

The Avenue School

Policy & Procedure Document

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Drafted by	J. Claringbold	Approved by Board on	25/06/2024
Responsible person	Board/Principal	Scheduled review date	25/06/2025
Policy Area	Student Wellbeing		

Title: Child Safety & Wellbeing

Policy

The Avenue School has no tolerance for child abuse and racism and is committed to promoting and protecting the interests, safety and wellbeing of all children and students.

This policy establishes the implementation of the Child Safe Standards including controls and actions to prevent child abuse and harm, promote the safety and wellbeing of children and students and comply with the Ministerial Order 1359 (MO1359).

The Avenue School Child Safety & Wellbeing Suite of Documents and Resources	
TAS Policies, Procedures and Documents	The Avenue School information sheets:
Child Safety & Wellbeing policy	Recognising Signs of Child Abuse
Child Safety & Wellbeing Code of Conduct	Signs of Sexual and Other Abuse in Teenagers
Responding & Reporting policy	Information available from https://www.justice.vic.gov.au via https://providers.dffh.vic.gov.au
Complaints Handling policy & procedures	Failure to disclose information sheet: Failure to disclose offence fact sheet (word) - DFFH Service Providers
Empowering Student Framework	Failure to protect information sheet failure to protect betrayal of trust factsheet 2017.pdf
Empowering Students - Education Timetable	Grooming offence factsheet: Grooming offence Department of Justice and Community Safety Victoria
Child Safety & Wellbeing Risk Management Plan	Information via Department of Education PROTECT website
Child Safety & Wellbeing Implementation Plan	Schools - guidance vic.gov.au (www.vic.gov.au)
Child Safety & Wellbeing Training Action Plan	Four Critical Actions Poster for Schools
Recruitment policy	Child Safe Standards Protect Poster
Induction Plan	Child Safe Risk Register Develop your school's child safety risk register vic.gov.au
Online Safety policy	
Information from the Public Records Office	
creating managing and retaining records of child sexual abuse final 0.pdf (prov.vic.gov.au)	
Information from the National Office of Child Safety	
speak-up-for-children-and-young-people-poster	
complaint-handling-guide	

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Scope

All individuals who are working or volunteering at The Avenue School are required to comply with this policy and the Child Safety & Wellbeing Code of Conduct. It applies in all School environments including, on-site, face to face, on-line or remotely with students.

Standards of Conduct

Staff and volunteers at The Avenue School are responsible for supporting the safety, participation, wellbeing and empowerment of children.

Purpose

The purpose of this policy is to:

1. Ensure effective Child Safety & Wellbeing governance measures, policies, procedures, codes and practices are implemented and adhered to including the 11 Child Safety Standards.
2. Ensure that all parties are aware of their responsibilities for identifying possible child abuse and for establishing controls and procedures for preventing abuse and/or detecting abuse when it occurs.
3. Ensure that all suspected incidents of abuse are reported, documented in accordance with guidelines and fully investigated.
4. Establish controls and procedures to prevent child abuse and harm occurring within the school environment.
5. Ensure the physical and on-line environments support safety and wellbeing.
6. Provide a culturally safe and inclusive environment for the diverse needs of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children, children from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds, children with disabilities, and children who are vulnerable.
7. Promote the Commitment to Child Safety by modelling a child safe culture.
8. Place an emphasis on genuine engagement with and empowerment of students and families.
9. Ensure all staff and volunteers agree and adhere to the Child Safety & Wellbeing Code of Conduct.
10. Promote regular open discussion on child safety issues within the MDLC including at staff meetings and Board meetings.
11. Facilitate professional learning for staff and volunteers on child safety, cultural safety, student wellbeing and prevention of, and responding to abuse.
12. 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.
13. Undertake comprehensive recruitment practices that support Child Safety and wellbeing.
14. Enable inclusive practices where the diverse needs of all students are considered.

