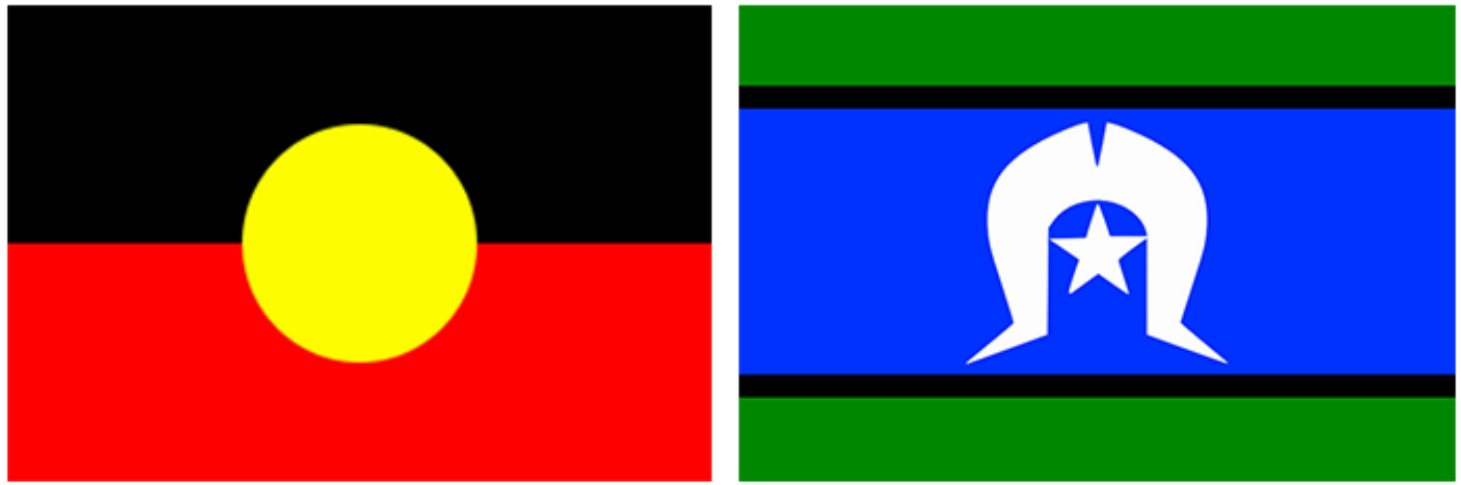
PROTECT

Victoria's Child Safe Standards

Volunteer training

Acknowledgment of Country



Support available

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- You can talk to:
  - Our school leadership team

- Or access external services:
  - Lifeline: 13 11 14 or lifeline.org.au
  - Beyond Blue: 1300 22 46 36 or beyondblue.org.au
  - 1800 Respect: 1800 737 732 or 1800Respect.org.au
  - Your GP or another allied health professional

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Definitions: Child safety and child abuse

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Child safety

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

Child abuse

Child abuse includes:

a) any act committed against a child involving:
- a sexual offence
- grooming

b) the infliction, on a child, of
- physical violence
- serious emotional or psychological harm

c) the serious neglect of a child

Further information on child abuse, including physical and behavioural indicators of abuse, is available on the department's PROTECT website at Identify child abuse

Why child safety is so important

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- Our school is committed to the safety and wellbeing of all children. We want children attending our school to be safe, happy and respected.
- The Child Safe Standards recognise that all children are vulnerable.
- The Child Safe Standards require schools to **take steps to prevent child abuse** and **build a culture of child safety**.
- Schools cannot assume that child abuse does not and cannot happen within their school or school community.

