



BUCKLEY PARK COLLEGE

Child Safe Policy

Developed: July 2016

Revised: Annually in Term 1

Review Date: January 2017

Rationale

The Victorian Government, and the Buckley Park College community, is committed to the safety and wellbeing of all children and young people. As part of the Victorian Government's commitment to implementing the recommendations of the *Betrayal of Trust* report, in 2016 there is a new regulatory landscape surrounding child safety, underpinned by new compulsory [Child Safe Standards](#).

The Child Safe Standards are compulsory minimum standards for all Victorian schools, to ensure they are well prepared to protect children from abuse and neglect.

It is recognised that at Buckley Park College we have many policies and procedures already in place which aim to keep children safe. The Child Safe Standards, introduced in 2016 provide a further framework to improve policy and practices around child safety. The school is committed to ongoing improvement in this area.

The Buckley Park College Council and staff have zero tolerance for any, and all, examples of child abuse of any form. This commitment is led by the School Council and implemented in word and action by the College Principal and staff.

This policy is informed by the content of [Ministerial Order 870](#).

Aims / Purpose

To maintain and strengthen Buckley Park College as a truly child safe organisation, in which all of the Child Safe Standards apply. The Standards which are fully implemented are:

1. strategies to embed an organisational culture of child safety, including through effective leadership arrangements
2. a child safe policy or statement of commitment to child safety
3. a code of conduct that establishes clear expectations for appropriate behaviour with children
4. screening, supervision, training and other human resources practices that reduce the risk of child abuse by new and existing personnel
5. processes for responding to and reporting suspected child abuse
6. strategies to identify and reduce or remove risks of child abuse
7. strategies to promote the participation and empowerment of children.

Key Definition: What is Child Abuse?

The child safe standards aim to protect children from abuse in organisations. Under [the Act](#), child abuse includes four categories of abuse as outlined below.¹

¹ These definitions are based on the Victorian [Child Protection Practice Manual](#): www.dhs.vic.gov.au/cpmanual/practice-context/child-protection-program-overview/1008-abuse-and-harm-legal-and-practice-definitions

While the standards apply specifically to child abuse, organisations should look to promote children's health and wellbeing in a broader sense.

Physical violence

Physical violence occurs when a child suffers or is likely to suffer significant harm from a non-accidental injury or injuries inflicted by another person. Physical violence can be inflicted in many ways, including beating, shaking, burning or use of weapons (such as, belts and paddles).

Possible physical indicators:

- Unexplained bruises
- Burns and/or fractured bones

Possible behavioural indicators:

- Showing wariness or distrust of adults
- Wearing long sleeved clothes on hot days (to hide bruising or other injury)
- Fear of specific people
- Unexplained absences
- Academic problems

Sexual offences

Sexual offences occur when a person involves the child in sexual activity, or deliberately puts the child in the presence of sexual behaviours that are exploitative or inappropriate to his/her age and development. Child sexual abuse can involve a range of sexual activity including fondling, masturbation, penetration, voyeurism and exhibitionism. It can also include exposure to or exploitation through pornography or prostitution, as well as grooming behaviour.²

Possible physical indicators:

- Presence of sexually transmitted diseases
- Pregnancy
- Vaginal or anal bleeding or discharge

Possible behavioural indicators:

- Displaying sexual behaviour or knowledge that is unusual for the child's age
- Difficulty sleeping
- Being withdrawn
- Complaining of headaches or stomach pains
- Fear of specific people
- Showing wariness or distrust of adults
- Displaying aggressive behaviour

Serious emotional or psychological abuse

Serious emotional or psychological abuse occurs when harm is inflicted on a child through repeated rejection, isolation, or by threats or violence. It can include derogatory name-calling and put-downs, or persistent and deliberate coldness from a person, to the extent where the behaviour of the child is disturbed or their emotional development is at serious risk of being impaired. Serious emotional or psychological abuse could also result from conduct that exploits a child without necessarily being criminal, such as encouraging a child to engage in inappropriate or risky behaviours.

