



## Child Safe Policy

### **RATIONALE:**

The Child Safe Policy sets out the school's approach to creating a child safe organisation where children and young people are safe and feel safe; and provides the policy framework for the school's approach to the Child Safe Standards as outlined in Ministerial Order No. 870.

### **SCOPE:**

All staff, volunteers, contractors whether or not they work in direct contact with children or young people. This policy will apply across a range of school forums (e.g. camps, online) both in and outside of school hours.

### **IMPLEMENTATION:**

Maffra Secondary College is committed to safety and wellbeing of all children and young people. This will be the primary focus of our care and decision-making.

Maffra Secondary College is committed to providing a child safe environment where children and young people are safe and feel safe, and their voices are heard about decisions that affect their lives. Particular attention will be paid to the cultural safety of Aboriginal children and children from culturally and/or linguistically diverse backgrounds, as well as the safety of children with a disability and children who are vulnerable.

### **Child Safety Officer**

Maffra Secondary College has designated the Child Safety Officer as the College Wellbeing Leader. This includes the substantive employee, or any person acting in this role for a period of time. Refer to Child Safety Officer role description for more details.

**Every person** involved in Maffra Secondary College has a responsibility to understand the important and specific role he/she plays individually and collectively to ensure that the wellbeing and safety of all children and young people is at the forefront of all they do and every decision they make. Child Safety – policy and procedures will be an integral component of the College's induction program for new and returning staff.

Maffra Secondary College has zero tolerance for child abuse.

### **Reporting a concern**

If any person has a concern regarding child safety, or any information pertaining to the possibility of or potential for child abuse, they **MUST** report the information immediately.

Students, parents, staff or any community member should report their concerns in the first instance to the Child Safety Officer and/or the College Principal.

The Child Safe Officer will take responsibility for promptly managing the school's response to an allegation or disclosure of child abuse, while the principal, holding ultimate responsibility, will oversee the process.

The Child Safety Officer is responsible for responding appropriately to a child who makes or is affected by an allegation of child abuse.

### **Duty of Care**

**All staff** at Maffra Secondary College have a duty of care to take reasonable precautions to prevent the abuse of a child by an individual associated with the College while the child is under the care, supervision or authority of the organisation. **Staff at Maffra Secondary College have a duty of care to all students** and will take reasonable measures to protect them from risks of injury that should have been reasonably foreseen. Where Maffra Secondary College engages a service provider – The school will assess all external providers WWC & Police Checks credentials in order to ensure that the experience, qualifications and skills of each staff member (including volunteers, instructors – where a service provider is engaged, must be sufficient in order to provide effective supervision in general and for planned activities (as applicable). The Duty of Care cannot be transferred. The Duty of Care always lies with the teacher.

Maffra Secondary College is committed to providing a child safe environment where children and young people are safe and feel safe, and their voices are heard about decisions that affect their lives.

### **Visitors to the School**

Any visitors to the school **must** report to and sign in at the main office. Visitors will not be allowed to walk around the school unsupervised. All visitors must remain in the main Office unless supervised by a member of staff. Visitors will be supervised at all times, particularly, if speaking with any of our students. All visitors will be required to wear a badge or lanyard displaying the workers credentials / WWC card.

### **In its planning, decision-making and operations, Maffra Secondary College will:**

1. Take a preventative, proactive and participatory approach to child safety.
2. Value and empower students to participate in decisions which affect their lives.
3. Foster a culture of openness that supports all persons to safely disclose risks of harm to children.
4. Respect diversity in cultures and child rearing practices while keeping child safety paramount.
5. Provide written guidance on appropriate conduct and behaviour towards all students.
6. Engage only the most suitable people to work with children and have high quality staff and volunteer supervision and professional development.
7. Ensure children know who to talk with if they are worried or are feeling unsafe, and that they are comfortable and encouraged to raise such issues.
8. Report suspected abuse, neglect or mistreatment promptly to the appropriate authorities.
9. Share information appropriately and lawfully with other organisations where the safety and wellbeing of children is at risk.
10. Value the input of and communicate regularly with families and carers.

#### Policy and Procedures

Policies and procedures outlining Maffra Secondary College's approach to the Child Safe Standards are outlined below. For further information, please contact the school's Principal or Assistant Principal.

