
Child Safety and Wellbeing Policy

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1. Preamble

- 1.1. All children are precious in the sight of God. The Bible indicates that the nurture of children is a high priority in the community with specific responsibility being given to parents (Ephesians 6:4; Deuteronomy 4:9). It is the responsibility of all members of the SHCS school community to love, and therefore protect, the students in their care. This love, as described in 1 Corinthians 13, guides the words and actions of staff members as they partner with families.
- 1.2. Upon enrolment, Swan Hill Christian School (SHCS) enters into an agreement with parents/guardians to assist them in their God-given responsibility for the nurture of their children. The school strives to fulfil their contract to support parents but not to the detriment of the welfare of the student. It is part of the school's duty of care to ensure that students receive the protection that is due to them.
- 1.3. SHCS has a zero tolerance for child abuse and is committed to acting in the best interests of children and to keeping them safe from harm. The school regards its child protection responsibilities to be of the utmost importance and, as such, is committed to providing the necessary resources to ensure compliance with all relevant child protection laws and regulations, and to maintaining a child safe culture.
- 1.4. SHCS *Child Safety and Wellbeing Policy* expresses our school's commitment to:
 - 1.4.1. creating and maintaining a child safe organisation, where children and young people experience safety;
 - 1.4.2. developing policies, procedures, practices and systems that promote child protection within the school;
 - 1.4.3. creating a positive and robust child protection culture;
 - 1.4.4. promoting open discussion of child protection issues within the school; and
 - 1.4.5. complying with all laws, regulations and standards relevant to child protection in Victoria.
- 1.5. This policy provides an overview of SHCS's approach to implementing [Ministerial Order 1359](#) which sets out how the Victorian Child Safe Standards apply in school environments.
- 1.6. This policy:
 - 1.6.1. applies to all school staff, volunteers and contractors whether or not they work in direct contact with students. It also applies to Directors as indicated.
 - 1.6.2. applies in all physical and online school environments used by students during or outside of school hours, including other locations for a student's use (for example, a school camp) and those provided through third-party providers.
- 1.7. This *Child Safety and Wellbeing Policy* is to be read in conjunction with other related school policies and procedures as outlined throughout this document, with particular reference to the *Staff & Student Professional Boundaries Policy* and the *Staff Conduct & Professional Practice Policy*.

Definitions

- 1.8. *Act* refers to the Education and Training Reform Act 2006
- 1.9. *Child* refers to a child or young person who is under the age of 18 years (*Child Wellbeing & Safety Act 2005*).
- 1.10. *Child Safety* includes 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 suspicions, incidents, disclosures or allegations of child abuse.

1.11. *Child Abuse* refers to:

- 1.11.1. any act committed against a child involving: a sexual offence; grooming offences under section 49M(1) of the Crimes Act 1958
- 1.11.2. the infliction, on a child, of: physical violence; serious emotional or psychological harm
- 1.11.3. the serious neglect of a child.

1.12. *Child-connected work* refers to work authorised by the school governing authority and performed by an adult in a school environment while children are present or reasonably expected to be present. Working with Children clearance is required by law only for people who engage in child-related work. Schools may choose to require suitability checks (including Working with Children clearance) for visitors and volunteers engaging in child-connected work.

1.13. *Child-related work* refers to work which usually involves (or is likely to involve) direct contact with a child, irrespective of whether that contact is supervised or not, and in any of the child-related occupational fields listed in the Worker Screening Act (2020). The definition of direct contact includes oral, written or electronic communication as well as face-to-face and physical contact. 'Child-related work' may be either paid or unpaid (voluntary). There are exemptions from the Worker Screening Act including people under 18 years of age, parent volunteers whose child ordinarily participates in the activity, sworn police officers, teachers currently registered with the Victorian Institute of Teaching, and visiting workers who do not ordinarily reside and perform child-related work in Victoria, among others.

1.14. *Duty of Care* refers to the obligation of all staff working with students to take reasonable steps to protect them from reasonably foreseeable harm.

1.15. *School environment* refers to any of the following physical, online or virtual places, used during or outside school hours and includes:

- 1.15.1. The campus of the school
- 1.15.2. Online or virtual school environments made available or authorised by the school governing authority for use by a child or student (including email, intranet systems, software applications, collaboration tools, and online services)
- 1.15.3. Other locations provided by the school or through a third-party provider for a child or student to use including, but not limited to, locations used for: camps, sporting events, excursions, competitions or other events.

1.16. *School staff*, specifically in a non-government school, refers to an individual working in a school environment who is:

- 1.16.1. directly engaged or employed by a school governing authority
- 1.16.2. a contracted service provider (whether or not a body corporate or any other person is an intermediary) engaged by the school governing authority to perform child-related work.

1.17. *School governing authority* refers to:

- 1.17.1. the proprietor of a school, including a person authorised to act for or on behalf of the proprietor
- 1.17.2. the governing body for a school (however described), as authorised by the proprietor of a school or the Act

- 1.17.3. the principal, as authorised by the proprietor of a school, the school governing body, or Act.
- 1.18. *Student* refers to a person who is enrolled at or attends the school.
- 1.19. *Volunteer* refers to a person who performs work without remuneration or reward for the school.
- 1.20. *Wellbeing* refers to a sense of peace and is directly related to a view of self, in light of a relationship with God and others. Wellbeing must be considered against a background of how a person sees themselves and functions across five domains, including the spiritual, physical, social, cognitive and emotional, recognising the multidimensional nature of wellbeing.
2. **Understanding and Leading Child Safety at SHCS**
- 2.1. SHCS's commitment to caring for and protecting the safety of all children entrusted to our care begins with our belief that every person is created by God, in His own image. This belief means that all people, and particularly children, require our care, respect and protection.
- 2.2. In addition, SHCS is committed to meeting requirements set for the wider community by state and federal governments and agencies.
- 2.3. These commitments are expressed in SHCS's policies, procedures, practices, systems and plans that promote child protection within the school.
3. **Statement of Commitment to Child Safety**
- 3.1. Acknowledging our responsibility to God, we commit ourselves to protecting the safety of those children entrusted to our care as students. We believe that by role modelling our core values we will create and maintain an environment where the safety of children is of the highest priority.
- 3.2. SHCS's values are:
- 3.2.1. Honouring Christ: We place Jesus Christ at the centre of all that we do.
- 3.2.2. Partnering with families: We work in cooperation with parents and guardians.
- 3.2.3. Building community: We seek to ensure everyone knows that they belong.
- 3.2.4. Desiring excellence: We strive to do the very best that we can in all things.
- 3.2.5. Serving others: We develop and celebrate everyone's God-given potential.
4. **Roles and responsibilities**
- 4.1. At SHCS, all Board and staff members, as well as volunteers, have a shared responsibility for contributing to and ensuring the safety and protection of every child.
- 4.2. **Board Directors** are responsible for:
- 4.2.1. ensuring policies and practices are effectively developed and implemented in accordance with [Ministerial Order 1359](#).
- 4.2.2. ensuring that appropriate resources are made available to allow SHCS's *Child Safety and Wellbeing Policy* (and resulting programs) to be effectively implemented within the school.
- 4.2.3. holding the Principal accountable for the effective implementation of the *Child Safety and Wellbeing Policy* and related strategies
- 4.2.4. monitoring the school's compliance with the *Child Safety and Wellbeing Policy*
- 4.2.5. championing and promoting a child safe culture with the broader school community

