

CHILD SAFE STANDARDS

PURPOSE

This policy was written to demonstrate the commitment of Diamond Valley College to child safety and to establishing and maintaining child safe and child friendly environments.

This policy aims to provide clear guidelines and procedures for all matters related to protecting children from child abuse, managing the risk of child abuse, providing support to a child at risk of child abuse and responding to incidents and allegations of child abuse.

This policy aims to embed a culture of child safety and ensure zero tolerance of child abuse in the school and to make certain that protecting children from abuse is embedded in everyday thinking and practice. It reflects the school's commitment to provide a safe environment where every person has the right to be treated with respect and is safe and protected from harm. Accordingly, this policy has been written to comply with the Victorian Government Ministerial Order 870 dated 22 December 2015, Child Safe Standards - Managing the Risk of Child Abuse in Schools. The Order comes into effect on 1 August 2016 and is made under section 5.10.4 of the Education and Training Reform Act 2006. Furthermore, this Policy references three new Victorian criminal law reforms as follows:

- The Grooming Offence which targets communication, including online communication, with a child or their parents with the intent of committing child sexual abuse
- The Failure to Disclose Offence that requires adults to report to police a reasonable belief that a sexual offence has been committed against a child (unless they have a reasonable excuse for not doing so)
- The Failure to Protect Offence that applies to people within organisations who knew of a risk of child sexual abuse by someone in the organisation and had the authority to reduce or remove the risk, but negligently failed to do so.

This policy, from the date of endorsement, applies to all people involved in the organisation, including:

- employees (permanent and casual)
- volunteers
- contractors
- sub-contractors
- pre-service teachers
- work experience students
- indirect service providers
- any other individual involved in this organisation

If you believe a student is at immediate risk of abuse phone 000.

Child Safe STANDARD 1

Strategies to embed an organisational culture of child safety, including through effective leadership arrangements.

- **Strategy 1:** Linking the Child Safe Policy with the school ethos and promoting a child safe culture.
- **Strategy 2:** Identifying the Chain of Care and Responsibility 2016, including policy review of the previous Mandatory Reporting Policy and the writing, implementation, communication, monitoring and management of the new Child Safe Policy (2016).
- **Strategy 3:** Identification and Support for Children with Diverse Needs.
- **Strategy 4:** Reviewing and updating of current Code of Conduct for Appropriate Behaviour with Children (See Standard 3).
- **Strategy 5:** Reviewing and updating of current Provision for Screening, Supervision and Training of new and existing personnel. (See Standard 4).
- **Strategy 6:** Reviewing and updating current Process for Responding to and Reporting Suspected Child Abuse (see Standard 5).
- **Strategy 7:** Development of procedures to identify and reduce or remove the risk of abuse. (See Standard 6).
- **Strategy 8:** Development of a Plan to enable the empowerment and participation of all children with respect to Child Safe. (See standard 7).

Child Safe STANDARD 2

Statement of commitment to child safety.

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

Diamond Valley College has zero tolerance for child abuse.

Diamond Valley College is 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, as well as the safety of children with a disability.

Every person involved in Diamond Valley College has a responsibility to understand the important and specific role he/she plays 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.

In its planning, decision-making and operations Diamond Valley College will

1. Take a preventative, proactive and participatory approach to child safety;
2. Value and empower children to participate in decisions which affect their lives;
3. Foster a culture of openness that supports all persons to safely disclose risks of harm to children
4. Respect diversity in cultures and child rearing practices while keeping child safety paramount;

5. Provide written guidance on appropriate conduct and behaviour towards children;
6. Engage only the most suitable people to work with children and have high quality staff and volunteer supervision and professional development;
7. Ensure children know who to talk with if they are worried or are feeling unsafe, and that they are comfortable and encouraged to raise such issues;
- 8 Report suspected abuse, neglect or mistreatment promptly to the appropriate authorities;
9. Share information appropriately and lawfully with other organisations where the safety and wellbeing of children is at risk; and
10. Value the input of and communicate regularly with families and carers.

