

Child Safe Policy

1. PURPOSE

Kingswood College’s governing authority, the College Council, is committed to child safety by protecting and promoting the interests of children and ensuring that those people who care for our students act in their best interests and take all reasonable steps to provide a safe and secure environment.

Through the establishment of this policy the College Council sets out the key elements of Kingswood College’s approach to ensuring child safety and provide an overarching set of principles that guide the development of the College policies and procedures that aim to protect children from abuse and embed a strong and robust organisational culture of child safety.

2. SCOPE

This policy applies to all members of the Kingswood College community.

3. KEY RESPONSIBILITIES

Position/Roles	Responsibilities
Council	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> To set out the values and principles that will guide Kingswood College in developing a child safe culture and environment. Establish and approve the Child Safe Policy and Code of Conduct. Ensure a culture of child safety and a zero tolerance to child abuse is embedded into all aspects of the College.
Executive Team	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Develop and implement strategies to embed an organisational culture of child safety Allocate roles and responsibilities for child safety within the College
Child Safety Officers	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Be an active and available staff member for anyone in the College community to report a suspected child safety or abuse concern Provide authoritative advice and raise awareness about child safety within the community
All College staff, volunteers and contractors	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Are required to comply with this <i>Child Safe Policy</i>, our <i>Code of Conduct</i> and their legal obligations with respect to the reporting of child abuse Be aware of key risk indicators of child abuse and raise any concerns they may have relating to child abuse to a Child Safety Officer Contribute to the development of this policy and ongoing efforts to ensure a child safe environment exists at Kingswood.

4. OUR POLICY

4.1 Commitment to child safety

Kingswood College is committed to child safety. All children at the College should feel safe, happy and empowered.

Kingswood College has a zero tolerance of child abuse. All allegations and child safety concerns are treated consistently and very seriously. Any allegations or concerns should be reported to our **Child Safety Officers** as well as the appropriate authorities.

The College is committed to preventing child abuse, identifying risks early and removing or reducing these risks in the school environment (including physical and online environments). Recruitment processes seek to ensure that the most suitable people are selected to work and volunteer with children, and that unsuitable people are screened out. Regular training occurs to inform staff and volunteers of child abuse risks.

The College is also committed to providing age-appropriate education to students, parents and staff, to enable all members of the community to understand, identify, discuss and report child safety matters.

All children are supported and respected at Kingswood College, as well as our staff and volunteers. The College is committed to the cultural safety of Aboriginal children, the cultural safety of children from culturally and/or linguistically diverse backgrounds, providing a safe environment for children with a disability and support for same sex attracted, intersex, gender diverse students and children from same sex families.

Kingswood College will ensure compliance with *Ministerial Order 870, Child Safe Standards – Managing the risk of child abuse in schools* and all other relevant legislation by embedding all aspects of the legislation into our policies and procedures.

Further, specific policies, procedures and training exists to support our leadership team, staff, contractors and volunteers and to support College's commitment to child safety. Refer to the Related College Policies and Procedures listed below.

4.2 Students

This policy is intended to empower children as vital and active participants of Kingswood College. Where appropriate, students are involved when decisions are made about matters that directly affect them. Student views are listened to and treated with respect.

Diversity and respect are promoted at Kingswood College. People from all walks of life and cultural backgrounds are welcome. In particular we:

- promote the cultural safety, participation and empowerment of Aboriginal children
- promote the cultural safety, participation and empowerment of children from culturally and/or linguistically diverse backgrounds
- ensure that children with a disability are safe and can participate
- support same sex attracted, intersex and gender diverse students, and students from same sex families.

Kingswood College will actively support and assist any child who discloses child abuse, or are otherwise linked to child abuse. The College Counsellors and Wellbeing teams will provide this support along with appropriate external specialists if required.

The College will listen to and consider the opinions of children and draw on such in shaping our child safety policies.

4.3 Staff and volunteers

This policy along with our *Code of Conduct* and *Child Safety Program* and associated training guides our staff and volunteers on how to behave with children in the College community.

All of our staff and volunteers must agree to abide by our *Code of Conduct* which specifies the standards of conduct and what is acceptable and unacceptable behaviour required when working with children. All staff and volunteers, as well as children and their families, are given the opportunity to contribute to the development of the code of conduct.

4.4 Training and supervision

Training and education is important to reinforce the understanding that child safety is everyone's responsibility.

Kingswood College seeks to create a culture where all staff and volunteers (in addition to parents/carers and children) feel confident and able to discuss any allegations of child abuse or child safety concerns. Staff and volunteers are informed on how to identify, assess, and minimise risks of child abuse and to detect potential signs of child abuse through annual training courses, briefings and seminars.

Staff and volunteers are also supported through ongoing supervision to develop their skills to protect children from abuse; and promote the cultural safety of Aboriginal children, the cultural safety of children from linguistically and/or diverse backgrounds, the safety of children with a disability and how to provide support to same sex attracted, intersex, gender diverse students and children from same sex families.

