



## CHILD SAFETY POLICY

### Statement of Commitment to Child Safety

Darul Ulum College is committed to promoting the wellbeing of students and protecting them from abuse by fostering and creating environments where children feel safe and welcomed.

We promote the virtue of maintaining respectful relationships between students and their peers and between students and adults. This is reinforced when all parties are informed of their rights and equally conscious of their duties and obligations towards others.

We have no tolerance of child abuse or discrimination and are committed to apply measures to identify and manage risks of harm to our students in the school environment.

Students are informed about the various means available for them to voice their concerns and when a concern is raised, it is taken seriously and responded to accordingly.

Promotion of student wellbeing and protecting children from harm is a shared responsibility between the community and staff of the school as all children have a right to feel safe and protected from all forms of abuse and is inherent to our faith and tradition. All members of the school community, including staff, parents, guardians, volunteers, students on placements and contractors share a legal and moral responsibility to protect children from abuse and to respond to incidents involving the abuse and/or neglect of children.

This policy must be read in conjunction with the Complaints Management and Procedures Policy, Code of Conduct for Staff and Others Who Interact with Students, Child Safety Risk Management Policy, Critical Incident Policy, Duty of Care Policy, Protecting Children: Mandatory Reporting of Child Abuse Policy, Staff Guidelines for Safe and Responsible Use of Web Tools and Electronic Publishing and Virtual Classes Staff Code of Conduct Policy.

In line with the College's vision which promotes a child safe school environment, these policies demonstrate our commitment to creating and maintaining a child safe school.

This policy provides an overview of our school's approach in implementing **Ministerial Order No 1359 - Implementing the Child Safety Standards - Managing the risk of child abuse in schools and school boarding premises** which details out how the Victorian Child Safe Standards apply in school environments.

In summary, the new Victorian Child Safe Standards are:

**Child Safe Standard 1:** Organisations establish a culturally safe environment in which the diverse and unique identities and experiences of Aboriginal children and young people are respected and valued.

**Child Safe Standard 2:** Child safety and wellbeing is embedded in organisational leadership, governance and culture.

**Child Safe Standard 3:** Children and young people are empowered about their rights, participate in decisions affecting them and are taken seriously.

**Child Safe Standard 4:** Families and communities are informed and involved in promoting child safety and wellbeing.

**Child Safe Standard 5:** Equity is upheld and diverse needs respected in policy and practice.

**Child Safe Standard 6:** People working with children and young people are suitable and supported to reflect child safety and wellbeing values in practice.

**Child Safe Standard 7:** Processes for complaints and concerns are child focused.

**Child Safe Standard 8:** Staff and volunteers are equipped with the knowledge, skills and awareness to keep children and young people safe through ongoing education and training.

**Child Safe Standard 9:** Physical and online environments promote safety and wellbeing while minimising the opportunity for children and young people to be harmed.

**Child Safe Standard 10:** Implementation of the Child Safe Standards is regularly reviewed and improved.

**Child Safe Standard 11:** Policies and procedures document how the organisation is safe for children and young people.

## **Roles and Responsibilities**

### **Board of Directors**

Consistent with school's Risk Management Matrix and child safe policies, members of the Board of Directors will:

- ensure that child safe standards and student wellbeing will be one of the core agenda items discussed in the Board's Annual General Meeting and meetings of the Management Committee as deemed necessary;
- undertake annual training on child safety matters and student wellbeing at the school;
- review the school's Child Safe Matrix annually at a minimum or as deemed necessary to identify and mitigate child safety and wellbeing risks based on the feedback provided by the Secretary to the Board / Executive Principal and/or Principal;
- ensure sufficient resource are in place to facilitate the effective implementation of child safe policies;
- promote and champion a child safe culture within the school (where applicable) and with the broader school community;
- approve relevant updates to all child safe policies, including the Code of Conduct for Staff and Others who Interact with Students; and
- ensure all recruitment procedures and processes are consistent with child safe measures and policies.

