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|  | Child Safety and Wellbeing Policy | Approval Date: 23/02/2023 |
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| Authorised by: | Board | Version Date: 20/10/2023 |
| Responsible Person: | Executive Officer | |
| Staff Involved: | All | |

Purpose

This Child Safety and Wellbeing Policy demonstrates Prace'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:

- Provides a clear statement of Prace's child safety commitment and zero tolerance for child abuse
- Informs the Prace community of everyone's obligations to act safely and appropriately towards children
- Guides our processes and practices for the safety and wellbeing of children and young people across all areas of our work
- Outlines actions we take to ensure a child safe culture is embedded and championed throughout the organisation, that is, Prace's child safety strategy
- Provides an overview of our approach to implementing Ministerial Order 1359 at Prace College. Ministerial Order 1359 sets out how the Victorian Child Safe Standards apply in school environments.

Scope

This policy applies:

- To all Prace activities that involve, result in, or relate to contact with children.
- To all Prace staff and volunteers whether or not they work in direct contact with students. It also applies to members of the Prace Board and contractors where indicated
- In all physical and online Prace educational environments used by students during or outside of school hours or Prace program/service hours. It includes other locations provided by Prace for a student's use (for example, a school camp) and those provided through third-party providers
- To all aspects of a Prace Representative's engagement with Prace and children in its care, including all students.

For contractor screening, induction and supervision see the Procurement Policy and Procedure.

This policy should be read together with our other child safety and wellbeing policies, procedures, and codes – refer to the Related Policies and Procedures and Related Documents sections below.

Values and Principles

Prace's commitment to child safety is based on the following statement of commitment, values and principles that guide the development and regular review of our work systems, practices, policies and procedures to protect children and young people from abuse.

Statement of commitment to child safety

Prace is a child safe organisation that welcomes all children, young people and their families.

As we strive to develop dynamic, responsive and innovative educational programs, teaching and learning experiences, we will actively promote and protect the interests and safety of children.

We are committed to providing environments where children and young people are safe and feel safe, where their participation is valued, their views respected, and their voices are heard about decisions that affect their lives.

This is achieved by:

- Having a zero tolerance for child abuse or harm
- Taking proactive steps to identify and manage any risk of harm to children and young people participating in our programs and services. When child safety concerns are raised or identified, we treat these seriously and respond promptly and thoroughly
- Working to actively listen to and empower children
- Promoting positive relationships between students and adults and between students and their peers. These relationships are based on trust and respect
- Engaging only the most suitable people to work with children, along with providing high quality supervision and professional development
- Ensuring our child safe policies, strategies and practices are inclusive of the needs of all children and young people participating in Prace programs and services.

Particular attention is given to the child safety needs of Aboriginal students, those from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds, international students, students with disabilities, those unable to live at home, children and young people who identify as lesbian, gay, bisexual, trans and gender diverse, intersex and queer (LGBTIQ+), and other students experiencing risk or vulnerability. Inappropriate or harmful behaviour targeting students based on these or other characteristics, such as racism or homophobia, are not tolerated at Prace, and any instances identified will be addressed with appropriate consequences.

Child safety is a shared responsibility. Every person involved in the Prace community has an important role in promoting child safety and wellbeing and promptly raising any issues or concerns about a child's safety.

We are committed to regularly reviewing our child safe practices, and seeking input from our students, families, service users, staff, and volunteers to inform our ongoing strategies.

Definitions

Board means the board of the incorporated association Prace Inc, and the Prace College governing authority.

Child or young person means a person under the age of 18 years.

Child abuse includes:

- a) any act committed against a child involving:
 - a sexual offence
 - grooming offences under section 49M(1) of the *Crimes Act 1958*
- b) the infliction, on a child, of:
 - physical violence
 - serious emotional or psychological harm

<https://www.vic.gov.au/child-safe-standards-definitions>

Child connected work means work authorised by the Principal or Prace Board and performed by an adult in a school environment while children are present or reasonably expected to be present.

https://www.education.vic.gov.au/Documents/about/programs/health/protect/Ministerial_Order.pdf

Child-related work: The *Worker Screening Act 2020* defines 'child-related work' as 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 Act. The definition of 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).

