



Child Safe Handbook

March 2023



Supporting and empowering students to influence their world with integrity

Feedback

Red Rock Christian College values your feedback on our Child Safe policy. Please provide feedback to the Principal, admin@redrock.vic.edu.au

Public Availability

Copies of this report are available on the college website redrock.vic.edu.au and to parents via Compass.

Published by

Red Rock Christian College
340 Settlement Rd,
Sunbury, 3429

Further Information and Support

If you or someone you know has suffered abuse, we encourage you to seek support.

Lifeline

131 114 (24 hours, 7 days)

Adults Surviving Child Abuse (ASCA)

1300 657 380 (9am – 5 pm, 7 days)

Bravehearts

1800 272 831

Department of Health and Human Services

<https://services.dffh.vic.gov.au/reporting-child-abuse>

Commission for Children and Young People

<https://ccyp.vic.gov.au/child-safe-standards/>

Call 000 if you have an immediate concern for a child's safety.

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Version History

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Related College Policies and Documents

Students at Risk and Mandatory Reporting	(8.3)
Reportable Conduct	(8.4)
Investigating Reportable or Misconduct	(8.5)
Concerns and Complaints	(8.8)
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STATEMENT OF COMMITMENT TO CHILD SAFETY

Red Rock Christian College is committed to a learning and working environment for its students and staff that is safe, supportive, caring; and free from wrongful discrimination and sexual harassment. This is not just a response to our legal obligation but is the outworking of our moral purpose and the Christian values that underpin our culture and policies.

At the heart of what we believe is that all children are 'fearfully and wonderfully' made by our loving God. Our Wellbeing Statement outlines our endeavours to create a culture in which students thrive. A culture of wellbeing is one in which students feel they belong, have a strong and positive identity and are connected in healthy relationships with peers and staff. A culture of wellbeing creates a safe environment in which students are more likely to demonstrate help-seeking behaviours and identify trusted adults they can talk to about concerns or harmful situations they or their friends are facing.

The college believes in the inherent value of all people and therefore promotes the cultural safety of Aboriginal children, children from culturally diverse and or linguistically diverse backgrounds; children with a disability and potentially vulnerable children.

We, therefore, want our students to learn and grow in an environment in which they know people care about them and honour who they are.

Every person within the College community is responsible for the care and protection of students, maintaining zero tolerance to child abuse. The school requires that staff, students and other members of the community treat each other with respect and love. Staff are expected to display Christian love and appropriate professional behaviour in their dealings with each other and the students in their care.

We are committed to:

- treating all allegations and safety concerns seriously and consistently with our robust policies and procedures
- rigorously follow legal and moral obligations to contact authorities when we have concerns about a child's safety
- preventing child abuse and identifying risks early, and removing and reducing these risks
- applying robust recruitment practices for all staff
- regularly training and educating our staff and volunteers on child abuse risks

The Child Safe Standards

The Victorian Government introduced substantial legislative changes, including Ministerial Order No. 1359 which mandates schools to adhere to minimum standards known as The Child Safe Standards. Their purpose is to create continuous improvement in the way we:

- promote child safety
- prevent child abuse; and
- ensure there are proper responses to child abuse allegations.

There are eleven child safe standards applicable to all schools.

Child Safe Standard 1-

Organisations establish a culturally safe environment where Aboriginal children and young people's diverse and unique identities and experiences are respected and valued.

Ministerial Requirement

In complying with Child Safe Standard 1 a school must ensure:

- 1.1 A child's ability to express their culture and enjoy their cultural rights is encouraged and actively supported.
- 1.2 Strategies are embedded within the organisation, which equip all members to acknowledge and appreciate the strengths of Aboriginal culture and understand its importance to the wellbeing and safety of Aboriginal children and young people.
- 1.3 Measures are adopted by the organisation to ensure racism within the organisation are identified, confronted and not tolerated. Any instances of racism are addressed with appropriate consequences.
- 1.4 The organisation actively supports and facilitates participation and inclusion within it by Aboriginal children, young people and their families.
- 1.5 All of the organisation's policies, procedures, systems and processes together create a culturally safe and inclusive environment and meet the needs of Aboriginal children, young people and their families.

Meeting the requirements of Ministerial Order 1359

The Context and Purpose and Commitment to Child Safety Statements establish the college's foundation believes that all people have inherent dignity and worth, and created uniquely and should be treated with care and respect.

The college curriculum and resources reflect the belief that all people are created equally and develop student awareness and respect for people of all nations. The college includes in its library and classrooms a variety of books and resources and excursions/incursions reflecting the history and culture of Aboriginal people as well as other cultures. The college seeks to demonstrate our appreciation and acknowledgement of the importance of Aboriginal culture through the visibility of meaningful Aboriginal artefacts.

The college, through its restorative approach to behaviour response, treats racism seriously and engages in educating students to identify and change racist behaviour, comments and assumptions.

