

## Yurran P-9 College

### Child Safety and Wellbeing Policy



#### Help for non-English speakers

If you need help to understand this policy, please contact the School Administration Office.

#### Purpose

The Yurran P-9 College Child Safety and Wellbeing Policy demonstrates our school's commitment to creating and maintaining a child safe and child-friendly organisation, 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](#) (PDF, 363KB) 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 by for a student's use (for example, a school camp) and those provided through third-party providers
- should be read together with our other child safety and wellbeing policies, procedures, and codes – refer to the related school policies section below.

#### Definitions

The following terms in this policy have [specific definitions](#):

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

## **Statement of commitment to child safety**

Yurran P-9 College is a child safe organisation which welcomes all children, young people and their families.

We are committed to providing environments 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 children and 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 environments.

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

We take proactive steps to identify and manage any risk 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.

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 lesbian, gay, bisexual, trans and gender diverse, intersex, queer, questioning and asexual (LGBTIQA+) 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 of the principal, assistant principal and learning specialists are 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.

Principals and assistant principals 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 (where appropriate) to build deeper understandings of child safety, cultural safety, student wellbeing and prevention of, and 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 always follow the school's child safety and wellbeing 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, including following the [Four Critical Actions for Schools](#)
- 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
- approve updates to, and act in accordance with the Child Safety Code of Conduct to the extent that it applies to school council employees and members
- ensure that selection, supervision, and management practices are child safe when hiring school council employees.

### **Specific staff child safety responsibilities**

Yurran P-9 College has nominated a Child Safety Officer to support the principal to implement our child safety policies and practices, including staff and volunteer training.

The responsibilities of the child safety officer are outlined at [Guidance for child safety champions](#). In addition to these roles, our Child Safety Officer is also responsible for:

- providing professional learning to all new staff during induction as well as to school council members.

Our principal and Child Safety Officer are the first point of contact for child safety concerns or queries and for coordinating responses to child safety incidents.

- the Child Safety Officer is responsible for monitoring the school's compliance with the Child Safety and Wellbeing Policy. Anyone in our school community should approach the

child safety officer if they have any concerns about the school's compliance with the Child Safety and Wellbeing Policy

- the Child Safety Officer is responsible for informing the school community about this policy, and making it publicly available
- other specific roles and responsibilities are named in other child safety policies and procedures, including the Child Safety Code of Conduct, Child Safety Responding and Reporting Obligations (including Mandatory Reporting) Policy and Procedures, and Child Safety Risk Register.

Our school has also established a Child Safety and Wellbeing Team and a Student Reference Group (SRG) on child safety. The Child Safety and Wellbeing Team meet regularly to identify and respond to any ongoing matters related to child safety and wellbeing. The Student Representative Council (SRC) provides an opportunity for students to provide input into school strategies.

Our Risk Management Committee monitors the Child Safety Risk Register.

### **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 and wellbeing in our physical and online school environments. These risks are managed through our child safety and wellbeing policies, procedures and practices, and in our activity specific risk registers, such as those we develop for off-site overnight camps, adventure activities and facilities and services we contract through third party providers for student use.

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 Yurran P-9 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 and the Aboriginal community to have a voice and presence in our school planning, policies, and activities.

We have developed the following strategies to promote cultural safety in our school community:

- equip staff, students, volunteers, and the school community to acknowledge and appreciate the strengths of Aboriginal culture and understand its importance to the wellbeing and safety of Aboriginal students
- adopt measures to ensure racism is identified, confronted, and not tolerated

- address any instances of racism within the school environment with appropriate consequences
- actively support participation and inclusion in the school by Aboriginal children, students, and their families
- ensure school policies, procedures, systems, and processes together create a culturally safe and inclusive environment and meet the needs of Aboriginal children, students, and their families
- celebrate our community diversity through participation in and promotion of Harmony Day.

We actively seek participation and feedback from Koorie students, families and Community by:

- acknowledging the existing knowledge of Koorie students and their families and seeking their feedback on decisions that affect them, and on how well we are meeting their needs, through initial enrolment meetings, Student Support Groups, during the development of Individual Education Plans and Student Led Conferences
- working with our regional Koorie Engagement Support Officers (KESOs) for advice on how we can create a culturally inclusive learning environment and to build our capacity to provide support for individual Koorie students attending our school.

To ensure our staff are equipped with the skills and knowledge necessary to create and maintain a positive and inclusive school environment we support teachers to work in their Professional Learning Communities (PLCs) to identify and develop teaching and learning activities within the Victorian Curriculum priorities to enable staff to build their confidence with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander content and to recognise opportunities to draw upon Aboriginal pedagogies and practices within their classrooms.

