Policy
Safeguarding Children and Young People

1. Policy Statement

Scotch College is committed to the protection of all children and young people from all forms of child abuse. The College values and respects every child and young person and is committed to providing them with a safe and inclusive environment when participating in the College's activities, services and programs.

2. Rationale

The College has a legal and moral duty to protect children and young people from foreseeable harm, and an important part of exercising that duty is strong policy. The purpose of this policy is to outline:

- the responsibilities, procedures and practices required of all staff within Scotch College to provide a safe school environment and protect the emotional, psychological and physical wellbeing of children and young people.
- the College's approach to meeting its safeguarding obligations as legislated in the *Child Wellbeing and Safety Act 2005* (Vic) incorporating the Child Safe Standards; Ministerial Order 1359 – Implementing the Child Safe Standards – Managing the Risk of Child Abuse in Schools and School Boarding Premises; and the Reportable Conduct Scheme.

The College is committed to advancing the safety and wellbeing of children and young people and complying with all requirements set out in this policy. This includes the provision of safeguards against mistreatment and the prompt reporting and effective risk management of actual, suspected or alleged child abuse.

3. Scope

This policy applies to all members of the College community, including:

- Staff members – this includes non-teaching staff and temporary, contract or casual staff
- College Council
- Volunteers, including Accommodation Providers for CRICOS students
- Third party contractors
- Teacher candidates or other tertiary students on placement at the College
- Visitors.

This policy applies to all forms of child abuse. Types and indicators of abuse are outlined in the College's Safeguarding Reporting Policy.

This policy applies across all school environments, as defined.

4. Definitions

Refer to Appendix 1.

5. Statement of Commitment

- The College is committed to the safety and wellbeing of all children and young people. This commitment remains the primary focus of the College's care and decision-making.
- The College has zero tolerance for child abuse.
- The College is committed to providing a child safe environment where children and young people are safe, and feel safe, and where their voices are heard with respect to decisions that affect their education and lives. Particular attention will be paid to the experiences of Aboriginal children and children from culturally and/or linguistically diverse backgrounds, as well as to the safety of children with a disability or vulnerability.

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- Every person involved with the College has a responsibility to understand the important and specific role they individually and collectively play to ensure that the wellbeing and safety of all students, children and young people is at the forefront of all they do and every decision they make.

6. Guiding Principles

The College's commitment to child safety and wellbeing is based on the following overarching principles that guide the development and regular review of the College's work systems, practices, policies and procedures to protect children and young people from abuse:

- All children have the right to be safe
- Any form of child abuse will not be tolerated and immediate action will be taken upon report of any suspected harmful or abusive behaviours
- The best interest of the child will be the primary consideration in all actions and decisions concerning the safety or wellbeing of a child or young person
- The views of the child or young person must be considered, and a child's privacy must be respected
- The College empowers children by informing them of their rights and responsibilities and supporting them to speak up about any matters of importance to them, including if something goes wrong. The College works to include the participation of children and young people in decision making regarding any matters affecting their welfare
- Clear expectations for appropriate behaviour with children and young people are established in the College's Child Safety and Wellbeing Code of Conduct and Staff Professional Boundaries policy
- Safeguarding children and young people is a shared responsibility, and is reliant on all individuals within the College community to keep children and young people safe in the College's care
- The safety of children is dependent upon the existence of an appropriate and compliant child safe culture including an environment where any form of racism will not be tolerated
- Child safety and wellbeing awareness is promoted and openly discussed within the College and the College community
- Through effective and accessible communication, families are encouraged to participate in decisions related to child safety and wellbeing which affect their child. Key policies are available on the College website
- Procedures are in place to lawfully and diligently screen all staff, volunteers and contractors who have direct contact with children
- Child protection training is mandatory for all Council members, staff, contractors and volunteers
- Procedures for responding to alleged or suspected incidents of child abuse are simple and accessible for all members of the College community
- Children have the right to a culturally safe school environment in which their diverse and unique identities are respected and valued
- The College pays particular attention to children who have any kind of disability or vulnerability, who are from culturally or linguistically diverse backgrounds, children who are unable to live at home, overseas students and lesbian, gay, bisexual, trans and gender diverse, intersex and queer (LGBTIQ+) students
- The College's Safeguarding program is regularly reviewed and improved upon.

