

Child Safety Policy Suite

Application of the Child Safe Standards



Help for non-English speakers

If you need help to understand this policy, contact croydon.hills.ps@education.vic.gov.au

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Child Safety Policy



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Purpose

The Croydon Hills Primary School Child Safety Policy demonstrates our school's commitment to creating and maintaining a child safe and child-friendly organisation, where children and young people are safe and feel safe.

This policy provides an overview of our school's approach to implementing [Ministerial Order 1359](#) (PDF, 363KB) which sets out how the Victorian Child Safe Standards apply in school environments.

It informs our school community of everyone's obligations to act safely and appropriately towards children and guides our processes and practices for the safety and wellbeing of students across all areas of our work.

Scope

This policy:

- applies to all school staff, volunteers and contractors whether or not they work in direct contact with students. It also applies to school council members where indicated.
- applies in all physical and online school environments used by students during or outside of school hours, including other locations provided by for a student's use (for example, a school camp) and those provided through third-party providers
- should be read together with our other child safety and wellbeing policies, procedures, and codes – refer to the related school policies section below.

Definitions

The following terms in this policy have [specific definitions](#):

- child
- child safety
- child abuse
- child-connected work
- child-related work
- school environment
- school boarding environment
- school staff
- school boarding premises staff
- school governing authority
- school boarding premises governing authority
- student
- volunteer.

Statement of commitment to child safety

Croydon Hills Primary School is a child safe organisation which welcomes all children, young people and their families.

We are committed to providing environments where our students are safe and feel safe, where their participation is valued, their views respected, and their voices are heard about decisions that affect their lives. Our child safe policies, strategies and practices are inclusive of the needs of all children and students.

We have no tolerance for child abuse and take proactive steps to identify and manage any risks of harm to students in our school environments.

We promote positive relationships between students and adults and between students and their peers. These relationships are based on trust and respect.

We take proactive steps to identify and manage any risk of harm to students in our school environment. When child safety concerns are raised or identified, we treat these seriously and respond promptly and thoroughly.

Particular attention is given to the child safety needs of Aboriginal students, those from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds, international students, students with disabilities, those unable to live at home, children and young people who identify as lesbian, gay, bisexual, trans and gender diverse, intersex and queer (LGBTIQ+) and other students experiencing risk or vulnerability. Inappropriate or harmful behaviour targeting students based on these or other characteristics, such as racism or homophobia, are not tolerated at our school, and any instances identified will be addressed with appropriate consequences.

Child safety is a shared responsibility. Every person involved in our school has an important role in promoting child safety and wellbeing and promptly raising any issues or concerns about a child's safety.

We are committed to regularly reviewing our child safe practices, and seeking input from our students, families, staff, and volunteers to inform our ongoing strategies.

Roles and responsibilities

School leadership team

Our school leadership team (comprising the principal, assistant principals, and wellbeing officer) is responsible for ensuring that a strong child safe culture is created and maintained, and that policies and practices are effectively developed and implemented in accordance with Ministerial Order 1359.

Principals and assistant principals will:

- ensure effective child safety and wellbeing governance, policies, procedures, codes and practices are in place and followed
- model a child safe culture that facilitates the active participation of students, families and staff in promoting and improving child safety, cultural safety and wellbeing
- enable inclusive practices where the diverse needs of all students are considered
- reinforce high standards of respectful behaviour between students and adults, and between students

- promote regular open discussion on child safety issues within the school community including at leadership team meetings, staff meetings and school council meetings
- facilitate regular professional learning for staff and volunteers (where appropriate) to build deeper understandings of child safety, cultural safety, student wellbeing and prevention of responding to abuse
- create an environment where child safety complaints and concerns are readily raised, and no one is discouraged from reporting an allegation of child abuse to relevant authorities.

School staff and volunteers

All staff and volunteers will:

- participate in child safety and wellbeing induction and training provided by the school or the Department of Education and Training, and always follow the school's child safety and wellbeing policies and procedures
- act in accordance with our Child Safety Code of Conduct (p13)
- identify and raise concerns about child safety issues in accordance with our Child Safety Responding and Reporting Obligations Policy and Procedures (p16), including following the [Four Critical Actions for Schools](#)
- ensure students' views are taken seriously and their voices are heard about decisions that affect their lives
- implement inclusive practices that respond to the diverse needs of students.

School council

In performing the functions and powers given to them under the *Education and Training Reform Act 2006*, school council members will:

- champion and promote a child safe culture with the broader school community
- ensure that child safety is a regular agenda item at school council meetings
- undertake annual training on child safety, (via the this policy and/or the Child Safe Standards School Council Training slide presentation available on [PROTECTI](#)).
- approve updates to, and act in accordance with the Child Safety Code of Conduct to the extent that it applies to school council employees and members
- when hiring school council employees, ensure that selection, supervision, and management practices are child safe At our school, school council employment duties are delegated to the principal who is bound by this policy"

Specific staff-child safety responsibilities

Croydon Hills Primary School has nominated the Assistant Principal – Wellbeing and Inclusion as the school's child safety champion to support the principal to implement our child safety policies and practices, including staff and volunteer training.

The responsibilities of the child safety champion are outlined at [Guidance for child safety champions](#).

Our principal and child safety champion are the first point of contact for child safety concerns or queries and for coordinating responses to child safety incidents.

- The principal is responsible for monitoring the school's compliance with the Child Safety Policy. Anyone in our school community should approach the principal if they have any concerns about the school's compliance with the Child Safety Policy.
- The principal is responsible for informing the school community about this policy, and making it publicly available
- Other specific roles and responsibilities are named in other child safety policies and procedures, including the Child Safety Code of Conduct, Child Safety Responding and Reporting Obligations (including Mandatory Reporting) Policy and Procedures, and Child Safety Risk Register.