<https://www2.education.vic.gov.au/pal/suitability-employment-checks/policy-and-guidelines/working-children>

A number of occupational fields are specifically mentioned, including:

- State schools (all primary, secondary, technical and special state schools)
- Non-government schools (all primary, secondary and special non-government schools)
- TAFE colleges and TAFE divisions of universities providing VCE and/or Victorian Certificate of Applied Learning (VCAL) subjects
- Some adult education providers offering VCE and/or VCAL subjects
- Other institutions providing children's study or training programs

<https://www.workingwithchildren.vic.gov.au/about-the-check/when-you-need-a-check>

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 or child abuse, and responding to suspicions, incidents, disclosures or allegations of child abuse.

<https://www.vic.gov.au/child-safe-standards-definitions>

Parent / guardian / carer / informal carer (parent): In relation to a child means any person who has parental responsibility for ‘major long-term issues’ as defined in the *Family Law Act 1975* (Cth) or has been granted ‘guardianship’ for the child pursuant to the *Children, Youth and Families Act 2005* (Vic) or other state welfare legislation.

An Informal Carer is a person who has responsibility for the day-to-day care of the student and with whom the student is residing. Where a student is not living with a parent/guardian but is living in an informal care arrangement with a relative or other person, Prace may accept enrolment and other permission forms signed by the informal carer if the carer provides a signed Informal Carer’s Statutory Declaration to Prace. This is a written declaration by the carer that sets out the care arrangements for the child — refer to: Informal Carer Statutory Declaration template. Generally, an informal carer who has provided Prace with a completed Informal Carer Statutory Declaration may make education-based decisions for the child and may access education and participation information ordinarily provided to a Carer.

Prace: means the incorporated association (A0032713Z) which includes the Registered Training Organisation (4036) & Prace College (2110).

Prace College: means the section of Prace that operates as an independent school from both the Merrilands and Mernda campuses under registration number 2110.

Prace College Staff: means the Principal, Assistant Principal, and any person employed or engaged as a part of Prace College (both Merrilands and Mernda campuses), including:

- to teach Prace College students, or
- in an educational support role for the Prace College program, including teacher’s aides / education support workers, youth workers, psychologists, or
- administration staff, or
- 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 at Prace College.

All Prace College Staff are presumed to engage in child-connected work.

Prace managed site means Merrilands Community Centre, Reservoir and the Prace Mernda Campus.

School environment means any of the following physical, online or virtual places, used during or outside school hours:

- a) A campus of the school
- 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)
- 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:
 - (i) camps

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- (ii) approved homestay accommodation
 - (iii) delivery of education and training such as registered training organisations, TAFEs, non-school senior secondary providers or another school
 - (iv) sporting events, excursions, competitions or other events.

https://www.education.vic.gov.au/Documents/about/programs/health/protect/Ministerial_Order.pdf

School governing authority, in the context of this policy and Ministerial Order 1359, means:

- a) The Prace Board, including a person authorised to act for or on behalf of the Board in relation to Prace College.
- b) The Principal of Prace College, as authorised by the Prace Board, or the *Education and Training Reform Act 2006* (Vic).

The **Senior Management Team** is made up of the Prace Executive Officer, Education & Business Operations Manager, Principal of Prace College and any other staff member as appointed to the team by the Executive Officer.

Student, in this policy, means any student enrolled at Prace College, including those over the age of 18, and any Prace student or service user under the age of 18.

Roles and Responsibilities

The Prace Board is responsible for acting as the school governing authority, approving child safety policies and procedures and ensuring that Prace and Prace College have appropriate resources to effectively implement the child safe strategy. The Prace Board oversees the development and implementation of risk management processes that include the identification and mitigation of child safety risks in the Prace environment.

The Prace Board will:

- Champion and promote a child safe culture within the Prace and Prace College community
- Ensure that child safety is a regular agenda item at Prace Board meetings
- Undertake annual training on child safety
- Approve updates to, and act in accordance with the Prace Child Safety Code of Conduct
- Ensure that processes for selection, supervision, and management of staff and volunteers are child safe by reviewing and approving the Staff and Volunteer Screening Checks Policy and Procedure.

The Executive Officer of Prace is responsible for

- Developing child safe strategies in consultation with the Board, staff, students and wider Prace community.
 - Ensuring effective child safety and wellbeing governance, policies, procedures, codes and practices are in place and followed
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- Ensuring appropriate training is conducted with staff, volunteers and Board members on child safety and risk management, and contractors as indicated in the Procurement Policy and Procedure
 - Actively modelling Prace's child safety culture.

The Prace College Subcommittee is responsible for contributing to the annual review of the Prace Child Safe strategy and the Annual Child Safety risk assessment / register.

