



## **CHILD SAFETY AND WELLBEING POLICY**

### **Statement of Context and Purpose**

The welfare of every child and young person (collectively, students) studying at Huntingtower is the School's paramount concern. Huntingtower has a zero-tolerance policy for child abuse, racism and discrimination and is committed to promoting child safety.

The Huntingtower Child Safety and Wellbeing Policy demonstrates the School's commitment to creating and maintaining a child safe and child-friendly environment, where students are safe and feel safe.

This policy outlines the key elements of the School's approach to implementing Ministerial Order No. 1359 which sets out how the Victorian Child Safe Standards apply in school environments. It forms the foundation of the School's procedures, practices, decision-making process and ultimately the School's culture with respect to child safety. It has been approved and endorsed by the School Board and is reviewed annually by the School Board.

This communication informs our school community about everyone's obligations to act safely and appropriately towards children and young individuals. The guiding policies, procedures and practices we follow will ensure the security and welfare of all students in all aspects of our operations.

### **Application**

This policy:

- Applies to all adults in the school community, whether or not their work involves direct contact with students including staff, School Board members, volunteers, contractors, third-party education providers (VET and other providers) and visitors
- Applies in all physical and online school environments used by students during or outside of school hours, including other locations provided for a student's use (for example, a school camp) and those provided through third-party providers
- Should be read together with Huntingtower's other Child Safety policies, procedures and codes

### **Commitment to Child Safety and Wellbeing**

Huntingtower is committed to providing a nurturing school environment where our students are safe and feel safe, where their participation is valued, their views respected and their voices are heard about decisions that affect their lives. Our child safe policies, strategies and practices are inclusive of the needs of all students.

The School has a zero tolerance for child abuse, racism and discrimination and other harm and takes proactive steps to identify and manage any risks of harm to students in our school environment. When child safety concerns are raised or identified, we treat these seriously and respond promptly and thoroughly.

The School promotes positive relationships between students and adults and between students and their peers. These relationships are based on trust and respect.

Huntingtower will promote the inherent dignity of all students and their fundamental right to be respected and nurtured in a safe school environment. Particular attention is given to the child safety needs of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students, those from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds, international students, students with disabilities, those unable to live at home, students who identify as lesbian, gay, bisexual, trans and gender diverse, intersex and queer (LGBTIQ+) 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 the School and any instances identified will be addressed with appropriate consequences.

Huntingtower strives for continual improvement that is responsive to emerging thinking, evidence and practice, so as to eliminate the possibility of inappropriate behaviour that may compromise child safety or student wellbeing from occurring in the first place. The School will regularly seek input from our students, families, staff and volunteers and inform them of our ongoing strategies

## **Child Safety Standards**

The School's Child Safety Program has been developed consistent with the broader context of the [Victorian Child Safe Standards](#).

The Victorian Registration and Qualifications Authority (VRQA) monitors and enforces compliance with the Victorian Child Safe Standards for all registered schools in Victoria.

## **Child Safety Codes of Conduct**

Our Child Safety Codes of Conduct include a Code of Conduct for staff and students. Together, these Codes of Conduct set boundaries and expectations for appropriate behaviours between adults in the School community and students, including in physical, online and virtual environments.

Through Child Safe lessons in Junior School and the Wellbeing curriculum in the Senior School, 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 their lives, including those at school.

The Student Wellbeing and Engagement Policy and Guidelines also includes processes to report inappropriate student behaviour.

## **Child Safety and Wellbeing Risk Management**

At Huntingtower, we prioritise child safety and wellbeing across all aspects of our operations. Our commitment to this cause is reflected in our policies and procedures, codes and practices and is supported by our Risk Management Framework.

The Child Safety and Wellbeing Program integrates risk controls derived from assessments, focusing on activity-specific risks. This approach ensures comprehensive risk management while protecting children's rights to privacy, information, social connections, and learning opportunities.

The School actively documents and reviews child safety and wellbeing risks, identifying, assessing, and managing child safety across all environments, taking into account the nature of activities, physical, virtual, and online settings, and student characteristics. The School Executive Team regularly reviews these risks and makes the necessary updates to the information contained in our policies, procedures, and in the activity planning documentation.