- 4.2.6. ensuring that child safety is a regular agenda item at school Board meetings
 - 4.2.7. undertaking annual training on child safety
 - 4.2.8. approving updates to, and acting in accordance with the *Child Safety and Wellbeing Policy*
 - 4.2.9. annually reviewing and approving SHCS's *Child Safety Risk Register*.
- 4.3. The **Principal** is responsible for:
- 4.3.1. implementing SHCS's *Child Safety and Wellbeing Policy* (and resulting programs)
 - 4.3.2. championing child protection within the school
 - 4.3.3. informing the school community about this policy, and making it publicly available
 - 4.3.4. ensuring that a strong child safe culture is created and maintained
 - 4.3.5. ensuring stakeholders are regularly consulted on the development of a strong child safe culture
 - 4.3.6. developing and implementing policies and practices in accordance with *Ministerial Order 1359*.
 - 4.3.7. ensuring regular professional learning for staff and volunteers that builds deeper understandings of child safety, cultural safety, student wellbeing and prevention of and responding to abuse.
 - 4.3.8. regularly reviewing SHCS's *Child Safety and Wellbeing Policy* (and resulting programs), and providing recommendations to the Board
 - 4.3.9. annually reviewing SHCS's *Child Safety Risk Register* and reporting this to the Board
 - 4.3.10. modelling, promoting and enabling a child safe culture that facilitates the active participation of students, families and staff in promoting and improving child safety, cultural safety and wellbeing
 - 4.3.11. enabling inclusive practices where the diverse needs of all students are considered
 - 4.3.12. reinforcing high standards of respectful behaviour between students and adults, and between students
 - 4.3.13. promoting open discussion on child safety issues within the school community
 - 4.3.14. creating an environment where child safety complaints and concerns are readily raised and addressed appropriately.
- 4.4. **Child Protection Officers'** names and contact details are communicated to the school community and published on SHCS's website. Child Protection Officers are responsible for:
- 4.4.1. implementing SHCS's *Child Safety and Wellbeing Policy*
 - 4.4.2. championing child protection within the school
 - 4.4.3. being the first point of contact for child protection concerns or complaints within the school and coordinating responses to child protection incidents
 - 4.4.4. ensuring that appropriate action is taken in response to any concerns raised or complaints made

- 4.4.5. ensuring that documentation of concerns and complaints and actions taken is completed and securely stored
- 4.4.6. participating in annual staff training and additional training with respect to child protection issues
- 4.4.7. provision of guidance for other school staff and volunteers when needed
- 4.4.8. provision of support for students involved in concerns or complaints
- 4.5. **Staff members** and **volunteers** are responsible for:
 - 4.5.1. knowing and fulfilling SHCS's *Child Safety and Wellbeing Policy*
 - 4.5.2. knowing and fulfilling their obligations with respect to the reporting of child abuse
 - 4.5.3. knowing and implementing inclusive practices that respond to the diverse needs of students
 - 4.5.4. ensuring students' views are taken seriously and their voices heard
 - 4.5.5. raising any concerns relating to child abuse with a Child Protection Officer
 - 4.5.6. completing child safety and wellbeing induction and training as required
- 4.6. **Contractors** and **Service providers** are responsible for:
 - 4.6.1. contributing to the safety and protection of children they may come in contact with
 - 4.6.2. knowing and fulfilling SHCS's *Child Safety and Wellbeing Policy* as appropriate
 - 4.6.3. knowing and fulfilling their obligations with respect to the reporting of child abuse
- 5. **Proactive Measures to meet Child Safety Standards**
 - 5.1. *Standard 1: Culturally Safe Environments*
 - 5.1.1. At SHCS we want to establish a culturally safe environment in which the diverse and unique identities and experiences of Aboriginal students are respected and valued
 - 5.1.2. We are committed to establishing an inclusive and culturally safe school where the strengths of Aboriginal culture, values and practices are acknowledged and respected. We recognise the link between Aboriginal culture, identity and safety, and invite Aboriginal students and families to have a voice in our school planning and policies.
 - 5.1.3. SHCS is committed to encouraging and actively supporting a student's ability to express their culture and enjoy their cultural rights in the following ways:
 - equip staff, students, volunteers and the school community to acknowledge and appreciate the strengths of Aboriginal culture and understand its importance to the wellbeing and safety of Aboriginal students
 - adopt measures to ensure racism is identified, confronted and addressed
 - address all instances of racism within the school environment with appropriate consequences
 - increase staff professional awareness, training and opportunities for cultural awareness
 - actively support participation and inclusion in the school by Aboriginal students and their families
 - seek appropriate and meaningful means of acknowledging and celebrating Aboriginal culture and contributions within the school community.

ensure school policies, procedures, systems and processes together create a culturally safe and inclusive environment and meet the needs of Aboriginal students and their families

- 5.1.4. We will speak SHCS's *Acknowledgement of Country* at appropriate opportunities.
- 5.1.5. SHCS will engage with the local indigenous community to inform SHCS's understanding, planning and action in this Standard.

5.2. Standard 2: Child safety and wellbeing is embedded in leadership, governance and culture

- 5.2.1. Child safety and wellbeing is embedded in organisational leadership, governance and culture, being a central part of documents, processes and planning at SHCS.
- 5.2.2. SHCS is committed to embedding child safety and wellbeing by:
 - communicating, displaying and regularly reviewing the school's commitment to child safety, including the *Child Safety and Wellbeing Policy*
 - ensure child safety is discussed regularly at Board meetings
 - developing, recording, and implementing risk management actions to make sure children are safe in the school environment
 - monitoring, reviewing and evaluating child safety and wellbeing risks in the school environment
 - ensuring records relevant to child safety and wellbeing are created, maintained and disposed of in accordance with the *Public Record Office Victoria Recordkeeping Standards*. For further information see our *Records Management Policy*
 - ensuring school staff and volunteers understand and abide by their obligations in risk assessment, information sharing and recordkeeping. For further information see our *Privacy Policy*
- 5.2.3. SHCS will communicate to students, families, and staff the *Child Safety and Wellbeing Policy* and the *Child Safety Code of Conduct* annually and display these documents on our website.
- 5.2.4. Other related policies include *Board Conduct and Professional Practices Policy*, *Board Responsibilities Policy*, and *Risk Management Policy*.