Victoria's Child Safe Standards

- **Child Safe Standard 1** – Establish a culturally safe environment in which the diverse and unique identities and experiences of Aboriginal children and young people are respected and valued.
- **Child Safe Standard 2** – Ensure that child safety and wellbeing are embedded in school leadership, governance and culture.
- **Child Safe Standard 3** – Children and young people are empowered about their rights, participate in decisions affecting them and are taken seriously.
- **Child Safe Standard 4** – Families and communities are informed and involved in promoting child safety and wellbeing.
- **Child Safe Standard 5** – Equity is upheld and diverse needs are respected in policy and practice.
- **Child Safe Standard 6** – People working with children and young people are suitable and supported to reflect child safety and wellbeing values in practice.
- **Child Safe Standard 7** – Ensure that processes for complaints and concerns are child focused.
- **Child Safe Standard 8** – Staff and volunteers are equipped with the knowledge, skills and awareness to keep children and young people safe through ongoing education and training.
- **Child Safe Standard 9** – Physical and online environments promote safety and wellbeing while minimising the opportunity for children and young people to be harmed.
- **Child Safe Standard 10** – Implementation of the Child Safe Standards is regularly reviewed and improved.
- **Child Safe Standard 11** – Policies and procedures that document how schools are safe for children, young people and students.
- Ministerial Order 1359 provides the framework for child safety in schools.

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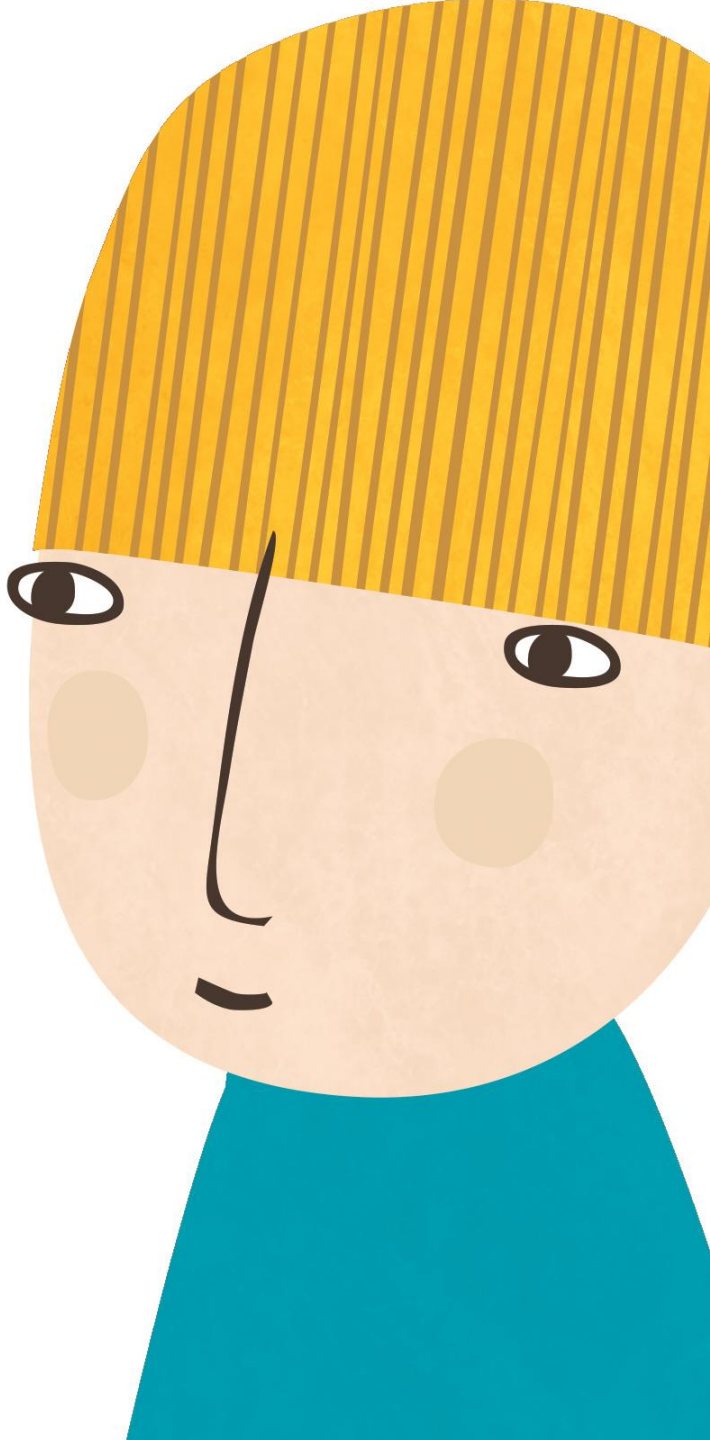
Volunteer responsibilities to keep students safe and our school's child safety policies and procedures