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

- Acknowledgement of Country at all formal gatherings such as Presentation Night, Open Days and the start of term assemblies.
- Display of the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander flags
- Display of appropriate aboriginal art or artefacts
- Curriculum priority: covered in curriculum planning documents.
- Ensure classrooms and the library have a comprehensive range of books of aboriginal stories and culture
- Incorporate into staff meetings ongoing professional development on culture, country and history (especially local)

Child Safe Standard 2 –

Child safety and wellbeing is embedded in organisational leadership, governance and culture

Ministerial Requirement

In complying with Child Safe Standard 2 a school must ensure:

- 2.1 The organisation makes a public commitment to child safety
- 2.2 2.2 A child safe culture is championed and modelled at all levels
- 2.3 Governance arrangements facilitate the implementation of the child safety and wellbeing policy at all levels.
- 2.4 Code of Conduct provides guidelines for staff and volunteers on expected behavioural standards and responsibilities
- 2.5 Risk management strategies focus on preventing, identifying and mitigating risks to children and young people.

Meeting the requirements of Ministerial Order 1359

It is the role of the Red Rock Christian College Board of Governance to oversee all aspects of the school's governance including championing and modelling a child safe culture.

The Board reviewed the 2022 updated version of the Child Safe Standards and contributed to and approved the amendments to the Child Safe Policy and the Code of Conduct for staff, volunteers and visitors. The college has a comprehensive Risk Assessment policy and procedures for all school-related activities. The Child Safe policy including the Statement of Commitment to Child Safety is available to the public via the school website.

Actions:

- Child safety is a standing item in the monthly board meetings
- Board members undertake annual child safe training.

Child Safe Standard 3 –

Children and young people are empowered about their rights, participate in decisions affecting them and are taken seriously.

Ministerial Requirement

In complying with Child Safe Standard 3 a school must ensure:

- 3.1 Children and young people are informed about their rights, including to safety, information and participation.
- 3.2 The importance of friendships is recognised and support from peers is encouraged, to help children and young people feel safe and be less isolated.
- 3.3 Where relevant to the setting or context, children and young people are offered access to sexual abuse prevention programs and to relevant information in an age appropriate way.
- 3.4 Staff and volunteers are attuned to signs of harm and facilitate child-friendly ways for children and young people to express their views, participate in decision-making and raise their concerns.
- 3.5 Organisations have strategies in place to develop a culture that facilitates participation and is responsive to the input of children and young people.
- 3.6 Organisations provide opportunities for children and young people to participate and are responsive to their contributions, thereby strengthening confidence and engagement.

Meeting the requirements of Ministerial Order 1359

To support child safety and wellbeing at Red Rock 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 through, implementing our whole school approach to Restorative Behaviour, our student Code of Conduct, our school values, our whole school approach to Visible Wellbeing.

We inform students of their rights through their mentor sessions and wellbeing session 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. 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 www.redrock.vic.edu.au.

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.

Child Safe Standard 4 –

Families and communities are informed, and involved in promoting child safety and wellbeing.

Ministerial Requirement

In complying with Child Safe Standard 4 a school must ensure:

- 4.1 Families participate in decisions affecting their child
- 4.2 Organisations engage and open communicate with families and the community about their child safe approach and relevant information is accessible.
- 4.3 Families and communities have a say in the development and review of the organisation's policies and practices
- 4.4 Families, carers and the community are informed about the organisation's operations and governance.

Meeting the requirements of Ministerial Order 1359

To support family engagement, at Red Rock 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 invite members of our community to provide feedback on our child safety policies and practices and encourage them to raise any concerns and ideas for improvement.

We do this by:

- through the parent portal, school website, newsletters, Board of governance, subcommittees of school board, student, staff, and parent meetings
- all of our child safety policies and procedures will be available for students and parents at www.redrock.vic.edu.au
- Newsletters and communication through COMPASS 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 school

Child Safe Standard 5 –

Equity is upheld and diverse needs respected in Policy and practice

Ministerial Requirement

In complying with Child Safe Standard 4 a school must ensure:

5.1 The organisation, including staff and volunteers, understand children and young people's diverse circumstance and provide support and responds to those who are vulnerable.

5.2 Children and young people have access to information, support and complaints processes in ways that are culturally safe, accessible and easy to understand.

5.3 The organisation pays particular attention to the needs of potentially vulnerable children

5.4 The organisation pays particular attention to the needs of Aboriginal children and young people and provides/promotes a culturally safe environment for them.

Meeting the requirements of Ministerial Order 1359

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
- all potentially vulnerable children

Our Wellbeing, Behaviour and Learning Frameworks provide more information about the measures we have in place to support diversity and equity.

Child Safe Standard 6 –

People working with Children and young people are suitable and supported to reflect child safety and wellbeing values in practice.

Ministerial Requirement

In complying with Child Safe Standard 4 a school must ensure:

6.1 Recruitment, including advertising, referee checks and staff and volunteer pre-employment screening, emphasise child safety and wellbeing.

6.2 Relevant staff and volunteers have current working with children checks or equivalent background checks.

6.3 All staff, contractors and volunteers receive appropriate induction and are aware of their responsibilities to children and young people, including record keeping, information sharing and reporting obligations.

6.4 Ongoing supervision and people management is focused on child safety and wellbeing.

Meeting the requirements of Ministerial Order 1359

The following policies and documents have been reviewed and updated where necessary and approved by the College Board of Governance to meet the Ministerial Order.

