

# STAWELL SECONDARY COLLEGE

## Child Safe Policy

### Rationale:

- This policy reflects the commitment to child safety of Stawell Secondary College. It is reflected in our Child Safety Statement:

### **Child Safety Statement**

At *Stawell Secondary College* we hold the care, safety and wellbeing of children and young people as a central and fundamental responsibility of our school. This commitment is based on our five core values:

Inclusion  
Aspiration  
Resilience  
Participation  
Respect

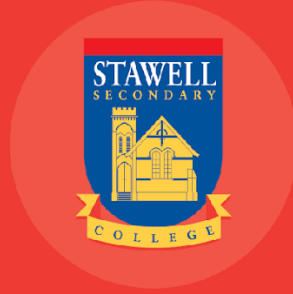
It is self-evident truth that a respectful, excellence aspirational community has, at its core, the care, safety and wellbeing of children and young people. Stawell Secondary College is committed to strict adherence to the standards of Child Safety. Stawell Secondary College has zero tolerance of child abuse in any form.

Stawell Secondary College adopted a Child Safety Statement that articulates our strict adherence to the Child Safe Standards.

Stawell Secondary College will appoint a Child Safety Officer to ensure that every individual and every policy and every practice demonstrates strict adherence to the Child Safe Standards.

### Aims:

- We want children to be safe, happy and empowered. We support and respect all children, as well as our staff and volunteers.
- We are committed to the safety, participation and empowerment of all children.
- We have 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 have legal and moral obligations to contact authorities when we are worried about a child's safety, which we follow rigorously.
- Stawell Secondary College is committed to preventing child abuse and identifying risks early, and removing and reducing these risks.

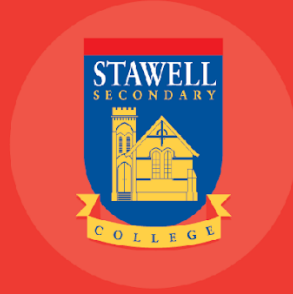


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- Stawell Secondary College has robust human resources and recruitment practices for all staff and volunteers.
- Stawell Secondary College is committed to regularly training and educating our staff and volunteers on child abuse risks.
- We support and respect all children, as well as our staff and volunteers. We are committed to the cultural safety of Aboriginal children, the cultural safety of children from a culturally and/or linguistically diverse backgrounds, and to providing a safe environment for children with a disability.
- We have specific policies, procedures and training in place that support our leadership team, staff and volunteers to achieve these commitments.
- All school staff have an individual responsibility to understand the important and specific role they play individually and collectively to ensure that the wellbeing and safety of all students, including international or fee-paying students, is at the forefront of all they do and every decision they make.
- **If you believe a child is at immediate risk of abuse phone 000.**

## **Definitions:**

Word	Definition
Child	Child means a child or young person who is under the age of 18 years.
Child Abuse	<p>a) any act committed against a child involving:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. a sexual offence</li> <li>2. grooming offences under section 49M(1) of the Crimes Act 1958</li> </ol> <p>b) the infliction, on a child, of:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. physical violence</li> <li>2. serious emotional or psychological harm</li> </ol> <p>c) the serious neglect of a child</p>
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-connected work	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	work which usually involves (or is likely to involve) direct contact with a child, irrespective of whether that contact is



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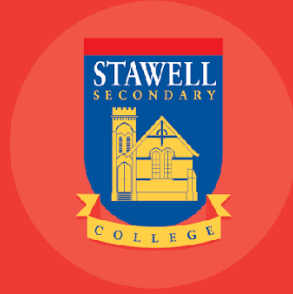
	supervised or not, and in any of the child-related occupational fields listed in the Act.
school environment	<p>a) A campus of the school</p> <p>b) Online or virtual school environments made available or authorised by the school governing authority for use by a child or student (including email, intranet systems, software applications, collaboration tools, and online services)</p> <p>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:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. camps</li> <li>2. approved homestay accommodation;</li> <li>3. delivery of education and training such as registered training organisations, TAFEs, non-school senior secondary providers or another school; or (iv) sporting events, excursions, competitions or other events.</li> </ol>
school staff	<p>employed under Part 2.4 of the ETR Act in the Government teaching service</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• employed under Part 2.3 of the ETR Act</li> </ul> <p>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</p>
school governing authority	<p>a) the proprietor of a school, including a person authorised to act for or on behalf of the proprietor</p> <p>b) the governing body for a school (however described), as authorised by the proprietor of a school or the ETR Act</p> <p>c) the principal, as authorised by the proprietor of a school, the school governing body, or the ETR Act.</p>
student	a person who is enrolled at or attends the school
Volunteer	a person who performs work without remuneration or reward for the school or school boarding premises in the school environment or school boarding premises environment.

