

## Child Safety Policy

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*Alphington Grammar School is committed to providing a child safe and child friendly environment, where children and young people are safe and feel safe, and are able to actively participate in decisions that affect their lives.*

### **Purpose:**

The purpose of this policy is to demonstrate the commitment of Alphington Grammar School in ensuring the safety, welfare and wellbeing of all students at our School is preserved. It provides an outline of the policies, procedures and strategies developed to keep students safe from harm, including all forms of abuse in our School environment, online and in other locations provided by the School.

This policy aims to embed a culture of child safety and ensure zero tolerance of child abuse in the school and to make certain that protecting children from abuse is embedded in everyday thinking and practice.

This policy applies to all Alphington Grammar School employees, contractors, volunteers, students and visitors.

### **1. Our Commitment to Child and Youth Safety:**

- 1.1. Alphington Grammar School is committed to providing a child safe and child friendly environment, where children and young people are safe and feel safe, are able to actively participate in decisions that affect their lives.
- 1.2. At Alphington Grammar School we have a zero tolerance for child abuse and are committed to acting in children's best interests and keeping them safe from harm. The School regards its child protection responsibilities with the utmost importance and as such, is committed to providing the necessary resources to ensure compliance with all relevant child protection laws and regulations and maintain a child safe culture.
- 1.3. Child abuse includes:
  - any act committed against a child involving a sexual offence or grooming;
  - the infliction on a child of physical violence, or serious emotional or physiological harm; and
  - serious neglect of a child and a child's exposure to family violence.

### **2. Child Safe Values and Principles:**

- 2.1. Alphington Grammar School's commitment to child safety is based on the following overarching principles that guide the development and regular review of our work systems, practices, policies and procedures to protect children from abuse:
  1. All children have the right to be safe.
  2. The welfare and best interests of the student are paramount.
  3. The views of the child and the child's privacy must be respected.
  4. Clear expectations for appropriate behaviour with children are established in our Child Safe Code of Conduct and Staff and Student Professional Boundaries Policy.
  5. The safety of children is dependent upon the existence of a child and youth safe culture.
  6. Child and youth safety awareness is promoted and openly discussed within our School community.
  7. Procedures are in place to screen all employees, direct contact volunteers, third party contractors and external education providers who have direct contact with children.



8. Child and youth safety and protection is the responsibility of everyone in our community.

9. Child and youth protection training is mandatory for the School Council, School Executive and all employees.

10. Procedures for responding to alleged or suspected incidents of child abuse are simple and accessible for all members of the School community.

11. Children from culturally or linguistically diverse backgrounds have the right to special care and support including those who identify as Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander.

12. Children who have any kind of disability have the right to special care and support.

2.2. Direct Contact Volunteers are those volunteers who are involved in providing support, guidance and supervision directly to students and could potentially have direct contact with students during the normal course of providing the volunteer service.

2.3. The Working with Children Act 2005 (Vic) defines 'direct contact' as any contact between a person and a child (aged under 18) that involves:

- physical contact;
- face to face contact;
- contact by post or other written communication;
- contact by telephone or other oral communication; and
- contact by email or other electronic communication.

2.4. Examples of Direct Contact Volunteer activities may include volunteers involved in School camps and excursions, coaching sporting teams or assisting in learning activities.

### **3. Child Protection Program**

3.1. Alphington Grammar School is committed to the effective implementation of our Child Protection Program and ensuring that it is appropriately reviewed and updated. We adopt a risk management approach by identifying key risk indicators and assessing child safety risks based on a range of factors including the nature of our School's activities, physical and online environments and the characteristics of the student body.

3.2. Our Child Protection Program relates to all aspects of protecting children from abuse and establishes work systems, practices, policies and procedures to protect children from abuse.

It includes:

- clear information as to what constitutes child abuse and associated key risk indicators;
- clear procedures for responding to and reporting allegations of child abuse;
- strategies to support, encourage and enable employees, volunteers, third party contractors, external education providers, parents/guardians and students to understand, identify, discuss and report child and youth protection matters;
- procedures for recruiting and screening School Council members, employees and direct contact volunteers;
- procedures for reporting reportable conduct and/or misconduct;
- pastoral care strategies designed to empower students and keep them safe;
- policies with respect to cultural diversity and students with disabilities;



- a child and youth protection training program;
  - information regarding the steps to take after a disclosure of abuse to protect, support and assist children;
  - guidelines with respect to record keeping and confidentiality;
  - policies to ensure compliance with all relevant laws, regulations and standards (including the Victorian Child Safe Standards); and
  - a system for continuous review and improvement.
- 3.3. As a part of Alphington Grammar School's induction process, all employees and direct contact volunteers are required to complete a selection of training modules on the content of our Child Protection Program.
- 3.4. Additional, ongoing child protection training is provided at least annually.
- 3.5. Employees, volunteers, third party contractors and external education providers are supported and supervised by the School's Child Safety Officers to ensure that they are compliant with the School's approach to child protection.

