



**Southern Cross**  
GRAMMAR

# Child Safety and Wellbeing Policy

## Policy Control Information

Policy Risk Rating	Very High
Version	3.0
Owner	Principal
Publication	School Community
Approver	Board
Approval Date	March 2025
Next Review Date	2027

## Document History

Version	Date	Status	Approval	Summary of Changes
3.0	March 2025	Approved	Board	This revised policy provides a clear definition of roles and responsibilities for child safety across the school, to ensure effective implementation and ongoing review. Additionally, in Term 4, 2024, the Victorian Department of Education updated their Child Safety templates, consolidating multiple Child Safety Standards. We have updated our policy to better align with these changes.
2.0	July 2024	Active	Board	Policy updated to align with MO 1359.
1.0	June 2021	Inactive	Board	Policy replaced.

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## Purpose

Southern Cross Grammar's Child Safety and Wellbeing Policy reflects our commitment to fostering environments where students are safe and feel safe. It outlines the strategies, practices and governance measures in place to protect students and promote a collective commitment to child safety across our community.

## Scope

This policy applies to:

- All school staff, volunteers, contractors, and School Board and Board Committee members, regardless of direct contact with students.
- Parents, guardians, and visitors to the School.
- All physical, online or virtual school environments used by students, both during and outside school hours, including locations such as sporting events, camps, tours, excursions, and those provided through third-party providers (e.g., external education providers).

## Policy

This policy outlines our approach to implementing the Victorian Child Safe Standards under Ministerial Order 1359, detailing their application within school environments. It should be read alongside the School's Child Safety Responding and Reporting Obligations Policy and Child Safety Code of Conduct.

The framework for child safety at the School is provided through this policy, covering:

- Our Commitment to child safety
- Our Child Safety Code of Conduct
- Risk management for child safety and wellbeing
- Culturally safe and inclusive environments
- Student empowerment and family engagement
- Diversity and equity
- Recruitment of suitable staff and volunteers
- Child safety training
- Complaint, reporting, and communication processes
- Privacy and information sharing
- Continuous review and improvement of child safety practices

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### Statement of commitment to child safety

At Southern Cross Grammar, we are committed to creating environments where students feel safe, supported, and valued. We ensure that all students' views are respected, their voices are heard, and their diverse needs are addressed through inclusive child safety policies, strategies, and practices.

We maintain a zero-tolerance approach to child abuse and take proactive measures to identify and manage any risks of harm to students within our school environments.

We foster positive relationships between students and adults, as well as among peers, built on trust and respect.

Particular attention is given to the safety needs of Aboriginal students, those from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds, students with disabilities, those affected by family violence, LGBTIQ+ students, and other vulnerable groups. Inappropriate or harmful behaviour targeting students based on these or other characteristics will not be tolerated and will be addressed with appropriate consequences.

We are committed to addressing any potential risks to students' safety and respond promptly and seriously when concerns are raised.

### Child Safety Code of Conduct

Our Child Safety Code of Conduct establishes clear boundaries and expectations for appropriate behaviours between adults in our school community and students, including in physical, online and virtual environments.

The School's Child Safety Code of Conduct also provides guidelines for reporting any inappropriate behaviour. We publish our Child Safety Code of Conduct on our public website so that everyone can easily find out what behaviours are acceptable and unacceptable at the School and how to report inappropriate behaviour.

We are committed to ensuring that students understand what is acceptable and what is not, empowering them to confidently identify what they can expect from adults within the school community.

### Managing risks to child safety and wellbeing

The School is committed to:

- Identifying, assessing and managing risks to child safety and wellbeing in physical, online or virtual school environments. These risks are managed through our child safety and wellbeing policies, procedures, and practices.
- Monitoring activity-specific online risk assessments by staff covering activities such as off-site overnight camps, adventure activities, and any third-party facilities or services contracted for student use.

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- Monitoring and evaluating the effectiveness of the actions in the Child Safety Risk Register on an ongoing basis and reporting any identified issues, trends, or areas for improvement to the School Board.

### Establishing a culturally safe environment

We are committed to creating an inclusive and culturally safe environment where the strengths of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander cultures, values, and practices are respected and celebrated. We recognise the vital connection between culture, identity, and safety.

To promote cultural safety, we implement the following strategies:

- Begin events with a Welcome to Country or Acknowledgement of Country.
- Fly the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander flags on school grounds.
- Celebrate the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander community through school events such as Harmony Day and NAIDOC Week.
- Speak with respect about Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander culture
- Actively address racism by students, staff, volunteers, or visitors.

