



Purpose

The purpose of this policy is to demonstrate the strong commitment of Monivae College to providing a safe environment and ensuring that children are able to experience the fundamental right to be protected from all forms of child abuse. It provides an outline of the policies, procedures and strategies developed to keep students safe from harm, including all forms of abuse in our school environment, on campus, online and in other locations provided by the school.

This policy takes into account relevant legislative requirements within the state of Victoria, including the specific requirements of the Victorian Child Safe Standards as set out in [Ministerial Order No. 870](#)

Scope

It is a shared and collective responsibility of all members of the school community to create a child safe culture and environment.

Legislative Context

- Children, Youth and Families Act 2005 (Vic)
- Child Wellbeing and Safety Act 2005 (Vic) and the Child Safe Standards (Vic)
- Crimes Act 1958 (Vic)
- Education and Training Reform Act 2006 (Vic.)
- Equal Opportunity Act 2010 (Vic.)
- Privacy Act 1988 (Cth)
- VRQA Guidelines to Minimum Standards 2015
- Working with Children Act 2005 (Vic)

Definitions

Term	Definition
Child	means a person under the age of 18 years.
Child abuse	child abuse can include physical or sexual harm, grooming, emotional or psychological harm, neglect, or family violence. It does not have to involve physical contact or force. Child abuse can include: <ul style="list-style-type: none">• sexually abusing or exploiting a child;• talking to a child in a sexually explicit way;• grooming a child for future sexual activity;• forcing a child to watch pornography;• being witness to family violence;• engaging in sexual activity with a child under 16; and/or• failing to provide a child with an adequate standard of nutrition, supervision or medical care to the extent that the development of the child is placed at serious risk or is significantly impaired.
Child Safe Standards	means the compulsory minimum standards (enacted

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Term	Definition
	<p>pursuant to the Child Wellbeing and Safety Act 2005) which apply to organisations in Victoria that provide services for children to help ensure the safety of children, as follows:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • strategies to embed an organisational culture of child safety, including through effective leadership arrangements; • a child safe policy or statement of commitment to child safety; • a code of conduct that establishes clear expectations for appropriate behaviour with children; • screening, supervision, training and other human resources practices that reduce the risk of child abuse by new and existing personnel; • processes for responding to and reporting suspected child abuse; • strategies to identify and reduce or remove risks of child abuse; and • strategies to promote the participation and empowerment of children.
Grooming	<p>when a person engages in predatory conduct to prepare a child for sexual activity at a later time. Grooming can include communicating electronically or face-to-face and/or attempting to befriend or establish a relationship or other emotional connection with the child or their/parent carer.</p>
Mandatory reporting	<p>The legal requirement under the Children, Youth and Families Act 2005 (Vic.) to protect children from harm relating to physical and sexual abuse. The principal, teachers, medical practitioners, nurses, counsellors at a school and all people in religious ministry including clergy, religious brothers and sisters and deacons are mandatory reporters under this Act.</p>
Reasonable belief	<p>a reasonable belief or a belief on reasonable grounds is not the same as having proof but is more than a mere rumor or speculation. A 'reasonable belief' is formed if a reasonable person in the same position would have formed the belief on the same grounds. For example, a 'reasonable belief' might be formed if:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • a child states that they have been physically or sexually abused; • a child states that they know someone who has been physically or sexually abused (sometimes the child may be talking about themselves); • someone who knows a child states that the child has been physically or sexually abused; • professional observations of the child's behaviour or development leads

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	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • a professional to form a belief that the child has been physically or sexually abused or is likely to be abused; • signs of abuse lead to a belief that the child has been physically or sexually abused; • a report has been made of a sexual relationship with a child under 16.
Reportable conduct	<p>Five types of “reportable conduct” are listed in the <i>Child Wellbeing and Safety Act 2005 (Children’s Legislation Amendment (Reportable Conduct) Act 2017)</i>. These include:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. sexual offences (against, with, or in the presence of, a child); 2. sexual misconduct (against, with, or in the presence of, a child); 3. physical violence (against, with, or in the presence of, a child); 4. behaviour that is likely to cause significant emotional or psychological harm; and 5. significant neglect.
Working with Children Check	a legislative requirement and process of assessment as prescribed in the <i>Working with Children Act 2005</i> and subsequent Regulations as amended from time to time.
School community	<p>The school community includes the following people and organisations:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • staff members; • students; • members of the school board and other school bodies and committees; • minister of religion; and • all contractors and organisations engaged by the school, including subcontractors.
School environment	<p>means any physical or virtual place made available or authorised by the school governing authority for use by a child during or outside school hours, including:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • campus of the school; • online school environments (including email and intranet systems); and • other locations provided by the school for a child’s use (including, without limitation, locations used for school camps, sporting events, excursions, competitions, and other events).
School staff	<p>means an individual working in a school environment who is:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> (a) directly engaged or employed by a school governing authority; (b) a volunteer or a contracted service provider (whether or not a body corporate or any other

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	person is an intermediary); and (c) a minister of religion (Ministerial Order No. 870).