Commitment

At all times The Avenue School is committed to promoting and protecting the best interests of students operating in the physical and on-line environment. All children, regardless of their gender, race, religious beliefs, age, disability, sexual orientation, family or social background, have equal rights to a safe environment.

Child protection is a shared responsibility between The Avenue School staff members, students, parents/guardians, Board members, volunteers and contractors.

The Avenue School will not treat any young person who is deemed to be at risk of child abuse will not be discriminated against or treated differently.

The Avenue School welcomes and considers the opinions of students and use their opinions to develop child safe practices. Refer to the Empowering Students Framework.

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To support child-safe practices, The Avenue School will utilise the resources available from Child Protection and Child Safe Standards PROTECT platform - Information and advice on how to protect children, create a child safe environment, identify and report signs of abuse.

Resources are available via:

<https://www.education.vic.gov.au/school/teachers/health/childprotection/Pages/default.aspx>

<https://ccyp.vic.gov.au/resources/child-safe-standards/>

Statement of Commitment to Child Safety

The Avenue School is a child safe organisation that welcomes all children, young people and their families, therefore The Avenue School...

1. Is committed to providing environments where students are safe and feel safe, where their participation is valued, their views respected, and their voices are heard about decisions that affect their lives. The Avenue School child safe policies, strategies and practices are inclusive of the needs of all children and young people.
2. Has no tolerance for child abuse and takes proactive steps to identify and manage any risks of harm to students in the physical and online environments of the school.
3. Promotes positive relationships between students and adults and between students and their peers. These relationships are based on trust and respect.
4. Takes proactive steps to identify and manage any risk of harm to students. When child safety concerns are raised or identified, they are treated seriously and responded to promptly and thoroughly.
5. Gives particular attention to the child safety needs of Aboriginal students, those from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds, 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.
6. Does not tolerate harmful behaviour such as racism or homophobia and any instances identified are addressed with appropriate consequences.
7. Recognises Child safety is a shared responsibility. Every person involved at The Avenue School has an important role in promoting child safety and wellbeing and promptly raising any issues or concerns about a child's safety.
8. Is committed to regularly reviewing child safe practices, and seeking input from students, families, staff, and volunteers to inform ongoing strategies.

Definitions

Adult: The term "adult" refers to any person of or over 18 years of age. Every adult at The Avenue School is responsible for the care and protection of the young people attending the school and reporting information about suspected child abuse.

Child: A child is a person under the age of 18 years.

Child protection: Any responsibility, measure or activity undertaken to safeguard children from harm.

Child abuse: Six recognised forms of child abuse: physical abuse, sexual abuse and "grooming", emotional child abuse, neglect, family violence and forced marriage.

Child sexual assault: Any act which exposes a child to, or involves a child in, sexual processes beyond their understanding or contrary to accepted community standards. Sexually abusive behaviours can include the fondling of genitals, masturbation, oral sex, vaginal or anal penetration by a penis, finger or any other object, fondling of breasts, voyeurism, exhibitionism, and exposing the child to or involving the child in pornography. It includes child grooming, which refers to actions deliberately undertaken by a person who has care, supervision or authority of the child with the aim of befriending and establishing an emotional connection with a child to lower the child's inhibitions in preparation for the groomer or another adult's involvement in sexual activity with the child.

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Orange Door: formerly Child First, The orange door provides help for people experiencing family violence, or who need assistance with the care and wellbeing of children and young people.

Reasonable grounds for belief: A belief based on reasonable grounds that child abuse has occurred when all known considerations or facts relevant to the formation of a belief are taken into account and these are objectively assessed. Circumstances or considerations may include the source of the allegation and how it was communicated, the nature of and details of the allegation, and whether there are any other related matters known regarding the alleged perpetrator.

A reasonable belief is formed if a reasonable person believes that:

- (a) The child needs protection,
- (b) The child has suffered or is likely to suffer “significant harm as a result of physical injury”,
- (c) The parents are unable or unwilling to protect the child.

