



# Peninsula Grammar School Child Safety and Wellbeing Policy

## 1. Introduction

Peninsula Grammar School (the **School** or **PGS**) 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 and practices are inclusive of the needs of all children and students.

We have a zero tolerance for child abuse and are committed to acting in children's best interests and keeping them safe from harm. The School regards its child protection responsibilities with the utmost importance and as such, is committed to providing the necessary resources to ensure compliance with all relevant child protection laws and regulations and maintain a child safe culture.

## 2. Purpose

This Policy sets out the School's commitment to creating and maintaining a child safe and child-friendly organisation and provides an overview of our approach to implementing Ministerial Order 1359, which sets out how the Victorian Child Safe Standards apply in School environments. It includes mandatory reporting obligations pursuant to the *Child, Youth and Families Act 2005 (Vic)* and reportable conduct obligations pursuant to the *Child Wellbeing and Safety Act 2005 (Vic)*.

This Policy informs our School community of everyone's obligations to act safely and appropriately towards children and guides our procedures and practices, and culture with respect to child safety and wellbeing.

## 3. Scope

This Policy applies to:

- all School staff, volunteers and contractors whether or not they work in direct contact with students;
- 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 (e.g. School camp) and those provided through third-party providers and
- the School's boarding premises and boarding environments.

## 4. Commitments to Child Safety

- 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 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

## 5. International Students

There are specific child safety requirements for international students. The School must notify the Victorian Regulation and Qualifications Authority (VRQA) if an alleged abuse relates to an international student and where the School has issued a Confirmation of Appropriate Accommodation and Welfare (**CAAW**) letter to that student, to undertake responsibility for approving their student's accommodation, support and general welfare. The School retains a legal obligation for international students even when they are not in the direct care of the School and monitoring and reporting procedures exists to support these students in all settings (holiday periods, homestay etc.).

## 6. Victorian Child Safety Standards

The School is committed to upholding the Victorian Child Safe Standards, in line with Ministerial Order 1359. We recognise the eleven Child Safe Standards to be:

<b>Standard 1</b>	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
<b>Standard 2</b>	Child safety and wellbeing is embedded in organisational leadership, governance and culture
<b>Standard 3</b>	Children and young people are empowered about their rights, participate in decisions affecting them and are taken seriously
<b>Standard 4</b>	Families and communities are informed, and involved in promoting child safety and wellbeing
<b>Standard 5</b>	Equity is upheld and diverse needs respected in Policy and practice
<b>Standard 6</b>	People working with children and young people are suitable and supported to reflect child safety and wellbeing values in practice
<b>Standard 7</b>	Processes for complaints and concerns are child focused
<b>Standard 8</b>	Staff and volunteers are equipped with the knowledge, skills and awareness to keep children and young people safe through ongoing education and training
<b>Standard 9</b>	Physical and online environments promote safety and wellbeing while minimising the opportunity for children and young people to be harmed
<b>Standard 10</b>	Implementation of the Child Safe Standards (i.e., the Victorian Standards) is regularly reviewed and improved
<b>Standard 11</b>	Policies and procedures document how the organisation is safe for children and young people



## 7. Roles and Responsibilities

### Board of Directors

The Board of Directors are responsible for ensuring that the School's governance arrangements support and prioritise a child safe culture and promotes the cultural safety and wellbeing of children. They are also responsible for ensuring the School has appropriate resources to implement this Policy and related procedures, and to hold the Principal accountable for its implementation.

### Principal

The Principal is responsible for taking practical measures to ensure that the School's Child Safety and Wellbeing Policy and Child Safe Code of Conduct is implemented effectively to promote and maintain a strong and sustainable child-safe culture within the School.

### Child Safety and Wellbeing Officers

Child Safety and Wellbeing Officers are appointed by the School to be the first point of contact raising child safety and wellbeing questions or concerns, including this Policy and our Child Safe Code of Conduct. Child Safety and Wellbeing Officers receive additional training with respect to child safety and wellbeing issues and assist the Principal and School Executive to coordinate appropriate responses to child safety and wellbeing incidents.

Senior Child Safety and Wellbeing Officers have an important role to promote and maintain a positive child protection culture at the School.

Senior Child Protection Officer is the first point of contact for child abuse concerns and queries and assists the Principal to coordinate appropriate responses to child abuse incidents which may include liaising with the Police and other external agencies and responding to a child who makes, or is affected by, an allegation of child abuse.