Policy Statement

Monivae College has a 'no tolerance' approach to all forms of child abuse, and all allegations and safety concerns will be treated seriously and consistently with the policies and procedures in place.

Monivae College is committed to ensuring the safety and well-being of all children under the care and supervision of school staff, students, volunteers, contractors and subcontractors by:

- preventing all forms of child abuse, identifying risks early, and removing / reducing those risks;
- complying with the legal and moral obligations of the school community in reporting allegations of child abuse, and alerting the appropriate authorities if there is a reasonable belief a child is in need of protection;
- upholding the safety of all children, including Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander children, children from culturally and/or linguistically diverse backgrounds, children with a disability and children who are vulnerable; and
- providing regular training and education to members of the school community on the risks of child abuse.

Policy Principles

Catholic schools have a moral, legal and mission-driven responsibility to create nurturing school environments where children and young people are respected, their voices are heard and they are safe and feel safe.

The following principles underpin our commitment to child safety at Monivae College.

- All students deserve, as a fundamental right, safety and protection from all forms of abuse and neglect.
- Our school works in partnership with families and the community to ensure that they are engaged in decision-making processes, particularly those that have an impact on child safety and protection.
- All students have the right to a thorough and systematic education in all aspects of personal safety, in partnership with their parents/guardians/caregivers.
- All adults in our school, including teaching and non-teaching staff, clergy, volunteers, and contractors, have a responsibility to care for children and young people, to positively promote their wellbeing and to protect them from any kind of harm or abuse.
- The policies, guidelines and codes of conduct for the care, wellbeing and protection of students are based on honest, respectful and trusting relationships between adults and children and young people.
- Policies and practices demonstrate compliance with legislative requirements and cooperation with the Church, governments, the police and human services agencies.
- All persons involved in situations where harm is suspected or disclosed must be treated with sensitivity, dignity and respect.
- Staff, clergy, volunteers, contractors, parents and students should feel free to raise concerns about child safety, knowing these will be taken seriously by school leadership.
- Appropriate confidentiality will be maintained, with information being provided to those who have a right or a need to be informed, either legally or pastorally.

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Actions

Promoting the Participation and Empowerment of Students

Monivae College has developed a safe, inclusive and supportive environment that involves and communicates with children, young people and their parents/carers. We encourage child and parent/carer involvement and engagement that informs safe school operations and builds the capability of children and parents/carers to understand their rights and their responsibilities. Our school is committed to supporting and encouraging students to use their voice to raise and share their concerns with a trusted adult at any time of need. Students can access information on how to report abuse via the school website.

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

The school will promote the Child Safe Standards in ways that are readily accessible, easy to understand, and user-friendly to children, including:

- all of our child safety policies and procedures will be available for the students and parents at Monivae College to read at reception or on the school website;
- displaying the PROTECT Child Safety posters across the school;
- school newsletters will inform students and the school community about the school's commitment to child safety, and strategies or initiatives that the school is taking to ensure student safety;
- ensuring age-appropriate discussion of child safety with students';
- students making and displaying their own child safety posters;
- child safety policies and procedures are written in child-friendly language or a language other than English that is relevant to our school;
- the four critical actions are actively taught to mandatory reporters and other school staff;
- the whole school is encouraged to contribute to risk assessment and mitigation; and
- the Child Safe Standards are addressed and explained at year level assemblies and parent information sessions.

Monivae College uses its health and wellbeing programs to deliver appropriate education to students about:

- standards of behaviour for students attending the school;
- healthy and respectful relationships (including sexuality);
- cybersafety;
- resilience; and
- child abuse awareness and prevention.

The following table outlines how the school demonstrates this requirement:

Principle	Demonstrated by:
<p>The school governing authority develops strategies to deliver appropriate education about:</p> <p>a) standards of behaviour for students attending the school;</p> <p>b) healthy and respectful relationships (including sexuality);</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • parent guides on the curriculum outlining the school's approach • parent handbook- outlines expectations and policy • class/pastoral meetings- to establish rules and for student to raise issues/ monitor student wellbeing and personal health and safety