- Working with Children Check Policy
- Employment Policy
- Position Description Documents
- Interview and Reference Check Documents

The Employment Policy has been updated to ensure Red Rock Christian College undertakes a comprehensive screening process for the recruitment of all staff, including:

- Working with Children Check
- Face-to-Face interviews where possible
- Interview questions to assess people's motives for working with children
- Over the phone referee checks to assess the suitability of the applicant to work with children
- Probation periods

All employment applicants are informed about the school's child safety practices. The following statement is published on the employment page of Red Rock Christian College's website:

Red Rock Christian College is committed to being a Child Safe learning community and therefore has zero tolerance for child abuse. To ensure we employ the right people our recruitment process includes vetting prospective staff: carrying out working with children, police records and reference checks. All staff are required to demonstrate a commitment to the safety and wellbeing of all students.

Child Safe training occurs during induction and annually for all staff.

Child Safe Standard 7 –

Processes for complaints and concerns are child focused.

Ministerial Requirement

In complying with Child Safe Standard 4 a school must ensure:

7.1 The organisation has an accessible, child-focused complaint-handling policy which clearly outlines the roles and responsibilities of leadership, staff and volunteers, approaches to dealing with different types of complaints, breaches of relevant policies or the Code of Conduct, an obligations to act and report.

7.2 Effective complaint-handling process are understood by children and young people, families, staff and volunteers and are culturally safe.

7.3 Complaints are taken seriously and responded to promptly and thoroughly.

7.4 The organisation has policies and procedures in place that address reporting of complaints and concerns to relevant authorities, whether or not the law requires reporting, and co-operates with law enforcement.

Meeting the requirements of Ministerial Order 1359

The concerns and complaints policy is publically available on the college website. A table outlining the complaints process and contact details are published weekly in the college newsletter.

Child Safe Standard 8 –

Staff and volunteers are equipped with the knowledge, skills and awareness to keep children and young people safe through ongoing education and training.

Ministerial Requirement

In complying with Child Safe Standard 8 a school must ensure:

8.1 Staff and volunteers are trained and supported to effectively implement the organisation's child safety and wellbeing policy.

8.2 Staff and volunteers receive training and information to recognise indicators of child harm including harm caused by other children and young people.

8.3 Staff and volunteers receive training and information to respond effectively to issues of child safety and wellbeing and support colleagues who disclose harm.

8.4 Staff and volunteers receive training and information on how to build culturally safe environments for children and young people.

Meeting the requirements of Ministerial Order 1359

Staff training occurs during induction for new staff and annually for all staff. Parent volunteer induction includes Child Safe awareness and the requirement to sign and adhere to our child safe Policy and code of conduct.

Child Safe Standard 9 –

Physical and online environments promote safety and wellbeing while minimising the opportunity for children and young people to be harmed

Ministerial Requirement

In complying with Child Safe Standard 4 a school must ensure:

9.1 Staff and volunteers identify and mitigate risks in the online and physical environments without compromising a child's right to privacy, access to information, social connections and learning opportunities.

9.2 The online environment is used in accordance with the organisation's Code of Conduct and child safety and wellbeing policy and practices.

9.3 Risk management plans consider risks posed by organisational settings, activities and the physical environment.

9.4 Organisations that contract facilities and services from third parties have procurement policies that ensure the safety of children and young people.

Meeting the requirements of Ministerial Order 1359

The college adheres to its privacy policy available on the college website and ensures online programs used by students for school related purposes provide their privacy policy and data collection and storage information. College practice with regard to use of Online platforms and resources is reviewed and adjusted in response to identified risks.

Refer to Information and Communication Policy and the Social Media Policy

Only programs and sites that follow Australian privacy laws are used by the college.

Students participate in online safety training.

Child Safe Standard 10-

Implementation of the Child Safe Standards is regularly reviewed and improved.

Ministerial Requirement

In complying with Child Safe Standard 10 a school must ensure:

10.1 The organisation regularly reviews, evaluates and improves child safe practices.

10.2 Complaints, concerns and safety incidents are analysed to identify causes and systemic failures to inform continuous improvement.

10.3 The organisation reports on the findings of relevant reviews to staff and volunteers, community and families and children and young people.

Meeting the requirements of Ministerial Order 1359

Child Safe practices and risks are tabled weekly by the Executive Leadership team and monthly by the college Board.

The Policy is reviewed in keeping with our Policy Review process.

Child Safe Standard 11 –

Policies and procedures document how the organisation is safe for children and young people.

Ministerial Requirement

In complying with Child Safe Standard 4 a school must ensure:

11.1 Policies and procedures address all Child Safe Standards

11.2 Policies and procedures are documents and easy to understand

11.3 Best practice models and stakeholder consultation informs the development of policies and procedures.

11.4 Leaders champion and model compliance with policies and procedures

11.5 Staff and volunteers understand and implement policies and procedures.

Child Safe Policy

Statement of Content and Purpose

The purpose of this Policy is:

1. Red Rock Christian College (the college) is committed to protecting its students from all aspects of harm, and has established strategies, practices and policies to uphold this commitment.
2. To create an environment where students can receive a Christian education in a Christ-focused environment characterised by ethical behaviour and defined by professional boundaries.
3. All policies and practices are established in keeping with the Red Rock Christian Biblical Foundation Policy 2.1 and Corporate Identity Policy 1.1
4. In accordance with its ethos, the college recognises that all students are created in the image of God (Genesis 1:26) and are Fearfully and Wonderfully made by God (Psalm 139). Thus, they have an inherent value and worth to God and should be safe-guarded by staff, their peers, family members and visitors to the college.
5. To facilitate the prevention of child abuse occurring within Red Rock Christian College and or during events associated with the college;
6. To work toward an organisational culture of child safety;
7. To ensure all parties are aware of their responsibilities for identifying possible occasions for child abuse and for establishing controls and procedures for preventing child abuse and or detecting and reporting abuse when it occurs;
8. To provide the College community with guidance as to the action that is required where they suspect abuse within or outside the school community;
9. To assist the College community to feel safe and enabled to disclose child safety concerns;
10. To provide assurance that children who disclose child abuse will be supported and action will be taken to ensure their safety;
11. To provide assurance that any and all suspected abuse will be reported to the appropriate authorities;
12. To provide assurance that any and all suspected abuse that occurs by staff, volunteers or contractors will be reported and fully investigated;
13. To provide a clear statement to the College community, including visitors, volunteers and contractors, that we have zero tolerance for child abuse.

Principle of Inclusion

At Red Rock Christian College, we respect the cultural differences and variations in child-rearing practices due to a family's cultural, personal or religious beliefs. We endeavour to establish a culture in which all children, regardless of gender, ethnicity, culture, age, socio-economic status, language, disability, religion or views, are shown due honour, given every opportunity to develop their full potential and are safe from harm or unlawful discrimination.

The Commission for Children and Young People (2015, p 12) states "...a child safe organisation recognises that these differences do not reduce a child's right to be safe or the organisation's responsibility to protect the child from harm." Furthermore, "The Royal commission into Institutional Responses to Child Sexual Abuse Interim Report noted that some children are more vulnerable to abuse based on various factors including age, gender, ethnicity, disability and prior abuse or neglect." (p.12) Hence the requirement for schools to ensure their policies and practices minimise the risk to vulnerable children.

The child safe standards require schools to consider factors that may make some members of their community more vulnerable.

For Aboriginal children, it has been reported that some contributing factors may be:

- past government policies like the forced removal of children from their homes and communities
- Lower socio-economic status
- Differences in child-rearing practices
- Intergenerational trauma
- May not feel culturally safe enough to report abuse

For students who are culturally and or linguistically, diverse factors may include:

- Distrust of social service providers
- Prior trauma or displacement and loss
- Communication barriers

For students with disabilities, the following may be some of the contributing factors:

- Impaired communication
- Prior abuse
- Less sexual education than peers

Scope

This Policy applies to:

- All school staff, volunteers and contractors whether or not they work in direct contact with students.
- Board members where indicated
- In all physical and online environments used by students during or outside of school hours for college purposes, including other locations provided for student use (for example, a school camp) and those provided through third-party providers.
- Members of the community can access this Policy in the College website.

Roles and Responsibilities

Child Safety is a shared responsibility of all members of Red Rock Christian College. This includes staff, volunteers, contractors, visitors, students and families.

The Board of Governance is responsible for:

The Board of Red Rock Christian College has ultimate responsibility for the detection and prevention of child abuse and is responsible for ensuring that appropriate and effective internal control systems are in place. The Board is also responsible for ensuring that appropriate policies and procedures and a Child Protection Code of Conduct are in place.

The Principal is responsible for:

- Dealing with and investigating reports of child abuse;
 - Following the Reportable Conduct policy
- Ensuring that all staff, contractors, and volunteers are aware of relevant laws, organisational policies and procedures, and the organisation's Code of Conduct;
- Ensuring that all adults within the Red Rock Christian College community are aware of their obligation to report suspected sexual abuse of a child in accordance with these policies and procedures;
- Ensuring that all staff, contractors and volunteers are aware of their obligation to observe the Code of Conduct (particularly as it relates to child safety);
- Providing support for staff, contractors and volunteers in undertaking their child protection responsibilities.

Staff in leadership roles must ensure that they:

- Promote child safety at all times;
- Assess the risk of child abuse within their area of control and eradicate/minimise any risk to the extent possible;
- Educate employees about the prevention and detection of child abuse; and
- Facilitate the reporting of any inappropriate behaviour or suspected abusive activities.

The Leadership team should be familiar with the types of abuse that might occur within their area of responsibility and be alert for any indications of such conduct.

All **staff/volunteers/contractors** share in the responsibility for the prevention and detection of child abuse and must:

- Familiarise themselves with the relevant laws, the Code of Conduct, and Red Rock Christian College's Policy and procedures in relation to child protection, and comply with all requirements;
- Report any reasonable belief that a child's safety is at risk to the relevant authorities (such as the police and / or DHS Child Protection) and fulfil their obligations as mandatory reporters;
- Report any suspicion that a child's safety may be at risk to their supervisor (or, if their supervisor is involved in the suspicion, to a responsible person in the organisation); and
- Provide an environment that is supportive of all children's emotional and physical safety.

Definitions

Child means a person below the age of 18 years unless, under the law applicable to the child, majority is attained earlier.

Child abuse means all forms of physical abuse, emotional ill-treatment, sexual abuse and exploitation, neglect or negligent treatment, commercial (e.g. for financial gain) or other exploitation of a child and includes any actions that results in actual or potential harm to a child.

Child protection means any responsibility, measure or activity undertaken to safeguard children from harm.

