

OLIVET CHRISTIAN COLLEGE

000 CHILD SAFETY AND WELLBEING POLICY

Policy number	000		
Drafted by		Last Approved by Executive	August 2022
Responsible person	Steven Nicholas	Scheduled review date	August 2025

Purpose

The Olivet Christian College Child Safety and Wellbeing Policy demonstrates our school's commitment to creating and maintaining a child safe and child-friendly organization, where children and young people are safe and feel safe.

This policy provides an overview of our school's approach to implementing [Ministerial Order 1359](#) which sets out how the Victorian Child Safe Standards apply in school environments.

It informs our school community of everyone's obligations to act safely and appropriately towards children and guides our processes and practices for the safety and wellbeing of students across all areas of our work.

Scope

This policy:

- applies to all school staff, volunteers, and contractors whether they work in direct contact with students. It also applies to Executive members where indicated.
- applies in all physical and online school environments used by students during or outside of school hours, including other locations provided by for a student's use (for example, a school camp) and those provided through third-party providers
- should be read together with our other child safety and wellbeing policies, procedures, and codes – refer to the related school policies section below.

Definitions

The following terms in this policy have [specific definitions](#):

- child
- child safety
- child abuse
- child-connected work
- child-related work
- school environment
- school staff
- school governing authority
- student
- volunteer

Statement of commitment to child safety

Olivet Christian College is a child safe organisation which welcomes all children, young people and their families.

Our example of God as a father, nurturing his children throughout their life journey through his provision of love and guidance is an image of God as the supreme 'care giver'. Jesus speaks very strongly on the value and care of children in several places throughout the scriptures. This establishes the foundation that the College is a community that works together in partnership to provide environments where our students are safe and feel safe, where their participation is valued, their views respected, and their voices are heard about decisions that affect their lives. Our child safe policies, strategies and practices are inclusive of the needs of all children and students.

We have no tolerance for child abuse and take proactive steps to identify and manage any risks of harm to students in our school environments.

We promote positive relationships between students and adults and between students and their peers. These relationships are based on trust and respect.

We take proactive steps to identify and manage any risk of harm to students in our school environment. When child safety concerns are raised or identified, we treat these seriously and respond promptly and thoroughly.

Particular attention is given to the child safety needs of Aboriginal students, those from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds, students with disabilities, those unable to live at home, children and young people who identify as lesbian, gay, bisexual, trans and gender diverse, intersex and queer (LGBTIQ+) and other students experiencing risk or vulnerability. Inappropriate or harmful behaviour targeting students based on these or other characteristics, such as racism or homophobia, are not tolerated at our school, and any instances identified will be addressed with appropriate consequences.

Child safety is a shared responsibility. Every person involved in our school has an important role in promoting child safety and wellbeing and promptly raising any issues or concerns about a child's safety.

We are committed to regularly reviewing our child safe practices, and seeking input from our students, families, staff, and volunteers to inform our ongoing strategies.

Roles and responsibilities

School leadership team

Our school leadership team (comprising the Principal and Business Manager), is responsible for ensuring that a strong child safe culture is created and maintained, and that policies and practices are effectively developed and implemented in accordance with Ministerial Order 1359.

The Principal will:

- ensure effective child safety and wellbeing, governance, policies, procedures, codes, and practices are in place and followed
- model a child safe culture that facilitates the active participation of students, families and staff in promoting and improving child safety, cultural safety and wellbeing
- enable inclusive practices where the diverse needs of all students are considered
- reinforce high standards of respectful behaviour between students and adults, and between students
- promote regular open discussion on child safety issues within the school community including at leadership team meetings, staff meetings and Executive meetings
- facilitate regular professional learning for staff and volunteers (where appropriate) to build deeper understandings of child safety, cultural safety, student wellbeing and prevention of responding to abuse
- create an environment where child safety complaints and concerns are readily raised, and no one is discouraged from reporting an allegation of child abuse to relevant authorities.