Our school has also established a Child Safety and Wellbeing Team and a Student Reference Group on child safety. The Child Safety and Wellbeing Team meet regularly to identify and respond to any ongoing matters related to child safety and wellbeing. The Student Reference Group (Junior School Council) provides an opportunity for students to provide input into school strategies.

Our Risk Management Committee monitors the Child Safety Risk Register.

Child Safety Code of Conduct

Our 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.

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.

The Child Safety Code of Conduct (p13) also includes processes to report inappropriate behaviour.

Managing risks to child safety and wellbeing

At our school 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, such as those we develop for off-site overnight camps, adventure activities and facilities and services we contract through third party providers for student use.

Our Child Safety Risk Register is used to record any identified risks related to child abuse alongside actions in place to manage those risks. Our school leadership team will monitor and evaluate the effectiveness of the actions in the Child Safety Risk Register at least annually.

In addition, the school promotes child safety and managing risk consistent with [PROTECT Child Safe Standard 9](#) guidance.

Establishing a culturally safe environment

At Croydon Hills Primary School, we are committed to establishing an inclusive and culturally safe school where the strengths of Aboriginal culture, values and practices are respected.

We think about how every student can have a positive experience in a safe environment. For Aboriginal students, we recognise the link between Aboriginal culture, identity and safety and actively create opportunities for Aboriginal students and the Aboriginal community to have a voice and presence in our school planning, policies, and activities.

We have developed the following strategies to promote cultural safety in our school community:

- Begin community events and meetings with a Welcome to Country or an Acknowledgement of Country as a standing agenda item.
- Fly the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander flags on school grounds.
- Display plaques and signs to Acknowledge Country and Traditional Owners.
- Make Aboriginal voice part of decision making in matters that affect Aboriginal students.
- Be open to different ways of doing and expressing things.
- Celebrate the local Aboriginal community in communications with students, staff, volunteers and families. Share information through school newsletters, school assemblies, parent information nights.
- Lead on safety and inclusion for all Aboriginal students and their families. Learn more about Aboriginal histories and cultures, both locally and across Australia.
- Speak with respect and confidence about Aboriginal culture, knowledge systems and people.
- Build schoolwide knowledge of Aboriginal histories, cultures, perspectives, values, skills and attitudes.

Student empowerment

To support child safety and wellbeing at Croydon Hills Primary School, we work to create an inclusive and supportive environment that encourages students and families to contribute to our child safety approach and understand their rights and their responsibilities.

Respectful relationships between students are reinforced and we encourage strong friendships and peer support in the school to ensure a sense of belonging our whole school approach to Positive Education, Respectful Relationships, our student Code of Conduct, and our school values.

We inform students of their rights through our whole school approach to Positive Education, and Respectful Relationships and give them the 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. We ensure our students know who to talk to if they are worried or feeling unsafe and we encourage them to share concerns with a trusted adult at any time. Students and families can also access information on how to report concerns at the school office, via this policy or with a trusted staff member.

When the school is gathering information in relation to a complaint about alleged misconduct or abuse of a child, we will 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.

In addition, the school promotes child safety and managing risk consistent with [PROTECT Child Safe Standard 3](#) guidance.

Family engagement

Our families and the school community have an important role in monitoring and promoting children's safety and wellbeing and helping children to raise any concerns.

To support family engagement, at Croydon Hills Primary School we are committed to providing families and the community with accessible information about our school's child safe policies and practices and involving them in our approach to child safety and wellbeing.

We will create opportunities for families to have input into the development and review of our child safety policies and practices and encourage them to raise any concerns and ideas for improvement.

We do this by:

- seeking input from families and the community through school surveys, school council, subcommittees of school council, student, staff, and parent meetings
- informing families and the community via Compass newsfeeds, school website, newsletters, and school policy (available at <https://www.croydonhps.vic.edu.au/page/74/Policies>)
- Newsletters will inform families and the school community about any significant updates to our child safety policies or processes, and strategies or initiatives that we are taking to ensure student safety.
- PROTECT Child Safety posters will be displayed across the school; in the Wellbeing Room, Administration and principal offices.

In addition, the school promotes child safety and managing risk consistent with [PROTECT Child Safe Standard 4](#) guidance.

Diversity and equity

As a child safe organisation, we celebrate the rich diversity of our students, families and community and promote respectful environments that are free from discrimination. Our focus is on wellbeing and growth for all.

We recognise that every child has unique skills, strengths and experiences to draw on.

We pay particular attention to individuals and groups of children and young people in our community with additional and specific needs. This includes tailoring our child safety strategies and supports to the needs of:

- Aboriginal children and young people
- children from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds
- children and young people with disabilities
- children unable to live at home or impacted by family violence
- international students
- children and young people who identify as LGBTIQ+.

Our [Student Wellbeing and Engagement Policy](#) provides more information about the measures we have in place to support diversity and equity.

A feature of the school's celebration of diversity and equity is recognition the community gives to date that connect with our school community (eg Reconciliation, Cultural, Pride). In addition, the school promotes child safety and managing risk consistent with [PROTECT Child Safe Standard 5](#) guidance.

Suitable staff and volunteers

At Croydon Hills Primary School, we apply robust child safe recruitment, induction, training, and supervision practices to ensure that all staff, contractors, and volunteers are suitable to work with children.