The School upholds a child safety risk register, which records identified risks and the corresponding measures implemented within the School to mitigate these risks. The School Board, Principal and the School Executive Team collectively oversees these measures conduct an annual evaluation of their effectiveness.

## Student Empowerment and Participation

To support child safety and wellbeing at Huntingtower 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.

The School will ensure that our physical, virtual and online environments are friendly and welcoming to all children and young people.

The School actively seeks to include students in decisions that affect them. This includes decisions about organisational planning, delivery of services, management of facilities and learning and assessment environments.

The School ensures that students know about their rights to safety, information and participation. We actively seek to understand what makes students feel safe in our School and regularly communicate with students about what they can do if they feel unsafe.

The School recognises the importance of friendships and encourages respectful relationships, strong friendships and support from peers.

## Family Engagement

Huntingtower 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, Huntingtower is committed to providing families and community with accessible information about our school's child safety policies and practices and involving them in our approach to child safety and wellbeing.

The School creates 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. Huntingtower communicates the School's child safety processes to the School community through:

- The School Bulletin, School seminars, occasional surveys published on HTConnect (Parent app and intranet) to inform the School community about any significant updates to our child safety and wellbeing policies or processes and initiatives that we are taking to ensure student safety and wellbeing
- Ensuring that key child safety and wellbeing policies and procedures are available on our website
- Regular consultation with our Parent & Friends Committee (Parent Representative Committee)
- Tailored resources and support services, including language assistance to cater to International families' specific needs

## Diversity and Equity

As a child safe organisation, Huntingtower celebrates the rich diversity of our students, families and community and promotes respectful relationships and environments that are free from racism and discrimination. Our focus is on wellbeing and growth for all.

The School recognises that every student has unique skills, strengths and experiences to draw upon and that these attributes contribute positively to the School environment and the experiences of others. We pay particular attention to individuals and groups of children and young people in our community with additional and specific needs. The School values diversity and does not tolerate any discriminatory practices. To achieve this, we:

- Support the cultural safety, participation and empowerment of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students and their families
- Support the cultural safety, participation and empowerment of International students - culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds and their families
- Support students with disability and their families and act to promote their participation

- Support students and families of diverse sexuality and act to promote their participation
- Seek to recruit a workforce that reflects a diversity of cultures, abilities and identities
- Ensure that all Staff and Volunteers have training about Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander cultures, disability, culturally and/or linguistically diverse backgrounds and those with particular experiences or needs
- Have a physical environment that actively celebrates diverse cultures and recognises cultural difference; and
- Commit to promoting the inclusion of students of differing abilities

## Establishing a Culturally Safe Environment

Huntingtower is firmly committed to establishing an inclusive and culturally safe school environment that respects and celebrates the rich histories, cultures, values and practices of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples. Simultaneously, we are dedicated to providing robust support for members of our International Community.

The School's dedication to inclusivity and cultural safety extends to addressing racism within our school environment with appropriate consequences. We believe that every student should have a positive experience in a safe and supportive environment. For our Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students, we acknowledge the profound connection between their culture, identity and cultural safety. We actively work to ensure that they feel comfortable expressing their spiritual and cultural beliefs, fostering an environment where they can be themselves.

Creating a culturally safe school environment is paramount for the wellbeing and success of our diverse international student community. We actively embrace their backgrounds and experiences, fostering inclusivity. Cultural awareness and sensitivity are promoted through training and educational programs for both staff and students. Tailored resources and support services, including language assistance and mentorship, cater to international students' specific needs.

The School's commitment extends to organising cultural events that celebrate various traditions and promote mutual learning. This approach creates a welcoming space for Aboriginal, Torres Strait Islander, and international students to thrive academically and personally, while appreciating the rich diversity of our school community.

To ensure cultural safety, we've implemented strategies that actively involve Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students, their families, and communities in our school's planning and activities. Their contributions are recognised as integral to shaping our inclusive and culturally diverse educational community.

## Our Commitment to Promoting Fairness, Inclusion and Combating Racism

Huntingtower is committed to creating an educational environment where racism is identified, confronted, not tolerated and effectively addressed, all while promoting diversity, equity and inclusion. In pursuit of this commitment, we have implemented a comprehensive set of practices designed to foster diversity, promote equity and ensure inclusion.