### **School Leadership Team**

Our senior leadership staff comprising of the Executive Principal, Principal, Heads of School (where applicable) and members of the Policy Committee, are responsible to develop and update all policies pertaining to child safety, and to ensure complete implementation of policies is maintained and reviewed in accordance with Ministerial Order 1359.

The Executive Principal, Principal and Heads of School are responsible to ensure that the Child Safety Policy, including the mandatory reporting requirements and Code of Conduct for Staff and Others who Interact with Students are effectively implemented in the school and that adequate response to a disclosure of suspected child abuse takes place in a timely manner as per the procedures outlined in the Protecting Children: Mandatory Reporting of Child Abuse Policy.

To achieve the above outcome, the leadership team will:

- develop, update and review child safe policies and practices as deemed necessary;
- monitor the implementation of policies and procedures and address any shortcomings in a timely manner;
- be positive role models by facilitating and promoting participation of all stake holders and by ensuring the diverse needs of students are attended to;
- conduct or facilitate termly professional learning opportunities for staff to keep abreast with child safe and wellbeing policies and ensure staff are not discouraged from reporting an allegation of child abuse to relevant authorities;

- address child safe issues and topics with the broader community during the annual parent information sessions;
- facilitate the publication of child safe policies to the school's website;
- facilitate appropriate strategies and platforms that promote student empowerment and participation;
- facilitate for child safe topics to be included in the school's newsletter on a regular basis;
- facilitate for the delivery of child safe topics / policies and respectful relationships during student orientation sessions;
- display child safety posters and material in prominent locations around the school and in age-appropriate language; and
- facilitate the means and resources for students to raise any concerns, complaints and/or suggestions in a student friendly / age-appropriate manner.

### **School Staff and Volunteers**

Our staff members and volunteers are expected to be proactive in ensuring child safety requirements are met by:

- adhering to the Code of Conduct for Staff and Others who Interact with Students, with special consideration given to the section titled Relationship with Students, along in addition to other child safe school policies;
- attending regular professional development sessions and training to gain a better understanding of the child safe requirements and policies; and learning about how to identify signs / symptoms of abuse, the key risk indicators of abuse and how to raise concerns with the senior leadership team as per the Protecting Children: Mandatory Reporting of Child Abuse Policy; and
- by following the Four Critical Actions for Schools.

### **Child Safety Risk Management**

In accordance with our school's Child Safety Risk Management Policy, we attempt to identify and manage child safety in our physical and online environments. This includes identifying and managing risks in the school, during excursions, incursions, camps and the online environment.

This process is managed through our Child Safety Risk Management Matrix which identifies the risk causes and consequences, existing controls, current risk assessment with current controls and actions to be taken for risks requiring further treatment. The senior leadership team comprising of the Executive Principal, Principal and Heads of School are responsible for reviewing the Child Safety Risk Management Matrix at least once annually and will update the risk management strategies as deemed necessary.

## **Creating a Culturally Safe Environment**

Consistent with our school's Vision Statement, we are committed to creating a culturally safe environment in which all students, and particularly students of an Aboriginal background feel safe, respected and valued.

In acknowledging the importance of being acquainted with the Aboriginal culture, our annual staff induction programs will address this topic to create awareness and appreciation towards the Aboriginal culture and its relevance to the safety of Aboriginal children and young people. Students will also be educated about the Aboriginal culture through the designed curriculum to appreciate their strengths and wellbeing.

The school will create opportunities for First Nations Australian students and their families by encouraging their participation in the school and enabling them to voice their opinions.

As a school comprising of students who come from a wide range of cultural backgrounds, we celebrate our cultural diversity by training students and staff about the importance of respecting one another and appreciating our cultural differences. This is reinforced by the many sacred texts and traditions that establish this concept.

The school has zero tolerance towards any form of racism. This is stipulated in the Code of Conduct for Staff and Others who Interact with Students, the Code of Conduct for Students, the Student Behaviour Management Policy and the Bullying Prevention Policy.

