

ABORIGINAL AND TORRES STRAIT ISLANDER POLICY AND PROCEDURES



BALCOMBE
GRAMMAR SCHOOL

This **Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Policy and Procedures (Policy)** outlines how Balcombe Grammar School promotes the cultural safety of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students. It has been developed in accordance with the Victorian Child Safe Standards and Ministerial Order 1359, *Implementing the Child Safe Standards – Managing the Risk of Child Abuse in Schools and School Boarding Premises*, made under the *Education and Training Reform Act 2006 (Vic)*.

This Policy is publicly available on our website, along with other child safety and wellbeing policies and procedures. This includes our **Child Safety Dictionary**, which lists the key definitions used in these policies and procedures.

If you would like a paper copy of this Policy or are a non-English speaker who needs help to understand this Policy, please contact Natalie Kurelja – Head of Faith & Wellbeing.

Objectives

Balcombe Grammar School understands 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 are fundamental to a student's overall wellbeing and sense of safety.

We acknowledge that:

- Cultural safety means the School will provide safe, nurturing and positive environments for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islanders students, where they are comfortable with being themselves, expressing their culture and spiritual and belief systems and strongly supported to do so through our respect for their Aboriginality and our encouragement of their sense of self and identity.
- The risk of abuse and other harm is heightened for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students when they do not feel culturally safe. Based on historical experiences of systemic racism and abuse, they 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.
- Providing a culturally safe school for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students requires a willingness to learn, understand and respond to the diversity of their culture and ensuring that we empower their participation in decision-making at our School.

Scope

This Policy applies to all:

- Staff, Volunteers and Contractors
- School environments, including physical, virtual and online places on-site and off-site, including locations provided by Balcombe Grammar School through a third-party provider for a student to use (e.g. extra-curricular activities such as sport and other programs, camps and excursions, interstate and overseas).

Roles and Responsibilities

Roles and responsibilities for child safety are set out in our **Child Safety and Wellbeing Policy**. Additionally, under this Policy, the following people have particular responsibilities:

Role	Responsibilities
Principal	The Principal is responsible for implementing this Policy.
Head of Faith & Wellbeing	The Head of Faith & Wellbeing is responsible for managing the involvement of relevant communities in School decisions and reviews.
Staff, Volunteers and Contractors	Staff and relevant Volunteers and Contractors are responsible for undergoing child safety induction and training, including about this Policy, and for complying with this Policy. For more information, refer to our Child Safety Training and Supervision Policy and Procedures and the 'Breach' section below.

Policy

1. 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.
2. The School:
 - identifies children from Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander backgrounds when they enrol in the School
 - employs appropriate strategies to ensure the safety and wellbeing of these children and has zero tolerance of discrimination in any form
 - 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 child safety and wellbeing policies and procedures
 - educates our Staff, Volunteers and Contractors about cultural safety and the strategies and processes that we use
 - recognises that whilst approaches to parenting vary considerably across culturally diverse groups, the safety of the student will always be the main consideration.
3. The School implements a number of strategies and initiatives, as set out in '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 our 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 a 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
- being 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

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- o developing information that is culturally appropriate and includes images portraying cultural diversity
- o creating multilingual resources, as needed.

Breach

Compliance with this Policy is monitored and enforced by Balcombe Grammar School. Any instances of non-compliance are investigated and reviewed. This may result in a range of measures being taken, 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.

Review

Balcombe Grammar School is committed to the continuous improvement of our child safety and wellbeing policies and procedures.

We review this Policy at least every two years or earlier if required, such as due to changes in legislation or after any significant child safety incident. This includes seeking input from students, parents and carers and the Balcombe Grammar School community.

Related Policies and Procedures

- Child Safety Dictionary
- Child Safety Code of Conduct
- Child Safety and Wellbeing Policy and Procedures
- Child Safety Training and Supervision Policy and Procedures
- Family and Community Involvement Policy and Procedures
- Student Participation and Empowerment Policy and Procedures
- Regular Reviews and Continuous Improvement Policy and Procedures

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	Approved on 8 February, 2023
Person Responsible	The Principal
Approver(s)	The CSV Board is responsible for approval of the Policy and ensuring it is reviewed, updated as needed.
Approval Date	8 February, 2023
Version Number	1.0
Version History	Created 2022
Review Frequency	At least every 2 years or earlier if required.
Next Review Date	January 2024
Risk Rating	High
Location	CompliSpace