New employees and volunteers are supervised regularly to ensure they understand the College's commitment to child safety and that everyone has a role to play in protecting children from abuse, as well as checking that their behaviour towards children is safe and appropriate (refer to Code of Conduct). Any inappropriate behaviour will be reported through appropriate channels, including the Department of Families, Fairness and Housing and Victoria Police, depending on the severity and urgency of the matter.

4.5 Recruitment and Selection

All reasonable steps are taken to employ skilled people to work with children. Selection criteria and advertisements are developed to clearly demonstrate the College's commitment to child safety and an awareness of social and legislative responsibilities. The College understands that when recruiting staff and volunteers, ethical as well as legislative obligations exist.

All people engaged in child-related work, including volunteers, are required to hold VIT Registration or a Working with Children Check and to provide evidence of this Check (see [Working with Children Check](#) website). Police checks are conducted as an element of gaining VIT Registration or a Working with Children Check.

Interviews and reference checks are conducted to establish the suitability of candidates to perform child-connected work. Information about a person's history of work with children will be requested from referees. Qualifications and identity of applicants are verified as part of the appointment process.

4.6 Fair procedures for personnel

The safety and wellbeing of children is the College's primary concern. The College also seeks to be fair and just to personnel. The decisions made when recruiting, assessing incidents, and undertaking disciplinary action will always be thorough, transparent, and based on evidence.

All allegations of abuse and safety concerns are recorded using the College's incident reporting form, including investigation updates. All records are securely stored.

If an allegation of abuse or a safety concern is raised, updates are provided to staff, children and families as appropriate on progress and any actions the College takes.

4.7 Privacy

All personal information considered or recorded will respect the privacy of the individuals involved, whether they be staff, volunteers, parents or children, unless there is a risk to someone's safety. Kingswood College has safeguards and practices in place to ensure any personal information is protected. Everyone is entitled to know how this information is recorded, what will be done with it, and who will have access to it.

4.8 Legislative responsibilities

Kingswood College and all adults in Victoria have a legal obligation to protect children, including:

Failure to disclose: Reporting child sexual abuse is a community-wide responsibility. All adults in Victoria who have a reasonable belief that an adult has committed a sexual offence against a child under 16 have an obligation to report that information to the police.¹

Failure to protect: People of authority at the College commit an offence if they know of a substantial risk of child sexual abuse and have the power or responsibility to reduce or remove the risk, but negligently fail to do so.²

Grooming³ and encouraging a child to engage in sexual activity⁴ Acts by an adult that encourage a child (under 18) to engage in, or be involved in, sexual activity are also considered an offence under the Crimes Act 1958 (Vic)

Any personnel who are **mandatory reporters** must comply with their duties.⁵

4.9 Risk Management

In addition to general occupational health and safety risks, Kingswood College proactively manages the risk of abuse to our children.

¹ A person will not commit this offence if they have a reasonable excuse for not disclosing the information, including a fear for their safety or where the information has already been disclosed. See [Department of Justice and Regulation website](#)

² Further information about the failure to protect offence is available on the [Department of Justice and Regulation website](#)

³ Crimes Act (Vic) section.49M

⁴ Crimes Act (Vic) sections 49K and 49L

⁵ Mandatory reporters (doctors, nurses, midwives, teachers (including early childhood teachers), principals and police) must report to child protection if they believe on reasonable grounds that a child is in need of protection from physical injury or sexual abuse. See [how to make a report to child protection](#).

The College has risk management strategies in place to identify, assess, and take steps to minimise child abuse risks, which include risks posed by physical environments and online environments.

4.10 Regular Review

This policy will be reviewed every two years and following significant incidents if they occur. Families and children have the opportunity to contribute to the policy. Where possible the College will do its best to work with local Aboriginal communities, culturally and/or linguistically diverse communities, people with a disability, same sex attracted, intersex and gender diverse students.

4.11 Allegations, concerns and complaints

Kingswood College takes all allegations seriously and has practices in place to investigate thoroughly and quickly. Staff and volunteers are informed on how to deal appropriately with allegations.

The College works to ensure all children, families, staff and volunteers know what to do and who to tell if they observe abuse or are a victim, and if they notice inappropriate behaviour. The College community has a shared responsibility to report an allegation of abuse if there is a reasonable belief that an incident took place.

If an adult has a **reasonable belief** that an incident has occurred then they must report the incident to the appropriate authorities and to Kingswood College's Principal or one of the College's **Child Safety Officers**.

A list of Kingswood's **Child Safety Officers** is available on the Kingswood website College Policies section at: <https://www.kingswoodcollege.vic.edu.au/about-kwc/governance/>

Factors contributing to reasonable belief may be:

- a child states they or someone they know has been abused (noting that sometimes the child may in fact be referring to themselves)
- behaviour consistent with that of an abuse victim is observed
- someone else has raised a suspicion of abuse but is unwilling to report it
- observing suspicious behaviour.

If you believe a child is at immediate risk of abuse phone 000.

5. RELATED COLLEGE POLICIES AND PUBLICATIONS

- Child Safety Officer Role
- Code of Conduct
- Mandatory Reporting Policy
- Privacy Policy
- Reportable Conduct of Staff, Volunteers and Others
- The Obligation to Report a Sexual Offence and Failure to Protect
- Recruitment Processes