

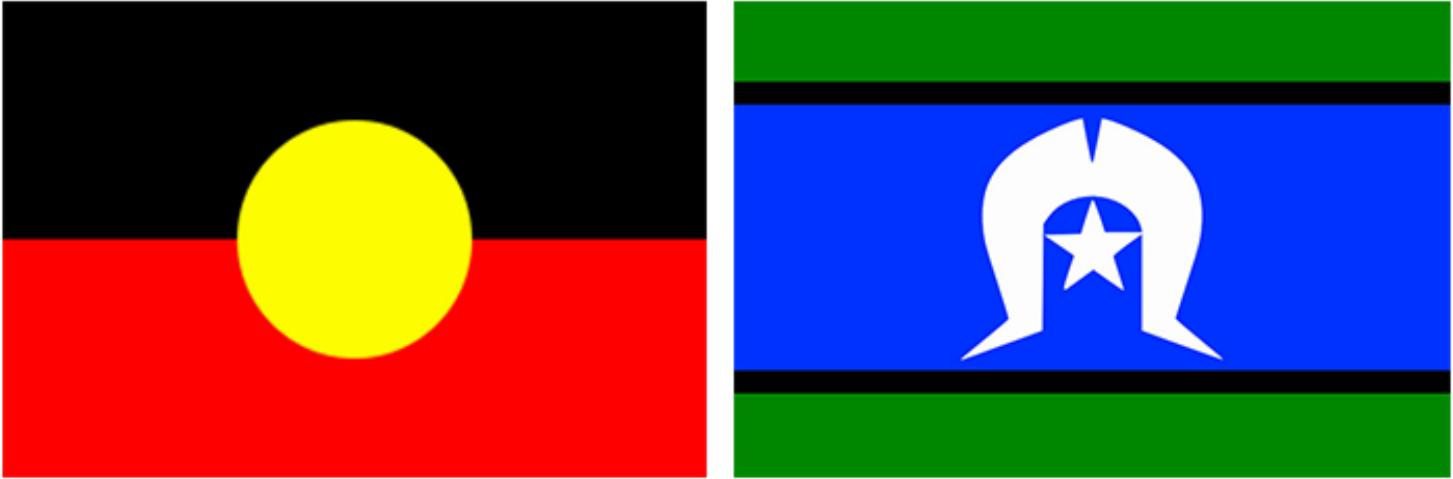
**PROTECT**

# **Victoria's Child Safe Standards**

**School staff training**



# Acknowledgment of Country



# Support available

- You can talk to:
  - Our school leadership team
  - Employee Assistance Program on 1300 361 008
- Or access external services:
  - Your GP or another allied health professional
  - Lifeline: 13 11 14 or [lifeline.org.au](https://www.lifeline.org.au)
  - Beyond Blue: 1300 22 46 36 or [beyondblue.org.au](https://www.beyondblue.org.au)
  - 1800 Respect: 1800 737 732 or [1800Respect.org.au](https://www.1800Respect.org.au)



# In this presentation

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- Possible consequences of non-compliance

## Our school's child safety policies and procedures and staff responsibilities

- Child Safety and Wellbeing Policy
- Child Safety Code of Conduct
- Child Safety Risk Register
- Complaints Policy
- Responding to incidents, disclosures and suspicions of child abuse
- Information sharing
- Record keeping
- Empowering students and families



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## Overview of the Child Safe Standards



# Definitions: Child safety and child abuse

## Child safety

Child safety includes 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 suspicions, incidents, disclosures or allegations of child abuse

## Child abuse

Child abuse includes:

- a) any act committed against a child involving:
  - a sexual offence
  - grooming
- b) the infliction, on a child, of
  - physical violence
  - serious emotional or psychological harm
- c) the serious neglect of a child

Further information on child abuse, including physical and behavioural indicators of abuse, is available on the department's PROTECT website at [Identify child abuse](#)



# Child Safe Standards – history



# Why the Child Safe Standards are so important

- The Child Safe Standards recognise that all children are vulnerable
- The Child Safe Standards require schools to **take steps to prevent child abuse** and **build a culture of child safety**
- Schools cannot assume that child abuse does not and cannot happen within their school or school community





