



## HUME CENTRAL SECONDARY COLLEGE CHILD SAFETY POLICY

### **Purpose**

Hume Central Secondary College's Child Safety Policy sets out the school's commitment and approach to creating and maintaining a child safe organization 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.

### **Scope**

This policy applies to all staff, volunteers, and contractors in the school environment, whether or not they work in direct contact with children or young people. This policy also applies to school council members where indicated. The policy will apply to the school environment (see Definitions section). The policy covers both school hours and outside of school hours. This policy applies to all school campuses of Hume Central Secondary College.

### **Definitions**

#### ***Child abuse***

Child abuse includes:

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

#### ***Child-connected work***

Child-connected work means work authorised by the school, school council, or Secretary of the Department of Education and Training and performed by an adult in a school environment while children are present or reasonably expected to be present.

#### ***Child safety***

Child safety encompasses matters related to protecting all children from child abuse, managing the risk of child abuse, providing support to a child at risk of child abuse, and responding to incidents or allegations of child abuse.

#### ***School environment***

School environment means any physical or virtual place made available or authorised by the school for use by a child during or outside school hours, including:

- a campus of the school;
- online school environments (including email and intranet systems); and
- other locations provided by the school for a child's use (including, without limitation, locations used for school camps, sporting events, excursions, competitions, homestays, and other school activities or events);
- external providers;
- homestay arrangements for international students.

#### ***School staff***

School staff means an individual working in a school environment who is:

- employed by the Department of Education and Training in the government teaching service;
- directly engaged or employed by a school council; or
- a volunteer or a contracted service provider (whether or not a body corporate or any other person is an intermediary).

### **STATEMENT OF COMMITMENT TO CHILD SAFETY AND CHILD SAFETY PRINCIPLES**

Hume Central Secondary College is committed to providing a safe, supportive and inclusive environment for all students, staff and members of our community. Our school recognises the importance of the partnership between our school and parents and carers to support student learning, engagement and wellbeing. We share a commitment to, and a responsibility for, creating an inclusive and safe school environment for our students.



The school's approach to creating and maintaining a child safe school environment is guided by our College vision and values. Hume Central Secondary College's vision is to develop and nurture the social, emotional, and academic growth of all our students in order that they become resilient, life-long learners equipped with the skills, qualifications and personal attributes for success in and beyond school.

## **VALUES**

Hume Central Secondary College's values are:

### **ACHIEVEMENT**

Supporting all students to achieve their personal best.

### **DIVERSITY**

Recognising the diverse backgrounds, cultures, talents, and aspirations of our students and providing rich learning opportunities for all.

### **SUCCESS**

Developing the knowledge, skills and personal attributes that will enable our students to lead successful lives beyond school.

Our guiding principles are also reflected in the three positive behaviour expectations that we hold of every member of our community:

### **To be RESPECTFUL To be RESPONSIBLE To be a LEARNER**

Hume Central Secondary College has zero tolerance for child abuse.

We have legal and moral obligations to contact authorities when we are concerned about a child's safety, which we follow rigorously.

Hume Central secondary College is committed to preventing child abuse and identifying risks early and removing and reducing these risks.

The College has robust human resources and recruitment practices for all staff and volunteers, and we are committed to regularly training and educating our staff and volunteers on child abuse risks.

We are 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.

We support and respect all children, as well as our staff and volunteers.

We are committed to the cultural safety of Aboriginal & Torres Strait Islander children, children from a culturally and/or linguistically diverse backgrounds, the safety of LGBTI (Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender, Queer, or Questioning, and Intersex) children, and the safety of children with a disability and children who are vulnerable due to age, family circumstances, abilities.

We have specific policies, procedures and training in place that support our leadership team, staff and volunteers to achieve these commitments.

Every person involved at Hume Central secondary College has a responsibility to understand the important and specific role they play 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, Hume Central Secondary 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 and 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 concerns;
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;
10. Value the input of and communicate regularly with families and carers;
11. Work with external education providers to ensure students are protected in all school environments; and
12. Support all international students to feel safe and protected in all environments.

## POLICY

### Strategies to embed a child safe culture

Hume Central Secondary College's culture encourages staff, students, parents and the school community to raise, discuss and scrutinise child safety concerns. This makes it more difficult for abuse to occur and remain hidden.

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 on Compass and in hard copy at reception at all campuses 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 Hume Central Secondary College's child safe culture, **school leadership** (including the principal and assistant principal[s]) 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 Hume Central Secondary 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 Hume Central Secondary 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
- 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, such as the [Child Safe Standards School Council Training PowerPoint](#)
- 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.

