



## STANDARD 1

### Strategies to Embed an Organisational Culture of Child Safety Including Effective School Leadership Arrangements at Carranballac P-9 College

#### Background Information and Rationale

- Victoria's Charter of Human Rights and Responsibilities (the Charter) outlines the basic human rights of all people. It was introduced in Victoria through the *Charter of Human Rights and Responsibilities Act 2006*.
- The Charter requires that governments, local councils and other public authorities not act inconsistently with the Charter and hence the introduction of the seven Child Safe Standards.
- Ministerial Order (MO) 870 which came into effect 1 August 2016, provides the framework for how schools will be required to comply with the Standards. Overall responsibility for ensuring compliance rests with the Victorian Registration and Qualifications Authority (VRQA).
- The Ministerial Order specifies the following requirements for schools regarding Standard 1:  
"The school governing authority must
  - (a) develop strategies to embed a culture of child safety at the school
  - (b) allocate roles and responsibilities for achieving the strategies
  - (c) inform the school community about the strategies, and allocated roles and responsibilities
  - (d) put the strategies into practice, and inform the school community about these practices;  
and
  - (e) periodically review the effectiveness of the strategies put into practice and, if considered appropriate, revise those strategies."
- The MO 870 identifies five elements of the Standard 1 requirement, including developing strategies, allocating roles and responsibilities, informing the school community, putting the strategies into practice, and periodic review. If a school is satisfied that its culture of child safety meets or exceeds the minimum standard in the Ministerial Order, the school needs to ensure that it can demonstrate the strength of its organisational culture to the VRQA.
- All staff and volunteers in organisations providing services to children need to recognise the importance and legislative implications, of keeping children safe. Under this Standard, organisations need to establish new ways or build on existing systems to embed or improve on a culture of child safety throughout all levels of their organisation.
- Preventing child abuse and responding to allegations is everyone's business. The Child Safe Standards aim to drive cultural change in organisations so that protecting children from abuse is embedded in everyday thinking and practice. To engage this cultural change, schools need to:
  - help leaders create an organisational culture that protects children from abuse
  - ensure the school's policies and practices reflect a commitment to child safety
  - ensure leadership is aware of allegations and substantiated cases of abuse and responds in ways that protect children from abuse
  - ensure staff and volunteers know and understand the organisation's commitment to child safety
  - commit to continuous improvement through regular reviews and updating policies and practices, and being open to scrutiny.
- To comply with the Child Safe Standards, an organisation must include the following principles as part of each standard:
  - promoting the cultural safety of Aboriginal children

- promoting the cultural safety of children from culturally and/or linguistically diverse backgrounds
  - promoting the safety of children with a disability
- The school already uses good leadership strategies. Leaders can use this resource to help protect children from abuse by embedding child safety in the school’s everyday thinking and practice.
- Whilst working with children can be very rewarding, it also brings additional responsibilities.
- Schools must act to protect children from abuse and build an environment where children feel respected, valued and encouraged to reach their full potential. This requires a culture of child safety to be embedded throughout the organisation so that child safety is part of everyone’s everyday thinking and practice. Such a culture is achieved through proactive leadership in demonstrating the appropriate values, attitudes and behaviours of an organisation.
- A child safe environment is the product of a range of strategies and initiatives. The school should foster a culture of openness, inclusiveness and awareness. Children and adults should know what to do if they observe or are subject to abuse or inappropriate behaviour.

### Purpose

- To ensure Carranballac P-9 College complies with the legislative requirements of MO 870.
- To identify those aspects of school leadership that will help to embed an organisational culture of child safety.
- To ensure the College demonstrates its commitment to creating a child safe environment.
- To raise awareness within the school community of the importance of child safety.
- To ensure the promotion of:
  - the cultural safety of Aboriginal children if applicable
  - the cultural safety of children from culturally and/or linguistically diverse backgrounds
  - the safety of children with a disability

### Definitions

At Carranballac P-9 College, College leadership comprises eleven members located on two campuses – the Boardwalk Campus and Jamieson Way Campus both of which are Foundation – Year 9 schools:

Principal called the Director  
 Campus Principals x 2  
 Assistant Principal Curriculum  
 Assistant Principal Music  
 Assistant Principals Middle Years x 2  
 Assistant Principals Early Years x 2  
 Business Manager  
 Wellbeing Leader (Leading Teacher)

Child Safe Officer - a person who is a point for contact for children and adults who feel unsafe or who wish to disclose abuse. The Child Safe officers will be the four Sub School Leaders and the Wellbeing Manager.

The School Council is the governing body and is responsible for ratifying all policies developed by the College.

In all Standards, the term “child” applies to any person under the age of 18 years. (For the glossary of all terms, please refer to Appendix 1).