# Why the Child Safe Standards are so important (2)

## **Child Safe Standards aim to:**

- promote the safety of children
- prevent child abuse
- ensure effective processes are in place to respond to and report all allegations of child abuse

## **Child Safe Standards work by:**

- driving changes in culture – embedding child safety in everyday thinking and practice
- providing a minimum standard of child safety
- highlighting we all have a role in keeping children safe from abuse



# What's different?

**On 1 July 2022 new Child Safe Standards were introduced.**

New requirements to keep children and students safe are:

- the involvement of families and students in child safety efforts
- schools' focus on safety for Aboriginal students
- better management of the risk of child abuse in online environments
- governance, systems and processes to keep students safe

[Ministerial Order 1359](#) provides the framework for implementing the Child Safe Standards in schools.

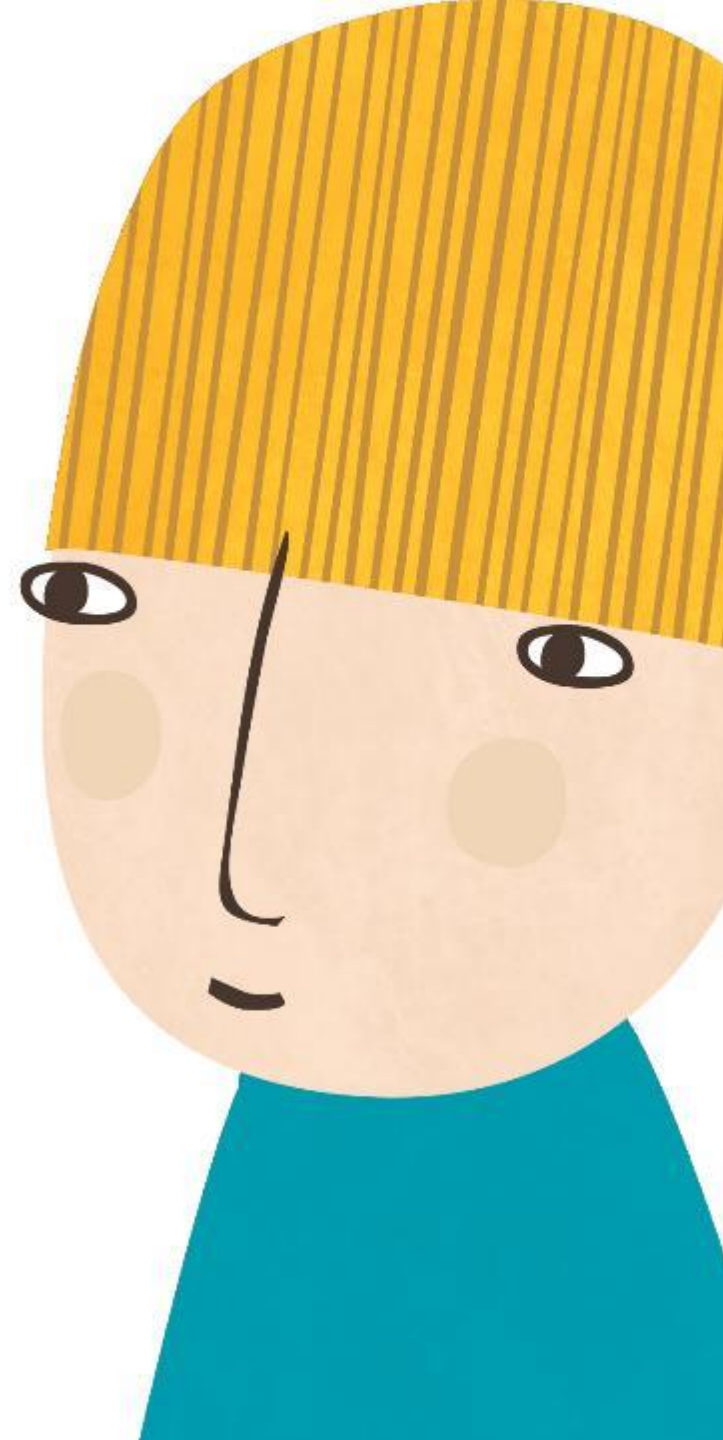


# Victoria's Child Safe Standards

- **Child Safe Standard 1** – Establish a culturally safe environment in which the diverse and unique identities and experiences of Aboriginal children and young people are respected and valued.
- **Child Safe Standard 2** – Ensure that child safety and wellbeing are embedded in school leadership, governance and culture.
- **Child Safe Standard 3** – Children and young people are empowered about their rights, participate in decisions affecting them and are taken seriously.
- **Child Safe Standard 4** – Families and communities are informed and involved in promoting child safety and wellbeing.
- **Child Safe Standard 5** – Equity is upheld and diverse needs are respected in policy and practice.
- **Child Safe Standard 6** – People working with children and young people are suitable and supported to reflect child safety and wellbeing values in practice.
- **Child Safe Standard 7** – Ensure that processes for complaints and concerns are child focused.
- **Child Safe Standard 8** – Staff and volunteers are equipped with the knowledge, skills and awareness to keep children and young people safe through ongoing education and training.
- **Child Safe Standard 9** – Physical and online environments promote safety and wellbeing while minimising the opportunity for children and young people to be harmed.
- **Child Safe Standard 10** – Implementation of the Child Safe Standards is regularly reviewed and improved.
- **Child Safe Standard 11** – Policies and procedures that document how schools are safe for children, young people and students.
- Ministerial Order 1359 provides the framework for child safety in schools.

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## Overview of each Child Safe Standard