In addition, we support our staff to participate in the Community Understanding and Safety Training (CUST), which strengthens the capability of school staff to build more culturally inclusive practices, including embedding Aboriginal perspectives in the curriculum, and connecting with Aboriginal Community to support ongoing learning and partnership

Yurran P-9 College supports the development of high expectations and individualised learning for Koorie students and creates a learning environment for all students that acknowledges, respects and values Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander cultures and identities. This includes:

- implementing the Department of Education and Training's Koorie Education Policy
- ensuring that all Koorie students have individual education plans developed in partnership with students, families, and KESOs.
- we utilise additional staff resources such as the [Koorie teaching resources for leaders and teachers](#)

We ensure our school events and activities acknowledge and celebrate Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander culture by acknowledging the Country and Traditional Owners of the land on which our school is located Bunurong Country, at the start of every school assembly and meeting and arranging Welcome to Country by local Elders at major school events such as the opening of new buildings or campuses.

We ensure our built environment and website demonstrates an appreciation and acknowledgment of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander culture through:

- flying the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander flags on school grounds.

- displaying plaques/signs outside our main entrance that Acknowledge Country and Traditional Owners
- including an Acknowledgement of Country and Traditional Owners on our website home page.

Our *Action Plan – Aboriginal Learning, Wellbeing and Safety* outlines the measures we have in place to maintain an inclusive and culturally safe school for Aboriginal children, students and their families. This plan links to the Department of Education’s [Marrung Aboriginal Education Plan](#).

### **Student empowerment**

To support child safety and wellbeing at Yurran P-9 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 our whole school approach to Respectful Relationships, our student Code of Conduct and our school values.

We inform students of their rights through our whole school approach to Respectful Relationships and wellbeing programs to 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 also access information on how to report concerns on the school website or via the Administration office.

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. To ensure our students are empowered we:

- inform students about all their rights, including their rights to safety, information, and participation
- recognise the importance of friendships and encourage support from peers, to help students feel safe and be less isolated
- make sure staff and volunteers:
  - are attuned to signs of harm
  - facilitate child-friendly ways for students to express their views, participate in decision- making and raise their concerns
- have developed a culture that encourages participation and responds to what students say
- give students opportunities to participate – via the SRC/SRG, student surveys and within the classroom, and respond to their contributions to strengthen confidence and engagement
- develop curriculum planning documents or other documentation that details how the school will address these requirements.

### **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 Yurran P-9 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:

- all of our child safety policies and procedures will be available for students and parents on our school website and available in hardcopy at the administration office, if required
- Newsletters and compass newsfeeds will 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 promoting child safety, student voice and agency
- create a welcoming environment at school reception so community members and families feel respected, included and safe to come onto our school grounds
- conduct an interview with each new family to ask parents and carers about their children to build connection and to learn about any unique requirements.
- in an ongoing capacity families will be included in Student Support Groups to assist in developing individual plans for students so that there is full transparency regarding what and who will be involved in the care and education of their child.
- organise interpreters and translators to engage with families from non-english speaking backgrounds, in conversations about the school's child safety strategies
- remind the school community about the shared roles of parents, carers and school staff in creating a positive environment for learning by promoting the Respectful Relationship Behaviours and program in the School Community Policy
- communicate with and appropriately involve families at all stages of the process if a concern is raised or complaint is made.

### **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+.

Our Student Wellbeing and Engagement Policy provides more information about the measures we have in place to support diversity and equity.

Other key strategies include:

- communicate with the school community that discrimination and bullying are not tolerated – if incidents of bullying or discrimination occur, address the incident in line with school policy
- let students know they can raise concerns or report incidents that occurred at school and outside the school
- check in with vulnerable students and their families to confirm their needs are being met
- engage genuinely with students. Find out what matters to them, what they know and don't know about safety, and what they need to be safe and feel safe
- seek out expert advice as needed to support inclusion, such as an occupational therapist, speech pathologist and or mental health practitioners
- ensure school environments are welcoming and inclusive. For example:
  - display flags representing different cultures within the school community
  - provide educational resources in different languages
- provide child safety information in accessible, child-friendly language and formats
- accompany child safety information with the support materials needed to help students and families interpret it
- recognise dates that connect with our school community, for example:
  - National Reconciliation Week
  - Harmony Day
  - R U OK Day
  - NAIDOC Week
- Refer to the [Preventing and Addressing Racism in Schools](#) policy which provides an extensive list of resources to strengthen our schools culture and practice to prevent and address racism.

### **Suitable staff and volunteers**

At Yurran P-9 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's recruitment policies and guidelines, available on the Policy and Advisory Library (PAL) at:

- [Recruitment in Schools](#)
- [Suitability for Employment Checks](#)
- [School Council Employment](#)
- [Contractor OHS Management](#)

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 teaching 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.
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### **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 and Wellbeing Policy (this document)
- the Child Safety Code of Conduct
- the Child Safety Responding and Reporting Obligations (including Mandatory Reporting) Policy and Procedures and
- any other child safety and wellbeing information that school leadership considers appropriate to the nature of the role.

