

Balcombe Grammar School has developed this Child Safety and Wellbeing Policy as an overarching document that provides key elements of our commitment to creating and maintaining a child safe culture and environment.

If you are a non-English speaker who needs help to understand this Policy, please contact the Head of Faith and Wellbeing.

This Policy forms the foundation of the School's procedures, practices and processes and ultimately the School's culture with respect to child safety and wellbeing. It informs our school community of everyone's obligations to act safely and appropriately towards children and young people. It is publicly available at:

<https://www.balcombegrammar.vic.edu.au/about-us/governance/school-policies/?preview=true>

The School's Child Safe Policy has been approved and endorsed by the CSV Board and is regularly reviewed by the School's Leadership Team in consultation with the Balcombe Consultative Committee.

Objectives

This Policy provides the framework for the School's:

- commitment to creating and maintaining a child safe and child friendly organisation where children and young people are and feel safe
- implementation of child-safe environment work systems, practices, policies and procedures that promote and maintain child safety and wellbeing
- creation of a culturally safe environment for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children and their families
- maintenance of a positive and robust child safety and wellbeing culture which is championed and modelled at all levels
- promotion and open discussion of child safety and wellbeing issues
- compliance with all laws, regulations and standards relevant to child safety in Victoria, including our approach to implementing Ministerial Order 1359, which sets out how the Victorian Child Safe Standards apply in school environments.¹

Scope

This Policy:

- applies to all school staff, volunteers and contractors (whether or not they work in direct contact with students) and to CSV Board members where indicated
- applies in all physical and online school environments used by students during or outside of school hours, including other locations provided for a student's use (for example, a school camp) and those provided through third-party providers
- should be read together with the School's Child Safety Code of Conduct and all other child safety and wellbeing policies and procedures.

Definitions

The following terms in this Policy have specific definitions (and consistent with Victorian law where indicated):

¹ *Implementing the Child Safe Standards – Managing the Risk of Child Abuse in Schools and School Boarding Premises*, Ministerial Order No. 1359 made pursuant to the *Education and Training Reform Act 2006* (Vic) operative from 1 July 2022. The *Child Safe Standards* are as gazetted by the Minister for Child Protection pursuant to the *Child Wellbeing and Safety Act 2005* (Vic).



Child	<p>Child means a child or young person who is under the age of 18 years.</p> <p>Source: <i>Child Wellbeing and Safety Act 2005 (Vic)</i></p>
Child abuse	<p>Child abuse includes:</p> <p>a) any act committed against a child involving:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. a sexual offence 2. grooming offences under section 49M(1) of the Crimes Act 1958 <p>b) the infliction, on a child, of:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. physical violence 2. serious emotional or psychological harm <p>c) the serious neglect of a child including exposure to family violence and its effects.</p> <p>Source: <i>Child Wellbeing and Safety Act 2005 (Vic)</i></p>
Child-connected work	<p>Child-connected work means:</p> <p>a) 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</p> <p>Source: <i>Ministerial Order 1359</i></p>
Child-related work	<p>Child-related work means:</p> <p>a) work at or for a service, body or place, or that involves a specified activity; and</p> <p>b) that usually involves direct contact with a child.</p> <p>Educational institutions are specified for the purpose of a).</p> <p>Source: <i>Worker Screening Act 2020 (Vic)</i></p>
Child safety	<p>Child safety includes 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 suspicions, incidents, disclosures or allegations of child abuse.</p> <p>Source: <i>Ministerial Order 1359</i></p>
Child Safety Champion / Child Safety Officers	<p>Child Safety Champion / Child Safety Officers are appointed by the school as the first point of contact to provide advice and support to children, parents, staff, contractors and volunteers regarding the safety and wellbeing of children when dealing with the school.</p> <p>The role and responsibilities of the Child Safety Champion / Child Safety Officers will include:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Acting as a point of contact for both staff and students. 2. Taking action when any child protection incidents are reported to them, including providing support to affected members of the school community. 3. Being responsible for reviewing the school's processes and procedures to respond to allegations or disclosures. <p>The responsibilities of the Child Safety Champion are outlined at Guidance for child safety champions.</p>
Direct contact	<p>Direct contact in relation to child-related work, means any contact between a person and a child that involves-</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • physical contact; or • face to face contact; or • contact by post or other written communication; or • contact by telephone or other oral communication; or • contact by email or other electronic communication. <p>Source: <i>Worker Screening Act 2020 (Vic)</i></p>
School environment	<p>School environment means any of the following physical, online or virtual places, used during or outside school hours:</p>