Staff recruitment

When recruiting staff, we follow the Department of Education and Training's recruitment policies and guidelines, available on the Policy and Advisory Library (PAL) at:

- [Recruitment in Schools](#)
- [Suitability for Employment Checks](#)
- [School Council Employment](#)
- [Contractor OHS Management](#).

When engaging staff to perform child-related work, we:

- sight, verify and record the person's Working with Children clearance or equivalent background check such as a Victorian teaching registration
- collect and record:
 - o proof of the person's identity and any professional or other qualifications
 - o the person's history of working with children
 - o references that address suitability for the job and working with children.

Staff induction

All newly appointed staff will be expected to participate in our child safety and wellbeing induction program. The program will include a focus on:

- the Child Safety Policy (this document)
- the Child Safety Code of Conduct
- the Child Safety Responding and Reporting Obligations (including Mandatory Reporting) Policy and Procedures and
- any other child safety and wellbeing information that school leadership considers appropriate to the nature of the role.

Ongoing supervision and management of staff

All staff engaged in child-connected work will be supervised appropriately to ensure that their behaviour towards children is safe and appropriate.

Staff will be monitored and assessed to ensure their continuing suitability for child-connected work. This will be done via collegiate coaching from teacher leaders, peer observations, performance and development processes, and feedback.

Inappropriate behaviour towards children and young people will be managed swiftly and in accordance with our school and department policies and our legal obligations. Child safety and wellbeing will be paramount.

The school's employment, induction and training processes are rigorous in our people management relevant to the Child Safe Standards. In addition, the school promotes child safety and managing risk consistent with [PROTECT Child Safe Standard 6](#) guidance.

Suitability of volunteers

All volunteers are required 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.

Child safety knowledge, skills and awareness

Ongoing training and education are essential to ensuring that staff understand their roles and responsibilities and develop their capacity to effectively address child safety and wellbeing matters.

In addition to the child safety and wellbeing induction, our staff will 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:

- our school's child safety and wellbeing policies, procedures, codes, and practices
- completing the [Protecting Children – Mandatory Reporting and Other Legal Obligations](#) online module annually
- recognising indicators of child harm including harm caused by other children and students
- responding effectively to issues of child safety and wellbeing and supporting colleagues who disclose harm
- how to build culturally safe environments for children and students
- information sharing and recordkeeping obligations
- how to identify and mitigate child safety and wellbeing risks in the school environment.

Other professional learning and training on child safety and wellbeing, for example, training for our volunteers, will be tailored to specific roles and responsibilities and any identified or emerging needs or issues.

In addition, the school promotes child safety and managing risk consistent with [PROTECT Child Safe Standard 8](#) guidance.

School council training and education

To ensure our school council is equipped with the knowledge required to make decisions in the best interests of student safety and wellbeing, and to identify and mitigate child safety and wellbeing risks in our school environment, the council is trained at least annually. Training includes guidance on:

- 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 our school environment
- Croydon Hills Primary School child safety and wellbeing policies, procedures, codes and practices

Complaints and reporting processes

Croydon Hills Primary School fosters a culture that encourages staff, volunteers, students, parents, and the school community to raise concerns and complaints. This makes it more difficult for breaches of the code of conduct, misconduct or abuse to occur and remain hidden.

We have clear pathways for raising complaints and concerns and responding and this is documented in our school's [Complaint Policy](#). The Complaints Policy can be found at <https://www.croydonhps.vic.edu.au/page/74/Policies>.

If there is an incident, disclosure, allegation or suspicion of child abuse, all staff and volunteers (including school council employees) must follow our Child Safety Responding and Reporting Obligations Policy and Procedures (p13). Our policy and procedures address complaints and concerns of child abuse made by or in relation to a child or student, school staff, volunteers, contractors, service providers, visitors or any other person while connected to the school.

As soon as any immediate health and safety concerns are addressed, and relevant school staff have been informed, we will ensure our school follows:

- the [Four Critical Actions](#) for complaints and concerns relating to adult behaviour towards a child
- the [Four Critical Actions: Student Sexual Offending](#) for complaints and concerns relating to student sexual offending

Our [Student Wellbeing and Engagement Policy](#) and [Bullying Prevention Policy](#) cover complaints and concerns relating to student physical violence or other harmful behaviours.

Communications

Croydon Hills Primary School is committed to communicating our child safety strategies to the school community through:

- ensuring that key child safety and wellbeing policies are available on our website including the Child Safety Policy (this document), Child Safety Code of Conduct, and the Child Safety Responding and Reporting Obligations (including Mandatory Reporting) Policy and Procedure
- displaying PROTECT posters around the school
- updates in our school newsletter and via Compass
- ensuring that child safety is a regular agenda item at school leadership meetings, staff meetings and school council meetings.

Privacy and information sharing

Croydon Hills Primary School collects, uses, and discloses information about children and their families in accordance with Victorian privacy laws, and other relevant laws. For information on how our school collects, uses and discloses information refer to: [Schools' Privacy Policy](#).

Records management

We acknowledge that good records management practices are a critical element of child safety and wellbeing and manage our records in accordance with the Department of Education and Training's policy: [Records Management – School Records](#)

Review of child safety practices

At Croydon Hills Primary School, we have established processes for the review and ongoing improvement of our child safe policies, procedures, and practices.

We will:

- review and improve our policy every 2 years or after any significant child safety incident
- analyse any complaints, concerns, and safety incidents to improve policy and practice

- act with transparency and share pertinent learnings and review outcomes with school staff and our school community.