5.3. Standard 3: Student empowerment

- 5.3.1. SHCS works to create an inclusive and supportive environment that encourages students to contribute to our child safety approach and understand their responsibilities and their rights in this area of our community. We are committed to students being empowered about their rights, participate in decisions affecting them and are taken seriously.
- 5.3.2. SHCS will:
 - create an inclusive and supportive environment that encourages students and families to contribute to SHCS's child safety approach and understand their responsibilities and rights.
 - reinforce respectful relationships between students and encourage a sense of belonging through strong friendships and peer support. This is particularly articulated through SHCS's *Student Code of Conduct*
 - implement programs that develop skills and confidence to recognise unsafe situations with adults or other students and to speak up and act on concerns relating to themselves or their peers.

inform students about all their rights, including their rights to safety, information and participation

ensure students know who to talk to if they are worried or feeling unsafe and encourage them to share concerns with a trusted adult at any time. See section 6.7 for more information on how students and parents can report concerns or complaints.

educate students in standards of behaviour through class meetings, displays and student meetings.

present age-appropriate educational sessions on the topic of acceptable and unacceptable behaviours, self-protection strategies, healthy and respectful relationships, resilience and child abuse.

train staff members that when gathering information in relation to a complaint about alleged misconduct or abuse of a child, to 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.

- 5.3.3. Other related policies include *Bullying (Student) Policy*, *Cybersafety Policy* and *Student Discipline and Behaviour Policy*.

5.4. Standard 4: Family engagement

- 5.4.1. SHCS is committed to partnering with families in all aspects of the school, including the promotion and monitoring of child safety and wellbeing.

- 5.4.2. All families at SHCS have an important role in monitoring and promoting children's safety and wellbeing, particularly in equipping and enabling children to raise any concerns they may have.

- 5.4.3. To support family engagement at SHCS, we are committed to:

providing families and the community with accessible information about the school's child safe policies and practices and involving them in our approach to child safety and wellbeing

inform families and carers about the school's governance and approach to child safety and wellbeing, including roles and responsibilities of school staff.

consulting with families during the development and review of our child safety policies and practices and encourage them to raise any concerns and ideas for improvement.

encourage families to participate in child safety and wellbeing decisions which affect their child

involving families (as appropriate) in complaints about student harm, alleged misconduct or abuse of any child

- 5.4.4. SHCS will proactively communicate to students, families and staff the *Child Safety & Wellbeing Policy* and the *Child Safety Code of Conduct* annually and display these documents on our website.

- 5.4.5. Other related policies include *Bullying (Student) Policy*, *Enrolment Policy*, *Health & Wellbeing (student) Policy*, *Staff & Student Professional Boundaries Policy*, *Student Discipline & Behaviour Policy*, *Visitors Policy* and *Volunteers Policy*.

5.5. Standard 5: Diversity and equity

- 5.5.1. At SHCS equity is upheld and diverse needs are respected in policy and practice.

- 5.5.2. At SHCS we value the rich diversity of our students and promote respectful environments that are free from discrimination. Our focus is on support and wellbeing for every student.

- 5.5.3. We recognise that every student has unique skills, strengths and experiences to draw on, and particularly commit to individuals and groups in our community with additional and specific needs.
- 5.5.4. SHCS will:
- develop policies, processes and practices that facilitate necessary support and responses to vulnerable students
 - seek to recruit staff and volunteers who are equipped to understand the diverse circumstances of students, and provide support and respond to vulnerable students
 - provide students, staff, volunteers and the school community access to information, support and complaints processes in ways that are culturally safe, accessible and easy to understand
 - seek to understand the particular needs of:
 - students with disability
 - students from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds
 - students who are unable to live at home
 - international students
 - lesbian, gay, bisexual, trans and gender diverse, intersex and queer (LGBTIQ+) students
 - Aboriginal students
 - seek to understand, provide and promote a culturally safe environment for each of these students
 - provide additional resources and supports that uphold the equity and meet the diverse needs of students, families and staff.
- 5.5.5. Related policies include *Bullying (students) Policy*, *Bullying (workplace) Policy*, *Dispute Resolution Policy*, *Equal Opportunity & Respectful Workplace Policy*, *Student Discipline & Behaviour Policy* and *Learning Support Policy*.

5.6. Standard 6: Suitable staff and volunteers

- 5.6.1. SHCS is committed to employing people that are suitable and are supported to reflect the child safety and wellbeing values in practice.
- 5.6.2. Compliance with all applicable child safety legislation, SHCS policy and training requirements is a condition of employment for all staff.
- 5.6.3. SHCS will:
- make sure job advertisements have clear statements about:
 - the job’s requirements, duties and responsibilities regarding child safety and wellbeing
 - the job occupant’s essential or relevant qualifications, experience and attributes in relation to child safety and wellbeing.
 - advise job applicants about the child safety practices of the school, including the *Child Safety Code of Conduct*
 - screen staff applicants:
 - Teaching staff: sight, verify and record the person’s Victorian Institute of Teaching registration
 - Non-teaching staff: sight, verify and record the person’s Working with Children clearance or equivalent background check

- require all staff to maintain WWCC/VIT and Police checks for the duration of employment
- collect and record:
 - proof of the person’s identity and any professional or other qualifications
 - the person’s history of working with children as provided through the application process
 - references that address suitability for the job and working with children.

make volunteers aware of the school’s *Child Safety and Wellbeing Policy* and *Child Safety Code of Conduct*

screen school volunteers:

- sight, verify and record a Working with Children clearance if the person is required to have a clearance in accordance with the Worker Screening Act 2020, or any equivalent background checks
- consider the child safety risks relevant to the volunteer’s role and, if reasonable and appropriate, collect and record proof of identity, qualifications, history of working with children and references that address the person’s suitability for working with children.

provide an induction to Board Directors, staff members, and volunteers engaged in child-connected work regarding child safety and wellbeing, that is appropriate to the nature of the role

ensure that induction addresses the school’s:

- *Child Safety Code of Conduct*
- Where relevant to the role, the *Child Safety and Wellbeing Policy* and the procedures for managing complaints and concerns related to child abuse

make sure that Board Directors, staff members and volunteers engaged in child-connected work, are aware of their responsibilities to:

- children and students
- information sharing and reporting obligations
- record keeping obligations

provide supervision and people management of staff and volunteers that focuses on child safety and wellbeing. All staff:

- participate in ongoing training initiatives that are designed to enhance child safety
- engaged in child-connected work will be supervised appropriately to ensure that staff are working according to child safety standards
- are monitored and assessed to ensure their continuing suitability for child-connected work.

ensure inappropriate behaviour towards students will be managed swiftly and in accordance with school policies and legal obligations.

require volunteers to comply with our *Volunteers Policy* 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.