The Child Safety and Wellbeing Team (comprising the Principal, Assistant Principals, Lead Teacher, Executive Officer, Education and Business Operations Manager, Support Services Manager and Compliance Manager) is responsible for ensuring that a strong child safe culture is created and maintained, and that policies and practices are effectively developed and implemented in accordance with the Child Safe Standards and Ministerial Order 1359.

The Principal of the College is responsible for the operational management of Prace College and implementation of the child safety strategy at the College. The Principal is responsible for taking all practical measures to ensure the implementation of this Policy and other child safety policies and procedures. The Principal is tasked with ensuring a strong and sustainable child protection culture at the College, and actively modelling Prace's child safety culture.

It is the responsibility of the Principal, both as Principal and Prace Child Safe Officer, to promptly manage the school's response to an allegation or disclosure of child abuse, taking into account the sensitivity required in relation to the diversity within the school community.

The Executive Officer, Principal and Assistant Principals will:

- 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
- Enable inclusive practices where the diverse needs of all children and young people are considered
- Reinforce high standards of respectful behaviour between students and adults, and between students
- Promote regular open discussion on child safety issues within the Prace and Prace College community including at leadership team meetings, staff meetings and Prace Board meetings
- Facilitate regular professional learning for all Prace staff, volunteers, Board members and contractors (as appropriate to their role) to build deeper understandings of child safety, cultural safety, student wellbeing and prevention of responding to abuse
- Create an environment where child safety complaints and concerns are readily raised, and no one is discouraged from reporting an allegation of child abuse to relevant authorities.

All Prace staff, volunteers, Board members and contractors are responsible for:

- Participating in child safety and wellbeing induction and training provided by Prace as appropriate
- Always following the Prace child safety and wellbeing policies and procedures
- Acting in accordance with our Child Safety Code of Conduct
- Understanding and complying with their child safety and legal obligations
- Identifying and raising concerns about child safety issues in accordance with our Child Safe Reporting Procedure, including following the [Four Critical Actions for Schools](#)
- Ensuring children's and young people's views are taken seriously and their voices are heard about decisions that affect their lives
- Implementing inclusive practices that respond to the diverse needs of children and young people accessing our programs and services.

Specific staff child safety responsibilities

Prace has nominated Child Safety Champions and Child Safety Officers to support the Child Safety and Wellbeing Team to implement our child safety policies and practices, including staff and volunteer training.

The responsibilities of the Child Safety Champions and Child Safety Officers are outlined in the work instruction, Child Safety Roles.

Child Safe Champions are the people at Prace who have knowledge of child safety issues, and Child Safety Officers are the first point of contact for others who have questions or concerns or want to report an allegation of child abuse.

- The Principal is responsible for monitoring Prace College's compliance with the Child Safety and Wellbeing Policy.
- The Education & Business Operations Manager is responsible for monitoring the compliance of Prace's adult education programs and services with the Child Safety and Wellbeing Policy.
- Anyone in our school community should approach the Principal or Education & Business Operations Manager if they have any concerns about compliance with the Child Safety and Wellbeing Policy.
- The Executive Officer is responsible for informing the Prace community about this policy, and making it publicly available via the Prace website.
- Other specific roles and responsibilities are named in other child safety policies and procedures, including the Child Safety Code of Conduct, Child Safe Reporting Procedure, Child Safety Roles work instruction, and Prace Risk Register.

Prace also established a Child Safety and Wellbeing Team. Any ongoing matters relating to child safety and wellbeing are identified via a standing item on staff team

meeting agendas and are reported to the Child Safety and Wellbeing Team for response.

The Senior Management Team monitors the Risk Register.

Child Safety Strategies

Protection of children and child safety at Prace is ensured through a range of strategies, which aim to embed an organisational culture of child safety, as set out below.

Child Safety Code of Conduct

Our Child Safety Code of Conduct sets the boundaries and expectations for appropriate behaviours between adults and children/young people. 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 information on how to report inappropriate behaviour.

Breaches of the Code of Conduct may result in disciplinary action including termination of a person's involvement with the organisation.

Managing risks to child safety and wellbeing

We identify, assess and manage risks to child safety and wellbeing in our physical and online educational environments without compromising a child or student's right to privacy, access to information, social connections and learning opportunities. These risks are managed through our child safety and wellbeing policies, procedures and practices, and in our activity-specific risk assessments, such as those we undertake for off-site activities and facilities and services we contract through third party providers for student use.

