



Child Safe Program

Executive Summary

If you have a belief or suspicion that a child is being, or has been, subjected to any form of abuse you must contact the Department of Families, Fairness and Housing ([Child Protection](#)).

Where you need guidance on making a report or have questions regarding child safety and wellbeing, contact a [Child Safe Officer](#).

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

Introduction

Statement of Commitment to Child Safety and Wellbeing

All children and young people who come to Little Yarra Steiner School have a right to feel and be safe. We are committed to the safety and wellbeing of all children and young people. We are 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.

We have a zero tolerance for child abuse and other harm and are committed to acting in students' best interests and keeping them safe from harm.

The School regards its child protection responsibilities with the utmost importance and is committed to providing the necessary resources to ensure compliance with all relevant child safety and wellbeing laws and regulations and maintaining a child safe culture.

Each member of the School community has a responsibility to understand the important and specific role that they play individually, and collectively, to ensure that the wellbeing and safety of all students is at the forefront of all that they do, and every decision that they make.

The Child Protection Program

This Child Protection Program is made up of work systems, practices, policies, and procedures designed to maintain a child safe environment and to embed an organisational culture of child safety within the School community.

The Program deals specifically with creating and maintaining a child safe organisation, including – but going further than - child protection issues. It is designed to ensure compliance with:

- the Victorian Child Safe Standards
- Ministerial Order No. 1359, made under the Education and Training Reform Act 2006 (Vic)
- child safety and wellbeing (including but not limited to child protection) laws and regulations in Victoria.

Broader child safety and wellbeing issues arising from our common law duty of care are dealt with through our Student Duty of Care Program.

Key Definition: Child Safety Incident or Concern

At Little Yarra Steiner School, and in our Child Protection Program, a “child safety incident or concern” means an incident of or a concern about:

- “child abuse” as defined in Ministerial Order 1359 and the Child Wellbeing and Safety Act 2005 (CWS Act). These define “child abuse” as:
 - any act committed against a child involving:
 - a sexual offence against a child
 - the criminal offence of grooming (which includes grooming of a child or of a person with care, supervision or responsibility for the child with the intention of facilitating the child being engaged or involved in the commission of a sexual offence)
 - the infliction, on a child, of physical violence or “serious” emotional or psychological harm*
 - the “serious” neglect of a child, including exposure to family violence and its effects*
- a child being “in need of protection” as defined in the Child, Youth and Families Act 2005 (Vic) (CYF Act). This includes:
 - abandonment of the child by their parents and no other suitable person can be found who is willing and able to care for the child
 - the child’s parents are dead or incapacitated and no other suitable person can be found who is willing and able to care for the child

- “significant” harm as a result of physical injury, from which the child’s parents have not or are not likely to protect the child*
- “significant” harm as a result of sexual abuse (including likely future sexual abuse as a result of grooming), from which the child’s parents have not or are not likely to protect the child*
- “significant” emotional or psychological harm, from which the child’s parents have not or are not likely to protect the child*
- “significant” neglect by the child’s parents*
- “reportable conduct” as defined in the CWS Act. Reportable conduct is conduct by an employee (whether in the course of their employment or not) involving:
 - a sexual offence committed against or in the presence of a child
 - sexual misconduct committed against or in the presence of a child
 - physical violence committed against or in the presence of a child
 - any behaviour that causes “significant” emotional or psychological harm to a child*
 - “significant” neglect of a child*
- a criminal offence against a child, or a student aged 18 or over, as set out in the Crimes Act 1958 (Vic). These include:
 - sexual penetration or sexual assault of, or sexual activity in the presence of, a child aged under 16 or a child aged 16 or 17 under the care, supervision or authority of the offender
 - grooming a child aged under 16 or a child aged 16 or 17 under the care, supervision or authority of the offender
 - grooming an adult who has a child under their care, supervision or authority
 - encouraging a child aged under 16 or a child aged 16 or 17 under the offender’s care, supervision or authority to be involved in sexual activity
 - image-based sexual offences
- a practice to change or suppress a child’s sexual orientation or gender identity, which is prohibited under the Change or Suppression (Conversion) Practices Prohibition Act 2021 (Vic)
- a breach of our Child Protection Codes of Conduct, such as:
 - a teacher engaging in undisclosed private meetings with a student who is not their own child
 - a Volunteer sports coach engaging in inappropriate online personal communications with a student
 - a Contractor music tutor publishing online photos, movies or recordings of a student without parental/carer consent.

*“Serious” emotional or psychological harm and “serious” neglect involve harm that has a lasting permanent effect. “Significant” emotional or psychological harm and “significant” neglect involve harm that is more than trivial or insignificant, but need not be as high as “serious” and need not have a lasting permanent effect.

For more information, refer to [Child Protection Codes of Conduct](#) and [Definitions and Key Indicators of Child Abuse and Other Harm](#).

Quick Access Documents

The Department of Education, Catholic Education Commission of Victoria and Independent Schools Victoria, [PROTECT Four Critical Actions for Schools: Responding to Incidents, Disclosures or Suspicions of Child Abuse](#), 2018

Department of Education, Catholic Education Commission of Victoria and Independent Schools Victoria, [PROTECT Identifying and Responding to All Forms of Abuse in Victorian Schools](#), 2018

The Department of Education, Catholic Education Commission of Victoria and Independent Schools Victoria, [PROTECT Recording your actions: Responding to suspected child abuse - A Template for Victorian Schools](#), 2018

Child Protection Contextualisation Guide

You may wish to turn the visibility of this section off, so that only Administrators can view this Contextualisation Guide.

This section of the Program – the “Child Protection Contextualisation Guide” - includes Variable Questions and Context Questions for you to answer to contextualise the new Program for your school.

This Child Safeguarding Program includes more Variables and Context Keys to complete than were in the Child Safety Program. This heightened contextualisation was a key focus in the revision of the Program in response to feedback from the VRQA and CECV regarding schools making the content ‘their own’.

Before Commencing Contextualisation

CompliSpace has developed a number of resources for your school to assist in understanding the new Child Safeguarding Program, and how it will affect your school and staff. Before commencing

work with this Contextualisation Guide, we recommend reviewing these resources:

- our recent School Governance article: [Ministerial Order 1359: A New Ministerial Order to Implement New Child Safe Standards in Victoria](#)
- CompliSpace's Principal Consultant for Child Protection, Deb De Fina, has recorded a demonstration and explanation of the updated Child Safeguarding Program, [available here](#)
- the [Child Safe/Safeguarding Program Implementation Guide](#) that guides and assists your school on how to prepare for the implementation of the Program.
- the [New Victorian Child Safe Standards Implementation Checklist](#) that explains the differences between the current and new Victorian Standards and how the new Child Safeguarding Program assists in complying with the new Standards.

You may wish to familiarise yourself with the articles available on the CompliSpace Support Hub that provide [instructions on completing Variables and Context Keys](#), and [other Administrator functions](#) in PolicyConnect.

Decommissioning of the Child Safety Program

From 1 July 2022, CompliSpace will decommission the existing Child Safety Program as it will no longer be compliant with the Victorian Child Safe Standards and it is not compliant with MO 1359.

For your school this means that:

- CompliSpace will set the ChildSafeguardingModule Variable to "YES" in your PolicyConnect site (this redirects internal links in your PolicyConnect site, for example from School Registration, to the new Child Safeguarding Program)
- CompliSpace will remove the Child Safety Program from your PolicyConnect site. [Please note](#) that this will not remove Contextualisation you have completed that applies across to the new Child Safeguarding Program.

You will be notified when this change is occurring.

CompliSpace-Provided Templates & Resources

CompliSpace has prepared the following Template Documents that can be downloaded, amended and used by your school. These are referenced on the Victorian Child Safe Standards page, as well as the Compliance with Child Protection Standards page in the Program.

- [Complaints Handling Policy](#)

- [Child Protection – Reporting Obligations: The School’s Procedures for Responding to and Reporting Child Safety Incidents or Concerns](#)
- [Public Facing Procedures for Managing Child Safety Incidents or Concerns At or Involving the School or its Staff, Volunteers or Contractors](#)

As part of the Policy product, your organisation has access to the following resources:

[Child Safe Risk Register and Compliance Framework Practical Implementation Guide](#)

This webpage provides a practical implementation guide to walk schools through understanding the new Child Safe Risk Register, their compliance obligations, how to adopt and set-up a child safe risk register and the risk management process.

[Child Safe Risk Register and Compliance Framework Resources](#)

This webpage provides an overview of the range of resources that CompliSpace has developed to assist schools in implementing a Child Safe Risk Register. These resources aim to provide practical guidance and support to schools to ensure that they meet their obligations to create a safe environment for children.

Key Information for Staff, Volunteers and Contractors

There are a variety of different child safety incidents and concerns that you as a staff member must report to the School and/or external authorities.

This section of the Child Protection Program summarises these reporting obligations and links to the relevant policies and procedures for more guidance.

Definition of “Child Safety Incident or Concern”

At Little Yarra Steiner School, we use the phrase “child safety incident or concern” to mean an incident of or concern about:

- “child abuse” as defined in Ministerial Order 1359 and the Child Wellbeing and Safety Act 2005 (Vic) (CWS Act)
- a child being “in need of protection” as defined in the Child, Youth and Families Act 2005 (Vic) (CYF Act)
- “reportable conduct” as defined in the CWS Act

- a criminal offence against a child, or a student aged 18 or over, as set out in the Crimes Act 1958 (Vic)
- a practice to change or suppress a child's, or a student's, sexual orientation or gender identity, which is prohibited under the Change or Suppression (Conversion) Practices Prohibition Act 2021 (Vic)
- a breach of our Child Protection Codes of Conduct.

For more information, refer to the full definition of "child safety incident or concern" on the [Responding to and Reporting Child Safety Incidents or Concerns Landing Page](#).

The School's Policy

The School will take appropriate, prompt action in response to all child safety incidents or concerns, including suspicions, allegations or disclosures of abuse or other harm, that are reported internally by Staff. Where appropriate, all matters that meet the required thresholds will be reported externally to the Department of Families, Fairness and Housing (Child Protection), the Commission for Children and Young People (CCYP), the Victorian Institute of Teaching and/or the Police, depending on the information contained in the report.

The welfare and best interests of the student are paramount. Whenever there are concerns that a student is in immediate danger, call the Police on 000.

Key Documents for Staff, Volunteers and Contractors

- [Our School's Child Safe Officers - Who to Speak to if You Have a Concern](#)
- [Response and Reporting Obligations](#)

Our Child Safe Officers – Who to Speak to if You Have a Concern

Our Child Safe Officers

You **must** report **all** child safety incidents or concerns internally to a Child Safe Officer or the Principal. For more information, refer to [Reporting a Child Safety Incident or Concern Internally](#).

Little Yarra Steiner School has appointed one or more Child Safe Officers. They are your first port of call for most situations involving child safety incidents or concerns.

They can assist in clarifying your reporting obligations and managing the next steps.

They can also answer any questions that you may have with respect to our [Child Safe Policy](#), and the Child Protection Program more generally.

Please be aware that reporting to or consulting with a Child Safe Officer does not change any obligation that you have under legislation to report to an external authority. For more information, refer to our procedures for [Responding to and Reporting Child Safety Incidents or Concerns](#).

Our Child Safe Officers are:

Name	Position	Contact No.	Email Address
John Stewart	Principal	59671953	jstewart@lyss.vic.edu.au
Bernard Wagg	Assistant Principal	59671953	bwagg@lyss.vic.edu.au

While students can also talk to Child Safe Officers if they have a child safety concern, the School does not place any limits on to whom or the ways in which students can disclose child safety incidents or concerns. Students therefore may raise child safety incidents or concerns, including about inappropriate behaviour by Staff, Volunteers and Contractors, via any means. For more information, refer to [Child Protection Complaints Management](#).

****Our Senior Child Safety Officer ****

Little Yarra Steiner School has also appointed at least one Senior Child Safety Officer. Their contact details are listed in the [Child Safe Policy](#).

The Senior Child Safety Officer has additional child protection responsibilities. The Senior Child Safety Officer is identified in the publicly available Child Safe Policy as the first point of contact for all child safety concerns or queries for the wider community, and coordinates the School's response to child safety incidents in consultation with the Principal, the School Management and the Board.

For more information about Child Safe Officers' and Senior Child Safety Officer's responsibilities, refer to [Child Protection Responsibilities](#).

Response and Reporting Obligations

Below are high-level summaries of the various response and reporting obligations School Staff may have, and links to the School's policies and procedures for responding and for reporting to external agencies.

Responding to an Emergency

If a student has been harmed or is at immediate risk of harm you must ensure their immediate safety by:

- separating alleged victims and others involved
- administering first aid if needed
- calling 000 for urgent medical assistance and/or Police assistance to address immediate health and safety concerns
- briefing the Senior Child Safety Officer to be the future liaison with the Police on the matter.

For more information, refer to the [Responding to an Emergency](#).

Managing Your Initial Response to a Child Safety Incident or Concern

There are six different ways that you may become aware of a child safety incident or concern involving a student. The links below take you to the strategies, guidelines, policies and procedures for managing each situation and for assisting the students involved:

- [Witnessing a Child Safety Incident](#)
- [Observation of Abuse and Other Harm Indicators](#)
- [Private Disclosure by a Student](#)
- [Public Disclosure by a Student](#)
- [Third Party Disclosure](#)
- [Disclosure by a Former Student](#)

You must also follow procedures for [Preserving Evidence](#) and [Documenting your Observations and Actions](#).

Information on how you and the School should support students following an incident or a disclosure of abuse, harm or inappropriate behaviour is also found in [Support Following Child Safety Incident or Disclosure](#).

Reporting a Child Safety Incident or Concern Internally

Child safety situations can be very complex, not only from the perspective of ascertaining whether abuse or other harm has occurred but also in terms of understanding what steps to take to protect the student/s involved. It is important to remember at all times that the safety and welfare of the student are paramount.

Obtain Advice

If you **suspect** that a student may be experiencing abuse or other harm or that their safety may be at risk, **but you are unsure** whether your concern rises to the levels required for external reporting to the relevant authority, you should immediately raise your concerns with a Child Safe Officer. They will be able to assist you in clarifying your concerns and managing the next steps.

Internal Reporting Procedure

If you **know** or have **reasonable grounds to believe** that a student:

- has been abused or otherwise harmed; or
- is in need of protection for any reason,

such that Mandatory Reporting to Child Protection, Non-Mandatory Reporting to Child Protection or Reporting to Police is required, you must – in addition to reporting externally – report the matter internally to the School.

These reports can be made to a Child Safe Officer or the Principal.

If the child safety incident or concern involves Reportable Conduct by a staff member, Volunteer or Contractor, then you may instead report directly to the Principal (or the Board Chair if the allegation involves the Principal).

For more information, refer to Reporting a Child Safety Incident or Concern Internally and Reportable Conduct.

Other Actions

In addition to reporting internally, you **must** also follow any appropriate external reporting procedures listed below.

You **must** document your internal report in PROTECT Recording your actions: Responding to suspected child abuse - A Template for Victorian Schools. For more information, refer to Child

Protection Record Keeping.

Duty to Protect/Failure to Protect

In Victoria, it is a crime if a person who occupies a position within or in relation to the School:

- **knows** that there is a **substantial risk** that:
 - a child (aged under 16) who is under the **care, supervision or authority** of the School;
 - will become a victim of a **sexual offence** committed by an adult **associated with** the School; and
- has, by reason of their position, the power or responsibility to reduce or remove that risk; and
- negligently fails to reduce or remove that risk.

This criminal offence is known as “Failure to Protect” and, in the School context, it covers failures to protect a student aged under 16 from sexual abuse by any adult Staff, Volunteer or Contractor.

The School also has a common law duty to protect **all** students, regardless of their age, from reasonably foreseeable risks of harm, including risks of **all** types of child abuse or other harm that may arise from Staff, Volunteers, and Contractors as well as from others.

To ensure that these obligations are met, it is the School’s policy that:

- if you know that **any** adult associated with the School (including Staff, Volunteers, Contractors, students aged 18 or over, parents/carers and other family members of students) poses a substantial risk of sexually abusing a student, or a reasonably foreseeable risk of child abuse or other harm to a student
- you **must** take any actions to reduce or remove that risk that are within your power or responsibilities to take.

In addition, you **must** report the matter to the Principal or the Deputy Principal.

You **must** also follow the appropriate external reporting procedures listed below.

For more information, refer to Duty to Protect/Failure to Protect.

Mandatory Reporting to Child Protection

Although everyone has a moral and social responsibility to report concerns about child abuse or other harm, some professionals are legally required to make a report to the Department of Families, Fairness and Housing (Child Protection). These people are called Mandatory Reporters.

Mandatory Reporters must make a Mandatory Report to Child Protection if – **during the course of their professional work or carrying out duties of their office, position or employment** – they:

- form a **belief on reasonable grounds**
- that a child (aged under 17) is **in need of protection** because:
 - the child has suffered or is likely to suffer **significant harm** as a result of **physical injury or sexual abuse**; and
 - the child's parents have not protected or are unlikely to protect the child from the harm.

At the School, the following people are Mandatory Reporters:

- teachers
- the Principal
- medical practitioners
- nurses
- early childhood workers
- persons in religious ministry who work or volunteer at the School in their religious capacity.

It does not matter whether they are engaged by the School in a paid or volunteer role, as long as they are working in the relevant profession.

Mandatory Reports can be made either to Child Protection or to the Police.

If you have contacted the Police, either as a result of [Responding to an Emergency](#) or [Reporting to Police](#), then you have made your Mandatory Report.

If you have not contacted Police, you must report to Child Protection. You must do this by:

- during business hours (8:45am-5:00pm, Monday to Friday), telephoning the Child Protection intake service for the local government area where the child resides, listed [here](#).
- after hours, telephoning Child Protection on **13 12 78**.

You should also consider whether you are required to take any other action or make any other external reports (for example, refer to [Duty to Protect/Failure to Protect](#), [Reporting to Police](#) and [Reportable Conduct](#)).

For more information, refer to [Mandatory Reporting to Child Protection](#).

Non-Mandatory Reporting to Child Protection

Under the law, anyone can report the following to Child Protection:

- **significant concerns** for the wellbeing of a child (aged under 17) (wellbeing reports)
- a child (aged under 17) who the person **believes on reasonable grounds** to be **in need of protection** (protective intervention reports)
- a child (aged under 18) who the person **believes on reasonable grounds** is **in need of therapeutic treatment** because they are exhibiting **sexually abusive behaviours** (therapeutic treatment reports).

Together, we call these “Non-Mandatory Reports to Child Protection”. All of these reports are voluntary under the law.

However, although Non-Mandatory Reporting to Child Protection is voluntary under the law, it is the School’s policy that **all** Staff (including those who are not Mandatory Reporters) **must**, in particular circumstances, make wellbeing reports, protective intervention reports and therapeutic treatment reports to Child Protection.

This requirement aligns with the requirements of PROTECT Four Critical Actions for Schools: Responding to Incidents, Disclosures or Suspicions of Child Abuse (Four Critical Actions).

For more information about when you may be required by the School’s policy and by Four Critical Actions to report to Child Protection, other than through Mandatory Reporting, refer to Non-Mandatory Reporting to Child Protection.

Reporting to Police

Failure to Disclose: Mandatory Reporting (of Sexual Offences Against Children) to Police

Victorian law requires that any person aged 18 or over (whether in Victoria or elsewhere) who forms a **reasonable belief** that a **sexual offence** has been committed in Victoria by an adult (a person aged 18 years or over) against a child (aged under 16) must report that information to the Police as soon as it is practicable to do so, unless the person has a reasonable excuse for not doing so.

We call this “Mandatory Reporting (of Sexual Offences Against Children) to Police”.

Failure to do this is a criminal offence known as “Failure to Disclose”.

If you have concerns that any adult, including a staff member, Volunteer, Contractor or any other adult, has committed a sexual offence in Victoria against a child (a person who, at the time of the

offence, was aged under 16), including a current or former student, you **must** immediately report your concerns to the Victoria Police.

Although sexual offences committed against a child aged under 16 by a student who is themselves aged under 18 do not fall under the Failure to Disclose offence, this must still be reported to Police. Refer to Non-Mandatory Reporting to Police, below.

Non-Mandatory Reporting to Police

Although not required by law to do so, it is the School's policy that the following must be reported to Police:

- sexual offences committed by a student under the age of 18 against another person. For more information, refer to [Responding to Student Sexual Offending](#).
- concerns for a student's immediate safety. For more information, refer to [Responding to an Emergency](#).
- knowledge or suspicions that a student aged 18 or over is being abused or harmed, but only if the student consents to the report or, if they do not consent, to lessen or prevent a serious or imminent threat to an individual's life, health, safety or welfare. For more information, refer to [Information Sharing with Consent](#) and [Sharing Information Without Consent](#).
- where a student is partaking in illegal activity that is extreme in nature or poses a high risk to the student. For more information, refer to [Responding to Other Concerns about the Wellbeing of a Student](#).

How to Report to Police

- In emergencies, or if the crime is happening now or has just happened and the suspected offender may still be in the area: call 000.
- All other matters: call your local police station, the details of which you can find [here](#).

For more information, refer to [Reporting to Police](#).

Reportable Conduct

Victorian law requires the "head" of the School to report to the Commission for Children and Young People (CCYP) any allegation that a School staff member, Volunteer or Contractor has committed reportable conduct or misconduct that may involve reportable conduct (a reportable allegation).

The "head" of the School for the purposes of the reportable conduct scheme is the Board Chair, who has authorised the Principal to receive internal reports of reportable conduct.

Reportable conduct includes:

- a sexual offence committed against, with or in the presence of, a child, whether or not a criminal proceeding in relation to the offence has been commenced or concluded
- sexual misconduct committed against, with or in the presence of, a child
- physical violence committed against, with or in the presence of, a child
- any behaviour that causes significant emotional or psychological harm to a child
- significant neglect of a child.

To enable the “head” of the School to fulfil their legal obligations, it is the School’s policy that if you form a **reasonable belief** that a Staff member, Volunteer or Contractor at the School has engaged in reportable conduct or misconduct that may involve reportable conduct, you must immediately report your concerns to the Principal (or the Board Chair if the allegation involves the Principal).

You should also consider whether you are required to make a Mandatory or Non-Mandatory Report to Child Protection, take any other action or make any other external reports (refer to [Mandatory Reporting to Child Protection](#), [Non-Mandatory Reporting to Child Protection](#), [Duty to Protect/Failure to Protect](#) and [Reporting to Police](#)).

For more information, refer to [Making an Internal Report of Reportable Conduct](#) and [Reportable Conduct Key Definitions](#).

Reporting Teacher Misconduct to the Victorian Institute of Teaching

Registered teachers in Victoria are exempt from holding a WWC (working with children) clearance. To align teacher registration with the WWC Check scheme, Victorian law requires that registered teachers notify the Victorian Institute of Teaching (VIT) if they are charged with, committed for trial for, or convicted or found guilty of certain criminal offences (that accord with those relevant to the WWC Check) or if they have been issued with a WWC exclusion.

Victorian law also requires that the School notifies the VIT if it becomes aware that a teacher has been charged with, or convicted or found guilty of, these criminal offences or has been given a WWC exclusion.

The School must dismiss or remove from its employment or engagement any teacher who has been convicted or found guilty of these criminal offences or been given a WWC exclusion.

The School must also notify the VIT if the School has taken any action against a registered teacher in response to allegations that raise concerns about the teacher’s fitness to teach.

To enable the School to fulfil its obligations, it is the School's policy that:

- registered teachers must inform the Principal (or, if they are the Principal, the Deputy Principal) if they are charged with, committed for trial for, or convicted or found guilty of a relevant offence or if they have been given a WWC exclusion
- all Staff must immediately report to the Principal (or, if the incident or allegation involves the Principal, to the Deputy Principal) any incident or allegation that raises concerns about a teacher's fitness to teach.

For more information, refer to Reporting [Teacher Misconduct to the Victorian Institute of Teaching](#).

Recognising and Responding to Sexual Behaviour in Children and to Student Sexual Offending

Knowing how to identify and respond to all sexual behaviour in students, whether it be age-appropriate, concerning, harmful or student sexual offending, helps Staff to support the development of healthy sexuality and protect students from abuse and other harm.

Recognising Sexual Behaviour in Children

It can be hard to distinguish between developmentally appropriate sexual behaviours and concerning or harmful sexual behaviours. It may be difficult to know if there is a problem and, if there is, how best to respond.

The School references the True Traffic Lights® Framework to enable Staff to identify, recognise and respond to all forms of sexual behaviour. The Traffic Lights® Framework categorises sexual behaviour as green, orange or red light.

As a general guide:

- red light sexual behaviours are those that are problematic or harmful, including forceful, secretive, compulsive, coercive or degrading sexual behaviours. These behaviours signal the need to provide immediate protection and follow up support.
- orange light sexual behaviours are those that are outside normal behaviour in terms of persistence, frequency or inequality in age, power or ability. These behaviours signal the need to monitor and provide extra support.
- green light sexual behaviours are those that are normal, age-appropriate, spontaneous, curious, mutual, light-hearted and easily-diverted experimentation. These behaviours provide opportunities to talk, explain and support.

For more information, refer to [Recognising Sexual Behaviour in Children and Student Sexual Offending](#).

[Responding to Sexual Behaviour in Children](#)

All green, orange and red light behaviours require some form of action and support.

Most red light (harmful) sexual behaviour by a student aged 10 or over that is directed at another person would be considered student sexual offending. Some orange light (concerning) behaviours could also be student sexual offending.

Orange and red light behaviours may therefore require external reporting.

For more information, refer to [Responding to Sexual Behaviour in Children](#).

[Responding to Student Sexual Offending](#)

Student sexual offending refers to sexual behaviour that:

- is led by a student aged 10 or over;
- is directed at another person; and
- amounts to a sexual offence.

It is the School's policy that, when you become aware of, or suspect, student sexual offending, or that a student is at risk of perpetrating or suffering student sexual offending, you **must** report the matter to Police.

This requirement aligns with the requirements of the [Four Critical Actions for Schools: Responding to Student Sexual Offending](#).

For more information, refer to [Responding to Student Sexual Offending](#).

Responding to Other Concerns About the Wellbeing of a Student

If you have any concerns about the wellbeing of a student, regardless of whether it has been caused by abuse or other harm, your concern should be taken seriously and acted on.

The School and its Staff (including teaching and non-teaching Staff), the Principal, Volunteers, and Contractors owe a duty of care to all students at the School to ensure that they feel safe and are supported at the School.

Concerns about the wellbeing of a student, that do not appear to be the result of abuse or other harm, may still be reported to:

- internally, a Child Safe Officer
- Victoria Police
- Child Protection
- Child FIRST/the Orange Door

depending on the age of the student and the nature of the concern.

You could also consider whether a referral to a support service may assist.

For more information, refer to [Responding to Other Concerns About the Wellbeing of a Student](#).

Making Additional Reports

There are some circumstances in which you will be required to make an additional report to an appropriate external authority.

For more information, refer to [Making Additional Reports](#).

Child Safe Policy

If you are a non-English speaker who needs help to understand this Policy, please contact the School office on (03) 5967 1953 or at office@lyss.vic.edu.au.

Background

Introduction

the Board has approved this Child Safe Policy on 1 July 2022. It will be reviewed on 1 July 2024.

Purpose

Our Child Safe Policy demonstrates the School's strong commitment to child safety and wellbeing and to creating and maintaining a child safe and child-friendly environment. It provides an overview of the policies and practices that we have developed to keep our students safe, including from abuse or other harm.

Our Child Safe Policy outlines the key elements of our approach to implementing Ministerial Order 1359 (which sets out how the Victorian Child Safe Standards apply in school environments) and to the School as a child safe organisation.

It informs the School community about everyone's obligations to act safely and appropriately towards students and guides the policies, processes and practices for the safety and wellbeing of students across all areas of our work, which are set out in the School's Child Protection Program. (1)

Little Yarra Steiner School's Child Safe Policy is to be read and understood in conjunction with, the Victorian Child Safe Standards and Ministerial Order 1359.

The Child Safe Policy provides the framework for:

- the implementation of the Victorian Child Safe Standards and Ministerial Order No 1359
- the implementation of the Child Safe Policy
- the development of work systems, practices, policies and procedures, consistent with PROTECT Four Critical Actions for Schools: Responding to Incidents, Disclosure and Suspicions of Child Abuse (PROTECT Four Critical Actions) and PROTECT Four Critical Actions for Schools: Responding to Student Sexual Offending (Four Critical Actions: Student Sexual Offending), that promote child protection, safety and wellbeing within the School
- the creation of a safe and supportive School environment and a positive and robust child safe culture
- the promotion and open discussion of child safety issues within the School
- compliance with all laws, regulations and standards relevant to child safety and wellbeing, including child protection, in Victoria.

Scope

The School's Child Safe Policy applies to all adults in the School community, whether or not their work involves direct contact with students, including:

- Staff and Direct Contact Contractors (including External Education Providers) who are "school staff" within the meaning of Ministerial Order 1359
- other types of Contractors
- Volunteers
- Visitors.

This Policy applies in all physical, virtual and online School environments used by students during or outside of school hours, including all locations provided for a student's use, (for example on-site and

off-site School grounds, sporting events, camps and excursions and environments provided by External Education Providers and other Contractors).

Definitions

Definitions of the following terms used in the Child Safe Policy can be found in [Child Protection Program Definitions](#):

- child/young person
- child abuse and other harm
- child safety and wellbeing
- child safety incident or concern
- child-connected work
- child-related work
- contractor
- school environment
- school staff
- school governing authority
- staff/staff member
- student
- visitor
- volunteer.

Roles and Responsibilities

Child safety and wellbeing is everyone's responsibility. All adults in the School community have a shared responsibility for contributing to the safety, wellbeing and protection of students.

Specific responsibilities are summarised at the end of this Policy.

Statement of Commitment to Child Safety and Wellbeing

All children and young people who come to Little Yarra Steiner School have a right to feel and be safe. We are committed to providing a child safe and child friendly environment, where children and young people are safe and feel safe and can actively participate in decisions that affect their lives.

We have a zero tolerance for child abuse and other harm and are committed to acting in students' best interests and keeping them safe from harm.

The School 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 safety and wellbeing laws and regulations and maintaining a child safe culture.

Each member of the School community has a responsibility to understand the important and specific role that they play individually and collectively to ensure that the wellbeing and safety of all students is at the forefront of all that they do and every decision that they make.

Child Protection Standards

Little Yarra Steiner School has also developed specific child safe principles and values relevant to its own specific circumstances that guide our work systems, practices, policies and procedures to protect students from abuse and harm.

The Victorian Child Safe Standards

The Victorian Child Safe Standards were originally developed in response to the Victorian Parliament's Inquiry into the Handling of Child Abuse by Religious and Other Organisations. They were replaced by a set of new Standards in 2022, to reflect the National Principles for Child Safe Organisations and to support greater national consistency. There are 11 Victorian Child Safe Standards. They are:

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.

-

The Victorian Registration and Qualifications Authority (VRQA) monitors and enforces compliance with the Victorian Child Safe Standards for all registered schools in Victoria.

Little Yarra Steiner School's Child Protection Principles and Values

Vision:

Working out of Anthroposophy, we learn and grow, inspiring our students to act with courage for the good of humanity.

Purpose:

To awaken in our students the capacity to reach their highest goals through the strength of their individuality and intercultural understanding.

Our Values:

Understanding

Our curriculum and pedagogy use content and teaching methods based on a deep understanding of the stages of child development.

Meaning

We strive for students to experience a meaningful and rewarding education leading to a lifelong love of learning and accomplishment as adults who can think and act freely and responsibly.

Environmental responsibility

Our educational offering combines the safety and beauty of our rural and artistic environment with twenty first century academic rigour and reverence for the environment.

Community

We promote a welcoming and inclusive whole school environment in which the wider community can participate.

Respect

We encourage and foster a culture of respectful relationships and positive student behaviours.

Freedom

We are philosophically committed to the principles and practice of Australian democracy, including elected government, rule of law, equal rights for all, freedom of religion, freedom of speech and association, the values of openness and tolerance

Safety

Little Yarra Steiner School 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.

Little Yarra Steiner School's Policy

Child Protection Codes of Conduct

Our Child Protection Codes of Conduct include a Child Safe Code of Conduct and a Staff and Student Professional Boundaries policy. Together, these Codes of Conduct set boundaries and expectations for appropriate behaviours between adults in our School community and students, including in physical, online and virtual environments.

We also have a Student Code of Conduct, which includes standards of behaviour for students relevant to child safety and wellbeing.

Our Child Protection Codes of Conduct include clear processes to report inappropriate behaviour. We publish our Child Protection Codes of Conduct on our public website so that everyone can easily find out what behaviours are acceptable and unacceptable at our School and how to report inappropriate behaviour.

We also provide additional information to students and families about the Child Protection Codes of Conduct, to ensure that they know what behaviours are acceptable and unacceptable and how to report inappropriate behaviour.

Cultural Safety

At Little Yarra Steiner School, we are committed to establishing an inclusive and culturally safe School where the strengths of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander culture, values and practices are respected.

We identify, confront and do not tolerate racism, and we address any instances of racism within the school environment with appropriate consequences.

We think about how every student can have a positive experience in a safe environment. For Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students, we recognise the link between culture, identity and safety and actively create opportunities for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students, their families and their communities (including local Aboriginal communities relevant to the School) to have a voice and presence in our School's planning, policies, and activities.

The specific strategies that we have adopted to promote cultural safety in our School community are set out in our Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Students (Child Protection) policy.

Student Empowerment and Participation

Little Yarra Steiner School is a child safe and child-centred organisation, and we work to create an inclusive and supportive environment that encourages students and families to contribute to our approach to child safety and wellbeing.

We ensure that our physical, virtual and online environments are friendly and welcoming to all children and young people.

We actively seek to include students in decisions that affect them. This includes decisions about organisational planning, delivery of services, management of facilities, and learning and assessment environments.

We ensure that students know about their rights to safety, information and participation. We actively seek to understand what makes students feel safe in our School and regularly communicate with students about what they can do if they feel unsafe.

We recognise the importance of friendships and encourage respectful relationships, strong friendships and support from peers.

The specific strategies that we have adopted to promote the participation of and empowerment of students, and to implement all of the above obligations, are set out in the Participation and Empowerment of Students section of our Child Protection Program.

Parent/Carer, Family and Community Engagement at the School

The School recognises that parents and carers have the primary responsibility for the upbringing and development of their children. We ensure that they participate in decisions affecting their children.