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7. Implementation of this policy and the Child Safe Standards

Effective implementation of this policy is enabled by the championing and modelling of the College's child safety and wellbeing culture across all levels of the College. All staff are required to acknowledge, in writing, their commitment and adherence to this policy. It is the responsibility of all at the College, including the College Council, the College Executive, staff, volunteers and contractors to:

- protect children and young people from all forms of child abuse
- be alert to incidents of child abuse occurring outside the scope of the College's operations and services that may have an impact on the children and young people to whom we provide a service
- create and maintain a child safe culture that is understood, endorsed and put into action by all the individuals who work for, volunteer, support or access the College's activities, programs and services.

Staff position descriptions clearly state relevant responsibilities and safeguarding requirements. A summary of responsibilities is outlined at Appendix 2.

Appendix 2 further outlines the specific actions the College takes to operationalise this policy, enabling compliance both with the policy and the 11 Child Safe Standards.

8. Reporting Child Abuse or Child Protection concerns

Refer to the College's Safeguarding Reporting Policy, publicly available on the College's website.

9. Safeguarding governance

The College's governance structure includes the College Executive, the Child Protection Officer who is responsible for managing the Safeguarding Program, the Dean of Boarding and a Child Protection Committee. The College Council, especially through its Risk Committee, provides governance oversight of safeguarding. Further detail on specific governance responsibilities, including policy management, risk management and review of the child safety and wellbeing program and practices, is outlined against the specific Child Safe Standards in Appendix 2.

10. Records and documentation

Records relating to safeguarding are maintained and retained in accordance with the College's Records Management Policy.

11. Review and Monitoring

This policy must be reviewed at least once every two years or following any significant incident, audit or legislative changes.

The Australian Childhood Foundation undertakes audit procedures at 3 yearly intervals including assessment of this policy and its operation.

12. Related Documents, Frameworks and Legislation

1. Scotch College Child Safety and Wellbeing Code of Conduct
2. Scotch College Inclusion Statement
3. Scotch College Safeguarding Reporting Policy
4. Scotch College Complaints (Parent, Student and Community) Policy
5. Scotch College Staff and Student Professional Boundaries Policy (Staff Policy Portal only)
6. Scotch College Boarding Staff Handbook (Staff access only)

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7. Scotch College Safeguarding Incident Management Policy (Staff Policy Portal Only)
8. Scotch College Safeguarding Reportable Conduct Policy (Staff Policy Portal only)
9. Scotch College Staff Recruitment and Screening Guideline (Staff Policy Portal only)
10. Scotch College Working with Children Check Policy (Staff Policy Portal only)
11. Scotch College Records Management Policy (Staff Policy Portal only)
12. *Children, Youth and Families Act 2005* (Vic)
13. *Education and Training Reform Act 2006* (Vic)
14. *Crimes Act 1958* (Vic)
15. *Crimes Amendment (Protection of Children) Act 2014* (Vic)
16. *Worker Screening Act 2020* (Vic)
17. *Child Wellbeing and Safety Act 2005* (Vic)
18. National Principles for Child Safe Organisations (Framework)
19. Safe and Supported – The National Framework for Protecting Australia's Children (2021-2031)

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Appendix 1 - Definitions

The following definitions are applicable across all environments, including in-person and online.

