



1. Purpose

Girton Grammar School's Child Safety Policy sets out the school's commitment and approach to creating and maintaining 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.

2. Scope

This policy applies to all staff, volunteers, contractors and other people connected to the school, whether or not they work in direct contact with children or young people. This policy also applies to School Board members where indicated.

The policy will apply to the school environment (see Definitions section). The policy covers both school hours and outside of school hours.

3. Definitions

Child abuse

Child abuse includes:

- 3.1 Any act by an adult or older adolescent that causes harm against a child involving:
 - 3.1.1 a sexual offence or abuse; or
 - 3.1.2 grooming; and
- 3.2 The infliction, on a child, of:
 - 3.2.1 physical violence or abuse; or
 - 3.2.2 serious emotional or psychological harm; and
- 3.3 Serious neglect of a child.

Child-connected work

Child-connected work means work authorised by the school, or School Board and performed by an adult in a school environment while children are present or reasonably expected to be present.

Child safety

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

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

- 3.4 All campuses of the school (Senior Campus; Junior Campus; Gymnasium);
- 3.5 Online school environments (including email and intranet systems); and
- 3.6 Other locations provided by the school for a child's use (including, but not limited to, locations used for school camps, sporting events, excursions, competitions, homestays, and other school activities or events)

School staff

School staff means an individual working in a school environment who is:

- 3.7 employed by Girton Grammar School;
- 3.8 directly engaged or employed by the Board; or
- 3.9 a volunteer, including parents or
- 3.10 a contracted service provider (whether or not a body corporate or any other person is an intermediary).
- 3.11 other people connected to the school including alumni or visitors

4 Statement of commitment to child safety and child safety principles

Girton Grammar School is committed to the safety and wellbeing of all children and young people. This is to be the primary focus of our care and decision-making.

Girton Grammar School has zero tolerance for any form of child abuse.

We are 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. Our child safe policies, procedures, strategies and practices will be inclusive of the needs of all children, particularly Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children, children from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds, children with disabilities, children who are vulnerable, Out of Home Care (OoHC) students and international students.

Every person involved in Girton Grammar School has a responsibility to understand the important and specific role they play 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.

At Girton, we understand that children need adults to be their advocates.



2.0 Child Safety Policy

Child safety principles

In its planning, decision-making and operations, Girton Grammar will:

- 4.1 Take a preventative, proactive and participatory approach to child safety;
- 4.2 Value and empower children to participate in decisions which affect their lives;
- 4.3 Foster a culture of openness that supports all persons to safely disclose risks of harm to children;
- 4.4 Respect diversity in cultures and child rearing practices while keeping child safety paramount;
- 4.5 Provide written guidance on appropriate conduct and behaviour towards children;
- 4.6 Engage only the most suitable people to work with children and have high quality staff and volunteer supervision and professional development;
- 4.7 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 concerns;
- 4.8 Report suspected abuse, neglect or mistreatment promptly to the appropriate authorities;
- 4.9 Share information appropriately and lawfully with other organisations where the safety and wellbeing of children is at risk; and
- 4.10 Value and encourage open and frequent dialogue about Child Safety between families and the school

5 Policy

Strategies to embed a child safe culture

Girton Grammar School's culture encourages staff, students, parents and the school community to raise, discuss and scrutinise child safety concerns. This makes it more difficult for abuse to occur and remain hidden.

All child safety documents, including this policy, the [Child Safety Code of Conduct](#), the school's [Child Safety Responding and Reporting Obligations](#) and Procedures, [Identifying and Responding to All Forms of Abuse in Victorian Schools](#) and the [Four Critical Actions for Schools](#) are readily available via Astra for all staff, students and parents to read at any time.



2.0 Child Safety Policy

Child safety is everyone's responsibility. **All school staff** are required to:

- 5.1 Act in accordance with the school's Child Safety Code of Conduct, which clearly sets out the difference between appropriate and inappropriate behaviour
- 5.2 Act in accordance with the Child Safety Responding and Reporting Obligations (including Mandatory Reporting) Policy and Procedures at all times, including following the [Four Critical Actions for Schools](#) where necessary
- 5.3 Undertake annual guidance and training on child safety
- 5.4 Act in accordance with their legal obligations, including:
 - 5.4.1 Failure to disclose offence (applies to all adults)
 - 5.4.2 Duty of care (applies to all school staff)
 - 5.4.3 Mandatory reporting obligations (applies to all mandatory reporters, including teachers, principals, registered psychologists, religious Ministry, and registered nurses)
 - 5.4.4 Failure to protect offence (applies to a person in a position of authority within the school)
 - 5.4.5 Reportable conduct obligations (applies to all school staff in reporting conduct to the principal, and applies to the principal in reporting to Employee Conduct Branch)
 - 5.4.6 Organisational duty of care (applies to the school as an organisation)
 - 5.4.7 For more information on these obligations, see [Identifying and Responding to All forms of Abuse in Victorian Schools](#)

