



## Child Safety and Wellbeing Policy

The Hamilton and Alexandra College has developed this Child Safety and Wellbeing Policy as an overarching document that provides key elements of our commitment to creating and maintaining a child safe culture and environment.

If you are a non-English speaker who needs help to understand this Policy, please contact the Deputy Principal Wellbeing, Ms Kristen Waldron on 03 5572 1355.

This Policy forms the foundation of the College's procedures, practices and processes and ultimately the College's culture with respect to child safety and wellbeing. It informs the School community of everyone's obligations to act safely and appropriately towards children and young people. It is publicly available [Link to be inserted when complete](#)

### 1. PURPOSE

This Policy provides the framework for the College's:

- commitment to creating and maintaining a child safe and child friendly organisation where children and young people are and feel safe
- implementation of child-safe environment work systems, practices, policies and procedures that promote and maintain child safety and wellbeing
- creation of a culturally safe environment for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children and their families
- maintenance of a positive and robust child safety and wellbeing culture which is championed and modelled at all levels
- promotion and open discussion of child safety and wellbeing issues
- compliance with all laws, regulations and standards relevant to child safety in Victoria, including our approach to implementing Ministerial Order 1359, which sets out how the Victorian Child Safe Standards apply in school environments.<sup>1</sup>

### 2. SCOPE

This Policy:

- applies to all school staff, boarding premises staff, volunteers and contractors (whether or not they work in direct contact with students) and to College Board members where indicated
- applies in all physical and online school environments used by students during or outside of school hours, including boarding premises and other locations provided for a student's use (for example, a school camp) and those provided through third-party providers

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<sup>1</sup> *Implementing the Child Safe Standards – Managing the Risk of Child Abuse in Schools and School Boarding Premises*, Ministerial Order No. 1359 made pursuant to the *Education and Training Reform Act 2006* (Vic) operative from 1 July 2022. The *Child Safe Standards* are as gazetted by the Minister for Child Protection pursuant to the *Child Wellbeing and Safety Act 2005* (Vic).

- should be read together with the College’s Child Safety Code of Conduct and all other child safety and wellbeing policies and procedures.

### 3. DEFINITIONS

The following terms in this Policy have specific definitions (and consistent with Victorian law where indicated):

Child	<p>Child means a child or young person who is under the age of 18 years.</p> <p>Source: <i>Child Wellbeing and Safety Act 2005 (Vic)</i></p>
Child abuse	<p>Child abuse includes:</p> <p>a) any act committed against a child involving:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. a sexual offence</li> <li>2. grooming offences under section 49M(1) of the Crimes Act 1958</li> </ol> <p>b) the infliction, on a child, of:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. physical violence</li> <li>2. serious emotional or psychological harm</li> </ol> <p>c) the serious neglect of a child including exposure to family violence and its effects.</p> <p>Source: <i>Child Wellbeing and Safety Act 2005 (Vic)</i></p>
Child-connected work	<p>Child-connected work means:</p> <p>a) work authorised by the College governing authority and performed by an adult in a school environment while children are present or reasonably expected to be present; or</p> <p>b) for the purposes of a school boarding premises, work authorised by the provider of school boarding premises in a school boarding premises environment while children are present or reasonably expected to be present.</p> <p>Source: <i>Ministerial Order 1359</i></p>
Child-related work	<p>Child-related work means:</p> <p>a) work at or for a service, body or place, or that involves a specified activity; and</p> <p>b) that usually involves direct contact with a child.</p> <p>Educational institutions are specified for the purpose of a).</p> <p>Source: <i>Worker Screening Act 2020 (Vic)</i></p>
Child safety	<p>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.</p> <p>Source: <i>Ministerial Order 1359</i></p>
Direct contact	<p>Direct contact in relation to child-related work, means any contact between a person and a child that involves-</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• physical contact; or</li> <li>• face to face contact; or</li> <li>• contact by post or other written communication; or</li> <li>• contact by telephone or other oral communication; or</li> <li>• contact by email or other electronic communication.</li> </ul> <p>Source: <i>Worker Screening Act 2020 (Vic)</i></p>
School environment	<p>School environment means any of the following physical, online or virtual places, used during or outside school hours:</p> <p>a) A campus of the College or boarding premises</p>

