



Policy
Child Safe

Policy Information		Child Safe Policy											
Policy Number	1091	Date Drafted	May 2023					Date Implemented	June 2023				
Revision Dates													
Next Revision Date	5/25												

Rationale

Grace Christian College is a Christian college that conducts the entirety of its affairs in accordance with its Statement of Faith, which outlines God’s good purposes for his people and how Christians are to live their lives in obedience to Him. All policies flow from the College’s Statement of Faith. This policy establishes the College’s approach to implementing Ministerial Order 1359 of the Victorian Education and Training Reform Act 2006.

Purpose

1. To outline the College’s approach to creating and maintaining an environment where children are safe and feel safe including the creation of culturally safe environments for children including Aboriginal children, students, and their families.
2. To ensure Child Safety and wellbeing is embedded in the College’s leadership, governance and culture.
3. To clarify how the College will empower children and students to actively take part in their own safety.
4. To outline how the College will support family engagement in the College’s policies and community.
5. To outline how the College will encourage and support students with diverse needs and uphold respect and equity for all members of the community.
6. To outline procedures to ensure that the College employs staff and volunteers who are suitable for child related work.
7. To outline procedures for a complaints handling process that is accessible, child-focussed, culturally safe and easily understood.
8. To outline procedures to ensure that College staff and Board members receive training in child safety knowledge, skills and awareness.
9. To outline procedures to provide child safety in the College’s physical and online environments.
10. To outline the College’s policy review timeline.
11. To outline procedures to ensure the effective implementation of child safety and wellbeing, policies, procedures, and practices related to the child safe standards and Ministerial Order 1359.

Statement of Commitment to Child Safety

Grace Christian College is a child safe organisation and is committed to the safety and wellbeing of all children and young people. This commitment includes the creation of a culturally safe and inclusive environment to meet the needs of Aboriginal children, young people and their families. We are committed to the protection of all children from all forms of child abuse and has established strategies, practices, policies and procedures to implement this commitment.

We have a zero tolerance for child abuse and are committed to acting in children’s best interests and keeping them safe from harm. We regard our child protection responsibilities with the utmost importance and as such, are committed to providing the necessary resources to ensure compliance with all relevant child protection laws and regulations and maintain a child safe culture.

Policy

1. CULTURALLY SAFE ENVIRONMENTS

- 1.1. The College aims to create an environment that aligns with its Statement of Faith and Vision and Mission Statements where students can receive a Christian education that is reflective of those documents.
- 1.2. In accordance with its beliefs, the College recognises that all students are made in the image of God (Genesis 1:26) and are, therefore, valued by God. Thus, they should be valued highly and safe-guarded by staff, their peers, visitors to the College, and family members. The care and protection of children is also a key principle in the teachings of Jesus Christ, who reserved His most severe condemnation for those who 'cause a child to stumble' or hinder them. The policies and procedural strategies we implement are the practical expression of our faith in Christ and desire to be faithful to His teachings.
- 1.3. The College will promote acceptance of students from diverse cultures by teaching students that all people are created by God in His image and therefore have inherent worth and value. All members of the community will be encouraged to respect others and their differences.
- 1.4. The College will promote acceptance of all students including Aboriginal students by including in the curriculum, lessons and experiences containing knowledge and understandings about the peoples and cultures of the world and how, although there are differences, there are many similarities. This includes implementing and embedding strategies within the College community that acknowledge and appreciate the strengths of Aboriginal culture, and understand its importance to the wellbeing and safety of Aboriginal children and students.
- 1.5. The College will encourage students to create a supportive College culture through its Help, Encourage and Respect motto and Thank You program which promotes a positive, respectful, inclusive culture by highlighting occasions when students exhibit these behaviours

2. LEADERSHIP, GOVERNANCE AND CULTURE

- 2.1. The College Board oversees the implementation of College policy and all Board members will complete training and Child Safety and Protection. The Principal will report to the Board matters relating to child safety and the implementation of the Child Safety Standards at the monthly Board meeting.
- 2.2. Through the staff meetings the Principal will work with staff at all levels to ensure that a child safe culture is embedded throughout the College.
- 2.3. Staff and volunteers must adhere to the College's Staff Code of Conduct and will receive training in this policy and its expectations at induction and reviewed through Professional Development Days and the regular staff meetings.
- 2.4. The College will maintain risk management procedures and assessments to identify, prevent and mitigate risks to the College's students.
- 2.5. Staff will receive training in their obligations on information sharing and record keeping in regard to child safe matters. These training will be conducted through Professional Development Days and the regular staff meetings.