<b>Child Safety and Wellbeing Officers</b>		
Louise Nicholls-Easley	Head of Junior School	9788 7831 <a href="mailto:lnichollseasley@pgs.vic.edu.au">lnichollseasley@pgs.vic.edu.au</a>
Dominic Linossier	Head of Middle School	9788 7867 <a href="mailto:dlinossier@pgs.vic.edu.au">dlinossier@pgs.vic.edu.au</a>
Greg Kennedy	Head of Pre-Senior	9788 7769 <a href="mailto:gkennedy@pgs.vic.edu.au">gkennedy@pgs.vic.edu.au</a>
Anne-Lise Haugen	Head of Senior School	9788 7647 <a href="mailto:ahaugen@pgs.vic.edu.au">ahaugen@pgs.vic.edu.au</a>
<b>Senior Child Safety and Wellbeing Officers</b>		
Suzanne Penhall	Head of Respectful Relationships	9788 7848 <a href="mailto:spenhall@pgs.vic.edu.au">spenhall@pgs.vic.edu.au</a>
Anne Stringer	Head of Wellbeing	9788 7823 <a href="mailto:astringer@pgs.vic.edu.au">astringer@pgs.vic.edu.au</a>
<b>Senior Child Protection Officer</b>		
Steven Church	Executive Deputy Principal	<a href="mailto:schurch@pgs.vic.edu.au">schurch@pgs.vic.edu.au</a>

### School Executive

The School leadership team 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*. This includes reinforcing high standards of respectful behaviour between



students and adults, and between students and to promote discussion on child safety issues within the School community including at leadership team meetings and staff meetings.

### All Staff

All staff of the School will:

- Participate in child safety and wellbeing induction and training provided by the School and always follow the School's child safety and wellbeing policies and procedures;
- Act in accordance with our Child Safety Code of Conduct;
- Be aware of key risk indicators of child abuse, being observant to, and raising any concerns relating to child protection with one of the School's Child Safety Officers or a member School Executive;
- Report child abuse in accordance with their legally mandatory reporting obligations;
- Ensure students' views are taken seriously and their voices are heard about decisions that affect their lives;
- Follow any reasonable direction given by a management representative of the School in the interest of protecting the safety and wellbeing of its students and
- Implement inclusive practices that respond to the diverse needs of students

### Volunteers and Contractors

All volunteers are required to be familiar with the content of our Child Safety and Wellbeing Policies, and their legal obligations with respect to the reporting of child abuse. They have a responsibility to be aware of key risk indicators of child abuse, their legal obligation for mandatory reporting, and to raise any concerns they may have relating to child abuse with one of the School's Child Safety and Wellbeing Officers.

## **8. Child Safety Code of Conduct**

Our Child Safety Code of Conduct (**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, and how to report inappropriate behaviour.

This Code of Conduct is accessible at the School website and internal network.

## **9. Mandatory Reporting**

Under the *Child, Youth and Families Act 2005 (Vic)*, mandatory reporters must make a report to the Department of Families, Fairness and Housing if, while carrying out their duties, form a reasonable belief that a child needs protection from physical harm or sexual abuse.

Principals, registered teachers, early childcare workers, registered medical practitioners, nurses, registered psychologists, school counsellors, people of religious ministry and all members of the police force are mandatory reporters under the *Child, Youth and Families Act 2005 (Vic)*.

It is the responsibility of other staff, volunteers or members of the School community to check whether they are mandatory reporters under the legislation.

All mandatory reporters must make a report to the Department of Families, Fairness and Housing as soon as practicable, if, while carrying out their professional roles and responsibilities, they form a reasonable belief 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 have not protected, or are unlikely to protect, the child from harm of that type.

To ensure our staff are best placed to meet their Mandatory Reporting obligations, the School places focus on education, intervention and reporting and post-incident review.

### Education

#### *Staff*

To ensure that staff are aware of and understand their obligation under the Act the School conducts annual Professional Development for staff relating to identifying child abuse, forming a belief that a child is at risk and mandatory reporting obligations and procedures upon.

With respect to students, teaching staff and the wellbeing team will work to educate students on unacceptable behaviours towards them and encourage them to disclose unsafe behaviour to appropriate staff.

#### *Student*

The School has developed programs to educate students on appropriate behaviours and how to disclose unsafe and unacceptable behaviours towards them.

#### *Community*

This Policy will be publicly available to ensure community awareness with respect to child abuse, its characteristics and the School's programs and response. The School regularly engages with School Community stakeholders including the Peninsula Grammar Parents Association to ensure that there is a clear understanding of the School's position on Child Safety.