## **Implementation:**

(03) 5358 1700

[stawellsc.vic.edu.au](http://stawellsc.vic.edu.au)

[stawell.sc@edumail.vic.gov.au](mailto:stawell.sc@edumail.vic.gov.au)



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## School staff and volunteers

All staff and volunteers will:

- participate in child safety and wellbeing induction and training provided by the school or the Department of Education and Training, and always follow the school's child safety and wellbeing policies and procedures
- act in accordance with our Child Safety Code of Conduct Policy
- identify and raise concerns about child safety issues in accordance with our Child Safety Responding and 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.
- The steps that will be taken to implement the policy.

## School council

In performing the functions and powers given to them under the *Education and Training Reform Act 2006*, school council members will:

- champion and promote a child safe culture with the broader school community
- ensure that child safety is a regular agenda item at school council meetings
- undertake annual training on child safety
- approve updates to, and act in accordance with the Child Safety Code of Conduct to the extent that it applies to school council employees and members
- when hiring school council employees, ensure that selection, supervision, and management practices are child safe

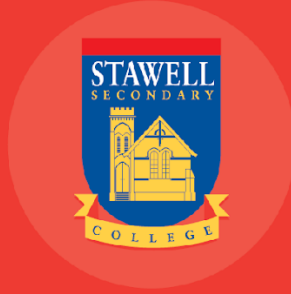
## Specific staff child safety responsibilities

Stawell Secondary College has nominated a child safety champion Assistant Principal to support the principal to implement our child safety policies and practices, including staff and volunteer training.

The responsibilities of the child safety champion are outlined at [Guidance for child safety champions](#).

Our principal and child safety champion and Assistant Principal are the first point of contact for child safety concerns or queries and for coordinating responses to child safety incidents.

- The Assistant Principal is responsible for monitoring the school's compliance with the Child Safety and Wellbeing Policy. Anyone in our school community should approach the



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Assistant Principal if they have any concerns about the school's compliance with the Child Safety and Wellbeing Policy.

- The policy coordinator is responsible for informing the school community about this policy, and making it publicly available
- Other specific roles and responsibilities are named in other child safety policies and procedures, including the Child Safety Code of Conduct, Child Safety Responding and Reporting Obligations (including Mandatory Reporting) Policy and Procedures, and Child Safety Risk Register.

Our school has also established a Child Safety and Wellbeing Team. The Child Safety and Wellbeing Team meet regularly to identify and respond to any ongoing matters related to child safety and wellbeing.

Our Risk Management Committee monitors the Child Safety Risk Register.

## **Child Safety Code of Conduct**

Our Child Safety 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.

The Child Safety Code of Conduct also includes processes to report inappropriate behaviour.

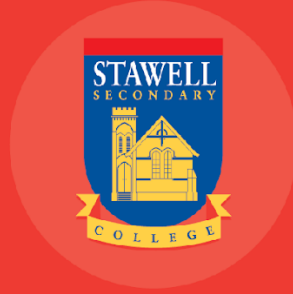
## **Managing risks to child safety and wellbeing**

At our school we identify, assess and manage 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. This includes those we develop for off-site overnight camps, adventure activities 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 school leadership team will monitor and evaluate the effectiveness of the actions in the Child Safety Risk Register at least annually.

## **Establishing a culturally safe environment**

At Stawell Secondary College, we are 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. We actively create opportunities for Aboriginal students and the Aboriginal community to have a voice and presence in our school planning, policies, and activities.



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Through the implementation of the following policies, at Stawell Secondary College we aim to create a culturally safe environment:

- Student Wellbeing and Engagement Policy
- Bullying Prevention Policy
- Inclusion and Diversity Policy

## **Student empowerment**

To support child safety and wellbeing at Stawell Secondary College, we work 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. We are currently implementing a whole school approach to Respectful Relationships, our student Code of Conduct, and our school values.

