



CHILD SAFE STANDARDS OVERVIEW

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Help for non-English speakers

If you need help to understand the information in this policy, please contact Horsham College on 5381 7100, or email horsham.co@education.vic.gov.au.

PURPOSE

To ensure a safe and welcoming environment for all students to encourage learning.

SCOPE

This policy applies to all staff, including casual relief staff, contractors and volunteers.

- The Child Safe Standards (the Standards) commenced in Victoria in January 2016. Since then we have seen how the Standards improve safety for children and young people.
- Organisations covered by these new Standards will need to comply by July 1st 2022.
- The new Standards set out minimum requirements and outline the actions organisations must take to keep children and young people safe. They provide more clarity for organisations and are more consistent with Standards in the rest of Australia.
- The things organisations already do to keep children and young people safe will support compliance with the new Standards.

1. CHILD SAFE STANDARD 1

Organisations establish a culturally safe environment in which the diverse and unique identities and experiences of Aboriginal children and young people are respected and valued.

How we address this at Horsham College:

- Students have the ability to express their culture and enjoy their cultural rights. It is encouraged and actively supported by staff, students and the school community.
- Strategies are embedded within the school which equip all members to acknowledge and appreciate the strengths of Aboriginal culture and understand its importance to the wellbeing and safety of Aboriginal children and young people.
- Our school has measures to ensure racism within the organisation is identified, confronted and not tolerated. Any instances of racism are addressed with appropriate consequences.
- Our school actively supports and facilitates participation and inclusion within it by Aboriginal children, young people and their families.

Horsham College is a Child Safe School

- Our schools' policies, procedures, systems and processes together create a culturally safe and inclusive environment and meet the needs of Aboriginal children, young people and their families.

This can be seen through:

- Our students are taught about the histories of Indigenous Australians. Each year our students acknowledge and celebrate Reconciliation week and NAIDOC week.
- At all school events, meetings and assemblies our leaders, students and staff commence with an acknowledgement of country.
- Our teachers organise cross cultural learning through all areas of the curriculum. This ensures that our students are regularly immersed in new learning and engage in discussions that surround cultural perspectives and understanding.
- Displays of Aboriginal culture are in all classrooms and across the school, to ensure our environment is culturally safe, respecting and valuing the identities and experiences of Aboriginal children and young people.

2. CHILD SAFE STANDARD 2

Child safety and wellbeing is embedded in organisational leadership, governance and culture.

How we address this at Horsham College:

- Our school makes a public commitment to child safety.
- A child safe culture is championed and modelled at all levels within the school from the top down and bottom up.
- Governance arrangements facilitate implementation of the Child Safety policy at all levels.
- A Code of Conduct provides guidelines for staff and volunteers on expected behavioural standards and responsibilities.
- Risk management strategies focus on preventing, identifying and mitigating risks to children and young people.
- Staff and volunteers understand their obligations on information sharing and record keeping.

This can be seen through:

- All staff, volunteers and visitors must sign in at the Administration Office to acknowledge and agree that they have read, understood and will abide by the Child Safe Code of Conduct.
- All staff, the School Council and families are provided with professional development annually. New members of the community are inducted on child safety when they commence at the school.
- Our public commitment to child safety is on the school website, in our school newsletter and other official documents.

- Child Safe Standards is a standing agenda item in staff meetings each week and at School Council meetings.
- Risk management is completed for all incursions and excursions to ensure the safety of our students
- Ensuring records relevant to child safety and wellbeing are created, maintained and disposed of by Public Record Office Victoria Recordkeeping Standards.
- Developing a policy or statement detailing the school's processes to meet the School Records Retention Guide for schools.
- Child safe policies and procedures are reviewed regularly and updated. They are available on our school website.

3. **CHILD SAFE STANDARD 3**

Children and young people are empowered about their rights, participate in decisions affecting them and are taken seriously.

How we address this at Horsham College:

- Children and young people at our school are informed about all of their rights, including safety, information and participation.
- The importance of friendships is recognised at Horsham College. Support from peers is encouraged to help students feel safe and be less isolated.
- Where relevant and if required students are offered access to sexual abuse prevention programs and to relevant related information in an age-appropriate way. This is sourced by our allied health and leadership teams.
- Staff and volunteers at Horsham College are attuned to signs of harm and facilitate child-friendly ways for our students to express their views, participate in decision-making and raise their concerns.
- Our school has strategies in place to develop a culture that facilitates participation and is responsive to the input of children and young people.
- Our school provides opportunities for children and young people to participate and are responsive to their contributions, thereby strengthening confidence and engagement.

This can be seen through:

- Our staff provide scheduled social skills sessions to foster friendships and encourage students to build strong relationships with peers, when required.
- Students are taught their rights, including safety and participation in child friendly ways. PROTECT posters on display around school.
- Student voice and agency is encouraged and supported in all classes and programs across the school to foster student confidence and engagement and strengthen their contributions.

- Choice and negotiation are key factors in our teaching and learning. Students have daily negotiation time that empowers them to problem solve and make individual decisions.