The school's consultation processes, and organised groups provide opportunities for students, staff, volunteers, families and community members to be involved in the review process. In addition, the school promotes child safety and managing risk consistent with [PROTECT Child Safe Standard 10](#) guidance.

Related policies and procedures

This Child Safety Policy is to be read in conjunction with other related school policies, procedures, and codes. These include our:

- Bullying Prevention Policy
- Child Safety Responding and Reporting Obligations Policy and Procedures
- Child Safety Code of Conduct
- Complaints Policy
- Digital Learning Policy
- Inclusion and Diversity Policy
- Student Wellbeing and Engagement Policy
- Visitors Policy
- Volunteers Policy

Related Department of Education and Training policies

- [Bullying Prevention and Response Policy](#)
- [Child and Family Violence Information Sharing Schemes](#)
- [Complaints Policy](#)
- [Contractor OHS Management Policy](#)
- [Digital Learning in Schools Policy](#)
- [Family Violence Support](#)
- [Protecting Children: Reporting Obligations Policy](#)
- [Policy and Guidelines for Recruitment in Schools](#)
- [Reportable Conduct Policy](#)
- [Student Wellbeing and Engagement Policy](#)
- [Supervision of Students Policy](#)
- [Visitors in Schools Policy](#)
- [Volunteers in Schools Policy](#)
- [Working with Children and other Suitability Checks for School Volunteers and Visitors](#)

Other related documents

- [Identifying and Responding to All Forms of Abuse in Victorian Schools](#)
- [Four Critical Actions for Schools](#)
- [Identifying and Responding to Student Sexual Offending](#)
- [Four Critical Actions for Schools: Responding to Student Sexual Offending](#)
- [Recording your actions: Responding to suspected child abuse – A template for Victorian schools](#)

Policy status and review

The principal is responsible for reviewing and updating the Child Safety Policy at least every two years. The review will include input from students, parents/carers and the school community.

Review Cycle

Consultation	- Staff 27 January 2026 - Junior School Council February 2026 - School Council 18 February 2026
Endorsed by	- Christian Holdsworth, Principal
Ratified by Principal	- 18 February 2026
Review Date	- February 2027

Child Safety Code of Conduct



Help for non-English speakers

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Purpose

Our Child Safety Code of Conduct sets out the expected behaviour of adults with children and young people in our school.

All Croydon Hills Primary School staff, volunteers, contractors, service providers, school council members and any other adult involved in child-connected work must follow the Child Safety Code of Conduct.

The Child Safety Code of Conduct applies to all physical and online environments used by students. It also applies during or outside of school hours and in other locations provided by the school for student use (for example, a school camp).

Acceptable behaviours

As Croydon Hills Primary School, staff, volunteers, contractors, and any other member of our school community involved in child-connected work, we are responsible for supporting and promoting the safety of children by:

- upholding our Croydon Hills Primary School commitment to child safety at all times and adhering to our Child Safety Policy
- treating students and families in our school community with respect in our school environment and outside our school environment as part of normal social and community activities
- listening and responding to the views and concerns of students, particularly if they disclose that they or another child or student has been abused or are worried about their safety or the safety of another child or student
- promoting the cultural safety, participation and empowerment of Aboriginal students, students with culturally and/or linguistically diverse backgrounds, students with a disability, international students, students who are unable to live at home and lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender and intersex (LGBTIQ+) students
- ensuring, as far as practicable, that adults are not alone with a student – one-to-one interactions between an adult and a student are to be in an open space or in line of sight of another adult.
- reporting any allegations of child abuse or other child safety concerns to a principal class member
- understanding and complying with all reporting and disclosure obligations (including mandatory reporting) in line with our Child Safety Responding and Reporting Obligations Policy and Procedures (p13), and the [PROTECT Four Critical Actions](#)

- if child abuse is suspected, ensuring as quickly as possible that the student(s) are safe and protected from harm.

Unacceptable behaviours

As Croydon Hills Primary School, staff, volunteers, contractors and member of our school community involved in child-connected work we must not:

- ignore or disregard any concerns, suspicions or disclosures of child abuse or harm
- develop a relationship with any student that could be seen as favouritism or amount to 'grooming' behaviour (for example, by offering gifts)
- display behaviours or engage with students in ways that are not justified by the educational or professional context
- ignore an adult's overly familiar or inappropriate behaviour towards a student
- discuss intimate topics or use sexualised language, except when needed to deliver the school curriculum or professional guidance
- treat a child or student unfavourably because of their disability, age, gender, race, culture, vulnerability, sexuality or ethnicity
- communicate directly with a student through personal or private contact channels (including by social media, email, instant messaging, texting etc) except where that communication is reasonable in all the circumstances, related to schoolwork or extra-curricular activities or where there is a safety concern or other urgent matter
- photograph or video a child or student in a school environment except in accordance with the [Photographing, Filming and Recording Students policy](#) or where required for duty of care purposes
- consume alcohol at school events where students are present
- take illicit drugs in the school environment or at school events
- have contact with any student outside of school hours except when needed to deliver the school curriculum or professional guidance and parental permission has been sought.

Breaches to the Child Safety Code of Conduct

All Croydon Hills Primary School staff, volunteers, contractors and any other member of the school community involved in child-connected work who breach this Child Safety Code of Conduct may be subject to disciplinary procedures in accordance with their employment agreement or relevant industrial instrument, professional code or terms of engagement.

In instances where a reportable allegation has been made, the matter will be managed in accordance with the Department of Education and Training Reportable Conduct Scheme Policy and may be subject to referral to Victoria Police.

All breaches and suspected breaches of the Croydon Hills Primary School Child Safety Code of Conduct must be reported to the principal.