	<p>b) Online or virtual school environments made available or authorised by the College governing authority for use by a child or student (including email, intranet systems, software applications, collaboration tools, and online services)</p> <p>c) Other locations provided by the College or through a third-party provider for a child or student to use including, but not limited to, locations used for:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. camps</li> <li>2. approved homestay accommodation;</li> <li>3. delivery of education and training such as registered training organisations, TAFEs, non-school senior secondary providers or another school; or</li> <li>4. sporting events, excursions, competitions or other events.</li> </ol> <p>Source: Ministerial Order 1359</p>
School governing authority	<p>School governing authority means:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a) the proprietor of a school, including a person authorised to at for or on behalf of the proprietor;</li> <li>b) the governing body for a school (however described), as authorised by the proprietor of a school or the <i>Education Training and Reform Act 2006</i> (Vic); or</li> <li>c) the principal, as authorised by the proprietor of a school, the College governing body, or the <i>Education Training and Reform Act 2006</i> (Vic).</li> </ol> <p>Source: Ministerial Order 1359</p>
School staff	<p>School staff in a non-Government school means:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a) an individual working in a school environment who is: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. directly engaged or employed by a school governing authority</li> <li>2. a contracted service provider (whether or not a body corporate or any other person is an intermediary) engaged by the College governing authority to perform child-related work</li> <li>3. a minister of religion, a religious leader or an employee or officer of a religious body associated with the College.</li> </ol> </li> </ol> <p>Source: Ministerial Order 1359</p>
Student	<p>Student means a person who is enrolled at or attends the College or a student at the school boarding premises.</p> <p>Source: Ministerial Order 1359</p>
Volunteer	<p>Volunteer means a person who performs work without remuneration or reward for the College or school boarding premises in the School environment or school boarding premises environment.</p> <p>Source: Ministerial Order 1359</p>
Vulnerable students	<p>Vulnerable students may include but are not limited to those who:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a) are deemed vulnerable by a government agency, funded family service or family violence service, or assessed as requiring education and care outside the family home</li> <li>b) are identified as vulnerable as a result of a referral from a government agency, funded family service or family violence service, homeless or youth justice service; or mental health or other health service</li> <li>c) self-identify or are identified by school staff or school boarding premises staff as a member of a vulnerable cohort.</li> </ol> <p>Source: Ministerial Order 1359</p>

## 4. POLICY

### 4.1 Statement of Commitment to Child Safety

The Hamilton and Alexandra College is committed to providing a child safe and child friendly environment, where children and young people are safe and feel safe to actively participate in decisions that affect their lives. We promote positive relationships between students and adults and between students and their peers. These relationships are based on trust and respect. Our child safe policies, strategies and practices are inclusive of the needs of all children and students.

At The Hamilton and Alexandra College we have no tolerance for child abuse and are committed to acting in children's best interests and keeping them safe from harm. The School regards its child safety responsibilities with the utmost importance. We take proactive steps to identify and manage any risks of harm to students in the School environments. When child safety concerns are raised or identified, the College treats these seriously and responds promptly and thoroughly.

At The Hamilton and Alexandra College, particular attention is given to the child safety needs of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students, those from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds, international students, 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 (**LGBTQIA+**) and other students experiencing risk or are vulnerable students. Inappropriate or harmful behaviour targeting students based on these or other characteristics, such as racism or homophobia, are not tolerated at The Hamilton and Alexandra College and any instances identified will be addressed with appropriate consequences.

Child safety is a shared responsibility. Every person involved with the College has an important role in promoting child safety and wellbeing and promptly raising any issues or concerns about a child's safety. We regularly review our child safe practices, and seeking input from our students, families, staff, and volunteers to inform our ongoing strategies.

### 4.2 Child Safety Values and Principles

The School's commitment to child safety is based on the following overarching principles that guide the development and regular review of our work systems, practices, policies and procedures to promote and maintain child safety and wellbeing and protect children from abuse.