	<p>a) A campus of the school</p> <p>b) Online or virtual school environments made available or authorised by the school governing authority for use by a child or student (including email, intranet systems, software applications, collaboration tools, and online services)</p> <p>c) Other locations provided by the school or through a third-party provider for a child or student to use including, but not limited to, locations used for:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. camps 2. delivery of education and training such as registered training organisations, TAFEs, non-school senior secondary providers or another school; or 3. sporting events, excursions, competitions or other events. <p>Source: Ministerial Order 1359</p>
School governing authority	<p>School governing authority means:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> a) the proprietor of a school, including a person authorised to act for or on behalf of the proprietor; b) the governing body for a school (however described), as authorised by the proprietor of a school or the <i>Education Training and Reform Act 2006</i> (Vic); or c) the principal, as authorised by the proprietor of a school, the school governing body, or the <i>Education Training and Reform Act 2006</i> (Vic). <p>Source: Ministerial Order 1359</p>
School staff	<p>School staff in a non-Government school means an individual working in a school environment who is:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. directly engaged or employed by a school governing authority 2. 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 3. a minister of religion, a religious leader or an employee or officer of a religious body associated with the school. <p>Source: Ministerial Order 1359</p>
Student	<p>Student means a person who is enrolled at or attends the school</p> <p>Source: Ministerial Order 1359</p>
Volunteer	<p>Volunteer means a person who performs work without remuneration or reward for the school in the school environment.</p> <p>Source: Ministerial Order 1359</p>
Vulnerable students	<p>Vulnerable students may include but are not limited to those who:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> a) are deemed vulnerable by a government agency, funded family service or family violence service, or assessed as requiring education and care outside the family home b) are identified as vulnerable as a result of a referral from a government agency, funded family service or family violence service, homeless or youth justice service; or mental health or other health service c) self-identify or are identified by school staff as a member of a vulnerable cohort. <p>Source: Ministerial Order 1359</p>

Statement of Commitment to Child Safety

Balcombe Grammar School is committed to providing a child safe and child friendly environment, where children and young people are safe and feel safe to actively participate in decisions that affect their lives. We promote



positive relationships between students and adults and between students and their peers. These relationships are based on trust and respect. Our child safe policies, strategies and practices are inclusive of the needs of all children and students.

At Balcombe Grammar School we have no tolerance for child abuse and are committed to acting in children's best interests and keeping them safe from harm. The School regards its child safety responsibilities with the utmost importance. We take proactive steps to identify and manage any risks of harm to students in our school environments. When child safety concerns are raised or identified, the School treats these seriously and responds promptly and thoroughly.

At Balcombe Grammar School particular attention is given to the child safety needs of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students, those from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds, international students, students with disabilities, those unable to live at home, children and young people who identify as lesbian, gay, bisexual, trans and gender diverse, intersex and queer (**LGBTQIA+**) and other students experiencing risk or are vulnerable students. Inappropriate or harmful behaviour targeting students based on these or other characteristics, such as racism or homophobia, are not tolerated at Balcombe Grammar School and any instances identified will be addressed with appropriate consequences.

Child safety is a shared responsibility. Every person involved with the School has an important role in promoting child safety and wellbeing and promptly raising any issues or concerns about a child's safety. We regularly review our child safe practices, and seeking input from our students, families, staff, and volunteers to inform our ongoing strategies.

Child Safety Values and Principles

The School's commitment to child safety is based on the following overarching principles that guide the development and regular review of our work systems, practices, policies and procedures to promote and maintain child safety and wellbeing and protect children from abuse.

