

Child Safety Policy

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Authorised Officer:	GOTAFE Board	Due for review	Annual 27/11/2024

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Purpose

The purpose of this Child Safety Policy (“the Policy”) is to define GOTAFE’s position on child safety, including providing a child-safe environment for all our children and young people. A ‘child or young person’ is any person aged 18 years or under.

The Policy requires GOTAFE to comply with their child safe obligations and to provide clear guidelines for all GOTAFE representatives including employees, students, contractors and visitors.

The Policy endorses the proper behaviours provided in the GOTAFE Employee Code of Conduct and GOTAFE Student Code of Conduct.

The Policy endorses the Child Safe Reporting Procedure and the Issue Resolution and Investigation Procedure.

Policy Statement

GOTAFE is committed to ensuring that all its representatives including employees, students, contractors, visitors, children, young people and their families are aware of GOTAFE’s commitment to child safety, including having access to child safety materials and avenues for providing feedback and complaints.

GOTAFE has a zero-tolerance approach to all forms of child abuse and neglect, and it recognises that all children and young people have a right to be kept safe from harm.

GOTAFE is committed to, and will uphold the following principles in applying this Policy:

- **Preventing child abuse:** identifying child abuse risks early, removing and reducing these risks and adhering to relevant legislation.
- **Zero-tolerance of child abuse:** all allegations and safety concerns will be treated very seriously, in a consistent manner and expeditiously addressed.
- **Reporting suspected child abuse:** to Contacting authorities about a child or young person’s safety.
- **Child and student engagement:** children, young people and students are empowered about their rights, participate in decisions affecting them and are taken seriously.
- **Protecting equity and diversity:** children and young people feel safe and are listened to and respected regardless of their abilities, sex, gender, sexual orientation religion, cultural or economic background. The diverse and unique identities of Aboriginal children and young people are respected and valued.

- **Safety, participation and empowerment:** employees and students, including children and young people, are aware of child safety practices and have access to raise concerns about abuse or misconduct. Students are supported to raise concerns through GOTAFE's student support services, and all staff receive relevant training and support to enable them to do so.
- **Physical and online environments:** promotion of safety, cybersecurity and wellbeing while minimizing the opportunity for children and young people to be harmed.
- **Family Engagement:** importance of family engagement including informed and involved participation in the promotion of Child Safety
- **Training and educating:** employees receive training and support, proportionate to their role, to ensure they are equipped with the skills and knowledge to provide children and young people with safe learning environments; understand the responsibilities and boundaries of their roles; and respond to any child safety concerns.
- **Continuous improvement:** regularly reviewing and removing any systemic issues which may be contributing to, or hindering, GOTAFE from being safe, or providing a safe environment.

GOTAFE is committed to fostering a culture where all its representatives including employees, students, contractors, visitors, children, young people and their families feel able to raise child safeguarding concerns.

Roles and Responsibilities

The Policy applies to all GOTAFE representatives including employees, students, contractors and visitors who have an obligation to comply with their child safe obligations to provide a safe environment for children and young people.

Any person engaged in child-related work at GOTAFE is required to have a valid Working with Children Check in compliance with current legislation.

GOTAFE employees are also required to attend mandatory annual Child Safe training to ensure all children and young people are kept safe.

All GOTAFE employees engaged in child-related work are required to report, where a reasonable belief exists that a child is at risk, as soon as practicable. Reasonable belief includes any event, incident or disclosure including a child stating they have been abused. Child Safe Officers will provide information and advice to staff and students on mandatory reporting requirements.

GOTAFE's Child Safe Officers have a specific obligation to champion child safe practices across GOTAFE and to embed these practices.

Documentation and regulation

Other material related to the Child Safety function at GOTAFE include, but are not limited to:

- Victorian Child Safe Standards (VCSS) 2022;
- *Children, Youth and Families Act 2005*;
- *Child Wellbeing and Safety Act 2005*;

- *Working with Children Check (WWCC) Act 2005;*
- *Worker Screening Act 2020*
- *Crimes Amendment (Grooming) Act 2014;*
- *Crimes Amendment (Protection of Children) Act 2014;*
- *Children Legislation Amendment (Reportable Conduct) Act 2017;*
- *The Wrong's Amendment (Organisational Child Abuse) Act 2017;*
- GOTAFE Employee Code of Conduct;
- GOTAFE Student Code of Conduct;
- Working with Children Check and National Police Check Policy;
- Duty of Care Policy;
- Child Safe Reporting Procedure; and
- Issue Resolution and Investigation Procedure.