### Student empowerment

We foster respectful relationships and encourage peer support to nurture a sense of belonging. Our approach is grounded in restorative practices, which help build positive relationships, address conflicts, and emphasise repairing relationships and learning from experiences. This empowers students to recognise unsafe situations and confidently speak up when concerned. Students know who to turn to if they feel unsafe and are encouraged to reach out to a trusted adult.

When handling complaints about alleged misconduct or abuse, we listen carefully, take concerns seriously, and prioritise supporting the student. We ensure students and their families are kept informed throughout the process.

Our Student Code of Conduct sets clear behavioural expectations, reflecting our core values of Kindness, Trust, Ethics, Enterprise, and Hopefulness. Our School's Strategic Plan supports student rights, including the right to learn, safety, inclusion, and respect for property.

### Family engagement

We encourage families to access information about our school's child safety policies and practices, and actively involve them in our approach to student safety and wellbeing.

We offer opportunities for families to contribute to the development and review of our policies and encourage them to share concerns or suggestions for improvement through:

- Publishing child safety policies and procedures on the parent portal, school website, and through communications at student, staff, and parent meetings

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- Informing families about significant updates to child safety policies, processes, and initiatives via the school portal
- Displaying PROTECT Child Safety posters throughout the school

### Diversity and equity

We celebrate the diversity of our students, families, and community, fostering a respectful environment focused on wellbeing for all.

We recognise the unique skills, strengths, and experiences each student brings and are particularly attentive to the needs of those with additional requirements, including:

- Aboriginal children and young people
- Children from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds
- Children and young people with disabilities
- Children impacted by family violence or unable to live at home
- International students
- Children and young people who identify as LGBTIQ+

### Suitable staff and volunteers

We apply robust child safe recruitment, induction, training, and supervision practices to ensure that all staff, contractors, and volunteers are suitable to work with students.

#### Staff recruitment

All applicants applying for child-connected work at the School are informed of the School's child protection policies and procedures, Staff Code of Conduct and zero tolerance of child abuse.

The school implements a rigorous pre-employment screening process to ensure the suitability of candidates, including:

- Sighting, verifying and recording the person's Working with Children Clearance (WWCC) or equivalent background check such as a Victorian Institute of Teaching (VIT) registration, and  
collecting and recording:
  - 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 role and ability to work with children
  - Conducting child-safe standard questioning during interviews for shortlisted candidates

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## Staff induction

All newly appointed staff will participate in our child safety and wellbeing induction program, which will include a focus on the School's:

- Child Safety and Wellbeing Policy (this document)
- Child Safety Code of Conduct
- Child Safety Responding and Reporting Obligations (including Mandatory Reporting) Policy and Procedures and
- Other child safety and wellbeing information that School Executives consider appropriate to the nature of the role.

## Ongoing supervision and management of staff

All staff engaged in child-connected work will receive appropriate supervision to ensure their behaviour towards children is safe and suitable.

Staff will undergo regular monitoring and assessment to ensure their ongoing suitability for child-connected work. This will include regular performance reviews, observations, feedback sessions, and professional development.

Inappropriate behaviour towards children and young people will be managed promptly in accordance with our school policies and legal obligations.

## Suitability of volunteers

All volunteers are required to comply with our Child Safe policies and procedures. Our Working With Children Check Policy describes how we screen and assess the suitability of prospective volunteers.

## Child safety knowledge, skills and awareness

In addition to the child safety and wellbeing induction, our staff will participate in a range of training and professional learning to provide them with the skills and knowledge to maintain a child safe environment.

Staff child safety and wellbeing training is delivered at least annually and includes guidance on:

- Our school's child safety and wellbeing policies, procedures, codes of conduct, and practices
- Completing the [Mandatory Reporting 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 students

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- Information sharing and recordkeeping obligations
- How to identify and mitigate child safety and wellbeing risks in the school environment.

Training for our volunteers, will be tailored to specific roles and responsibilities and any identified or emerging issues.

### School Board Training and Education

To ensure the School Board can make informed decisions about student safety and wellbeing, and effectively identify and mitigate risks, Board members receive annual training.