Possible physical indicators:

- Delays in emotional, mental, or even physical development
- Physical signs of self-harming

² A new grooming offence commenced in Victoria on 9 April 2014. Further information is available on the [Department of Justice website](http://www.justice.vic.gov.au/home/safer+communities/protecting+children+and+families/grooming+offence) <www.justice.vic.gov.au/home/safer+communities/protecting+children+and+families/grooming+offence>

Possible behavioural indicators:

- Exhibiting low self-esteem
- Exhibiting high anxiety
- Displaying aggressive or demanding behaviour
- Being withdrawn, passive and/or tearful
- Self-harming

Serious neglect

Serious neglect is the continued failure to provide a child with the basic necessities of life, such as food, clothing, shelter, hygiene, medical attention or adequate supervision, to the extent that the child's health, safety and/or development is, or is likely to be, jeopardised. Serious neglect can also occur if an adult fails to adequately ensure the safety of a child where the child is exposed to extremely dangerous or life threatening situations.

Possible physical indicators:

- Frequent hunger
- Malnutrition
- Poor hygiene
- Inappropriate clothing

Possible behavioural indicators:

- Stealing food
- Staying at school outside of school hours
- Aggressive behaviour
- Misusing alcohol or drugs
- Academic issues

Further Information about child protection services can be found on the [Department of Health and Human Services website](#)

Implementation

There are many vital components to the College's full implementation of the Child Safe standards. The implementation impacts all aspects of this organisation and the steps taken are outlined here in this policy. Many of these steps are detailed further in other connected policy documents.

Further supporting this Child Safety policy is the [College Child Safe Code of Conduct](#). (NB: hyper link to be added here when complete)

Staff at Buckley Park College:

1. Everyone connected to our school has a role to play to help children be safe.
2. We have zero tolerance for any abuse of children.
3. We have many policies and processes in place to protect the care, safety and welfare of children. As part of our commitment to continuous improvement, these are being strengthened all the time to ensure a zero tolerance approach to child abuse.
4. All staff complete an annual, compulsory Mandatory Reporting of Child Abuse learning module through the DET
5. There are clear boundaries about how staff may interact with the children at our school.
6. This Child Safe policy and the Child Safe standards apply to all school staff (including volunteers and contractors), visitors and students' family members.

7. Keeping children safe is everyone's responsibility. Different people at our school have different roles and responsibilities for ensuring children's safety. These roles are clearly defined.
8. A broad cross-section of staff will be involved in strategy development and review of policies and procedures associated with the Child Safe standards.
9. At Buckley Park College, the regular Student Engagement and Wellbeing, Middle Years and Later Years teams include 'Child Safe Concerns and Conversations' as part of their normal meeting agendas, to reinforce the Child Safe Code of Conduct.
10. There will be an annual whole staff meeting to launch and re-engage with the Child Safe standards, to outline roles and responsibilities, and confirm the whole school's commitment to protecting children
11. Staff recruitment and induction to Buckley Park College will have child safety as an explicit part of induction to this safe school culture.
12. The College will post child safety information on relevant notice boards within the school, as well as ensuring that all relevant electronic communication is shared widely
13. The College Child Safe Code of Conduct outlines clear behavioural expectations for all staff

Visitors, Volunteers and Contractors at Buckley Park College

Volunteers and contractors are often engaged in work at BPC. Their involvement may be for long or short periods of time.

1. This Child Safe policy and the Child Safe standards apply to all school staff (including volunteers and contractors), visitors and students' family members.
2. No contractor or volunteer is permitted to enter the school site without first signing in; undertaking an induction and presenting a current Working with Children check.
3. The school provides clear advice on the website about what to expect if working with or volunteering at the school
4. The school includes child safety information in volunteer and contractor advice
5. The school includes detailed child safety information on the College website:
www.buckleyparkco.vic.edu.au
6. The College Child Safe Code of Conduct outlines clear behavioural expectations for all visitors to the school.

Evaluation

The school will evaluate this Child Safe policy every year as part of our annual re-engagement work to begin each school year.