

## 1 Purpose

The purpose of the Child Safety Policy is to ensure that all current and prospective directors, staff, students, contractors, volunteers and community members are aware of Sunraysia Institute of TAFE's commitment to the safety, protection, participation and empowerment of all children and young people, and obligation to create a child safe organisation (CSO).

The Institute supports and respects all children, as well as staff and students, and is committed to providing a framework to ensure children are safe from abuse and neglect.

## 2 Scope

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

## 3 Definitions

Acronym/Term	Definition
CCYP	Commission for Children and Young People
CEO	Chief Executive Officer
Child	Anyone aged under 18
Child Abuse	Includes <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a. any act committee against a child involving:               <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>i) A sexual offence; or</li> <li>ii) An offence under section 49 of the Crimes Act 1958 (grooming); and</li> </ol> </li> <li>b. The infliction, on a child, of;               <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>i) Physical violence; or</li> <li>ii) Serious emotional or psychological harm; and</li> </ol> </li> <li>c. Serious neglect of a child.</li> </ol>
Child Safety Officer	The designated person/s with knowledge of child safety issues. All Student Support Services staff members at individual campuses are Child Safety Officers
DFFH	Department of Families, Fairness and Housing (Victoria)
Grooming	Grooming can involve the use of a variety of manipulative and controlling techniques used to build trust or normalise sexually harmful behaviour with the overall aim of facilitating exploitation or preventing disclosure (or both)
Mandatory Reporters	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• registered teachers</li> <li>• early childhood teachers</li> <li>• registered medical practitioners</li> <li>• nurses</li> <li>• midwives</li> </ul>

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	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• school principals</li><li>• school counsellors</li><li>• police officers</li><li>• out of home care workers (excluding voluntary foster and kinship carers)</li><li>• early childhood workers</li><li>• youth justice workers</li><li>• registered psychologists</li><li>• people in religious ministry.</li></ul>
<b>The Institute</b>	Sunraysia Institute of TAFE (SuniTAFE)
<b>QCR</b>	Quality, Compliance and Risk Team
<b>SSS</b>	Student Support Services Team

## 4 Policy

- 4.1** The Child Safe Standards form part of the Victorian Governments response to the 2013 Betrayal of Trust Inquiry. The revised eleven standards are compulsory minimum standards for all organisations providing services for children, to ensure the protection of children from abuse and neglect.
- 4.2** The Institute is committed to ensuring children have the opportunity to participate in education whilst being protected by robust policies, procedures and processes to ensure their safety through zero tolerance and reporting of any form of child abuse.
- 4.3** The Institute’s commitment to child safety:
- 4.3.1 Zero tolerance of child abuse;
  - 4.3.2 Commitment and compliance to legal, moral and ethical obligations regarding child safety;
  - 4.3.3 Effective human resources and recruitment practices for all directors, staff, volunteers and contractors;
  - 4.3.4 Regular training and education of directors, staff, volunteers, contractors and students on child abuse risks and reporting processes;
  - 4.3.5 Established procedures for the reporting of any inappropriate behaviour and reportable offences through the appropriate channels; including Department of Families, Fairness and Housing – Child Protection, Victoria Police and the Commission for Children & Young People.
  - 4.3.6 Proactive management of risks to child safety through identifying and assessing risks, and implementing processes to reduce or remove these risks.

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### 4.4 All staff are responsible for supporting the safety of children at the Institute by:

- 4.4.1 Adhering to the Institute's Child Safety Policy and Child Safety Procedure, and upholding the Institute's commitment to child safety at all times;
- 4.4.2 Listening and responding to any concerns raised by students, staff or the public, when this information alleges any form of child abuse or concern for the safety of a child;
- 4.4.3 Communicating all reports of abuse, neglect or concerns for the safety of a child to one the Institute's Child Safety Officers;
- 4.4.4 Promoting the cultural safety, participation and empowerment of all Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children, culturally and linguistically diverse children, and children with a disability.
- 4.4.5 By providing a safe environment free from discrimination for children who are same-sex attracted, intersex, non-binary and gender diverse.
- 4.4.6 Promoting and encouraging physical and situational environments that are safe for children including open, well-lit areas that are frequented by staff and students. Eliminate unnecessary free time for children on campus and unnecessary one-on-one time with children. Report concerns about physical or situational environments to the Institute's Manager Work Health & Safety.

### 4.5 Institute staff must not:

- 4.5.1 Ignore or disregard any suspected or disclosed child abuse;
- 4.5.2 Develop any personal relationship with children;
- 4.5.3 Exhibit behaviours with children with which may be construed as unnecessarily physical, or initiate unnecessary physical contact with children;
- 4.5.4 Put children at risk of abuse, through any actions or inactions;
- 4.5.5 Initiate and engage in open discussion of a mature or adult nature, use inappropriate language in the presence of children, e.g., swearing, sexually explicit or suggestive language.
- 4.5.6 Exchange personal contact details such as phone numbers, social networking sites or personal email addresses with any student
- 4.5.7 Initiate or seek any contact with children outside the Institute, other than for Institute related business;
- 4.5.8 Engage in any kind of sexual relationship with a child;
- 4.5.9 Photograph or video a child without the consent of the parent or guardian.

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## **5 Equity, Diversity & Inclusion**

- 5.1** The Institute acknowledges the significant diversity that exists within the communities in which we operate and commits to providing support and assistance to all children and young people, especially those who are identified as vulnerable.
- 5.2** The Institute will provide all directors, staff, volunteers and contractors with information and resources to support their understanding about children and young people from diverse backgrounds and circumstances.
- 5.3** Children and young people will have access to information, support, feedback and complaints processes in ways that ensure cultural safety, accessibility and employ any adaptive or assistive methods necessary.
- 5.4** Particular focus will be on support and accessibility for children and young people who are Aboriginal, have a disability, are from CALD communities, young people not able to live at home and members of the LGBTIQ+ communities.