We ensure that families and relevant communities (Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities, culturally and linguistically diverse communities, other communities that make up our Staff and student cohort, and the local community in which our School operates) know about the School's operations and policies, including its Child Safe Policy and the Child Protection Codes of Conduct, record keeping practices, risk management, and complaints and investigation processes.

We actively seek to include families and relevant communities in decisions about organisational planning, delivery of services, management of facilities, and learning and assessment environments.

We build cultural safety at the School through partnerships with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities, as well as with culturally and linguistically diverse communities that make up our staff and student cohort.

The specific strategies that we have adopted to promote the engagement of parents/carers, families, and relevant communities in child safety and wellbeing at the School, to make information about child safety and wellbeing available and accessible, and to implement all of the above obligations, are set out in the Family and Community Involvement in Child Protection policy in our Child Protection Program.

Diversity and Equity

Our School values diversity and does not tolerate any discriminatory practices. To achieve this, we:

- support the cultural safety, participation and empowerment of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students and their families
- support the cultural safety, participation and empowerment of students from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds and their families
- support students with disability and their families and act to promote their participation
- support students and families of diverse sexuality and act to promote their participation
- seek to recruit a workforce that reflects a diversity of cultures, abilities and identities
- ensure that all Staff, Direct Contact Volunteers and Direct Contact Contractors have training about Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander cultures, disability, culturally and/or linguistically diverse backgrounds, and those with particular experiences or needs
- have a physical environment that actively celebrates diverse cultures and recognises cultural difference
- commit to promoting the inclusion of students of differing abilities.

The specific strategies that we have adopted to promote equity and respect diversity at the School are set out in the Family and Community Involvement, Cultural Safety and Equity/Diversity section of our Child Protection Program.

Suitable Staff, Volunteers and Contractors and Child Safety Knowledge, Skills and Awareness (Child Protection Human Resources Management)

The specific human resources management strategies that we have adopted at the School to promote child safety and wellbeing are set out in the Child Protection Human Resources Management section of our Child Protection Program. They include the following:

Recruitment and Screening

Little Yarra Steiner School applies best practice standards in the recruitment and screening of Staff, Volunteers and Contractors to engage the most suitable and appropriate people to work with our students. Our practices include:

- making our commitment to child safety and wellbeing clear in recruitment advertising and documentation
- requiring all Staff and relevant Volunteers and Contractors to maintain a valid VIT Registration or WWC (working with children) clearance, and sighting, verifying and recording this information
- using additional selection, background checking and screening processes that take into account child protection considerations.

Training on and Information About Child Protection

As a part of Little Yarra Steiner School's induction process, all Staff, as well as relevant Volunteers and Contractors, must complete our child protection induction program, which includes information about our child protection policies, practices and procedures.

All Staff, as well as relevant Volunteers and Contractors also receive refresher and ongoing child protection training at least annually.

Our child protection induction and ongoing training program includes information about:

- this Child Safe Policy
- the Child Protection Codes of Conduct
- recognising child abuse and other harm and identifying key indicators, including harm caused by other children and young people

- our policies and procedures for responding to and reporting child safety incidents or concerns (including mandatory reporting, reporting to police and reportable conduct obligations)
- our policies and procedures for information sharing and record keeping about child safety incidents and concerns
- WWC clearances and other child safety and wellbeing human resources practices
- how to identify and mitigate child safety and wellbeing risks in the School's environments.

The School provides all Visitors to the School, including Casual Volunteers and Contractors, with information about the Child Safe Codes of Conduct and how to report child safety incidents or concerns to the School and to relevant external authorities.

the Board also receives child protection training at least annually, to ensure that its members are equipped with the knowledge required to make decisions in the best interests of student safety and wellbeing, and to identify and mitigate child safety and wellbeing risks in our School's environment. Its training includes guidance on:

- individual and collective obligations and responsibilities for implementing the Child Safe Standards and managing the risk of child abuse
- child safety and wellbeing risks in our School's environment
- the School's child protection policies, procedures, codes and practices.

Ongoing Supervision, Management and Support

The School's Child Safe Officers and School Management provide supervision and support to all Staff, Direct Contact and Regular Volunteers, and Direct Contact and Regular Contractors to ensure that they are compliant with the School's approach to child safety and wellbeing. Our child protection supervision and support program includes:

- annual performance reviews for all staff members
- appointing a supervising staff member to Direct Contact Volunteers/Contractors and to those Regular Volunteers/Contractors who are engaged in "child-connected work"
- professional development programs for Staff that include child protection education.

The School swiftly manages any inappropriate behaviour towards students, in accordance with our policies and legal obligations. Child safety and wellbeing is the paramount consideration when managing inappropriate behaviour.

Complaints and Reporting Processes: The School's Response to Child Safety Incidents or Concerns

Little Yarra Steiner School fosters a culture that encourages everyone in the School community to raise concerns and complaints about child safety and wellbeing. We have clear pathways for raising complaints and concerns set out in the **Procedures** below, and in our Grievance procedure.

We also have clear procedures that all Staff, Volunteers and Contractors must follow whenever they witness, suspect or receive a complaint about a child safety incident or concern involving a student, a staff member, a Volunteer, a Contractor or the School, set out in the **Responding to and Reporting Child Safety Incidents or Concerns** section of the Child Protection Program. These are summarised for students, parents/carers and other members of the School community in our public-facing Procedures for Responding to and Reporting Child Safety Incidents or Concerns and public-facing Procedures for Managing Child Safety Incidents or Concerns At or Involving the School or its Staff.

Our Insert List of Student Behaviour Policies and Procedures cover complaints and concerns relating to physical violence, bullying and other harmful student behaviours.

The School will take appropriate, prompt action in response to all child safety incidents or concerns, including all complaints, allegations or disclosures of abuse or other harm, when Staff, Volunteers, Contractors, students, parents/carers or anyone else reports these to the School.

The safety and wellbeing of the student/s involved in the matter will be the paramount consideration when responding to child safety incidents and concerns. The School follows the National Office of Child Safety's [Complaint Handling Guide: Upholding the rights of children and young people](#) and the Commission for Children and Young People's [Including Children and Young People in Reportable Conduct Investigations resources](#) when investigating and responding to child safety incidents and concerns.

The School's response will include:

- externally reporting all matters that meet the required relevant thresholds to Child Protection (Mandatory Reports), the Police (Mandatory Reporting of Child Sexual Abuse), the CCYP (Reportable Conduct), and/or the Victorian Institute of Teaching (Teacher Misconduct), depending on the issues raised and consistent with [PROTECT Four Critical Actions](#) and [Four Critical Actions: Student Sexual Offending](#)
- fully cooperating with any resulting investigation by an external agency
- protecting any student connected to the child safety incident or concern until it is resolved and providing ongoing support to those affected
- taking particular measures in response to child safety incidents or concerns about an Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander student, a student from a culturally and linguistically diverse

background, a student with disability, and other vulnerable students (such as students who are unable to live at home or students who identify as lesbian gay, bisexual, transgender or intersex)

- sharing information with, or requesting information from, external people or agencies as permitted or required under the Child Information Sharing Scheme and/or the Family Violence Information Sharing Scheme
- securing and retaining records of the child safety incident or concern and the School's response to it
- taking broader actions to improve child safety at the School (including systemic reviews and resulting improvements).

Child Protection Risk Management

Little Yarra Steiner School and Little Yarra Steiner School recognise the importance of a risk management approach to child protection and to minimising the risk of harm to children and young people without compromising their rights to privacy, access to information, social connections and learning opportunities. The School's Child Protection Risk Management Strategy can be found [here](#).

We have implemented a comprehensive [Risk Management Program](#) to assist in the identification, assessment and management of child protection risks in all School environments.

We identify, assess and manage child protection risks in all School environments, based on a range of factors including the nature of our School's activities, its physical, virtual and online environments and the characteristics of the student body. We use this information to inform our policies, procedures and activity planning.

We record identified risks to child safety and wellbeing in our Child Protection Risk Register, along with the actions in place at the School to manage these risks. the Board, the Principal and/or the School Management monitor and evaluate the effectiveness of these actions at least annually.

Child Protection Privacy and Information Sharing

The School collects, uses and discloses information about students and their families in accordance with Victorian privacy laws and other relevant laws, including laws that permit the School to disclose information about child safety and wellbeing to external people and agencies. For information about how the School collects, uses and discloses this information, refer to our Privacy policy.

Child Protection Record Keeping

The School is committed to best practice record keeping about child safety incidents and concerns in accordance with Public Record Office Victoria Recordkeeping Standards (including minimum retention periods).

The School records all internal and external reports of child safety incidents and concerns, as well as any other responses by the School using [PROTECT Recording your actions: Responding to suspected child abuse - A Template for Victorian Schools](#) or, if the incident or concern involves student sexual offending, the [PROTECT Responding to Suspected Student Sexual Offending - A Template for Victorian Schools](#).

When keeping records of child safety incidents or concerns, the School maintains confidentiality and privacy for students and families in accordance with federal and state privacy legislation.

Communications

Little Yarra Steiner School is committed to communicating our child safety and wellbeing strategies, policies and procedures to our School community through the measures set out in the Implementation section below. In addition, we:

- display PROTECT posters around the School
- provide child protection information and updates through newsletters, emails, class meetings etc
- include child safety as a regular agenda item at School Management meetings and staff meetings.

Child Protection Program and Practice Review

Little Yarra Steiner School is committed to the continuous improvement of the policies and procedures making up our entire Child Protection Program and of our child safety and wellbeing practices. We review the Program as a whole annually (or earlier if a significant child safety incident occurs at the School or legislation changes) for overall effectiveness and to ensure compliance with all child safety and wellbeing related laws, regulations and standards.

When undertaking these reviews, the School:

- actively seeks, actions, and incorporates feedback from students, families, the wider School community, Staff, Volunteers and Contractors
- analyses any complaints and child safety incidents that may have occurred

- communicates any learnings, adjustments or amendments to policy and practice widely throughout the School community.

Child Protection Procedures

Reporting Child Safety Incidents or Concerns to the School

Whenever there are concerns that a child or young person is in immediate danger call the Police on 000.

Any person, including all Staff, Volunteers, Contractors, parents/carers and students, can at any time report concerns about the wellbeing of a child aged under 17 to Child Protection by:

- during business hours (8:45am-5:00pm, Monday to Friday), contacting the Child Protection intake service for the local government area where the child resides, listed [here](#).
- after hours, telephoning 13 12 78.

Staff, Volunteers and Contractors

Staff, Volunteers and Contractors must follow our Procedures for Responding to and Reporting Child Safety Incidents or Concerns and report child safety incidents or concerns internally to a Child Safe Officer or the Principal.

Where the incident or concerns involves the Principal, internal reports should instead be made to the Deputy Principal.

We recognise that some individuals, particularly children, face additional vulnerabilities to child abuse and other harm, as well as additional barriers to disclosing child safety incidents or concerns. Our Child Protection Program provides guidance on identifying additional vulnerabilities and barriers, and contains strategies for supporting these individuals to participate in the School community and enabling them to disclose child safety incidents or concerns to the School.

Students, Parents/Carers and Community Members

Students who have child safety concerns about themselves or any other child or student aged 18 or over can:

- disclose the child safety incident or concern to any staff member, Volunteer or Contractor. This might be done:
 - verbally

- in writing
- through electronic means (such as email)
- indirectly (such as in written assignments, in artworks or in any other way)
- use the School's anonymous contact page, which is located on the LYSS website to disclose anonymously
- contact DFFH.

For more information, students can refer to the child-friendly version of our Child Protection Complaints Management Policy and Procedures, available ..

Parents/carers, family members and other community members who have child safety concerns or who suspect that a child or young person associated with the School may be subject to abuse or other harm can contact:

- the Principal
- the School's Senior Child Safety Officer, by phoning 59671953 or emailing jstewart@lyss.vic.edu.au

Any person can also contact the Principal, or the Senior Child Safety Officer if they have concerns regarding the School's leadership in relation to child safety.

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

The School's Response to and External Reporting of Child Safety Incidents or Concerns

Our Child Protection Program sets out the procedures, consistent with PROTECT Four Critical Actions and Four Critical Actions: Student Sexual Offending, that the School will follow for any child safety incident or concern involving a student, School Staff, Volunteer, Contractor or Visitor, or other person connected to the School or the School environment.

It also provides guidance for all Staff, Volunteers and Contractors on their obligations to respond to and report, to relevant external authorities, child safety incidents and concerns.

These procedures and guidance are summarised in our public-facing Procedures for Responding to and Reporting Child Safety Incidents or Concerns and public-facing Procedures for Managing Child Safety Incidents or Concerns At or Involving the School or its Staff.

Support for Students, Families and Staff Following Child Safety Incident or Disclosure

Child safety incidents or concerns can cause trauma and significantly impact on the mental health and wellbeing of children, as well as on their families. In addition to reporting and referral to the relevant authorities, the School plays a central role in addressing this trauma and has a duty of care to ensure that students feel safe and supported at School.

The School employs a range of measures to support students affected by a child safety incident or concern depending on the particular circumstances of the matter and of the student and their family:

- Child Safe Officers will work with the student and their family to develop a Student Support Plan
- support strategies that could be considered for students and/or their families might include offering or organising referrals to internal or external support, such as the School Class Teacher/Guardian, bi-cultural workers and/or translators, or an external support agency and/or child advocacy organisation which specialises in supporting children and young people impacted by abuse or other harm.

The School offers former students who may disclose historical child safety incidents or concerns from their time at the School similar support.

Witnessing a child safety incident or receiving a disclosure of abuse or other harm can be a distressing experience for Staff, Volunteers and Contractors involved. The School assists impacted Staff, Volunteers and Contractors to access necessary support.

Embedding a Culture of Child Safety: Our Child Protection Program

Our Child Protection Program itself is one of the strategies employed by Little Yarra Steiner School to embed a culture of child safety at the School.

Our Child Protection Program relates to all aspects of child safety and wellbeing and establishes work systems, practices, policies and procedures to create and maintain a child safe environment and culture at the School. It includes:

- the Child Protection Codes of Conduct
- clear information about what is child abuse and other harm and key indicators of child abuse and other harm
- clear procedures, that are consistent with PROTECT Four Critical Actions and Four Critical Actions: Student Sexual Offending, for responding to and reporting child safety incidents or concerns internally to a Child Safe Officer, and for responding to incidents or allegations of child abuse or other harm

- strategies to support, encourage and enable Staff, Volunteers, Contractors, parents/carers and students to understand, identify, discuss and report child safety matters
- procedures for recruiting and screening members of the School Management, Staff, Volunteers and Contractors
- procedures for reporting to external agencies, that are consistent with PROTECT Four Critical Actions and Four Critical Actions: Student Sexual Offending, including Mandatory Reporting to the Department of Families, Fairness and Housing (Child Protection), reporting reportable conduct to the Commission for Children and Young People (CCYP) and reporting child sexual abuse to police
- pastoral care strategies designed to empower students and keep them safe
- strategies to support and encourage the participation and inclusion of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students, students from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds and students with disability
- child protection training
- information regarding the steps to take after a disclosure of abuse or other harm to protect, support and assist students
- 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 and Ministerial Order 1359)
- a system for continuous review and improvement.

Child Protection Responsibilities at the School

Child safety and wellbeing is everyone's responsibility. Specific responsibilities at the School include:

The School Child Safe Officer/s

One or more staff members are nominated as a Schools Child Safe Officer. Child Safe Officers receive additional specialised training with respect to child safety and wellbeing, including but not limited to child protection issues. They are a point of contact for raising child safety concerns within the School. They are also responsible for championing child protection within the School and assisting in coordinating responses to child safety incidents.

Our Child Safe Officers are:

Name	Position	Contact No.	Email Address

John Stewart	Principal	59671953	jstewart@lyss.vic.edu.au
Bernard Wagg	Assistant Principal	59671953	bwagg@lyss.vic.edu.au

The Senior Child Safety Officer

Little Yarra Steiner School has also appointed John Stewart as the School Senior Child Safety Officer.

The Senior Child Safety Officer has additional child protection responsibilities, such as being a first point of contact for all child safety concerns or queries for the wider community and coordinating the School's response to child safety incidents in consultation with the Principal, the School Management and the Board.

the Board

the Board is Little Yarra Steiner School's "school governing authority" for the purposes of Ministerial Order 1359.

the Board is responsible for:

- championing and promoting a child safe culture within the School
- approving our Child Protection Program, including this Child Safe Policy and the Child Protection Codes of Conduct

It is responsible for ensuring that the School has appropriate resources to effectively implement the Victorian Child Safe Standards, Ministerial Order 1359 and our Child Protection Program.

Board Chair

Insert Head of Entity's Child Safe Responsibilities

The Board Chair is the "head" of the School for the purposes of the Reportable Conduct Scheme.

Insert Position Title of Group Regional Director or Similar

Insert Group Regional Director (or equivalent) Child Safe Responsibilities

For the purposes of the Reportable Conduct Scheme, the Insert Position Title of Group Regional Director or Similar has been authorised, by the Board Chair, to undertake responsibility for reporting and investigating Reportable Allegations that involve the Principal under our Reportable Conduct Policies and Procedures.

The Board

Insert Board Child Safe Responsibilities

The Principal

The Principal is responsible, and will be accountable, for the operational management of the School, and the implementation of the Child Protection Program. The Principal is responsible for:

- taking all practical measures to ensure that this Child Safe Policy and the School's Child Protection Program is implemented effectively and followed
- ensuring that a strong and sustainable child safe culture is maintained within the School, including by:
 - modelling the Child Safe Code of Conduct, and reinforcing high standards of child safe behaviours between adults and students and between students
 - facilitating the participation of students, families, Staff and other members of the School community in promoting and improving child safety and wellbeing at the School
 - promoting regular and open discussion of child safety and wellbeing issues within the School community
 - facilitating regular professional learning for Staff and relevant Volunteers and Contractors about child safety, cultural safety, student wellbeing and preventing and responding to child safety incidents and concerns
 - creating an environment where child safety incidents, concerns and complaints are readily raised with the School and where no one is discouraged from reporting child safety incidents or concerns to relevant external authorities.

Staff

All Staff are "school staff" for the purposes of Ministerial Order 1359.

All Staff are required to comply with our Child Safe Policy and Child Protection Codes of Conduct, be familiar with our Child Protection Program and understand their legal obligations with respect to the reporting of child abuse and other harm, and WWC Checks.

It is each individual's responsibility to be aware of key indicators of child abuse and other harm, to be observant, and to raise all child safety incidents and concerns with a Child Safe Officer.

To meet these obligations, all Staff must:

- participate in child safety and wellbeing induction and ongoing training provided by the School
- always follow the School's child safety and wellbeing policies and procedures in the Child Protection Program
- act in accordance with the Child Protection Codes of Conduct
- identify and raise child safety incidents and concerns in accordance with our Procedures for Responding to and Reporting Child Safety Incidents or Concerns, and follow the PROTECT Four Critical Actions and Four Critical Actions: Student Sexual Offending
- ensure students' views are taken seriously and their voices are heard when making decisions that affect them
- implement inclusive practices that respond to the diverse needs of students.

Volunteers

A Volunteer is a someone who performs work for the School in a School environment without remuneration or reward. Volunteers may be family members of students, or from the wider School or local community. Volunteers are not "school staff" for the purposes of Ministerial Order 1359.

All Volunteers at the School are responsible for contributing to the safety and protection of students in the School environment.

To meet these obligations:

- all Volunteers must comply with our Child Safe Policy and Child Protection Codes of Conduct
- Direct Contact Volunteers (and, if required by the School, other Volunteers such as Regular Volunteers who are engaged in "child-connected work") must:
 - participate in child safety and wellbeing induction and ongoing training provided by the School
 - be aware of key indicators of child abuse and other harm
 - understand their legal obligations with respect to the reporting of child abuse and other harm
 - raise all child safety concerns with a Child Safe Officer.

Contractors

A Contractor is someone engaged by the School to perform specific tasks. Contractors are not employees of the School. However, Contractors who have direct contact with children are “school staff” for the purposes of Ministerial Order 1359.

Contractors may include maintenance and building personnel, consultants, music tutors, sports coaches, and cleaners as well as external education providers (organisations that the School has arranged to deliver a specified course of study that is part of the curriculum, to a student or students enrolled at the School).

All Contractors are responsible for contributing to the safety and protection of students in the School environment.

To meet these obligations:

- all Contractors must comply with our Child Safe Policy and Child Protection Codes of Conduct.
- Direct Contact Contractors (and, if required by the School, other Contractors such as Regular Contractors who are engaged in “child-connected work”) must:
 - participate in child safety and wellbeing induction and ongoing training provided by the School
 - be aware of key indicators of child abuse and other harm
 - understand their legal obligations with respect to the reporting of child abuse and other harm
 - raise all child safety concerns with a Child Safe Officer.

The School may include these requirements in the written agreement between it and the Contractor.

Implementation

The Child Safe Policy is published on our School’s public website.

It is provided to new Staff, and to Direct Contact and Regular Volunteers, and Direct Contact and Regular Contractors at their induction or prior to them commencing their work at the School.

The School provides all Visitors to the School, including Casual Volunteers and Casual Contractors, with information about the Child Safe Policy (including in particular the Child Protection Codes of Conduct and how to report child safety incidents or concerns to the School and to relevant external authorities).

Breach of the Child Safe Policy

Little Yarra Steiner School enforces this Child Safe Policy and our Child Protection Codes of Conduct. In the event of any non-compliance, we will instigate a review that may result in a range of measures including (depending on the severity of the breach):

- remedial education
- counselling
- increased supervision
- the restriction of duties
- suspension
- in the case of serious breaches, termination of employment, contract or engagement.

Source of Obligation

The Child Safe Policy implements, and is to be read and understood in conjunction with:

- Victorian Child Safe Standards, Standard 2
- Ministerial Order 1359, Clause 6

Policy Review

A review of the Child Safe Policy is conducted annually or earlier if required, such as if a significant child safety incident occurs at the School or due to changes in legislation.

the Board is responsible for ensuring that this Policy is reviewed and updated as needed and for approving this Policy.

(1) The Child Protection Program is the name given to the full collection of policies and procedures that assist the School to be a child safe organisation and to meet the requirements of the Victorian Child Safe Standards and Ministerial Order 1359. It includes policies and procedures for:

- responding to and reporting child safety incidents and concerns
- child safe human resources management (including WWC clearances)
- participation and empowerment of students
- informing and involving families and relevant communities in child safeguarding issues
- equity and diversity
- child safeguarding risk management strategies
- strategies for embedding a culture of child safety at the School and
- regular reviews and continuous improvement of child protection policies, procedures and practices.

Child Protection Codes of Conduct

The Victorian Child Safe Standards and Ministerial Order 1359 require the School to have a code of conduct that sets standards about the ways in which “school staff” are expected to behave with children and students. They also require the Board to develop strategies to deliver appropriate education about, among other things, standards of behaviour for students attending the School.

All children and young people who come to Little Yarra Steiner School have a right to feel and be safe. We are committed to the safety and wellbeing of all children and young people.

Each member of the School community has a responsibility to understand the important and specific role that they play individually and collectively to ensure that the wellbeing and safety of all students is at the forefront of all that they do and every decision that they make.

This section of the Child Protection Program describes the Child Protection Codes of Conduct that Little Yarra Steiner School has developed to meet these commitments and requirements.

Each Policy and Procedure in this section also contains additional guidance for Staff, Volunteers, Contractors and the School to assist them to understand and comply with it.

The Policies and Procedures in this Section

- [Child Safe Code of Conduct](#)
- [Staff and Student Professional Boundaries](#)
- [Student Child Protection Code of Conduct](#)
- Parent, staff and student Codes of Conduct

Together, we refer to these as the Child Protection Codes of Conduct.

Source of Obligation

- Victorian Child Safe Standards, Standards 2, 3 and 6
- Ministerial Order 1359, Clauses 6 and 13.2(b)

Approvals and Reviews of the Child Protection Codes of Conduct

As required by Ministerial Order 1359, all of the Child Protection Codes of Conduct have been approved by the Board.

They are regularly reviewed in accordance with the schedule set out in the Regular Reviews and Continuous Improvement section of the Child Protection Program.

All changes to the Child Protection Codes of Conduct that result from a review are approved by the Board.

Policy administration information, including a record of the initial approval of the relevant Child Protection Code of Conduct, the date of the next scheduled review and the dates of all other reviews and approvals, is set out in the policy.

Child Safe Code of Conduct

If you are a non-English speaker who needs help to understand this Policy, please contact the School office on (03) 5967 1953 or at office@lyss.vic.edu.au.

The Child Safe Code of Conduct outlines appropriate standards of behaviour towards students for all adults in the School environment, and the School's expectations for compliance. It serves to protect students, reduce any opportunities for abuse or harm to occur, and promote child safety in the School environment. It provides guidance on how to best support students and how to avoid or better manage difficult situations.

It is the School's policy that any breach of the Child Safe Code of Conduct is a child safety incident that must be reported internally.

Any breach that meets the threshold for external reporting must also be reported to the relevant external authority.

For more information, refer to our procedures for Responding to and Reporting Child Safety Incidents or Concerns.

The School reviews the Child Safe Code of Conduct annually. the Board has approved the Child Safe Code of Conduct.

The Child Safe Code of Conduct is published on our public website.

Our Child Protection Program also includes a Staff and Student Professional Boundaries policy that provides detailed guidance for all Staff, Volunteers and Contractors on how to maintain professional boundaries between with students.

Scope

The Child Safe Code of Conduct applies to all adults in the School community, including:

- the Principal and the School Management
- all staff members, including non-teaching Staff and temporary or casual Staff
- all Volunteers
- all Contractors (including External Education Providers)
- teaching students on placement at the School
- Visitors

(together referred to as “the School Community” for the purposes of the Child Safe Code of Conduct).

The Child Safe Code of Conduct applies in all School environments. School environments include the following physical, virtual and online places used during or outside school hours:

- a campus of the School
- online or virtual School environments made available or authorised by the Board (or the Principal on its behalf) for use by a student (including email, intranet systems, software applications, collaboration tools and online services)
- other locations provided by the School or through a third-party provider for a student to use, including but not limited to:
 - camps
 - approved homestay accommodation
 - delivery of education and training such as registered training organisations, TAFEs, non-school senior secondary providers, another school
 - sporting events, excursions, competitions and other events.

Some staff members, Volunteers and Contractors at the School may have other professional or occupational codes of conduct that regulate their profession or occupation. These codes of conduct must be complied with. In the event that a staff member, Volunteer or Contractor considers that there is a conflict between their professional or occupational code of conduct and the Child Safe Code of Conduct in a particular matter, they must seek advice from their professional or occupational regulatory body and/or a Child Safe Officer, and must advise the Principal of their proposed course of action.

The Child Safe Code of Conduct

Each member of the School Community is responsible for promoting the safety and wellbeing of students by adhering to the following standards of behaviour:

Do:

- Uphold and act in accordance with Little Yarra Steiner School's Child Safe Policy at all times.
- Comply with applicable guidelines published by the School with respect to child safety, such as the Staff and Student Professional Boundaries policy.
- 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 wellbeing, including child protection issues.
- Provide age-appropriate supervision for students.
- Treat all students with respect.
- Promote the safety, participation and empowerment of students with disability.
- Promote the cultural safety, participation and empowerment of linguistically and/or culturally diverse students and Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander 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 a Child Safe Officer and ensure that your legal obligations to report child abuse or other harm externally are met.
- Where an allegation of child abuse or other harm 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.
- Discriminate against any student on the basis of characteristics that are protected in anti-discrimination legislation or express personal views that support or promote such discrimination.

- 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 (other than as expressly outlined in our [Restraint of Students Policy](#)) 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 who is not your own child.
- Engage in activities with a student who is not your own child, outside of school hours and without permission from the student's parent/carer.
- 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 identifying information about a student online unless it is necessary for the School's activities or you have consent from the student and/or their parents/guardians. Identifying information includes things such as the student's: full name; age; e-mail address; telephone number; residence; school; or details of a club or group that they may attend.
- Ignore or disregard any suspected or disclosed child abuse or other harm.

Agreement to the Child Safe Code of Conduct

The School provides a copy of the Child Safe Code of Conduct to all Staff, relevant Volunteers and relevant Contractors at induction, or otherwise prior to them commencing work at the School. The School also communicates it via refresher training at regular intervals for all Staff, as well as Direct Contact Volunteers.

All Staff, as well as Direct Contact and Regular Volunteers must acknowledge in writing or online/electronically that they have read and agree to adhere to the Child Safe Code of Conduct prior to commencing work at School.

The Child Safe Code of Conduct forms part of the contract between the School and any Direct Contact and Regular Contractors. Therefore, all Direct Contact and Regular Contractors are deemed to have agreed to adhere to the Child Safe Code of Conduct on signing the contract or on commencing work at the School.

The Child Safe Code of Conduct and Reportable Conduct

Our Child Protection Codes of Conduct outline expected standards of behaviour for all Staff at the School. However, breaches of these Codes of Conduct will not always be Reportable Conduct. For example, a Volunteer accepting a social media 'friend' request from a student would be a breach of our Child Protection Codes of Conduct but may not amount to Reportable Conduct.

These kinds of breaches of our Child Protection Codes of Conduct can be dealt with at the School level and the School does not need to report them to the Commission for Children and Young People.

For more information, refer to our [Reportable Conduct](#) policies and procedures.

Consequences for Breaching the Child Safe Code of Conduct

Staff, including the School Management and Principal, Volunteers and Contractors who breach this Code of Conduct may be subject to disciplinary actions that may result in a range of measures including (depending on the severity of the breach):

- remedial education
- counselling
- increased supervision
- the restriction of duties
- appointment to an alternate role
- suspension
- in the case of serious breaches, termination of employment, contract or engagement.

Where any other member of the School Community breaches any obligation, duty or responsibility within our Child Safe Code of Conduct, Little Yarra Steiner School will take appropriate action (School Community Safety Orders Policy).

Report Any Concerns

Whenever there are concerns that a child or young person is in immediate danger, call the Police on 000.

Staff

It is the School's policy that any breach of the Child Safe Code of Conduct is a child safety incident. Therefore, all Staff, Direct Contact and Regular Volunteers, and Direct Contact and Regular Contractors who witness, or suspect, any breach of this Code of Conduct must report their concern internally to a Child Safe Officer or the Principal. Where the child safety incident or concern involves the Principal, internal reports should instead be made to the Deputy Principal by phoning 5967 1953.

Staff who, in good faith, make an internal report alleging a breach of the Child Safe Code of Conduct will be protected from victimisation or other adverse consequences.

Note that reporting internally does not change any obligation that Staff may have under legislation to report to an external authority.

Our Child Protection Program includes information for Staff, Volunteers and Contractors about how to identify key indicators of child abuse or other harm and how to report child safety incidents or concerns to relevant external authorities.

For more information, refer to our procedures for [Responding to and Reporting Child Safety Incidents or Concerns](#).

Students

Students who are the victim of, or who witness or suspect a breach of the Child Safe Code of Conduct can:

- disclose the child safety incident or concern to any staff member, Volunteer or Contractor. This might be done:
 - verbally
 - in writing
 - through electronic means (such as email)
 - indirectly (such as in written assignments, in artworks or in any other way)
- use the School's anonymous contact page, which is located on the LYSS website to disclose anonymously
- contact DFFH.

Parents/Carers, Family Members or Other Community Members

Parents/carers, family members or other community members who witness or suspect that there has been a breach of the Child Safe Code of Conduct, or have concerns that a child or young person

associated with the School may be subject to abuse or harm from a member of Staff, a Volunteer or a Contractor, should contact:

- the School's Senior Child Safety Officer John Stewart, by phoning 59671953 or emailing jstewart@lyss.vic.edu.au or the Principal, or
- if the concern relates to the Principal, the Deputy Principal.

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

Staff and Student Professional Boundaries Policy

Purpose

Little Yarra Steiner School is committed to providing a safe physical, virtual and emotional environment where all of our students are respected and treated with dignity in an appropriate professional and caring manner, the risk of child abuse is minimised and a safe and supportive child safe environment is maintained.

Little Yarra Steiner School Staff, Volunteers and Contractors hold a unique position of influence, authority, trust and power in relation to students at the School. As such, it is their duty, at all times, to maintain professional boundaries with students.

A breach of professional boundaries may in some circumstances be a criminal offence. The Crimes Act 1958 (Vic) includes certain offences for persons, including teachers, Direct Contact Volunteers and Direct Contact Contractors, whose position places them in a position of "care, supervision or authority", with a student. For more information, refer to [Offences Under the Crimes Act 1958 \(Vic\)](#).

The following policy and guidelines are designed to raise awareness of situations where professional boundary violations may occur and some strategies to minimise the risk of boundary violations.

The practice of protective behaviours at all times will also reduce the possibility of vexatious claims being brought against Staff.

Scope

This Policy applies to:

- Board of Directors members
- all Staff, including the Principal and the School Management, teaching and non-teaching Staff
- all Volunteers

- all Contractors,

(together, referred to as “Staff” or “staff members” for the purposes of this Policy only). Their age does not matter.

The Staff and Student Professional Boundaries Policy applies in all School environments. School environments include, physical, virtual and online environments used during or outside school hours, as well as any environment (including those outside the School’s grounds) where School-related activities are occurring.

Little Yarra Steiner School's Policy

All staff members **must**:

- follow the guidelines for professional boundaries set out below
- exercise their responsibilities in a way that recognises professional boundaries with regard to their relationships with students at all times
- identify, discourage and reject any advances of a sexual nature initiated by a student
- interact with students in a manner that is professional at all times, including inside and outside of school hours
- report conflict of interest issues to the Principal, or the Deputy Principal, as soon as practicable
- remove themselves from decision-making where a conflict has been identified
- give equal learning opportunities to each student without discrimination.

Staff members who are teachers registered with the Victorian Institute of Teaching (VIT) must also comply with principles set out in The Victorian Teaching Profession’s Code of Conduct (VIT Code of Conduct).

Some staff members at the School may have other professional or occupational codes of conduct that regulate their profession or occupation. These codes of conduct **must** also be complied with. In the event that a staff member considers that there is a conflict between their professional or occupational code of conduct and the Staff and Student Professional Boundaries Policy in a particular matter, they must seek advice from their professional or occupational regulatory body and/or a Child Safe Officer, and must advise the Principal of their proposed course of action.

The School’s considers any breach of professional boundaries to be a child safety incident. As a result all staff members **must** report all breaches of this Policy internally to the School.

Any breach that meets the threshold for external reporting must also be reported to the relevant external authority.

For more information, refer to our procedures for [Responding to and Reporting Child Safety Incidents or Concerns](#).

The School will protect staff members who, in good faith, make an internal report alleging a breach of professional boundaries from victimisation or other adverse consequences.

What are Professional Boundaries?