- 5.6.4. Other related policies include *Health & Wellbeing (student) Policy*, *Staff & Student Professional Boundaries Policy*, *Staff Conduct & Professional Practice Policy*, *Staff Recruitment Policy*, and *Visitors Policy*.

5.7. Standard 7: Processes for complaints and concerns are child-focused

- 5.7.1. SHCS seeks to foster a culture that encourages staff, volunteers, students, parents, and the school community to raise concerns and complaints in an appropriate manner.
- 5.7.2. SHCS has pathways for raising complaints and concerns and responding which are documented in the following policy: *Complaints and Concerns Policy*.
- 5.7.3. SHCS will further develop and review:
- a complaints handling policy which:
- is publicly available and accessible
 - is child-focused
 - is culturally safe and easily understood by the school community
 - has information about the process for making a complaint about the school or any person within the school
 - requires that complaints are taken seriously and responded to promptly and thoroughly.
- procedure for responding to complaints or concerns relating to child abuse that is:
- culturally safe and publicly available and accessible
 - child-focused
 - easily understood by the school community
 - ensures complaints are taken seriously and responded to promptly and thoroughly
 - covers all forms of child abuse
 - sensitive to the characteristics of the school community
 - able to address reporting of complaints and concerns to relevant authorities, whether or not the law requires reporting, and cooperate with law enforcement
 - able to provide details of recordkeeping, reporting, privacy and employment law obligations to be met when responding to complaints and concerns
- 5.7.4. SHCS will communicate to the school community the policies and procedures relating to complaints and concerns of a child safety nature via the school’s website, and make readily accessible to all staff via SharePoint.
- 5.7.5. Roles and responsibilities of mandatory reporters and Child Safety Officers will also be communicated through training and procedures.
- 5.7.6. Other related policies and documents include *Privacy Policy* and *Child Safety Code of Conduct*.

5.8. *Standard 8: Child safety knowledge, skills and awareness*

- 5.8.1. Ongoing training and education are essential to ensuring that SHCS Directors, staff members and volunteers understand their roles and responsibilities and develop their capacity to effectively address child safety and wellbeing matters.
- 5.8.2. The **School Board**, at least annually, will receive appropriate training and guidance about:
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 the school environment; and
the child safety policies, procedures and practices of the school.
- 5.8.3. **SHCS staff** will have a child safety and wellbeing induction and 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 *Child Safety and Wellbeing Policy* of the school
 the *Child Safety Code of Conduct* of the school
 the procedures which apply to complaints and concerns relating to child abuse made by or in relation to a child or student, school staff, volunteers, contractors, service providers, visitors, or other persons while connected to the school environment
 guidance on recognising indicators of child harm including harm caused by other children and students
 guidance on responding effectively to issues of child safety and wellbeing and supporting colleagues who disclose harm
 guidance on how to build culturally safe environments for children and students
 guidance on information sharing and record keeping obligations
 guidance on how to identify and mitigate child safety and wellbeing risks in the school environment without compromising a child or student's right to privacy, access to information, social connections and learning opportunities
 the support available to them to implement the child safety and wellbeing policy of the school that is applicable to their role and responsibilities.

- 5.8.4. **Volunteers**, at least annually, who are engaged in child-related work receive training and information that will equip them with the knowledge, skills and awareness required to keep children and students safe and that is appropriate to the nature and responsibilities of their role. Due consideration will be given to the reasonableness and necessity to include training and information on:

the *Child Safety and Wellbeing Policy* of the school;
 the *Child Safety Code of Conduct* of the school;
 guidance on how to recognise indicators of child harm including harm caused by other children and students;
 guidance on how to respond effectively to issues of child safety and wellbeing and support colleagues who disclose harm;
 guidance on how they can contribute to building culturally safe environments for children and students;
 guidance on any obligations they have relating to information sharing and record keeping;
 and
 guidance on how to identify and manage child safety risks relevant to the role the volunteer will undertake, without compromising a child or student's right to privacy, access to information, social connections and learning opportunities.
 the support available to them to implement the *Child Safety and Wellbeing Policy* of the school that it is applicable to their role and responsibilities.

- 5.8.5. Staff are required to complete the annual Mandatory Reporting training as set out by DET.
- 5.8.6. SHCS will support staff and volunteers to implement the *Child Safety and Wellbeing Policy* and the *Child Safety Code of Conduct* where these policies apply to their role and responsibilities.
- 5.8.7. Email communication will be sent to all relevant staff, volunteers and directors when training is required each year. New staff and volunteers will be expected to complete the training during their induction period.

- 5.8.8. This training is to be conducted by SHCS's Child Safety Officer or delegate and will be available to staff, volunteers and directors.
- 5.8.9. Other related policies and documents include *Board Conduct & Professional Practice Policy, Child Safety & Wellbeing Policy, Professional Development Policy, Staff & Student Professional Boundaries Policy, Staff Recruitment Policy, Visitors Policy and Volunteers Policy.*

5.9. Standard 9: Child Safety in Physical and Online Environments

- 5.9.1. SHCS is committed to ensuring that physical and online environments promote safety and wellbeing while minimising the opportunity for students to be harmed.
- 5.9.2. SHCS will:
 - make sure child safety and wellbeing policies, procedures and practices enable school staff and volunteers to identify and mitigate risks without compromising a student's right to privacy, access to information, social connections and learning opportunities
 - endorse our *Cybersafety Policy* and other related policies that outlines expectations of online conduct
 - implement procurement policies for facilities and services from third parties that ensure the safety of students
 - conduct the annual *Child Safety Risk Register* to identify, manage and record risks related to child abuse in our physical and online school environments, alongside actions in place to manage those risks.
- 5.9.3. SHCS will communicate relevant policies and procedures that relate to providing and maintaining safe environments for students via the school website and/or on SharePoint.
- 5.9.4. At SHCS 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, including for facilities and services we contract through third party providers for student use.
- 5.9.5. SHCS's *Child Safety Risk Register* is used to identify, manage and record risks related to child abuse in our physical and online school environments, alongside actions in place to manage those risks. Risk assessment processes and documents are reviewed annually by the Principal. The findings of this review are reported to the Board annually.
- 5.9.6. In addition, all members of the SHCS community (including staff members, parents, students, volunteers, contractors and service providers) who have any concerns that a child may be subject to abuse are required to contact our Child Protection Officers as soon as possible. It is the responsibility of our Child Protection Officers to coordinate responses to child protection incidents and ensure that appropriate action is taken.
- 5.9.7. Other related policies and documents include *Electronic Communications & Information Technology Policy, Health & Wellbeing (students) Policy, Occupational Health and Safety Policy, Personal Electronic Devices Policy, Social Media Policy, Staff & Student Professional Boundaries Policy, Staff Conduct & Professional Practice Policy, Student Discipline & Behaviour Policy, Student Images Policy, Privacy Policy and Student Internet Use Agreement.*