School staff and volunteers

All staff and volunteers will:

- participate in child safety and wellbeing induction and training provided by the school or the Department of Education and Training, and always follow the school's child safety and wellbeing policies and procedures
- act in accordance with our [Child Safety Code of Conduct](#)
- identify and raise concerns about child safety issues in accordance with our Child Safety [Mandatory Reporting Policy](#), including following the [Four Critical Actions for Schools](#)
- ensure students' views are taken seriously and their voices are heard about decisions that affect their lives
- implement inclusive practices that respond to the diverse needs of students.

College Executive

In performing the functions and powers given to them under the *Education and Training Reform Act 2006*, executive members will:

- champion and promote a child safe culture with the broader school community
- ensure that child safety is a regular agenda item at College Executive Meetings to ensure that a culture of child safety is being embedded and school council members are informed and understand the issues.
- undertake annual training on child safety, using the Child Safe Standards School Council Training slide presentation available on [PROTECT](#).

- approve updates to, and act in accordance with, the Child Safety Code of Conduct to the extent that it applies to Executive employees and members
- when hiring employees, the Executive ensures that selection, supervision, and management practices are child safe.

Specific staff child safety responsibilities

Our Principal and Business Manager are the first point of contact for child safety concerns or queries and for coordinating responses to child safety incidents.

- The Principal is responsible for monitoring the school's compliance with the Child Safety and Wellbeing Policy. Anyone in our school community should approach the Principal if they have any concerns about the school's compliance with the Child Safety and Wellbeing Policy.
- The Business Manager is responsible for informing the school community about this policy, and making it publicly available.
- The whole teaching staff is responsible for meeting to discuss Child Safety and Wellbeing. The staff meet weekly to discuss overall Child Safety and Wellbeing issues. In specific circumstances, the class teachers of that area will meet with the Principal to identify and respond to any ongoing matters related to child safety and wellbeing.
- Senior House Captains participate in a Student Reference Group on child safety with the Principal. The Student Reference Group provides an opportunity for students to provide input into school strategies.
- The Principal monitors the Child Safety Risk Register.

Child Safety Code of Conduct

Our Child Safety Code of Conduct sets the boundaries and expectations for appropriate behaviours between adults and students. It also clarifies behaviours that are not acceptable in our physical and online environments.

We ensure that students also know what is acceptable and what is not acceptable so that they can be clear and confident about what to expect from adults in the school.

The [Child Safety Code of Conduct](#) also includes processes to report inappropriate behaviour.

Managing risks to child safety and wellbeing

At our school we identify, assess, and manage risks to child safety and wellbeing in our physical and online school environments. These risks are managed through our child safety and wellbeing policies, procedures, and practices, and in our activity specific risk registers, such as those we develop for off-site overnight camps, adventure activities and facilities and services we contract through third party providers for student use.

Our Child Safety Risk Register is used to record any identified risks related to child abuse alongside actions in place to manage those risks. Our school leadership team will monitor and evaluate the effectiveness of the actions in the Child Safety Risk Register at least annually.

Establishing a culturally safe environment

At Olivet Christian College, we are committed to establishing an inclusive and culturally safe school where the strengths of Aboriginal culture, values and practices are respected.

We think about how every student can have a positive experience in a safe environment. For Aboriginal students, we recognise the link between Aboriginal culture, identity and safety and actively create opportunities for Aboriginal students and the Aboriginal community to have a voice and presence in our school planning, policies, and activities.

We have developed the following strategies to promote cultural safety in our school community:

The College's culture encourages staff, students, parents, and the College community to raise, discuss and scrutinise child safety concerns. This makes it more difficult for abuse to occur and remain hidden.

Child safety is everyone's responsibility. All College staff are required to:

- Act in accordance with the College's Child Safety policy, which clearly sets out the difference between appropriate and inappropriate behaviour
- Act in accordance with the Positive Behaviour (Anti-Bullying), Anti-Harassment Policy, Child Safe Mandatory Reporting and Responding Policy, Emergency Management Policy, Critical Incident Risk Management Plan, Working with Children Policy, Child Safety Code of Conduct Policy, and Procedures at all times, including following the Four Critical Actions for Colleges where necessary

- Undertake annual guidance and training on child safety
- Act in accordance with their legal obligations, including:
 - o Failure to disclose offence (applies to all adults)
 - o Duty of care (applies to all College staff)
 - o Mandatory reporting obligations (applies to all mandatory reporters, including teachers, principals, registered psychologists, and registered doctors and nurses)
 - o Failure to protect offence (applies to a person in a position of authority within the College)
 - o Reportable conduct obligations (applies to all College staff in reporting conduct to the principal, and applies to the principal in reporting to Employee Conduct Branch)
 - o Organisational duty of care (applies to the College as an organisation)
 - o For more information on these obligations, see Identifying and Responding to All Forms of Abuse in Victorian Colleges.

