

Child Protection and Safety Policy

Christian College Geelong has developed the following Child Safe Policy. This Policy is an overarching document that provides key elements of our approach to protecting children from abuse.

The Policy forms the foundation of the College's procedures, practices, decision-making processes and ultimately the College's culture with respect to child safety.

It is designed to be published on our public website as well as communicated through other mediums such as newsletters, our annual report and in induction and welcome packs for Board of Directors members, staff and Volunteers. A PDF version of Christian College Geelong's Child Safe Policy is available [here](#).

The College's Child Safe Policy has been approved and endorsed by the College's Board of Directors and is regularly reviewed by the Board.

General Legal Obligations to Report Child Sexual Abuse and 'Act to Protect'

In Victoria, there are specific criminal offences which impose general obligations on persons

- Aged 18 years or over to report any belief that a sexual offence has been committed against a child under the age of 16 years by a person over the age of 18 years (Crimes Act 1958[Vic]s327) and
- In authority within a school to act to remove or reduce a substantial risk that a sexual offence will be committed against a child (Crimes Act [Vic]s490)

Details of these obligations are set out in the following sections:

The Obligation to Report a Sexual Offence

The Obligation to Act to Protect

Our Child Safe Policy

Objectives

This policy provides the framework for:

- the development of work systems, practices, policies and procedures that promote child protection within the College
- the creation of a positive and robust child protection culture
- the promotion and open discussion of child protection issues within the College
- compliance with all laws, regulations and standards relevant to child protection in Victoria.

Statement of Commitment to Child Safety

Christian College Geelong is committed to providing a child safe and child friendly environment, where children and young people are safe and feel safe, and are able to actively participate in decisions that affect their lives.

At Christian College Geelong we have a zero tolerance for child abuse and are committed to acting in children's best interests and keeping them safe from harm. The College regards its child protection responsibilities with the utmost importance and as such, is committed to providing the necessary resources to ensure compliance with all relevant child protection laws and regulations and maintain a child safe culture.

Child Safe Values and Principles

The College's commitment to child safety is based on the following overarching principles that guide the development and regular review of our work systems, practices, policies and procedures to protect children from abuse.

1. All children have the right to be safe.
2. The welfare and best interests of the child are paramount.
3. The views of the child and a child's privacy must be respected.
4. Clear expectations for appropriate behaviour with children are established in our Child Safe Code of Conduct and Staff and Student Professional Boundaries policy.
5. The safety of children is dependent upon the existence of a child safe culture.
6. Child safety awareness is promoted and openly discussed within our College community.
7. Procedures are in place to screen all staff, **Direct Contact Volunteers****, Third Party Contractors and External Education Providers who have direct contact with children.
8. Child safety and protection is everyone's responsibility.
9. Child protection training is mandatory for all Board of Directors members, staff and Direct Contact Volunteers.
10. Procedures for responding to alleged or suspected incidents of child abuse are simple and accessible for all members of the College community.
11. Children from culturally or linguistically diverse backgrounds have the right to special care and support including those who identify as Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander.
12. Children who have any kind of disability have the right to special care and support.

****Direct Contact Volunteers are those volunteers who are involved in providing support, guidance and supervision directly to students and could potentially have direct contact with students during the normal course of providing the volunteer service.**

The Working with Children Act 2005 (Vic) defines "direct contact" as any contact between a person and a child (aged under 18) that involves:

- *physical contact;*
- *face to face contact;*
- *contact by post or other written communication;*
- *contact by telephone or other oral communication; or*
- *contact by email or other electronic communication.*

Examples of Direct Contact Volunteer activities may include volunteers involved in College camps and excursions, coaching sporting teams or assisting in learning activities.

Child Protection Program

Christian College Geelong is committed to the effective implementation of our Child Protection Program and ensuring that it is appropriately reviewed and updated. We adopt a risk management approach by identifying key risk indicators and assessing child safety risks based on a range of factors including the nature of our College's activities, physical and online environments and the characteristics of the student body.

Our Child Protection Program relates to all aspects of protecting children from abuse and establishes work systems, practices, policies and procedures to protect children from abuse. It includes:

- clear information as to what constitutes child abuse and associated key risk indicators
- clear procedures for responding to and reporting allegations of child abuse
- strategies to support, encourage and enable staff, Volunteers, Third Party Contractors, External Education Providers, parents/carers and students to understand, identify, discuss and report child protection matters
- procedures for recruiting and screening Board of Directors members, staff, Direct Contact Volunteers, Third Party Contractors and External Education Providers
- procedures for reporting reportable conduct and/or misconduct
- pastoral care strategies designed to empower students and keep them safe
- policies with respect to cultural diversity and students with disabilities
- a child protection training program
- information regarding the steps to take after a disclosure of abuse to protect, support and assist children
- guidelines with respect to record keeping and confidentiality
- policies to ensure compliance with all relevant laws, regulations and standards (including the Victorian Child Safe Standards)
- a system for continuous review and improvement.