1. All children have the right to be safe.
2. The welfare and best interests of the child are paramount.
3. The views of the child and a child's privacy must be respected.
4. Clear expectations for appropriate behaviour with children are established in our Child Safety Code of Conduct and Staff and Student Professional Boundaries Policy.
5. The safety of children is dependent upon the existence of a child safe culture.
6. Child safety awareness is promoted and openly discussed within the School community.
7. Procedures are in place to screen all staff, volunteers, and external education providers who have direct contact with children.
8. Child safety and protection is everyone's responsibility.
9. Child safety training is mandatory for all Board members, school staff and volunteers who have direct contact with children.
10. Procedures for responding to alleged or suspected incidents of child abuse are simple and accessible for all members of the School community.
11. Children from culturally or linguistically diverse backgrounds have the right to special care and support including those who identify as Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander.
12. Children who have any kind of disability have the right to special care and support.

### 4.3 Child Safety Program

The Hamilton and Alexandra College is committed to the effective implementation of our Child Safety Program and ensuring that it is appropriately reviewed and updated. We develop and implement risk management strategies that focus on preventing, identifying and mitigating risks related to child safety and wellbeing in both the physical and online environment.

Our Child Safety Program relates to all aspects of protecting children from abuse and establishes work systems, practices, policies and procedures to protect children from child abuse. It includes:

- clear information as to what constitutes child abuse and associated key risk indicators
- clear procedures for responding to suspicions, incidents, disclosures and allegations of child abuse
- strategies to support, encourage and enable staff, volunteers, contractors, external education providers, parents, carers and students to understand, identify, discuss and disclose child safety matters
- procedures for recruiting and screening Board members, staff, direct contact volunteers, contractors and external education providers
- wellbeing strategies designed to empower students and keep them safe
- policies with respect to cultural safety, diversity and equity and students with disabilities
- a child safety training program
- information regarding the steps to take after a disclosure of abuse to protect, support and assist children
- guidelines with respect to record keeping and confidentiality
- policies to ensure compliance with all relevant laws, regulations and standards, including Ministerial Order 1359 and the Victorian Child Safe Standards
- a system for oversight, monitoring, continuous review and improvement.

As part of our Child Safety Program, we apply robust child safe recruitment, induction, training and supervision practices as appropriate to ensure the suitability of people engaged in child-connected work.

Staff, volunteers, third party contractors and external education providers are supported and supervised by the Principal to ensure compliance with the College's approach to child protection.

### 4.4 Responsibilities

Child safety is everyone's responsibility. At The Hamilton and Alexandra College, the Board and school staff, as well as volunteers, have a shared responsibility for contributing to the safety and protection of children. Specific responsibilities include:

#### Board

Each member of the Board is required to ensure that appropriate resources are made available so the College's Child Safety and Wellbeing Policy and the Child Safety Program are effectively implemented and are responsible for holding the Principal and the Leadership Team (comprising the Deputy Principal Wellbeing, Deputy Principal Teaching and Learning, Director of Boarding, Head of Junior School and Business Manager) accountable for ensuring a strong child safety culture is created and maintained and that policies and procedures effectively developed and implemented in accordance with Ministerial Order 1359.

#### The Principal and Leadership Team

The Principal and Leadership Team is responsible, and will be accountable for, taking all practical measures to ensure that this Policy and the College's Child Safety Program are developed and implemented effectively in accordance with Ministerial Order 1359 and that a strong and sustainable child safety culture is created and maintained.

The Principal and Leadership Team 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 College Board 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 school staff and volunteers are required to be familiar with the content of our Child Safety and Wellbeing Policy and our Child Safety Program and their legal obligations with respect to the reporting of child abuse. It is each individual's responsibility to be aware of key risk indicators of child abuse, to be observant, and to raise any concerns they may have relating to child abuse with one of the College's Child Safe Champions (CSC).

All school staff and volunteers will:

- participate in child safety and wellbeing induction and training provided by the College or the Department of Education and Training, and always follow the College'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 Responding and Reporting Obligations (including Mandatory Reporting) Policy and Procedures, 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.