## **6 Culturally Safe Environment**

- 6.1** The Institute commits to providing a culturally safe and inclusive environment across the organisation and within all its policies, procedures, systems and processes.
- 6.2** The Institute acknowledges the strong cultural diversity that exists within the communities in which we operate and commits to cultural safety for all with a particular focus on Aboriginal children and young people, their families and communities.
- 6.3** The Institute will actively provide and support a learning experience where all children and young people can express their culture, enjoy their cultural rights and feel valued for the diversity they bring.
- 6.4** The Institute will provide all directors, staff, volunteers and contractors with information and resources to support acknowledgement, appreciation, understanding and valuing of the strength and importance of culture and cultural safety for Aboriginal children and young people.
- 6.5** The Institute extends its supportive, inclusive and participatory practices to the family and community surrounding children and young people.
- 6.6** The Institute commits to providing a learning experience where there is zero tolerance for racism and that any instances are identified, actively addressed and appropriate consequences are enacted.

## **7 Engagement and Empowerment of Children and Young People**

- 7.1** The Institute will provide children and young people with appropriate information and resources that inform them about the following: -
  - 7.1.1** Empowerment
  - 7.1.2** Their rights and responsibilities,

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- 7.1.3 Their safety
  - 7.1.4 Their participation in systems and processes.
  - 7.1.5 Appropriate and inappropriate behaviour by adults
  - 7.1.6 How to make a complaint or raise an issue
  - 7.1.7 What internal and external supports are available for children and young people.
- 7.2** The Institute commits to a culture of seeking, valuing and actioning the results of participation and feedback from children and young people.
- 7.3** The Institute will have strategies, systems and processes that actively provide opportunities for children and young people to participate, contribute and be informed about resulting actions so as to strengthen their ongoing confidence and future engagement.

## 8 Physical and Online Safety and Wellbeing

- 8.1** The Institute will provide information, training and support to directors, staff, volunteers and contractors to achieve the following: -
- 8.1.1 Directors, staff, volunteers and contractors can identify and mitigate risks in the physical environment for children and young people.
  - 8.1.2 Directors, staff, volunteers and contractors can identify and mitigate risks in the online/ digital environment for children and young people.
  - 8.1.3 That sufficient protections are in place to safeguard a right to privacy, the right to access information, social connectivity and participation in learning opportunities for children and young people.
- 8.2** All formal and informal feedback, complaints or concerns about child safety are documented and provided to the Quality, Compliance and Risk (QCR) Team for analysis, risk assessment, action, stakeholder reporting and cataloguing.
- 8.3** All complaints and concerns will be managed in accordance with the organisational Complaints and Appeals Policy.
- 8.4** Annual Child Safe systems reviews to be conducted by QCR & SSS with a view to: -
- 8.4.1 Evaluating current systems for success, failure, causation and continuous improvement.
  - 8.4.2 The review incorporates the views of children, young people, their families and their communities as key stakeholders.

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## **9 Physical and Online Safety and Wellbeing**

**9.1** The Institute will adhere to all legislative requirements relating to child safety including;

**9.1.1 Reportable Conduct Scheme:** The CEO will investigate and report any allegations of child abuse by an Institute staff member to the Commission for Children and Young People (CCYP) in accordance with the Child Wellbeing and Safety Act 2005 (Vic);

**9.1.2 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;

**9.1.3 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;

**9.1.4 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;

**9.1.5 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

**9.1.5.1** The mandated reporter must;

- a) Make a report to Victorian DFFH's Child Protection Service as soon as practicable after forming a belief.
- b) Make a report each time you become aware of any further reasonable grounds for your belief.
- c) Report as soon as practical and on each occasion, they form belief including reporting even where the CEO does not share their belief.
- d) Ensure that a report has been made in instances where another mandated reporter has undertaken to make the report.

**9.1.5.2** If a mandated reporter is worried about a child's wellbeing but does not believe they are in need of protection, a referral can be made to Child FIRST or The Orange Door. Refer to DFFH's Child Protection Website on mandatory reporting for referring (<https://providers.dhhs.vic.gov.au/mandatory-reporting>).

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## **10 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 senior secondary education providers - Minimum standards for registration to provide an accredited senior secondary course

## **11 Associated documents**

### 11.1.1 Associated Policies

- Children on Campus Policy
- Complaints and Appeals Policy
- Criminal Record Checks Policy
- Excursion Policy
- Family Violence Policy
- Mobile Phone Usage Policy
- Occupational Health and Safety Policy
- Staff Code of Conduct Policy
- Student Code of Conduct Policy
- Working with Children Check Policy
- Workplace Learning Policy

### 11.1.2 Associated Procedures

- Child Safe Procedure
- Staff Complaints and Appeals Procedure
- Complaints and Appeals Procedure - Students & Community
- 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

### 11.1.3 Associated Forms

- Critical Incident Stress Management (CISM) Report Form
- Consent to Counsel a Child

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- Counsellor and Wellbeing Intake Checklist
- Incident Report

### 11.1.4 Other associated documents

- Strategic Risk Register
- Child Protection Contacts - <https://services.dhhs.vic.gov.au/child-protection-contacts>

## 12 Responsibility

The CEO is responsible for ensuring compliance with this policy, and its associated procedures and systems.

## 13 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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