5.10. Standard 10: Review of Child Safety practices

- 5.10.1. SHCS will ensure that the implementation of the Child Safe Standards is regularly reviewed and improved.

5.10.2. SHCS will:

review and evaluate their *Child Safety and Wellbeing Policy* and other related procedures and practices after any significant child safety incident, or at least every 2 years and improve where applicable

analyse complaints, concerns and safety incidents to identify causes and systemic failures and to inform continuous improvement

conduct the annual Child Safety Risk Assessments which are then approved by the Board Directors

report on the outcomes of relevant reviews to staff, volunteers, the community, families and students as appropriate

5.10.3. The Principal is responsible for reviewing and updating the *Child Safety and Wellbeing Policy*, and making recommendations to the Board as required in compliance with the *Policy Development & Review Policy*.

5.10.4. Regular reviews will include consultation with students, parents/carers, staff, the Board and relevant agencies as appropriate.

5.10.5. Other related policies include *Risk Management Policy*.

5.11. Standard 11: Implementation of child safe practices

5.11.1. SHCS has policies and procedures that document how the school is safe for students.

5.11.2. SHCS will:

implement practices for a child-safe environment

implement policies and procedures that meet all the Child Safe Standards

make sure all relevant school directors, staff and volunteers understand and implement the policies and procedures

champion and model the policies and procedures for a child-safe environment

document their policies and procedures and make them easy to understand

make sure their policies and procedures are updated regularly and informed by best practice models and stakeholder consultation.

6. Other Proactive Measures

6.1. *Child Safety Code of Conduct*

6.1.1. SHCS'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.

6.1.2. 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, documented in our *Student Code of Conduct*.

6.2. *Communications*

6.2.1. SHCS is committed to communicating the school's child safety and wellbeing strategies to the school community through:

ensuring that relevant documents are available on the school website, including the *Child Safety and Wellbeing Policy* (this document) and *Child Safety Code of Conduct*.

displaying relevant age-appropriate posters around the school.

providing updates for parents and guardians through emails and the school newsletter.
ensuring that child safety and wellbeing is a regular agenda item at staff meetings, Executive Leadership meetings, Board meetings, and in volunteer communications.

6.3. *Privacy and information sharing*

- 6.3.1. It is acknowledged that while individuals live in community, it is essential that their privacy and individuality as unique creations is respected. The school is therefore bound by the Australian Privacy Principles from Schedule 1 of the Privacy Amendment (Enhancing Privacy Protection) Act 2012, which amends the Privacy Act 1988, and the Victorian Health Act 2001.
- 6.3.2. The *Privacy Policy* outlines how personal information provided to or collected by the school (whether relating to students, parents/guardians, enrolment applicants, staff members, job applicants, volunteers, contractors or other people) is used, stored and managed, and is designed to enable careful and reasonable handling of personal information while effectively carrying out the school's functions and activities.
- 6.3.3. The **Child Information Sharing Scheme (CISS)** assists professionals and organisations to better perform their roles and responsibilities by expanding the circumstances in which they can share information to promote the wellbeing and safety of children.

The scheme is intended to facilitate services working together to identify needs and risks, promote earlier and more effective intervention and integrated service provision, and improve outcomes for children and families.

Organisations and services prescribed as information sharing entities by the Child Wellbeing and Safety (Information Sharing) Regulations are authorised to share information and request information under the Child Information Sharing Scheme. SHCS is a prescribed information sharing entity.

Organisations and services are prescribed because of their role and expertise within the service sector and because the information they hold may assist other information sharing entities to promote the wellbeing or safety of children. Individual workers are protected from liability if they share information in good faith and with reasonable care.

For more information about CISS refer to [Child Information Sharing Scheme | Victorian Government](#)

For additional information about the Family Violence Information Sharing Scheme refer to: [FVISS Victorian Government](#)

Guidance for Staff

Who is authorised to share information at CISS? Only nominated professionals are authorised to share confidential information under the scheme. These professionals include the Principal, Wellbeing and Learning Support Coordinators.

All requests to share information must also go through the Principal who will ensure that the required thresholds and procedures are met.

What to do if approached for information? Example: A student's psychologist contacts the class teacher directly requesting information. There are requirements that must be met before using the schemes to share information, in this example, the teacher must forward

the request to the Information Sharing Schemes Coordinator, the Principal, who will determine if the requested information can be shared under the scheme.

Does all sharing of information fall under the schemes? No. There is a range of information sharing mechanisms outside the Child Information Sharing Scheme. Organisations and services should share information and collaborate with other services as permitted by law, whether the Child Information Sharing Scheme or another law, such as the Privacy and Data Protection Act, the Health Records Act or the Children, Youth and Families Act. Where secrecy and confidentiality provisions in other laws prohibit the sharing of confidential information, the Child Information Sharing Scheme may be able to override it to promote the wellbeing and safety of a child.

6.4. Records management

6.4.1. SHCS acknowledges that good records management practices are a critical element of child safety and wellbeing and manage our records in accordance with the *Records Management Policy* and in line with the Standards set out by the Public Records Office Victoria. Further details are found in our *Records Management Policy*.

6.4.2. The Royal Commission into Institutional Responses to Child Sexual Abuse (RCIRCSA) Final Report (Recommendation 8.4) recommends that all institutions that engage in child-related work implement the principles set out below. These principles are consistent with Public Records Office Victoria (PROV) Standards and Specifications.

6.4.3. Therefore, SHCS has a responsibility to comply with and implement the following principles for records and recordkeeping, to a level that responds to the risk of child sexual abuse occurring within the school.

6.4.4. **Principle 1:** Creating and keeping full and accurate records relevant to child safety and wellbeing, including child sexual abuse, is in the best interests of children and should be an integral part of institutional leadership, governance and culture.