### The School's CSCs

A number of staff members have been nominated as the College's CSCs. Our CSCs receive additional specialised training with respect to child safety issues. They are a first point of contact for raising child safety concerns within the School environment. They are also responsible for championing child safety and wellbeing within the School community and assisting in coordinating responses to child safety incidents.

### Child Safety Champion

The Hamilton and Alexandra College has nominated Child Safety Champions [to support the Principal to implement our child safety policies and practices, including school staff and volunteer training.

The responsibilities of the child safety champion are outlined at [Guidance for child safety champions](#).

Our Principal and Child Safety Champions are a first point of contact for child safety concerns or queries and for coordinating responses to child safety incidents.

- The Deputy Principal Wellbeing is responsible for monitoring the College's compliance with the Child Safety and Wellbeing Policy. Anyone in the School community should approach Deputy Principal Wellbeing if they have any concerns about the College's compliance with the Child Safety and Wellbeing Policy.
- Deputy Principal Wellbeing is responsible for informing the School community about this policy, and making it publicly available
- Other specific roles and responsibilities are named in other child safety policies and procedures, including the Child Safety Code of Conduct, Child Safety Responding and Reporting Obligations (including Mandatory Reporting) Policy and Procedures.

The College has also established a Child Safety and Wellbeing Team and a Student Representative Council on child safety. The Child Safety and Wellbeing Team meet regularly to identify and respond to any ongoing matters related to child safety and wellbeing. The Student Representative Council provides an opportunity for students to provide input into school strategies.

### College Board

In performing the functions and powers given to them under the *Education and Training Reform Act 2006* (Vic), College Board 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 Board meetings
- undertake annual training on child safety
- approve updates to, and act in accordance with the Child Safety Code of Conduct to the extent that it applies to College Board employees and members
- when hiring College Board employees, ensure that selection, supervision, and management practices are child safe.

### Contractors and School Facility Users

All contractors who are not school staff are responsible for contributing to the safety and protection of children in the School environment.

Examples of contractors who are not school staff include (but are not limited to) external education providers that the College has arranged to deliver a specified course of study that is part of the curriculum to a student or students enrolled at the College.

Individuals who are engaged by students and their families directly rather than the College but have an agreement with the College to use the College's facilities (**school facility users**), such as music teachers and other extra-curricular teachers and instructors, are responsible for contributing to the safety and protection of children in the School environment.

All contractors and school facility users are required by the College to be familiar with our Child Safety and Wellbeing Policy and Child Safety Code of Conduct.

The Hamilton and Alexandra College may include this requirement in any written agreement between it and the contractor or school facility user.

## 4.5 Child Safety Code of Conduct

The Hamilton and Alexandra College's Child Safety Code of Conduct sets the boundaries and expectations for appropriate behaviours between adults and students. 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 at the College.

It also clarifies behaviours that are not acceptable in our physical and online environments. It pays particular attention to balancing the need to identify and mitigate risks in both physical and online school environments with ensuring that student rights to privacy, access to information, social connections and learning opportunities are not compromised.

The Child Safety Code of Conduct [insert link] also includes processes to report inappropriate behaviour and our Online Conduct and Online Safety Policy, also available at [Link to be inserted when complete](#).

#### 4.6 Managing Risks to Child Safety and Wellbeing

At The Hamilton and Alexandra College 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 (for example, ensuring that procurement policies for facilities and services from third parties ensure the safety of children and students).

#### 4.7 Establishing a Culturally Safe Environment

The Hamilton and Alexandra College is committed to establishing an inclusive and culturally safe school in which the diverse and unique identities and experiences of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children and young people and the strengths of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander culture, values and practices are respected and valued.