Child sexual assault is any act which exposes a child to, or involves a child in, sexual processes beyond his or her understanding or contrary to accepted community standards. Sexually abusive behaviours can include the fondling of genitals, masturbation, oral sex, vaginal or anal penetration by a penis, finger or any other object, fondling of breasts, voyeurism, exhibitionism, and exposing the child to or involving the child in pornography. It includes child grooming, which refers to actions deliberately undertaken with the aim of befriending and establishing an emotional connection with a child to lower the child's inhibitions in preparation for sexual activity with the child.

College: Red Rock Christian College

Commission: Commission for Children and Young People

Reasonable belief: Is not the same as having proof but is more than mere rumour or speculation.

A 'reasonable belief' is formed if a reasonable person in the same position would have formed the belief on the same grounds. For example, a 'reasonable belief' might be formed if:

- a) A child states that they have been physically or sexually abused;
- b) A child states that they know someone who has been physically or sexually abused (sometimes the child may be talking about themselves);
- c) Someone who knows a child states that the child has been physically or sexually abused;
- d) Professional observations of the child's behaviour or development leads a professional to form a belief that the child has been physically or sexually abused or is likely to be abused; and/or
- e) Signs of abuse lead to a belief that the child has been physically or sexually abused.

Reasonable grounds for belief is a belief based on reasonable grounds that child abuse has occurred when all known considerations or facts relevant to the formation of a belief are taken into account and these are objectively assessed. Circumstances or considerations may include the source of the allegation and how it was

communicated, the nature of and details of the allegation, and whether there are any other related matters known regarding the alleged perpetrator.

A reasonable belief is formed if a reasonable person believes that:

- (a) The child is in need of protection,
- (b) The child has suffered or is likely to suffer "significant harm as a result of physical injury",
- (c) The parents are unable or unwilling to protect the child.

Employment of Suitable Staff

Red Rock Christian College takes reasonable steps to employ skilled people to work with children. We develop selection criteria which clearly demonstrate our commitment to child safety and an awareness of our social and legislative responsibilities. Our organisation understands that when recruiting staff and volunteers we have ethical as well as legislative obligations.

Red Rock Christian College undertakes a comprehensive recruitment process that aims to:

- Promote and protect the safety of all children under the care of the organisation;
- Identify the safest and most suitable people who share the college's values and commitment to protect children; and
- Prevent a person from working at the college if they pose a risk to children.

Red Rock Christian College requires all workers/volunteers to pass through the organisation's recruitment and screening processes prior to commencing their engagement with the college.

- Persons applying for a role as a teacher with the college must be registered with the Victorian Institute of Teaching.
- Red Rock Christian College may require applicants to provide a police check in accordance with the law and as appropriate, before they commence working at the college and during their time with the college at regular intervals.
- All non-teaching staff and volunteers must have a current Working With Children Card.
- Red Rock Christian College will undertake thorough reference checks as per the approved internal procedure.

Once engaged, workers/volunteers must annually review and acknowledge their understanding of this Policy.

Child Safe Code of Conduct

All of our staff and volunteers must agree to abide by our code of conduct which specifies the standards of conduct required when working with children. All staff, volunteers, students and their families are given the opportunity to provide feedback on the Code of Conduct. (Appendix 1)

Training and Supervision

Training and education are important to ensure that everyone in our organisation understands that child safety is everyone's responsibility.

Our school culture aims for staff and volunteers (in addition to parents/carers and children) to feel confident and comfortable in discussing any allegations of child abuse or child safety concerns. We train our staff and volunteers to identify, assess and minimise risks of child abuse and to detect potential signs of child abuse. We also support our staff and volunteers through ongoing supervision to develop their skills to protect children from abuse and promote the cultural safety of vulnerable children.

Child Safe awareness is included in staff inductions, and staff are required to complete an annual Child Safe Statement confirming their familiarity with our Policy and code of conduct. Child safety is included in our volunteer induction are supervised regularly to ensure they understand our school'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 our code of conduct). Any inappropriate behaviour will be reported through appropriate channels, including the Department of Health and Human Services and Victoria Police, depending on the severity and urgency of the matter.

Staff training to include equipping staff to acknowledge and appreciate the strengths of Aboriginal culture and its importance to the wellbeing and safety of Aboriginal students

Creating a Culturally Safe Environment

Creating and maintaining a student-safe culture requires the commitment of the whole community. We aim to promote and support a culture that aligns with the College Statement of Belief, Values and Purpose.

The college aims to ensure that staff are given the opportunity to develop the skills and knowledge to understand and maintain a student and culturally safe environment, including through:

- a) Actively supporting and encouraging Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students, and students from linguistically diverse backgrounds to
 - Express their culture and enjoy their cultural rights
 - Participate in all aspects of College life
- b) Cultural training to improve understanding and respect culturally sensitive matters including using appropriate language when referring to individuals or communities.
- c) Implement strategies that acknowledge and appreciate the strengths of Aboriginal culture, and understand its importance to the wellbeing and safety of Aboriginal children and students.
- d) Identifying, confronting and addressing incidences of racism with appropriate consequences.
- e) As required by Ministerial Order No. 1359, provide particular attention to the needs of vulnerable students, including those with a disability, students from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds, international students, students who identify as LGBTQI+ or otherwise gender diverse, and those who are not able to live at home.

Student Participation and Empowerment

The college recognises that a student-safe culture is also contingent upon the participation and empowerment of students.

