



Child Safe Standards Policy

POLICY OWNER: Board of Directors

APPROVED: August 2020

REVIEW DATE: August 2022

1. Purpose

The purpose of this policy is to make clear to all stakeholders and members of the School community, including the board, staff, parents and students, the values and principles that guide the School in developing policies and procedures to create and maintain a child safe environment at Hume Anglican Grammar. This policy specifically responds to and complies with Standard 2 of *Ministerial Order No. 870 (Child Safe Standards – Managing the Risk of Child Abuse in Schools)*, which also includes the School's reporting obligations with respect to these standards.

2. Scope

This policy applies to members of the governing board (as individual members of the board as well as to the board as an entity), the Principal, all school staff, volunteers, pre-service teachers, guest presenters, contracted service providers (in 'direct contact' with children), prospective parents and students, and ministers of religion operating in the school environment.

The application of the policy also sets out the school's expectations of parents, visitors and older students and the part they play in ensuring the safety of children in the school.

The school's duty of care is non-delegable. This policy applies when children are learning with an external provider.

3. Alignment to the Strategic Plan

Values:

Christian, Excellence, Resilience, Respect, Integrity and Safety

Goal:

1. Student Wellbeing – a supportive, caring and inspiring environment where all can thrive.

2. Parents engaging families and forging strong relationships

Pathways:

a) Create a culture which promotes a positive sense of wellbeing and self-worth based upon Christ's example.

b) Maintain and promote a safe and secure environment with a zero tolerance towards child abuse, with an emphasis on pastoral care that nurtures each individual.

a) Foster a fruitful partnership between home and school.

4. Roles and Responsibilities

The Board of Directors is responsible for authorising the Child Safe Standards Policy, for overseeing its implementation and for managing the risk of child abuse.

The Principal is responsible for the culture of the school in which this policy is embedded in the everyday thinking and practice of the school and that children are safe.

The Principal is also responsible for ensuring appropriate arrangements for child safety (including, without limitation, clear and comprehensive policies, procedures, accountability mechanisms and communication strategies) are implemented, monitored and reviewed within the school.

The designated Child Safety Officer is the Deputy Principal, who is responsible for implementing the school's Child Safe Standards Policy and the mandated requirements of Ministerial Order 870. Staff may seek advice from the Child Safety Officer if they have concerns about child safe matters and when considering whether to make a report about a child in need of protection.

All staff, contractors and volunteers have a duty of care to protect children from harm and a responsibility to comply with the school's Child Safe Standards policies and procedures.

5. Desired Outcomes

Develop students with school pride, who can embark on meaningful and productive lives as confident and respected global citizens.

Have connected parents who support the School as an intrinsic and steadfast element of family life.

6. Associated Documents

- VIT – Teaching Profession Code of Conduct
- Hume Anglican Grammar Information and Communication Technologies Policy
- Hume Anglican Grammar Staff Laptop Policy
- Hume Anglican Grammar Social Media Policy
- Hume Anglican Grammar Parent Volunteer Policy
- Hume Anglican Grammar Staff Professional Expectations Policy
- Hume Anglican Grammar Recruitment and Selection Policy
- Hume Anglican Grammar Student Wellbeing Policy
- All Victorian Child Protection legislation and any amendments – including Ministerial Order No. 870 (Child Safe Standards – Managing the Risk of Child Abuse in Schools)

7. Definitions

7.1 **Child** - The word 'child' in this policy refers to a child enrolled as a student in this school, including those 18 years and over. This definition is consistent with the national framework, Creating Safe Environments for Children – Organisations, Employees and Volunteers, the Commission for Children and Young People Act, the Child Wellbeing and Safety Act 2005 and the Children, Youth and Families Act 2005.

7.2 **Child Abuse** – All abuse harms children. Even injuries that are not visible can be profound. They strike at a child's sense of identity, make them fearful and ashamed, and reduce their ability to participate in their community.

