

## CHILD SAFETY POLICY

### PURPOSE

Footscray High School's Child Safety Policy sets out the school's commitment and approach to creating and maintaining a child safe organisation where children and young people are safe and feel safe, and provides the policy framework for the school's approach to the Child Safe Standards.

### SCOPE

This policy applies to all staff, volunteers, and contractors in the school environment, whether or not they work in direct contact with children or young people.

The policy will apply to the school environment (see Definitions section). The policy covers both school hours and outside of school hours. This policy applies to all school campuses of Footscray High School.

### DEFINITIONS

#### Child abuse

Child abuse includes:

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

#### Child-connected work

Child-connected work means work authorised by the school governing authority and performed by an adult in a school environment while children are present or reasonably expected to be present.

#### Child safety

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

#### School environment

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

- a campus of the school;
- online school environments (including email and intranet systems); and
- other locations provided by the school for a child's use (including, without limitation, locations used for school camps, sporting events, excursions, competitions, and other events)
- External providers
- Homestay arrangements for International Students

#### School staff

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

- employed by the Department of Education and Training in the government teaching service;
- directly engaged or employed by a school governing authority;
- a volunteer or a contracted service provider (whether or not a body corporate or any other person is an intermediary); or
- A minister of religion.



## STATEMENT OF COMMITMENT TO CHILD SAFETY AND CHILD SAFETY PRINCIPLES

Footscray High School is a result of a merger of two schools; Footscray City College and Gilmore College for Girls. It is a multi-campus College. In 2020 it will consist of a year 7 Campus at Barkly Street and an 8-12 campus at Kinnear Street. In 2022, it will consist of 2 year 7-9 Campuses and one 10-12 campus. Footscray High School has developed close ties to the local community, and enjoys support from our local shops and community services.

Our school is culturally diverse with 25% of families having a language background other than English (LOTE), with the largest LOTE groups being Chinese (Mandarin), Vietnamese and Hindi. The school also has strong representation from the Koorie community. We are proud of our diversity and inclusive school community.

- We strive to provide a nurturing and challenging environment that empowers students to reach their personal best, both academically and socially.
- Footscray High School is committed to child safety.
- We want children to be safe, happy and empowered. We support and respect all children, as well as our staff and volunteers.
- We are committed to the safety, participation and empowerment of all children.
- We have zero tolerance of child abuse, and all allegations and safety concerns will be treated very seriously and consistently with our robust policies and procedures.
- We have legal and moral obligations to contact authorities when we are worried about a child's safety, which we follow rigorously.
- Footscray High School is committed to preventing child abuse and identifying risks early, and removing and reducing these risks.
- Footscray High School has robust human resources and recruitment practices for all staff and volunteers.
- Footscray High School is committed to regularly training and educating our staff and volunteers on child abuse risks.
- We support and respect all children, as well as our staff and volunteers. We are committed to the cultural safety of Aboriginal & Torres Strait Islander children, children from a culturally and/or linguistically diverse backgrounds, the safety of LGBTI (Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender, Queer, or Questioning, and Intersex) children, and the safety of children with a disability and children who are vulnerable due to age, family circumstances, abilities.
- We have specific policies, procedures and training in place that support our leadership team, staff and volunteers to achieve these commitments.
- If you believe a child is at immediate risk of abuse, phone 000.
- The school's approach to creating and maintaining a child safe school environment is guided by our school philosophy and values of unity, respect, creativity and endeavors.
- Every person involved in Footscray High School has a responsibility to understand the important and specific role they play individually and collectively to ensure that the wellbeing and safety of all children and young people is at the forefront of all they do and every decision they make.



## CHILD SAFETY PRINCIPLES

In its planning, decision-making and operations Footscray High School 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 organizations' where the safety and wellbeing of children is at risk; and
10. Value the input of and communicate regularly with families and carers
11. Work with external education providers to ensure students are protected in all school environment.
12. Support all international students at Footscray High School to feel safe and protected in all environment.