# Child Safe Standard 1: Culturally safe environments

**Schools must establish a culturally safe environment in which the diverse and unique identities and experiences of Aboriginal children, young people and students are respected and valued**

- Aboriginal children and young people who don't feel safe being themselves and expressing their individuality may be less willing to report abuse
- Providing safe environments for children has positive, lifelong impacts that cannot be underestimated, and cultural safety is a key dimension of safety for Aboriginal children
- By supporting Aboriginal children to feel strong in their identity schools also help them enjoy their cultural rights
- Schools need to address all forms of racism and consider attitudes and practices that are a barrier to providing a culturally safe environment and addressing all forms of racism



# Child Safe Standard 2: Child safety and wellbeing is embedded in leadership, governance and culture

## Schools must ensure that child safety and wellbeing is embedded in school leadership, governance and culture

- School leaders and governing authorities have a vital role in establishing:
  - a culture where child abuse and harm is not tolerated
  - effective systems and processes to implement child safe policies and practices and manage child abuse risks
- Schools must take deliberate steps to promote child safety and wellbeing and protect children by:
  - embedding and promoting a child safety culture at all levels
  - school leaders actively modelling such a culture
  - ensuring transparent governance arrangements



# Child Safe Standard 3: Child and student empowerment

**Schools must ensure that children, young people and students are empowered about their rights, participate in decisions affecting them and are taken seriously**

- Empowering children and young people improves child safety
- Policies and practices that are shaped by children's and young people's views can better prevent the risk of harm
- Children and young people are more likely to speak up when they feel respected and confident that they will be heard
- Children and young people benefit from strong friendships. They often see their friends as their main source of support, information and advice, and will go to them for help
- Supporting students to raise concerns about the safety or wellbeing of their friends to encourage students to support their peers



# Child Safe Standard 4: Family engagement

## **Schools must ensure that families and communities are informed and involved in promoting child safety and wellbeing**

- Involving families and communities in decisions relating to their children's safety and wellbeing:
  - recognises the important role they have in monitoring children's safety and wellbeing and helping children to disclose concerns
  - creates an open and transparent culture
  - promotes a greater understanding of child safety
  - encourages them to raise concerns or ideas for improvement.
- Providing accessible and inclusive child safe information encourages families to engage in child safety and wellbeing discussions.





