

Muhammadiyah Australia College

CHILD SAFETY POLICY



Endorsed on:	April 2026
Endorsed by:	Board of Directors
Next Review:	April 2027

Purpose

The Muhammadiyah Australia College 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 has the following specific aims

- To ensure the College implements the requirements of Ministerial Order 1359 – Implementing the Child Safe Standards – Managing the risks of child abuse in schools and boarding premises.
- To identify College leadership who will help to embed an organisational culture of child safety.
- To demonstrate the College's commitment to creating a child safe environment.
- To raise awareness within the College of the importance of child safety.
- To ensure the promotion of:
 - the cultural safety of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children, where applicable
 - the cultural safety of children from culturally or linguistically diverse backgrounds
 - the safety of children with a disability, with gender identity or sexual orientation issues or who are impacted by economic disadvantage or family violence
- To empower children who are key stakeholders within our organisation.
- To ensure the College discharges its duty of care towards children.
- To raise awareness of the importance to child safety with staff and volunteers.
- To protect children and reduce any opportunities for abuse or harm to occur.

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.

The College implements all Child Safe Standards:

- Standard 1 - Culturally safe environments
- Standard 2 – Leadership, governance and culture
- Standard 3 – Child and student empowerment
- Standard 4 – Family engagement
- Standard 5 – Diversity and equity
- Standard 6 – Suitable staff and volunteers
- Standard 7 – Complaints Processes
- Standard 8 – Child Safety knowledge, skills and awareness
- Standard 9 – Child safety in physical and online environments
- Standard 10 – Review of child safety practices
- Standard 11 – Implementation of child safety practices

Scope

This policy:

- applies to all College 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 meanings:

Child

A child or young person who is under the age of 18 years.

Child abuse

Any act committed against a child involving a sexual offence or an offence under section 49M of the Crimes Act 1958 (grooming); or the infliction on a child, of physical violence or serious emotional or psychological harm; or the serious neglect of a child.

Child-connected work

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

Child-related work

This refers to work which usually involves (or is likely to involve) direct contact with a child, irrespective of whether that contact is supervised or not, and in any of the child-related occupational fields listed in the Worker Screening Act 2020. Direct contact includes oral, written or electronic communication as well as face-to-face and physical contact. ‘Child-related work’ may be either paid or unpaid (voluntary).

Child safety

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

School environment

This means any of the following physical, online or virtual places, used during or outside school hours: a campus of the school; 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); other locations provided by the school or through a third-party provider for a child or student to use including, but not limited to, locations used for camps, sporting events, excursions, competitions or other events.

School staff

This refers to, in a non-Government school, an individual working in a school environment who is:

1. directly engaged or employed by a school governing authority.
2. a contracted service provider (whether or not a body corporate or any other person is an intermediary) engaged by the school governing authority to perform child-related work.
3. a minister of religion, a religious leader or an employee or officer of a religious body associated with the school.

School governing authority

This means

1. the proprietor of a school, including a person authorised to act for or on behalf of the proprietor.
2. the governing body for a school (however described), as authorised by the proprietor of a school or the Education Training Reform Act (ETR Act).
3. the Principal, as authorised by the proprietor of a school, the school governing body, or the ETR Act.

School governing body

Governing body is defined in the Education and Training Reform Regulations 2017 to mean, in relation to a non-government school, the person or body responsible for the governance, conduct or management of the school.

Student

Student means a person who is enrolled at or attends the school.

Volunteer

Volunteer means a person who performs work without remuneration or reward for the school.

Statement of commitment to child safety

1. We are committed to providing an environment where students are safe, happy and empowered in accordance with Ministerial Order No. 1359.
2. We support and respect all children, as well as our staff and volunteers.
3. We are committed to the safety, participation and empowerment of all children.
4. We have a zero-tolerance policy towards child abuse, and all allegations and safety concerns will be treated very seriously and consistently with our robust policies and procedures.
5. We have legal and moral obligations to contact authorities when we are worried about a child's safety, which we follow rigorously.
6. We are committed to preventing child abuse and identifying risks early and removing and reducing these risks.
7. We have robust recruitment and induction practices to reduce the risk of child abuse among new and existing board members, staff and volunteers.
8. We are committed to regularly training and educating our board members, staff and volunteers on child abuse risks.
9. We are committed to the cultural safety of Aboriginal children, the cultural safety of children from culturally and/or linguistically diverse backgrounds and providing a safe environment for children with a disability.
10. We take all allegations and concerns very seriously and respond to them consistently in line with mandatory reporting.
11. We proactively review and manage child safety risks by establishing a contextualized child safety risk register and internal controls to ensure monitoring occurs and issues are addressed in an appropriate manner and reviewed by the Board.
12. We communicate our Child Safety Statement via our website; posters displayed at the College site and at staff meetings and information sessions.