Our Student Behaviour Management Policy is based on four primary domains:

1. Fostering and Cultivating Ethical and Positive Behaviours and Relationships
2. Identification of Unacceptable Behaviours
3. Measures and Strategies for Restorative Practices
4. Consequences and Subsequent Responsive Measures

The school also adopts a three- phase approach to bullying which includes primary prevention, , intervention and post intervention. Consequences for inappropriate behaviour will be issued as per the guidelines stipulated in the Student Behaviour Management Policy and as deemed appropriate by the Discipline Committee.

## **Empowerment of Students**

As a college, we recognise the importance of gauging students' interests and parental involvement during the students' educational journey at the school. To create a sense of belongingness and to promote student wellbeing, we create opportunities for students and their parents to participate and contribute to our school's child safety measures and practices.

This is achieved by:

- training staff on themes and concepts pertaining to respectful relationships and restorative practices;
- encouraging students to establish friendships with each other and facilitating this by expecting teachers and year level coordinators to identify and intervene when a student is often observed on their own;
- establishing a Student Representative Council as a body to voice students' concerns and suggestions;
- encouraging students to provide suggestions to relevant school personnel in-person or by using the Suggestion Boxes;
- seeking students' feedback on child safety through school surveys;
- educating students about their rights and responsibilities that are outlined in the Student Code of Conduct;
- educating students on how to report any concerns through student orientation sessions and through posters displayed in prominent locations across the school;
- senior leadership and staff are trained to prioritise attending to cases related to child safety; and
- senior leadership holds student forums to listen to their concerns or suggestions periodically and/or on a need basis.

### **Family Engagement**

Our school recognises the importance of parental engagement and affirms that families partner in the shared privilege and responsibility for children and young people's faith formation, learning, safety and wellbeing.

This is achieved by:

- creating opportunities to ensure that members of the school community are adequately informed about the school's operations and governance relating to child safety and wellbeing;
- publishing our child safe policies on the school's website;
- providing parents the option of seeking translated policies if and when required;
- addressing child safe policies in parent information sessions;
- alerting parents of any updates to child safe policies through the school's newsletter;
- seeking parents' feedback and input on child safety through school surveys;
- informing parents on how to raise concerns or report abuse in reference to the child safe policies available on our website, or by attending the school in person, by seeking a meeting with senior leadership or by emailing [info@dulum.vic.edu.au](mailto:info@dulum.vic.edu.au)

### **Diversity and Equity**

As a school, we are committed to ensuring that equity is upheld and that students are not discriminated against.

Our Code of Conduct for Staff and Others who Interact with Students stipulates the requirement of knowing our learners and how they learn, respect individual differences and cater for individual abilities.

There is no tolerance for any form of labelling of children or use of discrimination or acts of prejudice based on colour, origin, background, ethnicity, gender, appearance or disability.

This implies paying due attention and care to the needs of all students, especially students identified as being vulnerable or requiring additional needs.

This is achieved by ensuring we communicate that discrimination and bullying are not tolerated – if incidents of bullying or discrimination occur, the incident will be addressed in line with school's Code of Conduct for Staff and Others who Interact with Student and the Student Behaviour Management Policy.

While all staff are required to cater for vulnerable students, members of the school's Student Wellbeing Department will frequently check in with vulnerable students and their families to confirm their needs are being met. Students who are at risk of social isolation will be offered buddying and/or mentoring by nominated students.

### **Recruitment: Suitable Staff and Volunteers**

Our recruitment process is underpinned by practices and protocols that ensure utmost importance and attention is given to child safety.

This process includes seeking the applicant's Working with Children clearance, or the Victorian Institute of teaching registration.

Thereafter, we collect and record the following:

- proof of applicant's identity;
- proof of professional qualifications; and
- references that confirm the applicant's suitability to the role

All records are retained by the HR Department in a secure location.

### **Staff Induction**

Successful applicants are required to attend the Staff Induction Program to acquaint themselves with school policies and expectations.