1. All children have the right to be safe.
2. The welfare and best interests of the child are paramount.
3. The views of the child and a child's privacy must be respected.
4. Clear expectations for appropriate behaviour with children are established in our Child Safety Code of Conduct and Staff and Student Professional Boundaries Policy.
5. The safety of children is dependent upon the existence of a child safe culture.
6. Child safety awareness is promoted and openly discussed within our School community.
7. Procedures are in place to screen all staff, volunteers, and external education providers who have direct contact with children.
8. Child safety and protection is everyone's responsibility.
9. Child safety training is mandatory for all CSV Board members, school staff and volunteers who have direct contact with children.
10. Procedures for responding to alleged or suspected incidents of child abuse are simple and accessible for all members of the School community via our website.
11. Children from culturally or linguistically diverse backgrounds have the right to special care and support including those who identify as Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander.
12. Children who have any kind of disability have the right to special care and support.

Child Safety Program

Balcombe Grammar School is committed to the effective implementation of our Child Safety Program and ensuring that it is appropriately reviewed and updated. We develop and implement risk management strategies that focus on preventing, identifying and mitigating risks related to child safety and wellbeing in both the physical and online environment. We record identified risks relating to child abuse in our Child Safety Risk Register, including risk controls

and treatments to reduce or remove risks. We monitor and review the risks related to child safety and wellbeing and the effectiveness of the implementation of the risks controls annually.

Our Child Safety Program relates to all aspects of protecting children from abuse and establishes work systems, practices, policies and procedures to protect children from child abuse. It includes:

- clear information as to what constitutes child abuse and associated key risk indicators
- clear procedures for responding to suspicions, incidents, disclosures and allegations of child abuse
- strategies to support, encourage and enable staff, volunteers, contractors, external education providers, parents, carers and students to understand, identify, discuss and disclose child safety matters
- procedures for recruiting and screening CSV Board members, staff, direct contact volunteers, contractors and external education providers
- wellbeing strategies designed to empower students and keep them safe
- policies with respect to cultural safety, diversity and equity and students with disabilities
- a child safety training program
- information regarding the steps to take after a disclosure of abuse to protect, support and assist children
- guidelines with respect to record keeping and confidentiality
- policies to ensure compliance with all relevant laws, regulations and standards, including Ministerial Order 1359 and the Victorian Child Safe Standards
- a system for oversight, monitoring, continuous review and improvement.

As part of our Child Safety Program, we apply robust child safe recruitment, induction, training and supervision practices as appropriate to ensure the suitability of people engaged in child-connected work.

Responsibilities

Child safety is everyone's responsibility. At Balcombe Grammar School, the CSV Board members, Balcombe Consultative Committee members and school staff, as well as volunteers, have a shared responsibility for contributing to the safety and protection of children. Specific responsibilities include:

CSV Board

Each member of the CSV Board is required to ensure that appropriate resources are made available so the School's Child Safety and Wellbeing Policy and the Child Safety Program are effectively implemented and are responsible for holding the Principal and the Leadership Team (comprised of the Principal, Executive Director Corporate Services, Deputy Principal – Primary, Deputy Principal – Secondary, Head of Teaching & Learning, Head of School Operations and the Health of Faith and Wellbeing) accountable for ensuring a strong child safety culture is created and maintained and that policies and procedures effectively developed and implemented in accordance with Ministerial Order 1359.

The Principal and Leadership Team

The Principal and Leadership Team is responsible, and will be accountable for, taking all practical measures to ensure that this Policy and the School's Child Safety Program are developed and implemented effectively in accordance with Ministerial Order 1359 and that a strong and sustainable child safety culture is created and maintained.

The Principal and Leadership Team will:

- ensure effective child safety and wellbeing governance, policies, procedures, codes and practices are in place and followed



- model a child safe culture that facilitates the active participation of students, families and staff in promoting and improving child safety, cultural safety and wellbeing
- enable inclusive practices where the diverse needs of all students are considered
- reinforce high standards of respectful behaviour between students and adults, and between students
- promote regular open discussion on child safety issues within the school community including at leadership team meetings, staff meetings and CSV Board meetings
- facilitate regular professional learning for staff and volunteers (where appropriate) to build deeper understandings of child safety, cultural safety, student wellbeing and prevention of responding to abuse
- create an environment where child safety complaints and concerns are readily raised, and no one is discouraged from reporting an allegation of child abuse to relevant authorities.