The School ensures racism is identified through ongoing education and training for staff and students, with a strong emphasis on diversity and inclusion. This includes awareness programs, diversity and inclusion training and culturally responsive curriculum development. Reporting mechanisms are in place to encourage individuals to report incidents of racism confidentially and without fear of reprisal.

Confronting racism is a top priority, aligned with our commitment to promoting equity and inclusion. We conduct thorough and impartial investigations when reports of racism are made and appropriate consequences are applied to those found responsible. We also promote dialogue and understanding through restorative practices, fostering reconciliation and growth while actively seeking to create an inclusive environment.

Tolerance for racism is not part of our school's culture. We actively work to raise awareness about the importance of confronting racism and fostering an inclusive environment through community engagement and celebrations of diversity, promoting equity and inclusion in all aspects of school life.

Addressing racism is an ongoing process, closely intertwined with our efforts to promote equity and inclusion. We continuously evaluate the effectiveness of our anti-racism efforts, seek feedback from the School community and engage in partnerships with organisations and experts in the field to stay informed about best practices. Our leadership is committed to leading by example and we are dedicated to promoting a school environment where every individual feels valued, respected and empowered to report and confront racism while championing equity and inclusion.

## **Embedding Child Safety**

In creating a child safe culture, Huntingtower recognises the importance of embedding child safety into all school practices. The School applies rigorous child safe recruitment, induction, training and supervision practices to ensure that all school staff, contractors and volunteers are suitable to work with children.

### **Recruitment**

The School employs a range of human resources management strategies to promote child safety and wellbeing including:

- Each staff position description involved in child-connected work outlines the requirements, duties, responsibilities and essential qualifications for ensuring child safety and wellbeing
- Requiring all staff, relevant volunteers, contractors and third-party education providers (VET and other providers) to maintain a valid VIT Registration or WWC (working with children) clearance and sighting, verifying and recording this information
- Using additional selection, background checking and screening processes that take into account child safety consideration
- Child safety induction and annual training programs, which include information about our child safety policies, practices and procedures
- Provision of information to all members of the School community about Child Safe Codes of Conduct and how to report child safety incidents or concerns to the School and to relevant external authorities

### **Staff Induction**

All newly appointed staff are expected to participate in our child safety and wellbeing induction. The induction includes:

- Becoming familiar with and understanding the School's Child Safety and Wellbeing Program, including:
  - The Child Safety and Wellbeing Policy (this document)
  - The Child Safety Code of Conduct
  - Procedures for responding to and reporting suspected child abuse (including Mandatory Reporting)
- How to access the School's policies and guidelines
- Where to go for help (our Child Safe Protection Officers)
- Any other child safety and wellbeing information that the School considers appropriate to the nature of the role.

### **Ongoing Supervision and Management of Staff**

All staff engaged in child-connected work are supervised appropriately to ensure that their behaviour towards children is safe and appropriate. Where it is not practical or desirable for school staff such as teachers to be directly supervised in their classrooms, the School has strategies in place to provide support and supervision of these school staff.

Staff are monitored and assessed to ensure their continued suitability for child-connected work. This is done through regular meetings with a School Executive Team member or a Department Head, classroom observations, annual child safety and wellbeing training, first aid and anaphylaxis training and professional development, annual VIT checks, supporting student wellbeing and respectful relationships and consent training.

### **Suitability of Volunteers and Contractors**

All volunteers and contractors are required to comply with this policy which describes how the School assesses the suitability of prospective volunteers and contractors. Expectations in relation to child safety and wellbeing induction, training, supervision and management will be dependent on the role of the volunteer or contractors.

### **Child Safety Knowledge, Skills and Awareness**

Ongoing training and education are essential to ensuring that school 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 school staff participate in a range of training and professional learning to equip them with the skills and knowledge necessary to maintain a child safe environment.

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

- The 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

Staff are supported through professional learning and training on child safety and wellbeing and are reminded of responsibilities during staff meetings, specific professional development and as part of the Wellbeing program.

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

### **School Board training and education**

To ensure the School Board 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 School Board and any new members to the Board will be trained 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
- Huntingtower's child safety and wellbeing policies, procedures, codes, practices and record management

### **Complaints, Concerns and Reporting Processes**

Huntingtower fosters a culture that encourages everyone in the School community to raise concerns and complaints in relation to child safety and wellbeing.