Student empowerment

To support child safety and wellbeing at Olivet Christian College, we work to create an inclusive and supportive environment that encourages students and families to contribute to our child safety approach and understand their rights and their responsibilities.

Respectful relationships between students are reinforced and we encourage strong friendships and peer support in the school to ensure a sense of belonging implementing our whole school approach to Respectful Relationships, our student Code of Conduct, and our school values.

One of the focus areas- Safety - addresses safety issues that students may encounter in their daily lives. The content supports students to make safe decisions and behave in ways that protect their own safety and that of others. Activities that help to empower our students include but are not restricted to are:

- Buddies' programs, assembly talks,
- Chapel times teaching and promoting positive character traits, cross year level, including Secondary to Primary activities.
- Health and Physical Education Classes. In Health and Physical Education, students develop personal and social skills through interacting with others in classroom and movement contexts. They use health and physical activity resources to enhance their own and others' wellbeing. Health and Physical Education addresses factors that influence the health, safety, relationships, wellbeing and physical activity patterns of individuals, groups, and communities. Students develop the understanding to challenge discrimination, assumptions, and stereotypes. They gain skills to take positive action regarding diversity, inclusion, consent, and respect in different social contexts. During Health and Physical Education classes we aim to enable students to

Through these processes we inform students of their [rights and special protections](#) including the right to:

- o live and grow up healthy
- o have a say about decisions affecting them
- o get information that is important to them
- o be safe and not harmed by anyone.
- o act to enhance and advocate for their own and others' health, wellbeing, safety, and physical activity participation
- o develop and use personal, social, and cognitive skills and strategies to promote self-identity and wellbeing, and to build and manage respectful relationships

As each student has a class teacher, or in the case of secondary, a home room teacher, they are encouraged to share any concerns they have regarding their safety.

A whole-school approach to Respectful Relationships recognising that schools are a safe space where young people can learn about gender equality and respectful relationships, in and out of the classroom and give students the skills and confidence to recognise unsafe situations with adults or other students and the confidence to speak up and act on concerns relating to themselves or their peers.

We ensure our students know who to talk to if they are worried or feeling unsafe and we encourage them to share concerns with a trusted adult at any time. Students and families can also access information on how to

report concerns at Olivet by discussion with the Principal and through the related policies and procedures at the end of this document.

When the school is gathering information in relation to a complaint about alleged misconduct or abuse of a child, we will listen to the complainant's account and take them seriously, check our understanding of the complaint, support the student, and keep them (and their parents and carers, as appropriate) informed about progress.

Family engagement

Our families and the school community have an important role in monitoring and promoting children's safety and wellbeing and helping children to raise any concerns.

To support family engagement, at Olivet Christian College we are committed to providing families and community with accessible information about our school's child safe policies and practices and involving them in our approach to child safety and wellbeing.

We will create opportunities for families to have input into the development and review of our child safety policies and practices and encourage them to raise any concerns and ideas for improvement.

We do this by:

- Having all our child safety policies and procedures are accessible for students and parents at the school reception upon request. Online on the school website at www.olivet.vic.edu. Under the forms and policies tab newsletters,
- Newsletters informing families and the school community about any significant updates to our child safety policies or processes, and strategies or initiatives that we are taking to ensure student safety.
- Having PROTECT Child Safety posters displayed across the school on doors and on noticeboards. Also, the Child Protection Fact Sheet is on display in the reception office.

Diversity and equity

As a child safe organisation, we celebrate the rich diversity of our students, families and community and promote respectful environments that are free from discrimination. Our focus is on wellbeing and growth for all.

