



NORWOOD SECONDARY COLLEGE CHILD SAFETY POLICY

RATIONALE

Norwood Secondary College is committed to preventing child abuse, identifying risks early, and removing and reducing these risks. We have a zero tolerance of child abuse, and all allegations and safety concerns will be treated very seriously and consistently with our robust policies and procedures. We support and respect all children, as well as our staff and volunteers. We are committed to the cultural safety of Aboriginal children, and children from culturally and/or linguistically diverse backgrounds, and to providing a safe environment for children with a disability.

Norwood Secondary College's commitment to child safety and wellbeing includes all students, whilst participating in school activities, both during and outside of school hours. This includes activities conducted outside of the school environment, such as excursions, camps and sporting events, as well as within online school environments, including email and intranet systems. Norwood Secondary College recognises that the wellbeing of students is the responsibility of all staff and that staff must report and respond to any concerns regarding possible sexual, physical, psychological and emotional abuse or neglect of a child, in accordance with the relevant policies and procedures.

For the purpose of this document, child abuse refers to any act committed against a child involving a sexual offence or grooming, physical violence, serious emotional or psychological harm, or serious neglect.

AIMS

- To support, encourage and enable school staff, parents and students to understand, identify, discuss and report child safety matters
- To actively work to listen to and empower all children
- To embed a culture of child safety within the College community that supports all students and takes into account the diversity of all students, including the needs of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students, students from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds, students with disabilities, and students who are vulnerable
- To define the roles and responsibilities of the College and staff in protecting the safety and wellbeing of students
- To regularly train and educate our staff and volunteers about child abuse risks
- To support and assist students and staff in the process of reporting suspected abuse

IMPLEMENTATION

1. The school will handle child safety concerns in a sensitive, confidential and timely fashion and will comply with all requirements set out in *Ministerial Order No. 870* and the Child Safe Standards.
2. Norwood Secondary College will:
 - Ensure staff have the appropriate qualifications to work within the school and that reasonable efforts are made to gather, verify and record the following information about a person whom it proposes to engage to perform child-connected work:
 - Working with Children Check status, or similar check; (a Volunteer Register and VIT Register will be kept)
 - Proof of personal identity and any professional or other qualifications; (a Teacher Qualifications Register will be kept)
 - The person's history of work involving children; and
 - References that address the person's suitability for the job and working with children.

- Monitor and assess a job occupant's continuing suitability for child-connected work
 - Induct new school staff into the school's policies, codes, practices, and procedures governing child safety and child-connected work
 - Brief staff on their responsibilities in relation to promoting child safety within the college and reporting suspected child abuse, on an annual basis
 - Ensure staff complete mandatory reporting training as per DE&T requirements
 - Support staff that make a mandatory report regarding suspected child abuse
 - Identify and document any situations or environments where there is a risk of child abuse occurring and take actions to minimise this
 - Ensure that any inappropriate behaviour will be reported through appropriate channels, including the Department of Health and Human Services and Victoria Police, depending on the severity and urgency of the matter.
3. All staff are expected to:
- Abide by The *Victorian Teaching Profession Code of Conduct*, and adhere to the expectations described in the school's *Duty of Care Policy* and *Staff Code of Practice*, as described in the Staff Handbook
 - Ensure a zero tolerance of corporal punishment
 - Be aware of and act upon the processes outlined in the Student Engagement and Inclusion Policy
 - Treat students with respect and foster an environment that is safe, pleasant and supportive, free from bullying, harassment, violence, discrimination or intimidation as described in the *Student Engagement and Inclusion Policy – Rights and Responsibilities*
 - Abide by the College's Mandatory Reporting Policy
 - Report all concerns about student wellbeing matters directly to either Head of Year Level/Coordinators and/or Student Wellbeing Coordinator
 - Use COMPASS to check for 'information' about students considered 'at risk' and use the chronicle feature to document concerns about students.
4. All volunteers are expected to:
- Provide a current Working with Children Check and supply evidence of this prior to working with students
 - Abide by the regulations as stipulated on the Working with Children Website: <http://www.workingwithchildren.vic.gov.au>
 - Abide by our code of conduct, required when working with children
 - Work with students in the presence of other staff members (teachers/Education support)
 - Electronically sign in at the General Office for every school visit and wear a Visitor's sticker
 - Report any suspected incidents of child abuse to their direct supervisor, teacher, Head of Year Level/Coordinator, Student Wellbeing Coordinator or any Principal Class Officer.
5. If an adult has a reasonable belief that an incident has occurred, then they must report the incident. Factors contributing to reasonable belief may be:
- A child states that they, or someone they know, has been abused (noting that sometimes the child may in fact be referring to themselves)
 - Behaviour consistent with that of an abuse victim is observed (please see: An Overview of the Victorian child safe standards: www.dhs.gov.au)
 - Someone else has raised a suspicion of abuse but is unwilling to report it
 - Observing suspicious behaviour.

RELATED POLICIES:

Mandatory Reporting

Student Engagement and Inclusion

Program for Students with Disabilities

POLICY DRAFTED BY: J Harris

DATE RATIFIED BY COLLEGE COUNCIL: July 2018

REVIEW DATE: July 2019