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

We have developed and endorsed a policy that details the following strategies and actions The Hamilton and Alexandra College will take to promote cultural safety in the School community to ensure:

- the ability of students to express their culture and enjoy their cultural rights is encouraged and actively supported
- strategies are embedded within the College that equip our school staff, students, volunteers and the School community to acknowledge and appreciate the strengths of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander culture and understand its importance to the wellbeing of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students
- measures have been adopted to ensure racism is identified, confronted and not tolerated and any instances within the School environment are addressed with appropriate consequences
- the active support and facilitation of participation and inclusion by Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students and their families
- our work systems, policies, procedures and processes, taken together, creates a culturally safe and inclusive environment and meet the needs of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students and their families.
- The College engages a Head of International Students and appoints a student as an International Prefect.
- Celebrates Cultural Awareness Week including a Cultural Awareness Assembly.
- Celebration of Chinese New Year.
- Acknowledgement of Country at each assembly and school function.
- Our Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Education Plan outlines the measures we have in place to maintain an inclusive and culturally safe school for Aboriginal children and students.



## 4.8 Student Empowerment

To support child safety and wellbeing, The Hamilton and Alexandra College works 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.

We have strategies in place to develop a culture that facilitates participation, is responsive to student input and the provision of opportunities for student participation and strengthens confidence and engagement through being responsive to their contributions.

Respectful relationships between students are reinforced and we encourage strong friendships and peer support in the College to ensure a sense of belonging and to help students feel safe and be less isolated through our Respectful Relationship Curriculum, Student Representative Council, Boarding Student Committee and School Rules and Values.

We inform students of their rights, including to safety, information and participation, through [insert your strategies here for example, our whole school approach to Respectful Relationships] and give them the skills and confidence to recognise unsafe situations with adults or other students and to speak up and act on concerns relating to themselves or their peers.

The Hamilton and Alexandra College staff are attuned to signs of harm and facilitate child-friendly ways of students to express their views, participate in decision-making and raise their concerns. 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 [Link to be inserted when complete](#).

When the College 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.

The College also provides:

- An anonymous online form for students to raise any concerns.
- Annual surveys
- SRC – student engagement assembly
- Displays of Protect Document including points of contact for students.

We ensure students have access to age-appropriate sex abuse prevention programs and relevant related information.

## 4.9 Family Engagement

Families and carers of The Hamilton and Alexandra College students are encouraged to participate in decisions related to child safety and wellbeing that affect their child. Families, carers and the School community also have an important role in monitoring and promoting children's safety and wellbeing and helping children to raise any concerns.

We openly communicate with families, carers and the School community about our child safe approach and ensure the accessibility of relevant information.

To support family and carer engagement, The Hamilton and Alexandra College is committed to providing families, carers and the School community with accessible information about the College's child safe policies and practices and involving them in our approach to child safety and wellbeing.

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

We do this by:

- The College will seek input from families and the community through:
  - The school website
  - Newsletters
  - College Board and Subcommittees of College Board
  - Parents and Friends Association
  - Information Nights
  - Parent Teacher Meetings
  - Student, staff, and parent meetings.
- The College will inform families and the community about child safety through:
  - all of our child safety policies and procedures will be available for students and parents at [Link to be inserted when complete](#)
  - Newsletters. Principal's Letter & the College App will inform 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.
- PROTECT Child Safety posters will be displayed across the College including:
  - Library – Junior and Senior Campus
  - The Refectory
  - MPAC Staff Office
  - Sports Centre Office
  - English Office
  - Maths Office
  - Middle Years Centre Office
  - Junior Campus Resource Room
  - Junior Campus Staff Room
  - Senior Campus Staff Room
  - Senior Campus Work Room

#### 4.10 Diversity and Equity

The Hamilton and Alexandra College celebrates the rich diversity of our students, families and community and promotes respectful environments that are free from discrimination. We ensure that equity is upheld and the diverse needs of our students are respected in policy and practice. 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 the School community with additional and specific needs. This includes tailoring our child safety strategies and supports to the needs of:

- Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children and young people and providing and promoting a culturally safe environment for them
- 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 LGBTQ+.

Our Student Wellbeing and Engagement Policy [Link to be inserted when complete](#) provides information, support and complaint processes in ways that are culturally safe, accessible and easy to understand. It includes more information about the measures we have in place to support diversity and equity. These include ensuring

that school staff contractors and volunteers and the School community understand the diverse circumstances of our students and provide support and respond appropriately.

#### 4.11 Suitable Staff, Board Members and Volunteers

At The Hamilton and Alexandra College we apply robust child safe recruitment, induction, training and supervision practices as appropriate to ensure that all school staff, contractors and volunteers are suitable to work with children. Board Members also have suitability requirements as set out below.