Term	Definition
Child	A child or young person under the age of 18 years. The College extends this definition to include persons over the age of 18 while enrolled at the College.
Child abuse	Includes— a) any act committed against a child involving— (i) a sexual offence; or (ii) an offence under section 49M(1) of the Crimes Act 1958 ; and b) the infliction, on a child, of— (i) physical violence; or (ii) serious emotional or psychological harm; and c) the serious neglect of a child;
Child safety	Includes 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 suspicions, incidents, disclosures or allegations of child abuse.
Risk management	In the context of creating safe environments for children and young people, risk management consists of assessing and taking steps to minimise the risks of harm to children and young people because of the action of a staff member, volunteer, contractor or another child or young person. Risk management includes planning the work of the College to reduce or minimise situations where children and young people may be abused.
School environment	Any of the following physical, online or virtual places, used by students during or outside school hours as part of school authorised activities: a) the College boarding facilities; b) a campus of the College; c) online or virtual school environments made available or authorised by the College for use by a student (including email, intranet systems, software applications, collaboration tools, and online services); and d) other locations provided by the College or through a third-party provider for a student to use including, but not limited to, locations used for: i. camps; ii. accommodation of students (approved accommodation providers); iii. delivery of education and training such as registered training organisations, TAFEs, non-school senior secondary providers or another school; or iv. sporting events, excursions, trips, competitions or other events.
Staff	Individuals working in a school environment who are: a) directly engaged or employed by a school governing authority (College Council); b) a contracted service provider (whether or not a body corporate or any other person is an intermediary) engaged by the school governing authority (College Council) to perform child-related work; or c) a minister of religion, a religious leader or an employee or officer of a religious body associated with the school.

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Appendix 2 – Implementation of this policy and the Child Safe Standards

Specific responsibilities for the implementation of this policy and the Child Safe Standards are outlined in the table below:

Role	Responsibility
College Council	• Advocate and promote child rights, empowering and engaging children and young people in support of this policy and its expectations. • Promote commitment to this policy and its expectations both internally and publicly. • Authorise this policy and support its review on a two year cycle as a minimum or at a time governed by legislation, regulations, or College learnings that promote a change to the policy and all relevant policy or procedural guidelines. • Monitor compliance with the policy via an inbuilt mechanism for ongoing monitoring and review. • Ensure adequate resources are allocated to allow for the development, effective implementation, communication and continuous improvement of this policy. • Evaluate and analyse complaints, concerns and safety incidents relating to this policy. • Support a culture of openness and continued improvement and accountability to keeping children and young people safe from abuse.
College Executive and the Dean of Boarding	• Advocate and promote child rights, empowering and engaging children and young people in support of this policy and its expectations. • Ensure all staff understand their obligations in accordance with this policy and any related policies and procedural documentation. • Ensure this policy is implemented and adhered to amongst staff. • Ensure the development and implementation of required internal policy/ procedures and guidelines are in place to support safeguarding children and young people practices in accordance with the expectations of this policy. • Ensure adequate resources are allocated to allow effective implementation of this policy. • Ensure staff are fully supported with any decision to initiate action to protect a child from abuse and neglect. • Ensure appropriate supports, such as counselling and formal debriefing, are provided for any staff involved in a matter relating to responding to a concern for the safety and wellbeing of a child or young person. • Proactively share resources and experience in the development of child safe initiatives as they are identified. • Develop opportunities for regular discussion and review at all levels to support a culture of continuous improvement and accountability of keeping children and young people safe from abuse and neglect. • Ensure that all staff are aware of the appropriate recruitment, screening and employment practice in relation to safeguarding children and young people. • Review and update this Policy and supporting resources in consultation with relevant stakeholders. • Evaluate and analyse complaints, concerns and safety incidents relating to this Policy • Provide training and advice in the application of this policy.
Staff, Contractors and Volunteers	• Advocate and promote child rights, empowering and engaging children and young people in support of this policy and its expectations. • Maintain a full understanding of the commitments and expectations of this policy, as well as all other policies and procedures relevant to safeguarding children and young people. • Ensure compliance with this policy, fully implementing and adhering to the commitments and expectations. • Undertake any induction and ongoing training relating to safeguarding of children and young people. • Support the College's culture of openness, continued improvement and accountability to children and young people by engaging in regular review and discussion of College policies and practices and providing feedback to support improvement. • Seek guidance from a supervisor or manager if there is ever any lack of understanding in relation to the commitments and expectations as set out in this policy. • Adopt appropriate safeguarding practice and behaviour • Take action to protect children and young people from all forms of child abuse.