As a part of Christian College Geelong's induction process, all staff and Direct Contact Volunteers are required to complete a selection of training modules on the content of our Child Protection Program.

Additional, ongoing child protection training is provided at least annually.

Staff, Volunteers, Third Party Contractors and External Education Providers are supported and supervised by the College's **Child Safety Officers** to ensure that they are compliant with the College's approach to child protection.

Responsibilities

Child protection is everyone's responsibility. At Christian College Geelong, the Board of Directors and staff, as well as Volunteers, have a shared responsibility for contributing to the safety and protection of children. Specific responsibilities include:

Appointment and ongoing support of **Child Safety Officers** who are readily accessible at each campus across the College

Implementation of a comprehensive array of Risk Management Strategies to minimise opportunity for occurrence of child abuse as well as to respond rapidly and effectively to any belief that child abuse is occurring through **Child Protection and Safety Risk Management Strategies**

Create and Maintain a Child Safe Environment through careful management of **Child Safe Human Resources Practices** and **Participation and Empowerment of Children**.

Ensure all personnel at the College, inclusive of Board members, College Leadership, Staff, Direct and Indirect Contact Volunteers, Direct, Indirect and Third Party Contractors and External Education Providers are familiar and compliant with the terms outlined in the Christian College Child Protection and Safety Policy

Board of Directors

Each member of the Board of Directors is required to ensure that appropriate resources are made available to allow the College's Child Safe Policy and the Child Protection Program to be effectively implemented within the College and are responsible for holding the Principal and/or Vice Principal and the Executive Team accountable for effective implementation.

The Principal and/or Vice Principal

The Principal and/or Vice Principal is responsible, and will be accountable for, taking all practical measures to ensure that this Child Safe Policy and the College's Child Protection Program are implemented effectively and that a strong and sustainable child protection culture is maintained within the College.

The College's Child Safety Officers

The College Chaplains have been nominated as the College's Child Safety Officers. Our Child Safety Officers receive additional specialised training with respect to child protection issues. They are the first point of contact for raising child protection concerns within the College. They are also responsible for championing child protection within the College and assisting in coordinating responses to child protection incidents. Child Safety Officers will report and discuss all incident responses in the first instance with the Head or Deputy Head of Campus.

Staff Members

All staff are required to be familiar with the content of our Child Safe Policy and our Child Protection Program and their legal obligations with respect to the reporting of child abuse. It is each individual's responsibility to be aware of key risk indicators of child abuse, to be observant, and to raise any concerns they may have relating to child abuse with one of the College's Child Safety Officers.

Direct Contact Volunteers

All Direct Contact Volunteers, as defined in this policy, are required to be familiar with the content of our Child Protection Program, particularly this Child Safe Policy and our Child Safe Code of Conduct, and their legal obligations with respect to the reporting of child abuse.

It is each individual's responsibility to be aware of key risk indicators of child abuse, to be observant, and to raise any concerns they may have relating to child abuse with one of the

College's Child Safety Officers.

Indirect Contact Volunteers

Indirect Contact Volunteers are those volunteers who are involved in providing support and services whilst not directly assisting a specific group of students.

All Indirect Contact Volunteers are responsible for contributing to the safety and protection of children in the College environment.

All Indirect Contact Volunteers are required by the College to be familiar with our Child Safe Policy and our Child Protection Program.

Examples of Indirect Contact Volunteer activities may include assisting with College administrative functions.

Third Party Contractors

All Third Party Contractors engaged by the College are responsible for contributing to the safety and protection of children in the College environment.

Third Party Contractors include, for example, maintenance and building personnel, consultants, casual teachers, tutors, sports coaches and College cleaners.

This also includes music teachers and other extra-curricular teachers and instructors who are engaged by students and their families directly, rather than the College, but have an agreement with the College to use the College's facilities.

External Education Providers

An External Education Provider is any organisation that the College has arranged to deliver a specified course of study that is part of the curriculum, to a student or students enrolled at the College.

The delivery of such a course may take place on College premises or elsewhere.

All External Education Providers engaged by the College are responsible for contributing to the safety and protection of children in the College environment.

All External Education Providers engaged by the College are required by the College to be familiar with our Child Safe Policy and our Child Safe Code of Conduct.

Christian College Geelong may include this requirement in the written agreement between it and the External Education Provider.

Reporting Child Abuse Concerns

Our Child Protection Program provides detailed guidance for the Board of Directors, staff and Direct Contact Volunteers as to how to identify key risk indicators of child abuse and how to report child abuse concerns to one of our College's nominated Child Safety Officers. It also contains detailed procedures with respect to the reporting of child abuse incidents to relevant authorities.