#### **4. Responsibilities**

4.1. Child protection is everyone's responsibility. At Alphington Grammar School all members of the School Council and employees, as well as volunteers, have a shared responsibility for contributing to the safety and protection of children. Specific responsibilities include:

##### **4.2. School Council**

4.2.1. Each member of the School Council is required to ensure that appropriate resources are made available to allow the School's Child Safe Policy and the Child Protection Program to be effectively implemented within the School and are responsible for holding the Principal and the Senior Management Team accountable for effective implementation.

##### **4.3. The Principal**

4.3.1. The Principal is responsible, and will be accountable for, taking all practical measures to ensure that this Child Safe Policy and the School's Child Protection Program are implemented effectively and that a strong and sustainable child protection culture is maintained within the School.

##### **4.4. The School's Child Safety Officers**

4.4.1. A number of senior staff members are nominated as the School's Child Safety Officers. Our Child Safety Officers receive additional specialised training with respect to child protection issues. They are the first point of contact for raising child protection concerns within the School. They are also responsible for championing child protection within the School and assisting in coordinating responses to child protection incidents.

##### **4.5. Employees**

4.5.1. All employees are required to be familiar with the content of our Child Safe Policy and our Child Protection Program and their legal obligations with respect to the reporting of child abuse. It is each individual's responsibility to be aware of key risk indicators of child abuse, to be observant, and to raise any concerns they may have relating to child abuse with one of the School's Child Safety Officers. Failure to be aware, observant and to raise concerns with the Child Safety Officers as a matter of urgency will be regarded as serious matters subject to the potential for discipline.



#### 4.6. Direct Contact Volunteers

- 4.6.1. All Direct Contact Volunteers, as defined in this policy, are required to be familiar with the content of our Child Safe Policy, our Child Protection and their legal obligations with respect to the reporting of child abuse.
- 4.6.2. It is each individual's responsibility to be aware of key risk indicators of child abuse, to be observant, and to raise any concerns they may have relating to child abuse with one of the School's Child Safety Officers.

#### 4.7. Indirect Contact Volunteers

- 4.7.1. Indirect Contact Volunteers are those volunteers who are involved in providing support and services whilst not directly assisting a specific group of students.
- 4.7.2. All Indirect Volunteers are responsible for contributing to the safety and protection of children in the School environment.
- 4.7.3. All Indirect Volunteers are required by the School to be familiar with our Child Safe Policy and our Child Safe Code of Conduct.
- 4.7.4. Examples of Indirect Contact Volunteer activities may include assisting with School administrative functions.

#### 4.8. Third Party Contractors

- 4.8.1. All Third Party Contractors engaged by the School are responsible for contributing to the safety and protection of children in the School environment.
- 4.8.2. Third Party Contractors include, for example, maintenance and building personnel, consultants, casual teachers, tutors, sports coaches and school cleaners.
- 4.8.3. This also includes music teachers and other extra-curricular teachers and instructors who are engaged by students and their families directly, rather than the School, but have an agreement with the School to use the School's facilities.
- 4.8.4. All Third Party Contractors engaged by the School are required by the School to be familiar with our Child Safe Policy and our Child Safe Code of Conduct.
- 4.8.5. The School may include this requirement in the written agreement between it and the Third Party Contractor.

#### 4.9. External Education Providers

- 4.9.1. An External Education Provider is any organisation that the School has arranged to deliver a specified course of study that is part of the curriculum, to a student or students enrolled at the School.
- 4.9.2. The delivery of such a course may take place on School premises or elsewhere.
- 4.9.3. All External Education Providers engaged by the School are responsible for contributing to the safety and protection of children in the School environment.
- 4.9.4. All External Education Providers engaged by the School are required by the School to be familiar with our Child Safe Policy and our Child Safe Code of Conduct.
- 4.9.5. Alphington Grammar School may include this requirement in the written agreement between it and the External Education Provider.



## **5. Reporting Child Abuse Concerns**

- 5.1. Our Child Protection Program provides detailed guidance for members of the School Council, employees and direct contact volunteers as to how to identify key risk indicators of child abuse and how to report child abuse concerns to one of our School's nominated Child Safety Officers. It also contains detailed procedures with respect to the reporting of child abuse incidents to relevant authorities.
- 5.2. Employees, third party contractors, external education providers, volunteers, students, parents/guardians and other community members who have concerns that a child may be subject to abuse or grooming are asked to contact the School's Senior Child Safety Officer, Tracey Nicholson, by phoning her on (03) 9497 4777 or emailing [tn@ags.vic.edu.au](mailto:tn@ags.vic.edu.au)
- 5.3. Communications will be treated confidentially on a "need to know basis".
- 5.4. Whenever there are concerns that a child is in immediate danger the Police should be called on 000

## **6. Relevant Legislation**

- 6.1. Relevant Legislation includes:
  - Children, Youth and Families Act 2005 (Vic).
  - Working with Children Act 2005 (Vic).
  - Education and Training Reform Act 2006 (Vic).
  - Equal Opportunity Act 2010 (Vic).
  - Privacy Act 1988 (Cth); and
  - Crimes Act 1958 (Vic).

## **7. References**

- 7.1. Alphington Grammar School Child Safety Policy 2020.

## **8. Policy and Program Review**

- 8.1. Alphington Grammar School is committed to the continuous improvement of our Child Protection Program. The Program is regularly reviewed for overall effectiveness and to ensure compliance with all child protection related laws, regulations and standards.