Professional boundaries are parameters that describe the limits of a relationship in circumstances where one person (a student) entrusts their welfare and safety to another person (a staff member), in circumstances where a power imbalance exists.

The fact that Staff are in a unique position of trust, care, authority and influence with students means that there is always an inherent power imbalance that exists between them. It also means that professional boundaries must be established, maintained and respected at all times.

In most cases this power imbalance is clear, however, sometimes it may be more difficult to recognise especially for younger Staff who may only be a few years older than their students.

The following guidelines are not exhaustive, and given that sometimes 'grey areas' may occur, it is expected that all Staff (no matter their age or experience) use their own good judgment, think very carefully about the implications and potential consequences of engaging in certain behaviours with students, and always err on the side of caution.

When unsure about whether professional boundaries are being, or have been, breached, ask yourself:

- Would I modify my behaviour if a colleague was present?
- How would I feel about explaining my actions at a staff meeting, to the Principal, or to parents/carers?
- Am I sharing information for the student's benefit, or for my benefit?
- Am I dealing with this student differently from others in similar circumstances?
- Is my language or demeanour different from normal when dealing with this particular student?

Intimate Relationships

Staff must not initiate or develop a relationship with any student that has, or can be misinterpreted as having, a romantic or sexual, rather than professional, basis. This is regardless of whether the relationship is consensual, non-consensual, or condoned by parents/carers.

Such relationships have a negative impact on the teaching and learning of students and colleagues and may carry a serious reputational risk for the staff member and, in turn, the School.

The professional relationship between Staff and students may be breached by:

- flirtatious behaviour or dating
- development of an intimate personal relationship
- sexual relations
- the use of sexual innuendo, inappropriate language and/or material with students
- unwarranted and inappropriate touching
- unwarranted and inappropriate filming or photography
- deliberate exposure to sexual behaviour of others (e.g. pornography)
- having intimate contact without a valid context via written or electronic means (e.g. email, letters, telephone, text messages, social media sites or chatrooms)
- going out, whether alone or in company, to social events such as the movies or dinner
- exchanging gifts of a personal nature that encourages the formation of an intimate relationship.

Relationships with Former Students

The imbalance of power and authority that exists in the Staff/student relationship does not suddenly disappear after the student finishes their schooling. Staff should not assume that they will be protected from disciplinary action by claiming that a relationship began only after the student left the School as there may be a reasonable belief that the emotional intimacy of the relationship developed while the Staff/student relationship existed.

For registered teachers, it is a breach of the VIT Code of Conduct for a teacher to have a sexualised relationship with a former student:

- within two years of the learner completing their senior secondary schooling or equivalent; and
- in all circumstances, the former student must be at least 18 years old before a relationship commences.

In addition, if any staff member engages in a romantic/sexual relationship with a person who was previously a student at the School, this may generate concerns that the staff member previously

crossed professional boundaries while the former student was under the care of the staff member. In particular, concerns may arise that the staff member engaged in grooming behaviour while the person was still a student.

The School will investigate any complaint that a staff member has abused their position and acted unprofessionally by engaging in a relationship with a former student. In considering whether there has been a breach of professional boundaries, the School may take the following factors into account:

- the nature of the relationship, including its closeness, dependence and significance
- the length of the relationship while the former student was attending the School
- any conduct the staff member undertook which gives cause for concern
- the length of time that has passed between when the person was a student at the School and the commencement of the relationship.

By ensuring that their relationships with Little Yarra Steiner School students do not breach Staff and Student Professional Boundaries, a staff member who subsequently forms a relationship with a former student will be less likely to be considered to have breached professional boundaries in relation to that former student, provided that the former student is at least 18 years old and at least two years have passed between the time when the former student concluded their senior secondary schooling and the commencement of the relationship.

Personal Relationships

Staff must not initiate or develop a relationship with any student that is or can be perceived or misinterpreted as having a personal rather than professional element. This is regardless of whether the relationship is consensual, non-consensual, or condoned by parents or carers.

It is the student's perception of staff behaviour and not the intention of the staff member that is important.

An established and expected professional relationship between Staff and students may be compromised by Staff:

- attending parties or socialising with students outside of organised School events (without parental/carer permission)
- sharing personal details about their private lives with students
- meeting with students outside of school hours without permission from the School.

Staff must recognise at all times that their role is not to be a “friend” or “parent” to a student.

Fair Learning Opportunities

The focus of teaching is effective student learning and as such teachers are expected to support their students with their professional expertise so as to offer them the best education in their individual circumstances. The quality of teaching and learning between teachers and students characterises their relationship.

Teachers should demonstrate their commitment to student learning by:

- maintaining a safe and challenging learning environment that promotes mutual respect
- recognising and developing each student’s abilities, skills, and talents by catering to their individual abilities and respecting their individual differences
- encouraging students to develop and reflect on their own values
- interacting with students without bias
- not engaging in preferential treatment
- not discriminating against any student on the basis of race, sex, sexuality, disability or religious or political conviction
- always making decisions in students’ best interests.

Electronic Communications between Staff and Students

It is expected that all Staff at the School will adhere to the following guidelines:

- all use of technology should be for educational purposes or for the organisation of co-curricular activities
- all email communication between Staff and students should be via the School email system and reflect a professional Staff/student relationship
- Staff should not communicate with students via text message where it is not in a professional context
- Staff should not give out their personal telephone numbers or social media contact details
- Staff are not to accept or request students as 'friends' on social media or otherwise use social media to communicate in any way that is not condoned or approved by the School
- Staff should not exchange personal pictures with a student
- teachers are not expected or encouraged to respond to concerns of parents/carers or students on holidays, weekends or in the evening

- any student personal contact numbers or other personal contact details made available to the School should only be used for School communications.

Physical Contact with Students

All Staff should be aware that situations may arise that can be perceived in a manner that was not intended. For this reason, all Staff at the School should adhere to the following guidelines for contact with students both in and outside of School grounds:

- Staff should avoid unnecessary physical contact with students
- minimal, non-lingering, non-gratuitous physical contact in the context of the situation is acceptable (e.g. congratulatory pat on the back or handshake)
- contact for sport, drama and dance instruction is acceptable in a class situation but not in a 1:1 situation. If physical contact is required for specific technical instructions, it must be brief and only with the consent of the student. Note that a student may withdraw consent for this contact either verbally or gesturally and Staff must remain vigilant while engaging in necessary contact situations. Once consent has been withdrawn no further contact can be or should be made.

Off-Campus Excursions and Camps

During off-campus excursions or camps, the same physical contact guidelines apply as well as the following:

- checking of sleeping arrangements, or supervising of students changing should be done, where possible, with another staff member present and always in a manner that respects students' privacy and personal space
- always knock and advise of presence prior to entering a bedroom or dormitory
- ensure that while in a bedroom or dormitory a strict Staff/student relationship is upheld and that inappropriate behaviour, such as sitting on a student's bed, is not undertaken.

Managing Conflicts of Interest

Where personal relationships with students such as family relationships and close friendship networks exist, questions of conflicts of interest may arise.

This may be more prevalent in close or rural communities where professional boundaries may be tested due to the nature and size of the community. In these circumstances, Staff need to be far more diligent in developing and maintaining these boundaries.

Where a staff member feels that a conflict of interest may exist, they should notify the Principal, or the Deputy Principal if the conflict involves the Principal, and arrangements should be implemented to avoid the conflict situation if possible. For example, the teaching of students by a staff member with a conflict should be avoided.

Any significant decisions relating to these students in the School (such as the appointment of classes or selection in sports teams) should be referred to another staff member and endorsed by a supervisor.

Declarations of Staff/Student Interactions

To enable the School to be aware of appropriate and inappropriate interactions between Staff and students, and to provide context in situations where an allegation of unprofessional conduct may be made, the School encourages Staff to declare any interactions with students outside the School context. These interactions may include situations where the staff member is:

- related to the student
- friends with the student's parents or family
- given parental consent to interact with the student for academic purposes outside of school hours and the parent/carer has notified the School.

Declarations by Staff about a relationship with students and their families outside of the School context or about interactions that occur with the consent of the parent/carer must be verified by the parent/carer of the student.

Little Yarra Steiner School maintains records of all declarations made by staff members related to their interactions with students, or relationships with students, that exist outside of school hours or School premises. These records are made available to the parents/carers of a student on request.

These records are kept in accordance with our [Child Protection Record Keeping](#) and Human Resources Management policies.

Staff and Student Professional Boundaries and Reportable Conduct

Our Child Protection Codes of Conduct outline expected standards of behaviour for all Staff at the School. However, breaches of these Codes of Conduct will not always be Reportable Conduct. For example, a Volunteer accepting a social media 'friend' request from a student would be a breach of our Child Protection Codes of Conduct but may not amount to Reportable Conduct.

These kinds of breaches of our Child Protection Codes of Conduct can be dealt with at the School level and the School does not need to report them to the Commission for Children and Young People.

For more information, refer to our [Reportable Conduct](#) policies and procedures.

Consequences for Breaching the Staff and Student Professional Boundaries Policy

Where a staff member breaches this Policy, Little Yarra Steiner School may take disciplinary action that may include (depending on the severity of the breach):

- remedial education
- counselling
- increased supervision
- the restriction of duties
- suspension or
- in the case of serious breaches, termination of employment, contract or engagement.

Implementation

These guidelines are implemented through a combination of:

- staff training and development in professional conduct
- student and parent/carer education and information
- effective management of teachers engaging in inappropriate relationships with students
- effective management of conflicts of interest
- effective communication and incident notification procedures
- effective record keeping procedures
- initiation of corrective actions where necessary

Report Any Concerns

Whenever there are concerns that a child or young person is in immediate danger, call the Police on 000.

Staff

It is the School's policy that any breach of this Professional Boundaries Policy is a child safety incident. Therefore, all Staff, Direct Contact and Regular Volunteers, and Direct Contact and Regular Contractors who witness, or suspect, any breach of professional boundaries must report their concern

internally to a Child Safe Officer or the Principal. Where the child safety incident or concern involves the Principal, internal reports should instead be made to the Deputy Principal by phoning 5967 1953.

Our Child Protection Program includes information for Staff about how to identify key indicators of child abuse or other harm and detailed procedures about when and how to report child safety incidents or concerns to relevant external authorities. For more information, refer to our procedures for [Responding to and Reporting Child Safety Incidents or Concerns](#).

Students

Students who are the victim of, or who witness or suspect a breach of staff and student professional boundaries can:

- disclose the child safety incident or concern to any staff member. This might be done:
 - verbally
 - in writing
 - through electronic means (such as email)
 - indirectly (such as in written assignments, in artworks or in any other way)
- use the School's anonymous contact page, which is located on the LYSS website to disclose anonymously
- contact DFFH.

Parents/Carers, Family Members or Other Community Members

Parents/carers, family members or other community members who witness or suspect that there has been a breach of professional boundaries, or have concerns that a child or young person associated with the School may be subject to abuse or harm from a staff member, should contact:

- the School's Senior Child Safety Officer John Stewart, by phoning 59671953 or emailing jstewart@lyss.vic.edu.au or the Principal ; or
- if the concern relates to the Principal, the Deputy Principal.

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

Student Child Protection Code of Conduct

If you are a non-English speaker who needs help to understand this Policy, please contact the School office on (03) 5967 1953 or at office@lyss.vic.edu.au.

Purpose

At Little Yarra Steiner School we recognise that effective learning can only occur in a secure environment where the dignity, rights and responsibilities of others are known and respected and where standards and rules are fairly and consistently applied.

The Student Child Protection Code of Conduct has been developed to clearly set out standards of behaviour related to child protection that students are expected to abide by.

The School uses a variety of strategies to consult with students when considering the Student Child Protection Code of Conduct. These may include surveys, discussion groups, consultation with the student representative body or other means. For more information, refer to [Participation and Empowerment of Students](#).

the Board has approved the School's Student Child Protection Code of Conduct.

Source of Obligation

Standard 3 of the Victorian Child Safe Standards requires the School to ensure that children and young people are made aware of their rights, including their right to be safe from harm and that they are provided with age-appropriate information about safe and respectful peer relationships.

To implement these requirements, Ministerial Order 1359 requires the Board to develop documentation that details the strategies and actions that the School will take to, among other things, inform children and students about all of their rights, including to safety, and to recognise the importance of friendships and encourage support from peers. Our Student Child Protection Code of Conduct is one of these strategies.

Responsibilities

Managing the Student Child Protection Code of Conduct is a shared responsibility between students, parents/carers and the School. All students and families have ready access to support offered by teachers, Staff and School Child Safe Officers.

Little Yarra Steiner School's Values

The Student Child Protection Code of Conduct is based on the School's values.

See Student Code of Conduct

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Students' Rights

Students have the right to:

See Student Code of Conduct

Students' Responsibilities

See Student Code of Conduct

For more information, refer to [Bullying Prevention and Intervention](#), [Social Media – Student Usage](#) and [Harassment Policy \(Student Against Student\)](#).

Consequences for Breaching the Student Code of Conduct

Students are expected to observe and uphold the above rights and responsibilities:

Students are also expected to abide by School rules and the policies of the School, as well as the directions of teachers.

A breach of this Student Code of Conduct, School rules or policy will be dealt with according to our Behaviour Management Policy.

Raising Concerns About Safety

Whenever there are concerns that a child or young person is in immediate danger, call the Police on 000.

Any person can, at any time contact the Department of Families, Fairness and Housing (Child Protection) if they have reasonable grounds to believe that a child is in need of protection or significant concerns about the wellbeing of a child. Reports can be made:

- during business hours (8:45am-5:00pm, Monday to Friday), telephoning the Child Protection intake service for the local government area where the child resides, listed [here](#).
- after hours, telephoning DFFH Child Protection on 13 12 78.

If a student has concerns about their safety, or the behaviour of others, it's important that they tell a trusted adult. This could be a parent or carer, a trusted teacher or a School Child Safe Officer.

Our Staff are committed to ensuring that all students feel empowered to speak up and be heard and will take all concerns raised by students seriously and ensure that the student receives ongoing

support.

The School provides all students with information about and encourages them to use multiple pathways to raise child safety concerns about or at the School, including concerns about the behaviour of other students. These include informal and formal ways, an 'anonymous' way, and through external child advocacy or child safety organisations.

A child-friendly version of our [Child Protection Complaints Management](#) policy, which explains these different pathways, is available ..

Responding to and Reporting Child Safety Incidents or Concerns

Ministerial Order 1359 requires the Board to have a clear procedure or set of procedures for responding to complaints or concerns relating to child abuse, as defined in the Child Wellbeing and Safety Act 2005 (Vic) (CWS Act), in accordance with the Order and other legal obligations.

The Department of Education, Catholic Education Commission of Victoria and Independent Schools Victoria's PROTECT [Four Critical Actions for Schools: Responding to Incidents, Disclosures and Suspicions of Child Abuse](#) (Four Critical Actions) sets out the actions that Staff must take to respond to child abuse and other harm. The School's policies and procedures for responding to child abuse and other harm must align with the Four Critical Actions.

This section of the Child Protection Program describes our work systems, practices, policies and procedures for responding to and reporting **all** child safety incidents or concerns, including but not limited to incidents, concerns, complaints, allegations or disclosures of "child abuse" as defined in Ministerial Order 1359 and the CWS Act.

The Policies and Procedures in This Section

The policies and procedures in this section of the Child Protection Program are:

- [Managing Your Initial Response to a Child Safety Incident or Concern](#)
- [Reporting a Child Safety Incident or Concern Internally](#)
- [Duty to Protect/Failure to Protect](#)
- [Mandatory Reporting to Child Protection](#)
- [Non-Mandatory Reporting to Child Protection](#)

- [Reporting to Police](#)
- [Reportable Conduct](#)
- [Reporting Teacher Misconduct to the Victorian Institute of Teachers \(VIT\)](#)
- [Responding to Sexual Behaviour in Children and to Student Sexual Offending](#)
- [Responding to Other Concerns About the Wellbeing of a Student](#)
- [Making Additional Reports](#)
- [Support for Students Interviewed at the School](#)

Key Definition: Child Safety Incident or Concern

Definitions relevant to the Child Protection Program as a whole are contained in [Child Protection Program Definitions](#) and [Definitions and Key Indicators of Child Abuse and Other Harm](#).

Of particular relevance to this section is the phrase “child safety incident or concern”.

Child Safety Incident or Concern

At Little Yarra Steiner School, and in our Child Protection Program, a “child safety incident or concern” means an incident of or a concern about:

- “child abuse” as defined in Ministerial Order 1359 and the CWS Act. These define “child abuse” as:
 - any act committed against a child involving:
 - a sexual offence against a child
 - the criminal offence of grooming (which includes grooming of a child or of a person with care, supervision or responsibility for the child with the intention of facilitating the child being engaged or involved in the commission of a sexual offence)
 - the infliction, on a child, of physical violence or “serious” emotional or psychological harm*
 - the “serious” neglect of a child including exposure to family violence and its effects*
- a child being “in need of protection” as defined in the Child, Youth and Families Act 2005 (Vic) (CYF Act), which includes:
 - abandonment of the child by their parents and no other suitable person can be found who is willing and able to care for the child
 - the child’s parents are dead or incapacitated and no other suitable person can be found who is willing and able to care for the child
 - “significant” harm as a result of physical injury, from which the child’s parents have not or are not likely to protect the child*

- “significant” harm as a result of sexual abuse (including likely future sexual abuse as a result of grooming), from which the child’s parents have not or are not likely to protect the child*
- “significant” emotional or psychological harm, from which the child’s parents have not or are not likely to protect the child*
- “significant” neglect by the child’s parents*
- “reportable conduct” as defined in the CWS Act, which means conduct by an employee of the School (whether in the course of their employment or not) involving:
 - a sexual offence committed against or in the presence of a child
 - sexual misconduct committed against or in the presence of a child
 - physical violence committed against or in the presence of a child
 - any behaviour that causes “significant” emotional or psychological harm to a child*
 - “significant” neglect of a child*
- a criminal offence against a child, or a student aged 18 or over, as set out in the Crimes Act 1958 (Vic), such as:
 - sexual penetration or sexual assault of, or sexual activity in the presence of, a child aged under 16 or a child aged 16 or 17 under the care, supervision or authority of the offender
 - grooming a child aged under 16 or a child aged 16 or 17 under the care, supervision or authority of the offender
 - grooming an adult who has a child under their care, supervision or authority
 - encouraging a child aged under 16 or a child aged 16 or 17 under the offender’s care, supervision or authority to be involved in sexual activity
 - image-based sexual offences
- a practice to change or suppress a child’s sexual orientation or gender identity, which is prohibited under the Change or Suppression (Conversion) Practices Prohibition Act 2021 (Vic)
- a breach of our Child Protection Codes of Conduct, such as:
 - a teacher engaging in undisclosed private meetings with a student who is not their own child
 - a Volunteer sports coach engaging in inappropriate online personal communications with a student
 - a Contractor music tutor publishing online photos, movies or recordings of a student without parental/carers consent.

*“Serious” emotional or psychological harm and “serious” neglect involve harm that has a lasting permanent effect. “Significant” emotional or psychological harm and “significant” neglect involve

harm that is more than trivial or insignificant, but need not be as high as “serious” and need not have a lasting permanent effect.

For more information, refer to [Child Protection Codes of Conduct](#) and [Definitions and Key Indicators of Child Abuse and Other Harm](#).

Overview of Procedures for Responding to and Reporting Child Safety Incidents or Concerns

Child safety incidents or concerns can take many forms. Unfortunately, the nature of child abuse and other harm is complex. Child abuse or other harm may occur over time and potential indicators of abuse or harm are often difficult to detect. The perpetrator may be a parent, carer, other family member, staff member, Volunteer, Contractor, another adult or even another child. The legal obligations for reporting allegations of child abuse or other harm can vary depending on the circumstances of the child safety incident or concern.

All of the School’s procedures for reporting and responding to child safety incidents or concerns are designed and implemented taking into account the diverse characteristics of the School community.

Internal Reporting by Students, Parents/Carers and the Community

There are no limits on how or to whom students at the School can disclose any child safety incident or concern or make a complaint about a staff member, Volunteer or Contractor. The [Child Protection Complaints Management](#) policy provides multiple, child-focused pathways, including a pathway for anonymous disclosure, to enable all students to raise child safety incidents or concerns in the way with which they are most comfortable.

Parents/carers, family members and other community members who have child safety concerns about a student at the School are asked to follow the procedures set out in our [Child Safe Policy](#) which is available on our public website.

Internal and External Reporting by Staff, Volunteers and Contractors

The policies and procedures in this section of our Child Protection Program set out how Staff, Volunteers and Contractors should respond to child safety incidents or concerns. They include procedures for responding to incidents or disclosures of child abuse or other harm, or suspected child abuse or other harm, and simple and accessible procedures for Staff, Volunteers and Contractors to report a child safety incident or concern internally.

Under these policies and procedures Staff, and relevant Volunteers and Contractors, **must** report all child safety incidents and concerns internally. They **must** also report these to external authorities

when required to do so by law, by the Four Critical Actions or by Little Yarra Steiner School's policy.

These policies and procedures all make clear that reporting internally to or consulting with a Child Safe Officer does not change any obligation under legislation to report to an external authority.

The School's Response to Internal Reports

The School will take appropriate, prompt action in response to all child safety incidents or concerns, including all allegations or disclosures of abuse or other harm, that are reported internally to the School, including by:

- externally reporting all matters that meet the required relevant thresholds to Child Protection, the Police, the Commission for Children and Young People (CCYP), and/or the Victorian Institute of Teaching, depending on the issues raised
- fully cooperating with any resulting investigation by an external agency
- protecting any student connected to the incident or concern until it is resolved and providing ongoing support to those affected
- taking particular measures in response to child safety incidents or concerns about an Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander student, a student from a culturally and linguistically diverse background or a student with disability, and other vulnerable students (such as students who are unable to live at home or students who identify as lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender or intersex)
- sharing information with, or requesting information from, external people or agencies as permitted or required under the Child Information Sharing Scheme and/or the Family Violence Information Sharing Scheme
- securing and retaining records of the child safety incident or concern and the School's response to it
- taking broader actions to improve child safety at the School (including systemic reviews and resulting improvements).

Child safety incidents or concerns involving the conduct of a staff member, Volunteer or Contractor that are raised by a parent/carer or family or community member will be addressed in accordance with the policies and procedures in Child Protection Complaints Management Program.

Implementation of Procedures for Responding to and Reporting Child Safety Incidents or Concerns

All of the policies and procedures in this section of the Child Protection Program are made available to all Staff, Volunteers, and Contractors via the School's PolicyConnect site and through the induction

training and ongoing refresher training provided to Staff and to relevant Volunteers and Contractors. For more information, refer to [Child Protection Training](#).

The policies and procedures in this section of the Child Protection Program are made available to parents/carers, students and the wider School community in summary in our Child Safe Policy which is available on our public website.

The School's responding and reporting policies and procedures are also summarised for students, parents/carers and other community members in our Procedures for Responding to and Reporting Child Safety Incidents or Concerns and Procedures for Managing Child Safety Incidents or Concerns At or Involving the School or its Staff which are also available on our public website.

They are also available in hard copy by request.

Source of Obligation

- Victorian Child Safe Standards, Standards 7 and 11
- Ministerial Order 1359, Clauses 11 and 15

Other legislative obligations relevant to specific policies and procedures in this section of the Child Protection Program are set out in the various policies.

Approvals and Reviews of the Policies and Procedures for Responding to and Reporting Child Safety Incidents or Concerns

As required by Ministerial Order 1359, all of the policies and procedures in this section of the Child Protection Program have been approved by the Board.

They are regularly reviewed in accordance with the schedule set out in the Regular Reviews and Continuous Improvement section of the Child Protection Program.

All changes to these policies and procedures that result from a review are approved by the Board.

Policy administration information, including a record of the initial approval of the relevant policy/procedure in this section, the date of the next scheduled review and the dates of all other reviews and approvals, is set out in the policy.

Information Sharing and Record Keeping

Standard 2 of the Victorian Child Safe Standards requires that child safety and wellbeing is embedded in Little Yarra Steiner School's leadership, governance and culture. One of the criteria set for this Standard, and one of the requirements of Ministerial Order 1359, is that the School's Staff and Volunteers understand their obligations in relation to information sharing and record keeping. Ministerial Order 1359 further requires the School to meet the requirements of the Public Record Office Victoria Record Keeping Standards when creating, maintaining and disposing of records relevant to child safety and wellbeing.

To meet these requirements, the School must have documented information sharing and record keeping policies. These policies must ensure that information and records are treated as confidential and that the sharing or distribution of information and records is restricted to nominated personnel. Information sharing must be conducted in accordance with relevant legislative and statutory requirement and the School's record keeping policies must detail the processes in place to meet the Public Record Office Victoria Record Keeping Standards.

This section of the Child Protection Program describes our policies and procedures for Information sharing and record keeping relevant to child safety and wellbeing.

The Policies and Procedures in this Section

- [Confidentiality and Privacy](#)
- [Communicating with Parents and Carers About Internal and External Reports](#)
- [Sharing Information Relating to a Student's Safety or Wellbeing](#)
 - [Information Sharing Policy \(Child Protection\)](#)
 - [Information Sharing Under Part 6A of the Child Wellbeing and Safety Act 2005 \(Vic\)](#)
 - [Information Sharing under Part 5A of the Family Violence Protection Act 2008 \(Vic\)](#)
 - [Complying with Court Orders \(Information Sharing\)](#)
 - [Information Sharing Record Keeping](#)
- [Child Protection Record Keeping](#)

Source of Obligation

- Victorian Child Safe Standards, Standard 2
- Ministerial Order 1359, Clause 6

Approvals and Reviews of the Policies and Procedures for Child Protection Information Sharing and Record Keeping

Where required by Ministerial Order 1359, relevant policies and procedures in this section of the Child Protection Program have been approved by the Board. Where not so required, they are approved by the appropriate person at the School.

They are regularly reviewed in accordance with the schedule set out in the [Regular Reviews and Continuous Improvement Policy](#) section of the Child Protection Program.

All reviews that result in a change to the policy or procedure are approved by the Board or other appropriate person at the School.

Policy administration information, including a record of the initial approval of the relevant policy and procedure in this section, the date of the next scheduled review and the dates of all other reviews and approvals, is set out in the policy.

Creating and Maintaining a Child Safe Environment and Culture

Several of the Standards in the Victorian Child Safe Standards contain specific requirements that relate to the School's child safe culture.

Standard 2 of the Victorian Child Safe Standards requires that child safety and wellbeing are embedded in Little Yarra Steiner School's leadership, governance and culture.

In addition, Standard 9 of the Victorian Child Safe Standards requires the Board and Little Yarra Steiner School to develop and implement risk management strategies regarding child safety and wellbeing in all School environments.

Finally, Standards 6 and 8 of the Victorian Child Safe Standards set out specific requirements that must be met to ensure that the School's human resources management systems promote child safety and wellbeing.

To meet these aspects of the Victorian Child Safe Standards, Ministerial Order 1359 sets out a number of specific requirements that the Board must meet to embed child safety and wellbeing in the School's leadership, governance and culture.

The development and implementation of our Child Protection Program as a whole is one of the main strategies employed by the Board and by Little Yarra Steiner School to create and maintain a child

safe environment and culture at the School and to minimise risks to the safety and welfare of students.

This section of the child protection Program sets out several other key strategies, policies and procedures that are specifically aimed at creating, maintaining and embedding a culture of child safety and wellbeing at the School, ensuring that the School is a child safe environment and identifying and minimising risks regarding child safety and wellbeing.

The Policies and Procedures in this Section

- [Strategies to Embed a Culture of Child Safety at the School](#)
- [Child Safety Risk Management](#)
- [Child Protection Responsibilities](#)
- [Child Protection Human Resources Management](#)
- [Participation and Empowerment of Students](#)
- [Family and Community Involvement, Cultural Safety and Equity/Diversity](#)

Source of Obligation

- Victorian Child Safe Standards, Standards 2, 6, 8 and 9
- Ministerial Order 1359, Clauses 6, 10, 12 and 13

Approvals and Reviews of the Policies and Procedures for Creating and Maintaining a Child Safe Environment and Culture

As required by Ministerial Order 1359, all of the strategies, policies and procedures in this section of the Child Protection Program have been approved by the Board.

They are regularly reviewed in accordance with the schedule set out in the [Regular Reviews and Continuous Improvement](#) section of the Child Protection Program.

All changes to these policies and procedures that result from a review are approved by the Board.

Policy administration information, including a record of the initial approval of the relevant policy and procedure in this section, the date of the next scheduled review and the dates of all other reviews and approvals, is set out in the policy.

Strategies to Embed a Culture of Child Safety at the School

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Source of Obligation

Standard 2 of the Victorian Child Safe Standards and Clause 7 of Ministerial Order 1359 require the Board to ensure that child safety and wellbeing are embedded in Little Yarra Steiner School's leadership, governance and culture.

Our Child Protection Strategies

The following work systems, practices, policies and procedures are Little Yarra Steiner School's strategies for creating and embedding a child safety and wellbeing culture at the School:

- implementing, at the School level, Little Yarra Steiner School child protection strategies
- a holistic approach to child safety through this Child Protection Program
- appointing one or more Child Safe Officers and at least one Senior Child Safety Officer
- establishing key child protection standards in our Child Safe Policy
- establishing clear expectations for appropriate behaviour with students through our Child Protection Codes of Conduct, and clear expectations for appropriate behaviour by students in the Student Child Protection Code of Conduct
- educating our School Management, Staff and Direct Contact Volunteers through our Child Protection Training
- clear procedures for Reporting a Child Safety Incident or Concern Internally, including alleged or suspected incidents of child abuse or other harm
- clear procedures for reporting child safety concerns externally, including Mandatory Reporting to Child Protection, Non-Mandatory Reporting to Child Protection, Reporting to Police, Reportable Conduct and Reporting Teacher Misconduct to the Victorian Institute of Teaching
- recognition that Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Students, students from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds, students with disability and LGBTIQ+ students are particularly vulnerable and have the right to special care and support
- clearly defining the Child Protection Responsibilities of personnel involved in protecting students and allocating roles and responsibilities for implementing our child safe strategies
- establishing comprehensive Child Protection Record Keeping procedures to ensure that the School can evidence reasonable precautions taken to prevent abuse and other harm at the School in accordance with our Child Safety Risk Management strategies
- implementing Child Protection Human Resources Management to ensure that our human resources practices and procedures promote child safety
- Regular Reviews and Continuous Improvement of the Child Protection Program and our child protection practices

Implementing Our Child Protection Strategies

Roles and responsibilities relevant to implementing the Strategies to Embed a Culture of Child Safety are set out in [Child Protection Responsibilities](#).

Communicating Our Child Protection Strategies

the Board requires the School to inform the School community about these strategies. The School does this in the following ways:

- The following documents are available on the School's public website to ensure they are readily accessible by all members of the community:
 - Child Safe Policy
 - Child Protection Codes of Conduct
 - the Little Yarra Steiner School
 - public-facing Procedures for Responding to and Reporting Child Safety Incidents or Concerns
 - public-facing Procedures for Managing Child Safety Incidents or Concerns At or Involving the School or its Staff.
- Hard copies of these documents are also available at the School's administration office.
- Hard copies of the School's other Child Protection policies and procedures, including those that set out the above strategies, are available on request.
- Little Yarra Steiner School's Child Protection Program and our strategies for embedding a culture of child safety are also communicated in the following ways:
 - the School's induction training for staff members and relevant Volunteers and Contractors
 - regular information sessions for staff members about specific child safety issues at the School
 - the provision of refresher child protection training sessions at least annually for staff members, and relevant Volunteers and Contractors, including during professional development days
 - the provision of child protection information, including reporting procedures, to parents, carers and the School community through newsletters, emails, class meetings etc
 - inclusion of child protection information, including the Child Protection Codes of Conduct, reporting procedures and students' right to participate in the [Educating Students About Child Safety](#) curriculum
 - the provision of child-friendly versions of List Policies with Child-Friendly Versions to students through newsletters and the School's intranet.

Child Safety Risk Management

Standards 2 and 9 of the Victorian Child Safe Standards require the Board to develop and implement risk management strategies regarding child safety in the School's environments. Clauses 6 and 13 of Ministerial Order 1359 set out particular requirements that must be met when doing so.

Little Yarra Steiner School has a broad range of risks associated with its activities and operations, including risks relating to child safety. Effectively managing child safety risks is a vital element in ensuring that our School is keeping children and young people safe.

While child safety risks within the operations of a school can never be completely eliminated, Little Yarra Steiner School actively implements risk management practices to ensure that child safety risks are reduced.

The Child Safety Risk Management policy outlines our approach to managing these risks.

Key Definitions

In addition to definitions set out in [Child Protection Program Definitions](#), the following definitions are of particular importance to this Policy:

Risk

The term "risk" means, in simple terms, the possibility of something bad happening.

Risk Management

"Risk management" is the general process of identifying and assessing risks, followed by the application of resources to minimise, monitor, and control the probability and/or the impact of these unfortunate events.

Responsibilities for Child Safety Risk Management

Identifying and managing child safety risks is everyone's responsibility. All adults in the School community have a shared responsibility for contributing to the safety and protection of students through identifying and managing these risks.

In addition to relevant roles and responsibilities as set out in [Child Protection Responsibilities](#), the following people have particular responsibilities under this section of the Child Protection Program.

the Board

the Board is responsible for:

- understanding the child safety risks relevant to the School , based on the School's operational profile
- developing, and ensuring the effective implementation of, the School's child safety risk management strategies (noting that the Board has assigned responsibility for implementing the strategies to the Principal)
- reviewing and approving any changes to the School's child safety risk management strategies
- promoting a child safety risk management culture within the School
- establishing clear lines of responsibility and delegation with regard to child safety management
- ensuring that the School communicates its commitment to child safety and to child protection legal and regulatory compliance, and ensuring that operations are consistent with the commitment to child safety
- ensuring that the School identifies and takes steps to mitigate child safety risks, including by:
 - ensuring that the School has a child safety risk register in which child safety risks and risk controls are recorded
 - receiving regular reports regarding child safety risk management at the School and the School's Child Safety Risk Register
 - monitoring and evaluating the effectiveness the School's child safety risk controls
 - reviewing risk ratings for child safety risks, risk movement, new and emerging child safety risks and the proposed controls for these risks
 - receiving regular reports regarding child safety and wellbeing legal and regulatory compliance at the School
- ensuring that appropriate guidance, training and information is provided, at least annually, to:
 - the individual members of the Board about:
 - their individual and collective obligations and responsibilities for managing the risk of child abuse at the School
 - child safety and wellbeing risks in the School's environments
 - the School's child safety policies, procedures and practices
 - school staff about a number of matters, including guidance on how to identify and mitigate child safety and wellbeing risks in the School's environments (noting that the Board has assigned responsibility to the Principal for ensuring that school staff, including Direct Contact Contractors, receive this guidance, training and information).