If the breach or suspected breach relates to the principal, contact Kerrie Anderson, Senior Education Improvement Leader, 0427 026 382.

Review Cycle

Consultation

- Staff 27 January 2026
- School Council 18 February 2026

Endorsed by

- Christian Holdsworth, Principal

Ratified by School Council/Principal- 18 February 2026

Review Date - February 2027

Child Safety Responding and Reporting Obligations Policy and Procedures



Help for non-English speakers

If you need help to understand this policy, contact croydon.hills.ps@education.vic.gov.au

Purpose

The purpose of this policy is to outline the procedures our school has in place to respond to complaints or concerns relating to child abuse and to ensure that all staff and members of our school community understand and follow the various legal obligations that apply to the reporting of child abuse to relevant authorities.

Scope

This policy applies 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 any other person while connected to the school (physical and online).

Definitions

Child abuse

Child abuse includes:

- physical violence inflicted on a child
- sexual offences committed against a child
- grooming of a child by an adult
- family violence committed against or in the presence of a child
- serious emotional or psychological harm to a child
- serious neglect of a child.

The definition of child abuse is broad and can include student to student incidents and concerns, as well as behaviour committed by an adult.

Grooming

Grooming is a criminal offence under the *Crimes Act 1958* (Vic) and is a form of child abuse and sexual misconduct. This offence targets predatory conduct undertaken by an adult to prepare a child, under the age of 16, to engage in sexual activity at a later time. Grooming can include communicating (including electronic communications) and/or attempting to befriend or establish a relationship or other emotional connection with the child or their parent or carer.

School staff member

For the purpose of this policy a school staff member includes a contractor engaged by the school or school council to perform child-related work.

Policy

Croydon Hills Primary School understands the important role our school plays in protecting children from abuse. We have a range of policies and measures in place to prevent child abuse from occurring at our school or during school activities.

Information for students

- All students should feel safe to speak to any staff member to raise any concerns about their safety or any other concerns that they have.
- If a student does not know who to approach at Croydon Hills Primary School they should start with their classroom teacher or a member of the principal class.

Identifying child abuse

To ensure we can respond in the best interests of students and children when complaints or concerns relating to child abuse are raised, all staff and relevant volunteers must:

- understand how to identify signs of child abuse and behavioural indicators of perpetrators - for detailed information on identifying child abuse and behavioural indicators of perpetrators refer to [Identify child abuse](#).
- understand their various legal obligations in relation to reporting child abuse to relevant authorities - for detailed information on the various legal obligations refer to Appendix A
- follow the below procedures for responding to complaints or concerns relating to child abuse, which ensure our school acts in the best interests of students and children and complies with both our legal and Department policy obligations.

At Croydon Hills Primary School we recognise the diversity of the children, young people, and families at our school and take account of their individual needs and backgrounds when considering and responding to child safety incidents or concerns.

Procedures for responding to an incident, disclosure, allegation or suspicion of child abuse

In responding to a child safety incident, disclosure, allegation or suspicion, Croydon Hills Primary School will follow:

- the [Four Critical Actions for Schools](#) for complaints and concerns relating to all forms of child abuse
- the [Four Critical Actions: Student Sexual Offending](#) for complaints and concerns relating to student sexual offending
- our Student Wellbeing and Engagement Policy and Bullying Prevention Policy for complaints and concerns relating to student physical violence or other harmful student behaviours.

School staff and volunteer responsibilities

1. Immediate action

If a school staff member or volunteer witnesses an incident of child abuse, or reasonably believes, suspects or receives a disclosure or allegation that a child has been, or is at risk of being abused, they must:

- If a child is at immediate risk of harm, separate alleged victims and others involved, administer first aid (appropriate to their level of training) and call 000 for urgent medical or police assistance where required to respond to immediate health or safety concerns.
- Notify a member of the principal class as soon as possible, who will ensure our school follows the steps in these procedures.

NOTE for staff and volunteers:

- If you are uncertain if an incident, disclosure, allegation or suspicion gives rise to a concern about child abuse you must always err on the side of caution and report the concern to a member of the principal class.
- If a member of the principal class is unavailable, a member of the Leadership Team will take on this role.
- If the concerns relates to the conduct of the, notify the North Eastern Victoria Regional Office on 1300 333 231 who must then take on responsibility for ensuring our school follows these procedures.

Refer to Appendix B for guidance on how to respond to a disclosure of child abuse.

2. Reporting to authorities and referring to services

As soon as immediate health and safety concerns are addressed, and relevant school staff have been informed, the principal class staff member **must** report all incidents, suspicions and disclosures of child abuse as soon as possible.

The following steps will ensure our school complies with the four critical actions as well as additional actions required under the Child Safe Standards.

The principal class staff member must ensure:

- all relevant information is reported to the Department of Families, Fairness and Housing (DFFH) Child Protection, Victoria Police or relevant services where required
- the incident is reported to the Department's [eduSafe Plus portal](#) or the Incident Support and Operations Centre (1800 126 126) in accordance with the severity rating outlined in the [Managing and Reporting School Incidents Policy](#)
- all [reportable conduct](#) allegations or incidents are reported by the Principal to the Department's Employee Conduct Branch (03 7022 0005) – where a reportable conduct allegation is made against the Principal, the Regional Director must be informed who will then make a report to Employee Conduct Branch

NOTE: In circumstances where staff members are legally required to report child abuse to DFFH Child Protection or Victoria Police and they are unable to confirm that the information has been reported by another person at the school or the designated member of school staff does not agree that a report needs to be made, the staff member who has formed the reasonable belief must still contact DFFH Child Protection and Victoria Police to make the report.