Consistent with this understanding the college will ensure the following:

- Students are informed about their rights, including safety, information and participation.
- That the importance of friendships is recognised and support from peers is encouraged to help students feel safe and less isolated.
- Where relevant, students are offered access to child abuse (including sexual abuse) and reportable conduct information in an age-appropriate way.
- Staff are attuned to the signs of harm and facilitate child-friendly ways for students to express their views, participate in decision making and raise their concerns.
- The college has strategies and curriculum planning documents in place to develop a culture that facilitates participation and is responsive to the input of students.

Managing Risk

In Victoria organisations are required to protect children when a risk is identified. In addition to general occupational health and safety risks, we proactively 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 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 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 Safe Risk Register at least annually. Child Safe Risk is a standing order in monthly Board of Governance meetings and weekly, College Leadership Team Meetings.

Reporting Child Safe Concerns

The college takes all allegations or disclosures of suspected child abuse and reportable conduct seriously and responds to such allegations and disclosures promptly and thoroughly.

- Mandated staff are required by law to report to relevant authorities all matters in which they have formed a reasonable belief that a child is in need of protection because he/she (the child) has suffered, or is likely to suffer, significant harm as a result of physical injury or sexual abuse.

- Staff should discuss any concerns they may have about the safety and wellbeing of students with the Principal or Heads of School to enable support for the child, their family and staff where appropriate. Child First can also be contacted at this time if advice is desired.
- Any staff that makes a report in good faith in accordance with their reporting obligations will be supported by the college.

Mandatory Reports

- All adults over the age of 18 years are required by law to report to the police if they form a reasonable belief that a sexual offence has been committed in Victoria against a child (16 or under) by another person of or over the age of 18 years.
- All staff including medical practitioners, nurses, psychologists, registered teachers, teachers with permission to teach must make a report if:
 - They form a belief on reasonable grounds that a child is in need of protection from physical injury, significant psychological harm, significant neglect or sexual abuse;
 - The parents cannot or will not protect the child; and
 - The belief is formed in the course of practising his/her position of employment

Reportable Allegation

In relation to the reportable conduct scheme, any person may disclose a reportable allegation to the Commission .

Any person who has information that leads him/her to form a reasonable belief that an employee of Red Rock Christian College has committed:

- a) reportable conduct; or
- b) misconduct that may involve reportable conduct is encouraged to report such information to the Principal

The Principal of the College has an obligation to report to the Commission within three business days after becoming aware of a Reportable allegation.

Complaints Process

The College's Concern and Complaints policy is available on the College website. A table outlining who to raise concerns or complaints with and their contact details are published weekly in the College newsletter.

- If an allegation is made against a staff member, the Principal will follow the college's reporting procedure and take necessary steps to ensure the safety of the child. If the allegation is against the Principal, the Chair of the Board will be responsible for following the reporting procedure.
- An initial response to an allegation involves the withdrawal of the person from active duty, which may entail standing down, reassignment to to a role without direct contact with Children, working under close supervision during the investigation, working from home, or any other measures deemed appropriate depending on the seriousness of the allegation.
- The college will investigate allegations of inappropriate conduct against a Child in accordance with procedural fairness and will handle allegations in a confidential manner except where the college is required by law to disclose the information to relevant authorities or regulatory bodies.

Informing the Community

- This Policy is made available on the College website and through the college's student management system.
- This Policy is available to staff as part of the college's and the Board's internal document storage and access procedures. It is discussed during induction and as part of the annual professional child safe training.

Breach of this Policy

The college emphasises the need for staff to fully comply with this Policy.

Any College staff found to be in breach of the requirements of this Policy may be subject to disciplinary action, up to and including termination of employment; Breaches may also result in notifications to appropriate authorities and/or the Police.

Review

At Red Rock Christian College, we have established processes for the review and ongoing improvement of our Child Safe policy, procedures and practices.

We will:

- Review and improve our Policy every three years or after any significant child safety incident.
- Analyse any complaints, concerns and safety incidents to improve Policy and practices.
- Act with transparency and share pertinent learnings and review outcomes with staff
- Comply with privacy laws and protect the privacy and confidentiality of students and families within our transparency.

Child Safety Procedure

This procedure should be read in conjunction with the Red Rock Christian College (the College) Child Safe Policy, Reportable Conduct and Investigating Reportable Conduct Policies.

Step	Internal Procedure	External Procedure
If a person believes a child is in immediate danger of abuse, telephone 000		
1	A person receives information or forms a reasonable belief that the child is at risk.	Reporting obligations may be triggered at this point. See Schedule 2.
2	Person communicates their concern to a Head of School or the Principal (Leadership) Documents their concern (compass form)	
3	The Leadership discuss and clarifies the situation with the concerned staff: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Clarify a reasonable belief based on reasonable grounds has been formed • Provide support to the student • Provide support to the staff • Take steps to reduce and protect the child connected to the alleged abuse until the allegation is resolved. • Contact parents as appropriate. 	Regardless of whether any other person forms a reasonable belief that the child is at risk or is being abused the person forming the belief is mandated to make a report to DFFH.
4	Mandatory Reporting The person who formed the belief completes the Mandatory Reporting form (Compass) and makes a report under the applicable legislation.	Make a report may at first be by phone and then in writing to the appropriate external body (e.g police/SOCIT or DFFH). See Schedule 2. Ring DFFH (west division 1300 664 977) with the following information: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The child's name, age, address

