CHILD SAFETY POLICY 2024 - 2026

Help for non-English speakers
If you need help to understand the information in this policy, please email the General Office cranbourne.east.sc@education.vic.gov.au.

Rationale

This template has been developed for Victorian government schools.

Purpose

Cranbourne East Secondary College Child Safety Policy sets out the school's commitment and approach to creating and maintaining a child safe organisation where children and young people are safe and feel safe and provides the policy framework for the school's approach to the Child Safe Standards. This policy provides an overview of our school's approach to implementing Ministerial Order 1359 which sets out how the Victorian Child Safe Standards apply in school environments. It informs our school community of everyone's obligations to act safely and appropriately towards children and guides our processes and practices for the safety and wellbeing of students across all areas of our work.

Scope

This policy:

- applies to all school staff, volunteers and contractors whether or not they work in direct contact with students. It also applies to school council members where indicated.
- applies in all physical and online school environments used by students during or outside of school hours, including other locations provided by for a student's use (for example, a school camp) and those provided through third-party providers
- should be read together with our other child safety and wellbeing policies, procedures, and codes – refer to the related school policies section below.

Definitions

Some of the definitions used in this policy are listed below. Access to all definitions can be viewed using this link to specific definitions.

Child abuse

Child abuse includes:

- any act committed against a child involving:
  - a sexual offence; or
  - grooming; and
- the infliction, on a child, of:
  - physical violence; or
  - serious emotional or psychological harm; and

- serious neglect of a child.

Child-connected work

Child-connected work means work authorised by the school, school council, or Secretary of the Department of Education and Training and performed by an adult in a school environment while children are present or reasonably expected to be present.

Child safety

Child safety encompasses matters related to protecting all children from child abuse, managing the risk of child abuse, providing support to a child at risk of child abuse, and responding to incidents or allegations of child abuse.

School environment

School environment means any physical or virtual place made available or authorised by the school for use by a child during or outside school hours, including:

- a campus of the school;
- online school environments (including email and intranet systems); and
- other locations provided by the school for a child's use (including, without limitation, locations used for school camps, sporting events, excursions, competitions, homestays, and other school activities or events)

School staff

School staff means an individual working in a school environment who is:

- employed by the Department of Education and Training;
- directly engaged or employed by a school council; or
- a volunteer or a contracted service provider (whether or not a body corporate or any other person is an intermediary).

Statement of commitment to child safety and child safety principles

Cranbourne East Secondary College is committed to the safety and wellbeing of all children and young people. This will be the primary focus of our care and decision-making.

Cranbourne East Secondary College has zero tolerance for child abuse and take proactive steps to identify and manage any risks of harm to students in our school environments. When child safety concerns are raised or identified, we treat these seriously and respond promptly and thoroughly. At Cranbourne East Secondary College, we are committed to providing a child-safe environment where children and young people are safe and feel safe, and their voices are heard about decisions that affect their lives. Particular attention will be paid to the cultural safety of Aboriginal children and children from culturally and/or linguistically diverse backgrounds, those unable to live at home, children and young people who identify as lesbian, gay, bisexual, trans and gender diverse, intersex and queer (LGBTIQA+) and other students experiencing risk or vulnerability. Inappropriate or harmful behaviour targeting students based on these or other characteristics, such as racism or homophobia, are not tolerated at our school, and any instances identified will be addressed with appropriate consequences.

Every person involved in Cranbourne East Secondary College has a responsibility to understand the important and specific role they play individually and collectively to ensure that the wellbeing and safety of all children and young people is at the forefront of all they do and every decision they make.

We promote positive relationships between students and adults and between students and their peers. At Cranbourne East Secondary College our values guide the decisions and behaviours of all members of our school community, including in relation to child safety:

- Respect
- Responsibility
- Growth

- Achievement

Other school strategies, Cranbourne East Secondary College have developed to embed a culture of child safety, include

- the appointment of a school child safety officer,
- discussing child safety information in year level assemblies,
- providing updates through information sessions on child safety for families as required.

Roles and responsibilities

Cranbourne East Secondary College culture encourages staff, students, parents and the school community to raise, discuss and scrutinise child safety concerns. This makes it more difficult for abuse to occur and remain hidden.

All child safety documents, including this policy, the Child Safety Code of Conduct the school's Child Safety Responding and Reporting Obligations (including Mandatory Reporting) Policy and Procedures are available on the CESC School website.