Staff, Third Party Contractors, External Education Providers, Volunteers, students, parents/carers and other community members who have concerns that a child may be subject to abuse or grooming are asked to contact the College's Senior Child Safety Officer, , by phoning **52411577** or emailing **w.hines@ccg.vic.edu.au**.

Communications will be treated confidentially on a "need to know basis".

Whenever there are concerns that a child is in immediate danger the Police should be called on 000.

Policy and Program Review

Christian College Geelong is committed to the continuous improvement of our Child Protection Program. The Program is regularly reviewed for overall effectiveness and to ensure compliance with all child protection related laws, regulations and standards.

Child Safety Code of Conduct

A Child Safe Code of Conduct lists behaviours that are acceptable and those that are unacceptable. It provides a high-level statement of professional boundaries, ethical behaviour and acceptable and unacceptable relationships. For more detailed guidance refer to the College's **Staff and Student Professional Boundaries** policy.

The Child Safe Code of Conduct applies to:

- all staff members, including non-teaching staff and temporary or casual staff
- Volunteers
- students
- parents and carers
- Third Party Contractors
- External Education Providers
- the Board of Directors
- teaching students on placement at the College
- visitors.

The Child Safe Code of Conduct set out below is designed to stand alone. It can also be incorporated in whole or part into broader codes of conduct that are developed within the College, including other professional or occupational codes of conduct that regulate particular staff at the College.

The Code is made available to all staff, Volunteers, families and students via our public website and staff intranet..

Our Child Safe Code of Conduct

This Child Safe Code of Conduct outlines appropriate standards of behaviour for all adults towards students. The Code serves to protect students, reduce any opportunities for abuse or harm to occur, and promote child safety in the College environment. It provides guidance on how to best support students and how to avoid or better manage difficult situations. Where a staff member breaches the Code, Christian College Geelong may take disciplinary action, including in the case of serious breaches, summary dismissal. The College revises the Code annually.

Christian College Geelong has the following expectations of behaviours and boundaries for all adults interacting with students within our College community. This includes all teaching staff, non-teaching staff, the Board of Directors, Volunteers, Third Party Contractors, External Education Providers and parents/carers.

The College's Board of Directors has endorsed this Child Safe Code of Conduct.

DO:

- Behave as a positive role model to students.
- Promote the safety, welfare and wellbeing of students.
- Be vigilant and proactive with regard to student safety and child protection issues.
- Provide age appropriate supervision for students.
- Comply with guidelines published by the College with respect to child protection.
- Treat all students with respect.
- Promote the safety, participation and empowerment of students with a disability.
- Promote the cultural safety, participation and empowerment of linguistically and culturally diverse students.
- Use positive and affirming language towards students.
- Encourage students to 'have a say' and participate, and then listen to them with respect.
- Respect cultural, religious and political differences.
- Help provide an open, safe and supportive environment for all students to interact, and socialise.
- Intervene when students are engaging in inappropriate bullying behaviour towards others or acting in a humiliating or vilifying way.
- Report any breaches of this Child Safe Code of Conduct.
- Report concerns about child safety to one of the College's Child Safety Officers and ensure that your legal obligations to report allegations externally are met.
- Where an allegation of child abuse is made, ensure as quickly as possible that the student involved is safe.
- Call the Police on 000 if you have immediate concerns for a student's safety.
- Respect the privacy of students and their families and only disclose information to people who have a need to know.

DO NOT:

- Engage in any form of inappropriate behaviour towards students or expose students to such behaviour.
- Use prejudice, oppressive behaviour or inappropriate language with students.

- Express personal views on cultures, race or sexuality in the presence of students or discriminate against any student based on culture, race, ethnicity or disability.
- Engage in open discussions of an adult nature in the presence of students.
- Engage in any form of sexual conduct with a student including making sexually suggestive comments and sharing sexually suggestive material.
- Engage in inappropriate or unnecessary physical conduct or behaviours including doing things of a personal nature that a student can do for themselves, such as toileting or changing clothes.
- Engage in any form of physical violence towards a student including inappropriately rough physical play.
- Use physical means or corporal punishment to discipline or control a student.
- Engage in any form of behaviour that has the potential to cause a student serious emotional or psychological harm.
- Develop 'special' relationships with students that could be seen as favouritism (for example, the offering of gifts or special treatment for specific students).
- Engage in undisclosed private meetings with a student that is not your own child.
- Engage in meetings with a child that is not your own, outside of school hours and without permission from the College and the child's parent.
- Engage in inappropriate personal communications with a student through any medium, including any online contact or interactions with a student.
- Take or publish (including online) photos, movies or recordings of a student without parental/carer consent.
- Post online any information about a student that may identify them such as their: full name; age; e-mail address; telephone number; residence; school; or details of a club or group they may attend.
- Ignore or disregard any suspected or disclosed child abuse.