As part of Girton Grammar's child safe culture, school leadership (including the Principal and Deputy Principal) will:

- 5.5 Consider the diversity of all children, including (but not limited to) the needs of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children, children from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds, children with disabilities, children who are vulnerable, Out of Home Care (OoHC) students and International students, when implementing the Child Safe Standards
- 5.6 Ensure that child safety is a regular agenda item at school leadership meetings and staff meetings
- 5.7 Encourage and enable staff professional learning and training to build deeper understandings of child safety and prevention of abuse
- 5.8 Ensure that no one is prohibited or discouraged from reporting an allegation of child abuse to a person external to the school or from making records of any allegation

As part of Girton Grammar's child safe culture, **All School Staff** are required to:

- 5.9 Complete annual training on Mandatory Reporting and Child Safety



2.0 Child Safety Policy

- 5.10 Read and acknowledge the school's [Child Safety Code of Conduct](#) on induction, and maintain familiarity with that document annually.
- 5.11 Read and acknowledge the school's [Child Safety Responding and Reporting Obligations Policy](#) on induction, and maintain familiarity with that document
- 5.12 Read the school's Child Safety Policy (this document) on induction, and maintain familiarity with that document

As part of Girton Grammar's child safe culture, in performing the functions and powers given to them under the Education and Training Reform Act 2006, **School Board Members** will:

- 5.13 Ensure that child safety is a regular agenda item at Board meetings
- 5.14 Consider the diversity of all children, including (but not limited to) the needs of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children, children from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds, children with disabilities, children who are vulnerable, Out of Home Care (OoHC) students and International students, when making decisions regarding the Child Safe Standards
- 5.15 Undertake annual guidance and training on child safety, such as the Victorian Child Safe Standards – We All Have a Role to Play Training Module (Litmos)
- 5.16 Approve the Child Safety Code of Conduct to the extent that it applies to school board members, and if updated, note the new document in its School Board meeting minutes

School leadership will maintain records of the above processes.

Roles and responsibilities

School leaders will ensure that each person understands their role, responsibilities and behaviour expected in protecting children and young people from abuse and neglect. Staff will comply with the school's Child Safety Code of Conduct, which sets out clearly the difference between appropriate and inappropriate behaviour.

Specific child safety responsibilities:

- 5.17 Head of Senior School and Head of Junior School are responsible for reviewing and updating the Child Safety Policy every 3 years.
- 5.18 Head of Senior School and Head of Junior School are responsible for monitoring the school's compliance with the Child Safety Policy. The school community should approach the Head of Student Engagement (Senior School) and Head of Junior School if they have any concerns about the school's compliance with the Child Safety Policy.
- 5.19 Head of Senior School and Head of Junior School are responsible for informing the school community about this policy, and making it publicly available.



2.0 Child Safety Policy

- 5.20 Head of Student Engagement is responsible for communicating with International Students and their parents or carers regarding child safety and reporting of concerns. The school recognises that students and families from diverse cultural or linguistic backgrounds may need assistance in accessing the school Child Safety policies and support structures.
- 5.21 Other specific roles and responsibilities are named in Girton Grammar School's other child safety policies and procedures, including the Child Safety Responding and Reporting Policy, and Risk Assessment Register.

Recruitment

- 5.22 Girton Grammar School ensures we comply with child safe recruitment practices and clearly articulates its commitment to Child Safety to all prospective employees.
- 5.23 All prospective employees and volunteers are required to maintain a valid Working with Children Check.

Training and supervision

Training and education is important to ensure that everyone in the school understands that child safety is everyone's responsibility.

Our school culture aims for all staff and volunteers (in addition to parents/carers and children) to feel confident and comfortable in coming forward with any allegations or suspicions of child abuse or child safety concerns. We train our staff and volunteers to identify, assess, and minimise risks of child abuse and to detect potential signs of child abuse. This training occurs annually or more often as required.

We also support our staff and volunteers through ongoing supervision to develop their skills to protect children from abuse, to promote the cultural safety of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children and children from linguistically and/or diverse backgrounds, and the safety of children with a disability, international students residing with relatives and vulnerable children.