4. CHILD SAFE STANDARD 4

Families and communities are informed and involved in promoting child safety and wellbeing.

How we address this at Horsham College:

- Our families participate in decisions affecting their children.
- Our school engages and openly communicates with families and the community about its child safe approach and relevant information is accessible.
- Our families and school community have a say in the development and review of school practices.
- Families, carers and the community are informed about the schools' operations and governance.

This can be seen through:

- Information about our school's approach to child safety is easily accessible on the school website, with a section dedicated to school policies and procedures. All classes and offices have a child safe folder with relevant information available for staff and visitors. Parents are informed of the school's child safe approaches throughout the year in the school newsletter and via the school website.
- The annual Parent Opinion Survey is conducted and analysed by the leadership team to gain feedback and evaluate programs and practices in the school
- Through the school newsletters, Annual Implementation Plan, School Strategic Plan, detailed school website, families and the community are informed of the school's governance and operations.
- Student Support Group meetings (SSG's) are held each term with families as a collaborative discussion on support and strategies to support the students' learning and wellbeing.
- Families have opportunities for collaborative input and are part of the decision process, establishing goals within the Individual Education Plan (IEP).
- Our 'team around the child approach' and case management team process see families assist in decision making around behaviour support plans and interventions that may be required by internal and external allied health services.

5. CHILD SAFE STANDARD 5

Equity is upheld and diverse needs respected in policy and practice.

How we address this at Horsham College:

- Our whole school, including staff and volunteers, understand children and young people's diverse circumstances, and provide support and respond to those who are vulnerable.
- The students in our school have access to information, support and complaints processes in ways that are culturally safe, accessible and easy to understand.
- Our school pays particular attention to the needs of individuals with disability, children and young people from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds, those who are unable to live at home and identify for LGBTIQ+.
- Our school pays particular attention to the needs of Aboriginal children and young people and provides/promotes a culturally safe environment for them.

This can be seen through:

- Our school has policies and procedures in place to support and respond to the vulnerable and diverse needs of our students supported by a Disability Inclusion Leader employed by the school.
- Where students require assistance with their expressive and receptive language, visual communication supports are used, such as visual timetables, emotional regulation thermometers etc.
- Our school has a strong focus on inclusion and diversity. The schools' values of Commitment, Care, Character and Collaboration ensure all students are safe and supported, no matter their disability, gender, sexuality or cultural background.
- Our school adopts and implements a school wide approach to Positive Behaviour Supports, that promote equity and respectful behaviours.
- The Rights, Responsibilities and Respectful Relationships program is used and implemented across the school
- Our Leadership team works closely with Koorie Engagement Support Officers (KESO) and aligns professional development for staff as required.

6. CHILD SAFE STANDARD 6

People working with children and young people are suitable and supported to reflect child safety and wellbeing values in practice.

How we address this at Horsham College:

- At our school, recruitment, including advertising, referee checks and staff and volunteer pre-employment screening, emphasise child safety and wellbeing.
- Relevant staff and volunteers have current Working with Children Checks or equivalent background checks.

- All staff and volunteers receive an appropriate induction and are aware of their responsibilities to children and young people, including record keeping, information sharing and reporting obligations. At Horsham College, ongoing supervision and people management is focused on child safety and wellbeing.

This can be seen through:

- The entire Human Resources and recruitment process includes individual suitability and reflects child safe practices. In the Job advertisement our school's commitment to Child Safe practices is made explicit. All referees are asked a series of questions relating to the candidate's suitability to work with children and child standards.
- All staff, new staff appointed and volunteers must read, agree to and sign the school's Child Safe Code of Conduct annually.
- Our school's Child Safe Code of Conduct is located near the Visitor Sign In area in the Administration Office; all visitors to the school read this on entering.
- VIT cards and Working with Children Cards are checked, recorded and stored in the school's Visitor Management sign-in system (VMC).
- Staff and the School Council receive annual professional development on Child Safety and all staff must complete the Mandatory Report module and provide the Certificate of Completion to the nominated staff member.
- New staff and volunteers to the school receive induction on the school's policies and procedures and obligations towards reporting, information sharing, confidentiality and ensuring the safety of students.
- Our school policies of Student Wellbeing, Duty of Care, Visitors/Volunteers, Mandatory Reporting, along with our school wide behaviour management procedures, ensure child safety and wellbeing.

7. CHILD SAFE STANDARD 7

Processes for complaints and concerns are child focused.

How we address this at Horsham College:

- Our school has a Complaints Policy for staff, parents and the community that is available on the school website and is child focused.
- The Leadership team endeavours to initially respond to all complaints within the same day they are raised and follow up with more details within 48 hours of being notified.
- Horsham College ensures all staff follow policy and procedures that align to privacy reporting and legislation. It is also a requirement that teachers do this to maintain full registration with VIT.
- All decisions at Horsham College are made on the premise of '*what is best for our students?*' and how do we provide a safe and secure learning environment that promotes a positive climate for learning?

8. CHILD SAFE STANDARD 8

Staff and volunteers are equipped with the knowledge, skills and awareness to keep children and young people safe through ongoing education and training.