## POLICY

### A child safe culture

Footscray High School's culture encourages staff, students, parents and the school community to raise, discuss and scrutinise child safety concerns. This makes it more difficult for abuse to occur and remain hidden.

All child safety documents, including this policy, the Child Safety Code of Conduct, the school's Child Safety Reporting Obligations Policy and Procedures, *Identifying and Responding to All Forms of Abuse in Victorian Schools* and the *Four Critical Actions for Schools* are readily available online and in hard copy in both campuses and on the Schools website for all staff and students to read at any time.

The School has resources in Basic English to support student's international students and English as an Additional Language students to understand the schools obligations, these are available with the international student coordinator, the child safety officers and the student health and wellbeing team at each campus.

Child safety is everyone's responsibility.

### All school staff are required to:

- Act in accordance with the school's Child Safety Code of Conduct, which clearly sets out the difference between appropriate and inappropriate behaviour
- Act in accordance with the Child Safety Reporting Obligations Policy and Procedures at all times, including following the *Four Critical Actions for Schools* where necessary
- Act in accordance with their legal obligations, including:
  - Failure to disclose offence (applies to all adults)
  - Duty of care (applies to all school staff)
  - Mandatory reporting obligations (applies to all mandatory reporters, including teachers, principals, registered psychologists, and registered doctors and nurses)
  - Failure to protect offence (applies to a person in a position of authority within the school)
  - Reportable conduct obligations (applies to school leadership roles)



- Organisational duty of care (applies to the school as an organisation)
- For more information on these obligations, see [https://www.education.vic.gov.au/Documents/about/programs/health/protect/ChildSafeStandard5\\_SchoolsGuide.pdf](https://www.education.vic.gov.au/Documents/about/programs/health/protect/ChildSafeStandard5_SchoolsGuide.pdf).

As part of Footscray High School's child safe culture, **the transition work** will:

- Support for Students transitioning campus of Footscray High School, including induction, orientation programs, careers and pathways support, and allocated support staff for students with special needs and wellbeing referrals transferred.
- Support for Year 7 cohort include a transition program including information sessions, orientation day, coordinating transition of strategies from primary school.
- Support for Year 9 transition to the Senior Kinnear Campus, including information sessions, orientation day, events and transition of strategies from junior school to senior school
- Support for students learning with external providers, including Child Safe Standards and Workplace Learning Fact Sheet included in the Employer Pack.
- Supports for international students including, provide a tailored orientation and transition programs for all international students, homestay supports and welfare checks, Access to translation and interpretive services as required.

As part of Footscray High School's child safe culture, **school leadership** will:

- Ensure that child safety is a regular agenda item at school council meetings and staff meetings
- Encourage and enable staff professional learning and training to build deeper understandings of child safety and prevention of abuse
- Ensure that no one is prohibited or discouraged from reporting an allegation of child abuse to a person external to the school or from making records of any allegation.

As part of Footscray High School's child safe culture, **school mandatory reporting staff** are required to:

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

School leadership will maintain records of the above processes.

### **ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES**

School leaders and managers will ensure that each person understands their role, responsibilities and behaviour expected in protecting children and young people from abuse and neglect. Staff will comply with the school's Child Safety Code of Conduct, which sets out clearly the difference between appropriate and inappropriate behaviour.

Each school Campus of Footscray High School will have a child safety officer. Please see the role outline.



Specific child safety responsibilities:

- Child Safety Officer is responsible for reviewing and updating the Child Safety Policy every 3 years.
- Child Safety Officer is responsible for monitoring the school's compliance with the Child Safety Policy. The school community should approach this person if they have any ongoing concerns
- Child Safety Officer is responsible for informing the school community about this policy, and making it publicly available.
- International Student Coordinator is responsible for monitoring the homestay and international student wellbeing.
- Other specific roles and responsibilities are named in Footscray High School's other child safety policies and procedures, including the Child Safety Code of Conduct, Child Safety Reporting Obligations Policy and Procedures, and risk assessment register.