### **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:

- performance and development processes
- visibility into all learning areas (including open and shared classrooms and open learning spaces)
- learning walks conducted by leadership
- peer observations
- mentoring and coaching
- professional development
- mentors and additional support

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 our Volunteers Policy, which describes how we assess the suitability of prospective volunteers and outlines expectations in relation to child safety and wellbeing induction and training, and 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 and wellbeing training will be delivered at least annually and will include guidance on:

- our school's child safety and wellbeing policies, procedures, codes, and practices

- completing the [Protecting Children – Mandatory Reporting and Other Legal Obligations](#) online module annually
- recognising indicators of child harm including harm caused by other children and students
- responding effectively to issues of child safety and wellbeing 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 and wellbeing, for example, training for our 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 wellbeing, 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 and wellbeing risks in our school environment
- Yurran P-9 College child safety and wellbeing policies, procedures, codes and practices.

### **Complaints and reporting processes**

Yurran P-9 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.

We have clear pathways for raising complaints and concerns and responding and this is documented in our school's Complaint Policy. The Complaints Policy can be found on the school website or can be requested at the administration office.

If there is an incident, disclosure, allegation or suspicion of child abuse, all staff and volunteers (including school council employees) 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
- the [Four Critical Actions: Student Sexual Offending](#) for complaints and concerns relating to student sexual offending

Our Student Wellbeing and Engagement Policy and Bullying Prevention Policy cover complaints and concerns relating to student physical violence or other harmful behaviours.

## **Communications**

Yurran P-9 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 including the Child Safety and Wellbeing Policy (this document), Child Safety Code of Conduct, and the Child Safety Responding and Reporting Obligations (including Mandatory Reporting) Policy and Procedure
- displaying PROTECT and Child Safety Officer posters around the school
- throughout the primary school we will also consider displaying:
  - visually engaging and easy-to-read posters (e.g. student created or DE [posters](#)) around the school promoting child safety, student voice and agency
  - sharing a complaints [fact sheet](#) and [scenarios](#) on our school website and in our school newsletter for students and their parents/carers
- updates in our school newsletter and via compass
- ensuring that child safety is a regular agenda item at school leadership meetings, staff meetings and school council meetings.

## **Privacy and information sharing**

Yurran P-9 College collects, uses, and discloses information about children and their families in accordance with Victorian privacy laws, and other relevant laws. For information on how our school collects, uses and discloses information refer to: [Schools' Privacy Policy](#).

## **Records management**

We acknowledge that good records management practices are a critical element of child safety and wellbeing and manage our records in accordance with the Department of Education's policy: [Records Management – School Records](#)

## **Review of child safety practices**

At Yurran P-9 College, we have established processes for the review and ongoing improvement of our child safe policies, procedures, and practices.

The principal will:

- review and improve our policy every 2 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 community
- develop a register of existing child safe standard policies, noting the date the policy was approved, and schedule a review date every 2 years
- monitor and manage child safety risks using a risk register
- determine the causes of child safety incidents and monitor for repeat issues or systemic failures
- use complaints and incidents as a learning opportunity to inform continuous improvement.

## **Related policies and procedures**

This Child Safety and Wellbeing Policy is to be read in conjunction with other related school policies, procedures, and codes. These include our:

- *Bullying Prevention Policy*
- *Child Safety Responding and Reporting Obligations Policy and Procedures*
- *Child Safety Code of Conduct*
- *Complaints Policy*
- *Acceptable Use Agreement*
- *Inclusion and Diversity Policy*
- *Student Wellbeing and Engagement Policy*
- *Visitors Policy*
- *Volunteers Policy*

### **Related Department of Education policies**

- [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](#)
- [LGBTIQ+ Student Support](#)
- [Visitors in Schools Policy](#)
- [Volunteers in Schools Policy](#)
- [Working with Children and other Suitability Checks for School Volunteers and Visitors](#)
- [Preventing and Addressing Racism in schools](#)

### **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](#)

### **Policy status and review**

The principal along with the Child Safety Officer is responsible for reviewing and updating the Child Safety and Wellbeing Policy at least every two years. The review will include input from students, parents/carers and the school community.

### **Approval**

<b>Policy last reviewed</b>	July 2025
<b>Consultation</b>	Consultation with School Council and the school community to take place in Term 1, 2026 (or as soon as the School Council is appointed)

<b>Approved by</b>	Principal - July 2025
<b>Next scheduled review date</b>	Term 1, 2026 To ensure ongoing relevance and continuous improvement, this policy will be reviewed every 1-2 years thereafter*

\*The Child Safety and Wellbeing Policy will be reviewed earlier if a significant incident occurs or due to legislative changes.