A ‘reasonable belief’ or a ‘belief on reasonable grounds’ is not the same as having proof, but is more than mere rumour or speculation.

A ‘reasonable belief’ is formed if a reasonable person in the same position would have formed the belief on the same grounds. For example, a ‘reasonable belief’ might be formed if:

1. A child states that they have been physically or sexually abused.
2. A child states that they know someone who has been physically or sexually abused (sometimes the child may be talking about themselves).
3. Someone who knows a child states that the child has been physically or sexually abused.
4. Professional observations of the child’s behaviour or development leads a professional to form a belief that the child has been physically or sexually abused or is likely to be abused and/or
5. Signs of abuse lead to a belief that the child has been physically or sexually abused.

Staff: The term “staff” refers to all people working or volunteering at the School including all employees, Board members, volunteers and contractors undertaking child related work.

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

- The venue of the school.
- Online or virtual school environments made available or authorised by the Principal for use by a child, young person or student (including email, social media, intranet systems, software applications, collaboration tools, and online services); and
 - Other locations provided by the school or through a third-party provider for a child, young person or student to use including, but not limited to, locations used for camps.
 - Delivery of education and training such as registered training organisations, TAFEs, non-school senior secondary providers or another school; or
 - Sporting activities, excursions or other activities or events.

Recognising Child Abuse

Types of child abuse	Examples
Sexual offence or grooming	Harassment. Encouraging a child to engage in, or be involved in, sexual activity. Compelling sexual touching.
Physical violence or abuse	Physical violence occurs when a child suffers or is likely to suffer significant harm from a non-accidental injury or injuries inflicted by another person. Physical violence can be inflicted in many ways, including beating, shaking, burning or use of weapons (such as, belts and paddles).

Serious emotional and psychological harm	When a child has suffered or is likely to suffer emotional or psychological harm that causes the child's emotional or intellectual development is or is likely to be, significantly damaged and the child's parents have not protected, or are unlikely to protect, the child from harm.
Serious neglect	Neglect is an omission. Serious harm or impairment of development by being deprived of food, clothing, warmth, hygiene, intellectual stimulation, supervision, and safety, attachment to and affection from adults, medical care.

For further information refer to:

Child Safe Information sheet 1.	Recognising Signs of Child Abuse
Child Safe Information sheet 2.	Signs of Sexual Abuse in Teenagers

Child Safe Standards

1. Organisations establish a culturally safe environment in which, among other things, the diverse and unique identities and experiences of Aboriginal children and young people are respected and valued.
2. Child Safety & Wellbeing is embedded in organisational leadership, governance and culture.
3. Children and young people are empowered about their rights, participate in decisions affecting them and are taken seriously.
4. Families and communities are informed and involved in promoting child safety and wellbeing.
5. Equity is upheld and diverse needs respected in policy and practice.
6. People working with children and young people are suitable and supported to reflect Child Safety & Wellbeing values in practice.
7. Processes for complaints and concerns are child focused.
8. Staff and volunteers are equipped with the knowledge, skills and awareness to keep children and young people safe through ongoing education and training.
9. Physical and on-line environments promote safety and wellbeing while minimising the opportunity for children and young people to be harmed.
10. Implementation of the Child Safe Standards is regularly reviewed and improved.
11. Policies and procedures document how the organisation is safe for children and young people.

Duty of Care

The Avenue School has a legal duty of care, to all its students, to take reasonable steps to protect them when they are under the care of The Avenue School from risks of injury that should have been reasonably foreseen. Young people have the right to a safe environment while at school.

Duty of care obligations are part of legislation to protect children from any type of child abuse by reporting it to authorities and include:

1. Acting on concerns quickly and in the child's best interests.
2. Protecting the safety, health and wellbeing of children.
3. Seeking appropriate advice or consulting when unsure.
4. Reporting concerns to the relevant authorities.
5. Supporting a child at an interview.
6. Providing ongoing support to a child and their family.
7. Attending Department of Families, Fairness and Housing (DFFH) Child Protection Case Planning and Student Support/Care meetings as arranged.

