



# CHILD SAFE POLICY

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## **Purpose**

This policy was written to demonstrate the strong commitment of Shepparton ACE College to child safety and establishing and maintaining child safe and child friendly environments.

## **Context**

This policy reflects our commitment to provide a safe environment where every person has the right to be treated with respect and is safe and protected from harm.

It complies with the Education and Training Reform Act 2006, Child Safe Standards – Managing the Risk of Child Abuse in Schools, Ministerial Order No 870.

## **Scope**

This policy, from the date of endorsement, applies to any physical or virtual place made available or authorised by the school for use of a child during and after school hours by all people involved in the organisation, including:

- students
- teachers (permanent and casual)
- committee of management members
- contractors
- sub-contractors
- work experience students
- indirect service providers
- any other individual involved in this organisation

This policy covers all forms of abuse including:

- Any act committed against a student involving a sexual offence or grooming
- Any infliction of physical violence and serious emotional and psychological harm on a student
- Serious neglect of a student

## **Commitment to Young People's Safety**

All young people who come to Shepparton ACE College have a right to feel and be safe. We are committed to the safety and well-being of all young people accessing our services and the welfare of those in our care will always be our first priority. We aim to create a safe and friendly environment where all young people are valued and feel safe.

## **Young People's Participation**

Shepparton ACE College encourages and respects the views of the young people who access our services. We listen to and act upon any concerns that young people or their families raise with us. We teach young people what they can do if they feel unsafe.

We ensure that young people and their families know their rights and how to access the complaints procedures available to them.

We value diversity and do not tolerate any discriminatory practices.

## **Recruitment Practices**

Shepparton ACE College takes all reasonable steps to ensure that it engages the most suitable and appropriate people to work with our students. We employ a range of screening

measures and apply best practice standards in the screening and recruitment of employees and volunteers. We interview and conduct referee checks on all employees.

We conduct criminal history assessment for people working with children, as set out in Section 8B of the *Children's Protection Act 1993*. Criminal history assessments are required for anyone within our organisation that:

- has regular contact with young people and is not directly supervised at all times;
- works in close proximity to young people on a regular basis and is not directly supervised at all times; or
- supervises or manages persons who:
  - have regular contact with young people or
  - work in close proximity to young people on a regular basis; or
- has access to sensitive records relating to young people.

Exemptions from this requirement may apply in some circumstances.

We ensure that criminal history information is dealt with in accordance with the Child Safe Environments: Standards for dealing with information obtained about the criminal history of employees and volunteers who work with children, issued pursuant to Section 8A, *Children's Protection Act 1993*.

## **Code of Conduct**

All members are made aware of, and must abide by, our Code of Conduct. (see attachment – Appendix I)

## **Support for Employees**

Shepparton ACE College seeks to attract and retain the best employees. We provide support and supervision so people feel valued, respected and fairly treated. We ensure that employees who work with young people have ongoing supervision, support and training so that their capacity is developed and enhanced to promote the establishment and maintenance of a safe environment for our student

Strategies we have implemented include:

- All new employees undergo induction and receive a copy of our child safe policy and code of conduct.
- All employees receive regular supervision sessions that include a focus on ongoing learning about child protection and other matters that affect students.

## **Reporting and responding to suspected child abuse and neglect**

**Information about making appropriate reports of abuse or neglect is available from the Department of Human Services website <http://www.dhs.vic.gov.au/for-individuals/children,-families-and-young-people/child-protection/about-child-abuse>**

Shepparton ACE College will not tolerate incidents of child abuse.

All employees understand their obligation to notify the Child Protection Crisis Line 13 12 78 (24 hours, 7 days a week, toll free within Victoria) as soon as practicable if they have a reasonable suspicion that a child has been, or is being, abused or neglected.

We provide opportunities for employees on a regular basis to attend information sessions about these mandatory reporting obligations. We also ensure that employees have access to relevant information resources such as:

- Flowchart: [A step-by-step guide to making a report to Child Protection or Child FIRST \(PDF - 270Kb\)](#)  
<http://www.education.vic.gov.au/Documents/schools/principals/spag/safety/makingreportchild.pdf>
- [Protecting the safety and wellbeing of children and young people](#)  
<http://www.education.vic.gov.au/school/principals/spag/safety/Documents/protectionofchildren.PDF>
- [Mandatory Reporting eLearning Module](#)  
<http://www.elearn.com.au/deecd/mandatoryreporting>
- Department of Health:
  - [Child Protection](#)  
<http://www.cyf.vic.gov.au/family-services/to-make-a-report-to-child-protection>
  - [Child FIRST](#)  
<http://www.cyf.vic.gov.au/family-services/how-to-make-a-referral-to-child-first>
- [Victoria Police Sexual Offences and Child Abuse Investigation Teams \(SOCIT\)](#)  
[http://www.police.vic.gov.au/content.asp?Document\\_ID=36222](http://www.police.vic.gov.au/content.asp?Document_ID=36222) <http://www.education.vic.gov.au>

We ensure that support is also available for the employee making the report, particularly where an ongoing service is provided to the young person and their family.