### Intervention – Reporting Obligations and Procedures

#### *1. Mandatory Reporting Legislation*

All mandatory reporters whom, in the course of carrying out their duties, form a reasonable belief that a child is in need of protection from physical harm or sexual abuse, and that the child's parents are unwilling or unable to protect the child, must report that belief to the Department of Families, Fairness and Housing, Child Protection Division as soon as possible after forming the belief.

#### *2. Criminal Offences – Failure to disclose, failure to protect & grooming offences*

Any staff member who forms a reasonable belief that:

- a sexual offence has been committed by an adult against a child;
- an adult associated with the School poses a risk of sexual abuse to a student and/or
- a child is subject to predatory or "grooming" behaviour

must disclose that information to police.

Failure to disclose the information to the Police, or protect a student from the risk of sexual abuse is a Criminal Offence and applies to all adults in Victoria.

Reporting obligations and procedures are outlined in the *School's Child Safety Reporting Procedure*, which is located on Zenith (internal staff platform).



## Post-incident Review

Senior Executive will undertake a review of staff responses to specific incidents to ensure best practice and compliance with the Policy, including seeking guidance and recommendations, where available, from appropriate authorities. All staff and students involved will be offered ongoing support (see 'Support for Affected Students')

## 10. Reportable Conduct

The School is required to investigate and report to the Commission for Children and Young People (the **Commission**) any and all allegations of staff reportable conduct or misconduct that may involve reportable conduct.

Reportable conduct is defined in the Act to include:

- a sexual offence (even prior to criminal proceedings commencing), sexual misconduct or physical violence committed against, with or in the presence of a child;
- sexual misconduct committed, with or in the presence of a child;
- behaviour causing significant emotional or physical harm to a child;
- significant neglect of a child or
- misconduct involving any of the above.

"Sexual misconduct" includes:

- Behaviour, physical contact or speech or other communication of a sexual nature, for example
- 'sexting';
- Inappropriate touching or physical contact;
- Grooming behaviour and
- Voyeurism.

"Sexual offence" for the purposes of the Reportable Conduct Scheme means a serious sexual offence as set out in clause 1 of Schedule 1 of the *Sentencing Act 1991 (Vic)*, which includes rape, attempted rape, sexual assault, incest, indecent act with a child, persistent sexual abuse of a child, grooming and the production or possession of child pornography.

"Significant" means in relation to emotional or psychological harm or neglect, that the harm is more than trivial or insignificant, but need not be as high as serious and need not have a lasting permanent effect.

The threshold for reporting allegations of reportable conduct is a 'reasonable belief', which is much lower than these other reporting obligations. There must be some objective basis for the belief, however, it is not the same as proof, and certainty is not required.

Reportable conduct reporting obligations and requirements are outlined in the School's *Child Safety Reporting Procedure*, located on the School's intranet/network (Zenith).

## 11. Support of Affected Students

Ensuring a student feels safe and supported following an incident is of paramount importance to the School. In addition to immediate contact with our Student Wellbeing team, the School will also work closely with the student, parents, carers or guardians to determine any additional support services that may be available to provide appropriate support.

Whilst each matter will be dealt with on a case-by-case basis to ensure the student is provided with support they require as an individual, such action may include:

- Referral to School Counselling services.



- Referral to external agencies
- Family Counselling
- Academic Support
- Referral to culturally and/or linguistically diverse support services.

## 12. Family Violence Information & Child Information Sharing Scheme

The Victorian Governments Family Violence Information Sharing Scheme (FVISS) and Child Information Sharing Scheme (CISS) enable the sharing of confidential information with respect to Children when they meet a relevant threshold. For information pertaining to the FVISS and/or CISS please see our Privacy Policy available here

## 13. Managing Risks to Child Safety and Wellbeing

The School identifies, assesses and manages 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.

A Child Safety Risk Register is used to record any identified risks related to child abuse alongside actions in place to manage those risks.

The School's leadership team will monitor and evaluate the effectiveness of the actions in the Child Safety Risk Register at least annually.

## 14. Establishing a Culturally Safe Environment

The School is 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.

## 15. Student Empowerment

The School works 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 Behavioural Expectations Framework, Code of Conduct and our core values.

The School inform students of their rights 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 by contacting their Head of School.

When the School gathers 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.



## 16. Family Engagement

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, we are committed to providing families and community with accessible information about our School's child safe policies and practices and involving them in our approach to child safety and wellbeing.