We recognise that every child has unique skills, strengths and experiences to draw on.

We pay particular attention to individuals and groups of children and young people in our community with additional and specific needs. This includes tailoring our child safety strategies and supports to the needs of:

- Aboriginal children and young people
- children from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds
- children and young people with disabilities
- children unable to live at home or impacted by family violence
- international students
- children and young people who identify as LGBTIQ+.

[Equal Opportunity and Harassment Policy](#) and [Positive Behaviour \(anti-bullying\) Policy](#) provides more information about the measures we have in place to support diversity and equity.

Suitable staff and volunteers

At Olivet Christian College, we apply robust child safe recruitment, induction, training, and supervision practices to ensure that all staff, contractors, and volunteers are suitable to work with children.

Staff recruitment

When recruiting staff, we refer to our policies as listed below:

- [Staff Recruitment Policy](#)
- [Working with Children Policy](#)
- [Employment Reference Policy](#)
- [Occupational Health & Safety Policy](#)
- [Contractor Sub-Contractor, Tradesperson Policy.](#)

When engaging staff to perform child-related work, we:

- sight, verify and record the person's Working with Children clearance or equivalent background check such as a Victorian teaching registration

- collect and record:
 - proof of the person's identity and any professional or other qualifications
 - the person's history of working with children
 - references that address suitability for the job and working with children.
 - references that address suitability for the job and working with children.

Staff induction

All newly appointed staff will be expected to participate in our child safety and wellbeing induction program. The program will include a focus on:

- the Child Safety and Wellbeing Policy (this document)
- the Child Safety Code of Conduct
- the Child Safety Mandatory Reporting Policy and Procedures and
- any other child safety and wellbeing information that school leadership considers appropriate to the nature of the role.

Ongoing supervision and management of staff

All staff engaged in child-connected work will be supervised appropriately to ensure that their behaviour towards children is safe and appropriate.

- Staff will be monitored and assessed to ensure their continuing suitability for child-connected work. This will be done by making sure staff, governing body members, and volunteers engaged in child-connected work, are aware of their responsibilities for:
 - children and students
 - information sharing and reporting obligations
 - recordkeeping obligations
- provide supervision and people management of staff and volunteers that focuses on child safety and wellbeing.
- Regular performance reviews

Inappropriate behaviour towards children and young people will be managed swiftly and in accordance with our school policies and our legal obligations. Child safety and wellbeing will be paramount.

Suitability of volunteers

All volunteers are required to comply with [Code of Conduct for Employees Contractors and Volunteers Policy](#), which describes how we assess the suitability of prospective volunteers and outlines expectations in relation to child safety and wellbeing induction and training, and supervision and management.

Child safety knowledge, skills, and awareness

Ongoing training and education are essential to ensuring that staff understand their roles and responsibilities and develop their capacity to effectively address child safety and wellbeing matters.

In addition to the child safety and wellbeing induction, our staff will participate in a range of training and professional learning to equip them with the skills and knowledge necessary to maintain a child safe environment.

Staff child safety and wellbeing training will be delivered at least annually and will include guidance on:

- our school's child safety and wellbeing policies, procedures, codes, and practices
- completing the [Protecting Children – Mandatory Reporting and Other Legal Obligations](#) online module annually
- recognising indicators of child harm including harm caused by other children and students
- responding effectively to issues of child safety and wellbeing and supporting colleagues who disclose harm
- how to build culturally safe environments for children and students
- information sharing and recordkeeping obligations
- how to identify and mitigate child safety and wellbeing risks in the school environment.

Other professional learning and training on child safety and wellbeing, for example, training for our volunteers, will be tailored to specific roles and responsibilities and any identified or emerging needs or issues.

Executive training and education

To ensure the Executive is equipped with the knowledge required to make decisions in the best interests of student safety and wellbeing, and to identify and mitigate child safety and wellbeing risks in our school environment, the Executive is trained at least annually. Training includes guidance on:

- individual and collective obligations and responsibilities for implementing the Child Safe Standards and managing the risk of child abuse
- child safety and wellbeing risks in our school environment
- Olivet Christian College child safety and wellbeing policies, procedures, codes and practices

Complaints and reporting processes

Olivet Christian College fosters a culture that encourages staff, volunteers, students, parents, and the school community to raise concerns and complaints. This makes it more difficult for breaches of the code of conduct, misconduct, or abuse to occur and remain hidden.