Child abuse includes:

- Any act committed against a child involving:
 - a sexual offence
 - an offence under section 49M of the Crimes Act 1958 (grooming)
 - encouraging a child under the age of 16 to engage in, or be involved in, sexual activity
 - encouraging a child aged 16 or 17 under care, supervision or authority to engage in, or be involved in, sexual activity
- The infliction, on a child, of:
 - physical violence or
 - serious emotional harm
 - serious neglect of a child

7.3 **Child Safety** - encompasses 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 incidents or allegations of child abuse.

7.4 **Child Connected Work** - means work authorised by or on behalf of the governing board and performed by an adult in the school environment while children are present or reasonably expected to be present.

7.5 **The School Environment** - means any physical or virtual place made available or authorised by the Board for use by a child during or outside school hours, including:

- a campus of the School
- 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)
- online school environments (including email and intranet systems)

8. Hume Anglican Grammar Child Safe Standards Policy

8.1 Commitment to Child Safety

It is essential that all members of the School and wider communities recognise that Hume Anglican Grammar is absolutely committed to **a zero tolerance of child abuse**.

In the spirit of the School's commitment to student wellbeing, the School strives to provide a supportive, caring and inspiring environment where all can thrive and be safe always. The School considers the wellbeing of all who work for, study at or visit paramount.

8.2 Valuing Diversity

All current and prospective students will be cared for and their safety given the highest priority. This includes, but is not limited to, care and safety provisions for students who are living with a disability; of Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander descent; from culturally and/or linguistically diverse backgrounds; unable to live at home; and/or of diverse gender, sex or sexuality.

We are an inclusive Christian community in the Anglican tradition built upon compassion and service to others. We are also open to people of other faiths, or no faith, and respectful of their beliefs and cultures.

8.3 Recruiting

Staff and Volunteers: Specific information about child safety is an integral component of the School's recruitment, selection and management of staff. As part of this, all Teaching Staff must hold a valid, current Victorian Institute of Teaching (VIT) registration and advise the Principal immediately if there is any modification to their status or ability to work with children. All general staff, contractors, pre-service teachers and parent volunteers must hold a valid, current "Working with Children Check" (WCC) and advise the Principal immediately if there is any modification to their status or ability to work with children. In addition to these checks, targeted questioning during interviews and referee checks is conducted for all staff appointments and for parent volunteer roles. All staff and volunteers are expected to always conduct themselves in a manner that promotes the safety, welfare and wellbeing of students.

8.4 Supporting Staff and Volunteers

All staff, as well as supervised pre-service teachers, incursion presenters, casual relief teachers, contractors and volunteers at the School, are expected to maintain professional relationships with students at all times. This means that these individuals will never have an inappropriately intimate or sexual relationship with students; will never use sexual innuendo in the presence of students; will not use inappropriate or suggestive language or materials with students; will not hold conversations of an unsuitable personal nature with students, in person, via email or other electronic communication, via the post or other written communication, or through telephone communication. All of the examples cited are potentially forms of child abuse (see definition).

All visitors to the School must report to Main Reception, where they are required to electronically sign in using the SINE system. After visitors, including pre-service teachers, casual relief teachers, contractors and volunteers sign in, they are issued with an adhesive sticker with their name and photograph displayed. School staff and Board members can be easily distinguished by a magnetic name tag. The School Operations Manager will meet and undertake a child safety-based induction with any tradesperson or contractor upon their arrival at the School. Regular tradespersons will sign in, acknowledging the School's commitment to child safety, confirm they hold a valid WCC and are required to complete an annual child safety-based induction.

Parent volunteers working with Primary students must report to the Primary Reception upon their arrival to sign in and sign out again upon their departure. All parent volunteers are required to participate in Volunteers Induction Training, prior to working amongst children.

Visiting parents must also report to either the Primary or Secondary School Reception, so that a message can be given to their child. If they have a scheduled meeting the teacher concerned will come to the relevant Reception area to meet them. Parents or relatives who come to the School to collect an ill or injured child from the Health Centre may report directly to the First Aid Officer upon arrival. They will be required to sign the child out.

A member of staff may approach any visitor to the School, who does not have a school lanyard and Visitor's pass to offer assistance or to provide other instruction. All students are regularly reminded about interacting with strangers and primary students are to be accompanied by at least one other student whenever they leave their classroom.