The Principal

The Principal is responsible for the effective day-to-day management of risk and for:

- effectively implementing the School's child safety risk management strategies, and effectively deploying all available resources for that purpose
- communicating openly and honestly with, and providing advice to, the Board in relation to:
 - child safety risk management at the School
 - any instances of non-compliance with child protection legal and regulatory requirements
 - any breakdown in child safety risk controls, systems or processes
 - identifying child safety risks (including new and emerging risks) relevant to the School and the steps taken (or that should be taken) to mitigate these risks
 - the resources required for the School to meet its legal and regulatory compliance requirements, effectively manage child safety risks and be a child safe organisation
- promoting a child safety risk management culture within the School
- ensuring that the School's child safety risk register is maintained, regularly reviewed, reported to the Board and updated as set out in the **Child Safety Risk Management Procedures** below
- monitoring and evaluating the effectiveness of the School's child safety risk controls
- ensuring that the School's current programs and activities and any new programs and activities are assessed to ensure that any child safety risks associated with them are effectively managed and communicated to Staff
- ensuring that appropriate training and information is provided to all school staff, and relevant Volunteers and Contractors, at least annually, about a number of matters, including guidance on how to identify and mitigate child safety risks in the School's environments.

The School Management

The School Management is responsible for:

- reviewing, in consultation with the Principal, the School's child safety risk management strategies, the Child Safety Risk Register and the Child Protection Program in accordance with the policies and procedures set out below
- identifying and reporting to the Principal any instances of non-compliance with child protection legal and regulatory requirements and any breakdowns in child safety risk controls
- ensuring that appropriate resources are made available in their area of operations to allow the School's child safety risk management strategies to be effectively implemented within the School
- supporting the Principal in the practical application of the School's child safety risk management strategies, policies, procedures and work systems

- promoting a child safety risk management culture within the School.

Development of Child Safety Risk Management Strategies

The School has developed and implements the child safety risk management strategies set out below based on:

- the nature of all School environments (physical, virtual, online and off-campus)
- the operational profile of the School
- the activities students undertake at the School (including the provision of services by Contractors or outside the School's physical environment)
- the characteristics and needs of all of our students, including age, gender mix, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students, students from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds, students with disability, LGBTIQ+ students and other vulnerable students.

In particular, the School has taken the following factors into account:

Principal

The School's risk management strategies aim to identify and mitigate risks in the School's physical, virtual and online environments without compromising students' rights to privacy, access to information, social connections and learning opportunities.

Little Yarra Steiner School's Child Safety Risk Management Strategies

The School's strategies to identify and mitigate our child safety and wellbeing risks are:

- **Risk Management Program:** The School has a comprehensive Risk Management Program, that was drafted in accordance with the principles and standards of the International Risk Management Standard AS/ISO 31000, for managing all risks relating to its operations, including child safety risks.
- **Risk Assessments:** The School conducts a risk assessment of its environments and activities, taking into account the characteristics and the needs of students and applicable control measures (such as systems, policies and procedures), at least annually to ensure that all child safety risks are identified and that there aren't gaps in our child protection strategies and systems that a person motivated to harm or abuse students could exploit.
- **Child Safety Risk Register:** The School identifies and records all reasonably foreseeable risks of child abuse and other harm in all School environments, as well as all other risks relevant to child safety, in a Child Safety Risk Register, and assesses these risks with regard to the likelihood of

the risk event occurring and the potential consequences if it was to occur. This Risk Register can be found Child Safe Risk Register.

- **Child Safety Risk Register Annual Reviews:** The Child Safety Risk Register is reviewed annually by the Board and at least annually by the Principal. This review includes:
 - reviewing the effectiveness of child safety risk control measures and evaluating the overall risk rating for all child safety risks
 - analysing child safety incidents that may indicate a breakdown in risks controls
 - analysing any instances of non-compliance with child protection legal and regulatory requirements and the systems and procedures that should be put in place to avoid any further non-compliance
 - considering the need to implement risk treatments to further control risks.
- **Child Protection Program:** The School has developed and implemented this Child Protection Program, which includes a comprehensive suite of child protection policies and procedures. These policies and procedures include, in particular:
 - child protection standards, set out in our [Child Safe Policy](#)
 - policies, procedures and guidance, set out in [Responding to and Reporting Child Safety Incidents or Concerns](#), on identifying risks of child abuse and other harm in the School's environments, legal obligations, responsibilities for managing these risks, and how to report and how to respond to child safety incidents and concerns
 - a [Child Safe Code of Conduct](#)
 - a [Working with Children Checks](#) policy
 - a set of [Reportable Conduct](#) policies and procedures
 - a set of policies and procedures for [Child Protection Human Resources Management](#).
- **Cyber Safety:** The School has policies and procedures for both Staff and students about the use of information and communication technologies, cyber safety and online conduct that are consistent with the Child Safe Code of Conduct. **Child Protection Training and Information:** The School provides [Child Protection Training](#) at induction, and annual refresher child protection training, for all school staff. Relevant Volunteers also receive child protection training and/or information as set out in that policy.
- **Child Safe Officers:** The School has appointed a number of [Child Safe Officers](#) who are "child protection Champions" at the School.
- **Approvals for Specific Contexts and Activities:** The School has an approvals process and/or ongoing risk management process for certain School contexts and activities (set out in the Child Safety Risk Management Procedures below), which require that a specific risk assessment be undertaken and provided either to the Principal or a relevant management committee for their consideration.

- **Reporting about Child Safety Risk Management:** the Board and the School Management receive regular reports regarding child safety risk management and any instances of non-compliance with our policies and with legal and regulatory requirements, as well as any other information or incidents that may suggest a breakdown in child safety systems, procedures and risk controls.
- **Continuous Improvement:** The School and the Board are committed to a continuous improvement process which involves regular review of the Child Protection Program and child safety risks to identify areas for improvement.

Child Safety Risk Appetite

The School has no appetite for any increase to any risk rating for child safety risks.

As a result, the School regards any non-compliance with legal and regulatory requirements related to child safety and wellbeing as unacceptable and requiring immediate rectification.

The School has no appetite for implementing any new programs or initiatives that:

- may increase the School's child safety risks
- may result in a breakdown of the School's existing child safety risk controls and their effectiveness.

Child Safety Risk Management Procedures

Identifying and Internal Reporting of Child Safety Risks

The School Management and the Board consider, as part of their annual reviews of the Child Safety Risk Register, all currently identified child safety risks, whether these reflect all of the School's current child safety risks and whether there are any additional child safety risks that should be added to the Child Safety Risk Register.

In addition, child safety risks at the School may be identified during reviews of the Child Protection Program as a whole, which:

- consider whether a consistent child safety issue is being regularly raised in complaints and/or other feedback from the School community
- require systemic reviews and/or a root cause analyses of child safety incidents or concerns that occur at or involve the School.

For more information, refer to Regular Reviews and Continuous Improvement.

All staff members must be aware of the School's child safety risk management practices and must report to the Principal or a Child Safe Officer:

- any incidents, issues or concerns that may indicate a breakdown in our child safety risk controls
- any new or perceived child safety risks.

Contact details for our Child Safe Officers are available [here](#).

Risk Assessment, Risk Evaluation and Risk Treatment

Assessment of risk includes consideration of the effectiveness of risk controls (our current policies, procedures, systems and work practices), the likelihood of the risk happening and the consequence if the risk was to occur. Risks are then evaluated and matched to a risk matrix to determine the risk rating. The risk rating defines the level of governance oversight required and whether any additional measures ("risk treatments") are required to reduce or remove the risk.

The risk assessment methodology used at Little Yarra Steiner School is outlined in detail [here](#).

The risk evaluation methodology is outlined [here](#).

Risk treatments are implemented using the methodology outlined [here](#).

Risk Assessments for Specific School Contexts and Activities

The School Management, and any staff members who have or who have been delegated the required level of responsibility, must ensure that child safety risks are considered and reviewed when there are changes to the School's operational profile or when new activities, buildings and facilities are planned and operating.

The following School contexts and activities require, as part of their approvals or ongoing risk management processes, that specific risk assessments be undertaken and provided either to the Principal or a relevant management committee for their consideration:

- **Physical Environment:** Ongoing, periodic reviews must be undertaken of all physical School environments to eliminate physical isolation risks, such as solid classroom doors or rooms with no windows, and of any procedural controls where elimination is not possible, including random checks of obstructed or out-of-the-way locations.
- **Online Environment:** Regular monitoring, and ongoing periodic reviews must be undertaken of the online School environment and electronic communications, to identify and eliminate online

child safety risks such as access controls, inappropriate sharing of information/data security, online grooming, and breaches of the [Child Protection Codes of Conduct](#).

- **Excursions and Camps:** The School has developed and implements specific policies and procedures relating to excursions and camps ensuring that child safety risks specific to excursions and overnight stays are identified and controls are put in place. For more information, refer to our [Excursions policies](#).
- **Work Placement:** The School has developed and implements specific policies and procedures relating to work experience placements, including the completion of a Student Work Experience Checklist that outlines key child safeguarding requirements. For more information, refer to our [Student Work Experience Policy](#).
- **Sport:** The School has developed and implements specific policies and procedures to manage child safety risks specific to the variety of sporting activities at the School. These risks include the use of Casual Staff and Volunteers, maintaining professional boundaries, appropriate demonstration techniques and supervision both on School grounds and in off-site locations. For more information, refer to our [Insert School's Sports/Extra-Curricular Activities Policy](#).

CompliSpace Assurance

The School has implemented CompliSpace Assurance as one strategy to manage the child safety risks in the School's environments.

CompliSpace Assurance is an online risk and compliance workflow management tool that integrates with our Child Protection Program to provide a system of risk management, compliance and continuous improvement based on international standards.

Through this system, key risks and compliance obligations are captured, documented and converted into plain-English questions that are assigned via email to responsible individuals for action. Each individual is provided with a calendar view of their compliance performance via an online browser. Unactioned tasks are escalated and reported to allow the School to monitor and record its compliance performance in real-time.

The School also uses this risk management system as a method of evaluating and reviewing the ongoing effectiveness of the implementation of its risk measures and controls.

[The School's Child Safety Risk Register](#)

Our commitment to keeping children and young people safe cannot be achieved without effectively managing child safety risks. As a result, the School has developed a Child Safety Risk Register. This

is to ensure that the Board and the School Management have clear visibility and oversight of child safety risks in the School, and enable the School to effectively manage our legal and regulatory child safety obligations under Ministerial Order 1359.

The School Management and the Board review, at least annually, the child safety risks that are included in the Child Safety Risk Register and the effectiveness of risk controls for each child safety risk. Where new child safety risks are identified, these are discussed and added to the Child Safety Risk Register and risk controls for the new risks are identified and implemented.

Our Child Safety Risk Register can be found [Child Safe Risk Register**](#).

Communicating our Child Safety Risk Management Strategies

The School makes our Child Safety Risk Management policy available to all Staff via the School's PolicyConnect site. Training about the Child Safety Risk Management policy is included in induction and annual refresher training for Staff and relevant Volunteers and Contractors. For more information, refer to [Child Protection Training](#).

The Child Safety Risk Management policy is also communicated to Staff, Volunteers, Contractors, parents/carers, students and the wider School community in summary in the [Child Safe Policy](#), which is available on our public website.

It is also available in hard copy by request.

Child Protection Responsibilities

Everyone in society shares responsibility for promoting the safety and protection of children and young people from abuse and other harm. In the School context, all members of the School community have their role to play – teachers, Staff, administrators, parents/carers and other family members, Volunteers, Contractors and students.

That said, the School Management is committed to leading from the front and engaging in a preventative, proactive and participatory approach to child safety.

The School encourages students to take an active role in developing and maintaining a child safe environment at the School and provides them with opportunities to contribute and give feedback in the development of the School's policies and practices. Students also have and are made aware of the different avenues available to them to disclose abuse, harm or concerns for their safety or the safety of others.

This section of the Child Protection Program sets out the roles and responsibilities that specific members of the School community have with respect to child protection at the School in general and the Child Protection Program as a whole, as follows:

Additional roles and responsibilities that relate to individual policies and procedures are set out in the relevant policy/procedure.

Source of Obligation

Standard 2 of the Victorian Child Safe Standards requires that child safety and wellbeing is embedded in Little Yarra Steiner School's leadership, governance and culture. In particular, the School's governance arrangements must facilitate implementation of its child safety and wellbeing policies at all levels.

the Board Responsibilities

the Board is Little Yarra Steiner School's "school governing authority" for the purposes of Ministerial Order 1359.

the Board is responsible for:

- acquiring and keeping up to date knowledge of child safety issues
- understanding the nature of the School's operations and the child safety risks associated with these operations
- ensuring that the School has appropriate resources to effectively implement its Child Protection Program
- ensuring that the School has appropriate processes for receiving and considering information regarding child safety issues and is able to respond in a timely way to that information
- approving and reviewing the School's Child Protection Program to ensure that it has and implements processes to comply with its child safety legal and regulatory obligations
- ensuring that the School has developed and implemented ongoing monitoring processes to verify the provision and use of the resources that have been allocated to manage child protection obligations within the School and evaluate their effectiveness.

the Board has delegated its functions relating to the operational management and implementation of the Child Protection Program to the Principal.

The Principal's Responsibilities

the Board has delegated operational day-to-day management of the School and implementation of the Child Protection Program to the Principal.

The Principal is ultimately responsible, and will be accountable for, taking all practical measures to ensure that:

- the School effectively implements the Child Protection Program, and effectively deploys all available resources for that purpose
- one or more Child Safe Officers are appointed and trained
- a strong and sustainable child safe culture is maintained within the School, including by:
 - modelling the Child Safe Code of Conduct, and reinforcing high standards of child safe behaviours between adults and students and between students
 - facilitating the participation of students, families, Staff and other members of the School community in promoting and improving child safety and wellbeing at the School
 - promoting regular and open discussion of child safety and wellbeing issues within the School community
 - facilitating regular professional learning for Staff and relevant Volunteers and Contractors about child safety, cultural safety, student wellbeing and preventing and responding to child safety incidents and concerns
- creating an environment where child safety incidents, concerns and complaints are readily raised with the School and where no one is discouraged from reporting child safety incidents or concerns to relevant external authorities
- any child safety incidents or concerns are dealt with professionally and in a timely manner
- the Board receives regular reports with respect to child safety matters at the School
- all Staff and Direct Contact Contractors, as well as relevant Volunteers are aware of the School's Child Protection Program and trained in implementing the Program's processes and procedures
- the School is complying with its legal and regulatory obligations with respect to child safety and wellbeing.

The Principal may, when appropriate, call on the School Management for advice and support in the management and implementation of the School's Child Protection Program.

For the purposes of the Reportable Conduct Scheme, the Board Chair has authorised the Principal to undertake responsibility for reporting and investigating reportable allegations under our Reportable

Conduct Policies and Procedures, unless the allegations involve the Principal in which case the Board Chair undertakes these responsibilities.

The School Management's Responsibilities

Each member of the School Management is required to ensure that appropriate resources are made available in their area of operations to allow the School's Child Protection Program to be effectively implemented within the School, and to support the Principal in the practical application of the School's child protection strategies, policies, procedures and work systems.

Child Safe Officers' Responsibilities

One or more staff members are nominated as the School's Child Safe Officers. They are:

Name	Position	Contact No.	Email Address
John Stewart	Principal	59671953	jstewart@lyss.vic.edu.au
Bernard Wagg	Assistant Principal	59671953	bwagg@lyss.vic.edu.au

The appointment of Child Safe Officers is one strategy used at the School to meet Standard 2 of the Victorian Child Safe Standards – embedding a culture of child safety and wellbeing in the School's leadership, governance and culture.

Child Safe Officers are selected based on a number of considerations, namely:

- their personal attitudes, experiences and beliefs, for example, a person who is non-judgmental, calm, resilient and demonstrates a high degree of integrity and respect for confidentiality
- their role within the School, for example, a person who has seniority and experience working with complex student and family issues at the School and someone who is readily accessible and available to all members of the School community
- their personal profile within the School, for example, a person who is approachable, who students and Staff trust and who is willing and able to respond to issues personally and

sensitively.

Child Safe Officers also receive special training that allows them to deal with child safety incidents or concerns both sensitively and effectively.

Key responsibilities of Child Safe Officers

- having a good working knowledge of the School's Child Safe Policy and Child Protection Program
- acting as "Child Protection Champions" and ensuring that a strong and sustainable child safe culture is embedded within the School
- promoting child safety issues within the School community and responding to general queries with respect to the School's Child Protection Program
- being a point of contact for Staff, or other members of the School community, raising child safety concerns within the School
- communicating the School's child protection policies and procedures to all stakeholders including students, parents/carers, Staff, Volunteers and Contractors
- on behalf of the Board and the School Management, ensuring that the School's Child Protection Program is being effectively implemented
- on behalf of the Board and the School Management, reviewing and managing particular aspects of the School's Child Protection Program, and specifically the School's procedures for Responding to and Reporting Child Safety Incidents or Concerns
- ensuring that the School Management, all Staff, and relevant Volunteers and Contractors undertake child protection training so that they are able to identify signs of abuse and other harm, understand how to respond and know when to make a referral either internally or to an external agency, and understand our procedures for Responding to and Reporting Child Safety Incidents or Concerns
- ensuring that there are clear procedures to allow people to report Reportable Conduct within the School
- providing all Staff, Direct Contact and Regular Volunteers and Direct Contact and Regular Contractors with a copy of the School's Child Safe Policy, the Child Protection Codes of Conduct and key contact numbers for reporting child safety concerns
- where authority is delegated from the Principal, promptly managing the School's response to a child safety incident or concern, and ensuring that the incident, allegation, disclosure or suspicion is taken seriously
- responding appropriately to and providing support and assistance for students and their families following child safety incidents, concerns, complaints and disclosures

- offering assistance and support when other members of the School community receive or make a disclosure of abuse or other harm
- developing processes for minor corrective issues that don't need to be reported to an outside authority.

If a Child Safe Officer cannot perform their role, for example, due to conflicts of interest or absence, either another Child Safe Officer, the Principal, the Senior Child Safety Officer or the Deputy Principal must perform these duties.

The Senior Child Safety Officer's Responsibilities

The School has appointed at least one Senior Child Safety Officer. They are John Stewart.

They have an important role in the implementation and operation of our Child Protection Program and are identified in our publicly available Child Safe Policy as the individual/s who the wider community can contact when they have child safety concerns relating to the School.

Key responsibilities of the Senior Child Safety Officer include:

- being a first point of contact for all child safety concerns or queries for the wider community
- ensuring that other Child Safe Officers understand and comply with their key responsibilities
- ensuring that all Child Safe Officers undergo appropriate annual training in the School's Child Protection Program, their legal responsibilities, and how to appropriately respond to child safety concerns and incidents
- coordinating the School's response to child safety incidents in consultation with the the Principal, the School Management and Little Yarra Steiner School
- ensuring that the School's child protection policies and procedures are effectively implemented and communicated to all relevant stakeholders.

Staff Responsibilities

All Staff, including full-time, part-time, casual, relief, teaching and non-teaching Staff, are required, as a condition of their employment at the School, to comply with our Child Protection Program, including the Child Protection Codes of Conduct, and their legal obligations with respect to the reporting of child safety incidents or concerns and regarding WWC Checks.

It is each individual's responsibility to be aware of key indicators of child abuse and other harm, to be observant, and to raise any and all child safety incidents or concerns with a Child Safe Officer and with external agencies where required.

To meet these obligations, all Staff must:

- participate in child safety and wellbeing induction and ongoing training provided by the School
- always follow the School's child safety and wellbeing policies and procedures in the Child Protection Program
- act in accordance with the [Child Protection Codes of Conduct](#)
- identify and raise child safety incidents and concerns in accordance with our Procedures for Responding to and Reporting Child Safety Incidents or Concerns, and follow the [PROTECT Four Critical Actions](#) and [Four Critical Actions: Student Sexual Offending](#)
- ensure students' views are taken seriously and their voices are heard when making decisions that affect them
- implement inclusive practices that respond to the diverse needs of students.

Volunteers' Responsibilities

A volunteer is a person who works without payment or financial reward for the School. Volunteers may be family members of students, or from the wider School or local community. Volunteers make a considerable contribution to the School community by giving their time and sharing their skills and expertise with others. In most instances, School governing body members are also considered to be volunteers.

Most Volunteers engaged by the School are engaged in [child-connected work](#) within the meaning of Ministerial Order 1359.

Categories of Volunteer

Little Yarra Steiner School has identified three categories of Volunteers, based on the level and frequency of their interaction with students. Volunteers' responsibilities and obligations under the Child Protection Program may depend on their category. The categories of Volunteer are:

- Direct Contact Volunteers
- Regular Volunteers
- Casual Volunteers

Refer to [Child Protection Program Definitions](#) for an explanation of each of these categories and which Volunteers are engaged in "child-connected work" within the meaning of Ministerial Order 1359.

Where the term “Volunteer” is used, the relevant responsibility or obligation applies to “Direct Contact Volunteers”, “Regular Volunteers” and “Casual Volunteers”. Other responsibilities and obligations specify the category of Volunteer to whom that responsibility or obligation applies.

Responsibilities and Obligations of Volunteers

All Volunteers at the School are responsible for contributing to the safety and protection of students in the School environment.

It is the School’s policy that, irrespective of the degree of contact with students, or the frequency or length of engagement, **all Volunteers** must:

- adhere to the School’s Child Safe Policy, Child Safe Code of Conduct and Staff and Student Professional Boundaries policy
- hold a current WWC clearance if required to do so by law or by School policy (refer to Working with Children Checks for an explanation of which Volunteers are required by law or School policy to hold a WWC clearance)
- report child safety concerns to external agencies where required by law.

It is the School’s policy that, in addition to the above, Direct Contact Volunteers and Regular Volunteers who are engaged in child-connected work must:

- complete the School’s online child protection learning course prior to commencing volunteer work at the School
- acknowledge in writing or online/electronically indicating that they have read and understood the School’s Child Safe Policy and Child Safe Code of Conduct
- be aware and observant of key indicators of child abuse and other harm
- raise any child safety concerns they may have with a Child Safe Officer or the Principal.

Volunteers can direct questions about child safety at the School to a Child Safe Officer.

Contractors’ Responsibilities

On occasion it may be necessary for the School to engage outside, independent contractors to perform specific tasks. These Contractors are not employees of Little Yarra Steiner School. Contractors may include, for example, maintenance and building personnel, consultants, tutors, sports coaches and School cleaners.

Many, but not all, Contractors engaged by the School are engaged in child-connected work within the meaning of Ministerial Order 1359. Ministerial Order 1359 defines “child-connected work” as work authorised by Little Yarra Steiner School and performed by an adult in the School’s environment while children are present or reasonably expected to be present.

Categories of Contractors

Little Yarra Steiner School has identified three categories of Contractors, based on the level and frequency of their interaction with students. Contractors’ responsibilities and obligations under the Child Protection Program may depend on their category. The categories of Contractor are:

- Direct Contact Contractors
- Regular Contractors
- Casual Contractors

Refer to Child Protection Program Definitions for an explanation of each of these categories and which Contractors are engaged in “child-connected work” within the meaning of Ministerial Order 1359.

Where the term “Contractor” is used in our Child Protection Program, the relevant responsibility or obligation applies to “Direct Contact Contractors”, “Regular Contractors” and “Casual Contractors”. Other responsibilities or obligations specify the category of Contractor to whom that responsibility or obligation applies.

Responsibilities and Obligations of Contractors

All Contractors engaged by the School are responsible for contributing to the safety and protection of students in the School environment.

It is the School’s policy that, irrespective of the degree of contact with students, or the frequency or length of engagement, **all Contractors** must:

- adhere to the School’s Child Safe Policy, the Child Safe Code of Conduct and Staff and Student Professional Boundaries policy
- hold a current WWC clearance if required to do so by law or by School policy (refer to Working with Children Checks for an explanation of which Contractors are required by law or School policy to hold a WWC clearance)
- report child safety concerns to external agencies where required by law.

It is the School's policy that, in addition to the above, Direct Contact Contractors and Regular Contractors who are engaged in child-connected work must:

- complete child protection training prior to commencing work at the School
- be aware and observant of key indicators of child abuse and other harm
- raise any child safety concerns they may have with a Child Safe Officer or the Principal.

Little Yarra Steiner School may include these requirements in the written agreement between it and the Contractor.

Where a Contractor is engaged at short notice, making it impractical to undertake normal screening and/or briefing sessions/procedures, the School will take reasonable steps to ensure the safety of students at the School while the work is being completed.

Contractors can direct questions about child safety at the School to a Child Safe Officer.

External Education Providers' Responsibilities

An External Education Provider is any organisation that the School has arranged to deliver a specified course of study that is part of the curriculum, to a student or students enrolled at the School. The delivery of such a course may take place on School premises or elsewhere.

All External Education Providers engaged by the School are responsible for contributing to the safety and protection of children in the School environment (this includes camps and excursions).

All External Education Providers engaged by the School must be familiar with our [Child Safe Policy](#), and adhere to our [Child Protection Codes of Conduct](#).

Little Yarra Steiner School may include this requirement in the written agreement between it and the External Education Provider.

Child Protection Human Resources Management

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The Policies and Procedures in this Section

This section of the Child Protection Program sets out the expectations, systems, work practices, policies and procedures that the School employs to ensure that its Human Resources Management

practices are child safe, to protect children from abuse and other harm, and to create a child safe culture.

They include:

- [Child Protection Recruitment, Screening and Suitability Assessment](#)
- [Working with Children Checks](#)
- [Child Protection Training, Supervision, Performance Monitoring and Professional Development](#)
- [Disciplinary Actions \(Child Protection\)](#)

Source of Obligation

In general, Little Yarra Steiner School's Child Protection Human Resources Management Policies and Procedures implement:

- Victorian Child Safe Standards, Standards 6 and 8
- Ministerial Order 1359, Clauses 10 and 12

Standard 6 of the Victorian Child Safe Standard 4 requires people who work with children and young people at or for the School are suitable and are supported to reflect child safety and wellbeing values in practice.

Standard 8 of the Victorian Child Safe Standards sets out specific requirements in relation to ongoing training and information for Staff and Volunteers.

To implement these Standards, Ministerial Order 1359 requires the Board to ensure that the School meets a number of human resources-related requirements for **school staff** and **Volunteers** who will be or who are engaged in **child-connected work**.

Other legislative obligations relevant to specific policies and procedures in this section of the Child Protection are set out in the various policies.

Approvals and Reviews of the Child Protection Human Resources Management Policies and Procedures

As required by Ministerial Order 1359, all of the policies and procedures in this section of the Child Protection Program have been approved by the Board.

They are regularly reviewed in accordance with the schedule set out in the [Regular Reviews and Continuous Improvement](#) section of the Child Protection Program.

All changes to these policies and procedures that result from a review are approved by the Board.

Policy administration information, including a record of the initial approval of the relevant policy/ procedure in this section, the date of the next scheduled review and the dates of all other reviews and approvals, is set out in the policy.

Child Protection Recruitment, Screening and Suitability Assessment

Source of Obligation

A child safe organisation has policies and procedures for recruitment and selection processes, supervision and training, and managing the performance of Staff, and relevant Volunteers and Contractors, that promote child safety.

In particular, Ministerial Order 1359 requires (among other human resources-related requirements) the Board to ensure that:

- recruitment advertisements for **school staff** who will be engaged in **child-connected work** have a clear statement that sets out:
 - the job's requirements, duties and responsibilities regarding child safety and wellbeing
 - the job occupant's essential or relevant qualifications, experience and attributes in relation to child safety and wellbeing
- all applicants for jobs that involve child-connected work are informed about the School's child safety practices (including the Child Safe Code of Conduct)
- **Volunteers** engaged to undertake child-connected work are made aware of the School's Child Safe Policy and Child Safe Code of Conduct
- when engaging school staff, and Volunteers to perform **child-related work**, the Board collects and records (if reasonable and appropriate in relation to Volunteers):
 - proof of identity
 - information about essential or relevant professional or other qualifications
 - child-related work history
 - references that address suitability for the job and working with children.

the Board need not, however, comply with the requirements in the last dot point if it has already made reasonable efforts to collect and record this information about a particular individual within the previous 12 months.

Key Definitions

Definitions of particular terms used in the Child Protection Human Resources Management policies and procedures can be found in [Child Protection Program Definitions](#).

Of particular importance to Child Protection Recruitment, Screening and Suitability Assessment are the following additional key definitions, as well as summaries of other key definitions (from the full definitions in [Child Protection Program Definitions](#)):

Child-Connected Work

For the purposes of Ministerial Order 1359, “child-connected work” is defined as work authorised by the school governing authority and performed by an adult in a school environment while children are present or reasonably expected to be present.

Under this definition:

- all staff members, including teaching and non-teaching Staff, are engaged in child-connected work
- many, but not all Volunteers and Contractors are engaged in child-connected work. Volunteers and Contractors who are themselves children or who do not work when children or students are present or expected to be present are **not** engaged in child-connected work.

For more information about which Volunteers and Contractors may be engaged in child-connected work, refer to the definitions of **Direct Contact, Regular and Casual Volunteers**, and **Direct Contact, Regular and Casual Contractors**, below.

“Child-connected work” is broader than “child-related work”, defined below. “Child-connected work” does not need to involve direct contact with children, whereas “child-related work” does. For example, a consultant engaged by the School to work with the Board of Directors and who attends the School for meetings during school hours (i.e. when children are present) is not engaged in “child-related work” but **is** engaged in “child-connected work”.

Child-Related Work

“Child-related work” is defined in the Worker Screening Act 2020 (Vic). It is work performed at or for the School by a staff member, Volunteer or Contractor that usually involves direct contact with a child (unless the direct contact is only occasional and incidental to the work).

Direct contact means any contact between a person and a child 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.

Under this definition, most Staff at the School, and any Direct Contact Volunteers and Direct Contact Contractors, are engaged in child-related work for the purposes of Ministerial Order 1359.

School Staff

“School staff” is a particular phrase used in Ministerial Order 1359, and is defined as an individual working in a school environment who is:

- directly engaged or employed by a school governing authority;
- a contracted service provider (whether or not a body corporate or any other person is an intermediary) engaged by the school governing authority to perform child-related work; or
- a minister of religion, religious leader or an employee or officer of a religious body associated with the School.

The engagement or employment of Staff and Contractors at the School (other than the Principal) is undertaken by the Business Manager on behalf of the Board.

This means that, at the School, **all staff members, as well as Direct Contact Contractors and any minister of religion or employee or officer or a religious body associated with the School**, are “school staff”.

Staff/Staff Member

The terms “Staff” and “Staff Member” include all teaching and non-teaching Staff, including the Principal. They include all those employed by the School on a permanent, temporary or casual basis.

Although members of the Board of Directors are technically Volunteers, they are considered “Staff” for the purposes of this Policy and the Child Protection Program.

Volunteers and Contractors

A Volunteer is a someone who performs work for the School in a School environment without remuneration or reward. Volunteers may be family members of students, or from the wider School or local community.

Volunteers are not “school staff” within the meaning of Ministerial Order 1359, even if they are engaged in “child-connected work”.

A Contractor is someone engaged by the School to perform specific tasks. Contractors are not employees of the School. However, Contractors who have direct contact with children (see below) are “school staff” within the meaning of Ministerial Order 1359.

The School categorises Volunteers and Contractors as either:

- Direct Contact Volunteers/Contractors: Volunteers and Contractors who have direct physical or face-to-face contact with, or who directly communicate with, students (such as Volunteers and Contractors who are tutors, provide learning support, work in the Canteen, attend or provide excursions/incursions, assist in music/drama productions and coach sports teams). Direct Contact Volunteers/Contractors who are adults **are** engaged in **both** “child-connected work” and “child-related work”.
- Regular Volunteers/Contractors: Volunteers and Contractors who assist the School in ways that do not involve direct contact with students (although there could be indirect or incidental contact), and who do this more than seven times per year (such as Volunteers working the School’s administration office, contracted consultants, regular maintenance workers or cleaners, and caterers for staff events). Regular Volunteers/Contractors are **not** engaged in “child-related work”. They **are** engaged in “child-connected work” if they are adults and work when children are present or expected to be present.
- Casual Volunteers/Contractors: Volunteers and Contractors who assist the School in ways that do not involve direct contact with students (although there could be indirect or incidental contact) or whose services are aimed at the general public, and who do this seven times or less per year (such as Volunteers who work on a stall at a School fete or on a barbeque at a sporting event, and one-off emergency maintenance workers). Casual Volunteers/Contractors are **not** engaged in “child-related work”. They **are** engaged in “child-connected work” if they are adults and work when children are present or expected to be present.

Little Yarra Steiner School's Practices

At Little Yarra Steiner School we are committed to ensuring that our recruitment practices create a safe and supportive environment for all students. To this end, in addition to our general Recruitment and Selection Procedures, we have established child protection policies and procedures for recruiting those **Staff, Contractors** and **Volunteers** who are engaged in **child-connected work** and for assessing their suitability to work with children.

This Policy and its Procedures set out the recruitment, selection and assessment processes used at the School and that are designed to:

- select appropriate Board of Directors members, Staff (including members of the School Management), Direct Contact and Regular Volunteers, and Direct Contact and Regular Contractors
- discourage inappropriate people from working within the School.

Little Yarra Steiner School's Recruitment, Screening and Suitability Assessment Policies

Acknowledgment of Child Safe Policy and Child Protection Codes of Conduct

It is a condition of employment that all new Staff at the School acknowledge in writing or online/electronically that they have read and understood our Child Safe Policy and the Child Protection Codes of Conduct prior to commencing at the School. These acknowledgements are then required annually for ongoing Staff.

All Direct Contact Volunteers/Contractors and all Regular Volunteers/Contractors must acknowledge in writing or online/electronically that they have read and understood our Child Safe Policy and the Child Safe Code of Conduct before being engaged by the School. These acknowledgements are then required annually for ongoing Direct Contact and Regular Volunteers/Contractors.

Whenever possible and practicable, the School gives a copy of, or information about, our Child Safe Policy and the Child Safe Code of Conduct to Casual Volunteers/Contractors when they are first engaged by the School.

Assessing the Suitability of Potential Staff and Contractors

Assessing suitability to work with children requires more than just criminal background checking. The WWC Check is a useful tool to keep children safe, however, it is only one part of creating a child safe environment. For more information about WWC Checks, refer to [Working with Children Checks](#).