School Staff and Volunteers

All school staff and volunteers are required to be familiar with the content of our Child Safety and Wellbeing Policy and our Child Safety Program and their legal obligations with respect to the reporting of child abuse. It is each individual's responsibility to be aware of key risk indicators of child abuse, to be observant, and to raise any concerns they may have relating to child abuse with one of the School's Child Protection Champions (**CPCs**).

All school staff and volunteers will:

- participate in child safety and wellbeing induction and training provided by the School or the Department of Education and Training, and always follow the School's child safety and wellbeing policies and procedures
- act in accordance with our Child Safety Code of Conduct
- identify and raise concerns about child safety issues in accordance with our Child Safety Responding and Reporting Obligations Policy and Procedures, including following the [Four Critical Actions for Schools](#)
- ensure students' views are taken seriously and their voices are heard about decisions that affect their lives
- implement inclusive practices that respond to the diverse needs of students.

The School's CPCs

A number of staff members have been nominated as the School's CPCs. Our CPCs receive additional specialised training with respect to child safety issues. They are a first point of contact for raising child safety concerns within the school environment. They are also responsible for championing child safety and wellbeing within the school community and assisting in coordinating responses to child safety incidents.

Child Safety Champion

Balcombe Grammar School has a nominated a Child Safety Champion (Head of Faith & Wellbeing) to support the Principal to implement our child safety policies and practices, including school staff and volunteer training.

Our Principal and Head of Faith and Wellbeing are a first point of contact for child safety concerns or queries and for coordinating responses to child safety incidents.

The responsibilities of the Child Safety Champion are outlined at [Guidance for child safety champions](#). In addition to these roles:

- The Head of Faith & Wellbeing is responsible for monitoring the school's compliance with the Child Safety and Wellbeing Policy. Anyone in our school community should approach the Head of Faith and Wellbeing if they have any concerns about the school's compliance with the Child Safety and Wellbeing Policy.
- The Principal is responsible for informing the school community about this policy, and making it publicly available
- Other specific roles and responsibilities are named in 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 Child Safety Risk Register.

Our school has also established a Child Safety and Wellbeing Team and a Student Reference Group on child safety. The Child Safety and Wellbeing Team meet regularly to identify and respond to any ongoing matters related to child safety and wellbeing. The Student Reference Group provides an opportunity for students to provide input into school strategies.

Our Risk Management Committee monitors the Child Safety Risk Register every 6 months.

CSV Board

In performing the functions and powers given to them under the *Education and Training Reform Act 2006* (Vic), CSV Board members will:

- champion and promote a child safe culture with the broader school community
- ensure that child safety is a regular agenda item at CSV Board meetings
- undertake annual training on child safety
- approve updates to, and act in accordance with the Child Safety Code of Conduct to the extent that it applies to CSV Board employees and members
- when hiring CSV Board employees, ensure that selection, supervision, and management practices are child safe.

Contractors and School Facility Users,

All contractors who are not school staff are responsible for contributing to the safety and protection of children in the school environment.

Examples of contractors who are not school staff include (but are not limited to) external education providers 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.

Individuals 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 (**school facility users**), such as music teachers and other extra-curricular teachers and instructors, are responsible for contributing to the safety and protection of children in the School environment.

All contractors and school facility users are required by the School to be familiar with our Child Safety and Wellbeing Policy and Child Safety Code of Conduct.

Balcombe Grammar School may include this requirement in any written agreement between it and the contractor or school facility user.

Child Safety Code of Conduct

Balcombe Grammar School's Child Safety Code of Conduct sets the boundaries and expectations for appropriate behaviours between adults and students. We ensure that students also know what is acceptable and what is not acceptable so that they can be clear and confident about what to expect from adults at the School.

It also clarifies behaviours that are not acceptable in our physical and online environments. It pays particular attention to balancing the need to identify and mitigate risks in both physical and online school environments with ensuring that student rights to privacy, access to information, social connections and learning opportunities are not compromised.

The Child Safety Code of Conduct also includes processes to report inappropriate behaviour and our Online Conduct and Online Safety Policy, also available at www.balcombegrammar.vic.edu.au



Managing Risks to Child Safety and Wellbeing

At Balcombe Grammar School we identify, assess and manage risks to child safety and wellbeing in our physical and online school environments. These risks are managed through our child safety and wellbeing policies, procedures and practices and in our activity specific risk registers, such as those we develop for off-site overnight camps, adventure activities and facilities and services we contract through third party providers for student use (for example, ensuring that procurement policies for facilities and services from third parties ensure the safety of children and students).

