

# Child Safety Policy



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# LORETO Mandeville Hall Toorak

## CHILD SAFETY POLICY

### PURPOSE OF THE POLICY

The purpose of this Policy is to demonstrate the commitment of Loreto Toorak in ensuring the safety, welfare and wellbeing of all students at our School. It provides an outline of the policies, procedures and strategies developed to keep students safe from harm, including all forms of abuse in our School environment, on campus, online and in other locations provided by the School.

This Policy takes into account relevant legislative requirements within the state of Victoria, including the specific requirements of the Victorian Child Safe Standards as set out in Ministerial Order 870. The Policy applies to all Loreto Toorak Staff, third party contractors, external education providers, volunteers, and visitors. This Child Safe Policy has been approved and endorsed by the School Board.

### STATEMENT OF COMMITMENT TO CHILD SAFETY

Child abuse includes sexual offences, grooming, physical violence, serious emotional or psychological harm, serious neglect and a child's exposure to family violence. Loreto Toorak is committed to the protection of all children from all forms of child abuse and demonstrates this commitment through the implementation of a comprehensive Child Safety Program designed to keep children safe.

At Loreto Toorak we do not and will not tolerate child abuse, and we are always 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 and as such, is committed to providing the necessary resources to ensure compliance with all relevant child protection laws and regulations and maintain a child safe culture.

### 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 protect children from abuse.

- All children have the right to be safe
- The welfare and best interests of the child are paramount
- The views of the child and the child's privacy must be respected
- Clear expectations for appropriate behaviour with children are established in our Child Safe Code of Conduct
- The safety of children is dependent upon the existence of a Child Safe culture
- Child safety awareness is promoted and openly discussed within our School Community
- Procedures are in place to screen all staff, direct contact volunteers, contractors and external education providers who have direct contact with children
- Child safety and protection is everyone's responsibility
- Child safety training is mandatory for all staff, School board members and direct contact volunteers
- Procedures for responding to alleged or suspected incidents of child abuse are simple and accessible for all members of the School community



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- 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
- Children who have any kind of disability have the right to special care and support

## CHILD SAFETY PROGRAM

Loreto Toorak is committed to the effective implementation of our Child Safety Program and ensuring that it is appropriately reviewed and updated. We adopt a risk management approach by identifying key risk indicators and assessing child safety risks based on a range of factors including the nature of our School's activities, physical and online environments and the characteristics of the student cohort.

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 abuse. It includes:

- clear information as to what constitutes child abuse and associated key risk indicators
- clear procedures for responding to and reporting 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 report child protection matters
- procedures for recruiting and screening School Board Members, Staff, direct contact volunteers, contractors and external education providers
- procedures for reporting Reportable Conduct and/or misconduct
- pastoral care strategies designed to empower students and keep them safe
- policies with respect to cultural diversity 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 the Victorian Child Safe Standards)
- a system for continuous review and improvement.

As a part of Loreto Toorak induction process, all staff are required to complete a selection of training modules on the content of our Child Safety Program.

Additional, ongoing child safety training is provided at least annually.

## RESPONSIBILITIES

Child safety is everyone's responsibility. At Loreto Toorak, the Leadership Team and Staff, as well as Volunteers, have a shared responsibility for contributing to the safety and protection of children. Specific responsibilities include:

### **The Board, the Principal and Leadership Team**

Loreto Toorak recognise their particular responsibility to ensure the development of preventative and proactive strategies that promote a culture of openness, awareness of and shared responsibility for child safety.



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These include:

- creating an environment for children and young people to be safe and to feel safe
- upholding high principles and standards for all Loreto staff, volunteers, and contractors
- promoting models of behaviour between adults and children and young people based on mutual respect and consideration
- ensuring thorough and rigorous practices are applied in the recruitment, screening and ongoing professional learning of staff
- ensuring that school personnel have regular and appropriate learning to develop their knowledge of, openness to and ability to address child safety matters
- providing regular opportunities to clarify and confirm legislative obligations, policy and procedures in relation to child and young people's protection and wellbeing
- ensuring the school meets the specific requirements of the Victorian Child Safe Standards as set out in Ministerial Order No. 870.

**Responsibilities of school staff (school employees, volunteers, and contractors) include:**

- treating children and young people with dignity and respect, acting with propriety, providing a duty of care, and protecting children and young people in their care
- following the legislative and internal school processes in the course of their work, if they form a reasonable belief that a child or young person has been or is being abused or neglected
- providing a physically and psychologically safe environment where the wellbeing of children and young people is nurtured
- undertaking regular training and education in order to understand their individual responsibilities in relation to child safety and the wellbeing of children and young people
- assisting children and young people to develop positive, responsible and caring attitudes and behaviours which recognise the rights of all people to be safe and free from abuse
- following the school's Child Safety Code of Conduct.

## STUDENT SAFETY AND PARTICIPATION

Loreto Toorak encourages children to express their views. We listen to their suggestions and concerns, especially on matters that directly affect them. We actively encourage all children who use our services to 'have a say' about things that are important to them. We teach children about what they can do if they feel unsafe. We listen to and act on any concerns children, staff or community members raise with us regarding child safety.

## REPORTING AND RESPONDING

Our Child Safe Program provides detailed guidance as to how to identify key risk indicators of child abuse and how to report concerns to one of our School's nominated Child Safety Officer. It also contains detailed procedures with respect to the reporting of child abuse incidents to relevant authorities.

Staff, third party contractors, external education providers, volunteers, students, parents/guardians and other community members who have concerns that a child may be subject to abuse or grooming are asked to contact the relevant authority or the School's Senior Child Safety Officer, our Executive Deputy Principal, by phoning (03) 9823 8100 or by [email](#). Communication will be treated confidentially with a 'need to know' basis. **Whenever there are concerns that a child is in immediate danger the Police should be called on 000.**



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## RELEVANT LEGISLATION

- *Children, Youth and Families Act 2005* (Vic.)
- *Working with Children Act 2005* (Vic.)
- *Education and Training Reform Act 2006* (Vic.)
- *Equal Opportunity Act 2010* (Vic.)
- *Privacy Act 1988* (Cth)
- *Crimes Act 1958* (Vic.)

## REVIEW OF THIS CHILD SAFETY POLICY

Loreto Toorak is committed to the continuous improvement of our Child Safety Program. The Program is regularly reviewed for overall effectiveness and to ensure compliance with all child protection related laws, regulations and standards.

Policy Name: Child Safety Policy	Last Updated: August 2019
Policy Owner: Executive Deputy Principal	Date of Next Review; August 2022
Reviewer: Risk & Compliance	
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