Child Safe STANDARD 3

Code of Conduct for Behaviour with Children

This Code of Conduct outlines appropriate standards of behaviour by adults towards children at Diamond Valley College.

The Code of Conduct aims to protect children and reduce any opportunities for abuse or harm to occur. It also helps staff and volunteers by providing them with guidance on how to best support children and how to avoid or better manage difficult situations. All staff and volunteers at Diamond Valley College are required to comply.

All staff, volunteers and members of the School Council of Diamond Valley College are required to observe child safe principles and expectations for appropriate behaviour towards and in the company of children, as noted below. All personnel of Diamond Valley College are responsible for supporting the safety, participation, wellbeing and empowerment of children by:

1. Adhering to the Diamond Valley College child safe policy at all times / upholding the Diamond Valley College statement of commitment to child safety at all times.
2. Taking all reasonable steps to protect children from abuse.
3. Treating everyone with respect, including listening to and valuing their ideas and opinions.
4. Modelling appropriate adult behaviour.
5. Listening and responding to the views and concerns of children, particularly if they are telling you that they or another child has been abused and/or are worried about their safety or the safety of another.
6. Complying with our guidelines on physical contact with children (refer to SWC Policy).
7. Promoting the cultural safety, participation and empowerment of Aboriginal children (for example, by never questioning an Aboriginal child's self-identification).
8. Promoting the cultural safety, participation and empowerment of children with culturally and/or linguistically diverse backgrounds (for example, by having a zero tolerance of discrimination).
9. Promoting the safety, participation and empowerment of children with a disability (for example, during personal care activities).
10. Ensuring as far as practicable that adults are not left alone with a child. By working with children in an open and transparent way – other adults should always know about the work you are doing with children.
11. Respecting the privacy of children and their families, and only disclosing information to people who have a need to know (refer to SWC policy).

12. Reporting any allegations of child abuse to the Diamond Valley Principal and Assistant Principal and ensuring any allegation is reported to the police or child protection.
13. Reporting any child safety concerns to Diamond Valley Student Wellbeing Team.
14. If an allegation of child abuse is made, ensuring as quickly as possible that the child(ren) are safe.
15. Encouraging children to 'have a say' and participate in all relevant organisational activities where possible, especially on issues that are important to them

Staff and volunteers must not:

1. Develop any 'special' relationships with children that could be seen as favoritism (for example, the offering of gifts or special treatment for specific children).
2. Seek to use children in any way to meet the needs of adults including doing errands of a personal nature.
3. Exhibit behaviors with children which may be construed as unnecessarily physical.
4. Put children at risk of abuse (for example, by locking doors, allowing children to work out of sight with visitor). In all cases where an adult is alone with a child all reasonable steps must be taken to ensure that the activity is legitimate, open and transparent
5. Use prejudiced oppressive or aggressive behavior or language with children.
6. Do things of a personal nature that a child can do for themselves.
7. Engage in open discussions of a mature or adult nature in the presence of children (for example, personal social activities).
8. Use inappropriate language in the presence of children.
9. Express personal views on culture, race or sexuality in the presence of children.
10. Discriminate against any child because of culture, race, ethnicity or disability.
11. Have contact with a child or their family outside of our organisation without the knowledge and/or consent of the principal or vice principal.
12. Exchange personal contact details such as phone number, social networking site or email addresses with children.
13. Engage in rough or physical games with children.
14. Have any online contact with a child or their family.
15. Ignore or disregard any suspected or disclosed child abuse.

DVC staff are expected to acknowledge and sign the Code of Conduct each year.

Child Safe STANDARD 4

Screening, Supervision & Training (including Advice to Staff on the Betrayal of Trust report and Mandatory Reporting information).

Diamond Valley College takes all reasonable steps to ensure that it engages the most suitable and appropriate people to work with children. The school has a team based hands- on approach to recruitment to ensure that all adults are thoroughly screened.

