

CHILD SAFETY POLICY

INTRODUCTION

Victory Christian College has an overarching priority that all children in our care are safe, feel safe and that child abuse is non-existent in our community.

All children, regardless of their gender, race, religious beliefs, age, disability, sexual orientation, or family or social background, have equal rights to protection from abuse.

Victory Christian College is committed to protecting our children from injury and harm, and to promoting their health & safety; both physical and emotional whilst at school, on school activities and in the school's virtual world.

Child Safety is the shared responsibility of all adults at Victory Christian College. This includes teaching staff, support staff, volunteers, contractors, members of the school community, and the College Board.

CULTURAL MATTERS

We value and celebrate diversity, especially cultural diversity, and we do not tolerate discriminatory practices. To achieve this, we:

- promote the cultural safety, participation and empowerment of Aboriginal students and their families
- promote the cultural safety, participation and empowerment from culturally and/or linguistically diverse backgrounds and their families
- promote the personal safety, participation and empowerment of students with a disability and make them feel welcome and part of all aspects of school life.

PROCEDURES

To ensure Child Safety, Victory Christian College has in place Procedures and Policies, which must be followed to ensure that the college remains safe for children and that we have zero incidents of Child Abuse.

These Procedures and Policies include:

- Induction of new staff Procedures
- Staff Code of Conduct & Contracts
- Student Code of Conduct
- Student Well-Being Framework
- Child Protection Policies
- ICT and Internet Acceptable Use Policy
- Transport Policy
- Swimming Policy
- Camps & Excursion Policy
- Contractor Induction/Management Procedure
- Facilities Design Procedures
- Bullying & Harassment Policy
- Risk Management Policy
(Special notice should be given to this policy as it mandates that Risk Assessments must include the risk of Child Abuse. These may include Sporting Events, Overseas Trips, School Productions, and taking any group of students off the school property).
- Staff will be trained and made aware of these policies at an annual in-service and new employees will be trained and made aware of these during our New Staff Induction process.

CHILD SAFETY OFFICERS

The Child Safety Officers will be the Principal, Deputy Principal and the College Chaplain.

RESPONSIBILITIES OF THE COLLEGE BOARD

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

RESPONSIBILITIES OF THE PRINCIPAL

Dealing with and investigating reports of child abuse.

Ensuring that all staff, contractors, and volunteers are aware of relevant laws, College, policies and procedures, and the College's Child Safety Code of Conduct.

Ensuring that all adults within the Victory Christian College community are aware of their obligation to report suspected sexual abuse of a child in accordance with these policies and procedures.

Ensuring that all staff, contractors and volunteers are aware of their obligation to observe the Code of Conduct (particularly as it relates to child safety).

Providing support for staff, contractors and volunteers in undertaking their child protection responsibilities.

RESPONSIBILITIES OF EMPLOYEES IN LEADERSHIP POSITIONS

Employees in Leadership positions have the express responsibility of embedding a culture that ensures ongoing Child Safety at Victory Christian College.

They are to assess the risk of child abuse within their area of responsibility, and eradicate/minimise any risk to the extent possible.

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

RESPONSIBILITIES OF EMPLOYEES, CONTRACTORS AND VOLUNTEERS

All Staff / Volunteers / Contractors share in the responsibility for the prevention and detection of child abuse, and must:

Adhere to Child Safety Policies, Procedures, Instructions and Guidelines.

Co-operate with the College with respect to any action taken to comply with any requirement imposed by or under the Policies, Ministerial Orders or Act.

Not wilfully place at risk the health and safety of any children.

Familiarise themselves with the relevant laws, the Code of Conduct, Victory Christian College's policy and procedures in relation to child protection, and comply with all requirements.

Report any reasonable belief that a child's safety is at risk to the relevant authorities (such as the police and / or the state-based child protection service) and fulfill their obligations as mandatory reporters.

Report any suspicion that a child's safety may be at risk to their supervisor (or, if their supervisor is involved in the suspicion, to a responsible person at the College).

Provide an environment that is supportive of all children's emotional and physical safety.

