

Balcombe Grammar School has developed this Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Policy and Procedures as an overarching document that provides key elements of our approach to ensure the cultural safety of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students and to respect and value these students and their families and their communities. It supports the School's procedures, practices, decision-making processes and ultimately the School's culture with respect to child safety.

Balcombe Grammar School's Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Policy and Procedure has been approved and endorsed by the School's Board and is regularly reviewed by the Board.

Objectives

Balcombe Grammar School values the importance of every Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander student feeling that their sense of self and their identity is valued by the people and environments that surround them. Cultural identity and cultural safety (defined below) are fundamental to a student's overall wellbeing and sense of safety.

The risk of abuse and other harm is heightened for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students when they do not feel culturally safe. Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students may be less likely to disclose abuse or other harm due to a lack of cultural safety and fear of authorities intruding into their family and community, based on historical experiences of systemic racism and abuse.

Creating a culturally safe organisation for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students requires a willingness to learn, understand and respond to the diversity of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander culture and to empower participation in decision-making at the School.

This Policy and its Procedures set out how the School promotes the cultural safety of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students as required by the Victorian Child Safe Standards and Ministerial Order 1359, and how it meets those aspects of the National Catholic Safeguarding Standards and the EREA Child Safeguarding Standards Framework that relate to partnering with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander families, carers and communities and promoting equity and respecting diversity.

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.

At Balcombe Grammar School we have a zero 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 and as such, is committed to providing the necessary resources to ensure compliance with all relevant child safety laws and regulations and maintain a child safe culture.

Principles

Balcombe Grammar School is committed to ensuring the safety, wellbeing, and participation of all children and young people under our care. We have zero tolerance for child abuse.

Balcombe Grammar School has a moral, legal and mission-driven responsibility to create nurturing school environments where children and young people are respected and their voices heard, and where they are safe and feel safe.

Ministerial Order 1359 and the School's Child Safety Policy and Procedures, set out the principles that guide Balcombe Grammar School in the development and regular review of the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Students Policy and Procedures (Child Safeguarding).

Scope

This Policy and its Procedures apply to all Staff, Volunteers and Contractors.

They apply in all School environments, including physical, virtual and online environments, and on-site and off-site School grounds (e.g. extra-curricular activities such as sport and other programs, camps and excursions, interstate and overseas).

Definitions

Definitions of particular terms used in this Policy and its Procedures can be found in **Child Safeguarding Program Definitions**.

Cultural Safety: or a “**culturally safe**” environment, is a concept that goes beyond cultural awareness (knowledge and understanding of cultural differences and history) and cultural competence (culturally sensitive behaviour). It is about creating an environment where Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people are not only treated in a culturally respectful manner but are also empowered to actively participate and supported to carry out culturally significant tasks.

Responsibilities

In addition to relevant roles and responsibilities as set out in Child Safeguarding Responsibilities, the following people have particular responsibilities under this Policy and its Procedures.

Role	Responsibilities
Principal	The Principal is responsible for implementing this Policy and its Procedures.
Head of Faith & Wellbeing	The Head of Faith & Wellbeing is responsible for managing the involvement of relevant communities in School decisions and reviews

Balcombe Grammar School's Policy

- Balcombe Grammar School values and respects the cultural diversity of our students and is committed to ensuring that the backgrounds of all students are sensitively recognised, catered for, celebrated and valued so that cultural differences do not compromise students' safety and wellbeing.
- The School:
 - identifies children from Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander backgrounds when they are enrolled in the School
 - employs appropriate strategies to ensure the safety of these children as required
 - encourages participation and empowerment of these children, their families and their communities in the development of these strategies
 - considers these children when developing and implementing policies and procedures related to child safeguarding at the School
 - educates our Staff about cultural safety and the strategies and procedures that we have employed
 - recognises that approaches to parenting vary considerably across culturally diverse groups, however, the safety of the student should always be the main consideration.
- The School implements a number of strategies and initiatives, as set out in the Procedures below, to ensure that the School is a culturally safe environment for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students.