## Reportable Conduct Scheme

The Commission for Children and Young People is responsible for administering this scheme.

## Type of Conduct that are reportable

- Sexual misconduct and offences (against, with or the presence of a child)
- Physical violence (against, with or in the presence of a child)
- Behaviour that is likely to cause emotional or psychological harm
- Neglect

The Principal is required to:

- Notify the Commission within 3 business days of becoming aware of a reportable allegation
- Investigate the allegation subject to police clearance on criminal matters
- Advise the Commission who is undertaking the investigation
- Manage the risks to children
- Within 30 calendar days provide the Commission detailed information about the reportable allegation and any action you have taken
- Notify the Commission of the investigation findings and any disciplinary action taken

Further Information is available at [www.ccyp.vic.gov.au](http://www.ccyp.vic.gov.au)

## Supporting Young People and their Families

Child Protection is everyone's responsibility. Shepparton ACE College recognises that even where a report is made, we may still have a role in supporting the young person. This support may include:

- Referring the child, young person or their family to other appropriate services
- Displaying information about services that can assist children and their families (such as the Kids Helpline and Youth Healthline) in areas accessed by children and their families.

## **Dealing with reports or concerns relating to the actions of an employee of our organisation**

In addition to making a report to the Child Abuse Report Line, employees and volunteers must also report to the principal if reasonable suspicion is formed that a child has been, or is being, abused or neglected by another employee.

In response to any report to the principal concerning a member, or employee of this organisation, disciplinary action will be taken.

Other protective actions may also be introduced to ensure the safety of children and young people within our organisation.

Examples of strategies to minimise risk include the development of further policies and procedures which may address (but are not limited to):

- Transportation
- Taking images of young people
- Complaints procedures around safety
- Physical contact
- Procedure for breaches of policy
- Training\cyber safe guidelines
- Protecting privacy and confidentiality in issues around child safety
- Procedures for dealing with situations where a member is being investigated for, or is charged with, a serious criminal offence.

Evaluation of these strategies and the development of additional strategies to minimise and control risks to children and young people occur as part of our ongoing risk management process.

## **Harassment/bullying**

Shepparton ACE College opposes all forms of harassment, discrimination and bullying. We take this issue seriously and encourage anyone who believes that they, or another person, has been harassed, discriminated against or bullied to raise this issue with the Principal

## **Communication**

Shepparton ACE College will ensure that everyone to whom this policy applies is aware of and has had an opportunity to read the policy.

We also ask employees to sign a written statement indicating that they have read and will abide by our child-safe policy. We retain a copy of all signed statements.

## **Related policies and procedures**

- *Student Welfare Policy*
- *Child Protection\_Mandatory Reporting*
- *Anti Bullying and Harassment Policy*
- *Risk Management for Students and Staff*

## Child Protection Guidelines for Employees

Caring for young people brings additional responsibilities for employees of this organisation.

All employees of this organisation are responsible for promoting the safety and well-being of young people by:

- Ensuring the safety and welfare of the young person is paramount at all times.
- Treating all young people with dignity, equality and respect.
- Adhering to this organisation's child safe policy at all times.
- Listening and responding appropriately to the views and concerns of young people within the organisation.
- Taking all reasonable steps to ensure the safety and protection of young people within the organisation.
- Ensuring young people understand their rights and explaining to the young person in age-appropriate language what they can expect when participating in a service, activity or program offered by the organisation.
- Responding quickly, fairly and transparently to any serious complaints made by a young person or their parent/guardian.
- Notifying the **Child Protection Crisis Line 13 12 78** (24 hours, 7 days a week, toll free within Victoria) as soon as practicable if they have a reasonable suspicion that a young person has been or is being abused or neglected. This is an after hours emergency service. During business hours contact East Division Intake – rural and regional – 1800 075 599

Employees will not:

- Take part in any unnecessary physical contact with a young person.
- Discriminate against any young person because of age, gender, cultural background, religion, vulnerability or sexuality.
- Develop any 'special' relationships with young people outside of the professional relationship.
- Contact any student on social media.