New employees and volunteers will be inducted into the school, including by being referred to the Child Safety Policy (this document), the [Child Safety Code of Conduct](#), and the [Child Safety Responding and Reporting Obligations](#) Policy via Astra. They will also be supervised regularly to ensure they understand our school's commitment to child safety, and that their behaviour towards children is safe and appropriate. All employees of our school will be monitored and assessed via regular performance review to ensure their continuing suitability for child-connected work. Any inappropriate behaviour will be reported by school staff to the Principal or Deputy Principal and will be managed in accordance with Girton Grammar's Child Safety Responding and Mandatory Reporting Obligations Policy where required.



2.0 Child Safety Policy

Reporting a child safety concern or complaint

The school has clear expectations for all staff and volunteers in making a report about a child or young person who may be in need of protection. All staff (including School Board Members) must follow the school's Child Safety Responding and Mandatory Reporting Obligations Policy, including following the [Four Critical Actions for Schools](#) if there is an incident, disclosure or suspicion of child abuse. Immediate actions should include reporting their concerns to DFFH Child Protection (Ph. 03 5434 5555-Bendigo, 131 278 – 24 hour service), Victoria Police (Ph. 03 5448 1300 - Bendigo, 000 - Emergency) and/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.

Girton Grammar will never prohibit or discourage school staff from reporting an allegation of child abuse. The school will always take action to respond to a complaint in accordance with the school's Child Safety Responding and Mandatory Reporting Obligations Policy. In accordance with Action 4 of the Four Critical Actions for Schools, Girton Grammar will provide ongoing support for students affected by child abuse.

The Child Safety Responding and Reporting Obligations Policy can be found [here](#).

Risk reduction and management

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

We will identify and mitigate the risks of child abuse in school environments by taking into account the nature of each school environment, the activities expected to be conducted in that environment and the characteristics and needs of all children expected to be present in that environment.

Girton Grammar School monitors and evaluates the effectiveness of the actions it takes to reduce or remove risks to child safety, more information can be found in the school's risk assessment register.

Listening to, communicating with and empowering children

Girton Grammar has developed a safe, inclusive and supportive environment that involves and communicates with children, young people and their parents/carers. We encourage child and parent/carer involvement and engagement that informs safe school operations and builds the capability of children and parents/carers to understand their rights and their responsibilities. Our school is committed to supporting and encouraging students to use their voice to raise and share their concerns with a trusted adult at any time of need. Students can access information on how to report abuse via their House Tutor, classroom teacher or other staff member.

When the school is gathering information in relation to a complaint about alleged misconduct with or abuse of a child, the school will listen to the complainant's account and take them seriously.



2.0 Child Safety Policy

check understanding and keep the child (and/or their parents/carers, as appropriate) informed about progress.

The school will promote the Child Safe Standards in ways that are readily accessible, easy to understand, and user-friendly to children, including:

- 5.24 All of our child safety policies and procedures will be available for the students and parents/carers at Girton Grammar to read via Astra
- 5.25 PROTECT Child Safety posters will be displayed across the school
- 5.26 the Four Critical Actions are actively taught to mandatory reporters and other school staff, and
- 5.27 the Child Safe Standards are addressed and explained at year level assemblies or parent information sessions and via the school newsletter.
- 5.28 Child abuse prevention, support information and reporting processes are explained to students at age appropriate levels through the academic programs from Preparatory to Year 12.

The school will use its health and wellbeing programs to deliver appropriate education to its students about:

- 5.29 standards of behaviour for students attending the school;
- 5.30 healthy and respectful relationships (including sexuality);
- 5.31 resilience; and
- 5.32 child abuse awareness and prevention.

Communications

This school is committed to communicating our child safety strategies to the school community through:

- 5.33 Ensuring that the Child Safety Policy (this document), Code of Conduct, and the Child Safety Responding and Mandatory Reporting Obligations Policy are available via Astra
- 5.34 Ensuring that child safety is a regular agenda item at school leadership meetings and staff meetings for discussion
- 5.35 Communicating aspects of this policy in staff induction sessions, at student assemblies and parent/carer information sessions and via the school eLink newsletter.



Confidentiality and privacy

This school collects, uses and discloses information about particular children and their families in accordance with Victorian privacy law and other relevant laws. The principles regulating the collection, use and storage of information is included in the School's Privacy Policy [here](#)

6 Further Guidance

[Child Safety Code of Conduct](#)

[Four Critical Actions for Schools](#)

[Child Safety Responding and Reporting Obligations](#)

[Identifying and Responding to All forms of Abuse in Victorian Schools](#)

[Recording your Actions - Responding to suspected abuse](#)

[Identifying and Responding to Student Sexual Offending](#)

[Education and Training Reform Act 2006](#)

[Girton Grammar School's Privacy Policy](#)

7 Policy Status/Document Control

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