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Principle	Demonstrated by:
<p>c) cybersafety; d) resilience; and e) child abuse awareness and prevention.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • student safety surveys • chaplaincy and student wellbeing services • engagement of students in learning is embedded across the school • cross-curriculum focus on issues of safety and forms of abuse that are developed through literature, social media, media, government and church documents, examples of scenarios that develop understanding of responsibilities and ethical choices • curriculum scope and sequence that outlines key focus for resilience and healthy and respectful relationships at year levels • implementation of RE units that reinforce and allow student to develop their understanding of respecting the dignity of each person, social justice, reconciliation and respecting diversity • different levels of student voice: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ student surveys to assist with informing policies ○ student, staff and parent committees to review /collaborate on school initiatives ○ staff/student council ○ student representative council-across school ○ curriculum planning- pre and post testing, student input on unit planning and directions ○ student feedback on teaching practice and learning ○ focus group and action research ○ student led conferences • review and monitor curriculum and procedures for students • risk management register and strategies • professional learning on student voice and creating a culture that promotes students to report issues on own and others personal safety
<p>The school governing authority promotes the child safety standards in ways that are readily accessible, easy to understand, and user-friendly to children.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • student developed posters are developed and displayed throughout school • student developed guidelines for child safety • student code of conduct

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Principle	Demonstrated by:
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • procedure for reporting any form of abuse- such as in student diary/school app- accessible to students.

Organisational Culture of Safety through Effective Leadership Arrangements

Monivae College aims to promote an organisational culture of child safety through effective leadership by:

- ensuring compliance with the Child Safe Standards;
- regularly reviewing, updating and providing information on policies and procedures related to child safety; and
- monitoring and evaluating the operation of the school's Child Safe Code of Conduct.

Monivae College culture encourages staff, students, parents and the school community to raise, discuss and scrutinise child safety concerns. This makes it more difficult for abuse to occur and remain hidden.

All child safety documents, including this policy, the Child Safety Code of Conduct, the school's Child Safety Responding and Reporting Obligations (including Mandatory Reporting) Policy and Procedures, [Identifying and Responding to All Forms of Abuse in Victorian Schools](#) and the [Four Critical Actions for Schools](#) are readily available online and in hard copy at the School reception for all staff and students to read at any time.

Child safety is everyone's responsibility. **All school staff** are required to:

- act in accordance with the school's Child Safety Code of Conduct, which clearly sets out the difference between appropriate and inappropriate behaviour.
- act in accordance with the Child Safety Responding and Reporting Obligations (including Mandatory Reporting) Policy and Procedures at all times, including following the [Four Critical Actions for Schools](#) where necessary.
- undertake annual guidance and training on child safety.
- act in accordance with their legal obligations, including:
 - failure to disclose offence (applies to all adults)
 - duty of care (applies to all school staff)
 - mandatory reporting obligations (applies to all mandatory reporters, including teachers, principals, registered psychologists, counsellors and registered doctors and nurses and clergy)
 - failure to protect offence (applies to a person in a position of authority within the school)
 - reportable conduct obligations (applies to all school staff in reporting conduct to the principal, and applies to the principal in reporting to Employee Conduct Branch)
 - organisational duty of care (applies to the school as an organisation)

For more information on these obligations, see [Identifying and Responding to All Forms of Abuse in Victorian Schools](#).

As part of Monivae College child safe culture, **school leadership** (including the Principal and Deputy Principal) will:

- consider the diversity of all children, including (but not limited to) the needs of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children, children from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds, children with disabilities, and children who are vulnerable, when implementing the Child Safe Standards;

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- ensure that child safety is a regular agenda item at school leadership meetings and staff meetings;
- encourage and enable staff professional learning and training to build deeper understandings of child safety and prevention of abuse; and
- ensure that no one is prohibited or discouraged from reporting an allegation of child abuse to a person external to the school or from making records of any allegation.

As part of Monivae College child safe culture, **school mandatory reporting staff** are required to:

- complete the [Protecting Children – Mandatory reporting and other obligations](#) online module every year;
- read the school’s Child Safety Code of Conduct on induction and maintain familiarity with that document;
- read the school’s Child Safety Responding and Reporting Obligations (including Mandatory Reporting) Policy and Procedures on induction and maintain familiarity with that document; and
- read the school’s Child Safety Policy (this document) on induction and maintain familiarity with that document.

As part of Monivae College child safe culture, in performing the functions and powers given to them under the *Education and Training Reform Act 2006*, **the board** will:

- ensure that child safety is a regular agenda item at board meetings;
- consider the diversity of all children, including (but not limited to) the needs of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children, children from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds, children with disabilities, and children who are vulnerable, when making decisions regarding the Child Safe Standards;
- undertake annual guidance and training on child safety; and
- approve the Child Safety Code of Conduct to the extent that it applies to school board members, and if updated, note the new document in its board meeting minutes

The Deputy Principal is appointed at the Child Protection Officer and will maintain records of the above processes.

Recruitment

Monivae College follows the Catholic Education Commission Victoria’s Employment of Staff guide to ensure child safe recruitment practices.

All prospective volunteers are required to comply with our school’s Volunteers Policy, including in relation to assessing the suitability of prospective volunteers and obtaining a valid Working with Children Check.