School leadership team

Our school leadership team (comprising the principal and assistant principal of wellbeing) is 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.

Principal and assistant principals will:

- ensure effective child safety and wellbeing governance, policies, procedures, codes and practices are in place and followed
- model a child safe culture that facilitates the active participation of students, families and staff in promoting and improving child safety, cultural safety and wellbeing
- enable inclusive practices where the diverse needs of all students are considered
- reinforce high standards of respectful behaviour between students and adults, and between students
- promote regular open discussion on child safety issues within the school community including at leadership team meetings, staff meetings and school council meetings
- facilitate regular professional learning for staff and volunteers (where appropriate) to build deeper understandings of child safety, cultural safety, student wellbeing and prevention of responding to abuse
- create an environment where child safety complaints and concerns are readily raised, and no one is discouraged from reporting an allegation of child abuse to relevant authorities.

School staff and volunteers

All staff and volunteers will:

- participate in child safety and wellbeing induction and training provided by the school or the Department of Education and Training, and always follow the school's child safety and wellbeing policies and procedures
- act in accordance with our Child Safety Code of Conduct CESC School Policies
- All volunteers are required to comply with our Volunteers Policy CESC School Policies
- identify and raise concerns about child safety issues in accordance with our Child Safety Responding and Reporting Obligations Policy and Procedures CESC School Policies, including following the Four Critical Actions for Schools
- ensure students' views are taken seriously and their voices are heard about decisions that affect their lives
- implement inclusive practices that respond to the diverse needs of students.
- Act in accordance with their legal obligations, including:

- Failure to disclose offence (applies to all adults)
- Duty of care (applies to all school staff)
- Mandatory reporting obligations (applies to all mandatory reporters, including teachers, principals, registered psychologists, and registered doctors and nurses)
- Failure to protect offence (applies to a person in a position of authority within the school)
- Reportable conduct obligations (applies to all school staff in reporting conduct to the principal, and applies to the principal in reporting to Employee Conduct Branch)
- Organisational duty of care (applies to the school as an organisation)
- For more information on these obligations, see Identifying and Responding to All Forms of Abuse in Victorian Schools.

- At Cranbourne East Secondary College, we apply robust child safe recruitment, induction, training, and supervision practices to ensure that all staff, contractors, and volunteers are suitable to work with children.

School council

In performing the functions and powers given to them under the *Education and Training Reform Act 2006*, school council members will:

- champion and promote a child safe culture with the broader school community
- ensure that child safety is discussed at some meetings to ensure that a culture of child safety is being embedded and school council members are informed and understand the issues
- undertake annual training on child safety
- approve updates to, and act in accordance with the Child Safety Code of Conduct to the extent that it applies to school council employees and members
- when hiring school council employees, ensure that selection, supervision, and management practices are child safe. At Cranbourne East Secondary College, school council employment duties are delegated to the principal who is bound by this policy.

Specific staff child safety responsibilities

Cranbourne East Secondary College has nominated the Assistant Principal of Wellbeing to support the principal to implement our child safety policies and practices, including staff and volunteer training. The responsibilities of the Wellbeing team are outlined at Guidance for child safety champions.

As part of Cranbourne East Secondary College child safe culture, **school mandatory reporting staff** are required to:

- Complete the Protecting Children – Mandatory reporting and other obligations online module every year
- Read and sign the school's Child Safety Code of Conduct on induction, and maintain familiarity with that document
- Read the school's Child Safety Responding and Reporting Obligations (including Mandatory Reporting) Policy and Procedures on induction, and maintain familiarity with that document
- Read the school's Child Safety Policy (this document) on induction and maintain familiarity with that document.

Our Principal and Assistant Principal of Wellbeing are the first point of contact for child safety concerns or queries and for coordinating responses to child safety incidents.

- School Principal or nominee is responsible for monitoring the school's compliance with the Child Safety and Wellbeing Policy. Anyone in our school community should approach School principal or nominee if they have any concerns about the school's compliance with the Child Safety and Wellbeing Policy.

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- School Principal or nominee is responsible for informing the school community about this policy, and making it publicly available
- Other specific roles and responsibilities are named in other child safety policies and procedures, including the Child Safety Code of Conduct, Child Safety Responding and Reporting Obligations (including Mandatory Reporting) Policy and Procedures, and Child Safety Risk Register.