Our Child Safety Risk Register is used to record any identified risks related to child abuse alongside actions in place to manage those risks. The Principal and Leadership Team will monitor and evaluate the effectiveness of the actions in the Child Safety Risk Register at least annually.

Establishing a Culturally Safe Environment

Balcombe Grammar School is committed to establishing an inclusive and culturally safe school in which the diverse and unique identities and experiences of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children and young people and the strengths of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander culture, values and practices are respected and valued.

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 Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander culture, identity and safety and actively create opportunities for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students and the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander community to have a voice and presence in our school planning, policies, and activities.

We have developed and endorsed a statement that details the following strategies and actions Balcombe Grammar will take to promote cultural safety in our School community to ensure:

- the ability of students to express their culture and enjoy their cultural rights is encouraged and actively supported
- strategies are embedded within our School that equip our school staff, students, volunteers and the School community to acknowledge and appreciate the strengths of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander culture and understand its importance to the wellbeing of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students
- measures have been adopted to ensure racism is identified, confronted and not tolerated and any instances within the school environment are addressed with appropriate consequences
- the active support and facilitation of participation and inclusion by Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students and their families
- our work systems, policies, procedures and processes, taken together, creates a culturally safe and inclusive environment and meet the needs of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students and their families.
- Aboriginal culture is brought into the everyday life of the school by displaying the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Island flag and acknowledgement of country at all assemblies
- that from F-10 the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander history and culture is imbedded in the curriculum
- regular events are held to acknowledge and provide more information to our students on Aboriginal and Torres Strait history and culture
- our values of inclusion and compassion are part of our everyday school life which links to creating a safe environment for all students
- regular discussions occur at the Student Wellbeing Committee to actively involve them in providing a culturally safe environment
- all students and staff are fully informed of the reconciliation action plan (currently a work in progress) that Balcombe will have in place by the end of 2023
- the school recognised key awareness days throughout the year

Student Empowerment

To support child safety and wellbeing, Balcombe Grammar School works to create an inclusive and supportive environment that encourages students and families to contribute to our child safety approach and understand their rights and their responsibilities.

We have strategies in place to develop a culture that facilitates participation, is responsive to student input and the provision of opportunities for student participation and strengthens confidence and engagement through being responsive to their contributions.

Respectful relationships between students are reinforced and we encourage strong friendships and peer support in the School to ensure a sense of belonging and to help students feel safe and be less isolated. This is done through the curriculum in our Faith and Wellbeing program, regular promotion of the student code of conduct, communication and discussions at our student wellbeing group and by displaying our school values throughout the school.

We inform students of their rights, including to safety, information and participation, through educative sessions within our Faith and Wellbeing program and give them the skills and confidence to recognise unsafe situations with adults or other students and to speak up and act on concerns relating to themselves or their peers.

Balcombe Grammar School staff are attuned to signs of harm and facilitate child-friendly ways of students to express their views, participate in decision-making and raise their concerns. We ensure our students know who to talk to if they are worried or feeling unsafe and we encourage them to share concerns with a trusted adult at any time. Students and families can also access information on how to report concerns from any member of the wellbeing team, our counselling staff, Heads of Year or the Head of Faith and Wellbeing.

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

We ensure students have access to age-appropriate sex abuse prevention programs and relevant related information.

Family Engagement

Families and carers of Balcombe Grammar School students are encouraged to participate in decisions related to child safety and wellbeing that affect their child. Families, carers and the School community also have an important role in monitoring and promoting children's safety and wellbeing and helping children to raise any concerns.

We openly communicate with families, carers and the School community about our child safe approach and ensure the accessibility of relevant information.

To support family and carer engagement, Balcombe Grammar School is committed to providing families, carers and the School community with accessible information about the School's child safe policies and practices and involving them in our approach to child safety and wellbeing.

We will create opportunities for families and carers to have input into the development and review of our child safety and wellbeing policies and practices and encourage them to raise any concerns and ideas for improvement.