STRATEGIES TO EMBED A CULTRE OF CHILD SAFETY

Strategy	Responsible Staff Member/s
We will include Child Safety on Sub-School Meeting Agendas	Sub School Leaders
We will annually train our community in Cyber Safety Matters	Chaplain to organize appropriate people to run this program, e.g. Community Police, Cyber Safety Consultants
We will annually present Choices, Decisions and Outcomes (or an equivalent program) that teaches secondary students about Healthy & Respectful Relationships	Deputy Principal in coordination with the Gianna Centre
We will annually run student Mental Health, Resilience and Child Safety Workshops.	To be Coordinated by the Deputy Principal and Chaplain
We will advise parents of our Child Protection Policies and our Child Safety Code of Conduct through our newsletter and website.	Website Manager and Newsletter Editor
We will embed Child Safety Topics in the P.E. and Health curriculum.	Health and P.E Faculty Leader and staff
We will consider child safety matters on all risk assessments	Deputy Principal and Teaching Staff
We will provide students with visible access to the Child Protection Fact Sheet, and Child Protection Poster.	Administration Staff

EMPLOYMENT AND INDUCTION PROCEDURES

Victory Christian College undertakes a comprehensive recruitment and screening process for all workers which aims to:

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

Victory Christian College requires:

- All new staff to sign a statutory declaration in regards to previous allegations of sexual abuse or misconduct, as part of their employment contract.
- All non-teaching staff, volunteers and contractors to have current working with children's checks.
- All teachers to have VIT registration.
- All parents participating in school camps, or directly responsible for groups of students on excursions to have a current Working with Children's check and to read and sign the Child Safety Code of Conduct.
- All new staff and Contractors to complete a safety induction, to read, acknowledge and sign the Child Safety Code of Conduct.

REPORTING

Any staff member, volunteer or contractor who has grounds to suspect abusive activity must immediately notify the appropriate child protection service or the police. They should also advise their supervisor about their concern.

In situations where the supervisor is suspected of involvement in the activity, or if the person having the suspicion does not believe that the matter is being appropriately addressed or dealt with, the matter should be reported to the next highest level of supervision.

Supervisors must report complaints of suspected abusive behaviour or misconduct to the Principal and to any external regulatory body such as the police.

Mandatory / voluntary reporting requirements are documented in the Child Protection Policies.

INVESTIGATING

If the appropriate child protection service or the police decide to investigate this report, all employees, contractors or volunteers must co-operate fully with the investigation.

Whether or not the authorities decide to investigate, the Principal will consult with the authorities to determine whether an internal investigation is appropriate. If it is decided that such an investigation will not conflict with any proceeding of the authorities, the Principal may decide to conduct such an investigation. All employees, contractors and volunteers must co-operate fully with the investigation.

Any such investigation will be conducted according to the rules of natural justice.

The Principal will make every effort to keep any such investigation confidential; however, from time to time other members of staff may need to be consulted in conjunction with the investigation.

After an initial review and a determination that the suspected abuse warrants additional investigation, the Principal shall coordinate the investigation with the appropriate investigators and / or law enforcement officials. Internal or external legal representatives will be involved in the process, as deemed appropriate.

RESPONDING

If it is alleged that a member of staff, contractor or a volunteer may have committed an offence or have breached Victory Christian College's policies or its Code of Conduct the person concerned may be stood down (with pay, where applicable) while an investigation is conducted.

If the investigation concludes that on the balance of probabilities an offence (or a breach of the College's policies or Code of Conduct) has occurred then disciplinary action may follow, up to and including dismissal or cessation of involvement with the College. The findings of the investigation will also be reported to any external body as required.

PRIVACY

All personal information considered or recorded will respect the privacy of the individuals involved unless there is a risk to someone's safety. Victory Christian College will have safeguards and practices in place to ensure any personal information is protected. Everyone is entitled to know how the personal information is recorded, what will be done with it, and who will be able to access it.

LEGISLATIVE RESPONSIBILITIES

Victory Christian College takes its legal responsibilities seriously, including:

Failure to Disclose:

Reporting child sexual abuse is a community-wide responsibility. All adults in Victoria who have a reasonable belief that an adult has committed a sexual offence against a child under 16 have an obligation to report that information to the police.

Failure to Protect:

People of authority in our organisation will commit an offence if they know of a substantial risk of child sexual abuse and have the power or responsibility to reduce or remove the risk, but negligently fail to do so.

Any personnel who are **mandatory reporters** must comply with their duties. Please refer to the Mandatory Reporting Policy for additional information.

REVIEW OF PROCEDURES AND POLICY

The Child Safety procedures and policies will be reviewed by the College Board annually.

WHERE TO GO FOR FURTHER INFORMATION

The following people will be able to provide further information

- Deputy Principal, Chris Harvey
- Principal, Anne Marie Rodgers

RELEVANT LEGISLATION AND REGULATIONS:

Ministerial Order 870

Children, Youth and Families Act 2005

Child Wellbeing and Safety Act 2005 (Vic)

Education and Training Reform Act 2006

Crimes Act 1958 (Vic)

Working with Children Act 2005

Family Violence Protection Act 2008

Victorian Institute of Teaching Act 2001