Institutions that care for or provide services to children must keep the best interests of the child uppermost in all aspects of their conduct, including recordkeeping. It is in the best interest of children that institutions foster a culture in which the creation and management of accurate records are integral parts of the institution's operations and governance.

6.4.5. **Principle 2:** Full and accurate records should be created about all incidents, responses and decisions affecting child safety and wellbeing, including child sexual abuse.

Institutions should ensure that records are created to document any identified incidents of grooming, inappropriate behaviour (including breaches of institutional codes of conduct) or child sexual abuse and all responses to such incidents.

Records created by institutions should be clear, objective and thorough. They should be created at, or as close as possible to, the time the incidents occurred, and clearly show the author (whether individual or institutional) and the date created.

6.4.6. **Principle 3:** Records relevant to child safety and wellbeing, including child sexual abuse, should be maintained appropriately.

Records relevant to child safety and wellbeing, including child sexual abuse, should be maintained in an indexed, logical and secure manner. Associated records should be collocated

or cross-referenced to ensure that people using those records are aware of all relevant information.

- 6.4.7. **Principle 4:** Records relevant to child safety and wellbeing, including child sexual abuse, should only be disposed of in accordance with law or policy.

Records relevant to child safety and wellbeing, including child sexual abuse, must only be destroyed in accordance with records disposal schedules or published institutional policies. Records relevant to child sexual abuse should be subject to minimum retention periods that allow for delayed disclosure of abuse by victims, and take account of limitation periods for civil actions for child sexual abuse.

- 6.4.8. **Principle 5:** Individuals' existing rights to access, amend or annotate records about themselves should be recognised to the fullest extent.

Individuals whose childhoods are documented in institutional records should have a right to access records made about them. Full access should be given unless contrary to law. Specific, not generic, explanations should be provided in any case where a record, or part of a record, is withheld or redacted.

Individuals should be made aware of, and assisted to assert, their existing rights to request that records containing their personal information be amended or annotated, and to seek review or appeal of decisions refusing access, amendment or annotation.

- 6.4.9. To read the full report: [Final report | Royal Commission into Institutional Responses to Child Sexual Abuse](#)

- 6.4.10. Examples of records which could form part of the allegation and investigation record are:

Letters or emails making allegations or in relation to allegations (if this occurs verbally, a record should be made of this).

Incident reports, witness statements.

Records, including notes, of meetings or discussions about the actual or alleged incident.

Investigation records.

Referrals to law enforcement authorities and briefs of evidence supporting cases, including evidence gathered for cases that do not proceed.

Reports received from medical practitioners, health professionals, psychologists, teachers, coaches, social workers, legal officers, counsellors, chaplains and case officers in relation to actual or alleged incidents.

Records documenting support and remedial action i.e. claims, assessments, support, counselling, compensation, redress.

Records of cases or decisions by bodies, tribunals, courts.

Rosters, sign on sheets, personnel records of employees and volunteers, records detailing student work placements.

Enrolment, attendance and absence records of children.

Permission forms from parents and carers.

Surveillance images and footage.

Program flyers, location maps, photographs of the environment.

- 6.4.11. For extended information about SHCS's PROV recordkeeping requirements see: [Creating, Managing and Retaining Records for Current or Future Child Sexual Abuse Allegations](#)

6.5. *Review of child safety practices*

- 6.5.1. SHCS has established processes for the review and ongoing improvement of our child safety policies, procedures, and practices including:

reviewing and refining the *Child Safety and Wellbeing Policy* every 2 years or after any significant child safety incident
analysing all complaints, concerns, and safety incidents to improve policy and practice
acting with transparency and share pertinent learnings and review outcomes with school staff and our school community.

7. Child Safety Reporting General Information

7.1. *Mandatory Reporting*

- 7.1.1. All mandatory reporters must make a report to [Victoria Police](#) or [DFFH Child Protection](#) as soon as practicable if, during the course of carrying out their professional roles and responsibilities, they form a belief on reasonable grounds that:

a child has suffered or is likely to suffer, significant harm as a result of physical abuse or sexual abuse
the child's parents have not protected, or are unlikely to protect, the child from harm of that type.

- 7.1.2. It is a criminal offence not to report in these circumstances.

- 7.1.3. There are certain classes of professionals who are classified as "mandatory reporters". Within a school mandatory reporters include all:

Victorian Institute of Teaching (VIT) registered teachers, including principals
staff who have been granted permission to teach by the VIT
registered doctors and nurses
registered psychologists
school counsellors, which means a person who works (other than on a voluntary basis) to provide direct support to school students, at or directly connected with a school, for mental, emotional or psychological wellbeing
people in religious ministry.

Refer: [Mandatory reporting - DFFH Service Providers](#)

[Child Protection and Child Safe Standards \(PROTECT\)](#)

7.2. *Failure to Protect*

- 7.2.1. The Failure to Protect offence applies where there is a substantial risk that a child under the age of 16 under the care, supervision or authority of a relevant organisation will become a victim of a sexual offence committed by an adult associated with that organisation.

- 7.2.2. A person in a position of authority in the organisation will commit the offence if they know of the risk of abuse and have the power or responsibility to reduce or remove the risk, but negligently fail to do so.

- 7.2.3. This offence encourages organisations to actively manage the risks of sexual offences being committed against children in their care to protect them from harm.

Refer: [Justice- Failure to Protect](#)

7.3. *Failure to Disclose*

- 7.3.1. The failure to disclose offence applies to you if:
- you are an adult, and
 - you have information that leads you to form a 'reasonable belief' that another adult has sexually offended against a child under 16 in Victoria.
- 7.3.2. If this applies to you, you must report the information to police as soon as possible, unless:
- you have a 'reasonable excuse' for not reporting the information, or
 - you are exempt from the offence.
- 7.3.3. If you fail to report the information, you may be charged with a criminal offence. The failure to disclose offence helps to ensure that protecting children from sexual abuse is the responsibility of the whole community.

Refer: [Justice- Failure to Disclose](#)

7.4. *Grooming*

- 7.4.1. Grooming is when a person engages in predatory conduct to prepare a child or young person for sexual activity at a later time. Grooming can include communicating or attempting to befriend or establish a relationship or other emotional connection with the child or their parent or carer. Young people are often 'groomed' before they are sexually abused.

Refer: [Child sexual exploitation and grooming \(education.vic.gov.au\)](http://education.vic.gov.au)

7.5. *Duty of Care to Prevent Child Abuse*

- 7.5.1. The school owes a duty to take care that, in all the circumstances of the case, is reasonable to prevent the abuse of a child by an individual associated with the school while the child is under the care, supervision or authority of the school. Abuse includes sexual and physical abuse.