We inform students of their rights through Home Group sessions, Year Level assemblies and our whole school approach to Respectful Relationships. This creates a platform for students to learn the skills and gain the 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 the school reception and seeking to speak with the Year Level Coordinator or Sub School Leading Teacher.

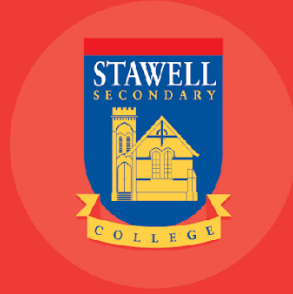
When the school is gathering information in relation to a complaint about alleged misconduct or abuse of a child, we will listen to the complainant's account and take them seriously, check our understanding of the complaint, support the student and keep them (and their parents and carers, as appropriate) informed about progress.

## **Family engagement**

Our 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, at Stawell Secondary College 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:



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- child safety policies and procedures will be available for students and parents at our school reception on request and on the SSC website.
- Newsletters will inform 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.
- PROTECT Child Safety posters will be displayed across the school.

## **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. 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
- 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+.

Our Student Wellbeing and Engagement Policy provides more information about the measures we have in place to support diversity and equity.

## **Suitable staff and volunteers**

At Stawell Secondary College, we apply robust child safe recruitment, induction, training, and supervision practices to ensure that all staff, contractors, and volunteers are suitable to work with children.

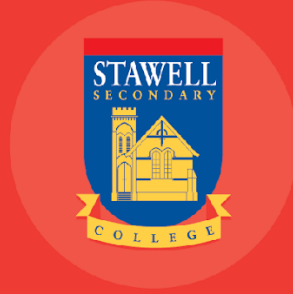
### **Staff recruitment**

When recruiting staff, we follow the Department of Education and Training's recruitment policies and guidelines, available on the Policy and Advisory Library (PAL) at:

- [Recruitment in Schools](#)
- [Suitability for Employment Checks](#)
- [School Council Employment](#)
- [Contractor OHS Management](#).

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

- sight, verify and record the person's Working with Children clearance or equivalent background check such as a Victorian teaching registration
- collect and record:
  - proof of the person's identity and any professional or other qualifications
  - the person's history of working with children



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- references that address suitability for the job and working with children.
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## **Staff induction**

All newly appointed staff will be expected to participate in our child safety and wellbeing induction program. The program will include a focus on:

- the Child Safety and Wellbeing Policy (this document)
- the Child Safety Code of Conduct
- the Child Safety Responding and Reporting Obligations (including Mandatory Reporting) Policy and Procedures and
- any other child safety and wellbeing information that school leadership considers appropriate to the nature of the role.

## **Ongoing supervision and management of staff**

All staff engaged in child-connected work will be supervised appropriately to ensure that their behaviour towards children is safe and appropriate.

Staff will be monitored and assessed to ensure their continuing suitability for child-connected work. This will be done by regular check ins with faculty leaders and in Professional Learning Communities meetings.

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

## **Suitability of volunteers**

All volunteers are required to comply with our Volunteers Policy, which describes how we assess the suitability of prospective volunteers and outlines expectations in relation to child safety and wellbeing induction and training, and supervision and management.

## **Child safety knowledge, skills and awareness**

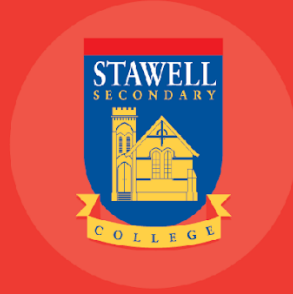
Ongoing training and education are essential to ensuring that staff understand their roles and responsibilities and develop their capacity to effectively address child safety and wellbeing matters.

In addition to the child safety and wellbeing induction, our 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 school's child safety and wellbeing 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





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- responding effectively to issues of child safety and wellbeing and supporting colleagues who disclose harm
- 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.

## School council training and education

To ensure our school council 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, the council is 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
- Stawell Secondary College child safety and wellbeing policies, procedures, codes and practices

## Complaints and reporting processes

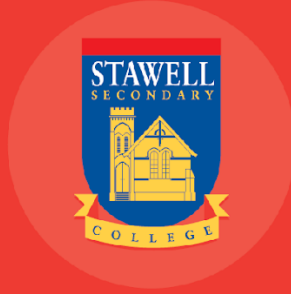
Stawell Secondary College fosters a culture that encourages staff, volunteers, students, parents, and the school community to raise concerns and complaints. This makes it more difficult for breaches of the code of conduct, misconduct or abuse to occur and remain hidden.