In addition to WWC Checks, Little Yarra Steiner School uses a range of screening procedures to assess the suitability of all applicants for Staff and Direct Contact Contractor roles. These include:

- personal identity verification and background checking
- verification of professional or other qualifications relevant to the job
- an examination of their history of child-connected work
- verbal reference checking that addresses the person's suitability for the job and working with children and young people

- specific selection criteria concerning attitudes to and application of child protection measures to which applicants must respond
- values-based interviewing.

The same selection and screening procedures are used when proposing to receive clergy, religious or staff members from overseas or other Australian jurisdictions, who are currently engaged by the same entity as, or a similar entity to, Little Yarra Steiner School.

Application to Direct Contact Volunteers

People that the School proposes to engage in Direct Contact Volunteer roles may be required to undergo the following screening (or modified versions of it) depending on their role, prior to commencing any work at the School:

- personal identity verification and background checking
- verification of professional and other qualifications if relevant to their role
- an examination of their history of child-related work
- reference checking that addresses the person's suitability for the job and working with children and young people.

This does not apply to parents/carers of students who are volunteering in an activity in which their child is participating.

For information about the application of WWC Checks to Direct Contact Volunteers (including parent volunteers), refer to Working with Children Checks.

Application to Casual Volunteers/Contractors

It may not generally be practicable for any of the above screening and suitability assessment procedures to be applied to the engagement of Casual Volunteers or Casual Contractors, even if they are likely to undertake “child-related work” or “child-connected work” while at the School. This is particularly the case for those who are engaged at short notice, such as emergency maintenance workers or Volunteers, other than parent volunteers, who fill in when another Volunteer does not attend their rostered activity.

In line with the School’s risk-based approach to child safety and wellbeing, where it is not practicable to undertake relevant screening and suitability assessment of a Casual Volunteer/Contractor, the School will undertake additional measures to ensure the safety of students at the School. These measures include but are not limited to:

Recruitment Record Keeping

The School holds recruitment records for all Staff, and engagement records for Direct Contact and Regular Volunteers/Contractors, including:

- applications and tenders, and any supporting documentation
- copies of identification verification documents
- notes of interviews, child-related work history check and reference check conversations,

pursuant to our Child Protection Record Keeping and the School's broader record keeping policies.

Little Yarra Steiner School's Recruitment, Screening and Suitability Assessment Procedures

Employment Advertising

All Little Yarra Steiner School job advertisements and employment packages clearly state our commitment to child safety.

Employment packages sent to potential applicants for child-connected Staff roles and Direct Contact Contractor roles at the School include a position description, below, the Child Safe Policy and the Child Safe Code of Conduct.

Position Descriptions

The School has developed clear job descriptions and duty statements (together called "position descriptions") for each "child-connected" Staff role and each Direct Contact Contractor role at or for the School.

In addition, we assess **all** roles for the expected level of contact with children and appropriate child safe recruitment procedures are implemented for each position.

Each position description clearly states:

- the School's commitment to child safety and wellbeing
- the expected level of contact with children and young people
- the duties and tasks of the role, including any specific requirements, duties and responsibilities regarding child protection
- the essential or relevant qualifications, experience and attributes that applicants must have in relation to child protection, including any requirement to have a WWC clearance

- the level of responsibility and supervision of and by the position
- the School's clear expectation that all Staff, and all Volunteers/Contractors engaged in child-connected work must have and maintain a commitment to child safety.

We also develop duty statements for Direct Contact Volunteer and Direct Contact Contractor roles at the School, or for generalised categories of these roles.

Duty statements for Volunteer and Contractor roles include a description of the role, the expectation to have and maintain a commitment to child safety, and the requirement to comply with the School's Child Safe Policy and the Child Protection Codes of Conduct.

The School informs all applicants for child-connected work at the School about the requirements of their role as set out in the relevant position description prior to commencing work at the School.

Identity Checks

It is critical to confirm the identity of an applicant for employment. The School confirms this identity, for every applicant for employment as a staff member, or for engagement as a Direct Contact Contractor, using the Victorian Institute of Teaching's Identity Verification Documents.

Selection Criteria and Values-Based Interviewing

The School uses formal selection criteria and values-based interviewing to assess the suitability of applicants for all Staff and Direct Contact Contractor roles.

The School assesses an applicant based on the following areas, and includes these in our selection criteria and interview questions:

- motivation to work with children and young people (personal and/professional)
- understanding of children's and young people's physical and emotional needs
- understanding of professional boundaries
- attitudes to children's rights and how they can be upheld
- attitudes to, understanding of and ability to apply child protection measures
- values (honesty, integrity, reliability, fairness and non-discrimination) and attitudes towards working with children and young people.

Written responses to selection criteria and values-based interviews are critical when a staff member or Direct Contact Contractor will be working closely with students, particularly students that are more vulnerable or have special needs.

The School provides in-depth guidance to its Human Resources Staff so that they can identify factors in these interviews that could indicate that an applicant is not suitable for roles requiring child safe settings.

Verification of Professional Qualifications, Child-Connected Work History and Verbal Reference Checks

Professional Qualifications and Work History Checks

The School checks the professional qualifications, child-connected work histories and details provided by applicants in respect of previous employment for accuracy in relation to applicants for all Staff and Direct Contact Contractor roles.

This may occur as part of or separate to checking an applicant's references.

Reference Checks

Reference checks are crucial for engaging Staff and relevant Contractors at the School – a failure to properly check applicants' references can compromise the safety of students and the School.

Wherever possible, the School checks references for all applicants for Staff and Direct Contact Contractor roles as follows:

- we hold direct verbal conversations with at least two professional referees
- at least one referee provided by an applicant is their current or most recent direct supervisor
- we verify the identity of the referee being communicated with
- at least one staff member who is on the interview panel is appropriately trained in undertaking reference checks and this person conducts these reference checks
- reference check conversations are appropriately documented.

Key questions asked of referees include:

- Have you observed the person interacting with children and/or young people?
- Can you describe the types of relationships and interactions the person has had with children and/or young people?
- Would you employ the person again?
- Do you have any concerns about the applicant working directly with children and/or young people?
- Are you comfortable knowing that the applicant might sometimes be working alone with children and/or young people?

- Did you have any disciplinary matters relating to the person or concerns about their adherence with the organisation's Code of Conduct?

Child Protection Recruitment and Other Legislation

Our recruitment practices are subject to state and federal anti-discrimination legislation and the requirements of the Privacy Act 1988 (Cth) when obtaining, using, disclosing, and storing information from applicants and referees.

Working with Children Checks

Source of Obligation

The Worker Screening Act 2020 (Vic) (the Act) aims to protect children from harm by ensuring that people who work with, or care for, them have their suitability to do so checked by a government body. This checking process is called the WWC (working with children) Check.

People who are assessed as posing an unjustifiable risk to the safety of children fail the WWC Check and the Act prohibits these people from working or volunteering with children. The Act imposes penalties for schools and individuals that do not comply with the Act.

Ministerial Order 1359 requires that, when engaging **school staff** or **Volunteers** to perform **child-connected work**, the Board must sight, verify and record the person's WWC clearance (if the person is required to have a clearance under the Act) or an equivalent background check where that is required (for example, VIT teacher registration). the Board need not, however, comply with this requirement if it has already undertaken these activities in relation to a particular individual within the previous 12 months.

This Policy and its Procedures outline the responsibilities and obligations of Staff, Volunteers, Contractors and others under the Act and Ministerial Order 1359. It also sets out information and procedures relevant to the WWC Check process and verification of workers' WWC clearances.

Key Definitions

Definitions of particular terms used in the Child Safe Human Resources Management policies and procedures can be found in [Child Protection Program Definitions](#).

Of particular importance to this Policy are the following additional key definitions, and summaries of other key definitions (from the full definitions in [Child Protection Program Definitions](#)):

Work and Worker

A person is referred to as a “worker” for the purposes of this Policy, if they are engaged in “work” for the School.

“Work” is defined in section 3 of the Act to mean:

(a) work engaged:

- under a contract of employment or a contract for services (whether written or unwritten)
- as a minister of religion or as part of the duties of a religious vocation
- as an officer of a body corporate, member of the committee of management of an unincorporated body or association, or member of a partnership

(b) practical training undertaken as part of an educational or vocational training course;

(c) work engaged in as a Volunteer, including unpaid community work under a community or treatment order.

Child-Connected Work

For the purposes of Ministerial Order 1359 “child-connected work” is defined as work authorised by the school governing authority and performed by an adult in a school environment while children are present or reasonably expected to be present.

Under this definition:

- all staff members, including teaching and non-teaching Staff, **are** engaged in child-connected work.
- many, but not all, Volunteers and Contractors are engaged in child-connected work. Volunteers and Contractors who are themselves children or who do not work when children are present or expected to be present are **not** engaged in child-connected work.

For more information about which Volunteers and Contractors may be engaged in child-connected work, refer to the definitions of Direct Contact, Regular and Casual Volunteers, and Direct Contact, Regular and Casual Contractors, below.

“Child-connected work” is broader than “child-related work”, defined below. “Child-connected work” does not need to involve direct contact with children, whereas “child-related work” does.

For example, a consultant engaged by the School to work with the Board of Directors and who attends the School for meetings during school hours (i.e. when children are present) is **not** engaged in “child-related work” for the purposes of the WWC Check but **is** engaged in “child-connected work” for the purposes of Ministerial Order 1359.

Child-Related Work

“Child-related work” is defined in section 7 of the Act as voluntary or paid work:

- at or for a service, body or place, or that involves an activity, listed in section 9(3) of the Act (occupational categories); and
- that usually involves direct contact with a child.

The occupational categories listed in the Act that may be relevant to the School include:

- education and care services within the meaning of the Education and Care Services National Law Act 2010 (Vic) (i.e. long day care, family day care, and outside school hours care)
- educational institutions (i.e. government and non-government schools)
- accommodation services specifically provided for students in connection with the operation of a student exchange program
- clubs, associations or movements (including of a cultural, recreational or sporting nature) that are for or directed at children or whose membership mainly comprises children
- religious organisations
- transport services specifically for children (i.e. school bus services and taxi services for children with disability)
- coaching or tuition services of any kind specifically for children
- counselling or other support services for children
- overnight camps for children
- school crossing services
- work engaged in as a minister of religion

However, work in these occupational categories (other than ministers of religion) is **not** “child-related work” if the work involves only occasional direct contact with children that is incidental to the work (e.g. a consultant engaged by the School and who attends the School for meetings during school hours when children are present is likely not to be engaged in “child-related work”).

Under this definition, most Staff at the School, and all Direct Contact Volunteers and Direct Contact Contractors, are engaged in child-related work.

Child-Related Work for Ministers of Religion

The Act defines child-related work for ministers of religion more broadly than for other occupations.

Under section 7(4) of the Act, all work engaged in by a minister of religion is considered child-related work unless any direct contact that they have with children during their work is only occasional and is incidental to their work.

Further, if the minister of religion is the appointed leader of a local religious congregation for an organised religious institution, and the congregation contains children, the minister is considered to be engaged in child-related work regardless of whether the minister of religion in fact has direct contact with children.

Therefore, ministers of religion who have children in their congregation, or who visit schools or school camps must have a WWC clearance.

An example of when a minister of religion would **not** be considered to be in child-related work (and therefore would not require a WWC clearance) is a minister conducting purely administrative roles within a church's bureaucracy.

Direct Contact

Direct contact with children is defined in section 3 of the Act as any contact between a person and a child 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.

It does not matter whether the contact occurs in the presence of or under the supervision of another person.

Staff/Staff Member

The terms "Staff" and "Staff Member" include all teaching and non-teaching Staff, including the Principal. They include all those employed by the School on a permanent, temporary or casual basis.

Although Board of Directors members are technically Volunteers, they are considered “Staff” for the purposes of this Policy and the Child Protection Program.

Volunteers and Contractors

A Volunteer is a someone who performs work for the School in a School environment without remuneration or reward. Volunteers may be family members of students, or from the wider School or local community.

Volunteers are not “school staff” within the meaning of Ministerial Order 1359, even if they are engaged in “child-connected work”.

A Contractor is someone engaged by the School to perform specific tasks. Contractors are not employees of the School. However, Contractors who have direct contact with children (see below) are “school staff” within the meaning of Ministerial Order of 1359.

The School categorises Volunteers and Contractors as either:

- Direct Contact Volunteers/Contractors: Volunteers and Contractors who have direct physical or face-to-face contact with, or who directly communicate with, students (such as Volunteers and Contractors who are tutors, provide learning support, work in the Canteen, attend or provide excursions/incursions, assist in music/drama productions and coach sports teams). Direct Contact Volunteers/Contractors who are adults **are** engaged in **both** “child-connected work” and “child-related work”.
- Regular Volunteers/Contractors: Volunteers and Contractors who assist the School in ways that do not involve direct contact with students (although there could be indirect or incidental contact), and who do this more than seven times per year (such as Volunteers working the School’s administration office, contracted consultants, regular maintenance workers or cleaners, and caterers for staff events). Regular Volunteers/Contractors are **not** engaged in “child-related work”. They are only engaged in “child-connected work” if they are adults and work when children are present or expected to be present.
- Casual Volunteers/Contractors: Volunteers and Contractors who assist the School in ways that do not involve direct contact with students (although there could be indirect or incidental contact) or whose services are aimed at the general public, and who do this seven times or less per year (such as Volunteers who work on a stall at a School fete or on a barbeque at a sporting event, and one-off emergency maintenance workers). Casual Volunteers/Contractors are **not** engaged in “child-related work”. They are only engaged in “child-connected work” if they are adults and work when children are present or expected to be present.

“Visitors”

The term “Visitor” refers to any adult who attends a School event or who is in a School environment on a one-off or casual basis. Examples of Visitors who are relevant to this Policy include, but are not limited to:

- Casual Volunteers
- Casual Contractors
- people invited by the School or a staff member to attend a School event or to be in a School environment
- people who attend a School environment for commercial purposes, such as for deliveries or sales purposes.

Who Needs a WWC Clearance?

By Law

Subject to **Key Exemptions** below, the Act requires that any **worker** who engages in **child-related work** that involves **direct contact** with a child must hold a valid WWC clearance.

Therefore, unless an exemption applies, it is a legal requirement that **the following persons at the School must undergo a WWC Check and hold a valid WWC clearance in order to work or volunteer at the School:**

- Staff who have direct contact with children, other than registered teachers (who are exempt)
- Direct Contact Volunteers (other than those who are exempt)
- Direct Contact Contractors
- ministers of religion and people performing duties of a religious vocation
- trainee teachers.

It is an offence for a worker in these categories to work with children without a valid WWC clearance. It is also an offence for the School to engage in child-related work a worker who does not hold a valid WWC clearance.

Key Exemptions

The Act exempts some people from needing a WWC clearance to volunteer or otherwise work with children.

Under the Act, the following people are not required, by law, to have a WWC clearance in order to work or volunteer with children:

- teachers registered with the Victorian Institute of Teaching (VIT)**
- parents or close relatives volunteering in an activity in which their child participates or normally participates
- students, aged 18 or 19, undertaking volunteer work organised or held at the School
- Victorian or Australian Federal Police officers
- workers, who usually live in another state or territory, visiting Victoria to engage in child-related work (only up to 30 days within the same calendar year)
- all children under the age of 18.

**Staff members with current VIT teacher registration do not require additional WWC Check screening as their registration includes equivalent checks, Information sharing and notification requirements. However, they must notify [Working with Children Check Victoria \(WWCCV\)](#) of organisations in which they undertake any other child-related work. They must also notify the VIT if they are charged with, committed for trial for, or convicted or found guilty of offences that accord with those applicable to the WWC Check scheme, or if they are issued with a negative notice under the WWC Check scheme. For more information, refer to [Reporting Teacher Misconduct to the Victorian Institute of Teaching](#).

Workers' Obligations

Workers must:

- provide their WWC Check Card and/or Application Receipt numbers to the School, before commencing work at the School
- on receiving a WWC clearance, show their WWC Check Card to the School,(or, in the case of a Contractor engaged by a company other than Little Yarra Steiner School to perform services at the School, their company) and to any other organisation where they do child-related work
- notify WWCCV, within 21 days, of:
 - any changes to their name, residential address, electronic address, birth date or phone numbers
 - any changes to the organisation(s) where they are engaged in child related work. (This can be done online through a [MyCheck Account](#) or [Services Victoria](#).)
- notify, in writing, both the School, (or, in the case of a Contractor engaged by a company other than Little Yarra Steiner School to perform services at the School, their company) and WWCCV, within seven days, if:

- they are charged with, convicted, or found guilty of a category A or B sexual, violent or drug offence (as defined in the Act), or the charge has been finally dealt with by a court in some way
 - a relevant disciplinary or regulatory finding is made against them
 - they are or become subject to reporting obligations under Part 3 of the Sex Offenders Registration Act 2004 (Vic)
 - they become subject to a supervision order, detention order or an emergency detention order
 - they have been given an NDIS exclusion
 - they have been excluded from child-related work under a corresponding working with children law
- stop working with children immediately if their WWC Check Card is suspended or revoked
 - not let another person use their WWC Check Card for child-related work
 - lodge a renewal form before their WWC Check Card expires.

Little Yarra Steiner School's Obligations

The School must:

- know when our workers' WWC clearances expire and, on expiry, check that workers have renewed their WWC clearance
- ensure that new Staff and relevant Volunteers and Contractors notify WWCCV within 21 days of commencing child-related work with Little Yarra Steiner School
- ensure that paid workers doing child-related work have an Employee WWC Check Card, not a Volunteer WWC Check Card
- respect and protect workers' privacy.

Where a company or other contracted service provider with multiple employees is engaged as a Contractor by Little Yarra Steiner School, the School may require, in its contract with the Contractor, that the Contractor undertake these responsibilities and confirm its compliance in writing to the School.

To meet these obligations, the School will:

- before engaging a new worker, check the status of the person's WWC Check Card or application number using the WWCCV's online checking system, found [here](#)
- keep records for each worker to whom the WWC Check scheme applies including:
 - full name

- date of birth
- WWC Check Application Receipt Number
- WWC Check Card Number
- date and outcome of WWC clearance
- WWC clearance expiry date
- notices sent by WWCCV
- notices provided by the worker
- remove, immediately on being notified, any worker in either paid or voluntary child-related work:
 - whose WWC clearance is suspended or revoked; or
 - who is issued with a WWC exclusion.

Where a company or other contracted service provider with multiple employees is engaged as a Contractor by Little Yarra Steiner School, the School may require, in its contract with the Contractor, that the Contractor:

- verify the WWC clearance status of every person engaged by the Contractor to provide the contracted services to the School and provide to the School evidence of this verification; and/or
- provide to the School a list of every person engaged by the Contractor to provide the contracted service to the School and their WWC Check Card or application receipt number; and/or
- keep all required WWC Check records for each person engaged by the Contractor to provide the contracted service to the School.

The School must not:

- engage or continue to engage anyone in child-related work who does not have a valid WWC clearance, unless they are exempt under the Act or unless they have lodged an application for a WWC Check that's currently being assessed (subject to the dot points below)
- engage or continue to engage anyone in child-related work who has a WWC exclusion, even if they are exempt (e.g. a parent volunteer cannot work or continue to work at the School if they have been issued with a WWC exclusion, even though they are legally exempt from having to have a WWC clearance when volunteering in an activity which involves their own child)
- allow people who are charged with, convicted or found guilty of certain sexual, violent or drug offences to work with or care for children while their WWC Check application is being processed or their WWC clearance reassessed
- allow people who are or who have become subject to reporting obligations under the Sex Offenders Registration Act 2004 (Vic), or supervision or detention or emergency detention orders or excluded from child-related work under a corresponding working with children law, to work

with or care for children (it is an offence for people in these categories to even apply for a WWC Check

- offer the services of any person who doesn't have a WWC clearance to another organisation if the work to be undertaken with that organisation is child-related work.

Record Keeping Obligations

Little Yarra Steiner School will maintain all required records relating to WWC Check requirements. For the School's record keeping obligations relating to the WWC Check and WWC clearances, refer to [Child Protection Record Keeping](#).

WWC Check Procedures and Guiding Information

How to Apply for a WWC Check

A worker who engages in child-related work is responsible for applying for their own WWC Check. An employer can not apply on behalf of a worker.

To apply:

1. Fill out an online application form on the Working with Children Check Victoria website, found [here](#).
2. On completion of the application, you will be sent an application summary email advising how to finalise your application.
3. Verify your identity either as part of your online application or in person at a participating Australia Post outlet:
 - Online – you will need 2 primary proof of identity documents which are current and, when combined, show your full name, date of birth and photo
 - In person – when you finalise your application with Australia Post, bring 3 original proof of identity documents (1 primary and 2 secondary documents; 2 primary and 1 secondary document; or 3 primary documents).
4. Finalise your application at a participating Australia Post outlet, bringing with you your application summary, one additional identity document if you verified your identity online or your 3 identity documents if you are verifying your identity in person, and any applicable fee.
5. WWC Check applications are free for Volunteers. If the WWC Check is for paid work, a fee is payable. .
6. If applying for a WWC Check from outside Victoria, the following must be posted to WWCCV:
 - the application summary of your online application, and certified by a certifying officer
 - copies of your proof of identity documents, certified by the certifying officer

- two passport-sized photos, one certified on the back by the certifying officer and the other attached to the application summary
- a credit card payment, bank cheque or money order for the fee if you are a paid worker
- Mail to: Working with Children Check Victoria, Department of Justice and Community Safety, GPO Box 1915, Melbourne VIC 3001

Can I Work While my Application is Being Processed?

Most workers can work in child-related work after applying for a WWC Check but before the outcome is determined.

However, if you fall into the following categories, the Act prohibits you from working in child-related work before the outcome of the WWC Check:

- you have been charged with, found guilty, or convicted of certain sexual, violent or drug offences if this conduct occurred as an adult
- you have previously been given a WWC exclusion
- you have applied for the WWC Check and are supervising a child under the age of 15 in employment under the Child Employment Act 2003 (Vic)
- you are working in an education and care service under the Children's Services Act 1996 (Vic) or in an education and care service under the Education and Care Services National Law (Victoria) Act 2010 (Vic)
- you are subject to:
 - reporting obligations under the Sex Offenders Registration Act 2004 (Vic)
 - an exclusion from child-related work under a corresponding working with children law in circumstances where you have been charged with, found guilty, or convicted of certain sexual, violent or drug offences
 - a supervision order, a detention order or an emergency detention order.

What is Checked?

Working with Children Check Victoria (WWCCV), which is located in the Department of Justice and Community Safety, assesses WWC Check applications. It obtains applicants' national criminal histories including:

- convictions (spent or unspent)
- non-conviction charges (for serious sexual, violent or drug offences)
- acquittals because of mental impairment

- guilty pleas
- juvenile records from when you were under 18 years of age
- findings of courts and Corrections Victoria
- formal findings of guilt
- pending charges.

It also considers professional conduct determinations and findings from relevant bodies, including the Reportable Conduct Scheme, VCAT and other tribunals (in respect of health practitioners), Victorian Institute of Teaching (in respect of teachers) and the Suitability Panel (which considers the registration of foster carers).

When assessing an application, WWCCV can request additional information from the applicant or from others, including:

- health treating professionals
- government agencies
- professional disciplinary bodies
- employers and other organisations.

The time it takes to process a WWC Check varies from person to person. It typically takes up to three weeks to assess a WWC Check application. If you have a common name – or if there are circumstances which require more time investigating your application – it might be up to 12 weeks.

Interim WWC Exclusions

Certain criminal charges or offences will result in an automatic WWC exclusion or may require WWCCV to start with a presumption that a WWC exclusion should be issued. These include:

- serious sexual offences
- serious violent offences
- serious drug-related offences
- offences against the Child, Youth and Families Act 2005 (Vic)
- other offences linked to the safety of children

If an applicant has been charged with or convicted of certain serious offences and/or if, after considering all of the required information, WWCCV considers that the applicant poses an unjustifiable risk to children, it will issue an Interim WWC exclusion.

The applicant will then have the opportunity to explain why they believe they should pass the WWC Check and to respond to the information that has caused the Interim WWC exclusion.

Outcome of the WWC Check

There are only two results for a WWC Check:

- a WWC clearance to work with children; or
- a WWC exclusion barring an applicant from working with children.

WWC Clearance

Where the outcome is a WWC clearance, the applicant will receive an email confirming that they have passed the Check and will then receive a WWC Check Card in the mail. The WWC Check Card is valid for five years, and displays the worker's name, signature, photograph, card number and expiry date.

An Employee WWC Check Card allows workers to engage in any paid or voluntary child-related work.

A Volunteer WWC Check Card can only be used for voluntary child-related work.

Workers who have a WWC clearance will be subjected to ongoing monitoring for relevant new records, which could lead to the WWC Check Card being suspended or revoked (and a WWC exclusion issued) before the five-year expiry date.

WWC Exclusion

Where an applicant has failed the WWC Check, they will be issued with a WWC exclusion. The person must not engage in any child-related work. The person must notify, in writing, all organisations where they do child-related work that they have received a WWC exclusion.

A copy of the WWC exclusion will be sent to all the organisations listed in the application, but they will not be notified of the reasons for the WWC exclusion.

Persons who have been issued with a WWC exclusion cannot apply for child-related work, unless they have subsequently reapplied for a WWC Check and been issued with a WWC clearance (or appealed the WWC exclusion and the WWC exclusion has been stayed).

Once issued with a WWC exclusion, a person cannot reapply for a WWC Check for five years, unless their circumstances have changed. Changed circumstances can include:

- a pending charge being withdrawn or dismissed by a court

- being found not guilty of a pending charge
- being no longer required to report under the Sex Offenders Registration Act 2004 (Vic)
- being no longer subject to a supervision order, a detention order or an emergency detention order
- being no longer excluded from child-related work under a corresponding working with children law
- their NDIS exclusion being deemed void or being set aside, rendered inoperative or otherwise invalidated.

In limited circumstances, people who have been issued with a WWC exclusion can appeal by making an application to the Victorian Civil and Administrative Tribunal within 28 days of the decision.

Penalties

It is against the law for the following people to even apply for a WWC Check:

- a registrable offender under the Sex Offenders Registration Act 2004 (Vic)
- a person who is subject to a supervision order, a detention order or an emergency detention order.

It is an offence to work with children without having applied for a WWC Check or holding a valid WWC Check Card.

It is an offence for anyone to apply for or engage in child-related work if they have been issued with a WWC exclusion.

The maximum penalty for all of the above is two years' imprisonment, a fine or both.

The School must take reasonable steps to ensure that they do not engage or continue to engage a person in child-related work who does not hold a valid WWC Check Card, who has been issued with a WWC exclusion or who has become subject to reporting obligations under the Sex Offenders Registration Act, supervision or detention or emergency detention orders, or excluded from child-related work under a corresponding working with children law. The penalty for organisations is a significant fine.

Child Protection Training, Supervision, Performance Monitoring and Professional Development

Source of Obligation

A child safe organisation must provide induction and ongoing training about child safety and wellbeing, including but not limited to child protection issues, for its Staff and relevant Volunteers and Contractors. It also must provide supervision in relation to, and monitor, their child safety-related performance.

In particular, Ministerial Order 1359 requires the Board to ensure that:

- **Volunteers** engaged in **child-connected work** are made aware of the Child Safe Policy and Child Safe Code of Conduct
- **school staff**, members of the School's governing body and Volunteers engaged in child-connected work receive an induction regarding child safety and wellbeing that is appropriate to the nature of their role and that includes:

information on the Child Safe Code of Conduct

- where relevant to their role, the Child Safe Policy and procedures for managing complaints and concerns relating to child abuse
- school staff, members of the School's governing body and Volunteers engaged in child-connected work are aware of their responsibilities to children and students, Information sharing and reporting obligations and record keeping obligations
- ongoing supervision and people management of Staff and Volunteers focuses on child safety and wellbeing.

Key Definitions

Definitions of particular terms used in the Child Protection Human Resources Management policies and procedures can be found in [Child Protection Program Definitions](#).

Of particular importance to Child Protection Training, Supervision, Performance Monitoring and Professional Development are the following additional key definitions and summaries of other key definitions (from the full definitions in [Child Protection Program Definitions](#)):

Child-Connected Work

For the purposes of Ministerial Order 1359, "child-connected work" is defined as work authorised by the school governing authority and performed by an adult in a school environment while children are present or reasonably expected to be present.

Under this definition:

- all staff members, including teaching and non-teaching Staff, **are** engaged in child-connected work
- many, but not all, Volunteers and Contractors are engaged in child-connected work. Volunteers and Contractors who are themselves children or who do not work when children or students are present or expected to be present are **not** engaged in child-connected work.

For more information about which Volunteers and Contractors may be engaged in child-connected work, refer to the definitions of Direct Contact, Regular and Casual Volunteers, and Direct Contact, Regular and Casual Contractors.

“Child-connected work” is broader than “child-related work” as defined in the Worker Screening Act 202 (Vic). “Child-connected work” does not need to involve direct contact with children, whereas “child-related work” does. For example, a consultant engaged by the School to work with the Board of Directors and who attends the School for meetings during school hours (i.e. when children are present) is not engaged in “child-related work” for the purposes of WWC clearance obligations but **is** engaged in “child-connected work” for the purposes of Ministerial Order 1359.

Child-Related Work

“Child-related work” is defined in the Worker Screening Act 2020 (Vic). It is work performed at or for the School by a staff member, Volunteer or Contractor that usually involves direct contact with a child (unless the direct contact is only occasional and incidental to the work).

Direct contact means any contact between a person and a child 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.

Under this definition, most Staff at the School, and any Direct Contact Volunteers and Direct Contact Contractors, are engaged in child-related work for the purposes of Ministerial Order 1359.

School Staff

“School staff” is a particular phrase used in Ministerial Order 1359 and is defined as an individual working in a school environment who is:

- directly engaged or employed by a school governing authority;

- a contracted service provider (whether or not a body corporate or any other person is an intermediary) engaged by the school governing authority to perform child-related work; or
- a minister of religion, religious leader or an employee or officer of a religious body associated with the school.

The engagement or employment of Staff and Contractors at the School (other than the Principal) is undertaken by the Business Manager on behalf of the Board.

This means that, at the School, **all staff members, as well as Direct Contact Contractors and any minister or religion, or an employee or officer of a religious body associated with the School**, are considered “school staff”.

Staff/Staff Member

The terms “Staff” and “Staff Member” include all teaching and non-teaching Staff, including the Principal. They include all those employed by the School on a permanent, temporary or casual basis.

Although Board of Directors members are technically Volunteers, they are considered “Staff” for the purposes of this policy and the Child Protection Program.

Volunteers and Contractors

A Volunteer is a someone who performs work for the School in a School environment without remuneration or reward. Volunteers may be family members of students, or from the wider School or local community.

Volunteers are not “school staff” within the meaning of Ministerial Order 1359, even if they are engaged in “child-connected work”.

A Contractor is someone engaged by the School to perform specific tasks. Contractors are not employees of the School. However, Contractors who have direct contact with children (see below) are “school staff” within the meaning of Ministerial Order 1359.

The School categorises Volunteers and Contractors as either:

- Direct Contact Volunteers/Contractors: Volunteers and Contractors who have direct physical or face-to-face contact with, or who directly communicate with, students (such as volunteers and contractors who are tutors, provide learning support, work in the Canteen, attend or provide excursions/incursions, assist in music/drama productions and coach sports teams). Direct Contact Volunteers/Contractors who are adults **are** engaged in “child-connected work”.

- Regular Volunteers/Contractors: Volunteers and Contractors who assist the School in ways that do not involve direct contact with students (although there could be indirect or incidental contact), and who do this more than seven times per year (such as Volunteers working the School's administration office, contracted consultants, regular maintenance workers or cleaners, and caterers for staff events). Regular Volunteers/Contractors who are adults and who work when children are present or expected to be present **are** engaged in "child-connected work".
- Casual Volunteers/Contractors: Volunteers and Contractors who assist the School in ways that do not involve direct contact with students (although there could be indirect or incidental contact) or whose services are aimed at the general public, and who do this seven times or less per year (such as Volunteers who work on a stall at a School fete or on a barbeque at a sporting event, and one-off emergency maintenance workers). Casual Volunteers/Contractors who are adults and who work when children are present or expected to be present **are** engaged in "child-connected work".

Little Yarra Steiner School's Practices

This Policy sets out, in the following subsections, the policies, procedures, work practices and guidelines that the School employs to ensure that Staff and relevant Volunteers and Contractors are provided with:

- an induction into our child safe policies, procedures and practices
- ongoing education and training about child safety
- child safety-related supervision, performance monitoring and performance appraisal
- child safety-related professional development.

The subsections of this Policy are:

- Subsection 1: Child Protection Training
- Subsection 2: Child Protection Supervision and Performance Monitoring
- Subsection 3: Child Protection Professional Development for Staff.

Together these are aimed at ensuring the safety of students and the protection of them from abuse and other harm and creating a child safe culture.

Subsection 1: Child Protection Training

Little Yarra Steiner School recognises that without child safety-related training and education of our the Board members, Staff, Volunteers and Contractors, our child protection policies and procedures

will not operate effectively to keep our students safe and protect them from abuse and harm.

This subsection of the **Child Protection Training, Supervision, Performance Monitoring and Professional Development** policy describes the child protection training requirements for all Staff, Volunteers and Contractors.

Who is Required to Complete What Child Protection Training?

Induction Training

The following people must complete the School's online Child Protection Learning Course, as part of the induction process when they first commence their role at the School:

- Board of Directors members
- all Staff
- Direct Contact Volunteers

The following people will receive, when they first commence their role at the School, either modified induction training or information on our Child Safe Policy, the Child Safe Code of Conduct and how to report child safety incidents or concerns to the School:

- Direct Contact Contractors and Regular Contractors who are engaged in child-connected work
- Regular Volunteers who are engaged in child-connected work
- Casual Volunteers/Contractors who are engaged in child-connected

Ongoing and Refresher Training

The following people must complete the School's online refresher Child Protection Learning Course, at least annually:

- Board of Directors members
- all Staff
- Direct Contact Volunteers

Direct Contact Contractors and Regular Contractors who are engaged in child-connected work must, as part of their contract with the School, provide evidence, or otherwise assure the School, that they undertake relevant child protection training at least annually. This training is not provided by the School.

Mandatory Reporter Training

All Staff and Direct Contact Volunteers who are Mandatory Reporters must complete the School's online Child Protection Learning Course when they first commence their role at the School as part of the induction process, and must undertake refresher training at least annually to ensure ongoing understanding of their obligations.

Contractors who are Mandatory Reporters must, as part of their contract with the School, provide evidence that they undertake relevant Mandatory Reporter Training at least annually. This training is not provided by the School.