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	• Report any abuse committed by staff within the College or by others.

The College's specific actions to enable compliance with each of the 11 Child Safe Standards are outlined below:

Child Safe Standard 1 – Organisations establish a culturally safe environment in which the diverse and unique identities and experiences of Aboriginal children and young people are respected and valued.

The following policies, procedures and practices are in place:

- Cultural Safety of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Students Policy
- Acknowledgement of Country takes place at the start of significant College events
- Student Bullying and Harassment Policy – explicitly promotes inclusion and sets out consequences for racial vilification
- Student Code of Conduct and Staff Code of Conduct prohibit racist conduct
- Inclusion Statement
- Curriculum programs to promote understanding and celebration of Aboriginal people and culture
- Formal recognition of Reconciliation Week and organisation of smoking ceremonies
- 'All staff' Indigenous Culturual Competence training included in 3-year rolling Staff Training Plan
- Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander flags are flown on College grounds
- Any instance of racism is logged via Incident Reporting system which has detailed follow-up and reporting mechanisms
- Annual visits from Tiwi College during which students experience traditional indigenous dance and smoking ceremony and Scotch students and their families host indigenous students.

Child Safe Standard 2 – Child safety and wellbeing is embedded in organisational leadership, governance and culture.

The following policies, procedures and practices are in place:

- Public commitment to Child Safety on website, staff portal and in all handbooks
- This policy
- Child Safety and Wellbeing Code of Conduct
- Child safe culture fostered at Council and Council Risk Committee level via quarterly incident reporting and analysis, discussion and professional learning
- Child safe culture fostered at Executive level through regular discussion of child safe matters
- Robust risk management processes in line with the College's Risk Management Framework. This includes maintenance of a specific Child Safety Risk register, validation of controls and risk reporting to the Council Risk Committee
- Information sharing policies and procedures specific to Child and Family Violence
- Records Management Policy
- Privacy Policy
- Training within the 3-year rolling Staff Training Plan to enable staff understanding and adherence to policies and procedures.

Child Safe Standard 3 – Children and young people are empowered about their rights, participate in decisions affecting them and are taken seriously.

The following policies, procedures and practices are in place:

- Student's rights, where and how to seek assistance and 'student voice' is promoted in a number of forums including

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Assemblies, House Meetings and Year Level meetings

- Summaries of important aspects of the College's safeguarding policies are available in child-friendly versions that reflect the ages, developmental stage, diversity and abilities of the children and young people in the College community
- Children's' voice statements developed by the College students articulating the standards expected of themselves and College staff
- Student Leadership and Representative positions offer a student voice
- Numerous programs are in place to recognise, facilitate and support friendships and a sense of safety and belonging. These include year-level transition program, peer-support programs, Clubs/Games groups and co-curricular programs
- Staff are trained on indicators of harm and these are included in the Safeguarding Reporting Policy
- Age-appropriate sexual abuse prevention programs / consent programs are included within the College curriculum.

Child Safe Standard 4 – Families and communities are informed and involved in promoting child safety and wellbeing.

The following policies, procedures and practices are in place:

- Child Protection Officer presentation at information evenings, including the Boarding Parents' Association
- Parent/Teacher conferences
- Boarding House orientation and induction sessions (includes both parents and students)
- Enrolment documentation
- Overseas student Accommodation Provider screening, induction and monitoring processes
- Publicly available policies
- 'The Torch' newsletter
- Detailed policy communication and consultation schedule
- Parent Surveys
- Complaints (Parent, Student and Community) Policy

Child Safe Standard 5 – Equity is upheld and diverse needs respected in policy and practice.