# Child Safe Standard 5: Diversity and equity

## **Schools must ensure that equity is upheld, and diverse needs respected in policy and practice**

- Schools need to create environments where all children and young people feel welcome
- Children and young people have unique abilities, skills and life experiences. Differences in backgrounds, personality and beliefs shape a child's experiences and needs. Their individual identity and sense of self can be fundamental to their wellbeing
- Children have better opportunities to fulfill their potential when diversity is valued
- Negative experiences like exclusion and discrimination can be harmful. They increase the risk of harm and abuse to a child and decrease the likelihood of them telling someone and receiving an effective response



# Child Safe Standard 6: Suitable staff and volunteers

**Schools must ensure that people working with children and young people are suitable and supported to reflect child safety and wellbeing values in practice**

- Selecting suitable people to work with children is vital to protecting children
- Good recruitment practices:
  - create a safer workplace
  - reduce the opportunity for harm to occur
  - prevent, screen out or deter people who are unsuitable to work or volunteer with children
  - recruit staff who uphold the school values
- Rigorous selection processes and appropriate induction, training and supervision helps keep staff and students safe



# Child Safe Standard 7: Complaints processes

## Schools must ensure that processes for complaints and concerns are child focused

- Making a complaint can be challenging
- Complaints are more likely to be raised when there are clear, well-communicated policies and procedures for concerns or allegations
- Complaints handling processes need to focus on students and their safety needs. The process should be able to handle all kinds of complaints and concerns. A complaint might reveal a bigger issue or prevent a situation from escalating
- Empowering students to raise low-level concerns improves the likelihood they will feel comfortable making a disclosure or reporting abuse
- Reporting concerns is easier if the school has procedures that are child-friendly and accessible to students and the school community
- Schools must also have clear procedures in place for responding to complaints or concerns relating to child abuse



# Child Safe Standard 8: Child safety knowledge, skills and awareness

**Schools must ensure that staff and volunteers are equipped with the knowledge, skills and awareness to keep children and young people safe through ongoing education and training**

- By delivering tailored training to all staff and volunteers, everyone will share an understanding of:
  - what child safety means
  - the importance of child safety
  - what to look for and what to do
- This provides staff and volunteers with the knowledge and skills they need to create a schoolwide culture of child safety
- Appropriate training and supervision helps keep staff and students safe and helps schools meet their child safety and occupational health and safety legal requirements



# Child Safe Standard 9: Child safety in physical and online environments

**Schools must ensure that physical and online environments promote safety and wellbeing while minimising the opportunity for children, young people and students to be harmed**

- A thorough risk analysis is the first thing schools should do to promote child safety
- Effective risk analysis will consider all of the Child Safe Standards and risks in physical and online environments and procurement
- Online technologies are constantly changing which presents significant challenges for schools, parents and carers
- Arrangements with external agencies also create child safety risks. They create opportunities for unknown people to have contact with students



# Child Safe Standard 10: Review of child safety practices

## **Schools must ensure that implementation of the Child Safe Standards is regularly reviewed and improved**

- Being a child-safe organisation requires ongoing effort
- Child safe organisations have an open and transparent culture, learn from their mistakes, and put the interests of children first. Taking time to review policies, procedures and practices put child safety and wellbeing at the centre of the school's activities
- Regular reviews of policies, procedures and practices:
- makes sure they are adequate, up-to-date and effective, fully implemented and followed by everyone
- helps schools maintain the best approach to child safety and wellbeing and minimise the risk of harm.



# Child Safe Standard 11: Implementation of child safety practices

## **Schools must have policies and procedures that document how schools are safe for children, young people and students**

- Being a child-safe organisation requires ongoing effort
- Schools are safer for children and students when child safety policies and procedures are championed by leaders and understood by all members of the school community.