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 College Principal and members of the Principal Class team are responsible for reviewing and updating the Child Safety Policy every 3 years.
- The College Principal and members of the Principal Class team are responsible for monitoring the school's compliance with the Child Safety Policy. The school community should approach any member of principal class if they have any concerns about the school's compliance with the Child Safety Policy.
- The College Principal is responsible for informing the school community about this policy and making it publicly available.
- Other specific roles and responsibilities are named in Hume Central Secondary 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**

Hume Central Secondary College follows the Department's Recruitment in Schools guide to ensure child safe recruitment practices, available on the Department's website at the following link:

<https://www.education.vic.gov.au/hrweb/careers/Pages/recruitinsch.aspx>

All prospective volunteers are required to comply with our school's Volunteers Policy, including in relation to obtaining checks required under this policy. All prospective volunteers are required to abide by the volunteer requirements outlined in the volunteer policy.

### **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 and 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 to the College Principal, Campus Principal or Assistant Principal and will be managed in accordance with Footscray High School's Child Safety Responding and Reporting Policy and Procedures where required.

At Hume Central Secondary College, on all campuses, the following strategies have been developed to support staff training, induction and supervision:

- WWCC or Victorian Institute of Teaching registration register review
- Recruitment practices to follow the DET recruitment in schools guide
- Homestay engagement guidelines and processes
- Strategies developed to embed culture of child safety
- Hume Central Secondary College Peer Coaching Partner Program
- Staff induction training to be held regularly to support all first year teachers to understand their obligations.
- Code of conduct and behaviour expectations to be embedded through staff meetings/ leadership meetings throughout the year.
- All staff to undertake the eLearning mandatory reporting module.

#### **Reporting a child safety concern or complaint**

The school has clear expectations for all staff and volunteers (including homestay providers) 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](#) 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.

Hume Central Secondary 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, Hume Central Secondary 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 school's website.

#### **Risk reduction and management**

Hume Central Secondary 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.

Hume Central Secondary College will ensure that it keeps, reviews and continually updates a risk assessment register, including the actions the school will take to reduce or remove the identified risks.



The Hume Central Secondary College risk register reflects the unique environment of the school and each campus and acknowledges the following risks are of key focus

- Transition arrangements for students as they begin at the College and make the transition to a new campus in Year 10
- Students experiencing bullying and harassment
- Maintaining an organisational culture of child safety – including leadership, public commitment and frequent messaging
- Students learning with external providers (e.g. TAFE)
- International students including homestay and WWC check requirements.

### **Listening to, communicating with and empowering children**

Hume Central Secondary 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 on the schools Compass portal, from a member of the Wellbeing team, their Team Leader or Mentor, the International Student Coordinator or reception on each campus. 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.

Where appropriate, the College Principal will make reports to the DET Employee Conduct and Ethics branch. 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 via the College website and in hard copy from reception at each campus
- 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
- For students making the transition to Year 7 and between campuses, child safe information will be included in induction, orientation programs and allocated support staff for students with special needs and wellbeing referrals transferred
- Students undertaking learning with an external provider, given child safe information and resources
- International Students
  - Child Safe Standards materials will be provided during orientation and pre-arrival, and on a regular basis while at the school
  - Provide and explain international students with the Easy English Protect Factsheet to identify reportable conduct and how to report it
  - Regular communication with students to obtain feedback on homestay environment
- The whole school is encouraged to contribute to risk assessment and mitigation, the Child Safe Standards are addressed and explained at assemblies or parent information sessions.

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

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



Through dedicated RRRR classes at Years 7-9 and through mentoring classes in Year 10-12 Hume Central Secondary College will deliver the respectful, rights and resilience program to ensure all students develop skills to communicate effectively, negotiate and resolve conflict and become confident, resilient and adaptable.

### 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 and via the Compass Portal
- Ensuring that child safety is a regular agenda item at school leadership meetings and staff meetings for discussion
- Ensuring that child safety is a regular agenda item at school council meetings and staff meetings for discussion
- Homestay providers will be provided with all Child Safe policies and expectations and procedures for reporting any abuse are discussed with homestay hosts as part of the induction process
- External providers communication includes
  - All contracts with external providers to follow Department guidelines.
  - The Hume Central Secondary College Child Safe Policy to be included in information shared with employers for work experience and Structured Workplace Learning

### Confidentiality and privacy

This school collects, uses and discloses information about particular children and their families in accordance with Victorian privacy law and other relevant laws. The principles regulating the collection, use and storage of information is included in the Department of Education and Training's Schools' Privacy Policy available at the following link: <https://www.education.vic.gov.au/Pages/schoolsprivacypolicy.aspx>

### Related policies and documents

Related policies and documents include:

- Code of Conduct
- Child Safety Responding and Reporting Obligations 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](#)
- [Policy and Advisory Library – Duty of Care](#)
- [Policy and Advisory Library – Child Protection Reporting Obligations](#)
- [Schools' Privacy Policy.](#)

### Policy evaluation and review

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

### REVIEW

This policy will be reviewed as required or due to changes in regulations or circumstances.

Date Reviewed	To Be Reviewed	Endorsed at College Council
May 2021	3-4 years	20 <sup>th</sup> May 2021