#### 4.12 Staff recruitment

When recruiting staff, we follow the Department of Education and Training's recruitment policies and guidelines, available on the Policy and Advisory Library (PAL) at:

- [Recruitment in Schools](#)
- [Suitability for Employment Checks](#)
- [College Board Employment](#)
- [Contractor OHS Management.](#)

We implement recruitment practices for staff and contractors engaged in child connected work that ensure:

- all job advertisements have a clear statement that sets out the job's requirements, duties and responsibilities regarding child safety and wellbeing and essential or relevant qualifications, experience and attributes in relation to child safety and wellbeing.
- all applicants for jobs are informed about the child safety practices, including the Code of Conduct
- we sight, verify and record the person's Working with Children clearance where required under the *Worker Screening Act 2020* (Vic) or equivalent background check such as a Victorian teaching registration and, where the person will be engaged in child-related work we 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.

#### 4.13 Volunteer engagement

We implement engagement practices for volunteers engaged in child connected work, including that we:

- sight, verify and record the person's Working with Children clearances where required under the *Worker Screening Act 2020* (Vic) or equivalent background check
- consider the child safety risks relevant to the volunteer's role and if reasonable and appropriate, 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.
- make volunteers aware of the Child Safety and Wellbeing policy and Child Safety Code of Conduct.

#### 4.14 Suitability of Volunteers

All volunteers are required to comply with our Volunteers Policy [Link to be inserted when complete](#), 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.

#### 4.15 Induction

All newly appointed school staff, [government body] members and volunteers engaged in child-connected work receive an induction regarding child safety and wellbeing appropriate to their roles, including information about:

- the Childcare Safety Conduct of Conduct and, where relevant to the role, the Child Safety and Wellbeing Policy and the procedures for managing child abuse complaints and concerns
- awareness of their responsibilities to children and students, information sharing and reporting obligations and record-keeping obligations.

All newly appointed school 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 Responding and Reporting Obligations (including Mandatory Reporting) Policy and Procedures and
- any other child safety and wellbeing information considered appropriate to the nature of the role.

#### 4.16 Ongoing Supervision and Management

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

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

Staff will be monitored and assessed to ensure their continuing suitability for child-connected work. This will be done by regular performance reviews with a specific focus on employees' suitability to work with children.

#### 4.17 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:

- the College's child safety and wellbeing policies, procedures, codes, and practices including this Policy, the Child Safety Code of Conduct and the College's procedures for responding to complaints and concerns relating to child abuse
- 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 record keeping obligations

- how to identify and mitigate child safety and wellbeing risks in physical and online environments without compromising a child or student's right to privacy, access to information, social connections and learning opportunities.

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 in order to equip them with the knowledge, skills and awareness required to keep students safe.

#### 4.18 College Board Training and Education

To ensure our College Board are 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 the School environment, the Board and College Board are 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 the School environment
- The Hamilton and Alexandra College's child safety and wellbeing policies, procedures, codes and practices.

#### 4.19 Complaints and Reporting Processes

The Hamilton and Alexandra College ensures our processes for complaints and concerns are child focused.

We foster a culture that encourages staff, contractors, 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 child abuse to occur and remain hidden.

We have clear pathways for raising complaints and concerns and responding and this is documented in the College's Complaints Policy.

We ensure complaints are taken seriously and responded to promptly and thoroughly. How we handle complaints is set out in our Complaints Policy in an accessible, child focused, culturally safe and easy to understand way. The Policy outlines:

- the process for making a complaint about the College or any person within the College (for example, staff, volunteers, contractors, families, children or students)
- the roles and responsibilities of leadership, school staff and volunteers in relation to handling complaints
- the process for dealing with different types of complaints, breaches of relevant policies or the Child Safety Code of Conduct and obligations to act and report
- how we address reporting of complaints and concerns to the College leadership and other relevant authorities whether or not the law requires responding and co-operation with law enforcement
- how we ensure all record keeping, reporting, private and employment law obligations are met when responding to complaints and concerns.