# Possible consequences of not complying with the Child Safe Standards

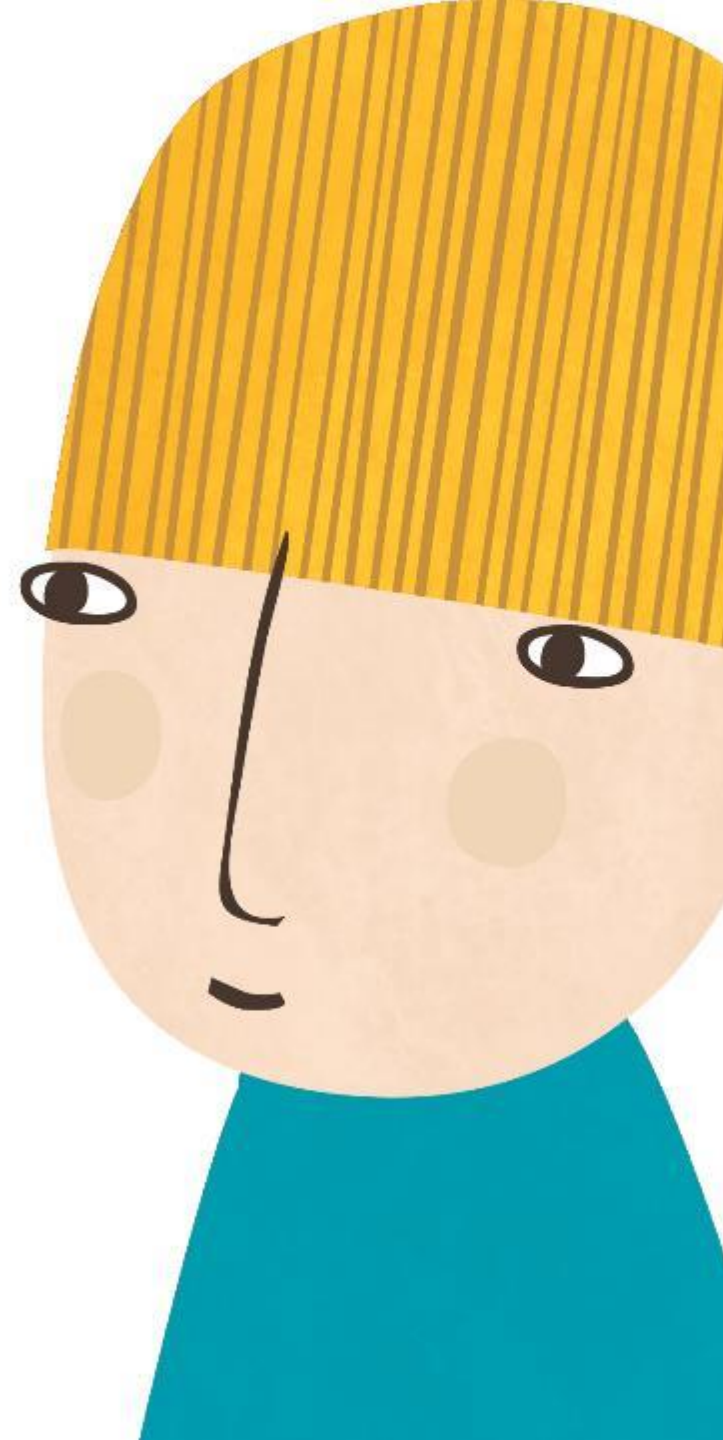
- Greater risk of child abuse
- Unsafe school culture
- Non compliance identified during school review
- Victorian Registration and Qualifications Authority action
- Commission for Children and Young People investigations
- Breach of duty of care or organisational duty of care
- Failure to report and failure to stop offences
- Legal action such as negligence claims
- Loss of reputation for keeping children safe





# PROTECT

**Our school's child safety policies and procedures and staff responsibilities**



# Our school's child safety policies and procedures



## Overarching child safety documents for our school

**Child Safety and Wellbeing Policy**

**Child Safety Risk Register**

**Child Safety Code of Conduct**

**Child Safety Responding and Reporting  
Obligations Policy and Procedure**



## Connected policies for child safety at our school

**Bullying  
Prevention**

**Complaints**

**Digital  
Learning**

**Student  
Wellbeing  
and  
Engagement**

**Visitors**

**Volunteers**

**Yard Duty  
and  
Supervision**



## Department policies on the Policy and Advisory Library and department systems

For example, procurement, records management, recruitment, incident reporting, complaints/misconduct processes, eduPay.



