

1 Purpose

The purpose of the Child Safety Policy is to outline SuniTAFE’s commitment to the safety, protection, participation and empowerment of all children and young people, in accordance with our obligation to create a child safe organisation.

The Institute supports and respects all children, as well as staff and students, and is committed to providing a framework to ensure children at the Institute are safe from abuse and neglect, and that where concerns about a child or young person are identified, appropriate reporting is undertaken.

2 Scope

This policy applies to all current and prospective Institute directors, staff, students, contractors, volunteers and community members.

Support & Guidance for responding to child safety concerns	
1.	If there is an immediate risk, threat or emergency to the safety of a child or young person, call 000.
2.	SuniTAFE’s Child Safety Procedure outlines steps for responding to Child Safety concerns and provides a simple reporting flowchart.
3.	If at any time you are unsure about reporting measures or the initial risk assessment, support and guidance can be sought from any Child Safety Officer by contacting the SuniTAFE Child Safety Officers on 03 5022 3995.

3 Definitions

Acronym/Term	Definition
CEO	Chief Executive Officer
CCYP	Victorian Commission for Children and Young People
Child and/or young person	Anyone aged under 18 years
Child Abuse	Includes <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. any act committed against a child involving: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> i) A sexual offence; or ii) grooming offences under section 49M (1) of the Crimes Act 1958; and b. The infliction, on a child, of; <ul style="list-style-type: none"> i) Physical violence; or ii) Serious emotional or psychological harm; and c. Serious neglect of a child.
Child Safety Officer	Designated staff who are appropriately trained and supported to respond to concerns related to the safety of a child or young person. All Student Support Services staff members at individual campuses are Child Safety Officers.
DFFH	Victorian Department of Families, Fairness and Housing
Grooming	Grooming is when a person engages in predatory conduct to prepare a child or young person for sexual activity at a later time.

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	Grooming can include communicating or attempting to befriend or establish a relationship or other emotional connection with the child or their parent or carer.
LGBTIQA+	Refers to people of diverse sexual orientations, gender identities, and sex characteristics, including but not limited to lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, intersex, queer/questioning, and asexual individuals
Mandatory reporters	The following are mandatory reporters in Victoria: <ul style="list-style-type: none">• registered medical practitioners• nurses• midwives• registered teachers and early childhood teachers• school principals• school counsellors• police officers• out of home care workers (excluding voluntary foster and kinship carers)• early childhood workers• youth justice workers• registered psychologists• people in religious ministry
The Institute	Sunraysia Institute of TAFE (SuniTAFE)

4 Policy

4.1 In respect to child safety, the Institute is committed to:

- 4.1.1 Zero Tolerance: Actively promoting a zero tolerance for child abuse with all allegations and safety concerns being treated seriously and consistently within the child safety framework.
- 4.1.2 Legal and Ethical Compliance: Compliance with legal, regulatory, moral and ethical obligations regarding child safety.
- 4.1.3 Safe Recruitment Practices: Effective recruitment and human resources practices that consider child safety applicable to directors, staff, volunteers and contractors.
- 4.1.4 Training and Education: Regular training and education for directors, staff, volunteers, contractors and students on child abuse risks and how to raise concerns, including reporting processes.
- 4.1.5 Support for Vulnerable Groups: Respecting and supporting diversity by recognising the unique needs of children and young people who are Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander, from culturally and linguistically diverse communities, have a disability, are unable to live at home, or identify as part of the LGBTIQA+ community.
- 4.1.6 Equitable Access: Providing equitable access to support services, feedback channels, and complaints processes through culturally safe, accessible, and adaptive methods.
- 4.1.7 Cultural Safety and Empowerment: Promoting cultural safety and empowerment by actively engaging children and young people in decision-making, valuing their insights, and encouraging them to speak up about matters that affect them.
- 4.1.8 Inclusive Environment: Maintaining a discrimination-free environment where all children and young people feel safe, respected, and affirmed in their identity.

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- 4.1.9 Accessible Support Channels: Providing children and young people with access to information, support, feedback and complaints processes in ways that ensure cultural safety, accessibility and employ any adaptive or assistive methods necessary.
- 4.1.10 Safe Physical and Online Environments: Promoting and encouraging physical and situational environments (including online environments) that are safe for children and young people, including the elimination of unnecessary and unsupervised free time for children and young people on campus.
- 4.1.11 Reporting Procedures: Maintaining established procedures for the reporting of any inappropriate behaviour and reportable offences through the appropriate channels.
- 4.1.12 Risk Management: Proactive management of risks to child safety through identifying and assessing risks, and implementing processes to reduce or remove these risks.

4.2 Information and Inclusion Commitments

- 4.2.1 SuniTAFE is committed to ensuring that all children and young people enrolled in its programs, and those who support them, are informed, included, and empowered in relation to child safety. To support this:
 - a) SuniTAFE's commitment to child safety will be published on our website, along with this policy.
 - b) Enrolled children and young people will be provided with accessible information about SuniTAFE's child safety commitments, including how to raise concerns and who to speak with if they feel unsafe.
 - c) Additional support and tailored communication will be provided to children and young people from diverse backgrounds to ensure cultural safety and inclusion.
 - d) Families and carers may request information about SuniTAFE's child safety approach, including policies and procedures.
 - e) Contractors attending campuses where children may be present will be informed of relevant child safety expectations and any required probity measures.