Our Child Protection Program includes a **Staff and Student Professional Boundaries** policy that provides detailed guidance for all adults at the College on how to maintain professional boundaries between students and adults at Christian College Geelong.

Report any concerns

The Program also includes information for members of the Board of Directors, staff and **Direct Contact Volunteers** as to how to identify key risk indicators of child abuse and how to report child abuse concerns to one of our College's nominated Child Safety Officers.

It also contains detailed procedures with respect to the reporting of child abuse incidents to relevant authorities.

Third Party Contractors, External Education Providers, Indirect Contact Volunteers, students, parents/carers or other community members who have concerns that a child may be subject to abuse are asked to contact one of the College's **Child Safety Officers**.

Communications will be treated confidentially on a 'need to know basis'.

Whenever there are concerns that a child is in immediate danger, the Police should be contacted on 000.

Procedures for Responding to and Reporting Allegations of Child Abuse

Child abuse can take many forms. The abuser may be a parent, carer, staff member, volunteer, another adult or even another child. Unfortunately, the nature of child abuse is complex. The abuse may occur over time and potential risk indicators are often difficult to detect. Even our legal obligations for reporting allegations of child abuse can vary depending on the circumstances of the incident.

The College will take appropriate, prompt action in response to **all** allegations or disclosures of abuse, neglect, inappropriate behaviour or concerns about child safety by reporting all matters to the Victorian Child Protection Service, the Commission for Children and Young People, or the Police, depending on the allegation or disclosure made.

Christian College Geelong has established simple and accessible procedures for anyone to report, if appropriate a child abuse concern internally to one of the College's **Child Safety Officers**. Please be aware that consulting with a Child Safety Officer does not change any obligation you have under legislation to report to an external authority.

Christian College Geelong has developed and implemented procedures for Board members, staff and Direct Contact Volunteers for responding to allegations and disclosures of child abuse, or suspected child abuse, including procedures for support following a disclosure by a student..

Reporting procedures for Third Party Contractors, External Education Providers, Indirect Contact Volunteers, parents/carers and other community members are also included in our **Child Protection and Safety Policy** which is available on our public website.

Age appropriate reporting procedures for students are developed through our **pastoral care program**.

This section describes our work systems, practices, policies and procedures for responding to and reporting allegations of child abuse both internally and externally. This includes:

Managing Your Initial Response to a Child Protection Incident

Responding to an Emergency

Reporting a Child Abuse Concern Internally

General Legal Obligation to “Act to Protect” and to Report Child Sexual Abuse

Mandatory Reporting

Reportable Conduct of Staff, Volunteers and Others

Responding to Other Concerns About the Wellbeing of a Child

Conduct that is Reportable to the Victorian Institute of Teachers (VIT)

Communication with Parents/Carers

Support for Students Interviewed at the College

Making Additional Reports

Child Protection Complaints Management

Confidentiality & Privacy

Child Protection Record Keeping

The College's policies and procedures for responding to and reporting allegations of suspected child abuse are made available to staff, students, parents/carers and the wider College community through our staff intranet and by request.

All of the College's procedures for reporting and responding to allegation of child abuse are designed and implemented taking into account the diverse characteristics of the College community.

A summary of these procedures is made publicly available on the College's website through our **Child Protection and Safety Policy** and is accessible to all children, College staff and the wider community.

The College will respond to all allegations of child abuse in an appropriate manner including:

- informing the appropriate authorities and fully cooperating with any resulting investigation;
- protecting any child connected to the allegation until it is resolved and providing ongoing support to those affected;
- taking particular measures in response to an allegation that concerns a culturally diverse child or a child with a disability; and
- securing and retaining records of the allegation and the College's response to it.



Documenting Your Observations and Actions

It is critical that all teaching staff, non-teaching staff, Board members, Volunteers, Third Party Contractors and External Education Providers keep clear and comprehensive notes relating to incidents, disclosures and allegations of child abuse. This information may be sought at a later date if the matter is the subject of court proceedings. Your notes may also assist you later if you're required to provide evidence to support your decisions regarding the handling of child protection incidents.

For more information about how to record observations, disclosures or allegations refer to the **Child Protection Record Keeping** section of this Program.

Preserving Evidence

When an incident of suspected child abuse occurs at the College, consider all of the following:

- environment: do not clean up the area and preserve the sites where the alleged incident occurred;
- clothing: take steps to ensure that the person who has allegedly committed the abuse and the child who has allegedly been abused remain in their clothing. If this is not possible, ensure the clothes are not washed, handled as little as possible and stored in a sealed bag;
- other physical items: ensure that items such as weapons, bedding and condoms are untouched; and
- potential witnesses: reasonable precautions must be taken to prevent discussion of the incident between those involved in the alleged incident.