Additional Training

The School's Child Safe Officer/s, and other selected Staff, undertake additional training as considered appropriate to their roles. This additional training may include external courses, conferences and workshops on relevant child safety-related topics as well as internal training provided by Little Yarra Steiner School and/or Little Yarra Steiner School.

Training for Members of the School's Governing Authority

the Board members must complete child protection training at least annually, to ensure that they are equipped with the knowledge required to make decisions in the best interests of student safety and wellbeing, and to identify and mitigate child safety and wellbeing risks in our School's environment. Their training includes guidance on:

- individual and collective obligations and responsibilities for implementing the Victorian Child Safe Standards and managing the risk of child abuse
- child safety and wellbeing risks in our School's environment
- the School's child protection policies, procedures, codes and practices.

Training Content

Our induction and refresher child protection Learning Courses includes information on:

- our Child Protection Program
- our Child Safe Policy and Child Protection Codes of Conduct
- the legal and regulatory framework for child safety and wellbeing, including:
 - Working with Children Checks
 - Mandatory Reporting to Child Protection
 - Non-Mandatory Reporting to Child Protection
 - Reportable Conduct

- Duty to Protect/Failure to Protect
 - Reporting to Police
 - Information sharing and record keeping obligations
 - privacy and employment law obligations related to child protection
 - whistleblower protection
- guidance on the different types of child abuse and other harm, recognising key indicators, and understanding circumstances that increase the vulnerability of some children and young people to child abuse or other harm
 - our complaints handling policies and procedures
 - procedures for responding to a child safety incident, concern or complaint
 - how to report child safety incidents or concerns internally to the School and externally to the appropriate external authorities
 - child protection Information sharing and record keeping obligations
 - children and young people's rights to participation, information and safety, empowering children and young people, and encouraging children and young people's participation
 - building culturally safe environments, including information about Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander cultures, culturally and linguistically diverse cultures, disability and people with other particular experiences or needs, and respecting children and young people irrespective of their individual characteristics, cultural backgrounds and abilities
 - identifying and mitigating child safety and wellbeing risks in the School's environments without compromising a student's right to privacy, access to information, social connections and learning opportunities.

Child Protection Training Record Keeping

Through the School's CompliLearn, the School creates and maintains electronic records of all completed child protection training.

Subsection 2: Child Protection Supervision and Performance Monitoring

This subsection of the **Child Protection Training, Supervision, Performance Monitoring and Professional Development** policy describes the supervision and performance review process that is provided to, or otherwise required of, various Staff, Volunteers and Contractors with respect to child safety and wellbeing.

Key Definitions

Supervision

“Supervision” is an intervention that is provided by a senior staff member of School to other staff members, Direct Contact Volunteers and Direct Contact Contractors.

The supervisor/supervisee relationship is evaluative, extends over time, and has the simultaneous purposes of enhancing the professional functioning of the staff member(s), monitoring the quality of education provided to students and of their relationship with the wider School community, and serving as a gatekeeper of those who are to enter the particular profession.

Performance Review

“Performance reviews” are a process aimed at assisting staff members to sustain their performance at a planned level, promoting a climate of continuous learning and development, and enhancing individual competencies. A performance review may or not be undertaken by a staff member’s direct supervisor.

Performance reviews include, but are not limited to:

- observing and analysing integration of the staff member’s skills, knowledge and practices during teaching and other interactions with students (including random and organised observations through in person, line of sight and within hearing range supervision)
- review of materials and audio-visual aids used
- seeking feedback from students, parents/carers and colleagues
- a performance appraisal discussion.

Performance Appraisal Discussion

Performance appraisal discussions involve, in relation to child protection:

- consideration of performance against the Child Protection Program, including the Child Protection Codes of Conduct
- reviewing the skill sets of staff members relating to child protection, safety and wellbeing
- identifying additional child protection training needs relevant to the staff member’s role
- setting goals in relation to issues which impact the safety and wellbeing of children and young people (for example, identifying ways to support staff members to perform the duties and skills contained within their job description).

Child Protection Supervision and Performance Reviews for Staff and Contractors

Regular Supervision and Performance Reviews for Staff and Contractors

The School provides all Staff, Direct Contact Contractors and Regular Contractors who are engaged in **child-connected work** with regular supervision – and, for Staff, performance reviews – by their Manager, a Child Safe Officer and/or a member of the School Management, that involves consideration of child safety issues, to ensure their behaviour towards students is appropriate and to monitor their compliance with the School’s Child Protection Program.

All Staff have a performance review at least annually.

The School assigns a supervising member of Staff to each Direct Contact Contractor and to each “child-connected” Regular Contractor. The Contractor’s supervising staff member will have at least one discussion with the Contractor during the period of the contract (and additional discussions, depending on the frequency of the Contractor’s engagement at the School) to discuss and monitor their performance in relation to child safety and wellbeing.

Child Protection Supervision and Performance Monitoring for Direct Contact and Regular Volunteers

The School assigns a supervising member of Staff to each Direct Contact and “child-connected” Regular Volunteer.

The Volunteer’s supervising staff member will have at least one discussion with the Volunteer during the period of the volunteer work (and additional discussions, depending on the frequency of the Volunteer’s engagement at the School) to discuss and monitor their performance in relation to child safety and wellbeing.

Subsection 3: Child Protection Professional Development for Staff

Little Yarra Steiner School recognises that ongoing professional development with respect to child protection is essential for our staff members to keep our students safe and protect them from abuse and harm.

When new Staff are first engaged by the School, the level of child protection training and experience they are required to possess is considered in the context of their appointed role. The School then works with each staff member to ensure that they can access ongoing child protection training and development opportunities that will continue to equip them to do their job well.

The School undertakes professional development reviews at least annually for all Staff, as part of the performance review process. These reviews include consideration of professional development

needs in light of the School's Child Protection Codes of Conduct and the requirements of the Child Protection Program.

Disciplinary Actions (Child Protection)

Where a staff member, or a Direct Contact or Regular Volunteer/Contractor breaches any obligation, duty or responsibility within our Child Protection Program, the School may take disciplinary action that may result in a range of measures including (depending on the severity of the breach):

- remedial education
- counselling
- increased supervision
- the restriction of duties
- appointment to an alternate role
- suspension
- in the case of serious breaches, termination of employment, contract or engagement.

Where any other member of the School community, including Casual Volunteers/ Contractors or other Visitors, breaches any obligation, duty or responsibility within our Program, the School will take appropriate action including, but not limited to, a School Community Safety Order in appropriate cases (for more information, refer to School Community Safety Orders Policy).

All members of the School community must be aware that if they engage in certain conduct in breach of this Program, their conduct may also be subject to Mandatory Reporting to Child Protection, Non-Mandatory Reporting to Child Protection, Reportable Conduct and/or Reporting to Police, which will be reported to the relevant external agency.

Participation and Empowerment of Students

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The Policies and Procedures in this Section

This section of the Child Protection Program sets out the strategies, policies, procedures and practices that the School uses to encourage the participation and empowerment of all students:

- Developing and Maintaining a Child-Friendly Culture
- Child Protection Pastoral Care

- Educating Students About Child Safety

These policies and procedures must be read in conjunction with Family and Community Involvement, Cultural Safety and Equity/Diversity and Regular Reviews and Continuous Improvement, which detail additional measures that the School takes to encourage, enable and empower all students to participate in decisions that affect them.

Principles of Participation

Three key principles underpin the participation of students:

- **Empowerment:** which involves students having greater control or say over their lives through participation.
- **Purposeful Engagement:** which involves students taking on valued roles, addressing issues that are relevant to them, and influencing real outcomes.
- **Inclusiveness:** which involves ensuring that all students are able to participate.

The School's Approach to Participation and Empowerment of Students

As part of creating and maintaining a child safe environment at the School for all students, the School:

- engages and involves students in decisions that affect them
- provides child-friendly pathways for students to express their views and raise concerns
- takes students' views and opinions seriously
- educates students about their rights
- includes students in policy consultation and development.

The School has developed a number of strategies, procedures and practices to encourage the participation and empowerment of all students at the School. These are explained in the policies and procedures in this section of our Child Protection Program.

Source of Obligation

Standard 3 of the Victorian Child Safe Standards is that children have a right to be heard and have their concerns and ideas taken seriously. To implement this Standard, Clause 7 of Ministerial Order 1359 requires the Board to ensure that:

- children and students are informed about all of their rights, including to safety, information and participation

- the importance of friendships is recognised and support from peers is encouraged, to help children and students feel safe and be less isolated
- Staff and Volunteers are attuned to signs of harm and facilitate child-friendly ways for children and students to express their views, participate in decision-making and raise their concerns
- the School has strategies in place to develop a culture that facilitates participation and is responsive to the input of children and students
- the School provides opportunities for children and students to participate and it responsive to their contributions to strengthen confidence and engagement.

Approvals and Reviews of the Participation and Empowerment of Students Strategies, Policies and Procedures

As required by Ministerial Order 1359, all of the strategies, policies and procedures in this section of the Child Protection Program have been approved by the Board.

They are regularly reviewed in accordance with the schedule set out in the Regular Reviews and Continuous Improvement section of the Child Protection Program.

All changes to these policies and procedures that result from a review are approved by the Board.

Policy administration information, including a record of the initial approval of the relevant policy/procedure in this section, the date of the next scheduled review and the dates of all other reviews and approvals, is set out in the policy.

Developing and Maintaining a Child-Friendly Culture

Little Yarra Steiner School is a child safe and child-centred organisation. Our physical and cultural environment promotes children and young people's feelings of inclusion, participation and empowerment.

The School provides multiple age-appropriate and child-friendly platforms to regularly seek students' views about, and to enable students to participate in, decisions that affect them. These include:

Insert Child Safe Participation Methods

Decisions that affect students include decisions about organisational planning, delivery of services, management of facilities and classroom learning and assessment environments.

The School actively seeks to understand what makes students feel safe in our organisation. To do this, the School:

- encourages students to provide feedback about child safety concerns and issues at the School
- has and implements strategies to obtain feedback from students, including:
 - formal mechanisms such as anonymous surveys
 - informal mechanisms such as conversations with guardians, class teachers, student support staff, counsellors.

Little Yarra Steiner School takes all student contributions seriously and documents and actively looks for ways to implement improvements to its Child Protection Program that reflect these contributions.

The School is honest with students about the extent of their involvement in decision-making and gives feedback on how their views have been taken into account and actioned.

Child Protection Pastoral Care

Key Definition

Pastoral Care

Pastoral care is the support given to students for their development as a person. It relates to the total care of students and involves tending to both the academic and non-academic needs of students including spiritual, emotional and social wellbeing.

Little Yarra Steiner School's Pastoral Care Practices

Little Yarra Steiner School is committed to providing a safe, supportive and social environment, where students feel nurtured as they learn.

To this end, we have developed, and continue to develop, a comprehensive range of pastoral care policies and procedures that are designed to promote the social and emotional wellbeing of our students. These include:

- The School recognises the importance of friendships and peer support in helping children and young people feel safe and be less isolated. We actively support students to develop and sustain friendships through documented formal programs. These programs include:

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- We are committed to ensuring that information and procedures to enable and to respond to child safety concerns raised by students are age-appropriate, simple, and accessible for all students including students from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students, students with disability, LGBTIQ+ students and other vulnerable students. For more information, refer to [Child Protection Complaints Management](#).
- We openly display contact details for independent child advocacy and child helpline services throughout the School.
- The School delivers age-appropriate education to all students about:
 - healthy and respectful relationships (including sexuality, sexual relationships and consent)
 - resilience and coping with adversity
 - child abuse awareness and their right to be safe
 - their right to make decisions about their body and their privacy
 - how they can raise concerns about safety, abuse or other harm
 - the fact that any concerns that they do raise will be taken seriously and responded to appropriately
 - our Child Safe Policy and Child Protection Codes of Conduct including our Student Child Protection Code of Conduct and other standards of behaviour for students.
- We make information about these topics, as well as other child safety and wellbeing topics, available to all students through various age-appropriate pastoral care initiatives as well as communications such as newsletters and the School's intranet. We also incorporate child safety and wellbeing topics into the School's curriculum.

For more information, refer to [Educating Students About Child Safety](#).

Educating Students About Child Safety

Students may not disclose child safety incidents or concerns because they:

- feel uncomfortable doing so
- do not recognise behaviours as inappropriate, abusive or grooming behaviour; or
- do not know how to raise their concerns or make a complaint.

We have simple and accessible information and processes in place to assist all students to develop appropriate knowledge and skills to identify and communicate when they do not feel safe.

A central part of the School's strategy for creating and maintain a child safe environment is to provide age-appropriate information and education about child safety to all students, including:

- healthy and respectful relationships (including sexuality, sexual relationships and consent)
- resilience and coping with adversity
- child abuse awareness and prevention, and their right to be safe
- their right to make decisions about their body and their privacy
- cyber safety
- how they can raise child safety incidents and concerns
- the School's response to child safety incidents and concerns, making clear that it will take any concerns that students raise seriously and will respond appropriately
- the Child Safe Policy and Child Safe Code of Conduct
- standards of behaviour for students attending the School

Standards of Behaviour for Students Attending the School

The School has developed a Student Child Protection Code of Conduct that includes standards of behaviour related to child protection for all students attending the School. We promote the Code within the School and we encourage students to provide feedback on the Code.

The School has also developed policies on Bullying Prevention and Intervention, Social Media – Student Usage and Harassment Policy (Student Against Student). For more information, refer to our Student Duty of Care Program..

Students who do not uphold the standards of behaviour outlined in the Student Child Protection Code of Conduct and in our anti-bullying, harassment and social media policies are subject to disciplinary procedures but are also supported by the School to mitigate behaviours that are not in line with the Code and address any underlying factors.

Students are encouraged to tell a trusted adult, whether it's a parent/carer or other family member, a trusted teacher or a Child Safe Officer, when they feel unsafe or are impacted by the behaviour of other students.

Healthy and Respectful Relationships and Resilience

The School includes, as part of its curriculum, the teaching of healthy and respectful relationships, including sexuality, sexual relationships and consent, to assist students to grow and develop into healthy, mature adults, capable of realising their full potential.

Healthy and respectful relationships at the School is:

- imparted in the context of moral teachings, leading to the formation of a healthy and appropriate conscience
- enshrined in core pedagogical practices that are age-appropriate, respectful, sensitive of culture and family background and differentiated to support the learning and developmental needs of the child or young person
- endorsed by the Board.

Little Yarra Steiner School recognises that building resilience (the ability to cope and thrive in the face of negative events, challenges or adversity) has a positive impact on students' social and academic outcomes and is particularly critical for students who may be impacted by abuse. The School includes, as part of its curriculum, the teaching of skills and information relating to resilience.

Child Abuse Awareness and Prevention

The School provides age-appropriate information and education for students on child safety awareness and child abuse and harm prevention, to build their capacity to:

- identify when they feel safe and unsafe and when they are at risk, including when online
- identify safe and unsafe touching (using the anatomical names for their body parts)
- promote their personal safety (avoiding harm where possible)
- seek help, using their identified safety networks
- overcome barriers to disclosure, for example guilt or disbelief.

The School considers best practice when providing access to or selecting providers of child abuse and harm prevention education.

The School openly displays contact details for independent child advocacy and child helpline services throughout the School.

Family and Community Involvement, Cultural Safety and Equity-Diversity

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This section of the Child Protection Program sets out the strategies, policies, procedures and practices that the School uses to encourage the participation of and to partner with families and relevant communities in creating a child safe environment, to create a culturally safe environment for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students, and to uphold equity and respect diversity at the School:

- [Family and Community Involvement \(Child Protection\)](#)
- [Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Students \(Child Protection\)](#)
- [Students with Disability \(Child Protection\)](#)
- [Students from Culturally and Linguistically Diverse Backgrounds \(Child Protection\)](#)
- [LGBTIQ+ Inclusion Policy](#)

These policies and procedures must be read in conjunction with:

- [Participation and Empowerment of Students](#) which details additional measures that the School takes to encourage, enable and empower students in particular, as members of the School community with additional participation needs, to participate in decisions that affect them
- [Child Protection Complaints Management](#)
- [Regular Reviews and Continuous Improvement](#) which details additional measures that the School takes to enable students, families and other members of the School community to participate in reviews of and improvements to our child safety and wellbeing policies and procedures.

Source of Obligation

Standard 4 of the Victorian Child Safe Standards is that families and communities are informed and involved in promoting child safety and wellbeing. To implement this Standard, Clause 8 of Ministerial Order 1359 requires the Board to develop a policy, statement or other documentation that details the strategies and actions the School will take to ensure that:

- families participate in decisions relating to child safety and wellbeing affecting their child
- the School engages and openly communicates with families and the School community about its child safe approach, and relevant information is accessible
- families and the School community have a say in the development and review of the School's policies and practices relating to child safety and wellbeing.
- families, carers and the School community are informed about the School's operations and governance related to child safety and wellbeing.

Standards 1 and 5 of the Victorian Child Safe Standards require the School to establish a culturally safe environment for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children and young people, and to uphold equity and respect diversity in policy and practice. To meet these Standards, Ministerial Order 1359 requires the Board to develop and endorse policies or statements that detail the strategies and actions that the School will take to ensure that:

- a child's or student's ability to express their culture and enjoy their cultural rights is encouraged and actively supported
- strategies are embedded within the School which equip school staff, students, Volunteers and the School community to acknowledge and appreciate the strengths of Aboriginal culture and understand its importance to the wellbeing and safety of Aboriginal children and students
- measures are adopted by the School to identify, confront and not tolerate racism within the School environment and that any instances of racism are addressed with appropriate consequences
- the School actively supports and facilitates participation and inclusion by Aboriginal children and students and their families
- all of the School's policies, procedures, systems and processes, taken together, create a culturally safe and inclusive environment and meet the needs of Aboriginal children and students and their families
- the School, including Staff and Volunteers, understands children and young people's diverse circumstances, and provides support and responds to vulnerable children and students
- children, students, Staff, Volunteers and the School community have access to information, support and complaints processes in ways that are culturally safe, accessible and easy to understand.
- the School pays particular attention to the needs of students with disability, students from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds, students who are unable to live at home, and lesbian, gay, bisexual, trans and gender diverse, intersex and queer (LGBTQI+) students
- the School pays particular attention to the needs of Aboriginal students and provides and promotes a culturally safe environment for them.

Approvals and Reviews of the Participation and Empowerment of Students Strategies, Policies and Procedures

As required by Ministerial Order 1359, the Board has reviewed all of the strategies, policies and procedures in this section of the Child Protection Program.

They are regularly reviewed in accordance with the schedule set out in the Regular Reviews and Continuous Improvement section of the Child Protection Program.

the Board approves all changes to these policies and procedures that result from a review.

The policy sets out the policy administration information, including a record of the initial approval of the relevant policy/ procedure in this section, the date of the next scheduled review and the dates of all other reviews and approvals.

Family and Community Involvement in Child Protection at the School

Little Yarra Steiner School recognises that families are best placed to advise the School about their children's needs and capabilities, and can provide important information about practices and environments that are safe for their children. Similarly, communities that are relevant to our students (such as Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities or culturally and linguistically diverse communities from which students and their families may come) have a wealth of knowledge about the diverse needs that children from their community may have and about the additional vulnerabilities and barriers that these children and their families may face when those needs are not met.

To be a child safe environment, the School must have and implement a variety of strategies to ensure that all members of the School community understand and are involved in decisions about child safety and wellbeing at the School.

Key Definition

The School Community

The School community includes:

- students and their families
- Staff, Volunteers and Contractors
- Little Yarra Steiner School
- the Board
- people from relevant communities (the variety of communities that are relevant to the School, such as Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities, culturally and linguistically diverse communities, and other communities that make up our Staff and student cohort)
- the local community in which the School operates.

The School has identified the following as relevant communities:

Wurrundjeri

Little Yarra Steiner School's Practices

Accessible Information about Child Protection at the School

The School ensures that the School community knows about the School's operations and governance relating to child safety and wellbeing and our approach to child safety and wellbeing, and that

relevant information is accessible, by publishing the following policies and procedures on our public website:

- Child Safe Policy
- Child Protection Codes of Conduct
- Procedures for Responding to and Reporting Child Safety Incidents or Concerns
- Procedures for Managing Child Safety Incidents or Concerns At or Involving the School or its Staff
- Grievance procedure.

In addition to publishing relevant policies and procedures on our public website, and to the initiatives and strategies set out below, the School uses the following mechanisms to communicate the School's operations, governance and approach to child protection:

Insert Communication Methods

Family Participation in Decisions Affecting Their Child

the Board and the School recognise that parents and carers have the primary responsibility for the upbringing and development of their children. The School ensures that they participate in decisions affecting their children through:

- the following family involvement initiatives:
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- procedures for informing parents/carers about child safety incidents or concerns that may involve their child or that involve the School or its Staff, Volunteers and Contractors (for more information, refer to Communicating with Parents and Carers About Internal and External Reports, Information Sharing Policy (Child Protection) and Information Sharing About Reportable Conduct)
- specific strategies for involving parents/carers in reviews of and improvements to our child safety and wellbeing policies and procedures, including:

Insert Involvement Strategies

(for more information, refer to Regular Reviews and Continuous Improvement).

Community Involvement in Organisational Decisions

The School uses the following mechanisms to consult with the School community about organisational decisions and to involve them in reviews of child protection policies and procedures:

- the following community involvement initiatives:

parent surveys

- procedures for informing the School community about child safety incidents or concerns that involve the School or its Staff, Volunteers and Contractors (for more information, refer to [\(Child Protection\)\)](#))
- specific strategies for involving the School community in reviews of and improvements to our child protection policies and procedures, including:

Insert Strategies

(for more information, refer to [Regular Reviews and Continuous Improvement](#)).

For more information about how we consult with and involve particular communities relevant to our School, refer to [Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Students \(Child Protection\)](#), [Culturally and Linguistically Diverse Students \(Child Protection\)](#), [Students with Disability \(Child Protection\)](#), [LGBTQI+ Inclusion Policy](#), and [Regular Reviews and Continuous Improvement](#).

Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Students (Child Protection)

Standard 1 of the Victorian Child Safe Standards requires Little Yarra Steiner School to establish a culturally safe environment in which the diverse and unique identities and experiences of Aboriginal children and young people are respected and valued.

Little Yarra Steiner School recognises the importance of every Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander student feeling that their sense of self and their identity is valued by the people and environments that surround them. Cultural identity and **cultural safety** are fundamental to a student's overall wellbeing and sense of safety.

The risk of abuse and other harm is heightened for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students when they do not feel culturally safe. Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students may be less likely to disclose abuse or other harm due to a lack of cultural safety and fear of authorities intruding into their family and community, based on historical experiences of systemic racism and abuse.

Creating a culturally safe organisation for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students requires a willingness to learn, understand and respond to the diversity of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander culture and to empower participation in decision-making at the School.

Key Definition

Culturally Safe/Cultural Safety

“Cultural safety”, or a “culturally safe” environment, is a concept that goes beyond cultural awareness (knowledge and understanding of cultural differences and history) and cultural competence (culturally sensitive behaviour). It is about creating an environment where Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people are not only treated in a culturally respectful manner but are also empowered to actively participate and supported to carry out culturally significant tasks.

Little Yarra Steiner School's Practices

Little Yarra Steiner School values and respects the cultural diversity of our students and is committed to ensuring that the backgrounds of all students are sensitively recognised, catered for, celebrated and valued so that cultural differences do not compromise students' safety and wellbeing.

Little Yarra Steiner School identifies, confronts and does not tolerate racism, and any instances of racism within the School environment are addressed with appropriate consequences.

It is our policy that:

- we identify children from Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander backgrounds when they are enrolled at the School
- we employ appropriate strategies to ensure the safety of these children as required
- we encourage participation and empowerment of these children, their families and their communities in the development of these strategies
- we consider these children when developing and implementing policies and procedures related to child protection at the School
- we educate our Staff about the strengths of Aboriginal cultures, their importance to the wellbeing and safety of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children and students, cultural safety and the strategies and procedures we have employed to create a culturally safe environment
- we recognise that approaches to parenting vary considerably across culturally diverse groups, however the safety of the student should always be the main consideration.

Some of the strategies and initiatives that Little Yarra Steiner School may implement to ensure that the School is a cultural safety environment for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students include:

refer to RAP

Students with Disability (Child Protection)

Little Yarra Steiner School recognises the importance of promoting understanding and acceptance of diversity, including disability, to create and maintain a child safe environment.

The School has an obligation to students with disability to ensure that they are afforded the same level of educational and pastoral care as any other student at the School and considers how each policy and procedure the School establishes and implements may affect students with disability.

The School recognises that students with disability will not only require additional assistance to participate and engage in School activities in a safe and supportive manner, but also that there are specific child safety risks that arise in relation to students with disability.

Children and young people with disability are at a higher risk of abuse or other harm, such as harassment, bullying, humiliation and physical and sexual abuse, and are also often less likely to disclose abuse or other concerns about their safety. This is because of:

- low levels of expectation held about their capacity to identify and report concerns
- reliance on caregivers for personal requirements
- limited provision of developmentally appropriate sexual and relationship information
- difficulties with speech, communication or literacy
- social isolation.

Little Yarra Steiner School's Practices

The School is committed to ensuring that we fulfil our legal obligations including those related to discrimination and disability standards (refer to our [Disability Discrimination Policy](#)).

The School does not stereotype or make assumptions about students' abilities, but rather recognises that each student is different and experiences their disability and the world differently.

Some of the strategies and initiatives that Little Yarra Steiner School may implement to ensure and promote the safety of students with disability include:

individual specific strategies as per IEP

Students from Culturally and Linguistically Diverse Backgrounds (Child Protection)

Our School community includes people of many backgrounds, countries, ethnicities and languages. These families have experienced varied journeys, and some have experienced trauma, violence and harm.

Key Definition

Students from Culturally and Linguistically Diverse Backgrounds

Students from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds are those who identify as having particular cultural or linguistic affiliations by virtue of their place of birth, ancestry or ethnic origin, religion, preferred language or language spoken at home or because of their parents' identification on a similar basis.

Little Yarra Steiner School's Practices

Little Yarra Steiner School values and respects the racial, cultural and linguistic diversity of our students and is committed to ensuring that the backgrounds of all students are sensitively recognised, catered for, celebrated and valued so that cultural differences do not compromise a student's safety and wellbeing.

Little Yarra Steiner School identifies, confronts and does not tolerate racism, and any instances of racism within the School environment are addressed with appropriate consequences.

It is our policy that:

- we identify children from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds when they are enrolled at the School
- we employ appropriate strategies to ensure the safety of these children as required
- we encourage participation and empowerment of these children in the development of these strategies
- we consider these children when developing and implementing policies and procedures related to child protection at the School
- we educate our Staff about these cultural differences and the strategies and procedures we have employed
- we recognise that approaches to parenting vary considerably across culturally diverse groups, however the safety of the student should always be the main consideration.

Some of the strategies and initiatives that Little Yarra Steiner School may implement to ensure and promote the safety of students from culturally and/or linguistically diverse backgrounds include:

strategies as per student IEPs

LGBTIQ+ Inclusion Policy

Refer to our [LGBTQIA+ Inclusion Policy](#) in the School's Student Duty of Care Module.

Child Protection Complaints Management

For the purposes of this Policy, we refer to School Staff, Volunteers or Contractors together as "Staff" or "staff members".

Key Definitions

Complaint

A "complaint" is an expression of dissatisfaction with an action taken, decision made, or service provided, or with the failure to provide a service, take action or make a decision at the School.

A complaint can be made by anyone including a student, former student, parent/carer, other family member, staff member or member of the wider community.

Child Protection-Related Complaint

For the purposes of this Policy, a "child protection-related complaint" includes any disclosure, allegation, suspicion, concern or internal report of:

- a breach of the School's [Child Protection Codes of Conduct](#)
- a [child safety incident or concern](#) alleged to have occurred, be occurring or be at risk of occurring at the School or a School event
- [Reportable Conduct](#)
- other staff misconduct (such as a procedural breach of the Child Protection Program)
- any complaint about the School's response to or management of a child safety incident or concern, including complaints alleging non-compliance with our procedures for [Responding to and Reporting Child Safety Incidents or Concerns](#).

Background

Under Standard 7 of the Victorian Child Safe Standards, the School must have and implement child-focused processes for managing complaints and concerns. To meet this Standard, Ministerial Order 1359 requires the Board to (among other things):

- develop a complaints handling policy that meets a number of specific elements and that clearly outlines:
 - the process for making a complaint about the School, or the behaviour of any person within the School
 - the roles and responsibilities of leadership, school staff, and Volunteers in relation to complaints handling
 - the process for dealing with different types of complaints, breaches of relevant policies or the Child Safety Code of Conduct, and obligations to act and report
- have policies and procedures in place that address reporting of complaints and concerns to relevant authorities, whether or not the law requires reporting, and cooperating with law enforcement
- ensure that record keeping, reporting, privacy and employment law obligations are met when responding to complaints and concerns
- have a clear procedure or set of procedures for responding to complaints or concerns relating to child abuse
- ensure that complaints are taken seriously and responded to promptly.

A child-focused complaints handling process is important for helping students and others at the School make complaints, whether about child safety wellbeing or otherwise. This Policy supports the creation of a culture for students and their families to have their complaints heard, considered and responded to, and a culture of transparency in our complaints management processes.

It sets out how the School, as a child safe organisation:

- has and implements a child-focused complaints handling system
- manages child protection-related complaints

This Child Protection Complaints Management Policy is communicated to and understood by students, Staff and parents/carers, and ensures that child protection-related complaints are handled in a timely, fair and transparent manner.

This Policy is summarised in our public-facing Procedures for Managing Child Safety Incidents or Concerns At or Involving the School or its Staff. In our public-facing Grievance procedure, we include details about how to make a Child Protection complaint.

A child-friendly version of this Policy is also provided to students.

Child-Focused and Culturally Safe Complaints Handling

The School's system for handling complaints that involve students (whether as complainant, victim, witness or person being complained about) is child-focused, and follows the National Office for Child Safety's [Complaint Handling Guide: Upholding the rights of children and young people](#) and the Commission for Children and Young People's [Including Children and Young People in Reportable Conduct Investigations](#) resources.

The School's system for handling complaints that involve students (whether as complainant, victim, witness or person being complained about) is culturally safe. We consult with relevant communities (the variety of communities that are relevant to the School, such as Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities, culturally and linguistically diverse communities, and other communities that make up our Staff and student cohort) about how to enable, support and respond to complaints in a culturally sensitive way.

Responsibilities for Child Protection Complaints Management

The Principal is responsible for ensuring the efficient and effective organisation, management and administration of the School's complaints handling processes.

All Staff are responsible for

- responding appropriately to a student who raises or is affected by a child protection-related complaint
- understanding their internal and external reporting requirements relevant to child protection-related complaints and for complying with this Policy.

Child Safe Officers and the Principal are responsible for:

- providing assistance and advice to Staff about their obligations under this Policy
- ensuring that the School takes all child protection-related complaints seriously, and escalates, reports and responds to these appropriately
- ensuring that the School responds appropriately to a student who raises or is affected by a child protection-related complaint
- promptly and thoroughly managing the School's response to child protection-related complaints as set out below
- monitoring the School's compliance with this Policy.

Where a particular child protection-related complaint involves the Principal and they therefore cannot perform the above roles, the Deputy Principal undertakes these responsibilities.

Making a Child Protection-Related Complaint

The School has developed complaints handling processes, to enable:

- simple and appropriate avenues for students, Staff, parents/carers and the wider community to make a complaint, including child protection-related complaints
- confidentiality and accessibility for all members of the School community.

These are:

1. **Anyone** can, at any time, make a child protection-related complaint to:

- the Principal
- a Child Safe Officer
- a trusted staff member

in person, in writing or over the phone.

Non-child protection-related complaints should be made to the Principal.

2. **Parents/carers, family members and other community members** who have child protection concerns or who wish to make a child protection-related complaint about the School, its students or staff members are asked to follow the procedures set out in our Child Safe Policy and to contact:

- the School's Senior Child Safety Officer, John Stewart, by phoning 59671953 or emailing jstewart@lyss.vic.edu.au, or the Principal; or
- if the concern relates to the Principal, the Deputy Principal by phoning 5967 1953.

3. **Students** have multiple pathways to make a complaint, including child protection-related complaints, at the School. These include:

- disclosing child safety incidents or concerns, including abuse or other harm of themselves or of any other child or student aged 18 or over, to any staff member. This might be done:
 - verbally
 - in writing
 - through electronic means (such as email)
 - indirectly (such as in written assignments, in artworks or in any other way)
- using the School contact page which is located on the LYSS website to disclose child safety incidents or concerns, including abuse or other harm of themselves or of any other child or young person, anonymously

- by contacting DFFH.

Responding to a Child Protection-Related Complaint

Support for Complainants

Whenever a staff member receives a complaint containing information about child safety incidents or concerns, the staff member must offer the complainant and any student involved in the complaint (if they are not the complainant) age and culturally appropriate support and assistance under our Support Following Child Safety Incident or Disclosure policy. The School will also support students, families and relevant Staff involved in a child protection-related complaint as set out in that policy.

Internal and External Reporting

All Staff **must** follow the School's Procedures for Responding to and Reporting Child Safety Incidents or Concerns if any information contained in a complaint that is made to them raises a concern that a student may have been subject to, or may be at risk of, abuse or other harm at the School or a School event, or from a staff member. This includes in particular:

- Reporting a Child Safety Incident or Concern Internally
- Duty to Protect/Failure to Protect
- Mandatory Reporting to Child Protection
- Non-Mandatory Reporting to Child Protection
- Reporting to Police
- Reportable Conduct
- Reporting Teacher Misconduct to the Victorian Institute of Teachers

Our internal reporting and Reportable Conduct policies require all Staff to report any child protection-related complaint that is made to them to a Child Safe Officer or the Principal in addition to making any required external reports. If a complaint is about the Principal, the complaint must be referred to the Board Chair.

How the School Manages Child Protection-Related Complaints

The School manages child protection-related complaints as follows:

Child protection-related complaints that involve, or raise the possibility of a risk of, child abuse or other harm to a child are managed under the Child Protection Program

The following child protection-related complaints must be managed pursuant to any relevant policies and procedures in this Child Protection Program:

1. complaints involving, or raising the possibility of a risk of, child abuse or other harm occurring at the School or a School event, or by a staff member, Volunteer or Contractor
2. complaints alleging a breach of the Child Protection Codes of Conduct that involves, or raises the possibility of a risk of, child abuse or other harm by a staff member, Volunteer or Contractor.