### Implementation

- The safety and wellbeing of our school population is our highest priority and our first consideration.
- We have **zero tolerance of child abuse**, and all allegations and safety concerns will be treated seriously and consistently with our robust policies and procedures.
- To reinforce the message to be conveyed within the Standards, the College has consciously chosen to use the term ‘child’ or ‘children’ rather than ‘student/students’. The exception is where the term ‘student’ is integral to the name of a document.

- It is seen as vital that the Leadership Team also has a clear understanding of how developed the College's child safety approaches are.
- The College recognises that developing a child safe environment is an ongoing process and will not be achieved in the short term.
- Implementing the Child Safe Standards requires an ongoing commitment.
- To begin the process of assessing how child safe the College is, the Leadership Team will systematically complete a Child Safety Review.
- Existing policies have been reviewed and updated to stress the importance the College places on child safety with sentences such as the first two dot points above. This includes the *Child Safe Policy* (November 2015) which has had additions and amendments as the College gained a better understanding of the requirements of a child safe culture.
- The College's Vision, Mission & Values Statement will include child safety as a key component.
- When the next School Strategic Plan is developed, it is expected that school goals will relate to the development of a child safe culture.
- The components of the College's child safe culture are:

### Child Safety Review

Over a period of time, and with broad consultation, the College will complete the Child Safety Review as it will help the College to identify what is currently in place and what needs to be developed.

We consider that children have a unique voice and are able to contribute to discussions about how they interact within the College. Through already established appointments such as the Student Leaders at each campus and the Student Representative Council and in an age-appropriate manner such as forums, class discussions and focus groups, children will be asked what makes them feel safe and unsafe. The College will provide opportunities for opinions to be provided confidentially. Children will be told about what the College is doing to help keep them safe, ensuring the experience is a positive one. We will consistently let children know that their views are valued and respected.

The College will dedicate time within its Meeting Structures so that all staff, teaching and non-teaching, will be given an opportunity to participate in the review to help to identify areas of risk of harm or injury and encourage everyone involved in the College to take a proactive approach to reducing risk.

The Wellbeing team, Consultative Group, ES staff, Parents and Friends Committee, School Council and Professional Learning Teams in addition to other teams across the College such as eSmart and Safe Schools Coalition will provide input. Other mediums such as hosted meetings, newsletter articles, surveys and questionnaires will be provided so that School Council, parents and volunteers can provide input into the review.

The review will be completed systematically with an invitation to participate and a date always set for the next section to be addressed. In that way, there will always be a reassurance the work being undertaken is of paramount importance to the College over the long term.

When the College has completed the Child Safety Review we will have identified the areas in which we need to improve. At this point, an Action Plan will be developed.

### Leadership and Staff Responsibilities

The Leadership Team is responsible for embedding a culture of child safety in the College.

All staff have the responsibility to make College leadership aware of child abuse allegations and risks so that appropriate action can be taken.

All allegations of child abuse and child safety concerns are treated very seriously by this College. This includes complying with all legal requirements, including reporting suspicions of child abuse to police or the Department of Health and Human Services (DHHS) Child Protection as soon as practicable.

**If any staff member believes a child is at immediate risk of abuse, they must immediately phone 000 and ask for police. In an emergency, this action is to occur without consultation.**

(Failure to disclose the information to police is a criminal offence, except in limited circumstances such as where the information has already been reported to DHHS Child Protection.)

#### Identification and Analysis of Risk of Abuse

The College will adopt an approach to prevent, detect and respond to child abuse risks. This includes a risk management strategy and policy that sets out how our organisation identifies, assess, and takes steps to reduce or remove child abuse risks. Please refer to Standard 6.

Risk analysis forms part of our required preparation for school camps and excursions/incursions. The analysis will now include possible potential for child abuse.

#### Development of a Child Safe Policy

The College has developed a child safe policy which outlines our commitment to promoting children's wellbeing and protecting children from abuse. Please refer to the College's policy documents and to Standard 2.

#### Development of a Code of Conduct

The College has developed a code of conduct for staff, teaching and non-teaching, which specifies the standards of conduct and care required when working and interacting with children. The *Staff Code of Conduct Policy (General)* references the *Child Safe Policy* and explicitly prohibits any staff member from communicating with children on social media. It also informs staff of the need for a current Working with Children Check which is recorded on CASES21.

The College's *Student Engagement Policy*, the *Bullying & Harassment Policy*, the *Internet/Social Media Policy* and the *Mobile Phone, Student Use Policy* also describe appropriate interaction between children. Please refer to Standard 3.