Huntingtower has clear pathways for raising complaints whenever someone witnesses, suspects, has a concern or receives a complaint about a child safety incident or concern involving a student, a staff member, a Volunteer, a Contractor or the School, set out in the Child Safety Program. These are in our public-facing Child Safety Identifying, Responding and Reporting Obligations Policy and the Reportable Conduct Policy.

The School will take appropriate, prompt action in response to all child safety incidents or concerns, including all complaints, allegations or disclosures of abuse or other harm, when staff, volunteers, contractors, students, parents/carers or anyone else reports these to the School.

The safety and wellbeing of the student(s) involved in the matter will be the paramount consideration when responding to child safety incidents and concerns. The School follows the National Office of Child Safety's Complaint Handling Guide: Upholding the rights of children and young people and the Commission for Children and Young People's Including Children and Young People in Reportable Conduct Investigations resources when investigating and responding to child safety incidents and concerns.

The School's response will include:

- Externally reporting all matters that meet the required relevant thresholds to Child Safety (Mandatory Reports), the Police (Mandatory Reporting of Child Sexual Abuse), the CCYP (Reportable Conduct) and/or the Victorian Institute of Teaching (Teacher Misconduct), depending on the issues raised
- Fully cooperating with any resulting investigation by an external agency
- Protecting any student connected to the child safety incident or concern until it is resolved and providing ongoing support to those affected
- Taking particular measures in response to child safety incidents or concerns about an Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander student, a student from a culturally and linguistically diverse background, a student with disability and other vulnerable students (such as students who are unable to live at home or students who identify as lesbian gay, bisexual, transgender or intersex)
- Sharing information with, or requesting information from, external people or agencies as permitted or required under the Child Information Sharing Scheme and/or the Family Violence Information Sharing Scheme
- Securing and retaining records of the child safety incident or concern and the School's response to it
- Taking broader actions to improve child safety at the School (including systemic reviews and resulting improvements)

## Privacy and Information Sharing

Huntingtower collects, uses and discloses information about students and their families in accordance with Australian Privacy Principles and other relevant laws including laws that permit the School to disclose information about child safety and wellbeing to external people and agencies. For information on how our school collects, uses and discloses information refer to the Privacy Policy.

## Records Management

Huntingtower is committed to best practice records keeping about child safety incidents and concerns in accordance with Public Record Office Victoria Recordkeeping Standards (including minimum retention periods).

When keeping records of child safety incidents or concerns, the School maintains confidentiality and privacy for students and families in accordance with federal and state privacy legislation.

The School acknowledges that good records management practices are a critical element of child safety and wellbeing and manage our records in accordance with the Australian Society of Archivists: Records Retention Schedule for Non-Government Schools, 2nd Edition.

## Communication

Huntingtower is committed to communicating our child safety and wellbeing strategies, policies, codes and guidelines to the School community through:

- Ensuring that key child safety and wellbeing policies are available on our website
- Displaying (CCYP) child safety messaging around the School – specifically the Four Critical Action Posters
- Providing child safety and wellbeing information and updates through school bulletins or notifications through HT Connect (Parent app and intranet)
- Regular highlights/updates in bulletins and parent emails on topics relating to child safety and wellbeing
- Providing the policy to new staff, Volunteers and Contractors at their induction or prior to them commencing any work at the School



- Providing all visitors to the School, including casual Volunteers and casual Contractors, with information about this Policy and in particular also the Child Safety Code of Conduct and how to report child safety incidents or concerns to the School and to relevant external authorities
- Ensuring that child safety is a regular agenda item at the Executive Team meetings, staff meetings and School Board meetings

## Review of Child Safety Practices

Huntingtower is committed to the continuous improvement of the policies and procedures making up our entire Child Safety Program and of our child safety and wellbeing practices. We review the Program as a whole annually (or earlier if a significant child safety incident occurs at the School or legislation changes) for overall effectiveness and to ensure compliance with all child safety and wellbeing related laws, regulations and standards.