Our school has also established a Child Safety and Wellbeing Team and a Student Reference Group on child safety. The Child Safety and Wellbeing Team meet regularly to identify and respond to any ongoing matters related to child safety and wellbeing. The Student Reference Group provides an opportunity for students to provide input into school strategies. Our Risk Management Committee monitors the Child Safety Risk Register.

Child Safety Code of Conduct

Cranbourne East Secondary College's Child Safety Code of Conduct sets the boundaries and expectations for appropriate behaviours between adults and students. It also clarifies behaviours that are not acceptable in our physical and online environments. We ensure that students also know what is acceptable and what is not acceptable so that they can be clear and confident about what to expect from adults in the school.

The Child Safety Code of Conduct CESC School Policies also includes processes to report inappropriate behaviour.

Managing risks to child safety and wellbeing

At our school we identify, assess and manage risks to child safety and wellbeing in our physical and online school environments. These risks are managed through our child safety and wellbeing policies, procedures and practices, and in our activity specific risk registers, such as those we develop for off-site overnight camps, adventure activities and facilities and services we contract through third party providers for student use.

Our Child Safety Risk Register is used to record any 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 Safety Risk Register at least annually.

Cranbourne East Secondary College monitors and evaluates the effectiveness of the actions it takes to reduce or remove risks to child safety; more information can be found in the school's risk assessment register. We will identify and mitigate the risks of child abuse in school environments by taking into account the nature of each school environment, the activities expected to be conducted in that environment and the characteristics and needs of all children expected to be present in that environment.

Establishing a culturally safe environment

At Cranbourne East Secondary College, we are committed to establishing an inclusive and culturally safe school where the strengths of Aboriginal culture, values and practices are respected. We think about how every student can have a positive experience in a safe environment. For Aboriginal students, we recognise the link between Aboriginal culture, identity and safety and actively create opportunities for Aboriginal students and the Aboriginal community to have a voice and presence in our school planning, policies, and activities.

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

- Our Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Education Plan outlines the measures we have in place to maintain an inclusive and culturally safe school for Aboriginal children and students

Student empowerment

To support child safety and wellbeing at Cranbourne East Secondary 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.

Cranbourne East Secondary College has developed a safe, inclusive and supportive environment that involves and communicates with children, young people and their parents/carers. We encourage child and parent/carer involvement and engagement that informs safe school operations and builds the capability of children and parents/carers to 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 Respectful Relationships, our student Code of Conduct and our school values. Our school is committed to supporting and encouraging students to use their voice to raise and share their concerns with a trusted adult at any time of need. Students can access information on how to report abuse at the Wellbeing office or Year Level Offices.

When the school is gathering information in relation to a complaint about alleged misconduct with or abuse of a child, the school will listen to the complainant's account and take them seriously, check understanding and keep the child (and/or their parents/carers, as appropriate) informed about progress.

The school will promote the Child Safe Standards in ways that are readily accessible, easy to understand, and user-friendly to children, including:

- All of our child safety policies and procedures will be available for the students and parents at Cranbourne East Secondary College to read at School Website
- PROTECT Child Safety posters will be displayed across the school
- School newsletters will inform students and the school community about the school's commitment to child safety, and strategies or initiatives that the school is taking to ensure student safety
- Age-appropriate discussion of child safety with students, in Year level Assemblies
- Child safety posters are posted around the school, at main entry exit points, reception and Year Level Offices
- the Four Critical Actions are actively taught to mandatory reporters and other school staff, the whole school is encouraged to contribute to risk assessment and mitigation, the Child Safe Standards are addressed and explained at year level assemblies or parent information sessions.

The school will use its health and wellbeing programs to deliver appropriate education to its students about:

- standards of behaviour for students attending the school;
- healthy and respectful relationships (including sexuality);
- resilience; and
- child abuse awareness and prevention.

At the College, the Home Group sessions deliver education around the standards of behaviour for students attending our school. This is revisited and reinforced in every subject, at all year levels.

In the Learning for Success (7&8) and Health Education (7-9) subjects deliver the Respectful Relationships and sexuality education programs. These subjects also deliver Mental Health units that also cover resilience.