The school acknowledges the Australian Human Rights Commission Guidelines for the Prevention of Discrimination in Employment on the Basis of Criminal Record (2012) and seeks to create an environment,

which will encourage an open and honest exchange of criminal record information between the school as employer and the job applicant or volunteer. The school selects staff and volunteers by following a process that is fair and just; however, the safety and wellbeing of children is the primary consideration. We ensure that our decision-making is rigorous, defensible and transparent by following a strict process.

Recruitment & Screening

1. We employ a range of screening measures and apply best practice standards in the screening and recruitment of employees and volunteers including:
 - i. Advertisements for positions Diamond Valley College will reflect the commitment of the school to Child Safety by informing applicants that rigorous reference and background checking will be undertaken, including a Working with Children Check and police record (at employees expense) and identity checks.
 - ii. Advertisements for positions at Diamond Valley College will reflect the school's commitment to the safety, participation and empowerment of all children, including those with a disability, those from linguistically diverse backgrounds and those from an aboriginal background.
 - iii. All positions include a formal job description.
 - iv. The job description or duty statement will include a clear outline of the role and state the expectation that staff must provide a child safe environment. It will clearly spell out:
 - *The organisational context*
 - *Duties and tasks of the role.*
 - *Qualifications, experience and attributes a person must have.*
 - *The level of responsibility and supervision associated with the position.*
2. We interview all employees and volunteers with a minimum of two management staff present as well as assessing applicant suitability for the position in term of professional task experience and qualifications (as applicable), a specific Child Safety based assessment is made including:
 - Direct questions about whether the applicant has any criminal convictions, cautions, other legal or pending cases, including formal disciplinary action, which may affect their suitability to work with children.
 - Motivation to work with children (personal and/or professional).
 - Relevant and verifiable experience.
 - Understanding of children's physical and emotional needs.
 - Understanding of professional boundaries.
 - Communication skills.
 - Attitudes to children's rights and how they can be upheld.
 - Values (honesty, integrity, reliability, fairness, and non-discrimination).
 - Checking that all details provided by the applicant, including identification documents and qualifications are valid.
 - Taking note of applicant's demeanor throughout the interview process.
3. We conduct criminal history assessment for people working with children, as set out in the Working with Children Check (the Check) as part of Victorian law. The Check was created by the *Working with Children Act 2005* (the Act). In addition to the Act, the school recognises a large number of other pieces of legislation are relevant to the Check and people working with children in Victoria. More information about this can be found on the Victorian Government Justice and Regulation Working with Children website.

Record Keeping

All Police Checks, Working with Children Checks and Victorian Institute of Teaching proof of registration is kept in relevant staff and volunteer files and updated regularly.

School records will indicate:

- That everyone with direct and unsupervised contact with children has a Working with Children Check. Additionally, the school recommends that any volunteer working in the school, even though they are supervised, obtain a WWC check.
- That applicants are legally not permitted to work while their application is processed (people with serious sexual, violent or drug offences or who are subject to orders listed under Schedule 3 of the Working with Children Act cannot work with children while their applications are assessed).
- When workers' Working with Children Checks expire.
- The application 'Working with Children Check' receipt or card number of all workers doing child-related work.
- The number, expiry date and card type.
- All correspondence received from the Department of Justice and Regulation about workers.

Supervision

We support our staff and volunteers through ongoing supervision to: develop their skills to protect students from abuse; and promote the cultural safety of Aboriginal students, the cultural safety of students from linguistically and/or diverse backgrounds, and the safety of students with a disability.

New employees and volunteers will be supervised regularly to ensure they understand our organisation's commitment to student safety and that everyone has a role to play in protecting students from abuse, as well as checking that their behaviour towards students is safe and appropriate. Any inappropriate behaviour will be reported through appropriate channels, including the Department of Health and Human Services and Victoria Police, depending on the severity and urgency of the matter.

Training

Training and education is important to ensure that everyone in our organisation understands that student safety is everyone's responsibility.

Our organisational culture aims for all staff and volunteers (in addition to parents/carers and students) to feel confident and comfortable in discussing any allegations of child abuse or child safety concerns. We train our staff and volunteers to identify, assess, and minimise risks of child abuse and to detect potential signs of child abuse. All Staff and volunteers are required to undergo regular training on Child Safety and Mandatory Reporting (refer to SWC policy) or when any updates or changes to policy are made.