When undertaking these reviews, the School:

- Actively seeks, actions and incorporates feedback from students, families, the wider School Community, Staff, Volunteers and Contractors
- Analyses any complaints and child safety incidents that may have occurred
- Ensures that child safety and wellbeing is discussed regularly at School Executive meetings, staff meetings and School Board meetings
- Communicates any learnings, adjustments or amendments to policy and practice widely throughout the community

The Principal and/or Head of Wellbeing is responsible for overseeing the review of our Child Safety and Wellbeing Program.

## Breach of the Child Safe Policy

The School enforces this Child Safe Policy and our Child Safety Codes of Conduct. In the event of any non-compliance, we will instigate a review that may result in a range of measures including (depending on the severity of the breach):

- Remedial education
- Counselling
- Increased supervision
- The restriction of duties
- Suspension
- In the case of serious breaches, termination of employment, contract or engagement

## Responsibilities

Child safety and wellbeing is everyone's responsibility. Each member of the School community has a responsibility to understand the important and specific role they play individually and collectively to ensure that the wellbeing and safety of all students is at the forefront of all they do and every decision they make.

The School has allocated roles and responsibilities for child safety and wellbeing as follows:

### School Board

The School Board is Huntingtower's school governing authority for the purpose of Ministerial Order 1359. The School Board is responsible for:

- Ensuring that the School's governance arrangements support and prioritise a child safe culture which promotes cultured safety and wellbeing of children and protection of children from all forms of harm
- Ensuring that standards of conduct in relation to child safety and wellbeing are defined and established through the School's policies and procedures and are communicated at all levels of the School
- Acquiring up-to-date knowledge of child protection matters
- Having an understanding of the broad nature of School operations and child protection risks associated with these operations
- Ensuring that the School has appropriate resources to effectively implement its Child Safety and Wellbeing Program



- Ensuring that the School has appropriate processes for receiving and considering information regarding child protection issues and can respond in a timely way to that information
- Ensuring that the School has and implements processes to ensure that the School is complying with its legal and regulatory obligations with respect to child protection and wellbeing
- Ensuring that the School has and implements processes to ensure ongoing monitoring to verify the provision and use of the resources that have been allocated to the management of child safety and wellbeing issues within the School and their effectiveness
- Ensuring that child safe recruitment, selection practices and training are employed when appointing new members to the School Board
- Acting in accordance with the Child Safety Code of Conduct, ensuring that child safety and wellbeing is a regular agenda item at School Board meetings
- Undertaking annual child safety and wellbeing training for current and new members to the School Board

### Principal

The School Board has delegated operational day-to-day management of the School and implementation of the Child Safety Program to the Principal. The Principal is ultimately responsible and will be accountable for taking all practical measures to ensure that:

- The School effectively implements the Child Safety Program and deploys all available resources for that purpose
- One or more Child Protection Officers are appointed and trained
- A strong and sustainable child safe culture is maintained within the School, including by:
  - modelling the Child Safety Code of Conduct and reinforcing high standards of child safe behaviours between adults and students and between students
  - facilitating the participation of students, families, staff and other members of the School community in promoting and improving child safety and wellbeing at the School
  - promoting regular and open discussion of child safety and wellbeing issues within the School community
  - facilitating regular professional learning for staff and relevant volunteers and contractors about child safety, cultural safety, student wellbeing and preventing and responding to child safety incidents and concerns
  - Ensuring all recruitment of new employees includes questions and checks regarding child safety, cultural safety, student wellbeing and the preventing and responding to incidents and concerns
- An environment is created where child safety incidents, concerns and complaints are readily raised with the School and where no one is discouraged from reporting child safety incidents or concerns to relevant external authorities
- Any child safety incidents or concerns are dealt with professionally and in a timely manner
- The School Board receives regular reports with respect to child safety matters at the School
- All staff and Contractors, as well as relevant volunteers are aware of the School's Child Safety Program and trained in implementing the Program's processes and procedures
- The School is complying with its legal and regulatory obligations with respect to child safety and wellbeing.

The Principal may, when appropriate, call on the School Executive Team for advice and support in the management and implementation of the School's Child Safety Program.

For the purposes of the Reportable Conduct Scheme, the Principal is the "head" of the School and is responsible for reporting and investigating Reportable Allegations under the School's Reportable Conduct policies and procedures, unless the allegations involve the Principal in which case the Deputy Principal undertakes these responsibilities.