Volunteer responsibilities to keep students safe

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- Volunteers make a valuable contribution to our school community and have responsibilities to keep students safe in our school environments.
- Our school has developed policies and procedures to keep children safe and to make sure we respond to any concerns.
- Volunteers must be familiar with and follow our school's:
  - Volunteers Policy
  - Child Safety Code of Conduct
  - Child Safety and Wellbeing Policy
  - Procedures for responding to incidents, disclosures and suspicions of child abuse

Volunteers Policy

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Our school's **Volunteers Policy** sets out the procedures to make sure that volunteers are suitable to work with children and can make a positive contribution to our school community. The policy outlines:

- Suitability checks required for volunteers which usually include:
  - Working with Children (WWC) Clearance
  - other suitability checks which may be needed based on the volunteer role, such as references, proof of identity, qualifications and work history involving children
- Our volunteer training and induction processes
- Management and supervision arrangements
- Volunteer obligations relating to privacy, information sharing and record keeping.

Child Safety and Wellbeing Policy

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Our school's Child Safety and Wellbeing Policy:

- demonstrates our commitment to providing environments where our students are safe and feel safe
- tells our community about our strategies and governance arrangements to keep children safe
- helps us create a shared commitment to keeping children safe
- supports everyone in our school community to know their responsibilities for keeping children safe
- is publicly available

Our Child Safety and Wellbeing Policy

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- All staff and **volunteers** will:
  - participate in child safety and wellbeing induction and training provided by the school
  - 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
  - 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.

Our commitment to child safety and wellbeing

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- We are a child safe organisation which welcomes all children, young people and their families
- We are committed to providing environments where our students are safe and feel safe, where their participation is valued, their views respected, and their voices are heard about decisions that affect their lives
- We have no tolerance for child abuse and take proactive steps to identify and manage any risk of harm to students in our school environments
- Every person involved in our school has an important role in promoting child safety and wellbeing and promptly raising any issues or concerns about a child's safety

Establishing culturally safe environments and responding to diverse needs

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- Our volunteers can support every student to have a positive experience in a safe environment
- This includes supporting aboriginal cultural safety and understanding the diverse circumstances of children and students.
- Everyone can:
  - promote cultural safety in our school community by recognising the link between Aboriginal culture, identity and safety.
  - pay particular attention to the needs of students with disability, students from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds, students who are unable to live at home, international students, lesbian, gay, bisexual, trans and gender diverse, intersex and queer (LGBTIQ+) students and Aboriginal students.

Child Safety Code of Conduct

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Our school's Child Safety Code of Conduct provides adults with a clear guide on the behaviour that is expected of them in our school environments, and:

- lists acceptable and unacceptable behaviours
- identifies professional boundaries and ethical behaviour
- applies to all school activities, including school camps, using digital technology and social media
- is publicly available

Who has to follow it?