#### Choosing Suitable Employees and Volunteers

The College will take all reasonable steps to ensure that it engages the most suitable and appropriate people to work with children. This includes police record and identity checks, Working with Children Checks where required, face-to-face interviews and detailed reference checks from previous employers, including from the applicant's most recent line manager. The College's *Incursions (Safety of Students Working with External Providers) Policy* and the *Working with Children Checks – Staff & Volunteers Policies* have details of the steps the College will take to provide a child safe environment. Please refer to the Standard 4.

#### Visitors to the College

The College has made clear decisions about what category of visitor is welcome in the College and the steps the College will take to ensure safety of children. Please refer to the College's *Visitors to the School Policy* and the *Photographing & Filming Students Policy*. Please refer to the Standard 4.

#### Support, Training, Supervision and Enhancement of Performance

The College will ensure that volunteers and employees who work with children are inducted and regularly updated and monitored so that their performance is developed and enhanced to help protect children from abuse.

The Wellbeing Coordinator and Sub School Leaders are the Child Safe Officers and a point of contact for others who have questions or concerns or want to report an allegation of abuse. The College would enhance the roles to include Child Safe responsibilities including the promotion of child safety within the College and the community. Additional training in child safety issues will be provided. Duties will be listed in the job description. Please refer to Standard 4.

#### Promoting Inclusion

The College values diversity and will be inclusive to all children and families. In particular, the College will establish a culture that supports:

- cultural safety for Aboriginal children, for example by working in partnership with Aboriginal peoples and Aboriginal community controlled organisations if applicable

- cultural safety for children from culturally and/or linguistically diverse backgrounds, for example by using inclusive language and images in policy documents, and communications such as the website and newsletters
- the safety of children with a disability, for example by ensuring your organisation is accessible to everyone and ensuring appropriate training and supervision of staff and volunteers working with children with a disability.

The College understands that for Aboriginal people, culture is about family networks, Elders and ancestors. It is about relationships, languages, dance, ceremony and heritage. Culture is about spiritual connection to lands and waters. It is the way stories are passed on and knowledge given to babies and children. It is how people are greeted. It is looking for connection. It is about all the parts that bind us together.

The College recognises that creating a physical environment that is respectful of Aboriginal culture is an important first step. Symbols and images that surround a place send an important message about respect. By acknowledging the Country in which the College is located, we are demonstrating our willingness to learn, understand and respond to the diversity of Aboriginal cultures. As part of the policy review process, the College will consider whether or not 'Acknowledgement of Country' should form part of its ceremonies.

The College recognises that cultural safety is living in an environment that is safe for people, where there is no assault, challenge or denial of their identity, of who they are and what they need with respect to Australian law.

It is about shared respect, shared meaning, shared knowledge and experience, of learning, living and working together with dignity and truly listening.

The College recognises that promotion of cultural safety of children from culturally and/or linguistically diverse backgrounds involves:

- ensuring the College clearly demonstrates a zero tolerance of discrimination
- being respectful, inclusive and welcoming of families from a range of backgrounds
- recognising times of importance to different cultures
- ensuring the physical environment has a positive image of a range of cultures, in terms of decoration and artwork
- employing staff that are representative of the local community
- actively seeking out and talking to families about how they would like to be involved
- asking about the best way to provide information to children and families

The College recognises that promotion of the safety of children with a disability involves:

- acknowledging that children with a disability are particularly vulnerable and ensure risk assessment processes consider their needs
- ensuring the College clearly demonstrates a zero tolerance to discrimination and actively welcomes all children
- making sure the environment does not pose access difficulties
- being responsive to families regarding specific measures that may be required to ensure the safe participation of a child with a disability
- supporting staff, other children and their families to understand and be inclusive of people with a disability
- thinking about how the College can encourage participation and feedback from children with a disability and their families

The College's definition of 'disability' extends to children with a medical condition such as diabetes, epilepsy, anaphylaxis or blood-borne viruses and has developed policies to support these children.

The College recognises that respecting diversity means:

- valuing and respecting people's beliefs
- building responsive relationships
- communicating openly and honestly to find out how best to be inclusive and respect cultural needs
- examining our personal ideas, customs and beliefs

- respecting that the beliefs of one person may not be the same as another
- acknowledging and respecting that others can hold different beliefs of equal significance

The College's *Anti-Discrimination Policy* describes the College's commitment to providing teaching and learning environments that are free from discrimination in all forms, including those based on race, ethnicity, gender, ability, disability, sexuality and religion. Anti-discrimination extends to the College's Uniform expectations so that children are treated equally with the rights of individual children balanced against the best interests of the College community as a whole when developing and implementing their Uniform expectations.

#### Empowering and Promoting the Participation of Children in Decision-Making

The College promotes the involvement and participation of children in developing and maintaining a child safe environment.

Ideas from children are sought formally by completion of the annual Student Attitude to School Survey which specifically addresses feelings of safety and through the already established appointments such as the Guardian Group at each campus and the Student Representative Council.