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 our school environment
- School child safety and wellbeing policies, procedures, codes and practices

### Board Committees Training and Education

To support the effective operation of Board Committees in maintaining a child-safe environment, Committee members also receive annual training. Training includes guidance on:

- The roles and responsibilities of Committees in maintaining a Child-safe environment
- Identifying and addressing child safety risks in specific areas of the school environment
- Relevant policies, procedures, and practices specific to the Committee's area of oversight

## Complaints and reporting processes

The School fosters a culture where staff, volunteers, students, parents, and the broader community are encouraged to raise concerns and complaints, making it harder for breaches of conduct, misconduct, or abuse to go unnoticed.

We have clear pathways for raising and responding to complaints, outlined in our Complaints Policy.

If there is an incident, disclosure, allegation or suspicion of child abuse, all staff and volunteers must follow our Child Safety Responding and Reporting Obligations Policy and Procedures. These policies address complaints related to child abuse involving any person connected to the school.

Once immediate health and safety concerns are addressed, we will follow:

- [PROTECT Identifying and Responding to All Forms of Abuse in Victorian Schools](#)
- [PROTECT Identifying and Responding to Student Sexual Offending](#)
- [PROTECT Four Critical Actions for Schools](#)
- [PROTECT Four Critical Actions for Schools: Responding to Student Sexual Offending](#)

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## Communications

The School 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 the Child Safety and Wellbeing Policy (this document), Child Safety Code of Conduct, and the Child Safety Responding and Reporting Obligations (including Mandatory Reporting) Policy and Procedure
  - Displaying PROTECT posters around the school
  - Updates in our school parent portal
- Ensuring that child safety is a regular agenda item at school leadership meetings, staff meetings and school council meetings.

## Privacy and information sharing

The School collects, uses, and discloses student and family information in compliance with Victorian privacy laws and relevant regulations.

We are bound by the Australian Privacy Principles under the Privacy Act 1988 and the Health Privacy Principles in the Health Records Act 2001 (Vic). Our Privacy Policy outlines the types of information we collect about:

- Students, prospective students, and their parents, guardians, and carers
- Job applicants, staff, volunteers, and contractors
- Other individuals or organisations interacting with the school

The policy also explains how we collect, use, store, and disclose this information.

As a prescribed Information Sharing Entity (ISE), we can collect and share confidential information with other ISEs to promote child wellbeing or safety under the Child Information Sharing Scheme (CISS) and Family Violence Information Sharing Scheme (FVISS).

## Records management

We acknowledge that effective records management practices are a critical element of child safety and wellbeing and manage our records in accordance with the Public Record Office Victoria Recordkeeping Standards and guidance.

Our School creates comprehensive records of school activities and decisions relating to the safety and wellbeing of students. This includes:



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- Incident reports involving child protection concerns
- Records of staff training on child safety
- Documentation of student support services and welfare interventions
- Meeting minutes from child safety-related discussions (e.g., safeguarding strategies, risk assessments)

These records are kept secure and protected from unauthorised access, amendment, misuse, disclosure, damage, deterioration, loss or destruction.

Digital files are stored on secure servers with restricted access based on roles and responsibilities.

Records are retained for the required period, and at the end of their retention period, they are securely destroyed (e.g., shredded or permanently deleted) to prevent any misuse.

### Review of child safety practices

The School is committed to:

- Reviewing this policy every 2 years or after any significant child safety incident
- Analysing any complaints, concerns, and safety incidents to improve policy and practice
- Acting with transparency and sharing pertinent learnings and review outcomes with school staff and our school community.

### Roles and Responsibilities for Reporting

#### School Executive team

Our School Executive team (comprising the Principal, Deputy Principal (Secondary), Head of Primary, Executive Director of People and Culture, and Executive Director of Corporate Services) are responsible for ensuring that a strong child safe culture is created and maintained, and that policies and practices are effectively developed and implemented in accordance with Ministerial Order 1359.

The Principal and School Executives will:

- Ensure policies, procedures, and practices for child safety and wellbeing are in place and followed.
- Model a child-safe culture that encourages active participation from students, families, and staff in promoting child safety, cultural safety, and wellbeing.
- Foster inclusive practices that address the diverse needs of all students.
- Uphold high standards of respectful behaviour between students and adults, and among students.

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- Promote open discussions on child safety at leadership, staff, and School Board meetings.
- Provide regular professional learning for staff and volunteers to deepen their understanding of child safety, cultural safety, student wellbeing, and abuse prevention.
- Create an environment where concerns about child safety are easily raised and reporting of abuse is encouraged without fear of discouragement.