Staff, volunteers, contractors, and any other member of our school community involved in child-connected work, including school council members

Acceptable and unacceptable behaviours

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Acceptable behaviours

- Upholding our commitment to child safety and following our Child Safety and Wellbeing Policy
- Treating students and families in our school community with respect
- Listening and responding to the views and concerns of students
- Promoting the cultural safety, participation and empowerment of Aboriginal students,
- Ensuring, as far as practicable, that adults are not alone with a student
- Reporting any allegations of child abuse or other child safety concerns
- If child abuse is suspected, ensuring as quickly as possible that the student(s) are safe and protected

Unacceptable behaviours

- Ignore or disregard concerns, suspicions or disclosures of child abuse
- Develop a relationship with a student that could be seen as favouritism or amount to 'grooming' behaviour
- Display behaviours or engage with students in ways that are not justified by the educational or professional context
- Ignore an adult's overly familiar or inappropriate behaviour towards a student
- Communicate directly with a student through personal or private contact channels
- Have contact with any student outside of school hours except when needed to deliver the school curriculum

Responding to incidents, disclosures and suspicions of child abuse (1)

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- Volunteers **must not** ignore or disregard any concerns, suspicions or disclosures of child abuse or harm

- You must report any concerns to a teacher or the school leadership team as quickly as possible

- Everyone has a role to ensure children are safe – if something doesn't feel right, you must speak up

Responding to incidents, disclosures and suspicions of child abuse (2)

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Volunteers should follow the Four Critical Actions for Schools when responding to incidents, disclosures and suspicions of child abuse

1. **Respond to the emergency**

   If a child is at immediate risk of harm you must ensure their safety

2. **Report to authorities**

   As soon as immediate health and safety concerns are addressed you must report your concerns to the principal or school leadership

3. **Contact Parents/Carers**

   The principal and school will determine who needs to be contacted

4. **Provide Support**

   The school will determine the support for children impacted by abuse.

For more information, see the Responding to Incidents, Disclosures and Suspicions of Child Abuse Poster

Signs of child abuse to look out for (1)

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- Children and young people can be harmed by other children, students or adults
- Child abuse can include physical abuse, sexual abuse, grooming, serious emotional or psychological harm, neglect, or family violence
- It doesn’t have to involve physical contact or force
- Child abuse can include:
  - talking to a child in a sexually explicit way
  - grooming a child for future sexual activity
  - experiencing family violence
  - failing to provide a child with an adequate standard of nutrition, supervision, or medical care

Signs of child abuse to look out for (2)

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- There are a range of common physical and behavioural indicators that a child may be being abused.
- Click on the video image to open the identifying signs of abuse video in your browser.

Identifying and managing child safety risks

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- Always follow our school's Child Safety Code of Conduct
- Be aware of the behavioural and physical indicators of child abuse
- Look out for any indicators of child abuse in children and young people you work with
- Immediately raise concerns about any suspicions of child abuse with a teacher or school leadership
- Alert a teacher or school leadership to any other potential risks you become aware of in our school environments

Information sharing obligations for volunteers

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- Any student information you become aware of because of your volunteer work must be managed sensitively and in accordance with our Schools' Privacy Policy and Volunteers Policy.
- You can share student information **with relevant school staff** to:
  - support the student's education, wellbeing and health
  - reduce the risk of harm to the student, other students, staff or visitors
- Volunteers must report any child safety concerns that they become aware of to a teacher or school leadership as soon as possible
- There are some circumstances where volunteers may also be obliged to disclose information to authorities outside of the school such as to Victoria Police

Record keeping

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- Our school follows the department's Records Management-School Records Policy

- While it's unlikely you will be responsible for any school records during your volunteer work, any school records that you are responsible for must be provided to the person nominated in our Volunteers Policy.

Key things to remember

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Child safety at our school is everyone's responsibility.

Volunteers have a responsibility to:

- always follow the school's child safety and wellbeing policies and procedures
- act in accordance with our school's **Child Safety Code of Conduct**
- take students' views seriously, especially when they raise concerns or worries about their safety or the safety of a friend
- raise concerns about a child's safety or any inappropriate behaviours in the school community with a teacher or school leadership immediately
- recognise and respect the diversity of the children, young people, and families at our school

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Questions?

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Thank you

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