## 17. 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.

The School 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+

## 18. Suitable Staff and Volunteers

This Policy, together with Our *Child Safe Code of Conduct* and School policies, outlines expected standards of behaviour of staff members at the School when interacting with children and young people. Conduct which breaches these policies will constitute reportable conduct under this Policy. Where staff are under investigation for breach of this Policy, or for any reason that would question their suitability to work with children, they will be immediately stood down until such time that an investigation can be completed.

The School applies robust child safe recruitment, induction, training, and supervision practices to ensure that all staff, contractors, and volunteers understand their child safe and wellbeing obligations, and are suitable to work with children.

All volunteers and contractors are required to comply with our Child Safety and Wellbeing Policy which describes how we assess the suitability of prospective volunteers and contractors. Expectations in relation to child safety and wellbeing induction, training, supervision and management will be dependent on the role of the volunteer or contractors.

## 19. Staff Training

All newly appointed staff are expected to participate in our child safety and wellbeing induction, which includes:

- Being familiar with this Policy, the Child Safe Code of Conduct, the Staff and Student Professional Boundaries Policy and procedures for responding to and reporting suspected child abuse (including Mandatory Reporting)
- Understand how to access School policies and procedures
- Where to get support and assistance for Child Safety and Wellbeing matters





The School will conduct refresher training for staff on an annual basis to reinforce the School's Child Safety and Wellbeing Policy and to equip them with the skills and knowledge to maintain a child safe environment.

## 20. Complaints

The School fosters a culture that encourages and expects staff, volunteers, students, parents, and the School community to raise concerns and complaints. We have clear pathways for raising complaints or concerns and responding to these. This is documented in our School's *Complaints Resolution Policy*.

If there is an incident, disclosure, allegation or suspicion of an offence, the School will act upon this and follow the procedures for responding to and reporting allegations of child abuse as outlined within this Policy.

## 21. Review

We will regularly review and update this Policy in line with legislative requirements or at least every two years, whichever comes first. The School will assess complaints, concerns and incidents to improve our Policy and practices.

## 22. Further Information

Questions or further information about this Policy should be directed to the Principal.

## 23. Definitions

The following terms within this Policy have specific definitions:

Term	Meaning
Child	a child or young person who is under the age of 18.
Child safety	matters related to protecting all children from child abuse, managing the risk of child abuse, providing support to a child at risk of child abuse, and responding to suspicions, incidents, disclosures or allegations of child abuse
Child abuse	Includes: (a) Any act committed against a child involving a sexual offence and/or grooming offences under section 49m(1) of the Crimes Act 1958 (b) The infliction, on a child, of physical violence and/or serious emotional or psychological harm (c) The serious neglect of a child including exposure to family violence
Child-connected work	means work authorised by the School Council and performed by an adult in a school environment while children are present or reasonably expected to be present
Contractor	A contracted service provider (whether or not a body corporate or any other person is an intermediary) engaged by the School to perform child-related work.



School environment	Any of the following physical, online or virtual places, used during or outside school hours:  (a) The School premises including its boarding premises  (b) Online or virtual school environments made available or authorised by the school governing authority for use by a child or student (including email, intranet systems, software applications, collaboration tools, and online services)  (c) Other locations provided by the school or through a third-party provider for a child or student to use including, but not limited to, locations used for camps, approved homestay accommodation, delivery of education and training such as registered training organisations, TAFEs or another school and sporting events, excursions, competitions other events.
Staff	a person who is directly employed by the School
Student	a person who is enrolled at or attends the School.
Volunteer	a person who performs work without remuneration or reward for the School in the School environment

### Relevant references and documents

*Ministerial Order 1359*

*Child Wellbeing and Safety Act 2005*

*Child, Youth and Families Act 2005 (Vic)*

*Worker Screening Act 2020*

*Peninsula Grammar School – Child Safe Code of Conduct*

*Peninsula Grammar School – Child Safety Reporting Procedure*

*Peninsula Grammar School – Staff and Student Professional Boundaries Policy*

*Peninsula Grammar School – Working with Children Check Policy*

*Peninsula Grammar School – Bullying Prevention and Intervention Policy*

*Peninsula Grammar School – Behavioural Expectations Framework*

### Document Control

Document Name	PGS Child Safety and Wellbeing Policy		
Version	1 - 2023.5		
Authorised Date	18/05/2023		
Review by	18/05/2025		
Document Type	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Policy	<input type="checkbox"/> Procedure	<input type="checkbox"/> Other
Document Scope	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Staff	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Student	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Parent/Community
Document Authoriser	Board of Directors		
Document Owner	Principal		
Communication Access	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Staff	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Student	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Parent/Community
Published Location(s)	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Zenith (Internal)	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Zenith (Community)	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Website