Refer: [Organisational duty of care to prevent child abuse | Department of Justice](#)

7.6. *Reportable Conduct Scheme*

- 7.6.1. The school is required to notify the Commission for Children and Young People (CCYP) of any allegation of reportable conduct made against a worker or volunteer.
- 7.6.2. There are five types of 'reportable conduct':
- sexual offences committed against, with or in the presence of a child
 - sexual misconduct committed against, with or in the presence of a child
 - physical violence against, with or in the presence of a child
 - any behaviour that causes significant emotional or psychological harm to a child
 - significant neglect of a child.
- 7.6.3. Any staff member, volunteer or contractor who needs clarification as to whether they have a 'reasonable belief' to report or not should speak with a Child Protection Officer.

Refer: [CCYP | About the Reportable Conduct Scheme](#)

7.7. *Historical Sexual Abuse Reports*

- 7.7.1. If a former student is now an adult and makes a claim of historic abuse within the school context, the school must notify the Police. If the former student is still a child, a mandatory report to the Department of Health and Human Services and a reportable conduct allegation to the Commission for Children and Young People must be made. Reporting requirements under the Crimes Act may also apply.

Refer: [Reporting \(historical\) sexual offences and child abuse](#)

7.8. *Student Sexual Offending*

- 7.8.1. Student sexual offending refers to sexual behaviour that is led by a student aged 10 years and over that may amount to a sexual offence. A sexual offence includes rape, sexual assault, indecent acts and other unwanted sexualised touching, all of which are offences under the Crimes Act 1958.

Refer: [Identifying and Responding to Student Sexual Offending](#)

7.9. *Students Under 10*

- 7.9.1. If a staff member, volunteer or visitor is unsure of any form of sexualised behaviour or has protective concerns for a child under the age of 10, they will speak with a Child Protection Officer.

Refer: [Identifying and Responding to Student Sexual Offending \(see Appendix 1\)](#)

8. **Child Safety Responding and Reporting Procedures**

- 8.1. All members of the SHCS community (including staff members, parents, students, volunteers, third party contractors and providers) who have any concerns that a child may be subject to abuse are asked to contact a Child Protection Officer as soon as possible. It is the responsibility of our Child Protection Officers to ensure that appropriate action is taken.
- 8.2. Where an incident, disclosure, allegation or suspicion of child abuse is raised, all staff and volunteers must follow these procedures.
- 8.3. Depending on the type of conduct that occurs, and with the involvement of SHCS's Child Protection Officers, the following authorities must be notified (see further information in Section 10)
- 8.3.1. Victoria Police under the Crimes Act 1958 (Vic) (Crimes Act) if the conduct amounts to a sexual offence or abuse (failure to disclose offence)
- 8.3.2. Child Protection under the Children, Youth and Families Act 2005 if the conduct meets the mandatory reporting criteria.
- 8.3.3. The Victoria Institute of Teaching (VIT) under the Education and Training Reform Act 2006 (Vic) (ETR Act) if the conduct involves a registered teacher (if the teacher misconduct involves a sexual offence, the VIT must be notified immediately)
- 8.3.4. The Commission for Children and Young People (the Commission) under the Child Wellbeing and Safety Act 2005 (Vic) (the CWS Act) if the allegation is against an employee, volunteer, contractor, office holder, minister of religion or officer of a religious body (an initial report is to be made within three days and a further report within 30 days)
- 8.3.5. Note: The online reporting procedure is outlined at this website: [CCYP | Report a concern or allegation](#)
- 8.3.6. The Commission has the power to share information it obtains under the Reportable Conduct Scheme to other organisations, including the Working with Children Check Unit and the Victoria Institute of Teaching.

- 8.4. In all circumstances, allegations of criminal conduct by a worker or volunteer must be reported to the Police as a first priority. Once the Police have been notified and a child is not at risk of harm, the school should then consider its reporting obligations under other legislation.
- 8.5. The school's child safety resources and training provide detailed guidance for Directors, staff members and volunteers regarding how to identify key risk indicators of child abuse and how to report child abuse concerns to one of the nominated Child Protection Officers. It also contains detailed procedures with respect to the reporting of child abuse incidents to relevant authorities.
- 8.6. Third party contractors (service providers), external education providers, volunteers, students, parents/carers or other community members who have concerns that a child may be subject to abuse are asked to contact one of the school's Child Protection Officers, whose responsibility it is to ensure that appropriate action is taken. Communications will be treated confidentially on a need-to-know basis.
- 8.7. Whenever there are concerns that a child is in immediate danger, the police should be called on 000.
- 8.8. Reporting to a Child Protection Officer does not displace or discharge any obligations that arise if a person reasonably believes that a child is at risk of child abuse. If a teacher, volunteer, contractor or other person engaged in child-connected work at SHCS does make a report to an external authority, it is expected that they will also immediately notify a Child Protection Officer that this has been done.
- 8.9. Procedure for responding to allegations of suspected child abuse:
 - 8.9.1. Any person making a disclosure will be told that this is a very serious matter that the school has no choice but to follow up by reporting to a Child Protection Officer
 - 8.9.2. If a student makes a disclosure, it will be referred to a Child Protection Officer
 - 8.9.3. The Child Protection Officer will meet with the student to gather more information and take note of any further risk indicators
 - 8.9.4. The Child Protection Officer will put in place immediate support for the student
 - 8.9.5. The Child Protection Officer will discuss the case with the Principal
 - 8.9.6. The Child Protection Officer will make any report necessary
 - 8.9.7. When making a report, the Child Protection Officer will take instruction from Victoria Police or Child Protection as to whether or not the school should communicate with parents and what the content of any communication should be
 - 8.9.8. When making a report, the Child Protection Officer, in consultation with Child Protection or Victoria Police officers, will decide issues of safety and implement appropriate steps to ensure the safety of the student
 - 8.9.9. Follow up support will be provided to the student as in section 3:10 below
 - 8.9.10. The Child Protection Officer will be present for interviews conducted by Police or Child Protection with the student at school
 - 8.9.11. If the disclosure was public, the Child Protection Officer will meet with other students who witnessed it to ensure appropriate support is in place for them and to brief them about appropriate ongoing behaviours