We do this by:

- seeking input from families through the Schools CSV Board
- staff, student and parent information sessions
- community survey's
- direct written correspondence and the parent portal - BGSHub
- all of our child safety policies and procedures will be available for students and parents at www.balcombegrammar.vic.edu.au
- newsletters, direct written correspondence and the parent portal - BGSHub will inform families and the school community about any significant updates to our child safety policies or processes, and strategies or initiatives that we are taking to ensure student safety.
- PROTECT Child Safety posters will be displayed across the school

Diversity and Equity

Balcombe Grammar School celebrates the rich diversity of our students, families and community and promotes respectful environments that are free from discrimination. We ensure that equity is upheld and the diverse needs of our students are respected in policy and practice. Our focus is on wellbeing and growth for all.

We recognise that every child has unique skills, strengths and experiences to draw on.

We pay particular attention to individuals and groups of children and young people in the School community with additional and specific needs. This includes tailoring our child safety strategies and supports to the needs of:

- Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children and young people and providing and promoting a culturally safe environment for them
- children from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds
- children and young people with disabilities
- children unable to live at home or impacted by family violence
- international students
- children and young people who identify as LGBTQIA+.

Our Student Wellbeing and Engagement Policy provides information, support and complaint processes in ways that are culturally safe, accessible and easy to understand. It includes more information about the measures we have in place to support diversity and equity. These include ensuring that school staff contractors and volunteers and the School community understand the diverse circumstances of our students and provide support and respond appropriately.

Suitable Staff, Board Members and Volunteers

At Balcombe Grammar School we apply robust child safe recruitment, induction, training and supervision practices as appropriate to ensure that all school staff, contractors and volunteers are suitable to work with children. CSV Board members also have suitability requirements as set out below.

Staff recruitment

When recruiting staff, we follow the Department of Education and Training's recruitment policies and guidelines, available on the Policy and Advisory Library (PAL) at:

- [Recruitment in Schools](#)
- [Suitability for Employment Checks](#)
- [CSV Board Employment](#)
- [Contractor OHS Management](#).

We implement recruitment practices for staff and contractors engaged in child connected work that ensure:

- all job advertisements have a clear statement that sets out the job's requirements, duties and responsibilities regarding child safety and wellbeing and essential or relevant qualifications, experience and attributes in relation to child safety and wellbeing.
- all applicants for jobs are informed about the child safety practices, including the Code of Conduct
- we sight, verify and record the person's Working with Children clearance where required under the *Worker Screening Act 2020* (Vic) or equivalent background check such as a Victorian teaching registration and, where the person will be engaged in child-related work we collect and record:
 - proof of the person's identity and any professional or other qualifications
 - the person's history of working with children
 - references that address suitability for the job and working with children.
 - references that address suitability for the job and working with children.

Volunteer engagement

We implement engagement practices for volunteers engaged in child connected work, including that we:

- sight, verify and record the person's Working with Children clearances where required under the *Worker Screening Act 2020* (Vic) or equivalent background check
- consider the child safety risks relevant to the volunteer's role and if reasonable and appropriate, collect and record:
 - proof of the person's identity and any professional or other qualifications
 - the person's history of working with children
 - references that address suitability for the job and working with children.
 - references that address suitability for the job and working with children.
- make volunteers aware of the Child Safety and Wellbeing policy and Child Safety Code of Conduct.

Suitability of Volunteers

All volunteers are required to comply with our Volunteers Policy, which describes how we assess the suitability of prospective volunteers and outlines expectations in relation to child safety and wellbeing induction and training, and supervision and management.

Induction

All newly appointed school staff, CSV Board members and volunteers engaged in child-connected work receive an induction regarding child safety and wellbeing appropriate to their roles, including information about:

- the Child Safety Code of Conduct and, where relevant to the role, the Child Safety and Wellbeing Policy and the procedures for managing child abuse complaints and concerns
- awareness of their responsibilities to children and students, information sharing and reporting obligations and record-keeping obligations.

All newly appointed school staff will be expected to participate in our child safety and wellbeing induction program. The program will include a focus on:

- the Child Safety and Wellbeing Policy (this document)
- the Child Safety Code of Conduct
- the Child Safety Responding and Reporting Obligations (including Mandatory Reporting) Policy and Procedures and
- any other child safety and wellbeing information considered appropriate to the nature of the role.