We have clear pathways for raising complaints and concerns and responding and this is documented in our school's Complaint Policy. The Complaints Policy can be found on the SSC website.

If there is an incident, disclosure, allegation or suspicion of child abuse, all staff and volunteers (including school council employees and homestay providers) must follow our Child Safety Responding and 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.

As soon as any immediate health and safety concerns are addressed, and relevant school staff have been informed, we will ensure our school follows:

- 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



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Our Student Wellbeing and Engagement Policy and Bullying Prevention Policy cover complaints and concerns relating to student physical violence or other harmful behaviours.

## **Communications**

Stawell Secondary College is committed to communicating our child safety strategies to the school community through:

- ensuring that key child safety and wellbeing policies are available on our website including the Child Safety and Wellbeing Policy (this document), Child Safety Code of Conduct, and the Child Safety Responding and Reporting Obligations (including Mandatory Reporting) Policy and Procedure
- displaying PROTECT around the school
- updates in our school newsletter
- ensuring that child safety is a regular agenda item at school leadership meetings, staff meetings and school council meetings.

## **Privacy and information sharing**

Stawell Secondary College collects, uses, and discloses information about children and their families in accordance with Victorian privacy laws, and other relevant laws. For information on how our school collects, uses and discloses information refer to: [Schools' 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 the Department of Education and Training's policy: [Records Management – School Records](#)

## **Review of child safety practices**

At Stawell Secondary College, we have established processes for the review and ongoing improvement of our child safe policies, procedures, and practices.

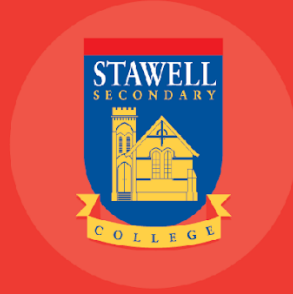
We will:

- review and improve our policy every 2 years or after any significant child safety incident
- analyse any complaints, concerns, and safety incidents to improve policy and practice
- act with transparency and share pertinent learnings and review outcomes with school staff and our school community.

## **Related policies and procedures**

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

- Bullying Prevention Policy
- Child Safety Responding and Reporting Obligations Policy and Procedures
- Child Safety Code of Conduct
- Complaints Policy



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- Digital Learning Policy
- Inclusion and Diversity Policy
- Student Wellbeing and Engagement Policy
- Visitors Policy
- Volunteers Policy

## **Related Department of Education and Training policies**

- [Bullying Prevention and Response Policy](#)
- [Child and Family Violence Information Sharing Schemes](#)
- [Complaints Policy](#)
- [Contractor OHS Management Policy](#)
- [Digital Learning in Schools Policy](#)
- [Family Violence Support](#)
- [Protecting Children: Reporting Obligations Policy](#)
- [Policy and Guidelines for Recruitment in Schools](#)
- [Reportable Conduct Policy](#)
- [Student Wellbeing and Engagement Policy](#)
- [Supervision of Students Policy](#)
- [Visitors in Schools Policy](#)
- [Volunteers in Schools Policy](#)
- [Working with Children and other Suitability Checks for School Volunteers and Visitors](#)

## **Other related documents**

- [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](#)

## **Policy status and review**

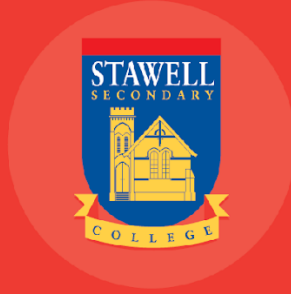
The Student Wellbeing Team is responsible for reviewing and updating the Child Safety and Wellbeing Policy at least every two years. The review will include input from students, parents/carers and the Stawell community.

## **Evaluation:**

This policy will be reviewed as part of the school's review cycle in accordance with the Child Safe Policy, in October 2023. The review will be led by the Student Wellbeing Team and referred to the Policy Subcommittee and School Council for ratification.

*Reviewed last: October 2023*

*Next Review: October 2024*



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<b>Created date</b>	<b>October 2023</b>
<b>Endorsed on</b>	
<b>Next review date</b>	October 2024