#### A child-Safe culture

Maffra Secondary College's culture encourages staff to raise, discuss and scrutinise concerns making it more difficult for abuse to occur and remain hidden.

#### Personnel understand

School leaders and managers will ensure that each person

their roles and responsibilities/Code of Conduct

understands their role, responsibilities and behaviour expected in protecting children and young people from abuse and neglect. Staff will comply with the school's Code of Conduct. The school's Code of Conduct sets out clear awareness of the difference between appropriate and inappropriate behaviour. Refer to the Victorian Institute of Teaching, Victorian Teachers Professional Codes of Conduct and Ethics

Human resources practices and training

The school applies best practice standards in the recruitment and screening of staff, and will take all reasonable steps to ensure that it engages the most suitable and appropriate people to work with them. We will ensure that staff induction, education and training programs are a vital part of our commitment to safeguarding children and young people from abuse and neglect. All prospective staff and volunteers are required to undergo National Criminal History Records check and/or maintain a valid Working with Children Check.

Reporting a child safety concern or complaint

The school has clear expectations for staff and volunteers in making a report about a child or young person who may be in need of protection. Immediate action should include reporting their concerns to the DHHS Child Protection or another appropriate agency and notifying the principal or a member of the school leadership team of their concerns and the reasons for those concerns.

Risk reduction and management

The school believes the wellbeing of children and young people is paramount, and is vigilant in ensuring proper risk management processes. The school recognises there are potential risks to children and young people and will take a risk management approach by undertaking preventative measures.

Listening to children

The school has developed a safe, inclusive and supportive environment that involves and communicates with children, young people and their parents/care givers. We encourage child and parent/care giver involvement and engagement that informs safe school operations and builds the capability of children and parents/care givers to understand their rights and their responsibilities.

Confidentiality and Privacy

Considerable importance is placed on safeguarding the confidentiality and privacy of information about particular children and their families. The collection, use and storage of information is included in school policies.

Breaches

Breaches of Duty of Care and Mandatory Reporting Obligations are identified in the specific policies.

Policy evaluation and review

To ensure ongoing relevance and continuous improvement, this policy will be reviewed in the context of school self-evaluation undertaken as part of the school accountability framework.

Definitions

A full list of definitions for Ministerial Order No. 870 is available at [www.vrqa.vic.gov.au/childsafes](http://www.vrqa.vic.gov.au/childsafes)

**Child abuse includes**

- Any act committed against a child involving –  
a sexual offence or  
an offence under section 49B(2) of the *Crimes Act 1958* (grooming)

- The infliction, on a child, of-  
Physical violence or  
Serious emotional or psychological harm
- Serious neglect of a child

*Child safety* encompasses matters related to protecting all children from child abuse, managing the risk of child abuse, providing support to a child at risk of child abuse, and responding to incidents or allegations of child abuse.

**School Environment means:**

*School environment* means any physical or virtual place made available or authorised by the school governing authority for use by a child during or outside school hours, including:

- a campus of the school
- online school environments (including email and intranet systems)
- other locations provided by the school for a child’s use (including, without limitation, locations used for school camps, sporting events, excursions, competitions and other events)

**School staff means:**

In a government school, an individual working in a school environment who is:

- employed under Part 2.4 of the *Education and Training Reform Act 2006 (ETR Act)* in the government teaching service or
- employed under a contract of service by the council of the school under Part 2.3 of the ETR Act or
- a volunteer or a contracted service provider (whether or not a body corporate or any other person is an intermediary)

This document and other related policies are available on the school’s website. Any concerns and or questions in regards to this policy can be directed to the Principal.

**Related policies and Documents**

School Policy Advisory Guide – Duty of Care  
 School Policy Advisory Guide – Child Protection Reporting Obligations  
 DET Child Wellbeing and Safety Framework  
 MSC Student Engagement, Welfare & Wellbeing Policy  
 MSC Mandatory Reporting Policy  
 MSC Bullying & Harassment Policy

**RATIFICATION:**

This policy was ratified by School Council in August 2018

This policy will be reviewed as part the school’s regular review cycle, or earlier if deemed necessary.