The focal points of the Staff Induction Program include the following:

- Code of Conduct for Staff and Others who Interact with Students;
- Staff Guidelines for Safe and Responsible Use of Web Tools and Electronic Publishing;
- Child Safety Policy;
- Protecting Children: Mandatory Reporting of Child Abuse Policy;
- overview of the Student Behaviour Management Policy;
- Duty of Care Policy;
- Critical Incident Policy;

- Teacher Duties and Responsibilities Policy; and
- other pertinent policies as deemed appropriate by management.

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

Newly appointed staff will be assigned a mentor for a period of one school year to guide them with pertinent policies school expectations, with particular attention give to child safety.

The leadership team will closely monitor the performance of staff in relation to child safety matters and will intervene in a timely manner if any concern is raised or observed in this regard. The consequence will be determined in accordance with the nature of the breach by the Executive Principal.

Performance Reviews will be initiated by the relevant Heads of School and/or Principal as deemed appropriate or necessary.

### **Complaints Processes**

All individuals associated with the school, including Board of Directors, staff, parents, students and the school community are frequently reminded and encouraged about the importance of raising a concern or a complaint and the consequences of failing to report. Reporters are assured that no adverse action will be held against them in any way or form and are informed about the consequences of failing to report cases of child abuse.

Students are educated about the processes to raise a concern or lodge a complaint during the annual student orientation sessions, the posters displayed in prominent locations across the school with visuals and age-appropriate language, the ongoing reminders during morning assemblies and the periodical reminders delivered in class by the form teachers.

Staff, parents, volunteers and the community are informed about and required to follow the procedures outlined in the Protecting Children: Mandatory Reporting of Child Abuse Policy. All school staff have been informed about the course of action to be taken upon receiving any immediate concerns pertaining to the safety of children and the school will implement the Four Critical Actions for complaints and concerns relating to adult behaviour towards a child and the Four Critical Actions: Student Sexual Offending for complaints and concerns relating to sexual offending.

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

In order to build a deeper understanding of the child safe policies and expectations, the Board of Directors, all staff, including non-teaching staff, will at least attend an annual training session which addresses the roles and responsibilities of all personnel associated with the school in relation to child safety and their legal obligations in accordance with the Child Safe Standards and Ministerial Order No. 1359.



The Board of Directors 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.

Staff and all individuals engaged with child-connected work will receive annual training and guidance on child safety that includes:

- the Child Safety and Wellbeing Policy;
- the Code of Conduct for Staff and Others who Interact with Children;
- the school's procedures for responding to complaints and concerns relating to child abuse;
- recognising indicators of child harm including harm caused by other children, students, or adults (including family violence);
- responding effectively to issues of child safety and wellbeing and supporting colleagues who disclose harm;
- building culturally safe environments;
- information sharing and recordkeeping processes and obligations; and
- how to identify and mitigate child safety and wellbeing risks in physical and online environments without compromising a child or student's right to privacy, access to information, social connections and learning opportunities.

To eliminate any ambiguity of obligations with respect to child safety, the Board of Directors, all staff, including volunteers, casual staff and student teachers will be required to read and sign the Code of Conduct for Staff and Others who Interact with Students annually. This will usually take place in the beginning of term one or upon employment of new staff members or placement of a student.

### **Review of Child Safety Practices**

The school has processes in place to ensure child safety policies are drafted, reviewed, and endorsed by the governing authority.

The school's Policy Committee will:

- review and evaluate child safe policies every two years, unless an earlier review is required, based on relevant input received from staff, students and families;
- initiate a review of child safety and wellbeing policies and practices subsequent to any child safety incident and improvements are put in place where applicable;
- analyse complaints and safety incidents to better inform policy and practice; and
- share relevant findings of analysed incidents and review outcomes with staff, students and the school's community.

Note: If you require this policy in a language other than English, please contact the school reception.

<b>Date of Review</b>	<b>Next Review</b>
Term 2, 2024	Term 2, 2026
<b>Executive Principal's Endorsement:</b> 	