8.5 Staff Interactions with Children

The School acknowledges that interactions with children may extend beyond the school setting, including outside of school hours, and particularly through utilising technologies such as email for educational purposes. Employees and volunteers must ensure that social interactions with students outside of school do not provide any grounds for allegations against them of improper conduct. They must be conscious that their position places significant obligations on them and a requirement to follow all relevant policies:

- a. Staff must not engage with students via any technologies, including social media, that are not for educational purposes.
- b. Where a personal relationship (such as family relationship or close friendship) exists between a staff member and a student attending the staff member's place of work, the staff member must notify their Line Manager of a potential conflict of interest. Where a personal relationship exists, and wherever practical, the School will timetable teachers so as to avoid them either teaching their child/ren in a class or having to be involved in educational decisions relating to that child. Similarly, wherever practical, the School will avoid timetabling teachers in a class with another family member or the children of close personal friends.
- c. As outlined in the Staff Professional Expectations Policy, staff should avoid driving students in their personal vehicle. In the event of an emergency or extraordinary situation, staff must obtain parental consent and also report the matter to the Deputy Principal, prior to the journey commencing. When this is not possible, staff must advise the Deputy Principal as soon as possible after the journey. The vehicle must be registered and insured when the journey is undertaken. Staff must never take a single student in their personal vehicle. At all times, at least one other person, preferably a staff member or other adult must be in the vehicle, as a third party. Only in extraordinary circumstances will an exemption to this policy be approved. In such extraordinary circumstances, the exemption must be approved prior to the transport taking place.
- d. Staff must not engage in paid individual tutoring or coaching of current students outside of school hours. If staff are engaged in a registered coaching/tutoring agency, and a Hume student is enrolled through this agency, then this is permissible. Staff must ensure that this outside work is authorised by the Principal.
- e. Staff must not engage in conduct that could be construed as assault of a child or student. Assault generally involves either hostile or reckless application of force or the threat of force, regardless of whether harm to the child, young person or student takes place.

The School expects that when physical contact with a student is necessary within the teaching/learning experience, employees and volunteers must exercise caution to ensure that the contact is appropriate and acceptable for the duty to be performed. Examples of situations where physical contact with a student may be necessary include:

- assisting students with special needs, for example, to allow a student to engage with a teaching/learning experience or the curriculum in general
- assessing a student who is injured or ill. The adult involved should advise the student of what they intend to do and, where possible, seek the student's consent and have another staff member or adult present
- restraining a student when the student, other students and/or staff are being harmed or are in imminent danger of being harmed
- teaching sport, music and other activities where physical contact of a student is required to demonstrate a particular action or skill
- comforting an upset student
- guiding a student in a helpful and non-threatening manner

The School expects that any physical contact as referred to in the above examples:

- is only acceptable if the contact was reasonable for the purpose of the management or care of the student
- must be appropriate given the age, maturity, health or other characteristics of the student
- should be consistent with any Individual Learning Plan in place for that student
- Staff must not engage in unreasonable conduct that could cause psychological harm to a child or student

Examples include:

- targeted and sustained criticism, belittling or teasing
- excessive or unreasonable demands
- persistent hostility and severe verbal abuse, rejection and/or scapegoating
- using inappropriate locations or social isolation as a form of punishment

8.6 Children's Rights to Safety and Participation

Each child at Hume Anglican Grammar has the right to express their views, to be listened to on matters that affect them and to feel safe. To support this a dedicated Class or Homeroom teacher has overall responsibility for their wellbeing, together with the relevant Head of Student Wellbeing or Year Level Coordinator. An age-specific wellbeing program is in place for each year level, so that all students are supported and cared for. In addition to the resources that are utilised by the teachers delivering these programs our students are also exposed to visiting speakers and presenters, who are experts in their field. Extending beyond the classroom, student wellbeing also includes a focus on protective behaviours with respect to areas such as online activities and 'stranger danger'.