### RECRUITMENT

Footscray High School follows the Department's Recruitment in Schools guide to ensure child safe recruitment practices, available on the Department's website at the following link:

<https://www.education.vic.gov.au/hrweb/careers/Pages/recruitinsch.aspx>

All prospective volunteers are required to comply with our school's Volunteers Policy, including in relation to obtaining checks required under this policy. All prospective volunteers are required to abide by the volunteer requirements outlined in the volunteer policy.

### TRAINING AND SUPERVISION

Training and education is important to ensure that everyone in the school understands that child safety is everyone's responsibility.

Our school culture aims for all staff and volunteers (in addition to parents/carers and children) to feel confident and comfortable in coming forward with 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. This training occurs annually or more often as required.

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

New employees and volunteers will be inducted into the school and supervised regularly to ensure they understand our school's commitment to child safety, and that their behaviour towards children is safe and appropriate. All employees of our school will be monitored and assessed via regular performance review to ensure their continuing suitability for child-connected work. Any inappropriate behaviour will be reported to the Principal or Assistant Principal and will be managed in accordance with Footscray High School's Child Safety Responding and Reporting Policy and Procedures where required.

As part of the transition to the new school environment the following strategies have been developed to support staff training, induction and supervision:

- WWCC or Victorian Institute of Teaching registration register review
- Recruitment practices to follow the DET recruitment in schools guide
- Homestay engagement guidelines and processes.
- Strategies developed to embed culture of child safety
- Footscray High School Performance management process
- Footscray High School professional learning teams
- Footscray High School coaching program
- Staff induction training to be held in Term 4 and January 2020.
- Staff roles in new school moved and integrated with new staff.



- Code of conduct and behaviour expectations to be embedded through staff meetings/ leadership meetings throughout the year.
- All staff to undertake the eLearning mandatory reporting module.

### REPORTING A CHILD SAFETY CONCERN OR COMPLAINT

The school has clear expectations for all staff and volunteers in making a report about a child or young person who may be in need of protection. All staff must follow the school's Child Safety Responding and Reporting Obligations Policy and Procedures, including following the Four Critical Actions for Schools if there is an incident, disclosure or suspicion of child abuse. Immediate actions should include reporting their concerns to DHHS Child Protection/Victoria Police or another appropriate agency and notifying the principal or a member of the school leadership team of their concerns and the reasons for those concerns.

Footscray High School will never prohibit or discourage school staff from reporting an allegation of child abuse. The school will always take action to respond to a complaint in accordance with the school's Child Safety Responding and Reporting Obligations Policy and Procedures. In accordance with Action 4 of the Four Critical Actions for Schools, Footscray High School will provide ongoing support for students affected by child abuse.

The Child Safety Responding and Reporting Obligations Policy and Procedures can be found on the schools website.

### RISK REDUCTION AND MANAGEMENT

Footscray High School believes the wellbeing of children and young people is paramount, and is vigilant in ensuring proper risk management processes, found in the risk assessment register. The school recognises there are potential risks to children and young people and will take a risk management approach by undertaking preventative measures.

We will identify and mitigate the risks of child abuse in school environments by taking into account the nature of each school environment, the activities expected to be conducted in that environment and the characteristics and needs of all children expected to be present in that environment.

Footscray High School will ensure that it keeps, reviews and continually updates a risk assessment register, including the actions the school will take to reduce or remove the identified risks.

Footscray High School risk register reflects the unique environment of the school and acknowledges the following risk are of key focus

- Transition arrangements for students onto new campuses / new school communities.
- Students Bullying and Harassment in new school environment
- No Organisational culture of child safety – lack of leadership, public commitment and frequent messaging
- Students learning with external providers
- International students including the homestay and WWC check requirements.



### **LISTENING TO, COMMUNICATING WITH, AND EMPOWERING CHILDREN**

Footscray High School has developed a safe, inclusive and supportive environment that involves and communicates with children, young people and their parents/carers. We encourage child and parent/carer involvement and engagement that informs safe school operations and builds the capability of children and parents/carers to understand their rights and their responsibilities. Our school is committed to supporting and encouraging students to use their voice to raise and share their concerns with a trusted adult at any time of need.