Child Safe STANDARD 5

Diamond Valley College Process for Responding to and Reporting Suspected Child Abuse (including Mandatory Reporting Process)

1. Discuss your concerns immediately with either the Principal, Assistant Principal or member of the Student Wellbeing Team.

NB. You should discuss your concerns each time you think the abuse has occurred, even if a report has already been made.

REMEMBER:

- You do not have to prove the abuse has taken place. You only need reasonable grounds or a suspicion that abuse may be occurring.
 - You cannot be held legally liable regardless of the outcome of the report.
 - You will not be required to personally make the report although it may be requested that you be present when a report is being made.
2. The Principal, Deputy Principals or a member of the Student Wellbeing Team will then take a detailed account of what you know about the child and the possible abuse.
 3. A report will be made to the Department of Human Services – Child Protection, Child First and/or Victoria Police depending on the nature of the concern that has been raised.

REMEMBER:

Reporters will remain confidential under the Children, Youth and Family Act, unless:

- You consent in writing to your identity as a reporter being disclosed
 - A court decides it needs this information in order to ensure the safety and wellbeing of the child
 - The court decides in the interests of justice it requires that evidence be given.
4. A report is always made to the Department of Health and Human Services – Child Protection over the phone and in some circumstances, the parents are made aware of this report. The following information is beneficial for the intake officer when a report is being made:
 - Details – the young person’s name, age and address
 - Indicators of Harm – the reason for believing that the injury or behaviour is the result of abuse or neglect
 - Reason for Reporting – the reason why the call is being made now
 - Safety Assessment – assessment of immediate danger to the young person
 - Description – description of the injury or behaviour observed
 - Young Person’s Whereabouts – the current whereabouts of the young person
 - Other Services – knowledge of other services involved with the family
 - Family Information – any other information about the family
 - Cultural Characteristics – any specific cultural or other details that will help to care for the child.

Failure to Report

A failure by mandated professionals and staff members to report a reasonable belief that a child is in need of protection from significant harm may result in the person being prosecuted and a court imposing a fine under the CYFA (section 184(1)).

In the case of sexual abuse failure to protect or disclose is now a criminal offence punishable by imprisonment.

Child Safe STANDARD 6 Strategies to Identify and Reduce/Remove Risks of Child Abuse

The purpose of the risk management strategy is to ensure the well-being of children and young people in the school, and protect them from harm. In the context of creating safe environments for children, risk management means identifying, assessing and taking steps to minimise the risks of harm to children, due to the action or inaction of another person involved with the school (such as an employee, volunteer, or another child).

In this context, a risk is anything that can cause harm or loss to a child. Risk of harm is the likelihood of inflicting harm to children (either directly or as a consequence of other actions) and the severity of that harm. In the Child Safety context, a child would be considered to be at risk if they are in a situation where there is a high likelihood that the child's safety and/or well-being will be severely compromised. Harm in the Child Safety context is defined as the detrimental impact on the physical, psychological, emotional or social safety, well-being and development of a child as a result of the actions or inactions of another person.

Diamond Valley College have risk management strategies in place to identify, assess, and take steps to minimise child abuse risks, which include risks posed by physical environments. Risk Management at Diamond Valley College is an ongoing process and the school evaluates processes and amends as needed.

Child Safe Standard 6: Risk Assessment template

A key part of a risk management strategy is a risk assessment. Risk assessments can take many forms. An example is provided below. Risk assessment resources form part of the [School Policy & Advisory Guide: Risk Management Policy](#). An example is provided below to assist schools in their risk assessment.

Each school will be different and must undertake their school specific assessment.