The College provides the students in Years 7 and 8 with education about online safety through Digital Technology classes (7 CORE, 9 & 10 Elective) and Optus Digital Workshops when possible.

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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.

Family engagement

Our families and the school community have an important role in monitoring and promoting children's safety and wellbeing and helping children to raise any concerns.

To support family engagement, at Cranbourne East Secondary 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 will create opportunities for families to have input into the development and review of our child safety policies and practices and encourage them to raise any concerns and ideas for improvement.

We do this by:

- Seek input from families and the community through school website, newsletters, compass communications, school council, subcommittees of school council, student, staff, and parent meetings and forums
- all of our child safety policies and procedures will be available for students and parents at CESC Website School Policies
- Newsletters 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

Diversity and equity

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
- children and young people who identify as LGBTIQA+.

Our Student Wellbeing and Engagement Policy CESC School Policies provides more information about the measures we have in place to support diversity and equity.

Suitable staff and volunteers

At Cranbourne East Secondary College, we apply robust child safe recruitment, induction, training, and supervision practices to ensure that all staff, contractors, and volunteers are suitable to work with children.

Staff recruitment

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

- Recruitment in Schools

- Suitability for Employment Checks
- School Council Employment
- Contractor OHS Management.

When engaging staff to perform child-related work, we:

- sight, verify and record the person's Working with Children clearance or equivalent background check such as a Victorian teaching registration
- collect and record:
    - proof of the person's identity and any professional or other qualifications
    - the person's history of working with children
    - references that address suitability for the job and working with children.
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Staff induction

All newly appointed staff will be expected to participate in our child safety and wellbeing induction program. The program will include a focus on:

- the Child Safety and Wellbeing Policy (this document)
- the Child Safety Code of Conduct
- the Child Safety Responding and Reporting Obligations (including Mandatory Reporting) Policy and Procedures and
- any other child safety and wellbeing information that school leadership considers appropriate to the nature of the role.

Ongoing supervision and management of staff

All staff engaged in child-connected work will be supervised appropriately to ensure that their behaviour towards children is safe and appropriate. Staff will be monitored and assessed to ensure their continuing suitability for child-connected work. This will be done by regular performance reviews Inappropriate behaviour towards children and young people will be managed swiftly and in accordance with our school and department policies and our legal obligations. Child safety and wellbeing will be paramount. CESC's people management processes align with Ministerial Order 1359, Clause 10.

Suitability of volunteers

All volunteers are required to comply with CESC Volunteer Policy CESC School Policies , which describes how we assess the suitability of prospective volunteers and outlines expectations in relation to child safety and wellbeing induction and training, and supervision and management.

Child safety knowledge, skills and awareness

Ongoing training and education are essential to ensuring that staff understand their roles and responsibilities and develop their capacity to effectively address child safety and wellbeing matters. In addition to the child safety and wellbeing induction, our staff will participate in a range of training and professional learning to equip them with the skills and knowledge necessary to maintain a child safe environment.

Staff child safety and wellbeing training will be delivered at least annually and will include guidance on:

- our school's child safety and wellbeing policies, procedures, codes, and practices
- completing the Protecting Children – Mandatory Reporting and Other Legal Obligations online module annually
- recognising indicators of child harm including harm caused by other children and students
- responding effectively to issues of child safety and wellbeing and supporting colleagues who disclose harm
- how to build culturally safe environments for children and students
- information sharing and recordkeeping obligations
- how to identify and mitigate child safety and wellbeing risks in the school environment.

Other professional learning and training on child safety and wellbeing, for example, training for our volunteers, will be tailored to specific roles and responsibilities and any identified or emerging needs or issues.

School council training and education

To ensure our school council is equipped with the knowledge required to make decisions in the best interests of student safety and wellbeing, and to identify and mitigate child safety and wellbeing risks in our school environment, the council is trained at least annually. Training includes guidance on:

- individual and collective obligations and responsibilities for implementing the Child Safe Standards and managing the risk of child abuse
- child safety and wellbeing risks in our school environment
- Cranbourne East Secondary College's child safety and wellbeing policies, procedures, codes and practices

Complaints and reporting processes

Cranbourne East Secondary College fosters a culture that encourages staff, volunteers, students, parents, and the school community to raise concerns and complaints. This makes it more difficult for breaches of the code of conduct, misconduct or abuse to occur and remain hidden. We have clear pathways for raising complaints and concerns and responding and this is documented in our school's Complaint Policy. The Complaints Policy can be found at CESC School Policies.