Ongoing Supervision and Management

All staff and volunteers engaged in child-connected work will be supervised and managed appropriately to ensure that their behaviour towards children is safe and appropriate.

Inappropriate behaviour towards children and young people will be managed swiftly and in accordance with our school policies and our legal obligations. Child safety and wellbeing will be paramount.

Staff will be monitored and assessed to ensure their continuing suitability for child-connected work. This will be done by annual appraisals and annual staff growth plans

Child Safety Knowledge, Skills and Awareness

Ongoing training and education are essential to ensuring that staff understand their roles and responsibilities and develop their capacity to effectively address child safety and wellbeing matters.

In addition to the child safety and wellbeing induction, our staff will participate in a range of training and professional learning to equip them with the skills and knowledge necessary to maintain a child safe environment.

Staff child safety and wellbeing training will be delivered at least annually (or more frequently if required) and will include guidance on:

- the School's child safety and wellbeing policies, procedures, codes, and practices including this Policy, the Child Safety Code of Conduct and the School's procedures for responding to complaints and concerns relating to child abuse
- completing the [Protecting Children – Mandatory Reporting and Other Legal Obligations](#) online module annually
- recognising indicators of child harm including harm caused by other children and students
- responding effectively to issues of child safety and wellbeing and supporting colleagues who disclose harm
- how to build culturally safe environments for children and students
- information sharing and record keeping obligations
- how to identify and mitigate child safety and wellbeing risks in physical and online environments without compromising a child or student's right to privacy, access to information, social connections and learning opportunities.

Other professional learning and training on child safety and wellbeing, for example, training for our volunteers, will be tailored to specific roles and responsibilities and any identified or emerging needs or issues in order to equip them with the knowledge, skills and awareness required to keep students safe.

Staff will be required to complete an annual online child safe training module together with annual training provided by an external partner to ensure that they are kept up to date with all child safety and wellbeing requirements.

CSV Board and Balcombe Consultative Committee Training and Education

To ensure our CSV Board and Balcombe Consultative Committee 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 environment, CSV Board and Balcombe Consultative Committee are trained at least annually or more frequently if required. 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 environment
- Balcombe Grammar School's child safety and wellbeing policies, procedures, codes and practices.

Complaints and Reporting Processes

Balcombe Grammar School ensures our processes for complaints and concerns are child focused.

We foster a culture that encourages staff, contractors, volunteers, students, parents and our School community to raise concerns and complaints. This makes it more difficult for breaches of the code of conduct, misconduct or child abuse to occur and remain hidden.

We have clear pathways for raising complaints and concerns and responding and this is documented in our School's Complaints & Grievances Policy.

We ensure complaints are taken seriously and responded to promptly and thoroughly. How we handle complaints is set out in our Complaints & Grievances Policy in an accessible, child focused, culturally safe and easy to understand way. The Policy outlines:

- the process for making a complaint about the School or any person within the School (for example, staff, volunteers, contractors, families, children or students)
- the roles and responsibilities of leadership, school staff and volunteers in relation to handling complaints
- 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
- how we address reporting of complaints and concerns to the School leadership and other relevant authorities whether or not the law requires responding and co-operation with law enforcement
- how we ensure all record keeping, reporting, private and employment law obligations are met when responding to complaints and concerns.

Our Complaints & Grievances Policy can be found at www.balcombegrammar.vic.edu.au

Balcombe Grammar School has a clear procedure for responding to complaints or concerns relating to child abuse.

If there is an incident, disclosure, allegation or suspicion of child abuse, all staff, contractors and volunteers (including CSV Board and School CSV Board employees) must follow our Child Safety Responding and Reporting Obligations Policy and Procedures.

