTERESTS OF THE CHILD

For the purposes of this Commitment Statement, acting in the best interests of the child includes:

- reporting to Child Protection and/or the Police all allegations or disclosures of physical abuse, sexual abuse, emotional abuse and neglect;
- reporting to Child Protection when a belief is formed that a child is in need of protection where a child has been harmed or is at risk of being harmed;
- making the child's ongoing safety and wellbeing the primary focus of decision-making;
- sharing appropriate information, expertise and resources with other service providers supporting the child;
- protecting and respecting the cultural and spiritual wellbeing of a child, and his or her connection to family or community of origin;
- enabling the child and the child's family to access appropriate services in order to reduce the long-term effects of abuse or neglect; and
- keeping the School Council informed through the Risk Committee of safeguarding incidents rated high and critical (nature, frequency and response).

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WE ACT ON ALL CONCERNS RELATING TO CHILD PROTECTION IN OUR COMMUNITY

Any person who believes on reasonable grounds that a child is in need of protection may report their belief and the grounds to Child Protection or the Police. Requirements of Scotch College staff in relation to these matters are detailed in the School's Safeguarding Reporting Policy.

The grounds on which a child is in need of protection include:

- where the child has been abandoned by his or her parents or carers and, after reasonable enquiries, the parents or carers cannot be found, and no other suitable person can be found who is willing and able to care for the child;
- where the child has suffered or is likely to suffer significant harm as a result of physical injury or sexual abuse, and the child's parents or carers have not protected or are unlikely to protect the child;
- where the child has suffered or is likely to suffer emotional or psychological harm of such a kind that his or her emotional or intellectual development is, or is likely to be, damaged, and the child's parents or carers have not protected or are unlikely to protect the child;
- where the child's physical development or health has been or is likely to be significantly harmed, and the child's parents or carers have not arranged for, or are unlikely to arrange for, basic care or effective medical, surgical or other remedial care for the child; and,
- where a child has suffered or is likely to suffer significant harm of a physical, sexual, emotional, developmental or psychological nature as a consequence of activity perpetrated by a member of the school community.

ACTIONS

The school commits to take the following actions to ensure the integrity of the Child Protection Commitment Statement by:

- informing the School community annually of the statement, and making the statement publicly accessible;
- monitoring the School's adherence to the statement through the offices of the Vice Principal and Child Protection Officer, reporting to the School Executive;
- providing appropriate and regular guidance and training for all staff, designed to reinforce obligations and responsibilities in relation to child abuse, areas of potential risk and the standards of practice expected; and,
- ensuring that appropriate support is readily available for any child disclosing abuse or suspected of being a victim of abuse.

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APPENDIX 2

DEFINITIONS

The following definitions are applicable across all environments, including in-person and online.

Term	Definition
Bullying	<p>Bullying involves the inappropriate use of power by one or more persons over another less powerful person or group and is generally an act that is repeated over time. Bullying has been described by researchers as taking many forms which are often interrelated and include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Verbal (name calling, put downs, threats); • Physical (hitting, punching, kicking, scratching, tripping, spitting); • Social (ignoring, excluding, ostracising, alienating); and/or • Psychological (spreading rumours, stalking, dirty looks, hiding or damaging possessions).
Child or young person	<p>A person under the age of eighteen years.</p> <p>Extends to include persons over the age of 18 while enrolled at the School</p>
Code of Conduct	<p>The Child Safety Code of Conduct aims to identify and prevent behaviour that may be harmful to children and young people in our communities. The Child Safety Code of Conduct outlines what is, and what is not acceptable behaviour or practice when working with or engaging with children and young people.</p>
Emotional or psychological abuse	<p>Emotional or psychological abuse occurs when a child or young person does not receive the love, affection or attention they need for healthy emotional, psychological and social development. Such abuse may involve repeated rejection or threats to a child or young person. Constant criticism, teasing, ignoring, threatening, yelling, scapegoating, ridicule and rejection or continual coldness are all examples of emotional abuse. These behaviours continue to an extent that results in significant damage to the child or young person's physical, intellectual or emotional wellbeing and development.</p>
Family Violence	<p>Family violence occurs when children are forced to live with violence between people in their home. It is harmful to children. It can include witnessing violence or the consequences of violence. Family violence is defined as violence between members of a family or extended family or those fulfilling the role of family in a child or young person's life. Exposure to family violence places children and young people at increased risk of physical injury and harm and has a significant impact on their wellbeing and development.</p>
Grooming	<p>Grooming is a term used to describe what happens when a perpetrator of abuse builds a relationship with a child with a view to abusing them at some stage. There is no set pattern in relation to the grooming of children. For some perpetrators, there will be a lengthy period of time before the abuse begins. The child may be given special attention and, what starts as an apparently normal display of affection, such as cuddling, can develop into sexual touching or masturbation and then into more serious sexual behaviour. Other perpetrators may draw a child in and abuse them relatively quickly. Some abusers do not groom children but abuse them without forming a relationship at all. Grooming can take place in any setting where a relationship is formed, such as leisure, music, sports and religious activities, or in internet chatrooms, in social media or by other technological channels.</p>
Harm	<p>Harm to a child is any detrimental effect of a significant nature on the child's physical, psychological or emotional wellbeing. It is immaterial how the harm is caused. Harm can be caused by:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • physical, psychological or emotional abuse or neglect; • sexual abuse or exploitation; • a single act, omission or circumstance; and • a series or combination of acts, omissions or circumstances.
LGBTQI+	<p>Lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, queer and intersex</p>