Student Mental Health is increasingly recognised in schools as being an area that requires attention. We have processes in place to help cater for the children in our School in this specialised area. Both Primary and Secondary students have access to the School's Psychologist and Counsellor. We also have links with Headspace in Craigieburn and other specialised support services, where required.

8.7 Reporting a Child Safety Concern or Complaint

In addition to helping provide a safe learning environment, our School policies and procedures stipulate how teaching staff fulfil their duty of care towards children and young people. Teachers are encouraged to discuss any concerns about the safety and wellbeing of students with the respective Assistant Principal, Head of Student Wellbeing, Year Level Coordinator or Deputy Principal.

Any person who is registered as a teacher under *the Education and Training Reform Act 2006*, or any person who has been granted permission to teach under that Act, is mandated to make a report to the appropriate Child Protection authority. Furthermore, all staff (teaching and general) are provided with information related to the procedures and documents that the School has created in order for them to understand, identify, discuss and report child safety matters.

In the course of undertaking their professional duties, mandated staff members (this includes all teachers, the School Psychologist, School Counsellor and First Aid Officer) are required to report their belief, when the belief is formed on reasonable grounds that a child is in need of protection from significant harm as a result of sexual, physical or emotional abuse, physical injury, or neglect.

Failure to disclose' legislation exists in Victoria, meaning it is a criminal offence not to have reported any information leading to a 'reasonable belief' that sexual abuse has occurred. Staff members should refer to the information and procedures for staff/volunteers when an allegation of child abuse is made and Mandatory Incident Report (Staff) documents¹⁰⁰¹. They are also able to consult with their Assistant Principal or Deputy Principal, when a report is required. The reporting staff member is required to provide the Deputy Principal with the completed Mandatory Incident Report Form – Staff, as soon as possible after making a report.

Similarly, appropriate information and support is available for both parents and volunteers, as well as children within the School community, so that they can understand, identify, discuss and report child safety matters, including abuse. The Deputy Principal is responsible for providing this information and support. However, it is likely that a child may choose to speak directly with a trusted teacher or other staff member, or the School Psychologist or School Counsellor, who will then inform the Deputy Principal of any disclosure of suspected child abuse.

Specific support will be provided for any child who discloses child abuse or who is otherwise linked to suspected child abuse. The Deputy Principal will have overall responsibility for this and communicate the nature of the support with other staff and a relative/carer of the child. There are some circumstances where contacting parents/carers may place the child at greater risk. Victoria Police or DHHS will advise if it is appropriate to make contact.

Any instance of child abuse will be documented, reported and the records kept by the Deputy Principal, who will liaise directly with the Principal with respect to this, to ensure the appropriate follow-up action is undertaken. The School recognises that making a child abuse report could be stressful for a mandated staff member and so the School will encourage any staff member who makes a report to seek support from the Employee Assistance Program, if required.

8.8 Reportable Conduct

If the Principal becomes aware of a reportable allegation against an employee, he/she must notify the Commission for Children and Young People (the Commission) in writing within three business days of the reportable allegation. The Principal will then adhere to the obligations of heads of organisations under the Victorian Reportable Conduct scheme within 30 days. The Principal will provide information to the Commission through online forms available on the Commission's website which will provide information about:

- the employee (worker or volunteer) who is the subject of the allegation
- the reportable allegation
- the organisation where the subject of the allegation works
- details of investigations and outcomes
- the actions that have been taken in response to the reportable offence

The scheme does not replace the need to report allegations of child abuse to Victoria Police, where appropriate, or to Child Protection if the conduct meets the mandatory reporting criteria. If the employee is a registered teacher, the Victorian Institute of Teaching (VIT) must also be immediately advised of a reportable allegation.

8.9 Risk Management

The School recognises the importance of risk management to minimise the potential for child abuse or harm to occur and use this to inform our policies, procedures and activity planning. In addition to general occupational health and safety risks (such as those outlined below), we proactively manage risks of abuse to our students.