How we address this at Horsham College:

- Our staff and volunteers are trained and supported to effectively implement the school's Child Safety Policy.
- Our staff and volunteers receive training and information to recognise indicators of child harm including harm caused by other children and young people.
- Our staff and volunteers receive training and information to respond effectively to issues of child safety and wellbeing and support colleagues who disclose harm.
- Our staff and volunteers receive training and information on how to build culturally safe environments for children and young people.

This can be seen through:

- Our staff and volunteers receive annual training with child safe standards and complete compulsory online training for Mandatory Reporting through child protection.
- A child safe standards update is a standing agenda item at School Council meetings, so staff and volunteers are always kept up to date to implement policies and procedures relating to child safety and wellbeing.
- Horsham College Leadership team and the school's Mental Health Practitioner provide information, training and support to staff and volunteers who disclose harm. Staff are also provided regular information about the Employee Assistance Program (EAP) and supporting the wellbeing of themselves and others.
- Through our professional development schedule our staff receive training through presentations and professional reading on how to build culturally safe environments that are inclusive and engaging.

9. CHILD SAFE STANDARD 9

Physical and online environments promote safety and wellbeing while minimising the opportunity for children and young people to be harmed.

How we address this at Horsham College:

- Our staff identify and mitigate risks in the online and physical environments without compromising a child's right to privacy, access to information, social connections and learning opportunities.
- At Horsham College the online environment is used in accordance with the school's Child Safety Code of Conduct Policy and Child Safety Policy and practices.
- Our risk management plans consider risks posed by organisational settings, activities and the physical environment.

- When our school contracts facilities and services from third parties, we have procurement policies that ensure the safety of children and young people.

This can be seen through:

- Our staff and students have ICT use agreements that identify and mitigate risks in the online and physical environments.
- Our Student Wellbeing and Engagement Policy, Duty of Care Policy, Yard Duty and Supervision Policy, and Child Safe policies all ensure our online and physical environments promote the safety and wellbeing of all students.
- Risk management processes occur for all incursions and excursions conducted by the staff in the school.
- Risk management is conducted for all contracts, facilities and services provided by third parties to ensure they comply with our commitment to child safe standard practices.
- Our students are explicitly taught about being safe online and the risks or problems they may face. This is taught through the digital technology curriculum.
- Our physical environment is well maintained, attractive and promotes positive wellbeing. The grounds are kept safe by secure fences, doors and buildings that minimise the opportunity for students to be harmed.

10. CHILD SAFE STANDARD 10

Implementation of the Child Safe Standards is *regularly reviewed and improved*.

How we address this at Horsham College:

- Our school regularly reviews, evaluates and improves child safe practices.
- Our school's complaints, concerns and safety incidents are analysed to identify causes and systemic failures to inform continuous improvement.
- Our school reports on the findings of relevant reviews to staff and volunteers, community and families and children and young people.

This can be seen through:

- Our child safe and wellbeing policies and practices are reviewed on an annual basis or sooner as needed. School leadership and staff ensure they are up to date in practices and adopting evidence-based research to support our students and families.
- Safety incidents are recorded on our school management system CASES21 (and SEQTA if deemed appropriate). This data is reviewed by the Leadership team and case management team, where supports and interventions are reviewed to promote improvement in outcomes for the students.

- Reporting of information, and reports and findings are provided regularly to all stakeholders in our school community through weekly meetings, briefings, email communication, parent meetings, SSG's, the annual Implementation Plan and school communications.

11. CHILD SAFE STANDARD 11

Policies and procedures document how the organisation is safe for children and young people.

How we address this at Horsham College:

- Our policies and procedures address all Child Safe Standards.
- Our policies and procedures are documented and easy to understand.
- Our school uses best practice models from the Department of Education (DE) in the development of policies and procedures.
- Our Leadership team champions and models compliance with policies and procedures.
- Our staff and volunteers understand and implement policies and procedures.

This can be seen through:

- Our policies and procedures are reviewed regularly and address all of the standards. Our policies are available on the school website.
- Horsham College works with the Department of Education (DE) to ensure our policies and procedures are following best practice.
- Horsham College's policies and procedures are role modelled by the leaders and the school community is supported to ensure they are embedded into day-to-day operations.
- Pulse checks are done throughout the year to ensure staff and volunteers understand the implementation of the policies and procedures.

POLICIES AND CORRESPONDING CHILD SAFE STANDARDS MATRIX

Policy Name	Child Safe Standards this policy applies to		
Student Wellbeing and Engagement Policy	1	3	5
Preventing and Addressing Racism Policy	1	5	
Bullying Prevention Policy	1	5	
Inclusion and Diversity Policy	1		
Volunteers Policy	2	8	
Complaints Policy	3	7	
Child Safety Policy	4	6	7
Visitors Policy	8		
Camps and Excursions Policy	9		
Acceptable Use Agreement	9		
Digital Learning Policy	9		
Yard Duty and Supervision Policy	9		
Child Safety Code of Conduct	10		

REVIEW CYCLE

This document will be reviewed in accordance with the Policy Review Schedule