If there is an incident, disclosure, allegation or suspicion of child abuse, all staff and volunteers (including school council employees) must follow our Child Safety Responding and Reporting Obligations Policy and Procedures CESC School Policies. Our policy and procedures address complaints and concerns of child abuse made by or in relation to a child or student, school staff, volunteers, contractors, service providers, visitors or any other person while connected to the school.
As soon as any immediate health and safety concerns are addressed, and relevant school staff have been informed, we will ensure our school follows:

- the Four Critical Actions for complaints and concerns relating to adult behaviour towards a child
- the Four Critical Actions: Student Sexual Offending for complaints and concerns relating to student sexual offending

Our Student Wellbeing and Engagement Policy CESC School Policies and Bullying Prevention Policy CESC School Policies cover complaints and concerns relating to student physical violence or other harmful behaviours.

Communications

Cranbourne East Secondary College promotes the Child Safe Standards in ways that are readily accessible, easy to understand, and user-friendly to children, including:

- All of our child safety policies and procedures will be available for the students and parents at Cranbourne East Secondary College to read at School Website
- PROTECT Child Safety posters will be displayed across the school
- School newsletters will inform students and the school community about the school's commitment to child safety, and strategies or initiatives that the school is taking to ensure student safety
- Age-appropriate discussion of child safety with students, in Year level Assemblies
- Child safety posters are posted around the school, at main entry exit points, reception and Year Level Offices
- the Four Critical Actions are actively taught to mandatory reporters and other school staff, the whole school is encouraged to contribute to risk assessment and mitigation, the Child Safe Standards are addressed and explained at year level assemblies or parent information sessions.

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Privacy and information sharing

Cranbourne East Secondary College collects, uses, and discloses information about children and their families in accordance with Victorian privacy laws, and other relevant laws. For information on how our school collects, uses and discloses information refer to: Schools' Privacy Policy.

Records management

We acknowledge that good records management practices are a critical element of child safety and wellbeing and manage our records in accordance with the Department of Education and Training's policy: Records Management – School Records

Review of child safety practices

At Cranbourne East Secondary College, we have established processes for the review and ongoing improvement of our child safe policies, procedures, and practices.
We will:

- review and improve our policy every 2 years or after any significant child safety incident
- analyse any complaints, concerns, and safety incidents to improve policy and practice
- act with transparency and share pertinent learnings and review outcomes with school staff and our school community.

Related policies and procedures

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 Policy
- Child Safety Responding and Reporting Obligations Policy and Procedures
- Child Safety Code of Conduct
- Complaints Policy
- Digital Learning Policy
- Inclusion and Diversity Policy
- Student Wellbeing and Engagement Policy
- Visitors Policy
- Volunteers Policy

Full details of Cranbourne East Secondary College Policies are located at CESC School Policies .

Related Department of Education and Training policies

- Bullying Prevention and Response Policy
- Child and Family Violence Information Sharing Schemes
- Complaints Policy
- Contractor OHS Management Policy
- Digital Learning in Schools Policy
- Family Violence Support
- Protecting Children: Reporting Obligations Policy
- Policy and Guidelines for Recruitment in Schools
- Reportable Conduct Policy
- Student Wellbeing and Engagement Policy
- Supervision of Students Policy
- Visitors in Schools Policy
- Volunteers in Schools Policy
- Working with Children and other Suitability Checks for School Volunteers and Visitors

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Other related documents

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

Policy status and review

Assistant Principal of Wellbeing is responsible for reviewing and updating the Child Safety and Wellbeing Policy at least every two years. The review will include input from students, parents/carers and the school community.

COMMUNICATION

This policy will be communicated to our school community in the following ways:

- Available publicly on school website
- Included in staff induction processes
- Staff meeting/briefing
- Annual staff and school council training
- Staff handbook/manual
- Hard copy of the policy if requested

Approval

Created date	**Term 3 2024**
Consultation	Consultation process during term 3 2022 included the following groups: • School council policy subcommittee • School council • Teaching staff – weekly news • Student representative committee (SRC)
Endorsed by	School Principal
Endorsed on	Term 3 2024
Next review date	Term 3 2026 - Mandatory review cycle – Every 2 years