# Child Safety and Wellbeing Policy

## **Our school's Child Safety and Wellbeing Policy:**

- demonstrates our commitment to providing environments where our students are safe and feel safe
- tells our community about our strategies and governance arrangements to keep children safe
- helps us create a shared commitment to keeping children safe
- supports everyone in our school community to know their responsibilities for keeping children safe
- is publicly available



# What does our policy say about our school's commitment to child safety and wellbeing?

- We are 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
- We have no tolerance for child abuse and take proactive steps to identify and manage any risk of harm to students in our school environments
- 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



# Establishing culturally safe environments and responding to diverse needs

- Our staff can support every student to have a positive experience in a safe environment
- This includes supporting aboriginal cultural safety and understanding the diverse circumstances of children and students.
- Everyone can:
  - promote cultural safety in our school community by recognising the link between Aboriginal culture, identity and safety.
  - pay particular attention to the needs of students with disability, students from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds, students who are unable to live at home, international students, lesbian, gay, bisexual, trans and gender diverse, intersex and queer (LGBTIQ+) students and Aboriginal students.



# Child Safety Code of Conduct

**Our school's Child Safety Code of Conduct** provides adults with a clear guide on the behaviour that is expected of them in our school environments, and:

- lists acceptable and unacceptable behaviours
- identifies professional boundaries and ethical behaviour
- applies to all school activities, including school camps, using digital technology and social media
- is publicly available

## **Who has to follow it?**

Staff, volunteers, contractors, and any other member of our school community involved in child-connected work, including school council members



# Acceptable and unacceptable behaviours

## Acceptable behaviours

- upholding our commitment to child safety and following our Child Safety and Wellbeing Policy
- treating students and families in our school community with respect
- listening and responding to the views and concerns of students
- promoting the cultural safety, participation and empowerment of Aboriginal students
- ensuring, as far as practicable, that adults are not alone with a student
- reporting any allegations of child abuse or other child safety concerns
- if child abuse is suspected, ensuring as quickly as possible that the student(s) are safe and protected.

## Unacceptable behaviours

- ignore or disregard concerns, suspicions or disclosures of child abuse
- develop a relationship with a student that could be seen as favouritism or amount to 'grooming' behaviour
- display behaviours or engage with students in ways that are not justified by the educational or professional context
- ignore an adult's overly familiar or inappropriate behaviour towards a student
- communicate directly with a student through personal or private contact channels
- have contact with any student outside of school hours except when needed to deliver the school curriculum.



# Child Safety Risk Register

- **Our school has developed a Child Safety Risk Register, and we:**
  - have considered risks for each of the 11 Child Safe Standards and have developed and recorded our risk controls
  - have taken risk causes and consequences into account
- All staff play an important role in identifying and reporting child safety risks in our physical and online environment. Ask yourselves:
  - How do our school structures, attitudes and practices affect the risk of harm or child abuse?
  - What are some of the current and emerging online safety issues?
  - Are there opportunities for adults to be alone with students, unseen by others?
  - Are students, parents and the school community empowered to raise concerns? How do we know?
  - Are there barriers that might stop students from raising concerns?





# Complaints Policy

## Our school's Complaints Policy:

- provides an outline of our school's complaints process
- informs students, parents and members of the community how they can raise complaints or concerns about issues arising at our school
- sets an expectation that all complaints and concerns are managed in a timely, effective, fair and respectful manner
- relates to complaints brought by students, parents, carers, or members of our school community and applies to all matters relating to our school.
- is publicly available

Complaints and concerns relating to child abuse will be managed in accordance with our school's **Child Safety Responding and Reporting Obligations Policy and Procedures**



# Our role in responding to incidents, disclosures and suspicions of child abuse

- We **must not** ignore or disregard any concerns, suspicions or disclosures of child abuse or harm
- We have an important role to protect any child under our care and supervision from reasonably foreseeable harm
- As a staff member, you have a critical role in protecting children and must meet a range of legal obligations to identify, respond and report child abuse
- This includes abuse that has or is suspected to have taken place within or outside of school grounds and hours



# Responding to incidents, disclosures and suspicions of child abuse

Staff should follow the [Four Critical Actions for Schools](#) when responding to incidents, disclosures and suspicions of child abuse

## 1. Respond to the emergency

If a child is at immediate risk of harm you must ensure their safety

## 2. Report to authorities

As soon as immediate health and safety concerns are addressed you must report your concerns to the principal or school leadership

## 3. Contact Parents/Carers

The principal and school must determine who needs to be contacted

## 4. Provide Support

The school must determine the support for children impacted by abuse.