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Principle of Inclusion

The recognises and supports the diversity of all children, including (but not limited to) the needs of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children, children from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds, children with disabilities, and children who are vulnerable and promote and protect their safety.

Responsibilities

The Avenue School Board is responsible for the detection and prevention of child abuse in school environments and complying with the Victorian Child Safe Standards and Ministerial Order 1359. The Board has a non-delegable duty of care to children and students at the school.

Responsibilities of the Board:

1. Ensure appropriate and effective internal control systems are in place, including processes to respond to risks, complaints, concerns and/or disclosures.
2. Conduct regular reviews and evaluation of Child Safety & Wellbeing policies, procedures and practices annually or after any significant child safety incident.
3. Ensure complaints, concerns and safety incidents are analysed to identify causes and systemic failures and inform continuous improvement.
4. Ensure policies, procedures and codes of conduct are implemented so staff and volunteers know how to protect and prevent child abuse and report it when it occurs or is suspected.
5. Embedding a culture of Child Safety & Wellbeing in governance and leadership that promotes the identification and mitigation of risks.
6. Monitor overall compliance with child safety policies, procedures and practices.
7. Maintain current knowledge of child safe practice and cultural awareness, including awareness of Aboriginal cultural awareness by attending training.

Responsibilities of the Principal:

1. Ensure complete and current knowledge of all Child Safe requirements as per legislation.
2. Enact The Avenue School Child Safety policy and adhere to applicable legislation.
3. Arrange for training of Board members in Child Safety and Cultural Awareness.
4. Report on Child Safety & Wellbeing matters to the Board including any incidences of reporting child abuse internally or externally.
5. Ensure all staff, volunteers and contractors understand that they must not displace or discharge any other obligations that arise if a person reasonably believes that a child is at risk of child abuse and that they must report abuse and potential abuse to the relevant authorities and cooperate with law enforcement.
6. Ensure Staff and Volunteers engaged in child-connected work receive training and information on child safety, information sharing protocols and record keeping procedures consistent with policies, guidelines, standards and legal obligations.
7. Ensure all adults in the school community are aware of their obligation to report suspected child abuse and harm, or risk of child abuse and harm.
8. Perform the responsibilities of the Head of Entity under the Reportable Conduct Scheme.
9. Report to the Board on risks to ensure they have been appropriately assessed, managed, and reported (including risk mitigation).
10. Include child safety matters as an agenda item in meetings to ensure information regarding red flags and child safety concerns is shared.
11. Ensure the Child Safety Code of Conduct is issued to staff and a record of such is recorded on the Staff Safety Register.
12. Undertake risk management procedures annually in relation to Child Safety including comprehensive mitigation strategies for all situations including off-site activities and excursions or incursions or at activities that may be held outside normal hours of operation.

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13. Consider the cultural needs and diverse needs of each individual child and support their equal inclusion and protection while attending The Avenue School.
14. Ensure supervision of children attending The Avenue School is robust.
15. Ensure information sharing and record keeping procedures are in accordance with recordkeeping standards and in keeping with privacy and employment law obligations.
16. Ensure Child Safety & Wellbeing recruitment procedures are adhered to.
17. Notify the Youth Worker of their duty to undertake the role of Child Safety & Wellbeing Officer.

Responsibilities of the Child Safety & Wellbeing Officer (CSO):

1. Champion and model child safety & wellbeing at The Avenue School.
2. Monitor risks and risk management processes and act to minimise risks to the greatest extent possible. Report risks to Child Safety & Wellbeing to the Principal.
3. Support the Principal in the implementation of Child Safety & Wellbeing policies and practices.
4. Support all staff in meeting reporting obligations in response to an allegation of child abuse.
5. Inform The Avenue School community on Child Safety & Wellbeing matters by clearly and regularly communicating information.
6. Support staff, volunteers, students and families to maintain a child safe school environment by listening, discussing and clarifying issues in relation to child safety.
7. Ensure student safety and wellbeing strategies are being implemented effectively and strengthened when required.
8. Report incidences or concerns of Child Safety & Wellbeing matters to the Principal.
9. Help to coordinate responses to Child Safety & Wellbeing incidents.
10. Respond promptly to a concern or complaint of child abuse, and ensure complaints and concerns are taken seriously.
11. Monitor adherence to Record Keeping and Retention protocols by all staff and volunteers.