These kinds of child protection-related complaints must be immediately referred to the Principal (or if the complaint involves the Principal, the Board Chair) to be managed pursuant to relevant policies and procedures in the Child Protection Program.

The Principal may, where appropriate, delegate management of these kinds of child protection-related complaints to a Child Safe Officer.

Relevant policies and procedures for managing these kinds of child protection-related complaints include, but are not limited to, Reportable Conduct, Reporting Teacher Misconduct to the Victorian Institute of Teaching, Mandatory Reporting to Child Protection, Reporting to Police and Duty to Protect/Failure to Protect.

Other child protection-related complaints that are managed under the Child Protection Program

The following child protection-related complaints must also be managed pursuant to any relevant policies and procedures in this Child Protection Program:

1. complaints about the School's investigation of and/or response to a specific incident of or concern about child abuse and other harm to a child
2. complaints that the School, when responding to a specific incident of, or concern about, child abuse and other harm to a child, has not correctly followed the School's own policies (for example, a complaint that we did not follow our Reporting Teacher Misconduct to the Victorian Institute of Teaching or Reportable Conduct policies)
3. complaints that the School has not correctly followed legislative or regulatory requirements regarding child protection in relation to a specific incident of, or concern about, child abuse or other harm to a child (for example, a complaint that we shared information about a child safety incident or concern with an external agency when not permitted by law to do so).

These kinds of child protection-related complaints must be immediately referred to the Principal (or if the complaint involves the Principal, the Board Chair) to be managed pursuant to relevant policies and procedures in the Child Protection Program.

The Principal may, where appropriate, delegate management of these kinds of child protection-related complaints to a Child Safe Officer.

Relevant policies and procedures for managing these kinds of child protection-related complaints include, but are not limited to, [Disciplinary Actions \(Child Protection\)](#), [Child Protection Program Breach Management](#) and [Regular Reviews and Continuous Improvement](#).

Child protection-related complaints that may be managed under other School policies and procedures

The following child protection-related complaints may be managed pursuant to other relevant School policies:

1. complaints alleging a breach of the Child Protection Codes of Conduct that **do not** involve, and **do not** raise the possibility of a risk of, child abuse or other harm to a child by a staff member, Volunteer or Contractor (for example, a complaint that a staff member has expressed personal views on sexuality in the presence of students)
2. complaints alleging procedural breaches of the Child Protection Program by Staff that **do not** involve, and **do not** raise the possibility of a risk of, child abuse or other harm to a child (for example, a complaint that a staff member has not renewed their WWC clearance)
3. general complaints about our Child Protection policies and procedures themselves (for example, a complaint that our policies and procedures do not accurately reflect the law or that they do not take into account the needs of a particular student or community cohort).

Although these kinds of child protection-related complaints may be managed pursuant to other relevant School policies, the Principal or other person managing the complaint should – where appropriate - consult with a Child Safe Officer as part of the investigation.

With respect to 3. above, given the high risk to the School of not having a compliant Child Protection Program, it is likely that the outcome of these kinds of complaints will need to be reported to the Board.

Relevant policies and procedures for managing these kinds of child protection-related complaints include, but are not limited to, our Grievance procedure.

Guidance and Resources for Managing Child Protection-Related Complaints

The Grievance procedure provides guidance on complaints handling principles and a step-by-step guide to managing a complaint.

The National Office for Child Safety publishes a guide for complaints that involve children and young people: [Complaint Handling Guide: Upholding the rights of children and young people](#).

Our [Reportable Conduct](#) and [Reporting Teacher Misconduct to the Victorian Institute of Teaching](#) policies set out procedures that will be followed for complaints about inappropriate conduct by Staff.

Reviews of Child Protection-Related Complaint Outcomes

Internal Reviews

Complainants or other persons who are involved in the child protection-related complaint (for example, a staff, member whose behaviour is the subject of the complaint, a student who is the victim of the alleged behaviour or the parent/carer of a student involved in the complaint) and who are not satisfied with the management of a child protection-related complaint or its outcome may request an internal review of:

- the procedures undertaken
- findings made
- disciplinary actions proposed or taken
- other outcomes (including a decision not to make a finding or to take disciplinary or other action).

Requests for internal reviews should be made to the Principal.

Record Keeping about Child Protection-Related Complaints

Because of the confidentiality and privacy issues that arise with respect to child protection-related complaints, records of complaints that contain information about child safety incidents or concerns are not held within our general complaints handling record keeping system.

Child protection-related complaints are instead recorded under our [Child Protection Record Keeping](#) policy.

General Reviews of Child Protection Complaints Management

The School regularly reviews child protection-related feedback, comments and complaints to ensure that any child safety-related feedback, comments or complaints from the School community members and relevant stakeholders are captured, analysed and acted on where appropriate.

In particular, the School and the Board regularly analyse child protection-related complaints to identify causes and systemic failures to inform continuous improvement.

Our Child Protection Complaints Management Policy is also itself regularly reviewed as part of our reviews of the Child Protection Program.

For more information, refer to [Regular Reviews and Continuous Improvement](#).

Child Protection Program Compliance, Review and Improvement

To ensure that the School is continuously complying with the Victorian Child Safe Standards, we have developed a series of policies and procedures relating to compliance, review and improvement of our Child Protection Program.

These include:

- [Compliance with Child Safe Standards and Ministerial Order 1359](#)
- [Child Protection Program Breach Management](#)
- [Regular Reviews and Continuous Improvement](#).

Source of Obligation

- Victorian Child Safe Standards, Standards 2, 10 and 11
- Ministerial Order 1359, Clause 14

Approvals and Reviews of the Policies and Procedures for Child Protection Program Compliance, Review and Improvement

Either the Board or a relevant staff member at the School, depending on the requirements of Ministerial Order 1359, has approved the policies and procedures in this section of the Child Protection Program.

They are regularly reviewed in accordance with the schedule set out in the Regular Reviews and Continuous Improvement section of the Child Protection Program.

All changes to these policies and procedures that result from a review are approved by the appropriate person.

Policy administration information, including a record of the initial approval of the relevant policy/procedure in this section, the date of the next scheduled review and the dates of all other reviews and approvals, is set out in the policy.

Compliance with Child Safe Standards and Ministerial Order 1359

Little Yarra Steiner School has established and implemented our Child Protection Program in accordance with the Victorian Child Safe Standards and Ministerial Order 1359.

This section of the Child Protection Program details exactly which parts of the Child Protection Program meet which aspects of these Child Safe Standards and Ministerial Order 1359.

Victorian Child Safe Standards and Ministerial Order 1359

The School is required by Part 6 of the Child Wellbeing and Safety Act 2005 (Vic) to comply with the Victorian Child Safe Standards (Victorian Standards). The 11 Victorian Standards align closely, but not directly, with the National Principles for Child Safe Organisations (National Principles). The Victorian Standards contain an additional Standard at the start, and then Standards 2-11 of the Victorian Standards align directly with Principles 1-10 of the National Principles.

The Minister for Education has published Ministerial Order No. 1359 which prescribes certain matters with which registered schools in Victoria must comply, as part of their registration requirements, in order to meet the Victorian Standards.

The Victorian Registration and Qualifications Authority (VRQA) monitors and enforces compliance with the Victorian Child Safe Standards and Ministerial Order 1359 for all registered schools in Victoria.

Victorian Child Safe Standard	Summary of Relevant Ministerial Order 1359 Requirement	National Principle	How Little Yarra Steiner School Complies with the Standard/Requirement/Principle
<u>Standard 1:</u> Organisations establish a culturally safe environment in which the diverse	<u>Clause 5:</u> To comply with this Standard, the School’s governing authority must	<u>See Standard 4</u>	The following policies and procedures (and, where relevant, their communication to relevant Staff, students, parents/carers

and unique identities and experiences of Aboriginal children and young people are respected and valued.

develop and endorse a policy or statement that details the strategies and actions the School will take to ensure that:

- (a) a child's or student's ability to express their culture and enjoy their cultural rights is encouraged and actively supported
- (b) strategies are embedded within the School which equip "school staff", students, Volunteers and the School community to acknowledge and appreciate the strengths of Aboriginal culture and understand its importance to the wellbeing and safety of Aboriginal children and students
- (c) measures are adopted by the School to identify, confront and not tolerate racism within the School environment and that any instances of racism are addressed with appropriate consequences
- (d) the School actively supports and facilitates

and the community) implement this Standard:

(MO 1359 documents; also meet aspects of this Standard/Principle in each relevant Child Safe Standard)

- Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Students (Child Protection)
- Child Safe Policy (in particular, Valuing Diversity in the School Community)

(Other evidence/documents meeting other aspects of this Standard/Principle)

Insert School's Anti-Discrimination / Disability Discrimination Policy

- Child Protection Training
- Regular Reviews and Continuous Improvement
- Insert Name of/Link to Cultural Training Policy and Procedure

	<p>participation and inclusion by Aboriginal children and students and their families</p> <p>(e) all of the School's policies, procedures, systems and processes, taken together, create a culturally safe and inclusive environment and meet the needs of Aboriginal children and students and their families.</p>		
<p><u>Standard 2:</u> Child safety and wellbeing is embedded in organisational leadership, governance and culture.</p>	<p><u>Clause 6:</u></p> <p>To comply with this Standard, the School's governing authority must:</p> <p>(a) develop, endorse and make publicly available a child safety and wellbeing policy that details:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> the School's commitment to child safety the actions the School will take to ensure a child safe culture is championed and modelled at all levels of the School the governance arrangements at the School for ensuring 	<p>Principle 1: Committed Leadership, Governance and Culture</p> <p>Child safety and wellbeing is embedded in organisational leadership, governance and culture</p>	<p>The following policies and procedures (and, where relevant, their communication to relevant Staff, students, parents/carers and the community) implement this Standard:</p> <p>(MO 1359 documents; also meet aspects of this Standard/Principle in each relevant Child Safe Standard)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Child Safe Policy Child Protection Codes of Conduct Child Protection Risk Management Child Protection Record Keeping Information Sharing Policy (Child Protection

the policy is implemented at all levels

- the processes by which the School's governing authority will review its child safe practices

(b) develop, endorse and make publicly available a Child Safety Code of Conduct that:

- has the objectives of promoting child safety and wellbeing in the School's environment
- provides guidelines for "school staff" and Volunteers on expected standards of behaviour in relation to child safety and wellbeing
- takes into account the needs of all children and students and is consistent with any relevant professional or occupational codes of conduct
- is consistent with the School's child safety and wellbeing

(other evidence/documents meeting other aspects of this Standard/Principle)

- the appointment of one or more senior staff members as the School's Child Safe Officers
- the development of this Child Protection Program as a whole, but in particular (and in addition to the above policies and procedures):
 - Child Protection Responsibilities
 - Child Protection Human Resources Management
 - Responding to and Reporting Child Safety Incidents or Concerns
 - Child Protection Risk Management
 - Regular Reviews and Continuous Improvement
 - Child Protection Training
- child safety and wellbeing is a standing agenda item for all relevant meetings, including regular School Management, Board of

	<p>strategies, policies and procedures</p> <p>(c) develop and implement risk management strategies that:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• focus on preventing, identifying and mitigating risks related to child safety and wellbeing in the School environment• take into account the nature of the School's environments, the activities expected to be conducted in those environments (including the provision of services by contractors or outside organisations), and the characteristics and needs of all children and students expected to be present in those environments <p>(d) where risks of child abuse occurring in the School are identified, make a record of those risks and the risks' controls and treatments</p>	<p>Directors and staff meetings</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• the use of CompliSpace Assurance.
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	<p>(e) monitor and review the risks related to child safety and wellbeing annually, including evaluating the effectiveness of the implementation of risk controls</p> <p>(f) create, maintain and dispose of records relevant to child safety and wellbeing in accordance with Public Record Office Victoria Record Keeping Standards</p> <p>(g) develop a policy or statement that details the processes the School has in place to meet the Public Record Office Victoria Record Keeping Standards</p> <p>(h) ensure that “school staff” and Volunteers understand their obligations on Information sharing and record keeping.</p>		
<p><u>Standard 3:</u> Children and young people are empowered about their rights, participate in decisions affecting them</p>	<p><u>Clause 7:</u> To comply with this Standard, the School’s governing authority must develop curriculum planning documents or other documentation that</p>	<p>Principle 2: Children and Young People are Safe, Informed and</p>	<p>The following policies and procedures (and their communication to relevant Staff, students, parents/carers and the community) implement this Standard and Principle:</p>

<p>and are taken seriously.</p>	<p>details the strategies and actions the School will take to ensure that:</p> <p>(a) children and students are informed about all of their rights, including to safety, information and participation</p> <p>(b) the importance of friendships is recognised and support from peers is encouraged, to help children and students feel safe and be less isolated</p> <p>(c) Staff and Volunteers are attuned to signs of harm and facilitate child-friendly ways for children and students to express their views, participate in decision-making and raise their concerns</p> <p>(d) the School has strategies in place to develop a culture that facilitates participation and is responsive to the input of children and students</p> <p>(e) the School provides opportunities for children and students to participate and is responsive to their contributions, to strengthen</p>	<p>Participate in the Organisation</p> <p>Children and young people are informed about their rights, participate in decisions affecting them and are taken seriously</p>	<p>(MO 1359 documents; also meet aspects of this Standard/Principle in each relevant Child Safe Standard)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <u>Participation and Empowerment of Students</u> including: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A Child-Friendly Culture • Child Protection Pastoral Care • Educating Students About Child Safety • Child Safe Policy <p>(other evidence/documents meeting other aspects of this Standard/Principle)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • We have, and provide to students, child-friendly versions of the following: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • List Policies with Child-Friendly Versions • <u>Student Child Protection Code of Conduct</u> • <u>Family and Community Involvement, Cultural Safety and Equity/Diversity</u>, including: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Students (Child Protection)
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	<p>confidence and engagement</p> <p>(f) students are offered access to sexual abuse prevention programs and to relevant related information in an age-appropriate way.</p>		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Students from Culturally and Linguistically Diverse Backgrounds (Child Protection) • Students with Disability (Child Protection) • LGBTIQ+ Inclusion Policy, • Student Duty of Care including: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <u>Bullying Prevention and Intervention</u> • <u>Harassment (Student against Student)</u> • <u>Cyber Safety</u> • <u>Social Media – Student Usage</u> • <u>Child Protection Training</u> • <u>Regular Reviews and Continuous Improvement</u>
<p><u>Standard 4:</u></p> <p>Families and communities are informed, and involved in promoting child safety and wellbeing.</p>	<p><u>Clause 8:</u></p> <p>To comply with this Standard, the School’s governing authority must develop a policy, statement or other documentation that details the strategies and actions the School will take to ensure that:</p> <p>(a) families participate in decisions relating to child</p>	<p>Principle 3:</p> <p>Families and Communities Involved in Safety Settings</p> <p>Families and communities are informed,</p>	<p>The following policies and procedures (and, where relevant, their communication to relevant Staff, students, parents/carers and the community) implement this Standard and Principle:</p> <p>(MO 1359 documents; also meet aspects of this Standard/Principle in each relevant Child Safe Standard)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <u>Family and Community Involvement in Child</u>

	<p>safety and wellbeing affecting their child</p> <p>(b) the School engages and openly communicates with families and the School community about its child safe approach, and relevant information is accessible</p> <p>(c) families and the School community have a say in the development and review of the School's policies and practices relating to child safety and wellbeing</p> <p>(d) families, carers and the School community are informed about the School's operations and governance related to child safety and wellbeing.</p>	<p>and involved in promoting child safety and wellbeing</p>	<p><u>Protection at the School</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <u>Child Safe Policy</u> (in particular, Parents/Carers, Families and Community Involvement at the School) <p>(other evidence/documents meeting other aspects of this Standard/Principle)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • We publish the following documents on our public website: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • public-facing Grievance procedure • public-facing Procedures for Responding to and Reporting Child Safety Incidents or Concerns • public-facing Procedures for Managing Child Safety Incidents or Concerns At or Involving the School or its Staff • <u>Child Protection Complaints Management</u> • <u>Sharing Information Relating to a Student's Safety or Wellbeing</u> • <u>Regular Reviews and Continuous Improvement</u>
<u>Standard 5: Equity</u>	<u>Clause 9:</u>	Principle 4:	The following policies and

<p>is upheld and diverse needs respected in policy and practice.</p>	<p>To comply with this Standard, the School's governing authority must develop and endorse a policy, statement or curriculum document that details the strategies and actions the School will take to ensure that:</p> <p>(a) the School, including Staff and Volunteers, understands children and young people's diverse circumstances, and provides support and responds to vulnerable children and students</p> <p>(b) children, students, Staff, Volunteers and the School community have access to information, support and complaints processes in ways that are culturally safe, accessible and easy to understand</p> <p>(c) the School pays particular attention to the needs of students with disability, students from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds, students who are unable to live at home, and lesbian, gay, bisexual, trans and</p>	<p>Equity Upheld and Diversity Respected</p> <p>Equity is upheld and diverse needs respected in policy and practice.</p>	<p>procedures (and where relevant, their communication to relevant Staff, students, parents/carers and the community) implement this Standard and Principle:</p> <p>(MO 1359 documents; also meet aspects of this Standard/Principle in each relevant Child Safe Standard)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <u>Child Safe Policy</u> (in particular, Valuing Diversity in the School Community and Support for Students, Families and Staff Following Child Safety Incident or Disclosure) • <u>Support Following Child Safety Incident or Disclosure</u> • <u>Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Students</u> (Child Protection) • <u>Students from Culturally and Linguistically Diverse Backgrounds</u> (Child Protection) • <u>Students with Disability</u> (Child Protection) • <u>LGBTIQ+ Inclusion Policy</u> <p>(other evidence/documents meeting other aspects of this Standard/Principle)</p>
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	<p>gender diverse, intersex and queer (LGBTQI+) students</p> <p>(d) the School pays particular attention to the needs of Aboriginal students and provides and promotes a culturally safe environment for them.</p>		<p>Insert School's Anti-Discrimination / Disability Discrimination Policy</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <u>Child Protection Training</u> • <u>Regular Reviews and Continuous Improvement</u>
<p><u>Standard 6:</u> People working with children and young people are suitable and supported to reflect child safety and wellbeing values in practice.</p>	<p><u>Clause 10:</u> To comply with this Standard, the School's governing authority must ensure that:</p> <p>(a) recruitment advertisements for "school staff" who will be engaged in "child-connected work" have a clear statement that sets out:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • the job's requirements, duties and responsibilities regarding child safety and wellbeing • the job occupant's essential or relevant qualifications, experience and attributes in relation to child safety and wellbeing 	<p>Principle 5: Robust Recruitment and Screening</p> <p>People working with children and young people are suitable and supported to reflect child safety and wellbeing values in practice</p>	<p>The following policies and procedures (and where relevant, their communication to relevant Staff, students, parents/carers and the community) implement this Standard and Principle:</p> <p>(MO 1359 documents; also meet aspects of this Standard/Principle in each relevant Child Safe Standard)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <u>Child Protection Human Resources Management</u>, including: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Child Protection Recruitment, Screening and Suitability Assessment • Working with Children Checks • Child Protection Training, Supervision, Performance Monitoring and

(b) all applicants for jobs involving “child-connected work” are informed about the School’s child safety practices (including the code of conduct)

(c) when engaging Volunteers to undertake “child-connected work”, they are made aware of the child safety and wellbeing policy and child safety code of conduct

(d) when engaging “school staff” to perform “child-connected work”, the School’s governing authority:

- sights and verifies the person’s WWCC clearance, if the person is required to have one by the Worker Screening Act, or any equivalent background check
- collects and records:
 - proof of identity
 - information about essential or relevant professional or other qualifications

Professional Development

- Disciplinary Actions (Child Protection)
- Child Protection Record Keeping

(other evidence/aspects of this Standard in each relevant Child Safe Standard)

- WWC Check Register
- Child Protection Learning Course
- CompliLearn Training Records
- general Human Resources Records

- child-related work history
- references that address suitability for the job and working with children

(e) “school staff”, members of the School’s governing body and Volunteers engaged in child-connected work, receive an induction regarding child safety and wellbeing that is appropriate to the nature of their role and that includes:

- information on the child safety code of conduct
- if relevant to their role, the child safety and wellbeing policy and the procedures for managing complaints and concerns related to child abuse

(f) “school staff”, members of the School’s governing body and Volunteers engaged in child-connected work, are aware of their responsibilities to children and students, Information

	<p>sharing and reporting obligations and record keeping obligations.</p> <p>(g) ongoing supervision and people management of Staff and Volunteers focuses on child safety and wellbeing.</p>		
<p>Standard 7: Processes for complaints and concerns are child focused.</p>	<p>Clause 11:</p> <p>To comply with this Standard, the School's governing authority must:</p> <p>(a) develop and make publicly available a complaints handling policy that is accessible, child-focused, culturally safe and easily understood by the School community, and that clearly outlines:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> the process for making a complaint about the School or the behaviour of any person within the School the roles and responsibilities of leadership, "school staff" and Volunteers in relation to handling complaints 	<p>Principle 6: Effective Complaints Management</p> <p>Processes to respond to complaints and concerns are child focused</p>	<p>The following policies and procedures (and where relevant, their communication to relevant Staff, students, parents/carers and the community) implement this Standard and Principle:</p> <p>(MO 1359 documents; also meet aspects of this Standard/Principle in each relevant Child Safe Standard)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Child Protection Complaints Management Responding to and Reporting Child Safety Incidents or Concerns Child Protection Record Keeping <p>To make these policies publicly available, accessible, and easily understood, we publish the following additional documents on our public website:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Grievance procedure

- the process for dealing with different types of complaints, breaches of relevant policies or the code of conduct and obligations to act and report

(b) have policies and procedures that:

- address the reporting of complaints and concerns to relevant authorities, whether or not the law requires reporting, and cooperate with law enforcement
- ensure record keeping, reporting, privacy and employment law obligations are met when responding to complaints and concerns

(c) have a clear procedure or set of procedures for responding to complaints or concerns relating to child abuse

The procedure in (c) above must:

- public-facing Procedures for Responding to and Reporting Child Safety Incidents or Concerns
- public-facing Procedures for Managing Child Safety Incidents or Concerns At or Involving the School or its Staff

To make these policies accessible and easily understood by students, we have, and provide to students, child-friendly versions of the following:

- List Policies with Child-Friendly Versions

(other evidence/documents meeting other aspects of this Standard/Principle)

- Child Protection Training
- Regular Reviews and Continuous Improvement

- cover all forms of “child abuse”
- be sensitive to the diversity and characteristics of the School community
- be made publicly available
- be accessible to children, students Staff, Volunteers and the School community
- apply to complaints and concerns relating to child abuse made by or in relation to a child or student, “school staff”, Volunteers, Contractors, service providers, Visitors or other persons while connected to a School environment
- identify the roles and responsibilities of “school staff” and leadership to act and report on complaints and concerns relating to child abuse, including:
 - ensuring complaints are taken seriously

- promptly and thoroughly managing the School's response
- responding appropriately to a child or student who raises or is affected by the complaint or concerns
- monitoring overall compliance of the School with the procedure
- managing an alternative procedure for responding if any person allocated responsibility cannot perform their role
- include a statement that fulfilling the roles and responsibilities in the procedure does not discharge other legal obligations if the person reasonably believes a child is at risk of child abuse

- clearly describe the actions the School will take to respond to a complaint or concerns relating to child abuse, including:
 - reporting to appropriate authorities, regardless of whether there is a legal obligation to report
 - protecting any child or student connected to the complaint or concerns until it is resolved
 - making, securing and retaining records of the complaint or concerns and the School's response

The procedure in (c) above must not:

- prohibit or discourage "school staff" or Volunteers from external reporting

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • state or imply that it is the victim's responsibility to inform police or other authorities • require "school staff" or Volunteers to make a judgment about the truth of a complaint or concerns of child abuse • prohibit "school staff" or Volunteers from making records in relation to a complaint or concerns. 		
<p>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.</p>	<p>Clause 12:</p> <p>To comply with this Standard, the School's governing authority must:</p> <p>(a) ensure that, at least annually, "school staff" receive training and information on child safety that includes a number of specific topics</p> <p>(b) ensure that Volunteers engaged in "child-connected work" receive training and information that will equip them with the knowledge, skills and</p>	<p>Principle 7:</p> <p>Ongoing Education and Training</p> <p>Staff and volunteers are equipped with the knowledge, skills and awareness to keep children and young people safe</p>	<p>The following policies and procedures (and where relevant, their communication to relevant Staff, students, parents/carers and the community) implement this Standard and Principle:</p> <p>(MO 1359 documents; also meet aspects of this Standard/Principle in each relevant Child Safe Standard)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <u>Child Protection Training</u> <p>(other evidence/documents meeting other aspects of this Standard/Principle)</p>

	<p>awareness required to keep children safe and that is appropriate to their role</p> <p>(c) consider whether it is reasonable and necessary to include training for Volunteers on a number of specific topics</p> <p>(d) ensure that “school staff” and Volunteers are supported to effectively implement the child safety and wellbeing policy, as applicable to their role</p> <p>(e) ensure that, at least annually, members of the School governing authority receive training and information on child safety that includes a number of specific topics.</p>	through ongoing education and training	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Responding to and Reporting Child Safety Incidents or Concerns • Child Protection Codes of Conduct • Definitions and Key Indicators of Child Abuse and Other Harm • Child Protection Record Keeping • Child Protection Responsibilities
<p>Standard 9:</p> <p>Physical and online environments promote safety and wellbeing while minimising the opportunity for children and young people to be harmed.</p>	<p>Clause 13:</p> <p>To comply with this Standard, the School’s governing authority must:</p> <p>(a) ensure that the School’s child safety and wellbeing policies, procedures and practices enable “school staff” and Volunteers to identify and mitigate risks</p>	<p>Principle 8:</p> <p>Safe Physical and Online Environments</p> <p>Physical and online environments promote safety and</p>	<p>The following policies and procedures (and, where relevant, their communication to relevant Staff, students, parents/carers and the community) implement this Standard and Principle:</p> <p>(MO 1359 documents; also meet aspects of this Standard/Principle in each relevant Child Safe Standard)</p>

	<p>in the School environment without compromising a child or student's right to privacy, access to information, social connections and learning opportunities</p> <p>(b) develop and endorse a policy or statement on online conduct and safety that is consistent with the School's child safety and wellbeing policy and the child safety code of conduct</p> <p>(c) ensure that the School's procurement policies for facilities and services from third parties ensure the safety of children and students.</p>	<p>wellbeing while minimising the opportunity for children and young people to be harmed</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Child Protection Risk Management • Parent, staff and student Codes of Conduct • Insert Name of/Link to School's Child Safe Procurement Policy <p>(other evidence/documents meeting other aspects of this Standard/Principle)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Child Protection Codes of Conduct • Child Protection Training • Regular Reviews and Continuous Improvement
<p>Standard 10: Implementation of the Child Safe Standards is regularly reviewed and improved.</p>	<p>Clause 14:</p> <p>To comply with this Standard, the School's governing authority must:</p> <p>(a) review and evaluate the School's child safety and wellbeing policies, procedures and practices:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>after any significant child</i> 	<p>Principle 9: Regular Improvement</p> <p>Implementation of the national child safe principles is regularly reviewed</p>	<p>The following policies and procedures (and where relevant, their communication to relevant Staff, students, parents/carers and the community) implement this Standard and Principle:</p> <p>(MO 1359 documents; also meet aspects of this Standard/Principle in each relevant Child Safe Standard)</p>

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <i>safety incident</i> <i>or least every two years</i> <p>and improve where applicable</p> <p>(b) ensure that complaints, concerns and safety incidents are analysed to identify causes and systemic failures to inform continuous improvement</p> <p>(c) report on the outcomes of relevant reviews to “school staff”, Volunteers, the School community, families and students.</p>	and improved	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <u>Regular Reviews and Continuous Improvement</u> <p>(other evidence/documents meeting other aspects of this Standard/Principle)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <u>Child Protection Risk Management</u> <u>Child Protection Record Keeping</u> CompliSpace Assurance
<p><u>Standard 11:</u></p> <p>Policies and procedures document how the organisation is safe for children and young people.</p>	<p><u>Clause 15:</u></p> <p>To comply with this Standard, the School’s governing authority must:</p> <p>(a) implement practices for a child safe environment in accordance with the Order</p> <p>(b) ensure that all policies, procedures and other statements and records required by the Order:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> address all Child Safe Standards 	<p>Principle 10: Child Safety and Wellbeing Policies and Procedures</p> <p>Policies and procedures document how the organisation is safe for children</p>	<p>The following policies and procedures (and where relevant, their communication to relevant Staff, students, parents/carers and the community) implement this Standard and Principle:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> the Child Protection Program as a whole CompliSpace Assurance.

	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• are understood and implemented by “school staff”, the School’s governing body and Volunteers• are championed and modelled by leaders• are documented and easy to understand• are informed by best practice models and stakeholder consultation.	and young people	
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Child Protection Program Breach Management

Little Yarra Steiner School has developed an action plan for managing procedural breaches of our Child Protection Program, as well as breaches of our Child Protection Codes of Conduct, in a fair and supportive manner.

Scope

The Child Protection Program Breach Management policy applies to:

- the Principal and the School Management
- all staff members, including non-teaching Staff and temporary or casual Staff
- all Volunteers
- all Contractors (including External Education Providers)
- teaching students on placement at the School
- Visitors (including parents/carers and other adult family members of students).

For the purposes of the Breach Management policy, we refer to these together as “the School community”.

Procedural Breaches

What is a Procedural Breach of Our Child Protection Program?

A procedural breach of the School's Child Protection Program includes any action or inaction by a member of the School community that fails to comply with procedural aspects of Little Yarra Steiner School's Child Protection Program.

Procedural breaches include, but are not limited to:

- [Child Protection Human Resources Management](#)
- [Responding to and Reporting Child Safety Incidents or Concerns](#)
- [Sharing Information Relating to a Student's Safety or Wellbeing](#)

Many, but not all, procedural breaches of the Child Protection Program would also be a breach of legal obligations under Victorian law.

For example, failing to make a Mandatory Report (of Sexual Offences Against Children) to Police under [Reporting to Police](#) or to Child Protection under [Mandatory Reporting to Child Protection](#) would be both a procedural breach as well as an offence under Victorian law.

On the other hand, failing to make a report to Child Protection under [Non-Mandatory Reporting to Child Protection](#) does not breach any legal obligations, but would still be a breach of policy under the Department of Education, Catholic Education Commission of Victoria and Independent Schools Victoria's [PROTECT Four Critical Actions for Schools: Responding to Incidents, Disclosures and Suspicions of Child Abuse](#) and of the Child Protection Program.

The kinds of disciplinary actions that could be taken for a procedural breach depend on the category of the breach, not on whether the breach is also a breach of a legal obligation. However, procedural breaches that are also a breach of legal obligations would generally fall into the moderate or severe categories of breach.

[How to Report a Procedural Breach](#)

Any member of the School community may contact a Child Safe Officer to report or make a complaint about a procedural breach of the School's Child Protection Program. Their contact details can be found [here](#).

Breaches can also be reported to the Principal or, if the alleged breach is by the Principal, to the Deputy Principal.

Staff, Volunteers or Contractors are encouraged to use the [PROTECT Recording your actions: Responding to suspected child abuse - A Template for Victorian Schools](#), as a starting point for documenting information regarding a breach of the School's Child Protection Program. The Form's

questions should in no way limit an individual's report of information regarding a breach of the Program. All available information should be recorded and reported.

All Child Protection Program Breach Reporting Forms should be submitted to the Principal or a Child Safe Officer as soon as practicable.

Students can raise breaches of the Program through the Child Protection Complaints Management policy.

Parents/carers, family members and other community members can raise breaches of the Program through the processes set out in our Child Safe Policy.

The School's Process for Managing Procedural Breaches

Procedural breaches of the Child Protection Program will be managed by the Principal in consultation with the School's Child Safe Officers, and Principal where necessary.

Breaches of Our Child Protection Codes of Conduct

Our Child Protection Codes of Conduct set out expected behaviours for all members of the School community. Any and all breaches of the Child Protection Codes of Conduct are considered a child safety incident.

Breaches of the Student Code of Conduct

Breaches of the Student Code of Conduct by students are dealt with pursuant to our Behaviour Management Policy.

Breaches of the Child Safe Code of Conduct by Parents/Carers, Family Members and Visitors

Breaches of the Child Safe Code of Conduct by parents/carers, family members and Visitors are managed by the Principal in consultation with the School's Child Safe Officers where necessary.

Breaches of the Child Protection Codes of Conduct by Staff, Volunteers and Contractors

Many, but not all, breaches of the Child Safe Code of Conduct and Staff and Student Professional Boundaries by Staff, Volunteers or Contractors would be Reportable Conduct.

To ensure procedural fairness and to maintain the safety of students, all breaches of the Child Protection Codes of Conduct by Staff, Volunteers and Contractors are managed pursuant to the procedures set out in Reportable Conduct. Where a breach is alleged to involve Reportable Conduct, it

must be reported to the Commission for Children and Young People under those policies and procedures.

Categories of Procedural Breach/Breach of the Child Protection Codes of Conduct and Possible Outcomes for Staff, Volunteers or Contractors

Procedural breaches of the School's Child Protection Program and breaches of the Child Protection Codes of Conduct will vary in severity. As such, the outcome of a breach will vary depending on the classification of the breach.

The Principal, in consultation with the School's Child Safe Officers and Principal may deviate from the specified action for a breach of the Program where there are exceptional or unique circumstances.

Possible Outcomes of Breaches of the Child Protection Codes of Conduct by Parents/Carers and Visitors

Where a member of the School community who is not a staff member, Volunteer or Contractor breaches our Child Safe Code of Conduct, the School will take appropriate action, including (but not limited to):

- providing additional information to the person about appropriate and/or inappropriate behaviour
- requiring the person to give undertakings about engaging in appropriate behaviour or ceasing inappropriate behaviour when they are in a School environment
- a staff member supervising the person when they are in a School environment
- in the case of serious breaches:
 - making an external report about the person to the Department of Families, Fairness and Housing (Child Protection) and/or the Police; and/or
 - prohibiting the person from being in a School environment.

Record Keeping About Breaches and Outcomes

Procedural Breaches

Little Yarra Steiner School ensures that the following information relating to procedural breaches of the Child Protection Program, that do not involve a child safety incident or concern, are recorded and stored for at least seven years:

- name of the reporter and the name and position of the person who received the report
- the date the report was initially received and, if different, the date it was reported to the Principal

- the names of the parties involved in the breach
- a description of the procedural breach
- the outcome of any investigation that took place
- action taken by the School.

