



2.0 Child Safety and Wellbeing Policy

1. Purpose

Girton Grammar School's (GGS) Child Safety and Wellbeing 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.

This policy provides an overview of GGS's approach to implementing Ministerial Order 1359, which sets out how the Child Safe Standards apply in the school environment.

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.

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.

This policy will apply in all physical and online school environments (see Definitions section) used by students during or outside of school hours, including other locations provided by the school for a student's use (for example, a school camp) and those provided through third-party providers.

3. Definitions

Child abuse (definition sourced from: Child Wellbeing and Safety Act 2005 (Vic))

Child abuse includes:

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

Child-connected work (definition sourced from: Ministerial Order No. 1359)

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

Child safety (definition sourced from: Ministerial Order No. 1359)

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 (definition sourced from: Ministerial Order No. 1359)

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

- All campuses of the school (Senior Campus; Junior Campus; Gymnasium).
- Online school environments (including email and intranet systems).
- 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).



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School staff

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

- Employed by GGS; or
- Directly engaged or employed by the Board; or
- A volunteer, including parents; or
- A contracted service provider (whether or not a body corporate or any other person is an intermediary); or
- Other people connected to the school including alumni or visitors.

4. Statement of commitment to child safety and child safety principles

GGS 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 (Out of Home Care (OoHC)), children and young people who identify as lesbian, gay, bisexual, trans and gender diverse, intersex and queer (LGBTIQ+) 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 GGS, and any instances identified will be addressed with appropriate consequences.

Child safety is a shared responsibility. Every person involved in GGS 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.

4.1 Child safety principles

In its planning, decision-making and operations, GGS will:

- Take a preventative, proactive and participatory approach to child safety.
- Value and empower children to participate in decisions which affect their lives.
- Foster a culture of openness that supports all persons to safely disclose risks of harm to children.
- Respect diversity in cultures and child rearing practices while keeping child safety paramount.



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- Provide written guidance on appropriate conduct and behaviour towards children.
- Engage only the most suitable people to work with children and have high quality staff and volunteer supervision and professional development.
- 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.
- Report suspected abuse, neglect or mistreatment promptly to the appropriate authorities.
- Share information appropriately and lawfully with other organisations where the safety and wellbeing of children is at risk.
- Value and encourage open and frequent dialogue about child safety between families and the school.

5. Policy

5.1 Strategies to embed a child safe culture

GGs'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](#), [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.

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

- Act in accordance with GGS's Child Safety Code of Conduct, which 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 clearly sets out the difference between appropriate and inappropriate behaviour.
- 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.
- Undertake annual guidance and training on child safety.
- Act in accordance with their legal obligations, including:
 - Failure to disclose offence (applies to all adults).
 - Duty of care (applies to all school staff).
 - Mandatory reporting obligations (applies to all mandatory reporters, including teachers, principals, registered psychologists, religious Ministry, and registered nurses).
 - Failure to protect offence (applies to a person in a position of authority within the school).



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- Reportable conduct obligations (applies to all school staff in reporting conduct to the Principal, and applies to the Principal in reporting to the Department of Families, Fairness and Housing (DFFH) Conduct and Integrity Division).
- Organisational duty of care (applies to the school as an organisation).
- For more information on these obligations, see [Identifying and Responding to All forms of Abuse in Victorian Schools](#).

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

- 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, OoHC students and International students, when implementing the Child Safe Standards.
- Ensure that child safety is a regular agenda item at school leadership meetings and staff meetings.
- Encourage and enable staff professional learning and training to build deeper understandings of child safety and prevention of abuse.
- 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 GGS's child safe culture, **All School Staff** are required to:

- Complete annual training on Mandatory Reporting and Child Safety.
- Read and acknowledge the following on induction, and maintain familiarity with these documents through annually training (Litmos) and during staff days at the beginning of term one and three.
 - Child Safety Code of Conduct
 - Child Safety Responding and Reporting Obligations Policy
 - Child Safety and Wellbeing Policy (this document).