Procedures

The strategies and initiatives that Balcombe Grammar School implements to ensure that the School is a culturally safe environment for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students include:

- talking with local Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people and organisations with Reconciliation Action Plans or Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander-inclusive policies for guidance on how the School can continue to be culturally safe
- making contact and engaging with local Traditional Owner groups and/or Registered Aboriginal Party
- recognising the continuing negative impacts of past government policies and practices on Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people
- seeking and taking into account cultural expert advice when developing and reviewing strategies for addressing child safety, child safety information and processes for students and families to raise child safety concerns
- actively engaging with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students and their families about how they would like to be involved by:
 - providing an environment where they feel safe and valued
 - creating opportunities for families to voice concerns and to help define solutions
 - holding informal meetings or surveys to proactively seek and incorporate feedback on existing systems and policies
 - asking about the best way to provide information to students and their families to foster conversations around child safety
- seeking to engage a mix of Staff, Volunteers and Contractors that is reflective of the diversity in the School community by:
 - engaging Staff, Volunteers and Contractors at every level that are representative of the School community
 - embedding targets for diversity into the School's governance structures and strategies
- acknowledging the National Government Apology to Australia's Indigenous People for the forced removal of Aboriginal children (Sorry Day)
- coordinating the School's participation in National Aborigines and Islanders Day Observance Committee (NAIDOC) Week, which celebrates Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander cultures
- creating a physical environment that is respectful of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander cultures, including:
 - a physical acknowledgement of the Traditional Owners of the land that the School is built on
 - the display of the Aboriginal flag
 - developing information that is culturally appropriate and includes images portraying cultural diversity
 - creating multilingual resources, as needed.

Implementation

This Policy and its Procedures are made available to all Staff, Volunteers, and Contractors, via the School's intranet. They are included in induction training and in ongoing refresher training for Staff and relevant Volunteers and Contractors. For more information, refer to **Child Safeguarding Training and Supervision Policy and Procedures**. They are made available to parents/carers, students and the wider School community in summary in our **Child Safeguarding (Safety and Protection) Policy and Procedures** as well as newsletters, direct written correspondence and the parent portal (BGSHub).

They are also available in hard copy by request.

Breach of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Policy and Procedures (Child Safeguarding)

Balcombe Grammar School enforces this Policy and its Procedures. In the event of any non-compliance, we will instigate a review that may result in a range of measures including (depending on the severity of the breach):

- remedial education
- counselling
- increased supervision
- the restriction of duties
- appointment to an alternate role
- suspension
- in the case of serious breaches, termination of employment, contract or engagement.

For more information, refer to **Compliance and Breach (Child Safeguarding) Policy and Procedures**.

Policy and Procedure Review

A review of the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Students Policy and Procedures (Child Safeguarding) is conducted every two years or earlier if required, such as due to changes in legislation.

The CSV Board is responsible for ensuring that this Policy is reviewed and updated as needed and for approving this Policy.

Source of Obligation

Balcombe Grammar School Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Students Policy and Procedures (Child Safeguarding) implements the following:

- Victorian Child Safe Standards, Standards 1 and 5
- Ministerial Order 1359, Clause 5

Balcombe Grammar Schools Policy and Procedure Linkages

- Child Safeguarding (Safety and Protection) Policy and Procedures
- Student Participation and Empowerment Policy and Procedures
- Regular Reviews and Continuous Improvement Policy and Procedures
- Disability Discrimination Policy

Related Forms and Documents

- Reconciliation action plan currently in development
- Student code of conduct
- Staff code of conduct

References and Resources

National Office for Child Safety, SNAICC, and Victorian Aboriginal Child Care Agency, [Keeping our Kids Safe: Cultural Safety and the National Principles for Child Safe Organisations](#), 2021



Policy Administration

Status	Subject to final Board Approval
Person Responsible	The Principal
Approver(s)	The CSV Board is responsible for ensuring that the policy and its procedures are reviewed and updated as needed, and for approving this policy
Approval Date	TBC
Version Number	1.0
Version History	Created 2022
Review Frequency	A review of this policy and its procedures is conducted at least every 2 years or earlier if required, such as due to changes in legislation
Next Review Date	January 2023
Risk Rating	High
Location	CompliSpace