We have clear pathways for raising complaints and concerns and responding and this is documented in our school's [Complaints & Grievances Policy](#).

If there is an incident, disclosure, allegation or suspicion of child abuse, all staff, and volunteers (including Executive members) must follow our Child Safety [Mandatory Reporting](#) Obligations Policy and Procedures. Our policy and procedures address complaints and concerns of child abuse made by or in relation to a child or student, school staff, volunteers, contractors, service providers, visitors or any other person while connected to the school.

As soon as any immediate health and safety concerns are addressed, and relevant school staff have been informed, we will ensure our school follows:

- the [Four Critical Actions](#) for complaints and concerns relating to adult behaviour towards a child
- the [Four Critical Actions: Student Sexual Offending](#) for complaints and concerns relating to student sexual offending

[Our Student Wellbeing and Engagement Policy](#) and [Positive Behaviour \(anti-bullying\) Policy](#) cover complaints and concerns relating to student physical violence or other harmful behaviours.

Communications

Olivet Christian College is committed to communicating our child safety strategies to the school community through:

- ensuring that key child safety and wellbeing policies are available on our website including the Child Safety and Wellbeing Policy (this document), Child Safety Code of Conduct, and the Child Safety including Mandatory Reporting Policy and Procedure
- displaying PROTECT posters and the Child Protection Fact Sheet around the school
- updates in our school newsletter, online or by correspondence.
- ensuring that child safety is a regular agenda item at school leadership meetings, staff meetings and Executive meetings.

Privacy and information sharing

Olivet Christian College collects, uses, and discloses information about children and their families in accordance with Victorian privacy laws, and other relevant laws. For information on how our school collects, uses and discloses information refer to: [Schools' Privacy Policy](#).

Records management

We acknowledge that good records management practices are a critical element of child safety and wellbeing and manage our records in accordance with the Department of Education and Training's policy: [Privacy Policy & Procedures](#)

Review of child safety practices

At Olivet Christian College, we have established processes for the review and ongoing improvement of our child safe policies, procedures, and practices.

We will:

- review and improve our policy every 2 years or after any significant child safety incident

- analyse any complaints, concerns, and safety incidents to improve policy and practice
- act with transparency and share pertinent learnings and review outcomes with school staff and our school community.

Related policies and procedures

This Child Safety and Wellbeing Policy is to be read in conjunction with other related school policies, procedures, and codes. These include our:

- Positive Behaviour (anti-bullying) Policy
- Student Behaviour Policy
- Equal Opportunity and Harassment Policy
- Child Safety Mandatory Reporting Obligations Policy and Procedures
- Child Safety Code of Conduct
- Complaints & Grievances Policy
- Privacy Policy & Procedures
- ICT eSmart use of ICT and Mobile Phones Policy
- Student Safety & Wellbeing Policy
- Code of Conduct Employees Volunteers & Tradespersons Policy
- Working with Children Policy
- Occupational Health & Safety Policy
- Staff Recruitment Policy
- Supervision of Students Onsite Policy
- Supervision of Students (offsite Policy)
- Supervision of Students (Bushfire Preparedness) Policy
- Students on College Buses

Other related documents

- [Identifying and Responding to All Forms of Abuse in Victorian Schools](#)
- [Four Critical Actions for Schools](#)
- [Identifying and Responding to Student Sexual Offending](#)
- [Four Critical Actions for Schools: Responding to Student Sexual Offending](#)
- [Recording your actions: Responding to suspected child abuse – A template for Victorian schools](#)

Related Department of Education and Training policies

- [Child and Family Violence Information Sharing Schemes](#)
- [Family Violence Support](#)

Policy status and review

The Principal is responsible for reviewing and updating the Child Safety and Wellbeing Policy at least every two years. The review will include input from students, parents/carers and the school community.