Responsibilities of teachers and staff:

(Including volunteers and contractors working directly with students.)

1. Become familiar with relevant laws, adhere to The Avenue School Child Safety & Wellbeing Code of Conduct, policies and procedures in relation to child protection and comply with all requirements.
2. Become familiar with the key risk indicators of child abuse or reportable conduct, be observant and raising any concerns, no matter how minor, with the Principal or Child Safety & Wellbeing Officer and/or external agencies as required.
3. Complete Child Safety training as required by The Avenue School. If unclear on any aspects of Child Safety obligations, raise the matter either at staff meetings or directly with the Principal or Child Safety & Wellbeing Officer.
4. Report any reasonable belief that a child's safety is at risk to the relevant authorities (such as the police and / or the state-based child protection service) and fulfil their obligations as mandatory reporters.
5. Ensure record keeping procedures are adhered to.
6. Assist to provide an environment that is supportive of all children's emotional and physical safety.

Note: Permission to Teach (PTT) is not a renewable form of registration and is only applicable in limited circumstance. Staff holding PPT registration must have a current WWCC.

Responsibilities of volunteers:

1. Promote child safety and wellbeing at all times and provide a safe school.
2. Environment for children and students.
3. Read and comply with this Policy, Procedure and the Child Safety & wellbeing Code of Conduct.
4. Be familiar with their legal obligations with respect to reporting child abuse.

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5. Be aware of key risk indicators of child abuse.
6. Raise any concerns they may have relating to child abuse with a Child Safety & Wellbeing Officer or the Principal.

Culturally safe environments

We are committed to the cultural safety of Aboriginal children and young people and the cultural safety of children and young people from culturally and/or linguistically diverse backgrounds. The strategies and actions the school will take to create and maintain a culturally safe environment include:

1. Respecting and valuing the diverse and unique identities and experiences of Aboriginal children and young people.
2. Promoting community participation to foster respect and build inclusiveness.
3. Providing a space where all individuals can feel safe to engage, learn and build connections.
4. Actively supporting the participation and inclusion of Aboriginal students, their families and communities.
5. Recognising the importance of Aboriginal culture, identity and safety in our child safe approach, responses to disclosures and in the development of our curriculum.
6. Ensuring Aboriginal students and their community have a voice by providing a safe space to be heard.
7. Supporting and encouraging students to express their culture and enjoy their cultural rights.
8. Providing opportunities for staff, students, volunteers and the Board to understand and appreciate the strengths of Aboriginal culture and its importance to the wellbeing and safety of Aboriginal children and students, through training and professional development.
9. Having measures in place to ensure racism is recognised, opposed and under no circumstances tolerated. Any instances of racism within the school environment are addressed with serious and appropriate consequences.

We want children and young people to be safe, happy and empowered. We support and respect all children and young people, as well as our staff and volunteers.

Organisational Leadership

The Avenue School Board is ultimately responsible for ensuring child safety within the school and accepts this responsibility. The Board ensures child safety at the school with the following strategies:

1. The Child Safety & Wellbeing Committee of the Board meet quarterly to review Child Safe processes and procedures at the school and to make recommendations to the Board. The Principal and Child Safety & Wellbeing Officer attend these meetings.
2. The Principal reports to the Board on child safety matters, including any risks identified specific to the school's environment, activities to be conducted and the characteristics of students, and risk controls and treatments implemented.
3. The Child Safety & Wellbeing Policy and Statement of Commitment to Child Safety is publicly available on The Avenue School website.
4. Child Safety is a standard agenda item on all staff and Board meetings – minutes are stored electronically.
5. The Principal and Child Safety & Wellbeing Officer are responsible for monitoring compliance with this Child Safety Policy and the Reporting Procedure.
6. Staff, volunteers and Board members participate in regular and ongoing training on Child Safety matters.
7. Child Safety is embedded into staff and Board recruitment and induction procedures.