Our Risk Register is used to record any identified risks related to child abuse alongside actions in place to manage those risks. Our Senior Management Team will monitor and evaluate the effectiveness of the actions in the Risk Register at least annually, as set out in the Risk Management Policy and Procedure.

Establishing a culturally safe environment

At Prace, we are committed to establishing an inclusive and culturally safe environment where the strengths of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander cultures, values and practices are respected.

We think about how every student can have a positive experience, in a safe environment. For Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students, we recognise the link between culture, identity and safety, and actively create opportunities for First Nations students and communities to have a voice and presence in our service planning, policies, and activities.

Our Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Cultural Safety Policy outlines the strategies we have in place to maintain an inclusive and culturally safe environment for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children and students.

Empowerment of children and young people

To support child safety and wellbeing at Prace, we work to create an inclusive and supportive environment that encourages children and young people and their 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 to ensure a sense of belonging through our organisational values and Student Code of Conduct.

Prace College ensures its curriculum includes, at all levels, education on standards of behaviour for students attending the College, healthy and respectful relationships (including sexuality, protective behaviours such as child abuse awareness and prevention and boundaries), resilience and health and their own bodies. We inform students of their rights and give them the skills and 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 actively seek to understand what makes children feel safe in our organisation, and ensure all of our students know who to talk to if they are worried or feeling unsafe. 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 at prace.vic.edu.au/child-safety.

When Prace 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 students' families and the Prace community have an important role in monitoring and promoting children's and young people's safety and wellbeing and helping them to raise any concerns.

To support family engagement, we are committed to providing families and community with accessible information about our child safe policies and practices and involving them in our approach to child safety and wellbeing.

We will make sure families participate in child safety and wellbeing decisions that affect their child, by regularly engaging with parents, carers and students to discuss the needs of students.

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:

- Seeking input from families and the community via the Prace website, and via student, staff, and parent meetings.
- Making our child safety policies and procedures available for students and parents via the Prace website, and including links to them in Prace College social media posts, newsletters, and staff circulars
- Reporting on outcomes of child safety reviews to the Prace community via annual reports
- 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, via the Prace website and Student Information Handbooks.
- Displaying PROTECT Child Safety posters at Prace-managed sites, in shared areas that are accessible to parents and the community
- Conducting family information sessions (Prace College only)
- Hosting community events to welcome families and the broader community
- Providing parents with information about children and young people's rights via the Prace website or parent information sessions
- Making sure child safety information is easy to read – using images and other accessibility aids, and considering font size and style, colours, formatting and visual presentation
- Translating child safety information into multiple languages to reflect families of children and young people enrolled at Prace
- Ensuring that students, staff and members of the Prace community know who to contact if they have a concern about child safety, including keeping this information up-to-date and accessible and reviewing it regularly
- Communicating with and appropriately involving families at all stages of the process if a concern or complaint is raised.

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 all children and young people have 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 and Torres Strait Islander children and young people

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- 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+.

The following policies and procedures provide more information about the measures we have in place to support diversity and equity at Prace:

- Access and Equity Policy and Procedure
- Equal Opportunity and Non-Discrimination Policy and Procedure
- Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Cultural Safety Policy
- Gender Identity Policy and Procedure
- Bullying and Harassment Policy and Procedure
- Student Support Services (Adult Education) Policy and Procedure
- Student Welfare and Duty of Care (Prace College) Policy and Procedure
- Staff Professional Learning and Development Policy and Procedure

Suitable staff and volunteers

Staff recruitment

At Prace, we apply robust child safe recruitment, screening, induction, training, and supervision procedures to ensure that all staff, contractors, and volunteers are suitable to work with children, as set out in the following policies and procedures.

- Staff Recruitment and Selection Policy and Procedure
- Staff and Volunteer Screening Checks Policy and Procedure
- Staff Induction Policy and Procedure
- Staff Supervision Policy and Procedure
- Volunteer Policy and Procedure

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
 - References that address suitability for the job and working with children.
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Staff and volunteer induction

All newly appointed staff in child-connected or child-related roles 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 Safe Reporting Procedure and
- Any other child safety and wellbeing information that the Senior Management Team or the supervising staff member considers appropriate to the nature of the role.

Ongoing supervision and management of staff

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

Staff will be monitored and assessed to ensure their continuing suitability for child-connected and/or child-related work. This will be done via regular performance reviews.

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.

Suitability of volunteers

All volunteers are required to comply with our Volunteer Policy and Procedure, 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 for staff working in child-connected and child-related roles. Training will be determined in December for the following year based on:

- Staff feedback
- Changes to child safe policies, procedures and practices
- Outcomes of any child safety reviews or assessments
- Compliance requirements such as CPR updates

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- Changes in standards, legislation or government requirements
 - Identified or emerging needs or issues.