Students can access information on how to report abuse at the schools Compass portal, with the Wellbeing team, Campus Child Safety Officer, international Student Coordinator, school reception. When the school is gathering information in relation to a complaint about alleged misconduct with or abuse of a child, the school will listen to the complainant's account of things and take them seriously, check understanding and keep the child (or their parents/carers, where appropriate) informed about progress.

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

- All of our child safety policies and procedures will be available for the students at Footscray High School to read
- PROTECT Child Safety posters will be displayed across the school
- School newsletters will inform students and the school community about the school's commitment to child safety, and strategies or initiatives that the school is taking to ensure student safety
- Students transition to Year 7 and between campuses or schools, child safe information included in induction, orientation programs and allocated support staff for students with special needs and wellbeing referrals transferred.
- Students undertaking learning with an external provider, given child safe information and resources by the Workplace learning Community pre-placement checklist discussion with students
- International Students
  - Child Safe Standards materials will be provided during orientation and pre-arrival, and on a regular basis while at the school.
  - Provide and explain international students with the Easy English Protect Factsheet to identify reportable conduct and how to report it.
  - Regular communication with students to obtain feedback on homestay environment
- The whole school is encouraged to contribute to risk assessment and mitigation, the Child Safe Standards are addressed and explained at assemblies or parent information sessions.

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

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

Through the critical and creative thinking and the personal and social capability curriculum Footscray High School will deliver the respectful, rights and resilience program and STRIDE peer support programs to ensure all students develop skills to communicate effectively, negotiate and resolve conflict and become confident, resilient and adaptable.



### Communications

This school is committed to communicating our child safety strategies to the school community through:

- Ensuring that the Child Safety Policy (this document), Code of Conduct, and the Child Safety Responding and Reporting Obligations Policy and Procedure are available on the school website and via the compass portal.
- Ensuring that child safety is a regular agenda item at school council meetings and staff meetings for discussion.
- Homestay providers will be provided with all Child Safe policies and expectations and procedures for reporting any abuse are discussed with homestay hosts as part of the induction process. Discussion at all house visits.
- External providers communication includes
  - All contracts with external providers to follow Department guidelines.
  - The Footscray High School Child safe Policy statement to be included in the Employer Pack.
  - Child Safe Standards and Workplace Learning Fact Sheet included in the Employer Pack.
  - Child Safe environment specific questions included into the Student Pre Placement Checklist.
  - All partners involved in the SBAT development and sign up process are provided with the FHS Child safe Policy statement.
  - Updated DET forms for Workplace Learning Arrangement Forms and Travel Forms are used, which include reference to Child Safe Standards.

### CONFIDENTIALITY AND PRIVACY

This school collects, uses and discloses information about particular children and their families in accordance with Victorian privacy law. The principles regulating the collection, use and storage of information is included in the Department of Education and Training's Schools' Privacy Policy available at the following link: <https://www.education.vic.gov.au/Pages/schoolsprivacypolicy.aspx>

### RELATED POLICIES AND DOCUMENTS

Related policies and documents include:

- Code of Conduct
- Child Safety Officer Roles and responsibilities.
- Child Safety Responding and Reporting Obligations Policy and Procedures
- Risk assessment register
- Identifying and Responding to All Forms of Abuse in Victorian Schools
- Four Critical Actions for Schools
- Recording your actions: Responding to suspected child abuse – A template for Victorian schools
- Identifying and Responding to Student Sexual Offending
- Four Critical Actions for Schools: Responding to Student Sexual Offending
- School Policy and Advisory Guide – Duty of Care
- School Policy and Advisory Guide – Child Protection Reporting Obligations.

### POLICY EVALUATION AND REVIEW

To ensure ongoing relevance and continuous improvement, this policy will be reviewed every 3 years.