### School staff and volunteers

All staff and volunteers will:

- Complete child safety and wellbeing induction and training, and adhere to the School's child safety policies and procedures
- Follow our Child Safety Code of Conduct
- Identify and raise child safety concerns as per the Child Safety Responding and Reporting Obligations Policy and Procedures, including the Four Critical Actions for Schools
- Ensure students' views are respected and considered in decisions affecting them
- Implement inclusive practices that address the diverse needs of students.

### School Board

School Board members will:

- Promote a child-safe culture by supporting practices that prioritise student safety and wellbeing and proactively preventing harm
- Ensure child safety is a regular agenda item at Board meetings to embed a safety-focused culture and keep members informed
- Complete annual training on child safety
- Approve and adhere to the Child Safety Code of Conduct
- Ensure child-safe practices in the selection, supervision, and management of Board Committee members, or delegate to the Principal as appropriate.

### School Board Committees

All Board Committee members will:

- Complete annual child safety training and follow the School's child safety policies and procedures
- Adhere to the Child Safety Code of Conduct
- Inform the Board of any identified child safety issues.

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## Specific staff child safety responsibilities

The School has established a Child Safety and Wellbeing Team and child safety officers to address ongoing child safety matters and involve students in shaping strategies.

Child safety officers support the Principal in implementing child safety policies and practices.

The Principal and child safety officers serve as the first point of contact for concerns or queries, and for coordinating responses to incidents.

Additional roles and responsibilities are detailed in other child safety policies and procedures, including the Child Safety Code of Conduct, Child Safety Responding and Reporting Obligations Policy, and the Child Safety Risk Register.

## Related policies and resources

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

- Bullying Prevention and Response Policy
- Child Safety Responding and Reporting Obligations Policy and Procedures
- Reportable Conduct Policy
- Child Safety Code of Conduct
- Child Safety and Record Keeping Policy
- Complaints Policy
- Digital Learning Policy
- Inclusion and Diversity Policy
- Student Wellbeing and Engagement Policy
- Supervision Policy
- Visitors Policy
- Volunteers Policy
- Working with Children Check Policy

## Other related documents

- [PROTECT Identifying and Responding to All Forms of Abuse in Victorian Schools](#)
- [PROTECT Four Critical Actions for Schools](#)
- [PROTECT Identifying and Responding to Student Sexual Offending](#)
- [PROTECT Four Critical Actions for Schools: Responding to Student Sexual Offending](#)
- [PROTECT Recording your actions: Responding to suspected child abuse – A template for Victorian schools](#)

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## Legislation

Key legislation and standards:

- Ministerial Order 1359: Implementing the Child Safe Standards – Managing the Risk of Child Abuse in Schools and School Boarding Premises
- Children, Youth and Families Act 2005 (Vic.) Child Wellbeing and Safety Act 2005 (Vic.) Worker Screening Act 2020 (Vic.)
- Education and Training Reform Act 2006 (Vic.) Education and Training Reform Regulations 2017 (Vic.) Equal Opportunity Act 2010 (Vic.)
- Privacy Act 1988 (Cth)
- Public Records Act 1973 (Vic)
- Crimes Act 1958 (Vic.) – including three criminal offences under this Act:
  - [Failure to disclose offence](#): Any adult who forms a reasonable belief that a sexual offence has been committed by an adult against a child under 16 has an obligation to report that information to police. Failure to disclose the information to police is a criminal offence.
  - [Failure to protect offence](#): This offence will apply where there is a substantial risk that a child under the age of 16 under the care, supervision or authority of a relevant organisation will become a victim of a sexual offence committed by an adult associated with that organisation. A person in a position of authority in the organisation will commit the offence if they know of the risk of abuse and have the power or responsibility to reduce or remove the risk, but negligently fail to do so.
  - [Grooming offence](#): This offence targets predatory conduct designed to facilitate later sexual activity with a child. Grooming can be conducted in person or online, for example via interaction through social media, web forums and emails.

## Evaluation

This policy will be reviewed every two years or following a significant incident. The next review date will be in January 2027.

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## Appendix 1 - Definitions

Full definitions of terms used in this policy relating to the Victorian Child Safe Standards and Ministerial Order 1359 can be found on the [Victorian Government website](#):

- child
- child safety
- child abuse
- child-connected work
- child information sharing scheme
- child-related work
- mandatory reporting
- reportable conduct
- school environment
- school staff
- school governing authority
- student
- volunteer.