Child Safety & Wellbeing Code of Conduct

The purpose of the Code of Conduct is to:

1. Promote child safety in the school environment.
2. Sets behavioural expectations of Staff and Volunteers when interacting with students to reduce the risk of child abuse.
3. Outline the possible consequences should the Code of Conduct be breached.

All staff, volunteers and Board members of The Avenue School are required to observe child safe principles and expectations for appropriate behaviour towards and in the company of children and to adhere to the Code of Conduct.

We take into consideration contributions Staff, Volunteers, families, children and young people in the ongoing development of the Code of Conduct.

Risk Management

Child safety is a part of The Avenue School's overall risk management approach. Risk Management is overseen through the Board which are committed to identifying and managing risks at The Avenue School.

In addition to overall risk management systems, specific risk management procedures are undertaken to manage risks of abuse or harm to students at MDLC. These are reviewed and implemented on an annual basis using the PROTECT Child Safe Risk Management Template available at: <https://www.education.vic.gov.au/Documents/about/programs/health/protect/child-safety-risk-register.docx>

Risk management processes include mitigating risk in the physical and on-line environments, at the school and in activities undertaken outside the school including off-site activities, excursions, camps and with third-party education providers.

Key Risks in Summary:

1. Unintentional/accidental harm – poor supervision, high risk activity, poor physical environment leading to injury.
2. Physical abuse – physical punishment, pushing, shoving, punching, slapping, kicking etc.
3. Psychological abuse – bullying, threatening, shaming, ignoring and isolating.
4. Cultural abuse – lack of cultural respect, racial vilification or discrimination, lack of support to express cultural identity.
5. Neglect – lack of supervision, not providing nutrition or clothing or shelter, not meeting needs.
6. Sexual abuse – grooming, inappropriate touching, sex abuse or assault or exploitation, inappropriate sexual conversations (on-line or face to face), crossing professional boundaries.
7. Third party arrangements where responsibility must be reinforced outside the school.
8. On-line risks - cyber bullying, image-based abuse, scams and identity theft, fake news and information, inappropriate content, deliberate exclusion.

Student Empowerment

The Avenue School holds young people at the centre of our endeavours and encourages their empowerment by seeking their input and respecting their views. The Avenue School utilises the Empowering Students Framework developed by Mountain District Learning Centre (MDLC) which outlines the methodology employed to ensure students are empowered to participate in processes that directly affect them.

This is achieved by:

1. Consulting with students so they have an opportunity to share their views, thoughts, and ideas.
2. Informing students of their rights and their responsibilities.

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3. Advising students how to protect themselves through implementation of information sessions and embedded learning opportunities, so they can better recognise unsafe situations.
4. Providing students with a safe space in which they can communicate and express their views in order to raise awareness or their worries or concerns relating to themselves and others.
5. Providing robust wellbeing support and ensuring students are aware support is available if they are feeling unsafe, for example, protect posters are displayed in prominent places throughout the school.
6. Promoting student friendships and peer support to ensure a sense of belonging.

Community and Family Engagement

The Avenue School families and community have an important role in monitoring and promoting children’s safety and wellbeing and helping students to raise any concerns.

The Avenue School provides accessible information about its child safe policies and practices and involves families and the community in our approach to child safety and wellbeing. This is achieved via the school website, newsletters, surveys and by maintaining open and transparent communication on its child safe policies and practices with support agencies and services.

The Child Safety & Wellbeing policy and the Child Safety Reporting procedure are both publicly available on The Avenue School website.