Training topics may therefore include

- Current child safety standards adhered to by Prace
- Prace child safety and wellbeing policies, procedures, codes, and practices
- Completing the [Protecting Children – Mandatory Reporting and Other Legal Obligations](#) online module annually, covering
 - child abuse risks in the school environment
 - responsibilities for managing the risk of child abuse;
 - identifying child abuse
 - recognising grooming behaviours
 - individual and collective reporting and sharing obligations
 - recognising indicators of child harm including harm caused by other children and students
 - Responding effectively to issues of child safety and wellbeing and supporting colleagues who disclose harm
- Strategies to promote child participation and empowerment
- How to build culturally safe environments for children and young people
- Information sharing and recordkeeping obligations
- How to identify and mitigate child safety and wellbeing risks.
- First aid, including anaphylaxis management

Training may be tailored to specific roles and responsibilities, such as volunteers and contractors.

Prace Board training and education

To ensure our Board is equipped with the knowledge required to make decisions in the best interests of child safety and wellbeing, and to identify and mitigate child safety and wellbeing risks, training is provided 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 at Prace College, and for young people participating in our adult education programs and services
- Prace's child safety and wellbeing policies, procedures, codes and practices

Complaints and reporting processes

We foster a culture that encourages our staff, volunteers, students, parents, and the Prace 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 how Prace will respond. Information about our complaints procedure can be found on the Prace website at prace.vic.edu.au/prace-policies-and-procedures.

Prace takes seriously all allegations of child abuse committed against a child by a Prace Representative or any other person connected with our organisation. We have complaints, reporting, and staff and volunteer disciplinary procedures in place to manage any such incidents or allegations.

We encourage and expect all Prace staff, volunteers, Board members, contractors, parents, students and members of our community to identify and raise any child safety concerns. We do this in a number of ways including:

- Providing detailed guidance for Prace staff and volunteers on how to identify key risk indicators of child abuse and how to report child abuse concerns in accordance with our Child Safe Reporting Procedure
- Providing training at least annually to staff on identifying and reporting child safety matters
- Supporting Prace staff, volunteers, Board members, contractors and members of the Prace community to make reports of child abuse incidents to relevant authorities as needed
- Cooperating with regulatory authorities and the police on child safety matters as needed
- Empowering students to understand appropriate standards of behaviour and educating them on where they can go for help, both within Prace and externally.

If there is an incident, disclosure, allegation or suspicion of child abuse, all staff and volunteers must follow our Child Safe Reporting Procedure. Our policy and procedures address complaints and concerns of child abuse made by or in relation to a child or student, Prace staff, volunteers, contractors, service providers, visitors or any other person connected to Prace.

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

Allegations of abuse and safety concerns are recorded on the incident reporting form, including investigation updates. All records are securely stored as per the Prace Records Management Policy and Procedure. Individuals who make a child safety report in good faith will be supported by Prace.

Prace recognises that it can be difficult for individuals, particularly children and students, to raise a child safety concern. Prace and the College will provide support and pastoral care as appropriate to individuals who make a disclosure.

At all times when responding to a child safety concern or complaint, Prace's priority will be the safety of all children and young people. Where a student discloses child abuse or is otherwise linked to suspected child abuse, Prace will provide support by making referrals to external support services, working closely with the student's parents / guardians / carers as appropriate to support the student in a holistic manner, cooperating with regulatory authorities, and in the case of Prace College Students, offering the student access to the College's counselling and pastoral care services.

If an allegation is made against either the Executive Officer or the Principal, the Chairperson of the Prace Board will be responsible for managing Prace's response.

Our Bullying and Harassment Policy and Procedure, Student Welfare and Duty of Care (Prace College) Policy and Procedure, and Student and Service Users Disciplinary Policy and Procedure cover complaints and concerns relating to student physical violence or other harmful behaviours.

Communications

Prace 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 other relevant child safety information and procedures.
- Displaying PROTECT posters around Prace-managed sites, in shared areas that are accessible to parents and the community.
- Including information in our Student Information Handbooks that is easy to understand and user-friendly to children and young people.
- Ensuring that child safety is a regular agenda item at Senior Management Team meetings, staff meetings and Prace Board meetings.