4.3 Roles and Responsibilities for Child Safety at SuniTAFE

4.3.1 Board of Directors

- a) Governance Oversight: Ensure compliance with the Child Safe Standards and relevant legislation.
- b) Policy Endorsement: Approve the Child Safety Policy and monitor its implementation.
- c) Risk Management: Have oversight of annual organisational risk assessments related to child safety.
- d) Accountability: Hold executive leadership accountable for fostering a child-safe culture.

4.3.2 Executive Leadership

- a) Leadership Commitment: Champion a child-safe culture across the organisation.
- b) Strategic Direction: Integrate child safety into strategic planning and operations.
- c) Resource Allocation: Ensure adequate resources for training, reporting systems, and support services.

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- d) Compliance: Develop organisational controls and compliance systems that ultimately prevent, detect and respond to child abuse and neglect in accordance with obligations.
- e) Reporting: Ensure timely reporting of information to the Board regarding child safety matters including incidents, new and emerging risks and policy amendments.

4.3.3 Child Safety Committee

- a) Promote Culture: Champion awareness and a positive culture of child safety across the organisation.
- b) Review and Improve: Regularly review policies, procedures, and practices, using analysis of data and information (including insights from complaints, incidents, feedback and compliance reviews).
- c) Engagement: ensure there are mechanisms in place for stakeholder engagement, consultation, feedback and review of relevant systems, policies and procedures.
- d) Identify training opportunities: Recommend child safety education and training initiatives.
- e) Monitor Risk: Review and advise Executive Leadership on the organisation's Child Safety Risk assessment.

4.3.4 Child Safety Officers

- a) Primary Contact: Serve as the first point of contact for concerns or disclosures.
- b) Reporting: Provide support and guidance and work collaboratively with internal and external stakeholders through the reporting processes when a concern, allegation or disclosure of child abuse or neglect arises.
- c) Escalation: Ensure timely reporting of information to Executive Leadership regarding child safety matters including reportable incidents and new and emerging risks.
- d) Support and Guidance: Assist staff and students in applying child safety procedures.
- e) Training and Awareness: Coordinate training opportunities for staff and maintain awareness of obligations.
- f) Monitoring and Records: Track incidents and ensure policy compliance.
- g) Improvement: Present new ideas, best practice options, or up-to-date information on sector-wide research and initiatives.

4.3.5 People & Culture

- a) Recruitment: selection and screening of employees and volunteers in accordance with legislative requirements.
- b) Induction and Onboarding: Embed child safety principles into induction programs for all new staff, and volunteers including clear expectations around conduct, reporting obligations, and cultural safety.
- c) Support and Guidance for Managers: Support managers in identifying and responding to breaches by staff or volunteers regarding child safety expectations.

4.3.6 Managers and Supervisors

- a) Local Implementation: Embed child safety practices in daily operations.

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- b) Supervision of Children & Young People: Provide supervision to specific cohorts of children and young people as required.
- c) Staff Support: Ensure team members are trained and understand their responsibilities.
- d) Conduct Monitoring: Identify and report any breaches of the Child Safety Policy and Procedures.

4.3.7 All Directors, Staff, Contractors, and Volunteers

- a) Policy and Procedure: Adhere to the Institute's Child Safety Policy and Child Safety Procedure and Appropriate Workplace Behaviour Policy
- b) Duty of Care: Maintain a safe environment and uphold the commitment to child safety.
- c) Training Compliance: Complete required training and adhere to the Child Safety Policy and Procedure.
- d) Listening and Responding: To concerns raised by students, staff or the public, and promptly report concerns or breaches.

4.3.8 Students and Young People

- a) Empowerment: Are encouraged to speak up about anything that makes them feel unsafe.
- b) Awareness: Informed of their rights and available support.
- c) Participation: Are invited to participate in feedback and consultation processes.

4.4 Staff conduct and behaviours regarding children and young people

4.4.1 All directors, staff, students, contractors and volunteers must adhere to the Institute's Appropriate Workplace Behaviour Policy.

4.4.2 The following actions and behaviours are considered to be unacceptable, and will be considered a breach of Institute Policy:

- a) Ignoring, dismissing, or failing to act on any suspected or disclosed child abuse, neglect, or inappropriate behaviour.
- b) Engaging in conduct that breaches professional boundaries, including forming personal relationships with children and young people or initiating contact outside of Institute-related business.
- c) Using language or engaging in discussions that are of a mature, explicit, or inappropriate nature in the presence of children and young people.
- d) Initiating unnecessary physical contact or exhibiting behaviours that may be construed as overly familiar, intrusive, or unsafe.
- e) Placing children and young people at risk through actions or omissions that compromise their safety, wellbeing, or dignity.
- f) Exchanging personal contact details (e.g., phone numbers, social media profiles, personal email addresses) with students or communicating through unofficial channels.
- g) Engaging in any form of sexual conduct or relationship with a child or young person.