The Avenue School creates opportunities for families and community to have input into the development and review of child safety policies and practices, encourages concerns to be raised and welcomes ideas for improvement.

The Child Safety & Wellbeing Officer takes a pro-active approach by:

1. Communicating with parents/guardians to provide information in an accessible and respectful manner.
2. Engaging in conversations with families and external organisations who may need to be informed in relation to student safety.
3. Facilitating the involvement of families in decisions about their child unless it is inappropriate to do so.

Diversity and equity

The Avenue School promotes diversity and tolerance in our organisation and people from all walks of life and cultural backgrounds are welcome. This is achieved by:

1. Promoting the cultural safety, participation and empowerment of Aboriginal children and young people.
2. Promoting the cultural safety, participation and empowerment of children from culturally and/or linguistically diverse backgrounds.
3. Promoting the safety of children and young people with a disability.
4. Ensuring children with a disability are safe and can participate equally.
5. Promoting the safety and empowerment of LGBTQIA+ children and young people.
6. Paying particular attention to these and any other students who may be vulnerable for any other reason.

Suitable and Supported Staff

The Avenue School undertakes a comprehensive recruitment, screening, induction, training and review process for all staff to ensure the most suitable candidates who share The Avenue School’s values and commitment to protect children are engaged.

The Avenue School ensures staff members have the appropriate qualifications to work within the school. Thorough measures are applied to gather, verify and record information about a person whom it proposes to engage to perform child-connected work.

The safety and wellbeing of children and young people is our primary concern. The decisions we make when recruiting, assessing incidents, and undertaking disciplinary action will always be fair, thorough, transparent, and evidence based.

The Avenue School undertakes a comprehensive recruitment, screening, induction, training and review process for all staff, which aims to:

1. Identify the most suitable candidates who share The Avenue School's values and commitment to protect children.
2. Ensure candidates are screened by sighting and verifying WWCC/VIT, carrying out identity and qualifications checks, obtaining information about their history of work involving children and undertake child safe reference checks.
3. Provides initial and ongoing supervision.
4. Conduct performance reviews ensuring a focus on child safety and wellbeing.
5. Ensure continuous improvement of knowledge and practice through the provision of staff and Board training.

Complaint Procedures

The Child Safety Responding and Reporting policy details how The Avenue School meets its child safety reporting obligations and how the school responds to complaints or concerns relating to child abuse.

Child focused processes for complaints and concerns include:

- a) A complaint handling policy that is publicly available.
- b) Effective complaint handling processes that are understood by children and young people, families, staff and volunteers, and are culturally safe.
- c) Complaints are taken seriously and responded to promptly and thoroughly.
- d) Procedures are in place to report to relevant authorities.
- e) Reporting, information sharing, privacy and employment law obligations are met.

Responding and Reporting Obligations

The Avenue School has a Child Safety Responding & Reporting procedure, which details the process for reporting child abuse or child related misconduct or disclosures and suspicion of abuse involving staff, volunteers and participants.

The Avenue School staff must report all instances of suspected child abuse involving a staff member, contractor or volunteer to Victoria Police (call 000 or Knox police station 9881 7000). Staff must also report internally to the Principal who will report to the Board.

The Child Safety & Wellbeing Officer holds responsibility for ensuring Child Safety reporting procedures are implemented and must ensure incidents or concerns are reported to the Principal who will report to the Board.

Allegations of abuse and safety concerns are documented using the Protect – responding template. Investigation updates are also documented, and records are securely stored.

Reports of child abuse or child related misconduct involving staff, volunteers and participants of The Avenue School also must be reported through the Commission for Children and Young People (CCYP) as per the Reportable Conduct Scheme.

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If an allegation of abuse or a safety concern is raised, updates are provided to children, young people and families on progress and any actions taken by the school.

The Child Safety Reporting & Responding procedure and Complaints Handling policy are publicly available to our community to inform them how they can make complaints or raise concerns related to child safety.

What is reportable conduct?