Roles and responsibilities

College leadership team

The College leadership team (comprising the Principal, Business Manager) is responsible for embedding a culture of child safety and ensuring that policies and practices are effectively developed and implemented in accordance with Ministerial Order 1359.

The Leadership Team will:

- take the lead in protecting children from abuse
- treat all allegations of child abuse and child safety concerns seriously and act to comply with all legal requirements including reporting suspicions to Victoria Police or the Department of Families, Fairness and Housing Child Protection as soon as practicable
- facilitate regular professional learning for staff and volunteers to build understanding of child safety, cultural safety, student wellbeing and prevention of, and responding to abuse
- 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.

College staff and volunteers

All staff and volunteers will:

- participate in child safety and wellbeing induction and training provided by the College, and always follow child safety policies and procedures
- act in accordance with our Child Safety Code of Conduct
- identify and raise concerns about child safety issues in accordance with our Child Safety Mandatory and other Reporting Obligations Policy and Procedures, 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.

College Board

College board members will:

- promote a child safe culture with the broader school community
- approve updates to the Child Safety Code of Conduct
- model appropriate child safe behaviours and act in accordance with the Child Safety Code of Conduct
- participate in annual child safe training provided by the College
- ensure that child safety is a regular agenda item at Board meetings to ensure that a culture of child safety is being embedded and Board members are informed and understand the issues
- when appointing new Board members, ensure that selection, supervision, and management practices are child safe

Specific staff child safety responsibilities

Muhammadiyah Australia College has nominated the Principal to lead and implement our child safety policies and practices, including staff and volunteer training.

Our Principal is the first point of contact for child safety concerns or queries and for coordinating responses to child safety incidents and is responsible for monitoring the school's compliance with the Child Safety Policy and informing the school community about this policy and making it publicly available.

The College Board monitors the Child Safety Risk Register.

Child Safety Code of Conduct

The College has developed a Child Safety Code of Conduct for staff, teaching and non-teaching, volunteers and college Board which specifies the standards of conduct and care required when working and interacting with children. It sets our expectations for appropriate behaviours between adults and students. It also clarifies behaviours that are not acceptable in our physical and online environments. The code explicitly prohibits any staff member from communicating with children on social media.

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.

Managing risks to child safety and wellbeing

The College has identified, assessed and is managing risks to child safety and wellbeing in the school environment through our child safety and wellbeing policies, procedures and practices. We also use activity specific risk registers, such as those we develop for excursions, off-site overnight camps 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 leadership team monitors and evaluates the effectiveness of the actions in the Child Safety Risk Register at least annually and reports to the College Board regularly.

Standard 1 Establishing a culturally safe environment

Muhammadiyah Australia College values diversity and will be inclusive of all children and families. In particular, the College will establish a culture that supports cultural safety for Aboriginal children, for example by working in partnership with Aboriginal peoples and Aboriginal community-controlled organisations, if applicable.

The College understands that for Aboriginal people, culture is about family networks, Elders and ancestors. It is about relationships, languages, dance, ceremony and heritage. Culture is about spiritual connection to lands and waters. It is the way stories are passed on and knowledge given to babies and children. It is how people are greeted. It is looking for connection. It is about all the parts that bind us together.

The College recognises that creating a physical environment that is respectful of Aboriginal culture is an important first step. Symbols and images that surround a place send an important message

about respect. By acknowledging the Country in which the College is located, we are demonstrating our willingness to learn, understand and respond to the diversity of Aboriginal cultures.

Standard 2 – Leadership, Governance and Culture

The Muhammadiyah Australia College Board has overall responsibility for ensuring the safety and wellbeing of children in our College. The College’s policies, management practices, learning programs, events and celebrations and other activities are underpinned by the Child Safe Standards. The Board undertakes annual training on the Child Safety Code of Conduct, the Child Safety Policy and the Mandatory and other Reporting Obligations policy.

