

	<h2>Child Safety Policy</h2>	<p>Endorsed by School Council:</p> <p style="text-align: right;">Aug 2020</p> <p style="text-align: right;">Developed: June 2018</p>
<p>Information: 02 6076 1566</p> <p>Manager: Principal</p>	<p>DET Schools Reference Guide:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Ministerial Order no. 807 ● School Policy & Advisory Guide – Duty of Care ● School Policy & Advisory Guide – Child Protection Reporting Obligations ● DET Child Wellbeing and Safety Framework ● School Privacy Policy <p>Associated Policies:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● CORRYONG COLLEGE Mandatory Reporting Policy ● CORRYONG COLLEGE Student Engagement Policy ● CORRYONG COLLEGE Staff Code of Conduct 	<p>Next review: Term 3 2022</p> <p style="text-align: right;">Issue No: 1.5</p>

Rationale:

Every student has the right to feel safe and protected at school. Schools have a duty of care to provide a safe and supportive school environment. It is important to us that parents feel confident that their child is safe and well whilst at school. Promotion of child safe strategies must be in the context of a whole-school approach.

This policy sets out the school's commitment and approach to creating and maintaining a child safe organisation where children and young people are safe and feel safe; and provides the policy framework for the school's approach to the Child Safe Standards.

Aims:

Corryong College will actively promote a positive, safe and welcoming personal environment for all members of the school community. On 26 November 2015, the Victorian Parliament passed the *Child Wellbeing and Safety Amendment (Child Safe Standards) Bill 2015* to introduce seven child safe standards (the Standards) into law. The Standards apply to all organisations involved in child-related work in Victoria.

Implementation:

This policy applies to all staff, volunteers and contractors, whether or not they work in direct contact with children or young people, across a range of school forums (e.g. camps, online) and outside of school hours. This policy also applies to school council members where indicated.

The Child Safe Policy should be considered in the School Strategic Plan. It should be included on the school website and in the staff handbook.

Statement of Commitment to Child Safety and Principles:

Corryong College is committed to the safety and wellbeing of all children and young people. This will be the primary focus of our care and decision-making.

The school's approach to creating and maintaining a child safe school environment is guided by our school philosophy and values. As Corryong College our vision is *'together we empower all to learn and achieve with a sense of belonging and pride in self, school and community'*. We know children can struggle to learn and achieve their personal best if they are not safe from abuse.

Our motto *'enhancing lives, creating opportunities'*

At Corryong College our values guide the decisions and behaviours of all members of our school community, including in relation to child safety:

- Respect – for ourselves and others – Caring for, understanding, accepting and appreciating ourselves and others.
- Responsibility – Demonstrating ownership of our actions and words. Being accountable for our actions.
- Innovation – Seek out new opportunities. Step outside the square. Be entrepreneurial and seek out ways to bring curiosities, aspirations and big picture ideas to real life actions plans.
- Learner – demonstrating the curiosity and self-drive to continuously challenge new learning. Have confidence to take risks in learning and to take on support as well as encourage others to rise to the challenge of new learning opportunities.

Corryong College has zero tolerance for child abuse.

Corryong College is committed to providing a child safe environment where children and young people are safe and feel safe, and their voices are heard about decisions that affect their lives. Particular attention will be paid to the cultural safety, participation, empowerment and equal participation of Aboriginal/Torres Strait Islander children and children from culturally and/or linguistically diverse backgrounds, children with disabilities, children in out of home care and children who are vulnerable.

Every person involved in Corryong College has a responsibility to understand the important and specific role he/she plays individually and collectively to ensure that the wellbeing and safety of all children and young people is at the forefront of all they do and every decision they make.

Child Safety Principles:

In its planning, decision-making and operations Corryong College will:

1. Take a preventative, proactive and participatory approach to child safety;
2. Value and empower children to participate in decisions which affect their lives;
3. Foster a culture of openness that supports all persons to safely disclose risks of harm to children;
4. Respect diversity in cultures and child rearing practices while keeping child safety paramount;
5. Provide written guidance on appropriate conduct and behaviour towards children;
6. Engage only the most suitable people to work with children and have high quality staff, volunteer supervision and professional development;
7. Ensure children know who to talk with if they are worried or are feeling unsafe, and that they are comfortable and encouraged to raise such issues;
8. Report suspected abuse, neglect or mistreatment promptly to the appropriate authorities;
9. Share information appropriately and lawfully with other organisations where the safety and wellbeing of children is at risk; and
10. Value the input of and communicate regularly with families and carers.

Child Safe Policy and Procedures:

Policies and procedures outlining Corryong College's approach to the Child Safe Standards are outlined below. For more information, you can speak with the principal or Assistant Principal – Wellbeing.

A Child Safe Culture

Our school's culture encourages staff to raise, discuss and scrutinise concerns making it more difficult for abuse to occur and remain hidden. The school has developed a safe, inclusive and supportive environment that involves and communicates with children, young people and their parents/carers.