#### Professional Learning

The College has a strong commitment to ongoing professional learning for all staff.

There is an annual briefing for mandatory reporting protocols which is a component of induction for new staff. Induction for volunteers and external providers will include Child Safe information.

Staff are given information about a number of school policies with an emphasis now placed on the child safe related policies.

- The College will know it has successfully implemented Standard 1 when:
  - there are clear and transparent arrangements for leadership to be made aware of child safety issues
  - policies and practices prioritise child safety and promote shared responsibility – not just at a leadership level – by outlining all staff and volunteer responsibilities
  - policies and procedures include the steps that staff, volunteers, children or their families should take if they have concerns about the organisation's leadership in regard to child safety
  - child safety is a core part of public and internal messaging
  - a culture exists where staff, volunteers, children and families feel comfortable and supported when talking about any child safety concerns.
  - a culture exists of supporting cultural safety for Aboriginal children, and the organisations working in partnership with Aboriginal peoples and Aboriginal community controlled organisations to improve safety for Aboriginal children
  - a culture exists of supporting cultural safety for children from culturally and/or linguistically diverse backgrounds.
  - a culture exists of supporting safety for children with a disability

#### Evaluation

- This Standard will be reviewed after the completion of the child safe review process and then as part of the school's three-year review cycle or if guidelines change (latest information July 2016).

This document (Standard 1) was ratified by School Council in .....

## Appendix A

### Glossary of Terms

Term	Definition
<b>The Act</b>	<i>Child Safety and Wellbeing Act 2005</i>
<b>Aboriginal child</b>	A person under the age of 18 who: <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>· is of Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander descent</li><li>· identifies as Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander, and</li><li>· is accepted as Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander by an Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander community.</li></ul>
<b>Child abuse</b>	For the purposes of these Standards, abuse constitutes any act committed against a child involving: <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>· physical violence</li><li>· sexual offences</li><li>· serious emotional or psychological abuse</li><li>· serious neglect.</li><li>· family violence</li></ul>
<b>Children from culturally and/or linguistically diverse backgrounds</b>	A child or young person who identifies as having particular cultural or linguistic affiliations by virtue of their place of birth, ancestry or ethnic origin, religion, preferred language or language spoken at home or because of their parents' identification on a similar basis.
<b>Child</b>	A person who is under the age of 18 years.
<b>Child safety</b>	In the context of the Child Safe Standards, child safety means measures to protect children from abuse.
<b>Child safe organisation</b>	In the context of the Child Safe Standards, a child safe organisation is one that meets the Child Safe Standards by proactively taking measures to protect children from abuse.
<b>Cultural competency</b>	A set of congruent behaviours, attitudes and policies that come together in a system, agency or among professionals that enable them to work effectively in cross-cultural situations.
<b>Cultural abuse</b>	Actions and attitudes that deliberately ignore, denigrate or attack the culture of a person or community.
<b>Cultural safety for Aboriginal children</b>	The positive recognition and celebration of cultures. It is more than just the absence of racism or discrimination, and more than cultural awareness and cultural sensitivity. A culturally safe environment does not ignore, challenge or deny cultural identity. Cultural safety upholds the rights of Aboriginal children to: <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>· identify as Aboriginal without fear of retribution or questioning</li><li>· have an education that strengthens their culture and identity</li><li>· maintain connections to their land and country</li><li>· maintain their strong kinship ties and social obligations</li><li>· be taught their cultural heritage by their Elders</li><li>· receive information in a culturally sensitive, relevant and accessible manner</li><li>· be involved in services that are culturally respectful</li></ul>

Term	Definition
<b>Cultural safety for children from culturally and/or linguistically diverse backgrounds</b>	An environment which is spiritually, socially and emotionally safe, as well as physically safe for children; where there is no assault, challenge or denial of their cultural or linguistic identity, of who they are and what they need. Efforts need to be made to ensure the culturally and/or linguistically diverse children and their families receive information in a culturally sensitive, relevant and accessible manner, including in relevant community languages.
<b>Children with a disability</b>	A disability can be any physical, sensory, neurological disability, acquired brain injury or intellectual disability or developmental delay that affects a child's ability to undertake everyday activities. A disability can occur at any time in life. Children can be born with a disability or acquire a disability suddenly through an injury or illness. Some disabilities may be obvious while others are hidden.
<b>Organisation</b>	The <i>Child Safety and Wellbeing Act 2005</i> (the Act) will provide that the standards apply to 'applicable entities', which are defined in the Act as: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>· an incorporated body or association</li> <li>· an unincorporated body or association (however structured)</li> <li>· an individual who carries on a business and engages contractors, employees or volunteers to assist in the business in providing services or facilities</li> </ul>