Breaches of the Child Protection Codes of Conduct

Records of breaches that involve a child safety incident or concern, including breaches of the Child Protection Codes of Conduct, are managed according to our Child Protection Record Keeping policy.

Regular Reviews and Continuous Improvement

Source of Obligation

Standard 10 of the Victorian Child Safe Standards (Victorian Standards) requires Little Yarra Steiner School to regularly review and improve its implementation of the Victorian Standards.

To meet this Standard, clause 14 of Ministerial Order 1359 requires the Board to periodically review and evaluate the School's child safety and wellbeing policies, procedures and practices:

- after any significant child safety incident; or
- at least every two years,

and to improve these where applicable.

the Board must also ensure that complaints, concerns and safety incidents are analysed to identify causes and systemic failures to inform continuous improvement, and report on the outcomes of relevant reviews to **school staff,Volunteers**, the School community, families and students.

Standards 3 and 4 of the Victorian Standardsrequire the School to inform students, parents/carers and relevant communities about and give them a say in these reviews.

This section of the Child Protection Program sets out the School's policies, procedures and systems for reviewing and improving our Child Protection Program and its implementation.

Reviews of the Child Protection Program

Regular Reviews

the Board reviews Little Yarra Steiner School's Child Protection Program every two years, following the Review Procedures below.

The School actions all incremental improvements to our child protection policies and procedures that result from these reviews.

Additional Reviews

the Board reviews individual child protection policies and procedures relevant to Ministerial Order 1359 ahead of this schedule, following the Review Procedures below:

- in the event of a consistent issue being regularly raised in complaints and/or other feedback from the School community
- in the event of a change in law, regulation or best practice
- following a significant child safety incident or concern occurring at or involving the School.

If an Additional Review is triggered by a significant child safety incident or concern, occurring at or involving the School, the review must include a systemic review and/or a root cause analysis.

The School actions all incremental improvements to our child protection policies and procedures that result from these reviews.

Review Procedures

All reviews include:

- ensuring legal and regulatory compliance
- avenues for students, families, Staff, Volunteers, Contractors and relevant communities to participate and provide feedback on the Child Protection Program.

When reviewing the Program every two years, the Board considers, at a minimum:

- the level of internal compliance with the Child Protection Program, noting any significant breaches
- any child safety incidents that occurred during the review cycle, noting frequency and possible contributing factors
- the process used to manage any child safety incidents or concerns at the School, noting the positives and areas for improvement and
- the content and frequency of child protection training for Staff and Volunteers at the School, noting any significant feedback from Staff and Volunteers about the training.

When conducting an Additional Review following a significant child safety incident or concern, occurring at or involving the School, the Board considers, at a minimum:

- the severity of the incident or concern
- the first response of the individual who reported the incident or concern, including the effectiveness of continuing support for the student/s involved
- the School's compliance with internal and external reporting obligations
- whether the incident was a result of a gap in the School's Child Protection Program
- how the Child Protection Program could be improved or adapted to ensure the gap is addressed.

Record Keeping About Reviews

Every review is documented, with records maintained indefinitely.

Communicating Review Outcomes

The School communicates the outcomes of all reviews conducted by the Board and the School to the School community by:

email

Audits

The School is regularly audited for compliance with the Victorian Standards and Ministerial Order 1359 , either internally or externally by an independent specialist agency. This audit:

- audits the child protection policies and procedures, to provide evidence of how the School is child safe through, and to identify improvements to, its governance, leadership and culture
- includes audits of practice within the School to ensure that policies and procedures are followed in practice, consistently across the School community, and to identify areas for improvement.

Continuous Improvement

Little Yarra Steiner School is committed to continuous improvement in all its operations including this Child Protection Program. This is an ongoing process that the Principal and Child Safe Officer/s monitor.

Continuous improvement is the final step of our Compliance, Review and Improvement cycle. It involves using:

- data collected through various channels and collated in the reviews of the Child Protection Program
- research into best practice
- any legislative or regulatory updates,

to identify key areas that require improvement or amendment to ensure that our Child Protection Program is functioning effectively to ensure the protection, safety and wellbeing of children and young people at the School.

Approval of Changes to the Child Protection Program

All changes to the policies and procedures in the Child Protection Program that may result from reviews, audits, our improvement processes or otherwise (for example, when policies are updated due to legislative change) are put to:

- the Board
- the Principal; or
- another appropriate person at the School or Little Yarra Steiner School

for approval.

The approving person/body will, depend on:

- the subject matter of the relevant policy/procedure
- whether the Board has delegated review responsibility to the Principal or to another person at the School or Little Yarra Steiner School.

A record of the initial approval of each policy/procedure, the date of the next scheduled review, the dates of all other reviews, and a record of the approvals by the Board, the Principal and/or the other appropriate person at the School are recorded in the policy.

Definitions and Additional Resources

This section of the Program includes:

- [Child Protection Program Definitions](#)
- [Definitions and Key Indicators of Child Abuse and Other Harm](#)
- [Child Safety and Wellbeing Law and Regulation in Victoria](#)
- [Additional Child Protection Resources](#)

Child Protection Program Definitions

The following definitions apply to, and are used throughout, the Child Protection Program. Where additional definitions apply to a specific policy or procedure, these are set out in the relevant policy/procedure itself.

Child Protection

Where the phrase “child protection” is used in our Child Protection Program it refers to the safety and wellbeing of children and young people, which includes but goes further than the protection of them from child abuse and other harm.

Child and Young Person

A child and young person is defined in the Child Wellbeing and Safety Act 2005 (Vic) and for the purposes of our Child Protection Program, as a person who is under the age of 18 years. Note, however that different age ranges may apply to the definitions of “child” for different legal reporting and responding obligations. For more detailed information, refer to [Definitions and Key Indicators of Child Abuse and Other Harm](#).

Student

A student is defined in Ministerial Order 1359 as a person who is enrolled at or attends the School .

Similarly, where the term “student” is used in this Program, it refers to all students enrolled at or attending the School including those aged 18 and above.

Note that, as set out in our procedures for [Responding to and Reporting Child Safety Incidents and Concerns](#), our policies and procedures about the internal and external reporting of child safety incidents and concerns must be followed for incidents and concerns about students aged 18 years and above, provided that – for external reporting – the relevant student consents to the report or, if they do not consent, to lessen or prevent a serious or imminent threat to an individual’s life, health, safety or welfare.

For more information, refer to [Responding to and Reporting Child Safety Incidents and Concerns](#).

Child Abuse and Other Harm

“Child abuse and other harm” is not a defined term in Victorian law. However, various sources of legislation provide a definition of “child abuse” as well as other concepts and conduct which,

together, provide guidance as to what is child abuse and other harm in Victoria.

For the purposes of the Child Protection Program, the phrase “child abuse and other harm” refers to incidents of or concerns about, including concerns about a risk of, physical, sexual, psychological and emotional harm, neglect, grooming and exposure to family violence, regardless of by whom or how this harm occurs.

For more detailed information, refer to [Definitions and Key Indicators of Child Abuse and Other Harm](#).

Child Safety Incident or Concern

The different definitions of child abuse or other harm in various legislation, and the key indicators of child abuse and other harm are set out in [Definitions and Key Indicators of Child Abuse and Other Harm](#). Together, they are all considered “child safety incidents or concerns” for the purposes of our Child Protection Program.

Breaches of the [Child Protection Codes of Conduct](#) [child protection Code](#) are also considered child safety incidents or concerns.

For a full definition of exactly what is included as a “child safety incident or concern” refer to the Key Definition section of [Responding to and Reporting Child Safety Incidents and Concerns](#).

Child Safety Incidents or Concerns “Involving” the Principal

Throughout this Child Protection Program, the Principal is given specific responsibilities for receiving and managing internal reports, complaints, disclosures or allegations of child safety incidents or concerns that involve the School or its Staff, Volunteers or Contractors.

However, where the child safety incident or concern involves or is alleged to involve the Principal or where a child protection-related complaint is made about the Principal, the Deputy Principal is responsible for receiving and managing these reports, complaints, disclosures or allegations.

For more information, refer to:

- [Reporting a Child Safety Incident or Concern Internally](#)
- [Child Protection Complaints Management](#)
- [Reportable Conduct](#)
- [Reporting Teacher Misconduct to the Victorian Institute of Teaching](#).

For the purposes of these policies and procedures, a child safety incident, concern, complaint or allegation “involves” the Principal if:

- the Principal is the perpetrator of the child safety incident or concern, or is otherwise the subject of the complaint or allegation about a child a safety incident or concern
- the Principal has, or is alleged to have, mishandled a child safety incident, concern, complaint or allegation
- the Principal is otherwise involved in the chain of events surround the child safety incident or concern (for example, they are a witness to the child safety incident)
- the Principal has an actual, potential or perceived conflict of interest in receiving or managing the internal report, complaint or allegation (for example, they are related to the alleged victim or the alleged perpetrator).

Child-Connected Work

Ministerial Order 1359 defines “child-connected work” as work authorised by the school governing authority and performed by an adult in a school environment while children are present or reasonably expected to be present.

The Board of Directors authorises the Principal to work at or for the School.

the Business Manager authorises all other Staff, Volunteers and Contractors to work at or for the School on behalf of the Board.

This means that all staff members, including teaching and non-teaching Staff, are engaged in child-connected work.

Under this definition, the following Volunteers and Contractors are also engaged in child-connected work:

- all Direct Contact Volunteers/Contractors who are adults
- Regular Volunteers/Contractors who are adults and who work when children are present or expected to be present
- Casual Volunteers/Contractors who are adults and who work when children are present or expected to be present.

For more information, refer to the definitions of **Direct Contact, Regular and Casual Volunteers**, and **Direct Contact, Regular and Casual Contractors**, below.

Child-Related Work

“Child-related work” is defined in the Worker Screening Act 2020 (Vic). It is work performed at or for the School by a staff member, Volunteer or Contractor that usually involves (or is likely to involve) direct contact with a child (unless the direct contact is only occasional and incidental to the work).

Direct contact means any contact between a person and a child 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.

Under this definition, most Staff at the School, and all Direct Contact Volunteers and Direct Contact Contractors, are engaged in child-related work for the purposes of Ministerial Order 1359.

Members of the School Community

Throughout the Child Protection Program, certain groups of people in the School community are identified for the purposes of assigning roles, responsibilities and obligations. To ensure clarity, the following terms are used consistently throughout the Program and have the following meanings:

the Board

the Board is Little Yarra Steiner School's “school governing authority” for the purposes of Ministerial Order 1359.

References to the Board include all members irrespective of their level of interaction with students or School policy.

Board Chair

With the exception of where the Board Chair has specific roles and responsibilities and is therefore expressly identified, the Board Chair is considered an employee of Little Yarra Steiner School for the purposes of the Child Protection Program.

The Principal

With the exception of where the Principal has specific roles and responsibilities and is therefore expressly identified, the Principal is included as a staff member for the purposes of the Child Protection Program.

Board of Directors

The Board of Directors includes all Board of Directors members irrespective of their level of interaction with students or School policy.

School Staff

“School staff” is a particular phrase used in Ministerial Order 1359. It defines “school staff” as “an individual working in a school environment who is:

- directly engaged or employed by a school governing authority;
- a contracted service provider (whether or not a body corporate or any other person is an intermediary) engaged by the school governing authority to perform child-related work; or
- a minister of religion, religious leader or an employee or officer or a religious body associated with the school”.

the Business Manager engages or employs Staff, Volunteers and Contractors at the School (other than the Principal) on behalf of the Board.

This means that the phrase “school staff” includes all Staff, as well as Direct Contact Contractors at the School, no matter their age or the frequency of their engagement.

“School staff”, for the purposes of Ministerial Order 1359, is therefore broader in scope than the terms “Staff” and “staff members” as set out below.

Staff and Staff Members

The terms “Staff” and “staff members” include all persons employed by the School whether on a permanent, temporary or casual basis. These terms include all teaching and non-teaching Staff and, unless otherwise stated, the Principal.

All “staff members” are “school staff” for the purposes of Ministerial Order 1359.

Where differentiation between teachers and non-teaching Staff is required, it will be expressly stated within the policy or procedure itself.

Where the terms “Staff” or “staff members” are extended to include other members of the School community such as Volunteers or Contractors, this will be expressly stated within the policy or procedure itself.

Volunteers

A Volunteer is a person who performs work for the School in a School environment without remuneration or reward. Volunteers may be family members of students, or from the wider School or local community. Volunteers make a considerable contribution to the School community by giving their time and sharing their skills and expertise with others.

Volunteers are NOT “school staff” for the purposes of Ministerial Order 1359. However, many, but not all, Volunteers are engaged in “child-connected work” for the purposes of Ministerial Order 1359. Volunteers who are themselves children or who do not work when children or students are present or expected to be present are NOT engaged in child-connected work.

Little Yarra Steiner School has identified three categories of Volunteers, based on the level and frequency of their interaction with students. Volunteers’ responsibilities and obligations under the Child Protection Program may depend on their category. The categories of Volunteer are:

- Direct Contact Volunteers
- Regular Volunteers
- Casual Volunteers

Where the term “Volunteer” is used, it captures “Direct Contact Volunteers”, “Regular Volunteers” and “Casual Volunteers”.

Direct Contact Volunteer

Direct Contact Volunteers are 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 Worker Screening Act 2020 (Vic) defines “direct contact” in section 3 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
- contact by email or other electronic communication.

All Direct Contact Volunteers (other than those who are themselves children) are engaged in both child-connected work and child-related work within the meaning of Ministerial Order 1359.

Direct Contact Volunteers may have direct contact with students in circumstances where:

- they may have limited supervision by School Staff in their role
- they may be left alone, one-on-one, with a student (for example, 1:1 tutoring or learning support)
- a reasonable person would consider that the contact may enable the individual to form a relationship of trust with a student (for example, coaching a sports team, helping with a drama production, or regularly working in a canteen or library)
- a reasonable person would consider that the contact could create a potential risk to the safety of a student (for example, responsibility for a group of students during an excursion without a member of Staff present).

Examples of Direct Contact Volunteers include individuals who:

- attend a School camp or excursion
- assist a student during a learning activity
- assist a student to complete tests or exams (e.g. as a scribe or reader)
- coach, manage, or assist with the coaching or managing, of sports at the School
- assist with theatre or music productions
- tutor, or assist with the tutoring of, a student in extracurricular activities such as music, choir or debating
- volunteer in the School canteen or uniform shop.

Due to the nature of Direct Contact Volunteers' contact with students, they will have more comprehensive child protection responsibilities and obligations within our Child Protection Program.

Regular Volunteer

Regular Volunteers are individuals who provide volunteer services to the School, more than seven times in any one year, but are not a Direct Contact Volunteer. They may have some incidental contact with students when providing their services.

Regular Volunteers (other than those who are themselves children) who work in any School environment while children are present or are expected to present are engaged in "child-connected work" within the meaning of the Ministerial Order 1359. However, they are not engaged in "child-related work".

Examples of Regular Volunteers include individuals who volunteer more than seven times per year:

- in the School administrative office (other than in a role that has direct contact with students)
- on School advisory committees or advisory councils and do not have direct contact (such as by post, telephone or email) with students while doing so.

Due to the regular nature of Regular Volunteers' attendance at the School or School events, even though their contact with students may be incidental, they will have some child protection responsibilities and obligations within our Child Protection Program.

Casual Volunteer

Casual Volunteers are individuals who provide volunteer services to the School, seven times or less in any one year, but are not a Direct Contact Volunteer. They may have incidental contact with students when providing their services but only in circumstances where:

- they are providing services aimed at the general public
- they are not likely to be left alone, one-on-one, with a student
- a reasonable person would not consider that the contact may enable the individual to form a relationship of trust with a student (for example, their services are directed towards the general public rather than to students)
- a reasonable person would not consider that the contact may create a risk to the safety of a student.

Casual Volunteers (other than those who are themselves children) who work in any School environment while children are present or are expected to present are engaged in "child-connected work" within the meaning of the Ministerial Order 1359. However, they are not engaged in "child-related work".

Examples of Casual Volunteers include individuals who, in the circumstance described above, volunteer seven times or less in any one year:

- at a working bee to cover books or landscape a School garden
- on a stall at a School fair
- on a School BBQ at a sporting event
- in the School administrative office.

Due to the limited nature of Casual Volunteers' contact with students, they do not have the same comprehensive role, responsibilities, and obligations as School staff members or Direct Contact or Regular Volunteers, and are instead treated as Visitors.

Contractors

On occasion it may be necessary for the School to engage outside, independent contractors to perform specific tasks. These Contractors are not employees of Little Yarra Steiner School.

Contractors may include, for example, maintenance and building personnel, consultants, tutors, sports coaches, External Education Providers and cleaners.

Contractors who have direct contact with children (see below) are “school staff” for the purposes of Ministerial Order 1359. Many, but not all, Contractors are engaged in “child-connected work” for the purposes of Ministerial Order 1359. Contractors who are themselves children or who do not work when children or students are present or expected to be present are NOT engaged in child-connected work.

Little Yarra Steiner School has identified three categories of Contractors, based on the level and frequency of their interaction with students. Contractors’ responsibilities and obligations under the Child Protection Program may depend on their category. These categories are:

- Direct Contact Contractors
- Regular Contractors
- Casual Contractors

Where the term “Contractor” is used, it captures “Direct Contact Contractors”, “Regular Contractors” and “Casual Contractors”.

Direct Contact Contractors

Direct Contact Contractors are individuals who provide contractor services to the School where, in the normal course of providing the services, they could potentially have direct contact with students in circumstances where they:

- may be left alone, one-on-one, with a student (for example, 1:1 tutor or learning support)
- a reasonable person would consider that the contact may enable the individual to form a relationship of trust with a student (for example, casual teacher, coach of a sports team, music tutor, canteen worker, regular maintenance worker)
- a reasonable person would consider that the contact could create a potential risk to the safety of a student (for example, casual teacher, music tutor).

All Direct Contact Contractors (other than those who are themselves children) are engaged in child-connected work and child-related work within the meaning of Ministerial Order 1359.

Examples of Direct Contact Contractors may include:

- maintenance workers who regularly work at times when students are present
- tutors

- specialist music or drama teachers
- casual teachers
- sporting team coaches
- outdoor education specialists
- physical education service providers.

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

Due to the nature of Direct Contact Contractors' contact with students, they will have more comprehensive child protection responsibilities and obligations within our Child Protection Program.

Regular Contractor

Regular Contractors are individuals who provide contractor services to the School more than seven times in any one year and are not Direct Contact Contractors. They may have some incidental contact with students when providing their services.

Regular Contractors (other than those who are themselves children) who work in any School environment while children are present or are expected to present are engaged in "child-connected work" within the meaning of the Ministerial Order 1359. However, they are not engaged in "child-related work".

Examples of Regular Contractors may include:

- consultants
- umpires, referees or linesmen at sporting events
- maintenance workers who regularly work at times when students are not expected to be present
- regular caterers for Staff events.

Due to the regular nature of Regular Contractors' attendance at the School or School events, even though their contact with students may be incidental, they will have some child protection responsibilities and obligations within our Child Protection Program.

Casual Contractor

Casual Contractors are individuals who provide contractor services to the School, seven times or less in any one year, during which they may have incidental contact with students, but only in circumstances where:

- they are not left alone, one-on-one, with a student
- a reasonable person would not consider that the contact may enable the individual to form a relationship or trust with a student
- a reasonable person would not consider the contact to create a risk to the safety of a student.

Casual Contractors (other than those who are themselves children) who work in any School environment while children are present or are expected to present are engaged in “child-connected work” within the meaning of the Ministerial Order 1359. However, they are not engaged in “child-related work”.

Examples of Casual Contractors may include individuals who, less than seven times a year:

- provide one-off emergency maintenance work
- give a speech, performance or presentation at the School
- provide assistance with activities at a School sports day (e.g. lifeguards).

Due to the limited nature of Casual Contractors’ contact with students, they do not have the same comprehensive role, responsibilities and obligations as School staff members or Direct Contact or Regular Contractors, and are instead treated as Visitors.

External Education Providers

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

- another registered school
- a government school including:
 - the Open High School
 - Distance Education Centres
 - TAFE Colleges
 - Registered Training Organisations (RTOs)
- other external providers with appropriate scope of registration, qualifications and expertise.

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

For the purposes of our Child Protection Program, External Education Providers are considered Direct Contact Contractors.

Visitors

The term “Visitor” refers to any adult who attends a School event or in a School environment on a one-off or casual basis. Examples of Visitors include, but are not limited to:

- Casual Volunteers
- Casual Contractors
- parents, carers and other adult family members of students, when they are attending School events or in a School environment
- people invited by the School or a staff member to attend a School event or to be in a School environment
- people who attend a School environment for commercial purposes, such as for deliveries or sales purposes.

The School Environment

The “School environment” means any of the following physical, virtual or online places used during or outside school hours:

- a campus of the School
- online or virtual School environments made available or authorised by the Board (or the Principal on its behalf) for use by a child or student (including email, intranet systems, software applications, collaboration tools and online services)
- other locations provided by the School or through a third-party provider for a child or student to use, including but not limited to:
 - camps
 - approved homestay accommodation
 - delivery of education and training such as registered training organisations, TAFEs, non-school senior secondary providers, another school
 - sporting events, excursions, competitions and other events.

Definitions and Key Indicators of Child Abuse and Other Harm

- Key Definitions
- Offences Under the Crimes Act 1958 (Vic)
- Offences Under the Child, Youth and Families Act 2005 (Vic)
- Offences Under the Change or Suppression (Conversion) Practices Prohibition Act 2021 (Vic)
- Sexual Abuse and Sexual Offences
- Grooming Behaviour and Grooming Offences

- Physical Abuse and Physical Violence
- Serious Emotional or Psychological Harm and Significant Emotional or Psychological Harm
- Serious Neglect and Significant Neglect
- Family Violence
- Change or Suppression of a Child's or a Student's Sexual Orientation or Gender Identity
- Additional Vulnerabilities

Change or Suppression of a Child's or a Student's Sexual Orientation or Gender Identity

A "change or suppression practice" is defined under section 5 of the Change or Suppression (Conversion) Practices Prohibition Act 2021 (Vic) (Conversion Act) as a practice or conduct directed towards a person (with or without their consent) for the purpose of:

- changing or suppressing the sexual orientation or gender identity of the person; or
- inducing the person to change or suppress their sexual orientation or gender identity.

Section 4 of the Equal Opportunity Act 2010 (Vic) defines:

- **gender identity** as "a person's gender-related identity, which may or may not correspond with their designated sex at birth, and includes the personal sense of the body (whether this involves medical intervention or not) and other expressions of gender, including dress, speech, mannerisms, names and personal references"; and
- **sexual orientation** as "a person's emotional, affectional and sexual attraction to, or intimate or sexual relations with, persons of a different gender or the same gender or more than one gender".

Under section 5(3) of the Conversion Act, a change or suppression practice (whether directed towards a person in person, or remotely (including online)) includes, but is not limited to:

- providing a psychiatry or psychotherapy consultation, treatment or therapy, or any other similar consultation, treatment or therapy
- carrying out a religious practice, including but not limited to, a prayer based practice, a deliverance practice or an exorcism
- giving a person a referral for the purposes of a change or suppression practice being directed towards the person.

Under section 5(2) of the Conversion Act, the following practices or conduct is not a change or suppression practice if:

- it is supportive of or affirms a person's gender identity or sexual orientation including, but not limited to, a practice or conduct for the purposes of:
 - assisting a person who is undergoing a gender transition; or
 - assisting a person who is considering undergoing a gender transition; or
 - assisting a person to express their gender identity; or
 - providing acceptance, support or understanding of a person; or
 - facilitating a person's coping skills, social support or identity exploration and development; or
- it is a practice or conduct of a health service provider that is, in the health service provider's reasonable professional judgement, necessary:
 - to provide a health service; or
 - to comply with the legal or professional obligations of the health service provider.

Research on the impacts of sexual orientation and gender identity change or suppression practices notes that there is significant evidence that these are harmful to LGBTQI+ people and that they can lead to depression, anxiety, drug use, homelessness and suicide.

As sexual orientation and gender identity change or suppression practices can involve or result in one or more forms of child abuse (in particular, sexual abuse, physical abuse, emotional or psychological abuse or neglect) the physical and behavioural indicators of these types of abuse may also be indicative of a LGBTQI+ child being subjected to sexual orientation and gender identity change or suppression practices.

Child Safety and Wellbeing Law and Regulation in Victoria

The legal and regulatory framework for child safety and wellbeing in Victoria is made up of a complex web of laws, regulations and guidance notes.

The commentary below provides an overview of the framework.

Victorian Child Safe Standards and Ministerial Order 1359

The Victorian Child Safe Standards are designed to improve the way that all organisations that provide services to children, including schools, prevent and respond to child abuse. These Standards are 'principle-based' which means that, while they have the force of law, how the Standards are applied in practice is open to interpretation and will depend largely on the size, nature and complexity of the organisation that is seeking to comply with the Standards.

The School is required by Part 6 of the Child Wellbeing and Safety Act 2005 (Vic) to comply with the Victorian Child Safe Standards (the Child Safe Standards).

To provide a higher level of guidance for schools the Minister of Education has published Ministerial Order No. 1359 under the Education and Training Reform Act 2006 (Vic) that contains requirements that all registered schools must meet to comply with each of the Child Safe Standards.

The Victorian Registration and Qualifications Authority (VRQA) monitors and enforces compliance with the Victorian Child Safe Standards and Ministerial Order 1359 for all registered schools in Victoria.

Refer to [Compliance with the Child Safe Standards and Ministerial Order 1359](#) for more information about how we comply with each Standard and its corresponding clauses in Ministerial Order 1359 at Little Yarra Steiner School, as required by the Minister of Education.

Prescriptive Legal and Regulatory Requirements

There are a number of separate pieces of legislation that work together to make up the legal and regulatory framework for child safety and wellbeing in Victoria. They are in summary:

The Children, Youth and Families Act 2005 (Vic).

The Children, Youth and Families Act has many functions including:

- establishing the “child’s best interests” principle
- regulation of community services and care providers
- the management of child protection responses
- children in need of therapeutic treatment if exhibiting sexually inappropriate behaviour
- promoting stability in care arrangements.

For our Child Protection Program the Children, Youth and Families Act is important because it establishes obligations with respect to [Mandatory Reporting to Child Protection](#) and provides guidance as to what is considered child abuse and other harm.

Child Wellbeing and Safety Act 2005 (Vic).

The Child Wellbeing and Safety Act is a companion piece of legislation to the Children, Youth and Families Act.

Its primary function is to provide for the establishment of various government bodies that oversee the Victorian child and family services system.

For our Child Protection Program, the Child Wellbeing and Safety Act is important for three reasons:

- it provides a statutory definition of “child abuse” for particular purposes
- it is the Act through which the Victorian Child Safe Standards are created
- it is the Act through which the Reportable Conduct Scheme in Victoria is established

Education and Training Reform Act 2006 (Vic).

From a child safety perspective, the key functions of the Education and Training Reform Act are to:

- require schools to notify the Victorian Institute of Teaching (VIT) when a school has taken action against a teacher
- make compliance with the Victorian Child Safe Standards a requirement for registration of all Victorian schools.

Worker Screening Act 2020 (Vic).

The Worker Screening Act establishes a framework to screen the criminal records and the professional conduct of people who intend to work with or care for children. This screening process is called the WWC (working with children) Check.

People who are assessed as posing an unjustifiable risk to the safety of children will fail the WWC Check, and the Act prohibits these people from working with children.

The Act imposes penalties for schools and individuals that do not comply with the Act.

Crimes Act 1958 (Vic).

The Crimes Act in Victoria sets out a number of child abuse and harm related offences and key definitions, including those relating to indecent acts and persistent sexual abuse.

Of key relevance to the Victorian child protection framework and the School environment are the offences of:

- **Grooming** – which targets predatory conduct designed to facilitate later sexual activity with a child
- **Encouraging a Child to Engage in Sexual Activity** – which is a broader preparatory sexual offence than grooming, and targets behaviour that encourages sexual activity of children

- **Failure to Protect** – which requires people in authority within a school to take action to protect children where they know that a person associated with the school poses a substantial risk of sexually abusing a child (including the sexual offence of grooming a person who has the care, supervision or authority of a child aged under 16) in Victoria
- **Failure to Disclose** – which applies to all adults, not just professionals who work with children, and in effect requires mandatory Reporting to Police, if they hold a reasonable belief that a sexual offence has been committed by an adult against a child in Victoria.

Family Violence Protection Act 2008 (Vic).

The Family Violence Protection Act is designed to maximise safety for children and adults who have experienced family violence and forms a key part of the overall legal and regulatory framework for child protection in Victoria.

Critically, the Act provides an extensive definition of “family violence” that includes behaviour that causes a child to hear, witness, or be exposed to the effects of such behaviour.

Wrongs Act 1958 (Vic).

The Wrongs Act is the principal legislation governing claims for damages for economic and non-economic loss arising from personal injury and death in Victoria, as a result of negligence or fault. It is through this Act that child abuse victims may claim compensation for loss arising from child abuse.

Section 91 of the Wrongs Act imposes a duty of care on schools to take reasonable precautions to prevent the physical or sexual abuse of a child under its care, supervision or authority, by an individual associated with the school. If the victim of physical or sexual abuse alleged to have occurred at the School or to have involved School Staff, Volunteers or Contractors brings a claim against the School, a court will presume that the School breached its duty of care unless the School can prove that it took reasonable precautions to prevent the abuse.

Whether or not a school took reasonable precautions will be assessed by the court in accordance with considerations set out in the Wrongs Act and case law.

Examples of reasonable precautions could include:

- the effective implementation of the School’s risk management strategies in Child Safety Risk Management and our Reporting a Child Safety Incident or Concern Internally policy

- complying with Working with Children Checks and other child protection Human Resources Management policies
- ensuring that Staff and relevant Volunteers and Contractors complete child protection induction and ongoing training.

It is important to note that the operation of section 91 is subject to section 5.4.10 of the Education and Training Reform Act which states that Little Yarra Steiner School will not have a duty relating to the care or control of a student while that student is employed under an approved work experience arrangement, structured workplace arrangement or an apprentice contract.

Our Child Protection Program

In order to comply with the Victorian Child Safe Standards and Ministerial Order No. 1359, as well as each of the seven separate pieces of legislation noted above, Little Yarra Steiner School has established this Child Protection Program which sets out our work systems, practices, policies and procedures designed to not only ensure compliance, but also to develop a child safe culture.

Additional Child Protection Resources

Public-Facing Documents

Grievance procedure

Procedures for Responding to and Reporting Child Safety Incidents or Concerns

Procedures for Managing Child Safety Incidents or Concerns At or Involving the School or its Staff

Child Protection Record Keeping

[PROTECT Recording your actions: Responding to suspected child abuse - A Template for Victorian Schools](#)

Child Safe Standards and Implementation

Commission for Children and Young People, [The Victorian Child Safe Standards](#), 2022

Minister for Education, Implementing the Child Safe Standards – Managing the Risk of Child Abuse in Schools and School Boarding Premises, [Ministerial Order No. 1359](#), 2022

Victorian Registration and Qualifications Authority, [Guidelines to the Minimum Standards and Requirements for School Registration](#)

Victorian Registration and Qualifications Authority, [Schools and school boarding premises: Regulatory information and guidance to help you comply with the new Child Safe Standards](#)

Australian Human Rights Commission, [National Principles for Child Safe Organisations](#)

Royal Commission into Institutional Responses to Child Sexual Abuse, [Final Report Volume 6 – Making Institutions Child Safe](#)

Commission for Children and Young People, [Empowerment and Participation – A Guide for Organisations Working with Children and Young People](#)

Commonwealth of Australia, Department of the Prime Minister and Cabinet, [Keeping Our Kids Safe: Cultural Safety and the National Principles for Child Safe Organisations](#)

Commission for Children and Young People, [Cultural Safety for Aboriginal Children](#)

Commission for Children and Young People, [Safety of Children with a Disability](#)

Commission for Children and Young People, [Safety of Children from Culturally and Linguistically Diverse Backgrounds](#)

Child Protection Complaints Handling

National Office of Child Safety, [Complaint Handling Guide: Upholding the Rights of Children and Young People](#)

Royal Commission into Institutional Responses to Child Sexual Abuse, [Final Report Volume 7 – Improving Institutional Responding and Reporting](#)

Mandatory Reporting to Child Protection

Department of Education, [Your Reporting and Legal Obligations](#), 2018

Department of Health and Human Services, [Reporting child abuse](#), 2018

Department of Health and Human Services, Online [Child Protection Manual](#)

Joint protocol by Department of Health and Human Services, Department of Education and Early Childhood Development, Licensed Children's Services and Victorian Schools [Protecting the Safety and](#)

wellbeing of children and young people

Department of Health and Human Services, Mandatory Reporting to Child Protection in Victoria – frequently asked questions

Responding to Child Safety Incidents or Concerns

Department of Education, Catholic Education Commission of Victoria and Independent Schools Victoria, , PROTECT Identifying and Responding to All Forms of Abuse in Victorian Schools, 2018

Department of Education, Catholic Education Commission of Victoria and Independent Schools Victoria, PROTECT Four Critical Actions for Schools: Responding to Incidents, Disclosures or Suspicions of Child Abuse, 2018

Department of Education, Catholic Education Commission of Victoria and Independent Schools Victoria PROTECT Recording your actions: Responding to suspected child abuse - A Template for Victorian Schools, 2018

Department of Education, Catholic Education Commission of Victoria and Independent Schools Victoria, Four Critical Actions for Schools: Responding to Student Sexual Offending

Department of Education, Catholic Education Commission of Victoria and Independent Schools Victoria, Responding to Suspected Student Sexual Offending: A Template for all Victorian Schools

Recognising and Responding to Sexual Behaviour in Children and Young People

True Traffic Lights®

Working with Children Checks

Department of Justice and Community Safety, Working with Children Check Victoria website

Reportable Conduct Scheme

Commission for Children and Young People, Reportable Conduct Scheme, 2018

Commission for Children and Young People, Guidance for Organisations: Investigating a Reportable Conduct Allegation

Reporting to Police

Department of Justice and Community Safety, Failure to Disclose Offence Fact Sheet, 2018

Failure to Protect

Department of Justice and Community Safety, [Failure to protect: a new criminal offence to protect children from sexual abuse](#), 2018

Child Protection HR Management

Commission for Children and Young People, [Standard 6: People working with children and young people are suitable and supported to reflect child safety and wellbeing values in practice](#)

Victorian Government, [Schools - suitable staff and volunteers guidance](#)

Information Sharing About a Student's Safety or Wellbeing

Office of the Commissioner for Privacy and Data Protection, [Guidelines for Sharing Personal Information](#), 2016