As part of GGS'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:

- Ensure that child safety is a regular agenda item at Board meetings.
- 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, OoHC students and International students, when making decisions regarding the Child Safe Standards.
- 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).
- 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.



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We acknowledge that good records management practices are a critical element of child safety and wellbeing, we manage our records in accordance with GGS's Records Management Policy and will maintain records of the above processes.

5.2 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:

- Head of Student Engagement and Head of Junior School are responsible for reviewing and updating this policy annually.
- Head of Student Engagement and Head of Junior School are responsible for monitoring the school's compliance with this 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 this policy.
- Head of Student Engagement and Head of Junior School are responsible for informing the school community about this policy and making it publicly available.
- 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 GGS's child safety policies and support structures.
- The Principal is the Senior Child Protection Officer and the contact for the wider community regarding child protection concerns relating to GGS. The Senior Child Protection Officer is contactable by phone on 03 5441 3114 or by emailing principal@girton.vic.edu.au.
- Other specific roles and responsibilities are named in GGS's other child safety policies and procedures, including the Child Safety Responding and Reporting Policy and Child Safety Risk Assessment Register.

5.3 Recruitment

GGS ensures we comply with child safe recruitment practices and clearly articulates its commitment to child safety to all prospective employees.

All prospective employees and volunteers are required to maintain a valid Working with Children Check.

5.4 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.



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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 and Wellbeing 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 performance reviews and feedback process 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 GGS's Child Safety Responding and Mandatory Reporting Obligations Policy where required.

5.5 Reporting a child safety concern or complaint

GGs 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 North Division on 1300 598 521 or after hours and weekends on 13 12 78 or 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.

GGs 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, GGs will provide ongoing support for students affected by child abuse.

The Child Safety Responding and Reporting Obligations Policy can be found on Astra.

5.6 Risk reduction and management

At GGs 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 take 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.

Our Child Safety Risk Assessment Register is used to record 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 Assessment Register at least annually.

5.7 Listening to, communicating with and empowering children

GGs has developed a safe, inclusive and supportive environment that involves and



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

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

- All of our child safety policies and procedures will be available for the students and parents/carers at GGS to read via Astra.
- PROTECT Child Safety posters will be displayed across the school.
- The Four Critical Actions are actively taught to mandatory reporters and other school staff.
- The Child Safe Standards are addressed and explained at year level assemblies or parent information sessions and via the school newsletter.
- 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.

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

- Standards of behaviour for students attending the school.
- Healthy and respectful relationships (including sexuality).
- Resilience.
- Child abuse awareness and prevention.

5.7 Communications

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

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

5.8 Confidentiality and privacy

GGS 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 GGS [Privacy Policy](#).



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5.9 Institutional Child Sexual Abuse

Where a former student has experienced child sexual abuse for which the School is responsible as an institution, the School is committed to providing that individual with appropriate and trauma-informed redress.

Reflecting this commitment, the School has applied to participate in the National Redress Scheme for people who have experienced institutional child sexual abuse. The Scheme commenced on 1 July 2018, in response to the Royal Commission into Institutional Responses to Child Sexual Abuse. Whilst not named in the Royal Commission, the School nonetheless recognises the importance of providing appropriate and trauma-informed avenues for addressing institutional child sexual abuse.

Whilst decisions about offers of redress will be dictated by the relevant circumstances, offers will ordinarily include one or more of a direct personal response, access to professional counselling and psychological care, and, where appropriate, financial compensation.

6. Further Guidance

- [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](#)
- [Crimes Act 1958](#)
- [Four Critical Actions for Schools](#)

- [Child Safety Code of Conduct](#)
- [2.3 Child Safety Responding and Reporting Obligations Policy](#)
- [2.04 Child Safety Risk Assessment Register](#)
- [1.07 Whistleblower Policy](#)
- [3.2 Risk Management Policy](#)
- [3.2.1 Risk Management Procedure](#)
- [3.5 Volunteer & Visitor Policy](#)
- [4.01 Privacy Policy](#)
- [4.03 Records Management Policy](#)

7. Policy Status/Document Control

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