



## INTRODUCTION

This policy consolidates a series of policies which have been developed and implemented by Balcombe Grammar School (BGS) to create a safe learning environment and safeguard the emotional, psychological and physical wellbeing of its students. Balcombe recognises that it has a moral and legal duty to protect its students from foreseeable harm. This includes the provision of safeguards against mistreatment and timely reporting of child abuse.<sup>i</sup> Preventative measures include careful selection of staff, staff training and the implementation of a staff code of conduct to enforce a high level of professional standards. Balcombe is committed to promoting cultural safety for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children, children from a culturally, racially and/or linguistically diverse background, any children who are vulnerable, including LGBTI students and providing a safe environment for children with a disability.

Together this group of policies and procedures assist Balcombe to

- embed an organisational culture of child safety
- meet its moral and legal duties to its students,
- fulfil its statutory responsibilities to protect its students
- fulfil its statutory responsibility to report child abuse.

## GUIDING PRINCIPLES

Balcombe has zero tolerance of child abuse

- The interests of the child<sup>ii</sup> are paramount
- All children have the right to feel safe and be safe at school
- All children have equal rights to protection
- All staff play a vital role in creating a safe school environment<sup>iii</sup>
- All staff and other members of the Balcombe community have a responsibility to protect children and young people from mistreatment

All adult members of the Balcombe community have a legal responsibility to report child abuse.<sup>iv</sup>

## STAFF RECRUITMENT

All applicants applying for child connected work<sup>v</sup> at Balcombe are informed of Balcombe's child protection policies and procedures, Staff Code of Conduct and zero tolerance of child abuse.

Balcombe uses a combination of pre-employment screening processes to filter out inappropriate job applicants:

- checks are carried out to verify the applicant's identity, employment history and qualifications
- Job applicants selected for interview are subjected to rigorous questioning
- References are checked, not only for competence but also for suitability to work with children
- All teachers must be VIT registered and
- All other employees, volunteers and contractors must have a positive Working with Children Check (WWCC) Assessment Notice.



## INDUCTION AND TRAINING

New staff undergo induction which emphasises duty of care, child protection, and the statutory duty to report child abuse.

All staff undergo regular training in recognising symptoms of child abuse, duty to report and reporting procedures. All staff are required to complete an online training module on preventing and reporting child abuse and to update their knowledge and skills from time to time.

## STAFF CODE OF CONDUCT

Balcombe Grammar has a Staff Code of Conduct which includes Guidelines for Balcombe Staff/Student Contact.

Relationship boundaries are clearly explained and staff are directed to avoid behaviours and actions which could place students and staff at risk of harm or of allegations of harm.

## DUTY STATEMENTS

All staff job descriptions include a statement concerning the staff member's duties and responsibilities with respect to child protection.

## VISITORS TO BALCOMBE

All visitors to Balcombe must be clearly identified, sign in to the visitor's book and wear a visitor's lanyard.

All visitors without a WWCC card are directly supervised by a Balcombe staff member who holds a current WWCC card.

## E-SAFETY

Balcombe has in place policies and guidelines to support and encourage cyber-safe behaviours. These include Acceptable Use policy and guidelines for both students and staff.

## RISK MANAGEMENT

Balcombe has clear strategies, including policies and procedures to

- Identify risks of child abuse and to mitigate those risks
- Detect suspected child abuse
- Safeguard the child and
- Report suspected child abuse to the appropriate authorities.

## **BULLYING**

Balcombe acknowledges that bullying is a serious issue in schools and can result in high levels of student anxiety with risk of serious harm to the students.

Emotional and physical wellbeing of students, including outlining ways of reporting and seeking assistance with bullying, is prioritised and placed developmentally appropriately into the F-12 curriculum at Balcombe Grammar.

## **STUDENT SUPPORT AND COUNSELLING**

Balcombe has in place a process for the early detection of students at risk and a framework of support and counselling.

## **REPORTING CHILD ABUSE**

All teachers understand their mandatory reporting obligations.

All staff and volunteers are aware of their responsibility to protect the child and young people and to report child abuse.

All parents and other adult members of Balcombe community have been informed of their legal obligation to inform the police if they form a reasonable belief that a sexual offence has been committed by an adult against a child under 16.

## **STUDENT EMPOWERMENT**

Balcombe has strategies in place to empower its students through building

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

## **SUPPORTING DOCUMENTS**

- Balcombe Grammar School, Staff Code of Conduct
- Balcombe Grammar School, Working with Children Check Policy
- Balcombe Grammar School, Acceptable Use Policy
- Balcombe Grammar School, Bullying and Harassment Policy
- Balcombe Grammar School, Behaviour Management Guidelines
- Balcombe Grammar School, Staff Request Student Support Form
- Balcombe Grammar School, Notification of Concern Form
- Balcombe Grammar School, Mandatory Reporting Policy



## LEGISLATION

- Crimes Act 1958 Vic
- Education and Training Reform Act 2006
- Education and Training Reform Amendment (Child Safe Schools) Act 2015
- Ministerial Order 870
- Children Youth and Families Act 2005 (as amended)
- Working with Children Act 2005
- Charter of Human Rights and Responsibilities Act 2006
- Crimes Act (Vic) incorporating Crimes Amendment (Protection of Children) Act 2014
- Victorian Institute of Teaching Act 2001
- National Safe School Framework

## EVALUATION

<b>Document approved by</b>	The Board of CSV Limited
<b>Approval date</b>	4 August 2016
<b>Review date</b>	4 August 2017

<sup>i</sup> Section 1.1.3(1) of the Education and Training Reform Act 2006

"**child abuse**" includes—

- (a) any act committed against a child involving—
  - (i) a sexual offence; or
  - (ii) an offence under section 49B(2) of the **Crimes Act 1958 (grooming)**; and
- (b) the infliction, on a child, of —
  - (i) physical violence; or
  - (ii) serious emotional or psychological harm; or
- (c) serious neglect of a child".

<sup>ii</sup> "**child**" means a person who is under the age of 18 years, (Child Wellbeing and Safety Act 2005 - sect 3)

<sup>iii</sup> "**School environment**" means any physical or virtual place made available or authorised by the school governing authority for use by a child during or outside school hours, including

- (a) A campus of the school;
- (b) Online school environments (including email and internet systems); and
- (c) Other locations provided by the school for a child's use (including, without limitation, locations used for school camps, sporting events, competitions and other events).

<sup>iv</sup> Registered teachers have a mandatory obligation to report physical and sexual abuse. All other adult members of the community have a legal obligation to report sexual abuse.

<sup>v</sup> "**Child connected work**" means 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.