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

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

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

As part of Corryong College's child safe culture, **school leadership** (including the principal and assistant principals) will:

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

As part of Corryong College's child safe culture, **school mandatory reporting staff** are required to:

- Complete the [Protecting Children – Mandatory reporting and other obligations](#) online module every year
- Read the school's Child Safety Code of Conduct on induction, and maintain familiarity with that document
- Read the school's Child Safety Responding and Reporting Obligations (including Mandatory Reporting) Policy and Procedures on induction, and maintain familiarity with that document
- Read the school's Child Safety Policy (this document) on induction, and maintain familiarity with that document.

As part of Corryong College's child safe culture, in performing the functions and powers given to them under the *Education and Training Reform Act 2006*, **school councils and school council members** will:

- Ensure that child safety is a regular agenda item at school council meetings *[Note that there is no requirement to discuss child safety at every school council meeting, but it is best practice to have child safety on the agenda at some meetings to show that the school is embedding a culture of child safety and school council members are informed and understand the issues]*
- Consider the diversity of all children, including (but not limited to) the needs of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children, children from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds, children with disabilities, and children who are vulnerable, when making decisions regarding the Child Safe Standards
- Undertake annual guidance and training on child safety.
- Approve the Child Safety Code of Conduct to the extent that it applies to school council employees and members, and if updated, note the new document in its school council meeting minutes
- When hiring employees, the college will ensure that selection, supervision and management practices are child safe

School leadership will maintain records of the above processes.

Roles and responsibilities

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

Specific child safety responsibilities:

- The Principal and Assistant Principal - Wellbeing is responsible for reviewing and updating the Child Safety Policy every 3 years.
- The Principal and Assistant Principal - Wellbeing is responsible for monitoring the school's compliance with the Child Safety Policy. The school community should approach the Principal or Assistant Principal - Wellbeing if they have any concerns about the school's compliance with the Child Safety Policy.
- The Principal and Assistant Principal is responsible for informing the school community about this policy, and making it publicly available.
- Other specific roles and responsibilities are named in Corryong College's other child safety policies and procedures, including the Child Safety Code of Conduct, Child Safety Responding and Reporting Obligations (including Mandatory Reporting) Policy and Procedures, and risk assessment register.

Recruitment

Corryong College follows the Department's Recruitment in Schools guide to ensure child safe recruitment practices, available on the [Department's website](#).

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

Training and supervision

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

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

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

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

Reporting a child safety concern or complaint

The school has clear expectations for all staff and volunteers in making a report about a child or young person who may be in need of protection. All staff (including school council employees) must follow the school's Child Safety Responding and Reporting Obligations (including Mandatory Reporting) Policy and Procedures, including following the [Four Critical Actions for Schools](#) (within the Child's Safety Responding and Reporting Policy) if there is an incident, disclosure or suspicion of child abuse. Immediate actions should include reporting their concerns to DHHS Child

Protection, Victoria Police and/or another appropriate agency and notifying the principal or a member of the school leadership team of their concerns and the reasons for those concerns.

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

The Child Safety Responding and Reporting Obligations (including Mandatory Reporting) Policy and Procedures can be found on the Corryong College website.

Risk reduction and management

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

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

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

Listening to, communicating with and empowering children

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

When the school is gathering information in relation to a complaint about alleged misconduct with or abuse of a child, the school will listen to the complainant's account and take them seriously, check understanding and keep the child (and/or their parents/carers, as appropriate) informed about progress.

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

- All of our child safety policies and procedures will be available for the students and parents at Corryong College to read from the college website or the front office.
- PROTECT Child Safety posters will be displayed across the school
- School newsletters will inform students and the school community about the school's commitment to child safety, and strategies or initiatives that the school is taking to ensure student safety
- Age-appropriate discussion of child safety with students, students making and displaying their own child safety posters, the Four Critical Actions are actively taught to mandatory reporters and other school staff, the whole school is encouraged to contribute to risk assessment and mitigation.

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

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

Communications

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

- Ensuring that the Child Safety Policy (this document), Code of Conduct, and the Child Safety Responding and Reporting Obligations (including Mandatory Reporting) Policy and Procedure are available on the school website or hard copy from the front office on request of printing.
- Once per term reminders in the school newsletter of our school's commitment to child safety
- Ensuring that child safety is a regular agenda item at school leadership meetings and staff meetings for discussion
- Placing posters throughout the school

Confidentiality and privacy

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

Related policies and documents

Related policies and documents include:

- Code of Conduct
- Child Safety Responding and Reporting Obligations (including Mandatory Reporting) Policy and Procedures
- Risk assessment register
- [Identifying and Responding to All Forms of Abuse in Victorian Schools](#)
- [Four Critical Actions for Schools](#)
- [Recording your actions: Responding to suspected child abuse – A template for Victorian schools](#)
- [Identifying and Responding to Student Sexual Offending](#)
- [Four Critical Actions for Schools: Responding to Student Sexual Offending](#)
- [School Policy and Advisory Guide – Duty of Care](#)
- [School Policy and Advisory Guide – Child Protection Reporting Obligations](#).

Policy evaluation and review

To ensure ongoing relevance and continuous improvement, this policy will be reviewed every 2-3 years. The review will include input from students, parents/carers and the school community.