For more information, see the [Responding to Incidents, Disclosures and Suspicions of Child Abuse Poster](#)



# Staff training eLearning module on protecting children

- All teaching staff must complete the [Protecting Children — Mandatory Reporting and Other Obligations eLearning module](#).
- The training covers important child safety content including:
  - Indicators of harm
  - Failure to disclose and failure to protect
  - Reportable conduct scheme
- The training is available via LearnEd on eduPay.
- School staff who are:
  - mandatory reporters must complete the module once per calendar year
  - non-mandatory reporters are strongly encouraged to complete the module once each calendar year.



# Signs of child abuse to look out for

- Children and young people can be harmed by other children, students or adults
- Child abuse can include physical abuse, sexual abuse, grooming, serious emotional or psychological harm, neglect, or family violence
- It doesn't have to involve physical contact or force
- Child abuse can include:
  - talking to a child in a sexually explicit way
  - grooming a child for future sexual activity
  - experiencing family violence
  - failing to provide a child with an adequate standard of nutrition, supervision, or medical care



# Signs of child abuse to look out for (video)

- There are a range of common physical and behavioural indicators that a child may be being abused.
- Press control and click on the video image to play the identifying signs of abuse video in your browser.

Video: Identifying signs of abuse



# Information sharing obligations for staff

- Our school follows the department's [Privacy and Information Sharing Policy](#)
- Personal and health information of students, staff and others can be shared to carry out school and Department functions or for other related purposes and in other limited circumstances such as where there is a risk to health and safety.
- Information is shared on a 'need to know' basis.
- There are occasions where the school may lawfully share information with other parties outside the school or the department, for example to:
  - report suspected child abuse to [DFFH Child Protection](#) or [Victoria Police](#)
  - to request and share confidential information under the [Child and Family Violence Information Sharing Schemes](#)
- Requests under the information sharing schemes must go through **[insert name of trained information sharing nominees at your school]**



# Record keeping obligations for schools and staff

- Good records management practices are a critical element of child safety and wellbeing
- Our school follows the department's [Records Management- School Records Policy](#)
- The policy addresses requirements for creating, storing and disposing of school records
- Information is always recorded
- Staff must create full and accurate records
- Schools must keep **all records** relating to child safety, health and wellbeing. These records must not be disposed of or destroyed
- Records must be kept in designated school storage areas
- Staff must always follow our school's records management procedures





# Empowering students and families to express their views and raise concerns – example strategies

## School policies

- Identify ways to involve students, families and community members in reviews of child safety policies and practices
- Provide links to the school's child safety policies in the school's social media posts, newsletters and staff circulars.
- Use surveys, focus groups and discussions to review the accessibility and level of awareness of child-safe policies and procedures by students and families.
- Report on outcomes of relevant reviews to staff and volunteers, community and families and students to show transparency and accountability.

## School practice

- Provide frequent opportunities for families to engage with staff about their children's experiences at school
- Invite students to provide feedback on school-wide decisions and take their views into account
- Be aware of discriminatory barriers and any overreliance on student leaders
- Give students a variety of ways to raise concerns. For example:
  - provide an anonymous, year-level student suggestion box
  - display posters and information about the adults who students can talk to if they have a concern



# Key things to remember

**Child safety and wellbeing at our school is everyone's responsibility.**

School staff have a responsibility to:

- always follow our school's child safety and wellbeing policies and procedures
- act in accordance with our school's **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** and the [Four Critical Actions for Schools](#)
- ensure students' views are taken seriously and their voices are heard about decisions affecting their lives
- implement inclusive practices that respond to the diverse needs of students and families
- participate in child safety and wellbeing induction and training



# PROTECT

## Questions?



# PROTECT

## Thank you

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