If you believe that a child is not subject to abuse, but you still hold significant concerns for their wellbeing you must still act. This may include making a referral or seeking advice from The

Orange Door (formally Child FIRST) - in circumstances where the family are open to receiving support; DFFH Child Protection or Victoria Police.

3. Contacting parents or carers

The principal class staff member must ensure parents and carers are notified unless advised otherwise by DFFH Child Protection or Victoria Police, or there are other safety and wellbeing concerns in relation to informing parents/carers.

Principals may contact the Department of Education and Training Legal Division for advice on notifying parents and carers, and where relevant, the wider school community.

For further guidance, refer to [PROTECT Contacting parents and carers](#)

4. Ongoing protection and support

The principal class staff member must ensure appropriate steps are taken by the school to protect the child and other children from any continued risk of abuse. These steps must be taken in consultation with any relevant external agency or Department staff such as DFFH Child Protection, Victoria Police, Legal Division or Employee Conduct Branch. Ongoing protection will also include further reports to authorities if new information comes to light or further incidents occur.

Appropriate, culturally sensitive and ongoing support must be offered and provided to all affected students. Ongoing support will be based on any available advice from the Department, parents and carers, health practitioners, and other authorities (such as DFFH or Victoria Police) and may include referral to wellbeing professionals, development of a safety plan, student support group meetings, and, for student to student incidents, behaviour management and support measures.

5. Recordkeeping

The principal class staff member will ensure that:

- detailed notes of the incident, disclosure, allegation or suspicion are taken. including, where possible, by the staff member or volunteer who reported the incident, disclosure, or suspicion to them. The staff member may collate these notes using the [Responding to Suspected Child Abuse: Template](#) or the [Responding to Student Sexual Offending: template](#)
- detailed notes are taken of any immediate or ongoing action taken by the school to respond to the incident, disclosure, allegation or suspicion
- all notes and other records relating to the incident, disclosure, allegation or suspicion, including the schools immediate and ongoing actions, are stored securely in the secure Executive Class Drive

For school visitors and school community members

All community members aged 18 years or over have legal obligations relating to reporting child abuse – refer to Appendix A for detailed information.

Any person can make a report to DFFH Child Protection or Victoria Police if they believe on reasonable grounds that a child is in need of protection. For contact details, refer to the [Four Critical Actions](#).

Members of the community do not have to inform the school if they are making a disclosure to DFFH Child Protection or the Victoria Police. However, where a community member is concerned about the safety of a child or children at the school, the community member should report this concern to the principal so that appropriate steps to support the student can be taken

Additional requirements for all staff

All staff play an important role in supporting student safety and wellbeing and have a duty of care to take reasonable steps to prevent reasonably foreseeable harm to students.

Fulfilling the roles and responsibilities in the above procedure does not displace or discharge any other obligations that arise if a person reasonably believes that a child is at risk of child abuse. This means that if, after following the actions outlined in the procedure, a staff member reasonably believes that a child remains at risk of abuse, they must take the following steps:

- if they are concerned that the school has not taken reasonable steps to prevent or reduce the risk, raise these concerns with the principal in the first instance, and escalate to the regional office if they remain unsatisfied.
- report the matter to the relevant authorities where they are unable to confirm that the information has been reported by another staff member

Staff must refer to Appendix A for further information on their obligations relating to reporting to authorities.

COMMUNICATION

This policy will be communicated to our school community in the following ways:

- Available publicly on our school's website
- Included in staff induction processes and annual staff training
- Included in volunteer induction processes and training for relevant volunteers
- Discussed at annual staff briefings or meetings
- Included in staff handbook or manual
- Hard copy available from school administration upon request

FURTHER INFORMATION AND RESOURCES

The following Department of Education and Training policies and guidance are relevant to this policy:

- [Child Safe Standards](#)
- [Protecting Children — Reporting and Other Legal Obligations](#)
- [Managing and Reporting School Incidents](#)
- [Reportable Conduct](#)
- [Restraint and Seclusion](#)
- [Identify child abuse](#)
- [Report child abuse in schools \(including four critical actions\)](#)
- [Identify and respond to student sexual offending](#)

The following school policies are also relevant to this policy:

- Child Safety Policy
- Child Safety Code of Conduct
- Statement of Values and School Philosophy
- Student Wellbeing and Engagement Policy
- Volunteer Policy
- Duty of Care Policy

- Inclusion and Diversity Policy

POLICY REVIEW AND APPROVAL

Approval and review

Review Cycle

Consultation	- Staff 27 January 2026 - School Council 18 February 2026
Endorsed by	- Christian Holdsworth, Principal
Ratified by School Council/Principal-	18 February 2026
Review Date	- February 2027

APPENDIX A

LEGAL OBLIGATIONS RELATING TO REPORTING CHILD ABUSE

The following information outlines the various legal obligations relating to the reporting of child abuse to relevant authorities.

It is important to note that the procedures outlined in the above policy ensure compliance with the below reporting obligations, and also include additional steps to ensure compliance with Department policy and our school's duty of care obligations.