Privacy and information sharing

Prace collects, uses, and discloses information about children and their families in accordance with Victorian privacy laws, and other relevant laws. For more information see our [Privacy Statement](#) on the Prace website.

As an authorised information sharing entity under the Child Information Sharing Scheme and Family Violence Information Sharing Scheme, Prace College will share information, including personal and sensitive information, appropriately and lawfully with other authorised entities to support the wellbeing of a child, or to manage family violence risk. Precedence will be given to the wellbeing and safety of a child or group of children over an individual's right to privacy.

Records management

We acknowledge that good records management practices are a critical element of child safety and wellbeing.

As an independent school, Registered Training Organisation, Learn Local, charity and Neighbourhood House, Prace abides by a number of standards in terms of record keeping, including the Public Record Office of Victoria Recordkeeping Standards and minimum retention periods.

We have in place a records management framework of control for the development, verification, reporting, storage, retention, and disposal of records in compliance with the relevant legislative and regulatory requirements. This includes meeting specific requirements in relation to records relevant to child safety and wellbeing.

Review

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

We will:

- Review and improve our child safe policies and procedures every 2 years, and after any significant child safety incident or complaint, or in response to significant emerging risks or further government mandates/requirements.
- Analyse any complaints, concerns, and safety incidents to improve policy and practice
- Act with transparency and share pertinent learnings and review outcomes with our staff and the Prace community.

We regularly review our compliance, policies, procedures and practices with regard to existing and emerging risks, and complaints, providing monthly reports to the Board on child safety improvements.

Areas that are considered as a part of the review are:

- Existing policies and procedure/practices
- Partnerships and contractual arrangements
- Prace's risk management plan/register
- The diverse needs of children and young people.
- Incidents and complaints relating to child safety
- Input from students, families and the Prace community

Progress on the implementation of strategies is recorded and made available to the Prace Board at each Board meeting.

The Prace Board is responsible for approving this Policy.

Following a review, improvements will be put in place where applicable

**Relevant
Legislation /
Standards**

Australian Human Rights Commission Act 1986 (Cth)
Charter of Human Rights and Responsibilities Act 2006 (Vic)
Child Wellbeing and Safety Act 2005 (Vic)
Child Wellbeing and Safety (Information Sharing) Regulations 2018
Children, Youth and Families Act 2005 (Vic) - Section 182: Mandatory Reporting
Crimes Act 1958 (Vic)
Crimes Amendment (Protection of Children) Act 2014 (Vic)
Education and Training Reform Act 2006 (Vic)
Family Law Act 1975 (Cth)
Family Violence Protection Act 2008 (Vic)
Family Violence Protection (Information Sharing and Risk Management)
Regulations 2018
Online Safety Act 2021 (Cth)
Worker Screening Act 2020 (Vic)
Worker Screening Regulations 2021 (Vic)
Victorian Reportable Conduct Scheme

Child Safe Standards (Vic)
Ministerial Order No. 1359

**Related Policies
and Procedures**

Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Cultural Safety Policy
Acceptable Use of Digital Technologies Policy and Procedure
Access and Equity Policy and Procedure
Bullying and Harassment Policy and Procedure
Child Safe Reporting Procedure
Complaints and Appeals Policy and Procedure
Critical Incidents Policy and Procedure
Curriculum and Assessment Policy
Equal Opportunity and Non-Discrimination Policy and Procedure
Gender Identity Policy and Procedure
Information Sharing Schemes Procedure
Procurement Policy and Procedure
Records Management Policy and Procedure
Risk Management Policy and Procedure
Social Media Policy
Staff and Volunteer Screening Checks Policy and Procedure
Staff Disciplinary Policy and Procedure
Staff Induction Policy and Procedure
Staff Professional Learning and Development Policy and Procedure
Staff Recruitment and Selection Policy and Procedure
Staff Supervision Policy and Procedure
Student and Service Users Disciplinary Policy and Procedure
Student Supervision (Prace College) Procedure
Student Support Services (Adult Education) Policy and Procedure
Student Welfare and Duty of Care (Prace College) Policy and Procedure
Visitor Policy and Procedure
Volunteer Policy and Procedure

Related Documents

Child Safety Code of Conduct
Code of Conduct – Students and service users
Work Instruction - Records Storage and Retention Schedule
Risk Register
Staff, Volunteers and Contractors
Code of Conduct

Consultation

Prace College students
Prace College support staff
Play Learn Connect teaching staff
Prace College Subcommittee
Senior Management Team
Prace Reconciliation Action Plan Committee
Prace Board
Compliance Manager