Our Child Safety Responding and Reporting Obligations Policy and Procedures:

- cover all forms of abuse
- are sensitive to the diversity and characteristics of our School community
- are publicly available
- are accessible to children, 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 any other persons while connected to the School environment
- identify roles and responsibilities of school staff and leadership to act and report on complaints and concerns relating to child abuse
- do not displace or discharge any other obligations that arise if a person reasonably believes a child is at risk of child abuse
- clearly describe the actions Balcombe Grammar School will take to respond to a complaint or concern relating to child abuse
- address reporting of complaints and concerns to relevant authorities, whether or not the law requires reporting, and co-operation with law enforcement
- ensure all record keeping, reporting, privacy and employment law obligations are met when responding to complaints and concerns.

Our Child Safety Responding and Reporting Obligations Policy can be found at www.balcombegrammar.vic.edu.au

As soon as any immediate health and safety concerns are addressed, and relevant Balcombe Grammar School staff members have been informed, we will ensure the School follows:

- the [Four Critical Actions](#) for complaints and concerns relating to adult behaviour towards a child
- the [Four Critical Actions: Student Sexual Offending](#) for complaints and concerns relating to student sexual offending.

Our Student Wellbeing and Engagement Policy and Bullying Prevention & Intervention Policy cover complaints and concerns relating to student physical violence or other harmful behaviours.

Reporting Child Abuse Concerns

Our Child Safety Program provides detailed guidance for the Board, staff and Direct Contact Volunteers as to how to identify key risk indicators of child abuse and how to report child abuse concerns to our School's nominated Child Safety Champion's. It also contains detailed procedures with respect to the reporting of child abuse incidents to relevant authorities.

Staff, Third Party Contractors, External Education Providers, Volunteers, students, parents/carers and other community members who have concerns that a child may be subject to abuse or grooming are asked to contact the School's Child Safety Champion's. At Balcombe Grammar School the CPCs are the Principal and The Head of Faith & Wellbeing

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

Whenever there are concerns that a child is in immediate danger the Police should be called on 000.

Communications

Balcombe Grammar School is committed to communicating our child safety strategies to our School community through:

- ensuring that key child safety and wellbeing policies are available on our website, including this Policy, the Child Safety Code of Conduct, and the Child Safety Responding and Reporting Obligations (including Mandatory Reporting) Policy and Procedure
- displaying PROTECT posters around the school
- updates in the School newsletter and direct written parent communication as required.
- ensuring that child safety is a regular agenda item at, Principal and Leadership Team meetings, staff meetings, CSV Board meetings and Consultative Committee meetings.

Privacy and Information Sharing

Balcombe Grammar School collects, uses, and discloses information about children and their families in accordance with Victorian privacy laws, and other relevant laws. For information on how our school collects, uses and discloses information refer to our Privacy Policy.

Records Management

We acknowledge that good records management practices are a critical element of child safety and wellbeing and manage our records in accordance with our [Records Management – School Records Policy](#).

Child Safety and Wellbeing Review

Balcombe Grammar School is committed to the continuous improvement of our Child Safety Program. We have established processes for the review and ongoing improvement of our child safe policies, procedures, and practices for overall effectiveness and to ensure compliance with all child safety related laws, regulations and standards:

- the Principal and Head of the Faith and Wellbeing are responsible for reviewing and updating the Child Safety and Wellbeing Policy at least every two years or after any significant child safety incident, including seeking input from students, parents and carers and the School community
- we record and analyse all complaints, concerns, and safety incidents to identify causes and systemic failures and inform continuous improvement
- we act with transparency and share pertinent learnings and review outcomes with school staff and our School community.

Related Policies and Procedures

This Child Safety and Wellbeing Policy is to be read in conjunction with other related Balcombe Grammar School policies, procedures, and codes. These include our:

- Bullying Prevention Policy
- Child Safety Responding and Reporting Obligations Policy and Procedures
- Child Safety Code of Conduct
- Complaints Policy
- ICT Acceptable Use Policy
- Inclusion and Diversity Policy
- Student Wellbeing and Engagement Policy
- Visitors Policy
- Volunteers Policy

Approval

Created date	
Consultation	Consultative Committee – to be discussed at meeting in Term 4, 2022 Student Representative Group – to be discussed at meeting in Term 4, 2022
Endorsed by	CSV Board
Endorsed on	7 September 2022
Next review date	7 September 2024

This document was current as at 07/09/2022 AEST time. Updates to content may have been made since this date. Refer to your policy site for the latest version.

This content was last updated on 07/09/2022 AEST time.