Term	Definition
National Principles for Child Safe Organisations (National Principles)	The National Principles are designed to build capacity and deliver child safety and wellbeing in organisations, families and communities and prevent future harm. The Principles have been endorsed by all Commonwealth, state and territory governments. https://chidsafe.humanrights.gov.au/national-principles
Neglect	Neglect is the persistent failure or deliberate denial to provide the child or young person with the basic necessities of life. Such neglect includes the failure to provide adequate food, clothing, shelter, adequate supervision, clean water, medical attention or supervision to the extent that the child or young person's health and development is, or is likely to be, significantly harmed. Categories of neglect include physical neglect, medical neglect, abandonment or desertion, emotional neglect and educational neglect. The issue of neglect must be considered within the context of resources reasonably available.
Online environment	Anywhere online that allows digital communication, such as: social networks, text messages and messaging apps, email and private messaging, online chats, comments on live streaming sites and voice chat in games.
Personnel	All who work for the School whether in a paid or unpaid capacity, including employees, casual employees, volunteers, Council and Council committee members and contractors.
Physical abuse	Physical abuse occurs when a person subjects a child or young person to non-accidental physically aggressive acts. The abuser may inflict an injury intentionally or inadvertently as a result of physical punishment or the aggressive treatment of a child or young person. Physically abusive behaviour includes (but is not limited to) showing, hitting, slapping, shaking, throwing, punching, biting, burning, suffocating, excessive and physically harmful over training, and kicking. It also includes giving children and young people harmful substances such as drugs, alcohol or poison. Certain types of punishment, whilst not causing injury can also be considered physical abuse if they place a child or young person at risk of being hurt.
Risk management	In the context of creating safe environments for children and young people, risk management consists of assessing and taking steps to minimise the risks of harm to children and young people because of the action of an employee, volunteer, contractor or another child or young person. Risk management includes planning the work of the School to reduce or minimise situations where children and young people may be abused.
The Royal Commission into Institutional Responses to Child Sexual Abuse (Royal Commission).	An independent inquiry established in 2013 by the Australian Government to examine and report upon responses by institutions to instances and allegations of child sexual abuse in educational institutions, religious groups, sporting organisations, state institutions and youth organisations. The findings provide recommendations to the Government on how to improve laws, polices, structures and practices to prevent such harm from re-occurring. https://www.childabuseroyalcommission.gov.au/
Sexual abuse	Sexual abuse occurs when an adult or a person of authority (e.g. teacher, coach) involves a child or young person in any sexual activity. Perpetrators of sexual abuse take advantage of their power, authority or position over the child or young person for their own benefit. It can include making sexual comments to a child, engaging children to participate in sexual conversations over the internet or on social media, kissing, touching a child's genitals or breasts, oral sex or intercourse with a child. Encouraging a child to view pornographic magazines, websites and videos is also sexual abuse. Engaging children to participate in sexual conversations over the internet is also considered sexual abuse.
Sexual exploitation	Sexual exploitation is a form of sexual abuse where offenders use their power, (physical, financial or emotional) over a child or young person, or a false identity, to sexually or emotionally abuse them. It often involves situations and relationships where children and young people receive something (food, accommodation, drugs, alcohol, cigarettes, affection, gifts, money etc.) in return for participating in sexual activities. Sexual exploitation can occur in person or online, and sometimes the child or young person may not even realise they are a victim.
United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child	Is an international agreement setting out the civil, political, economic, social and cultural rights of every child, regardless of their race, religion or abilities. https://www.ohchr.org/en/professionalinterest/pages/crc.aspx

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DEFINITION REFERENCE AND SOURCES

Australian Institute of Health and Welfare (AIHW), 2018
World Health Organization, (2006)
Child Family Community Australia (CFCA), (2016).
Australian eSafety Commissioner, (2020).

Reference	Date approved	Date last amended	Date of next review	Status
	Endorsed by: Risk Committee of Council 26 th August 2021		August 2024	Endorsed by ACF 25 th May 2021 Approved by: School Council 04/10/2021