Mandatory reporting to Department of Families, Fairness and Housing (DFFH) Child Protection

The following individuals are mandatory reporters under the *Children, Youth and Families Act 2005* (Vic):

- registered teachers and early childhood teachers (including principals and school staff who have been granted permission to teach by the VIT)
- school counsellors including staff who provide direct support to students for mental, emotional or psychological wellbeing, including (but not limited to) school health and wellbeing staff, primary welfare coordinators, student wellbeing coordinators, mental health practitioners, chaplains, and Student Support Services staff
- nurses
- registered psychologists
- police officers
- registered medical practitioners
- out of home care workers (excluding voluntary foster and kinship carers)
- early childhood workers
- youth justice workers
- people in religious ministry
- midwives

All mandatory reporters must make a report to the Department of Families, Fairness and Housing (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 and/or sexual abuse; and
- the child's parents or carers have not protected, or are unlikely to protect, the child from harm of that type.

A mandatory reporter who fails to comply with this legal obligation may be committing a criminal offence. It is important for all staff at Croydon Hills Primary School to be aware that they are legally obliged to make a mandatory report on each occasion that they form a reasonable belief that a child is in need of protection and they must make a mandatory report even if the principal or any other mandatory reporter does not share their belief that a report is necessary.

If charged with not making a mandatory report, it may be a defence for the person charged to prove that they honestly and reasonably believed that all of the reasonable grounds for their belief had been the subject of a report to child protection made by another person.

The identity of a person who reports any protective concerns to DFFH Child Protection is protected by law. It is an offence for a person, other than the person who made the report, to disclose the name of the person who made a report or any information that is likely to lead to their identification.

At our school, all mandated school staff must undertake the *Mandatory Reporting and Other Obligations eLearning Module* annually. We also require/encourage all other staff to undertake this module, even where they are not mandatory reporters.

The policy of the Department of Education and Training (DET) requires **all staff** who form a reasonable belief that a child is in need of protection to discuss their concerns with the school leadership team and to report their concerns to DFFH and in some circumstances to Victoria Police, or to ensure that all the information relevant to the report has been made by another school staff member.

Any person can make a report to DFFH Child Protection (131 278 – 24 hour service) if they believe on reasonable grounds that a child is in need of protection even if they are not a mandatory reporter listed above.

Reporting student wellbeing concerns to Orange Door (formally Child FIRST)

At Croydon Hills Primary School we also encourage staff to make a referral to Orange Door (formally Child FIRST) when they have significant concern for a child's wellbeing. For more information about making a referral to Orange Door (formally Child FIRST) see the Policy and Advisory Library: [Protecting Children – Reporting and Other Legal Obligations](#).

Reportable Conduct

The Reportable Conduct Scheme is focussed on worker and volunteer conduct and how organisations investigate and respond to suspected child abuse. The scheme aims to improve organisational responses to suspected child abuse and to facilitate the identification of individuals who pose a risk of harm to children.

There are five types of 'reportable conduct' listed in the *Child Wellbeing and Safety Act 2005*:

- sexual offences against, with or in the presence of, a child
- sexual misconduct (which includes grooming) 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 to a child
- significant neglect of a child.

A reportable conduct allegation is made where a person makes an allegation, based on a reasonable belief, that a worker or volunteer has committed reportable conduct or misconduct that **may** involve reportable conduct.

If school staff or volunteers become aware of reportable conduct by any current or former employee, contractor or volunteer, they must notify the school principal immediately. If the allegation relates to the principal, they must notify the Regional Director.

The principal or regional director must notify the Department's Employee Conduct Branch of any reportable conduct allegations involving current or former employees of the school (including Department, allied health, casual and school council employees), contractors and volunteers (including parent volunteers).

- Employee Conduct Branch: 03 7022 0005 or employee.conduct@education.vic.gov.au

The Department's Secretary, through the Manager, Employee Conduct Branch, has a legal obligation to inform the Commission for Children and Young People when an allegation of reportable conduct is made.

For more information about reportable conduct see the Department's *Policy and Advisory Library: Reportable Conduct* and the Commission for Children and Young People's [website](#).

Failure to disclose offence

Reporting child sexual abuse is a community-wide responsibility. All adults (ie persons aged 18 years and over), not just professionals who work with children, have a legal obligation to report to Victoria Police, as soon as practicable, where they form a 'reasonable belief' that a sexual offence has been committed by an adult against a child under the age of 16 in Victoria.

Failure to disclose information to Victoria Police (by calling 000, local police station or the Police Assistance Line 131 444) as soon as practicable may amount to a criminal offence unless a person has a 'reasonable excuse' or exemption from doing so.

"Reasonable belief" is not the same as having proof. A 'reasonable belief' is formed if a reasonable person in the same position would have formed the belief on the same grounds.

For example, a 'reasonable belief' might be formed when:

- a child states that they have been sexually abused
- a child states that they know someone who has been sexually abused (sometimes the child may be talking about themselves)
- someone who knows a child states that the child has been sexually abused
- professional observations of the child's behaviour or development leads a mandated professional to form a belief that the child has been sexually abused
- signs of sexual abuse leads to a belief that the child has been sexually abused.

"Reasonable excuse" is defined by law and includes:

- fear for the safety of any person including yourself or the potential victim (but not including the alleged perpetrator or an organisation)
- where the information has already been disclosed to Victoria Police and you have no further information to add (for example, through a mandatory report to DFFH Child Protection or a report to Victoria Police from another member of school staff).

Failure to protect offence

This reporting obligation applies to school staff in a position of authority. This can include principals, assistant principals and campus principals. Any staff member in a position of authority who becomes aware that an adult associated with their school (such as an employee, contractor, volunteer or visitor) poses a risk of sexual abuse to a child under the age of 16 under their care, authority or supervision, must take all reasonable steps to remove or reduce that risk.

This may include removing the adult (ie persons aged 18 years and over) from working with children pending an investigation and reporting your concerns to Victoria Police.

