



## **Toorak College Child Safe Policy**

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### ***Purpose***

The purpose of this policy is to demonstrate the strong commitment of the School leadership, employees and volunteers to child safety and provide an outline of the policies and practices that have been developed to keep all children safe from any harm, including abuse. Abuse constitutes any act against a child involving:

### **Physical Violence**

Physical violence occurs when a child suffers or is likely to suffer significant harm from a non-accidental injury or injuries inflicted by another person. Physical violence can be inflicted in many ways, including beating, shaking, burning or use of weapons (such as, belts and paddles).

### **Sexual Offences**

Sexual offences occur when a person involves the child in sexual activity, or deliberately puts the child in the presence of sexual behaviours that are exploitative or inappropriate to his/her age and development. Child sexual abuse can involve a range of sexual activity including fondling, masturbation, penetration, voyeurism and exhibitionism. It can also include exposure to or exploitation through pornography or prostitution, as well as grooming behaviour.<sup>1</sup>

### **Serious Emotional or Psychological Abuse**

Serious emotional or psychological abuse occurs when harm is inflicted on a child through repeated rejection, isolation, or by threats or violence. It can include derogatory name-calling and put-downs, or persistent and deliberate coldness from a person, to the extent where the behaviour of the child is disturbed or their emotional development is at serious risk of being impaired. Serious emotional or psychological abuse could also result from conduct that exploits a child without necessarily being criminal, such as encouraging a child to engage in inappropriate or risky behaviours.

### **Serious Neglect**

Serious neglect is the continued failure to provide a child with the basic necessities of life, such as food, clothing, shelter, hygiene, medical attention or adequate supervision, to the extent that the child's health, safety and/or development is, or is likely to be, jeopardised. Serious neglect can also occur if an adult fails to adequately ensure the safety of a child where the child is exposed to extremely dangerous or life threatening situations.

### ***Scope***

Applies to all students at Toorak College extending from the Early Learning Centre to Year 12 students.

### ***Policy Statement***

All children who attend Toorak College have the right to feel and be safe. The welfare of the children in our care is consistently our first priority and Toorak College has a zero tolerance to child abuse.

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<sup>1</sup> A new grooming offence commenced in Victoria on 9 April 2014. Further information is available on the [Department of Justice website](http://www.justice.vic.gov.au/home/safer+communities/protecting+children+and+families/grooming+offence) <www.justice.vic.gov.au/home/safer+communities/protecting+children+and+families/grooming+offence>

Toorak College aims to create a child safe and child friendly environment for students.

### **Students rights to safety and participation**

Toorak College employees and volunteers encourage students to express their views. All students are encouraged to provide input in regards to aspects of School life which are important to them.

Students are informed what they can do if they feel unsafe. Employees listen to and act upon any concerns raised by students or their parents. Parents are able to contact the applicable staff member as indicated in the communications guide.

### **Valuing diversity**

We value diversity and do not tolerate any discriminatory practices. To achieve this, we:

- Promote the safety, participation and empowerment of all students.
- Seek appropriate employees from diverse cultural backgrounds.

### **Recruiting employees and volunteers**

Toorak College applies the best practice standards in the recruitment and screening of employees and volunteers. Candidates and volunteers for relevant positions are interviewed and referee checks and Working with Children Checks are sought. A commitment to Child Safety and screening requirements are referenced in all advertisements.

### **Supporting staff and volunteers**

Executive members in each relevant section of the School will respond to any complaints made by employees, volunteers, parents or students. Any grievances by employees and volunteers can be conducted as outlined in the Staff Grievance Policy. Students are guided by the Student Grievance Policy to have any complaints addressed. Parents can refer to the communication guide to direct their grievance to the applicable person.

### **Risk Management**

A risk management approach to minimising the potential for child abuse or harm informs the School's policy, procedures and activity planning. In addition to general occupational health and safety risks, the reduction of risks of abuse to students is proactively managed. When planning incursions/excursions which involve an external provider, the process outlined in the Excursion and Incursion Policy must be followed.

### **Reporting**

Under section 327 of the Crimes Act, any person (including any staff member) of or over the age of 18 years who forms a reasonable belief that a sexual offence has been committed in Victoria by an adult against a child under 16 years of age must disclose that information to police, as soon as it is practicable to do so. Failure to disclose the information to police is a criminal offence. The offence applies to all adults in Victoria, not just professionals who work with children. Staff should refer to the Mandatory Reporting Policy and Mandatory Reporting in relation to "Failure to Report"

If students, employees or Volunteers wish to report any allegations of abuse, the communication process is outlined in the applicable Child Safety reporting process for: students, parents, or employees and volunteers.

The School will make, secure, and retain records of the allegation of child abuse and the School's response to it.

### ***Related Documents***

A Guide for Creating a Child Safe Organisation - Commission for Children and Young People  
Inclusion Policy  
Excursion and Incursion Policy  
Student Grievances Policy  
Safe Schools and Bullying Prevention Policy  
Staff Grievance Policy  
Student Wellbeing Policy  
Communications Guide  
Working with Children Check Policy

### ***Related Legislation***

Child Wellbeing and Safety Amendment (Child Safe Standards) Bill 2015  
Ministerial Order No. 870  
Crimes Act 1958 (Vic)  
Sex Discrimination Amendment (Sexual Orientation, Gender Identity and Intersex Status) Act 2013  
Working with Children Act 2005  
National ESOS Act 2000  
Child Safety and Wellbeing Act 2005

### ***Document Review***

This document was prepared in July 2016 and will be reviewed in 2018