The following policies, procedures and practices are in place:

- Inclusion Statement
- Cultural Safety of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Students
- Staff and volunteer induction processes
- Diverse choice of texts in library spaces
- Complaints (Parent, Student and Community) Policy

Child Safe Standard 6 – People working with children and young people are suitable and supported to reflect child safety and wellbeing values in practice.

The following policies, procedures and practices are in place:

- Staff Recruitment and Screening Guideline
- Working with Children Check Policy
- Staff and volunteer induction processes

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- 3-year rolling Staff Training Plan covering all aspects of Child Safety including reporting and record-keeping obligations
- Monitoring and supervision of all staff, including contractors and partner organisations, for appropriate practice and behaviour in the delivery of the College's service to children and young people
- Staff are required to display identity cards when walking around the campus, or wear issued uniforms where this is a requirement of their employment
- Volunteers and visitors are required to display issued lanyards/stickers at all times. College staff are trained to approach or challenge persons on the College campus who are not displaying a lanyard/sticker (where safe to do so and the staff member feels confident to do so).

Child Safe Standard 7 – Processes for complaints and concerns are child focused.

The following policies, procedures and practices are in place:

- Complaints (Parent, Student and Community) Policy, including student-friendly language
- Student Record Book and included policies (e.g. Behaviour Management, Bullying and Harassment, Student use of ICT Resources)
- 'Open-door' access to Heads of House, Heads of Year Level, Form teachers, classroom teachers, Psychologists, Boarding House Wellbeing team
- This policy
- Safeguarding – Reporting Policy
- Reportable Conduct Policy
- Mandatory Reporting Policy
- Privacy Policy
- The College is part of the National Redress Scheme.

Child Safe Standard 8 – Staff and volunteers are equipped with the knowledge, skills and awareness to keep children and young people safe through ongoing education and training.

The following policies, procedures and practices are in place:

- Staff and volunteer induction processes
- 3-year rolling Staff Training Plan incorporating all required Child Safety training, delivered via various modes
- Annual Council training
- Detailed professional learning / courses for key staff members such as Child Protection Officer and Dean of Boarding

Child Safe Standard 9 – Physical and online environments promote safety and wellbeing while minimising the opportunity for children and young people to be harmed.

The following policies, procedures and practices are in place:

- Student Use of ICT Resources Policy
- Staff Use of ICT Resources Policy
- 3-year rolling Staff Training Plan including professional learning in acceptable use of ICT
- Parent, Student and Staff information sessions
- Risk Management processes for camps, trips and excursions

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- Third party child safety matrix.

Child Safe Standard 10 – Implementation of the Child Safe Standards is regularly reviewed and improved.

The following policies, procedures and practices are in place:

- Policy Control Schedule (including policy review cycle)
- Reporting and analysis provided to the Risk Committee quarterly on Child Safety incidents, trends, root causes, improvement opportunities, and progress/status of any remediation. Reports discussed during meeting
- Reporting and analysis provided to the Risk Committee quarterly on complaints / concerns and safety incidents. Reporting includes root cause analysis and identification of any systemic issues. Reports discussed during meeting
- Reporting on the outcome of College community surveys to the Council and to staff, parents, students, volunteers and the broader College community (as appropriate)
- Child Safety related matters (such as privacy, information sharing, records management) incorporated into third party assurance provision to the College
- Annual self-assessment and 3-yearly full audit undertaken by the Australian Childhood Foundation to maintain the College's certification as a child safe organisation.

Child Safe Standard 11 – Policies and procedures document how the organisation is safe for children and young people.

The following policies, procedures and practices are in place:

- Scotch policy portals (public, staff and parent/student portals) contain relevant policies
- Detailed Policy Control Schedule overseen by a Policy Secretariat
- Stakeholder consultation undertaken in the development and maintenance of key policies
- Policies circulated to staff and implemented by staff
- Independent Schools Victoria's isComply system is utilised to inform best practice policies
- Risk Committee oversee Child Safety related policies and following review/update as required, endorses policies to progress to Council review.

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