### School Executive Team

Each member of the School Executive Team is required to ensure that appropriate resources are made available in their area of operations to allow the School's Child Safety Program to be effectively implemented within the School and to support the Principal in the practical application of the School's child safety strategies, policies, procedures and work systems. The School Executive team 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
- Ensuring that effective child safety and wellbeing policies, procedures, codes and practices are in place and implemented within their respective areas of responsibility
- Modelling a child safe culture that facilitates the active participation of students, families and staff in promoting and improving child safety, cultural safety and wellbeing
- Enabling inclusive practices where the diverse needs of all students are considered
- Reinforcing high standards of respectful behaviour between students and adults and between students
- Promoting regular open discussion on child safety and wellbeing issues within the school community including at school executive team meetings and staff meetings
- Facilitating regular professional learning for staff, contractors and volunteers (where appropriate) to build deeper understanding of child safety, cultural safety, student wellbeing and prevention of and responding to abuse
- Encouraging child safety and wellbeing complaints and concerns to be raised and ensuring that no one is discouraged from reporting an allegation of child abuse to relevant authorities

### Head of Wellbeing

The Head of Wellbeing is responsible for:

- Being a first point of contact for child safety and wellbeing concerns or queries from the wider community
- Ensuring that the Child Protection Officers understand and comply with their key responsibilities
- Ensuring that all Child Protection Officers as well as staff undergo appropriate annual training in the School's Child Safety and Wellbeing Program, their legal responsibilities and how to effectively respond to child protection concerns and incidents
- Coordinating the School's response to child safety and wellbeing incidents in consultation with the Principal and other members of the School's Executive Team
- Reviewing and assessing the effectiveness of the School's response to a child protection incident
- Ensuring that the School's Child Safety and Wellbeing Program is effectively implemented and communicated to all relevant stakeholders

### Child Protection Officers

The key responsibilities of Child Protection Officers are:

- Having a good working knowledge of this Policy and the School's Child Safety Program
- Acting as "Child Safety Champions" and contributing to the embedding of a strong and sustainable child safe culture within the School
- Promoting child safety issues within the School community and responding to general queries with respect to the Child Safety Program
- Being a point of contact for staff, or other members of the School community, raising child safety concerns within the School as appropriate
- Communicating the School's child safety policies and procedures to stakeholders including students, parents/carers, staff, volunteers and contractors as required
- Responding appropriately to and providing support and assistance for students and their families following child safety incidents, concerns, complaints and disclosures
- Offering assistance and support when other members of the School community receive or make a disclosure of abuse or other harm

### **All Staff**

All staff, including full-time, part-time, casual, teaching and general staff are required, as a condition of their employment, to comply with our Child Safety Program, including the Child Safe Codes of Conduct and their legal obligations with respect to the reporting of child safety incidents or concerns and regarding Working With Children Checks.

It is each individual's responsibility to be aware of key indicators of child abuse and other harm, being observant and raising any and all child safety incidents or concerns with a Child Protection Officer and/or a member of the Executive Team or with external agencies where required. To meet these obligations, all staff must:

- Participate in child safety and wellbeing induction and ongoing training provided by the School
- Comply with this Child Safety and Wellbeing Policy, the Codes of Conduct and the Child Safety Program
- Be aware of key risk indicators of child abuse, be observant to and raise any concerns relating to child protection with one of the School's Child Safety and Wellbeing Officers or a member of Senior Management
- Ensure students' views are taken seriously and their voices are heard when making decisions that affect them
- Implement inclusive practices that respond to the diverse needs of students
- Report child abuse in accordance with their legally mandatory reporting obligations
- Follow any reasonable direction given by a management representative of the School in the interest of protecting the safety and wellbeing of its students
- Help to implement the School's Child Safety and Wellbeing Program in a manner commensurate with their role in the School

### **Volunteers and Contractors**

Volunteers and contractors are responsible for:

- Successfully completing the induction and training provided by the School in complying with this Child Safety and Wellbeing Policy, the Child Safety Code of Conduct and other policies as required
- Being aware of and complying with their legal obligations for the mandatory reporting of child abuse
- Being aware of key risk indicators of child abuse, being observant to and raising any concerns relating to child protection with one of the School's Child Protection Officers or a member of the School Executive Team
- Obtaining a valid Working with Children (WWC) clearance before commencing work at the School
- Following any reasonable direction given by a management representative of the School in the interest of protecting the safety and wellbeing of its students
- Helping to implement the School's Child Safety and Wellbeing Program in a manner commensurate with their role in the School