- 8.9.12. If the disclosure was from an adult third party, the Child Protection Officer will gather details of the person making the disclosure if they are willing to give them, and will follow up and report as appropriate and encourage the disclosing person to also report to the appropriate authorities
- 8.9.13. If the disclosure was from a third party student, the Child Protection Officer will provide them support as below and meet with the student who is the subject of the disclosure as above
- 8.9.14. The school does not provide feedback relating to ongoing action to third party informers
- 8.10. Procedure for responding to a student making or affected by an abuse allegation. The Child Protection Officer making the report, in consultation with the principal, will complete an Individual Safety Plan if appropriate. This will include necessary follow up appointments with health professionals such as:
 - 8.10.1. ongoing support with the school's wellbeing team;
 - 8.10.2. external support through counsellor or psychologist;
 - 8.10.3. referral to a Centre Against Sexual Assault; and
 - 8.10.4. referral to the student's GP.
- 8.11. Documentation is the responsibility of the Child Protection Officer dealing with a particular report, who will:
 - 8.11.1. complete a Child Safety Incident Report that will also be signed by the Principal;
 - 8.11.2. include further supporting notes in the student's case notes file;
 - 8.11.3. file this form with the student's case notes file; and
 - 8.11.4. place a photocopy of this form in a sealed envelope marked "Only to be Opened by Principal", with the envelope to be filed in the confidential section of the Administration student file. Files are securely retained.

9. **Staff Reporting Responsibilities**

9.1. *Victoria Police*

- 9.1.1. Any suspected criminal behaviour should be reported to police. (<https://ccyp.vic.gov.au/resources/reportable-conduct-scheme/reportable-conduct-scheme-information-sheets/#TOC-1> (info sheet 5). Retrieved 10/10/2022)
- 9.1.2. If a reportable allegation involves suspected criminal behaviour, both Victoria Police and the Commission must be notified. (<https://ccyp.vic.gov.au/resources/reportable-conduct-scheme/reportable-conduct-scheme-information-sheets/#TOC-1> (info sheet 5 & 7) Retrieved 10/10/2022)
- 9.1.3. A police investigation into any matter takes priority over a reportable conduct investigation, and may require an organisation's investigation to be put on hold until the police investigation is complete.
- 9.1.4. Heads of organisations should consult with Victoria Police before beginning an investigation to gain their advice and find out if police are, or will be, conducting an investigation.

9.1.5. Failure to Disclose: Any adult who forms a reasonable belief that a sexual offence has been committed by an adult against a child under 16 must report that information to Victoria Police. It is a criminal offence to fail to disclose that information to Victoria Police.

9.1.6. Failure to Protect: If you are a staff member in a position of authority, and you become aware that an adult associated with your organisation (such as a worker or volunteer) poses a risk of sexual abuse to a child who is under the care, authority or supervision of the organisation, you must take all reasonable steps to remove or reduce the risk. If you fail to take reasonable steps in these circumstances, this may amount to a criminal offence.

9.2. *Commission for Children and Young People (CCYP)*

9.2.1. There are five types of 'reportable conduct' listed in the Child Wellbeing and Safety Act 2005: (<https://ccyp.vic.gov.au/resources/reportable-conduct-scheme/reportable-conduct-scheme-information-sheets/#TOC-1> (info sheet 2) Retrieved 10/10/2022)

sexual offences (against, with or in the presence of, a child)
sexual misconduct (against, with or in the presence of, a child)
physical violence (against, with or in the presence of, a child)
behaviour that causes significant emotional or psychological harm
significant neglect.

9.2.2. A reportable allegation can be made about certain workers or volunteers over 18 years of age who are or were: (<https://ccyp.vic.gov.au/resources/reportable-conduct-scheme/reportable-conduct-scheme-information-sheets/#TOC-1> (info sheet 1) Retrieved 10/10/2022)

an employee of an organisation covered by the scheme
a minister of religion, religious leader or officer of a religious body
a foster or kinship carer
a volunteer, contractor, office holder, officer or other position directly engaged by an organisation covered by the scheme to provide services.

9.3. *Victorian Institute of Teaching (VIT)*

9.3.1. Under the Education and Training Reform Act 2006 (Vic), an employer of a registered teacher must notify VIT: (<https://www.vit.vic.edu.au/employers/conductTeacher> conduct and suitability | Victorian Institute of Teaching (vit.vic.edu.au) Retrieved 10/10/2022)

9.3.2. if the employer has taken any action against the registered teacher in response to allegations of serious incompetence of the registered teacher
of serious misconduct of the registered teacher
that the registered teacher is unfit to be a teacher
that the registered teacher's ability to practise as a teacher is seriously detrimentally affected
or likely to be seriously detrimentally affected because of an impairment

9.3.3. of any other actions against the registered teacher that may be relevant to the teacher's fitness to teach, and

9.3.4. if the employer becomes aware that the registered teacher
is currently charged with, or convicted or found guilty of, a Category A offence or a Category B offence, or
has been given a Working with Children (WWC) exclusion (previously known as a negative notice).

9.4. *Children, Youth and Families Act 2005 (CYFA)*

- 9.4.1. Registered medical practitioners, nurses, midwives, registered teachers and early childhood teachers, school principals, school counsellors, police officers, out of home care workers (excluding voluntary foster and kinship carers), early childhood workers, youth justice workers, registered psychologists and people in religious ministry are all 'mandatory reporters'. They must report to Child Protection if they form a reasonable belief that a child is in need of protection from physical injury or sexual abuse. (Mandatory reporting - DFFH Service Providers, Retrieved, 10/10/2022)
- 9.4.2. What am I required to do? In Victoria, under the Children, Youth and Families Act 2005, mandatory reporters must make a report to child protection, if:
- in the course of practising their profession or carrying out duties of their office, position or employment
- they form a belief on reasonable grounds that a child is in need of protection from physical injury or sexual abuse.
- 9.4.3. When do I have to report? Make a report to Child Protection as soon as practicable after forming your belief. Make a report each time you become aware of any further reasonable grounds for your belief. The penalty for failing to make mandatory report is 10 penalty points.
- 9.4.4. If you are worried about a child's wellbeing but do not believe they are in need of protection, consideration with a Child Protection Officer about whether a referral to [The Orange Door](#) would be the most appropriate first step.
- 9.4.5. What is a belief on reasonable grounds? A belief is a belief on reasonable grounds if a reasonable person, doing the same work, would have formed the same belief on those grounds. Grounds for forming a belief are matters of which you have become aware, and any opinions in relation to those matters.
- 9.4.6. When is a child in need of protection? A child may be in need of protection if they have experienced or are at risk of significant harm, and their parents have not protected, or are unlikely to protect them from that harm. Significant harm may relate to:
- physical injury
sexual abuse
emotional or intellectual development
physical development or health
abandonment or parental incapacity.
- 9.4.7. Mandatory reporters are required to report in relation to significant harm as a result of physical injury or sexual abuse. They may choose, as can anyone, to report in relation to other types of significant harm.