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- h) Capturing or sharing images or videos of children or young people without the informed consent of a parent or guardian, and without a legitimate educational or organisational purpose.

4.5 Adhering to legislative obligations for reporting

4.5.1 The Institute will adhere to all legislative requirements relating to child safety including:

- a) Reportable Conduct Scheme: The CEO will investigate and report any allegations of child abuse by an Institute staff member to the CCYP in accordance with the Child Wellbeing and Safety Act 2005 (Vic);
- b) Failure to Disclose: All adults in Victoria who have a reasonable belief that an adult has committed a sexual offence against a child have an obligation to report that information to the Victorian Police. Reporting child sexual abuse is a community-wide responsibility;
- c) Failure to Protect: People of authority at the Institute will commit an offence if they know of a substantial risk of child sexual abuse and have the power or responsibility to reduce or remove the risk, but negligently fail to do so;
- d) Duty of Care: All Institute staff have a duty of care to report to Victorian DFFH's Child Protection Service if they believe on reasonable grounds that a child is in need of protection from physical injury, sexual or emotional/psychological abuse or neglect;
- e) Mandatory Reporting: Under the Children, Youth and Families Act 2005, mandatory reporters must make a report to Child Protection, if in the course of practicing their profession or carrying out duties of their office, position or employment they form a belief on reasonable grounds that a child is in need of protection from physical injury or sexual abuse. Failing to report as required by legislation will result in penalties. See definitions for list of mandatory reporters.

4.6 Feedback and Complaints

4.6.1 The Institute encourages feedback from children, young people, families, staff, and volunteers regarding child safety practices. Feedback can be provided through:

- a) Raising an issue with any member of Institute staff;
- b) Direct communication with Child Safety Officers;
- c) Participation in student forums or consultation sessions.

4.6.2 All complaints and concerns will be managed in accordance with the organisational Complaints and Appeals Policy.

4.6.3 Feedback will be reviewed by the Child Safety Committee and used to inform continuous improvement of child safety systems and practices.

4.7 Monitoring and Evaluation

4.7.1 The Child Safety Committee will conduct annual reviews of child safety systems, policies, and procedures. These reviews will include:

- a) Analysis of complaints, incidents, and breaches
- b) Feedback from children, families, and staff
- c) Assessment of compliance with the Child Safe Standards
- d) Identification of emerging risks and trends

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- 4.7.2 Findings will be reported to Executive Leadership and the Board, and used to guide strategic improvements.

4.8 Privacy and Information Storage

- 4.8.1 The Institute is committed to protecting the privacy and personal information of children and young people in accordance with applicable legislation and internal governance protocols.
- 4.8.2 All records, disclosures, complaints, and reports related to child safety are stored securely, with access restricted to authorised personnel only.
- 4.8.3 Digital and physical records are protected against unauthorised access, loss, or misuse through appropriate security measures.
- 4.8.4 Online platforms used for communication and learning are monitored and assessed for compliance with privacy and child safety standards.
- 4.8.5 Children and young people’s right to privacy is respected in all environments, including during counselling, reporting, and participation in feedback or consultation processes.

5 Legislative Context

- [Child Safe Standards \(Vic\)](#)
- Child Wellbeing and Safety Act 2005 (Vic)
- Children, Youth and Families Act 2005 (Vic)
- Crimes Act 1958 (Vic) – Section 327 & 490
- Crimes Amendment (Protection of Children) Act 2014
- Education and Training Reform Act 2006 (Vic)
- Guidelines for Non-school Providers - Minimum Standards for Registration to provide an Accredited Senior Secondary or Foundation Secondary course
- Standards for Registered Training Organisations (RTOs) 2025 (Cth)

6 Associated documents

6.1.1 Associated Policies

- Appropriate Workplace Behaviour Policy
- Children on Campus Policy
- Complaints and Appeals Policy
- Mobile and Telephone Usage Policy
- Occupational Health, Safety and Wellbeing Policy
- Remuneration, Entitlements, Leave and Benefits Policy
- Student Code of Conduct Policy
- Workplace Learning Policy

6.1.2 Associated Procedures

- Child Safety Reporting Procedure & Flowchart
- Complaints and Appeals Procedure - Students & Community

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- Critical Incident Procedure
- Excursion Procedure
- Family Violence Procedure
- Staff Complaints and Appeals Procedure
- Student Conduct Breach Procedure
- Student Support Services Information and Referral Procedure
- Transporting Students in an Emergency or Exceptional Circumstances Procedure
- Unattended Children in the Institute Procedure

6.1.3 Associated Forms

- Consent to Counsel a Child
- Counsellor and Wellbeing Intake Checklist
- Critical Incident Stress Management (CISM) Report Form
- Incident Report

6.1.4 Other associated documents

- Child Safety Risk Register

7 Responsibility

The Chief Executive Officer (CEO) is responsible for ensuring compliance with this policy, and its associated procedures and systems.

8 Review Frequency

This policy is to be reviewed annually, and remains in force as amended from time to time, until rescinded.

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