Risk Event or Environment	Existing risk management strategies or existing controls	Likelihood	Consequence	Current risk rating	New risk management strategies or treatments	Who is responsible?	Target risk rating
No organisational culture of child safety – lack of leadership, public commitment and frequent messaging	Child safety code of conduct Strategies developed to embed culture of child safety	Possible	Severe	Extreme	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Strategies to embed organisational culture of child safety are reviewed Statement of commitment to child safety is publicly available All staff to annually acknowledge the child safety Code of Conduct 	Principal, School Council Chair	Low
Inappropriate behaviour is not reported and addressed	Child safety code of conduct Clear child safety reporting procedures Performance	Unlikely	Severe	High	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Strategies to embed organisational culture of child safety are reviewed Refresher training for staff – see eLearning mandatory reporting 	Principal, School Council Chair	Low

Risk Event or Environment	Existing risk management strategies or existing controls	Likelihood	Consequence	Current risk rating	New risk management strategies or treatments	Who is responsible?	Target risk rating
	management procedures				module <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Child Safety briefing of all staff biannually 		
Unquestioning trust of long term employees and contractors or norms	Strategies developed to embed culture of child safety Clear child safety reporting procedures	Possible	Major	High	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Refresher training for staff – see eLearning mandatory reporting module Child Safety briefing of all staff biannually 	Principal, School Council Chair	Low
Recruitment of an inappropriate person	WWCC or Victorian Institute of Teaching registration	Unlikely	Major	Medium	Processes updated to require: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Criminal history search Pre-employment reference check includes asking about child safety Documentation of process 	Principal, School Council Chair	Low
Engagement with children online	Child safety code of conduct Strategies developed to embed culture of child safety	Possible	Moderate	Medium	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Train students and staff to detect inappropriate behaviour Ensure appropriate settings on all student technologies Policy in place to support appropriate use of digital technologies 	Principal, School Council Chair	Low
Unknown people and environments at excursions and camps	Child safety code of conduct Strategies developed to embed culture of child	Unlikely	Moderate	Medium	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Assessment of new or changed environments for child safety risks Ensure Code and strategies 	Principal, School Council Chair	Low

Risk Event or Environment	Existing risk management strategies or existing controls	Likelihood	Consequence	Current risk rating	New risk management strategies or treatments	Who is responsible?	Target risk rating
	safety Clear child safety reporting procedures				apply in all school contexts <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ensure Camps and venues are Child Safety compliant 		
Ad-hoc contractors on the premises (eg maintenance)	Child safe environments Information and awareness for visitors, staff, volunteers and contractors Adequate monitoring	Unlikely	Moderate	Medium	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Refresher training for frequent contractors • Working with Children file maintained 	Principal, School Council Chair	Low

Child Safe STANDARD 7

Strategies to Promote the Participation and Empowerment of Children

Diamond Valley College wants to ensure that children feel safe and comfortable in reporting concerns and allegations. Key components to this are:

Strategy 1: Ongoing and thorough Professional Learning for all staff to ensure they are aware of the reporting process, their obligations and the law.

Strategy 2: A thorough induction program regarding Child Safe for all new staff and volunteers.

Strategy 3: An ongoing program for all parents and caregivers on the Child Safe standards.

Strategy 4: Ongoing education for all children at Diamond Valley College. This will include all aspects of Child Safety as addressed in this policy, taught at an age and developmentally appropriate level. The school will assure that all Child Safe education is mindful of:

- children with a disability, their needs and ability to access information
- children from diverse cultural and language backgrounds
- children from an Aboriginal background.

FURTHER INFORMATION AND RESOURCES

Resources used in the compilation of this policy include

- Ministerial Order 870 Child Safe Standards (Victorian Government Gazette December 2015).
- Working With Children Act 2005 (Victorian Government 2005).
- Child Safe Standards overview (DHHS 2015).
- Child Safe Standards Toolkit (DHHS 2015).
- Child Protection Information for Parents 2016 (DHS 2016).
- Changes to Legislation Guide January 2016 (DHS 2016).
- Mandatory Reporting Flowchart (DHS undated).
- VRQA Child Safe Standards Readiness Tool (VRQA 2016).

REVIEW PERIOD

This policy was last updated in March 2019 and is scheduled for review in May 2021.