If a school staff member in a position of authority fails to take reasonable steps in these circumstances, this may amount to a criminal offence.

Further information

For more information about the offences and reporting obligations outlined in this fact sheet refer to: [Protecting Children — Reporting and Other Legal Obligations](#).

APPENDIX B: MANAGING DISCLOSURES OF CHILD ABUSE

Important information for staff

When managing a disclosure relating to child abuse you should:

- listen to the student and allow them to speak
- stay calm and use a neutral tone with no urgency and where possible use the child's language and vocabulary (you do not want to frighten the child or interrupt the child)
- be gentle, patient and non-judgmental throughout
- highlight to the student it was important for them to tell you about what has happened
- assure them that they are not to blame for what has occurred
- do not ask leading questions, for example gently ask, "What happened next?" rather than "Why?"
- be patient and allow the child to talk at their own pace and in their own words
- do not pressure the child into telling you more than they want to, they will be asked a lot of questions by other professionals, and it is important not to force them to retell what has occurred multiple times
- reassure the child that you believe them and that disclosing the matter was important for them to do
- use verbal facilitators such as, "I see", restate the child's previous statement, and use non-suggestive words of encouragement, designed to keep the child talking in an open-ended way ("what happened next?")
- tell the child in age appropriate language you are required to report to the relevant authority to help stop the abuse, and explain the role of these authorities if appropriate (for a young child this may be as simple as saying "I will need to talk to people to work out what to do next to help you")
- Take prompt action in relation to following the procedures outlined below.

When managing a disclosure you should AVOID:

- displaying expressions of panic or shock
- asking questions that are investigative and potentially invasive (this may make the child feel uncomfortable and may cause the child to withdraw)
- going over the information repeatedly (you are only gathering information to help you form a belief on reasonable grounds that you need to make a report to the relevant authority)
- making any comments that would lead the student to believe that what has happened is their fault
- making any promises you will keep the information the student provided confidential
- making promises to the child about what will occur next or that things will be different given the process can be unpredictable and different for each child depending on their circumstances (instead reassure them that you and others will do your best to help).

Croydon Hills Primary School

Aboriginal Learning, Wellbeing and Safety Action Plan



Help for non-English speakers

If you need help to understand this policy, contact croydon.hills.ps@education.vic.gov.au

Croydon Hills Primary School embraces the vision of the [Marrung Aboriginal Education Plan](#) and celebrates the culture, knowledge and experiences of First Nations Peoples. We are committed to creating and maintaining a school environment that empowers Koorie students to feel valued, respected and culturally strong.

Our school has a number of measures in place to ensure our community acknowledges and appreciates the strengths of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander culture. These measures are outlined below.

Family and community perspectives and feedback

We actively seek participation and feedback from Koorie students, families and Community by:

- acknowledging the existing knowledge of Koorie students and their families and seeking their feedback on decisions that affect them, and on how well we are meeting their needs, through initial enrolment meetings, Student Support Groups, during the development of Individual Education Plans and the school's/EACH's Journey Tracks program
- working with our regional Koorie Engagement Support Officers (KESOs) for advice on how we can create a culturally inclusive learning environment and to build our capacity to provide support for individual Koorie students attending our school
- partnering with the **Wurundjeri Woiwurrung People of the Kulin Nation** to seek feedback and advice on existing and new actions we can take to support the diverse and unique identities and experiences of Aboriginal students and children in our community.

Training and professional development of staff

To ensure our staff are equipped with the skills and knowledge necessary to create and maintain a positive and inclusive school environment we:

- ensure staff participate in [Community Understanding and Safety Training \(CUST\)](#) training
- provide tailored training and professional development each year to build knowledge for specific staff based on any emerging or current areas of need
- ensure training and professional development equips teaching staff to deliver Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander perspectives within the classroom curriculum

- support teachers to work in their Professional Learning Communities (PLCs) to map and develop teaching and learning activities within the Victorian Curriculum priorities to enable staff to build their confidence with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander content and to recognise opportunities to draw upon Aboriginal pedagogies and practices within their classrooms
- ensure training and professional development equips staff with an understanding and appreciation of the strengths of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander culture and its importance to the wellbeing and safety of Koorie children and students.

Curriculum and learning

Croydon Hills Primary School supports the development of high expectations and individualised learning for Koorie students and creates a learning environment for all students that acknowledges, respects and values Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander cultures and identities. This includes:

- implementing the Department of Education and Training's [Koorie Education Policy](#)
- ensuring that all Koorie students have individual education plans developed in partnership with students, families, and KESOs.

Assemblies and other school events and activities

We ensure our school events and activities acknowledge and celebrate Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander culture by:

- acknowledging the Country and Traditional Owners of the land on which our school is located Wurundjeri land at the start of every school assembly and community meeting
- arranging incursions and excursions, and recognising key events and anniversaries that celebrate Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander culture

Built and digital environment

We ensure our built environment and website demonstrates an appreciation and acknowledgment of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander culture through:

- flying the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander flags on school grounds.
- displaying plaques/signs outside our main entrance that Acknowledge Country and Traditional Owners
- including an Acknowledgement of Country and Traditional Owners on our website home page

Review and feedback

We recognise that our school's practices must be regularly reviewed and updated in partnership with our families and local communities. We encourage you to contact the school on 9725 1206 croydon.hills.ps@education.vic.gov.au with any feedback, concerns or suggestions.

Review Cycle

Consultation

- Staff 27 January 2026
- School Council 18 February 2026

Endorsed by

- Christian Holdsworth, Principal

Ratified by Principal

- 18 February 2026

Review Date

- February 2027