- a. In recognition of the scheduled duty times, parents are informed that students should not arrive at school prior to 8:15am and Primary students, who do not have an older sibling in the school and are not being picked up by 3:45pm, will be sent to Outside School Hours Care.
- b. In a 'connected world' it is appropriate that teachers may make contact with students online. Generally, this is most likely to occur through email, Microsoft Teams and Seesaw. This may include students, seeking feedback on drafting or asking questions about upcoming assessment items etc., All such communications will occur from the teacher's school email account, with the student also expected to use their school email account. All members of the school community must be aware of the policies related to the use of ICT, in particular the Hume Anglican Grammar Information and Communication Technologies Staff Laptop and Social Media policies.
- c. The School will have in place policies, processes and procedures (including record-keeping) that are reasonable with relation to the duty of care of all its students, to prevent the abuse of a child by an individual associated with the school, while the child is under the care, supervision or authority of the school.

8.10 Failure to Protect & Failure to Disclose

The Principal is also required to reduce or remove the risk of sexual abuse of a child by an adult associated with the school, as per the Failure to Protect criminal offence (1 July 2015). The offence requires the Principal to act if he/she knows that a person associated with the organisation poses a substantial risk of child sexual abuse.

The failure to disclose offence came into effect on 27 October 2014 for adults who fail to disclose child sexual abuse to police. The offence applies to all adults, not just professionals who work with children. Any adult who holds a reasonable belief that a sexual offence has been committed by an adult against a child in Victoria must report that belief to police, unless they have a reasonable excuse for not reporting. All staff of the school therefore have a personal legal obligation with respect to this offence.

8.11 Reviewing this Policy

Hume Anglican Grammar seeks to embed a culture of child safety within the school by ensuring that we regularly review all of our existing school policies and procedures every two years, whilst also keeping abreast of the latest government regulations and educational discourse in this area.

Due to the importance and sensitivity of this policy, the Board of Directors will review the Child Safe Standards Policy annually. The Board will require the Principal to report each month in his/her monthly report whether there has been any incident involving a member of staff, volunteer or associated provider that may be in breach of the Child Safe Standards.

The Deputy Principal will undertake to seek views, comments and suggestions from children, parents, staff and volunteers, as part of the review process. The School Board will ultimately be responsible for ensuring school management decisions related to child safety at Hume are embedded.

The School undertakes to not only adhere to this policy but also monitor adherence to the policy. This will be part of the review process but also ongoing.

8.12 Communication of this Policy

The school will make regular and frequent public statements to demonstrate its commitment to child safety and to raise an awareness of the school community's collective responsibility to ensure all children are safe from harm.

This policy will be publicly available via the school website and our intranet, SIMON.

Regular communication with regards to the policy will occur for the whole school community, including the Board, staff, parents, students, pre-service teachers and volunteers and it will also be shared with prospective families, visitors and contractor supervisors (where direct contact with children could occur).

In addition to providing information about the policy, various initiatives will be employed to ensure the policy is understood by all staff, parents, children, pre-service teachers, volunteers and contractor supervisors (where direct contact with children could occur).

Child Safe Code of Conduct

Hume Anglican Grammar is committed to child safety and has **a zero tolerance of child abuse**. We support and respect all children, as well as our staff and volunteers. In accordance with Hume's commitment to the safety, participation and empowerment of all children, all staff are obligated to actively support the school's child safe standards. A means of affirming commitment is by the endorsement of this Code of Conduct which conveys appropriate standards of behaviour by adults towards children.

All staff, Board members, contractors and volunteers and approved visitors (including but not limited to pre-service teachers, guest presenters, contracted tradespeople working in 'direct contact' with children) of Hume Anglican Grammar are required to observe child safe principles and expectations for appropriate behaviour towards and in the company of children. Specifically, all Hume Anglican Grammar personnel, volunteers and approved visitors are responsible for supporting the safety, participation, wellbeing and empowerment of children and must adhere to this Code of Conduct to help protect children from abuse by:

- adhering to Hume Anglican Grammar's Child Safety Policy, a key component of the School's statement of commitment to child safety taking all reasonable steps to protect children from abuse
- treating everyone with respect, listening and responding to the views and concerns of children, particularly if they are telling you that they or another child has been abused and/or are worried about their safety or the safety of another
- promoting the cultural safety, participation and empowerment of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children (for example, by never questioning an Aboriginal child's self-identification)
- promoting the cultural safety, participation and empowerment of children with culturally and/or linguistically diverse backgrounds (for example, by having a zero tolerance of discrimination)
- promoting the safety, participation and empowerment of children with a disability (for example, during personal care activities)
- ensuring as far as practicable that adults are not left alone with a child, this includes but is not limited to, school camps, counselling sessions, when receiving first aid, bus travel and children with high support needs
- reporting any allegation(s) of child abuse to the School's Child Safety Officer, the Deputy Principal, and ensuring any allegation is reported to Child Protection
- reporting any child safety concerns to the Deputy Principal of Hume Anglican Grammar
- if an allegation of child abuse is made, the first priority is to ensure as quickly as possible that the child(ren) are safe. It is also important to respect the privacy of children and their families, and only disclose information to people who have a need to know

The Principal of Hume Anglican Grammar will report to the Victorian Institute of Teaching (VIT) any charges, committals for trial or convictions in relation to a sexual offence by a registered teacher, or certain allegations or concerns about a registered teacher.

Staff and volunteers must not:

- develop any 'special' relationships with children that could be seen as favouritism (for example, the offering of gifts or special treatment for specific children)
- exhibit behaviours with children which may be construed as unnecessarily physical (for example, inappropriate sitting on laps or sitting alongside a child with an arm around them.
- use any physical contact when interacting with or disciplining a child that is inappropriate or unacceptable for the duty being performed or the circumstances
- put children at risk of abuse (for example, by locking doors or closing blinds to obscure vision)

- do things of a personal nature that a child can do for themselves, such as toileting or changing clothes
- engage in open discussions of a mature or adult nature in the presence of children (for example, about personal social activities)
- use inappropriate language in the presence of children
- express derogatory personal views on cultures, race or sexuality in the presence of children
- discriminate against any child, including because of culture, race, ethnicity or disability
- have contact with a child or their family outside of the school without a member of Hume Anglican Grammar's Senior Leadership Team's knowledge and/or consent (for example, no babysitting). Incidental contact, such as seeing people in the street or in a restaurant, is acceptable
- have any online contact with a child through social media. Staff must adhere to the school's ICT and Social Media policies with respect to online interaction with children both during and outside of school hours
- ignore or disregard any suspected or disclosed child abuse

Breaches

A breach of the Code may be:

- a disciplinary matter for the school (and result in performance management, formal warning, suspension, demotion or termination in accordance with industrial processes)
- a contractual matter (breach, termination)
- due to professional misconduct, referred to the Victorian Institute of Teaching
- a breach of statute referred to relevant authorities
- a criminal matter referred to relevant authorities
- a civil matter referred for legal advice and remedy
- any disciplinary process in relation to a breach of the Code will be managed with procedural fairness and in keeping with the principles of natural justice

Reportable Conduct procedure If an allegation of child abuse is made, the first priority is to ensure as quickly as possible that the child(ren) are safe. It is also important to respect the privacy of children and their families, and only disclose information to people who have a need to know.

If the Principal of Hume Anglican Grammar becomes aware of a reportable allegation against an employee, he/she must notify the Commission for Children and Young People in writing within 3 business days of the reportable allegation. The Principal will then adhere to the obligations of heads of organisations, under the Victorian Reportable Conduct scheme.

The Principal will also report to the Victorian Institute of Teaching (VIT) any charges, committals for trial or convictions in relation to a sexual offence by a registered teacher, or certain allegations or concerns about a registered teacher. By observing these standards and signing below, you confirm your commitment to the School's child safe principles and expectations and acknowledge your responsibility to immediately report any breach of this code to a member of Hume Anglican Grammar's Senior Leadership Team.

I agree to adhere to this Code of Conduct:

Name:Signature: Date:

IF YOU BELIEVE A CHILD IS AT IMMEDIATE RISK OF ABUSE PHONE 000

The Deputy Principal as the School's designated Child Safety Officer is responsible for the development, review and implementation of the Child Safety Code of Conduct.