Our Complaints Policy can be found at [Link to be inserted when complete.](#)

The Hamilton and Alexandra College has a clear procedure for responding to complaints or concerns relating to child abuse.

If there is an incident, disclosure, allegation or suspicion of child abuse, all staff, contractors and volunteers (including College Board employees) must follow our Child Safety Responding and Reporting Obligations Policy and Procedures.

Our Child Safety Responding and Reporting Obligations Policy and Procedures:

- cover all forms of abuse
- are sensitive to the diversity and characteristics of the School community
- are publicly available
- are accessible to children, staff, volunteers and the School community
- apply to complaints and concerns relating to child abuse made by or in relation to a child or student, school staff, volunteers, contractors, service providers, visitors or any other persons while connected to the School environment
- identify roles and responsibilities of school staff and leadership to act and report on complaints and concerns relating to child abuse
- do not displace or discharge any other obligations that arise if a person reasonably believes a child is at risk of child abuse
- clearly describe the actions The Hamilton and Alexandra College will take to respond to a complaint or concern relating to child abuse
- address reporting of complaints and concerns to relevant authorities, whether or not the law requires reporting, and co-operation with law enforcement
- ensure all record keeping, reporting, privacy and employment law obligations are met when responding to complaints and concerns.

Our Child Safety Responding and Reporting Obligations Policy can be found at [Link to be inserted when complete](#)

As soon as any immediate health and safety concerns are addressed, and relevant College staff members have been informed, we will ensure the College 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 [Link to be inserted when complete](#) and Bullying Prevention Policy [Link to be inserted when complete](#) cover complaints and concerns relating to student physical violence or other harmful behaviours.

#### 4.20 Communications

The Hamilton and Alexandra 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 this Policy, the Child Safety Code of Conduct, and the Child Safety Responding and Reporting Obligations (including Mandatory Reporting) Policy and Procedure
- displaying PROTECT posters around the College
- updates in the College newsletter, Principal's Letter and College App.
- ensuring that child safety is a regular agenda item at Principal and Leadership Team meetings, staff meetings and College Board meetings.

#### 4.21 Privacy and Information Sharing

The Hamilton and Alexandra 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 the College collects, uses and discloses information refer to our Privacy Policy [Link to be inserted when complete](#).

#### 4.22 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 our [Records Management – School Records [Policy](#)].

## 5. POLICY REVIEW

The Hamilton and Alexandra College is committed to the continuous improvement of our Child Safety Program. We have established processes for the review and ongoing improvement of our child safe policies, procedures, and practices for overall effectiveness and to ensure compliance with all child safety related laws, regulations and standards:

- The Deputy Principal Wellbeing is responsible for reviewing and updating the Child Safety and Wellbeing Policy at least every two years or after any significant child safety incident, including seeking input from students, parents and carers and the School community
- we record and analyse all complaints, concerns, and safety incidents to identify causes and systemic failures and inform continuous improvement
- we act with transparency and share pertinent learnings and review outcomes with school staff and the School community.

## 6. RELATED POLICIES AND PROCEDURES

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

- Child Safety Code of Conduct
- Student Wellbeing and Engagement Policy
- Bullying Prevention Policy
- Child Safety Responding and Reporting Obligations (including Mandatory Reporting) Policy and Procedures
- Complaints Policy
- Privacy Policy
- Digital Learning Policy
- Online Conduct and Online Safety Policy
- Inclusion and Diversity Policy
- Child Safeguarding Record Keeping Policy and Procedures
- Visitors Policy
- Volunteers Policy

## 7. APPROVAL

<b>Created date</b>	<b>19<sup>th</sup> July 2022</b>
<b>Consultation</b>	In Progress
<b>Endorsed by</b>	The Hamilton and Alexandra College Board
<b>Endorsed on</b>	Draft endorsed 28 <sup>th</sup> July 2022
<b>Next review date</b>	July 2023

This document was current as at 19<sup>th</sup> July 2022 4:00pm AEST time. Updates to content may have been made since this date. Refer to your policy site for the latest version.

This content was last updated on 19<sup>th</sup> July 2022.