On a day to day level, the Principal and Leadership Team are responsible for building an environment where children feel respected, valued and encouraged to reach their full potential and for ensuring children in their care are safe from abuse or harm.

Together the Board, the Principal and the Leadership team are responsible for raising awareness of child safety across the College by:

- promoting child safety policies and practices with staff, parents, volunteers and students
- providing relevant training and professional development to staff and the Board about child safety, Child Safe Standards and ensuring responding and reporting obligations are understood and implemented
- identifying and managing child safety risks and actively monitoring these through the Child Safety Risk Register
- publishing or making available the Child Safety Policy, Child Safe Code of Conduct and other relevant policies, processes or procedures
- annually review the Child Safety Policy implementing any improvements or changes to practice.

Standard 3 - Child and Student Empowerment

Muhammadiyah Australia College actively supports child safety and wellbeing by working 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.

We reinforce respectful relationships between students and encourage strong friendships and peer support to ensure a sense of belonging through our Respectful Relationships program and reinforcing our student Code of Conduct and modelling our school values. We also encourage student representative council which is made up of representatives from each year level and meet with the Principal once a term.

We aim to empower students to understand their rights, recognise what abuse is and understand any form of abuse is “not okay” and that they can do something about it. We provide children with age-appropriate information about the standard of care they are entitled to, particularly about their rights. We teach children how to raise concerns, make complaints or let someone know they feel unsafe. We regularly check with parents and children that they are aware of relevant child safe policies and procedures and that the child safety culture is visible.

The College uses existing forums as well as providing other opportunities for input from children. Ideas are sought by the completion of the annual Student Attitude to the College Survey, through informal discussions with small groups led by class teachers.

Standard 4 - Family engagement

Our families and the College 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.

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:

- providing information through the College website, newsletters, direct communications (emails, letters, social media), student, staff, and parent meetings etc.
- making available our child safety policies and procedures to students and parents on our website or from the College Administration Reception/Office.
- through our Newsletter, informing 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.
- displaying PROTECT Child Safety posters across the College and in the Staff Room.

Standard 5 - Diversity and equity

At Muhammadiyah Australia College we recognise that students have a right to participate freely and equally in all aspects of their life regardless of their background, characteristics or beliefs. We acknowledge that some students are at a higher risk of harm and ensure that we act responsibly and flexibly to ensure their safety. This includes students who may have a physical or intellectual disability or who are neurodiverse or have learning or behavioural challenges such as dyslexia or ADHD.

We recognise that every child has unique skills, strengths and experiences to draw on and focus on developing the unique talents of each child.

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, where applicable
- children from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds
- children and young people with disabilities
- children impacted by economic disadvantage or family violence
- children dealing with gender identity or sexual orientation issues.

Our Diversity and Equity Policy provide more information about the measures we have in place to support diversity and equity. Diversity and equity is also supported through our Duty of Care Policy, Bullying and Harassment Policy, Student Behaviour Policy and Child Safety Code of Conduct.

Standard 6 - Suitable staff and volunteers

Muhammadiyah Australia College applies robust child safe recruitment, induction, training, and supervision practices to ensure that all staff, contractors, and volunteers are suitable to work with children.

Our staff Recruitment Policy details our approach to the recruitment, selection and induction of all employees, teaching and non-teaching, to ensure the College only engages staff who are motivated and qualified to work with children and young people and who are of good character.

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

- sight, verify and record the person's Working with Children clearance or VIT registration
- collect and record:
 - proof of the person's identity
 - professional or other qualifications
 - the person's history of working with children
 - references that address suitability for the job and working with children.

We induct all newly appointed staff and volunteers through an induction program which has a focus on:

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

Staff and volunteers who are engaged in child-connected work will be supervised appropriately to ensure that their behaviour towards children is safe and appropriate. They will be monitored and assessed to ensure their continuing suitability for child-connected work. This will be done by periodic review of staff performance through the Professional Learning Plan designed for each staff member, discussions with volunteers on their conduct and interaction with children. College leadership will also consider feedback from other staff, parental feedback as well as observations of performance made by College leaders and other team members.

