

**Vermont Secondary College**  
*'Lift up thine eyes'*

## **Child Safe Standards policy**

@ 08 December 2016

Vermont Secondary College is committed to the safety and wellbeing of all children and young people, and has a zero tolerance for child abuse. This will be the primary focus of our care and decision-making.

As part of the Victorian Government's and DET's commitment to implementing the recommendations of the Betrayal of Trust report, VSC will continue to deliver best practice programs that enable us as a college community to meet the Child Safe Standards. They are outlined in Ministerial Order No. 870, which operationalises the Child Safe Standards in all Victorian schools, and came into operation on 1 August 2016. 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.

VSC promotes the achievement of excellence in a learning environment that is safe, caring and accepting of diversity. Our college is committed to the development of life-long learning skills that motivate and enable all students to achieve their individual goals and make a positive contribution to the global community. This philosophy is underpinned by our college values of excellence, respect, responsibility, integrity and tolerance; these five values govern and direct our approach to learning and teaching, and embody our wellbeing and engagement strategies.

VSC's Student Wellbeing and Engagement Strategies are informed by a whole school approach to achieving wellness rather than focusing on isolated issues, behaviours or outcomes. Our policy is heavily informed by the World Health Organisation's Health-Promoting Schools model (1998). (VSC Student Wellbeing & Engagement policy 2015)

VSC is committed to a culture of child safety and ensures the maintenance of policies and procedures that demonstrate zero tolerance of child abuse. All safety concerns and allegations will be treated respectfully, seriously and consistently. VSC is committed to preventing child abuse through identifying risks early and removing and/or reducing these risks.

VSC supports and respects all children, and is committed to providing a child safe environment where children and young people are safe and feel safe, and their voices are heard about decisions that affect their lives. We are committed to the cultural safety of aboriginal students, the cultural safety of children from a culturally and/or linguistically diverse background (CALD), and to providing a safe and inclusive environment for children who are vulnerable or those with a disability.

Every person involved in VSC has a responsibility to understand the important and specific role he/she plays individually and collectively to ensure that the wellbeing and safety of all children and young people is at the forefront of all they do and every decision they make.

**To create and maintain a child safe organisation, and as an entity to which the Child Safe Standards apply, VSC has:**

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


**In our planning, decision-making and operations, VSC will:**

- Take a preventative, proactive and participatory approach to child safety;
- Value and empower children to participate in decisions which affect their lives;
- Foster a culture of openness that supports all persons to safely disclose risks of harm to children;
- Respect diversity in cultures and child rearing practices while keeping child safety paramount;
- Provide written guidance on appropriate conduct and behaviour towards children;
- Engage only the most suitable people to work with children and have high quality staff and volunteer supervision and professional development;
- Ensure children know who to talk with if they are worried or are feeling unsafe, and that they are comfortable and encouraged to raise such issues;
- Report suspected abuse, neglect or mistreatment promptly to the appropriate authorities;
- Share information appropriately and lawfully with other organisations where the safety and wellbeing of children is at risk; and
- Value the input of and communicate regularly with families and carers.

**VSC has existing procedures and policies that aim to keep children safe. We demonstrate our commitment to the Child Safe Standards through this VSC Child Safe policy, and the following documents, which underpin it:**

- the VSC Child Safe Code of Conduct
- the VSC Student Wellbeing & Engagement policy
- the VSC House system and related wellbeing, engagement and transition processes
- the VSC Student Citizenship policy
- the VSC Duty of Care policy
- the VSC Mandatory Reporting policy
- the VSC Working with Children, Volunteers and Visitors policy
- the VSC Mobile Devices policy
- the VSC e-Safety policy
- the VSC Classroom Relationships framework
- the VSC Teacher Role framework, which embeds the AITSL standards
- the VSC Induction policy and related employment processes
- the VSC First Aid Centre policy

VSC will continue to review these policies, programs and practices to ensure continual improvement so that best practice is maintained.

<b>Date Implemented</b>	August 2016
<b>Author</b>	Aidan Message (Head of Student Wellbeing) & Harry Ruff (Assistant Principal)
<b>Approved By</b>	School Council
<b>Approval Authority (Signature &amp; Date)</b>	
<b>Date Reviewed</b>	As required
<b>Responsible for Review</b>	Assistant Principals & Head of Student Wellbeing
<b>Review Date</b>	triennially
<b>References</b>	<p> Ministerial Order 870 Victorian Government Schools Policy Advisory Guide Child Safe Standards &gt; Health, Wellbeing and Safety &gt; PROTECT &gt; Child Safe Standards</p> <p><a href="#">VRQA Child Safe Standards</a> VSC Duty of Care policy</p> <p>For further information and general support materials for organisations, see: <a href="#">Child Safe Standards - Department of Health &amp; Human Services (DHHS)</a>.</p>