3. EMPOWERMENT OF CHILDREN

- 3.1. The College will embed in the curriculum, knowledge and understandings relating to the rights of individuals to safety, information and participation in College life and the wider community.
- 3.2. The College promotes a strong sense of community with high expectations of respectful behaviour between individuals to create social cohesion, and will seek to be responsive to the concerns of children and young people in regard to the College's culture.
- 3.3. The College will provide opportunities for students to actively participate in schooling through a variety of projects to allow for individual student interest and capacity. Among these will be class projects, sporting events, activity days, Chapel services, assembly presentations, art show, Movie Making day among others. The staff will promote a culture of active participation and will monitor student's involvement.

4. COMMUNICATION OF INFORMATION

- 4.1. Grace Christian College believes that families are a primary social unit ordained by God and parents have the ultimate responsibility and authority over their children. The College will therefore ensure it involves parents in decisions affecting their child.
- 4.2. Information regarding the College's Child Safe policies and approach to Child Safety will be communicated to the College community through publications, College website, posters, assemblies and other presentations to students including class lessons.
- 4.3. The College will include the College community in its review of policies and practices and give consideration to parent and student feedback on actions taken.
- 4.4. Information regarding the College's operations and governance will be included in College publications and the College website.

5. EQUITY AND DIVERSITY

- 5.1. Grace Christian College recognises that its students have diverse needs and live in different circumstances and will seek to support students as individuals and ensure they are included in the College community.
 - 5.2. The College maintains information regarding student learning and personal characteristics in a documented student profile which allows staff to be informed of student needs on an ongoing basis. This information is shared with parents and students.
6. SUITABILITY OF EMPLOYEES AND TRAINING
- 6.1. The College will aim to ensure that staff are suitable for Child work by checking applicant referees, training and education and previous work history.
 - 6.2. The College will aim to ensure that staff will receive ongoing support to reflect child safety and wellbeing values in practice through induction procedures, professional development and training experiences which include regular staff meetings and presentations.
 - 6.3. The College will maintain a register of staff with WCCs and VIT registration and regularly check the status of these registrations to ensure they are current at all times.
7. CHILD-FOCUSED COMPLAINTS
- 7.1. The College has a child-focused approach to complaints and takes all complaints seriously. The students at the College are made aware of the complaints process and are encouraged to report any complaints they have to the College staff.
 - 7.2. The College has detailed a clear structure and process for complaints in its Complaints Policy which provides guidelines and responsibilities for staff, students and parents.
 - 7.3. The College includes in its policies, procedures for reporting complaints and concerns to relevant authorities and seeks to co-operate with legal requirements and law enforcement. These details can be found in the Mandatory Reporting Policy.
8. STAFF TRAINING
- 8.1. The College will support its staff and volunteers with training to effectively implement the organisation's Child Safety and Well being Policy. Training will be completed during induction of new employees and through regular professional development days and staff meetings.
 - 8.2. The training staff receive will enable them to recognise indicators of child harm including harm cause by other children and young people and will enable them to build a culturally safe environment for children and young people.
9. SAFETY OF PHYSICAL AND ONLINE ENVIRONMENTS
- 9.1. The College will use a system of risk management plans to ensure the safety of the physical and online environments connected with the College. The risk management plans will draw on feedback from staff and volunteers who will be trained to identify risks.
 - 9.2. The College will seek to protect a child's right to privacy, access to information, social connections and learning opportunities in its risk management processes.
 - 9.3. The College's risk management plans will include the College environment both physical and online and also the environments where excursions and activities take place outside of the campus grounds.
 - 9.4. The College staff will be trained in procedures to assess the extent of risk to children through the engagement of third party organisations. Third-party contractors will be required to comply with the organisation's policies and procedures.
10. REVIEW OF CHILD SAFE STANDARDS IMPLEMENTATION
- 10.1. The College takes its responsibilities for child safety seriously and will regularly review, evaluate and improve its child safe practices.
 - 10.2. A registry of complaints, concerns and safety incidents will be maintained and analysed to identify causes and any stem failures to inform continuous improvement.
 - 10.3. The College will report any relevant findings through the review process to the College community.
11. DOCUMENTING ORGANISATIONAL SAFETY
- 11.1. The College will aim to make its policies and procedures comprehensive and easy to understand.
 - 11.2. Feedback gathered through consultation with the College community will be used to improve policies and practices.
 - 11.3. The College Board is responsible to oversee the College's policies and ensure the Principal implements them effectively.
12. IMPLEMENTATION
- 12.1. It is the responsibility of the College Board to ensure this policy is effectively implemented by the College Principal.