When a person has a reasonable belief that there has been:

- a) A sexual offence (even prior to criminal proceedings commencing).
- b) Sexual misconduct.
- c) Physical violence committed against, with or in the presence of a child.
- d) Behaviour causing significant emotional or psychological harm.
- e) Significant neglect of a child.
- f) Misconduct involving any of the above.

The scope of 'reportable conduct' is wide and is not limited to criminal conduct. This means that reportable conduct includes:

- a) Sexual abuse.
- b) Grooming.
- c) Sexting.
- d) Inappropriate physical contact.
- e) Sexualised behaviour with a child.

Reportable conduct includes information about something that is alleged to have occurred outside the course of the person's employment.

Ongoing Support

The Avenue School will ensure any student who has been the subject of child abuse allegations and reporting procedures receives ongoing support which may include:

- a) Coordinating allied health and wellbeing supports and services.
- b) Updating the student wellbeing plan.
- c) Maintaining regular contact with parents (as appropriate) to support the student's wellbeing.
- d) Ensuring ongoing follow up.

Child Safety Knowledge, Skills and Awareness

Staff and volunteers are trained and supported to effectively implement The Avenue School's Child Safety & Wellbeing Policy and how to build culturally safe environments for children and young people.

A training schedule is completed to ensure training is planned, timetabled and delivered and a register is in place to show which staff have completed staff training when it was undertaken.

Training is undertaken as part of induction and annual training procedures in the following areas:

- 1. Child Safety & Wellbeing policy.
- 2. Child Safety Code of Conduct.
- 3. Child Safe Responding and Reporting Obligations policy.
- 4. Guidance on:
 - a) Recognising indicators of child harm, including harm caused by other young people and/or students.
 - b) Responding effectively to issues of Child Safety & Wellbeing and supporting colleagues who disclose harm.
 - c) How to build culturally safe environments for students.
 - d) Information sharing and recordkeeping obligations.

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- e) Identifying and mitigating Child Safety & Wellbeing risks in the school environment without compromising a child's or student's right to privacy, access to information, social connections and learning opportunities.
- f) Supporting child safety in on-line environments.
- g) Responding to complaints and concerns.

Sharing Information

All staff undertake MARAM training in relation to sharing information and the wellbeing team understand their obligations under the Child Sharing Information Scheme (CISS). Under the Child Information Sharing Scheme (CISS) the school is considered an authorised organisations to share information to support child wellbeing or safety. The Scheme has expanded legal permissions for professionals to share and request information from other professionals.

Record Keeping and Retention of Records

Full and accurate records document all aspects of any allegation and investigation in keeping with The Avenue School policy requirements.

Record keeping and retention protocols apply to all Board members, staff and volunteers who are informed of this requirement.

The Avenue School adheres to protocols around recording and retaining information about Child Safety & Wellbeing matters in keeping with the following requirements:

1. The Public Records Office of Victoria (PROV) Standards (PROS 19/08 Retention and Disposal Authority for Records of Organisational Response to Child Sexual Abuse Incidents and Allegations).
2. The Royal Commission into Institutional Responses to Child Sexual Abuse (RCIRCSA) Final Report.

Records are properly managed and retained in keeping with The Avenue School's Records Management policy, Privacy policy, Child Safety & Wellbeing policy and upon advice of the Child Safety & Wellbeing Officer and Principal, to ensure access to reliable records is guaranteed if required at a future point in time.

Reportable information on Child Safety Matters collected at The Avenue School must not be destroyed. Information will be stored electronically in a secure folder or within the Student Management System, with access limited to only those staff who need to know details. All information must be available, if required for Child Protection or Victoria Police.

Refer to: Public Records Office of Victoria (PROV) - Creating, managing and retaining records of child sexual abuse available via <https://prov.vic.gov.au/>

Associated documents:

- Complaints Handling Policy
- Records Management Policy
- Privacy Policy
- Refer to table above for additional resources

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Child Safety and Wellbeing			