#### **Volunteers**

Supervisory responsibility for a group of students with only broad and indirect oversight of a School staff member

#### **Contractors**

All Third-Party Contractors engaged by the School are responsible for contributing to the safety and protection of children in the School environment

Third Party Contractors include, for example, maintenance and building personnel, consultants, casual teachers, tutors, sports coaches and cleaners. This also includes music teachers and other extra-curricular teachers and instructors who are engaged by students and their families directly, rather than the School, but have an agreement with the School to use the facilities.

Third Party Contractors engaged by the School are required by the School to be familiar with this Policy and the School Code of Conduct. Where Third Party Contractors are engaged at short notice, making it impractical to undertake normal screening and/or induction, the School will take reasonable steps to ensure the safety of children at the School while the work is being completed. The School may include this requirement in the written agreement between it and the Third-Party Contractor.

### External Education Providers

An External Education Provider is any organisation that the School has arranged to deliver a specified course of study that is part of the curriculum, to a student or students enrolled at the School. The delivery of such a course may take place on School premises or elsewhere.

All External Education Providers engaged by the School are responsible for contributing to the safety and protection of children in the School environment and will be familiar with this Policy and our Codes of Conduct. The School may include this requirement in the written agreement between it and the External Education Provider.

### Specific staff child safety responsibilities

The School Principal and nominated Child Protection Officers (CPO's) are the first point of contact for child safety concerns or queries and for coordinating responses to child safety incidents

Posters displaying information about the CPO's have been placed around the school. The responsibilities of the CPO's are outlined in the Guidelines for Child Protection Officers.

The Child Safe committee monitors the School's compliance with its Child Safety policies and procedures. The Committee identifies, assesses and manages child safety risks in all School environments, based on a range of factors including the nature of the School's activities, their physical, virtual and online environments and the characteristics of our students. We use this information to inform our policies, procedures and activity planning.

The committee records identified risks to child safety and wellbeing in our Child Safety Risk Register, along with the actions in place at the School to manage these risks. The School Board, the Principal, the School Executive Team monitor and evaluate the effectiveness of these actions at least annually

The Principal is responsible for informing the school community about this policy and making it publicly available.

### Definitions

In this policy, the following terms are defined in this link - [specific definitions](#):

- child
- child safety
- child abuse
- child-connected work
- child-related work
- school environment
- school staff
- school governing authority
- student
- volunteer

### Related documents

- Child Safety Code of Conduct
- Child Safety Responding and Reporting Obligations
- Reportable Conduct Policy
- Student Wellbeing and Engagement Policy
- Student Wellbeing and Responsible Engagement Policy & Guidelines
- Child and Family Violence Information Sharing Scheme Policy
- Complaints and Grievances Policy
- Record Management Policy
- Recruitment Policy
- Privacy Policy

## Other related documents and legislation

- Ministerial Order No. 1359
- Crimes Act 1958 (Vic)
- Children, Youth and Families Act 2005 (Vic)
- Child Wellbeing and Safety Act 2005 (Vic)
- Sentencing Act 1991 (Vic)
- Worker Screening Act 2020 (Vic)
- Privacy Act

## Communication

This Policy will be available on the School website. In addition, relevant aspects of this Policy will be raised in staff, student and parent meetings.

It is provided to new staff and to Volunteers and Contractors at their induction or prior to them commencing their work at the School.

The school provides all visitors to the School, including casual Volunteers and casual Contractors, with information about the Child Safe Policy (including, in particular, the Child Safety Codes of Conduct and how to report child safety incidents or concerns to the School and to relevant external authorities) at their induction or prior to them commencing their work at the School.

## Evaluation

The School Board is responsible for ensuring that this Policy is reviewed and updated as needed and for approving this Policy annually or earlier if required, such as if a significant child safety incident occurs at the School or due to changes in legislation. The Principal is responsible for monitoring Huntingtower's overall compliance with this Policy.

## Authorisation

This policy was initially authorised by the Board in September 2022  
Board reviewed October 2023, February 2024, 2025  
Date of next review: February 2026