Training and Supervision

Training and education is important to ensure that everyone in the school understands that child safety is everyone’s responsibility.

Our school culture aims for all staff and volunteers (in addition to parents/carers and children) to feel confident and comfortable in coming forward with any allegations or suspicions of child abuse or child safety concerns. We train our staff and volunteers to identify, assess, and minimise risks of child abuse and to detect potential signs of child abuse. This training occurs annually or more often as required.

We also support our staff and volunteers through ongoing supervision to develop their skills to protect children from abuse, to promote the cultural safety of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children and children from linguistically and/or diverse backgrounds, and the safety

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of children with a disability and vulnerable children.

New employees and volunteers will be inducted into the school, including by being referred to the Child Safety Policy (this document), the Child Safety Code of Conduct, and the Child Safety Responding and Reporting Obligations (including Mandatory Reporting) Policy and Procedures on the school website.

They will also be supervised regularly to ensure they understand our school's commitment to child safety, and that their behaviour towards children is safe and appropriate. All employees of our school will be monitored and assessed via regular performance review to ensure their continuing suitability for child-connected work. Any inappropriate behaviour will be reported by school staff to the Principal or Deputy Principal and will be managed in accordance with school's Child Safety Responding and Reporting Obligations (including Mandatory Reporting) Policy and Procedures where required.

Reporting a Child Safety Concern or Complaint

The school has clear expectations for all staff and volunteers in making a report about a child or young person who may be in need of protection. All staff (including board members) must follow the school's Child Safety Responding and Reporting Obligations (including Mandatory Reporting) Policy and Procedures, including following the [Four Critical Actions for Schools](#) if there is an incident, disclosure or suspicion of child abuse. Immediate actions should include reporting their concerns to DHHS Child Protection, Victoria Police and/or another appropriate agency and notifying the Principal, Deputy Principal or a member of the school leadership team of their concerns and the reasons for those concerns.

The school will always take action to respond to a complaint in accordance with the school's Child Safety Responding and Reporting Obligations (including Mandatory Reporting) Policy and Procedures. In accordance with Action 4 of the Four Critical Actions for Schools, Monivae College will provide ongoing support for students affected by child abuse.

The Child Safety Responding and Reporting Obligations (including Mandatory Reporting) Policy and Procedures can be found at www.monivae.com.au.

Risk Reduction and Management

Monivae College believes the wellbeing of children and young people is paramount, and is vigilant in ensuring proper risk management processes, found in the school's Child Safety Risk Register. The school recognises there are potential risks to children and young people and will take a risk management approach by undertaking preventative measures.

We will identify and mitigate the risks of child abuse in school environments by taking into account the nature of each school environment, the activities expected to be conducted in that environment and the characteristics and needs of all children expected to be present in that environment.

Monivae College monitors and evaluates the effectiveness of the actions it takes to reduce or remove risks to child safety, more information can be found in the Child Safety Risk Register.

Policy Evaluation and Review

To ensure ongoing relevance and continuous improvement, this policy will be reviewed annually. The review will include input from staff, students, parents/carers and the school community.

Supporting Documents

Internal Documents

- Code of Conduct

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- Child Safety Responding and Reporting Obligations (including Mandatory Reporting) Policy and Procedures
- Child Safety Risk Register

External Documents

- [PROTECT Responding to Suspected Child Abuse: A Template for all Victorian Schools](#)
- [An Overview of the Child Safe Standards \[DHHS\]](#)
- [A Guide for Creating a Child Safe Organisation \[CCYP\]](#)
- Empowerment and participation of children ([CCYP - Tip Sheet for Child Safe Organisation](#))
- Catholic Education Commission of Victoria Ltd (CECV) 2016, [Commitment Statement to Child Safety: A safe and nurturing culture for all children and young people in Catholic schools.](#)
- Catholic Education Commission of Victoria Ltd (CECV) 2013, [Victorian Catholic Education Multi Enterprise Agreement 2013](#), CECV.
- Congregation for Catholic Education 1997, [The Catholic School on the Threshold of the Third Millennium](#), Vatican.
- Parliament of Victoria, Family and Community Development Committee, 2013, [Betrayal of Trust](#)

Responsibility

Approval Authority	Policy Sponsor	Administration
Responsible for monitoring the implementation, outcomes and scheduled review of this procedure	Responsible for maintaining the content of this policy as delegated by the Approval Authority	Responsible for the administration support for the maintenance of this policy as directed by the Policy Sponsor
Governing Authority	Governance Committee	Principal

Promulgation

The procedure will be communicated throughout the School community in the form of:

1. Policies section of the Monivae website to alert the School-wide community of the approved procedure; and
2. distribution of e-mails to all current student families.

Implementation

This policy will be implemented throughout the School via:

- policy library section of the school intranet;
- staff briefing session; and
- training sessions.

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