		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The reason for forming the belief • The assessment of immediate danger • Description of any known injury • Current whereabouts of the child
	If the child is agreeable to being interviewed, the college will take into account the diversity of all children including but not limited to those defined as vulnerable and will make a reasonable effort to accommodate those needs.	If the student is agreeable to being interviewed by DFFH a member of the Wellbeing team or preferred support person will be available to attend.
5	<p>Reportable Allegation A person who forms a reasonable belief may disclose a Reportable allegation to the Commission. The Principal, after becoming aware of a reportable allegation, must notify the Commission within 3 business days</p> <p>The Principal must notify CCYP within 30 days the outcome of the investigation and the disciplinary action taken, if any. (An update is required if the investigation is not complete).</p> <p>The Principal to notify parent (s) of a child or children affected by or exposed to the allegations of Child abuse as appropriate and keep them informed throughout the process.</p>	<p>Report allegation to the Police. Their investigation takes priority and any internal investigation carried out by the college or regulatory body is to be discontinued until further notice.</p> <p>Report to the Commission for Children and Young People (CCYP) on 1300 78 29 78.</p> <p>Complete the notification form CCYP website ccyp.vic.gov.au</p> <p>Request if the police interview is to take place at the college, the police attend in plain clothes. Arrange a private meeting room.</p> <p>Only if they are not going to investigate – appoint an external investigator ie Working Together to conduct an investigation.</p> <p>The college will notify and provide the Commission with:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The details of the investigator • Regular updates as appropriate regarding the investigation • Within 30 days provide a copy of the findings and any disciplinary action taken.
	<p>The following actions will apply when the college forms a reasonable belief that reportable conduct has been committed by:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • College staff member: Suspended on full pay pending the outcome of the investigation. • Contractor: Suspended from undertaking any works pending the outcome of the investigation. • Volunteer: suspended from undertaking volunteer work or accessing the school grounds pending the outcome of the investigation. 	
6	<p>Completion of Investigation The Principal will advise the person alleged to have committed the conduct of the determination of the investigation and the pending outcomes both verbally and in writing.</p> <p>The Principal will notify the person who raised the concern, and other parties</p>	

	(student, family) as to the outcomes of the investigation both verbally and in writing.	
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Additional Comments

- Fulfilling the roles and responsibilities within this procedure does not displace or discharge any other obligations that arise if a person reasonably believes that a child is at risk of child abuse.
- Following a report, it is important to protect the confidentiality and the interest of the child and family at all times except where the relevant laws require the disclosure of information or for the protection of public interest.
- DFFH, the Investigator or the Commission will only interview the student if he/she is agreeable and, reasonable steps have been taken to mitigate any negative effect that the interview may have on the child.
- The family will not be contacted until it is believed the child is at risk.
- The identity of the person making a notification will be kept confidential (except when that information is required to be disclosed in good faith under the relevant laws and jurisdictions) unless that person gives written permission for the information to be disclosed.
- Throughout the entire process of observation, discussion, reporting and investigating, the interests of the child should be protected from unnecessary disclosure of information.
- Following making a report to the DFFH, or the Commission or Victoria Police, any investigation that takes place is the responsibility of the authority conducting the investigation.
- The college will secure and retain records of the allegation of Child Abuse and its responses to it.

Appendix 1: Child Safe Code of Conduct

Our Child Safe Code of Conduct sets out the expected behaviour of adults with children and young people in our school.

All staff, volunteers, contractors, service providers, board members and any other adult involved in child-connected work must follow the Child Safe Code of Conduct.

The Child Safe Code of Conduct applies to all physical and online environments used by students. It also applies during or outside school hours and in other locations provided by the school for student use.

Acceptable behaviours

As Red Rock Christian College staff, volunteers, contractors, and any other adult member of our school community involved in child-connected work, we are responsible for supporting and promoting the safety of children by:

- Adhering to RRCC child safe policy at all times;
- Taking reasonable steps to protect children from abuse;
- Treating everyone in the school community with respect;
- Listening and responding to the views and concerns of children, particularly if they are telling you that they or another child has been abused and/or are worried about their safety or the safety of another;
- promoting the cultural safety, participation and empowerment of Aboriginal students, students with culturally and/or linguistically diverse backgrounds, students with a disability, and all potentially vulnerable students;
- Ensuring as far as practicable that adults are not left alone with a child or, if unavoidable for only a very short period of time. (eg. remain in the line of sight);
- Reporting any allegations of child abuse to the Principal of RRCC;
- Understanding and complying with all reporting obligations as they relate to mandatory reporting and reporting under the *Crimes Act 1958*;
- If an allegation of child abuse is made, ensure as quickly as possible that the child(ren) are safe;
- Contacting the police if a student is at immediate risk of abuse (telephone 000)

Unacceptable behaviours

As Red Rock Christian College staff, volunteers, contractors and members of our school community involved in child-connected work, we must not:

- Ignore or disregard any suspected or disclosed child abuse
- Develop any 'special' relationships with children that could be seen as favouritism or amount to grooming behaviour (.. the offering of gifts or special treatment for specific children);
- Display behaviours or engage with students in ways that are not justified by the educational or professional context
- communicate directly with a student through personal or private contact channels (including social media, email, instant messaging, texting etc.)
- Exhibit behaviours with children which may be construed as unnecessarily physical (e.g. inappropriate sitting on laps. (sitting on laps may be appropriate sometimes, for example, when reading a book to a small child in an open plan area);
- Put children at risk of abuse (e.g. by locking doors);
- Initiate unnecessary physical contact with children or do things of a personal nature that a child can do for themselves, such as toileting or changing clothes;
- Arrange personal contact, including online contact, with students outside of the college's programs and activities (This does not apply to other appropriate, legitimate activities)
- Engage in open discussion of a mature adult nature in the presence of children (e.g. personal social activities)
- Use inappropriate language in the presence of children
- Express personal views on cultures, race, or sexuality in the presence of children
- Photograph or video a child without the consent of the parent or guardians;
- Work with students whilst under the influence of alcohol or illegal drugs;
- Consume alcohol or drugs at school or at school events in the presence of students.

The Victorian Teaching Profession Code of Conduct

Teaching staff at RRCC are also expected to adhere to the Victorian Teaching Profession Code of Conduct.https://www.vit.vic.edu.au/sites/default/files/media/pdf/2021-07/Document_VIT_Code_of_Conduct.pdf

Breach of this Code of Conduct

All Red Rock Christian College staff, volunteers, contractors and any other member of the school community involved in child-connected work who breach this Child Safety Code of Conduct may be subject to disciplinary procedures in accordance with their employment agreement or relevant industrial instrument, professional code or terms of engagement.

In instances where a reportable allegation has been made, the matter will be managed in accordance with the Reportable Conduct Scheme Policy and may be subject to referral to Victoria Police.

All breaches and suspected breaches of the Red Rock Christian College Child Safety Code of Conduct must be reported to the Principal.

By observing these standards, you acknowledge your responsibility to immediately report any breach of this code to the Principal of RRCC.

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

I agree to this Code of Conduct:

Name:

Signature:

Date:.....

Schedule 1: Signs of Abuse and Indicators of Students at Risk

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).

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 activities, including fondling, masturbation, penetration, voyeurism and exhibitionism. It can also include exposure to or exploitation through pornography or prostitution, as well as grooming 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 of violence. It can include derogatory name-calling and put-downs or persistent and deliberate coldness from a person to the extent that 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.

Indicators of possible abuse.

There are many indicators of child abuse. The presence of a single indicator, even several indicators, does not prove that abuse has occurred. However, the repeated occurrence of an indicator, or the occurrence of several indicators together, is an alert to the possibility of abuse.

Possible physical indicators are:

- Unexplained bruises
- Burns or fractured bones
- Physical marks in unexpected places
- Delays in emotional, mental or physical development
- Signs of self-harm
- Presence of sexually transmitted disease
- Pregnancy

Possible behavioural indicators are:

- Showing wariness or distrust of adults
- Wearing long sleeved clothes on hot days (to hide marks)
- Fear of specific people
- Unexplained absences
- Academic problems.
- Displaying sexual behaviour or knowledge that is unusual for the child's age
- Difficulty sleeping
- withdrawn, passive
- aggressive or demanding behaviour
- changes in behaviour
- Complaining of headaches or stomach pains
- Low self-esteem
- High anxiety

Schedule 2: Overview of Reporting Obligations in Victoria

Legislation	Who must report	Circumstances	Obligation	Exceptions/Defence	Penalty
Failure to disclose sexual offences committed against child under the age of 16 years <i>S 327 Crimes Act 1958 (Vic)</i>	Any person 18 years or over.	Reasonable belief of sexual offence against a child Child is 16 or under.	Mandatory obligation to report to police information that leads to reasonable belief.	various	3 years imprisonment
Mandatory reporting <i>S 184 Children, Youth & Families Act 2005 (Vic)</i>	Particular professionals: Registered teachers and early childhood teachers (including principals and teachers with permission to teach) Nurses Registered psychologists Police officers Medical practitioners Youth justice workers People in religious ministry Midwives School counsellors Chaplains	A belief on reasonable grounds arises in the course of work, that a child is in need of protection (due to neglect or abuse) and the child's parents will not/cannot protect the child. Child is under 17	Mandatory obligation to report to DFFH	Person honestly and reasonably believed that all the reasonable grounds for their belief had already been reported.	Fine
Report to DFFH or police <i>S 183 Children, Youth & Families Act 2005 (Vic)</i>	Any Person	Believes on reasonable grounds that a child is in need of protection	May report to DFFH or police that belief and the reasonable grounds for it.	None	
Child displaying sexually abusive behaviours <i>S 185 Children, Youth & Families Act 2005 (Vic)</i>	Any Person	Any person may report if they believe on reasonable grounds that a child is in need of therapeutic treatment bc they have exhibited sexually abusive behaviours C Child is 10 -14	May report to DFFH the belief and the reasonable grounds for it.	None	
Concern for the wellbeing of a child <i>S28 Children, Youth &</i>	Any person	A person may make a report to DFFH if they have a significant	May report to DFFH a significant concern	None	

<i>Families Act</i> 2005 (Vic)		concern for the wellbeing of a child. Child is under 17.			
Reportable allegation	Any Person	Forming a reasonable belief	Must notify the Commission after becoming aware	Reasonable excuse	Fine
Reportable allegation	College Principal/Board Chair	Forming a reasonable belief	Must notify the Commission within 3 business days of becoming aware.		