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

All volunteers are required to comply with our Child Safety Volunteers Policy, which describes how we engage with and manage prospective volunteers and outlines expectations in relation to child safety and wellbeing induction and training, and supervision and management.

Standard 7 - Complaints and reporting processes

Muhammadiyah Australia College encourages openness, accountability and transparency which encourages staff, volunteers, students, parents, and the College community to raise concerns and complaints. A transparent complaints process makes it more difficult for breaches of the code of conduct, misconduct or abuse to occur and remain hidden.

We have established a process for raising complaints and concerns and responding for both general complaints and complaints relating to child safety matters. These are documented in our Complaints Management Policy and Child Safety Complaints Policy.

If there is an incident, disclosure, allegation or suspicion of child abuse, all staff and volunteers (including College Board members) must follow our Child Safety Mandatory and other Reporting Obligations Policy and Procedures. 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.

The College manages any incident, disclosure, allegation or suspicion by following:

- 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

The Principal manages any reportable conduct matters according to our stated policy.

Standard 8 - 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, 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 child safety 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 supporting colleagues who disclose harm
- understanding reporting obligations including mandatory reporting
- 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.

College board training and education

To ensure our Board 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, Board members will be 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
- our child safety policies, procedures, codes and practices.

Standard 9 – Child safety in physical and online environments

Muhammadiyah Australia College acknowledges that risk identification and management is an important part of keeping students safe at school and protecting them from harm. We recognise that both physical and online environments are potential areas of risk and have implemented practices and policies to actively manage risk.

The College ensures the physical and online safety of students in the following ways:

- Actively supervising students in the physical environment of the College including before, during and after school
- Supervising students in the classroom and during recesses and lunch periods, while on excursion, at camp or at school arranged events
- Risk assessing excursions, camps and internal and external events and activities
- Implementing the Digital Learning Policy and ensure Acceptable Use Agreements are in place
- Utilising centralised programs to filter out unacceptable online materials and programs
- Maintaining the Child Safe Risk Register and developing strategies to minimise risks
- Using CCTV as a deterrent to inappropriate behaviours and to support a safe environment
- Implementing rigorous selection and recruitment processes for all staff and volunteers
- Ensuring staff follow College codes of conduct and any professional codes of conduct or ethics relating to their occupational category
- Reinforcing the need for teachers and other staff to engage with students and parents in a friendly yet professional manner at all times and not to form inappropriate personal relationships.

Standard 10 – Review of child safety practices

Muhammadiyah Australia College is committed to a culture of continuous improvement and has established processes for the review and ongoing improvement of our child safe policies, procedures, and practices to ensure currency and efficacy.

We will:

- review our policy annually or after any significant child safety incident
- analyse any complaints, concerns, and safety incidents to improve policy and practice
- facilitate meetings with staff and volunteers to obtain feedback on the policy, our practices and our approach to identifying and reducing risk factors in our environment
- seek feedback from parents and students through surveys or questionnaires
- act with transparency and share pertinent learnings and review outcomes with staff, volunteers and our community.

Standard 11 – Implementation of child safety practices

In accordance with the requirement of this standard Muhammadiyah Australia College implements a range of policies and practices designed to ensure the College offers an environment that is safe for children and young people.

Amongst these are policies, practices and procedures which ensure all Child Safe Standards:

- are understood and implemented by all relevant staff and volunteers
- are modelled by College leaders including the College Board
- are documented, accessible and easy to understand

- are informed by best practice models and stakeholder consultation.

Privacy and information sharing

We collect, use, and disclose information about children and their families in accordance with Victorian privacy laws, and other relevant laws. For information on how we do this refer to our 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 our Records Management Policy.

Communications

The College will communicate this to the College community through:

- the College website
- displaying PROTECT posters in staff rooms, the first aid room and around the school
- updates in the College Newsletter
- ensuring that child safety is a regular agenda item at staff and leadership meetings, student wellbeing meetings and College Board meetings.

Relevant policies

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

- Bullying and Harassment Policy
- Child Safety Mandatory and Other Reporting Obligations Policy and Procedures
- Child Safety Code of Conduct
- Complaints Management Policy
- Child Safety Complaints Policy
- Child Safety Diversity and Equity Policy
- Digital Learning Policy
- Child Safety Visitors Policy
- Child Safety Volunteers Policy

Resources

- [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](#)