

Beaconhills College Child Protection Program

Child Safe Policy

Beaconhills College has developed the following *Child Safe Policy*.

This policy is an overarching document that provides key elements of our approach to protecting children from abuse. It is designed to be communicated through our public website as well as through other mediums including newsletters, our annual report and induction and welcome packs for College Board members, staff, homestay families and volunteers.

Objectives

This policy provides the framework for:

- Development of work systems, practices, policies and procedures that promote child protection within the College
- Creation of a positive and robust child protection culture
- Promotion and open discussion of child protection issues within the College
- Compliance with all laws, regulations and standards relevant to child protection in Victoria.

Statement of commitment to child safety

Beaconhills College 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.

At Beaconhills College 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 College 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.

Child Safe values and principles

The College'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 child are paramount.
3. The views of the child and a child's privacy must be respected.
4. Clear expectations for appropriate behaviour with children are established in our *Child Safety Code of Conduct and Staff and Student Professional Boundaries Policy*.
5. The safety of children is dependent upon the existence of a child safe culture.
6. Child safety awareness is promoted and openly discussed within our College community.
7. Procedures are in place to screen all staff, homestay families, volunteers**, third party contractors and external education providers who have direct contact with children.
8. Child safety and protection is everyone's responsibility.
9. Child protection training is mandatory for all College Board members, staff, homestay families and volunteers.
10. Procedures for responding to alleged or suspected incidents of child abuse are simple and accessible for all members of the College 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.

** **Volunteers** are those volunteers who are involved in providing support, guidance and supervision to students and could potentially have direct unsupervised contact with students during the normal course of providing the volunteer service. Examples of volunteer activities may include College co-curricular events, coaching sporting teams or assisting in classroom learning activities.



Child Protection Program

Beaconhills College 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 College's activities, physical and online environments and the characteristics of the student body.

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 staff, homestay hosts, volunteers, third party contractors, external education providers, parents and students to understand procedures to identify, discuss and report child protection matters;
- procedures for recruiting and screening College Board members, staff, homestay families, and 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 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 improvement and review.

As a part of Beaconhills College's induction process, all staff, homestay families and volunteers are required to complete training and information on the content of our Child Protection Program.

All staff, homestay families, volunteers and College Board members are provided with additional, ongoing child protection training at least annually.

Staff, homestay families, volunteers, third party contractors and external education providers are supported and supervised by the College's child safe officers to ensure that they are compliant with the College's approach to child protection.

Responsibilities

Child protection is everyone's responsibility. At Beaconhills College the College Board members, the Headmaster, child safe officers, homestay families, volunteers, third party contractors and external education providers, have a shared responsibility for contributing to the safety and protection of children.

Specific responsibilities include:

Board of Directors

Each member of the Board of Directors is required to ensure that appropriate resources are made available to allow the College's *Child Safe Policy* and the Child Protection Program to be effectively implemented within the College and are responsible for holding the Headmaster and executive team accountable for effective implementation.



The Headmaster

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

The College's child safe officers

A number of staff members have been nominated as the College's child safe officers. Our child safe 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 College. They are also responsible for championing child protection within the College and assisting in co-ordinating responses to child protection incidents.

Staff members

All staff 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 College's child safe officers.

Homestay families

All homestay families are required to undergo a child safe induction program and are required to be familiar with the content of our *Child Safe Policy* and our child safety code of conduct and their legal obligations with respect to the reporting of child abuse.

Volunteers

Volunteers 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.

All volunteers are required to be familiar with the content of our Child Protection Program, particularly this *Child Safe Policy* and our *Child Safe Code of Conduct*. They must be aware that they too have legal obligations with respect to the reporting of child abuse.

All volunteers will be required to be registered through the College's approval process, and will be identified whilst on site or at events via a green lanyard.

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 College's child safe officers and/or with external agencies where required.

Third party contractors

All third party contractors (service providers) engaged by the College are responsible for contributing to the safety and protection of children in the College environment.

Third party contractors include, for example, maintenance and building personnel, consultants, casual teachers, tutors, sports coaches and College cleaners.

This also includes music teachers and other extra-curricular teachers and instructors who are engaged by students and their families directly, rather than the College, but have an agreement with the College to use the College's facilities.



External education providers

An external education provider is any organisation that the College has arranged to deliver a specified course of study - that is part of the curriculum - to a student or students enrolled at the College.

The delivery of such a course may take place on College premises or elsewhere. All external education providers engaged by the College are responsible for contributing to the safety and protection of children in the College environment.

All external education providers engaged by the College are required by the College to be familiar with our *Child Safe Policy* and our Child Protection Program.

Beaconhills College may include this requirement in the written agreement between it and the external education provider.

Reporting concerns

Our Child Protection Program provides detailed guidance for the Board of Directors, staff, homestay families and volunteers as to how to identify key risk indicators of child abuse and how to report child abuse concerns to one of the College's nominated child safe officers. It also contains detailed procedures with respect to the reporting of child abuse incidents to relevant authorities.

Third party contractors, external education providers, all volunteers, students, parents/carers or other community members who have concerns that a child may be subject to abuse are asked to contact the College's Senior Child Protection Officer, Yvonne Ashmore, by calling 1300 002 225 or email childsafecollege@beaconhills.vic.edu.au.

Communications will be treated confidentially on a 'need to know basis', and are managed in line with our privacy and records management policy.

If you have a belief or suspicion that a child is being, or has been, subjected to any form of abuse you must contact the Victorian Child Protection Service or, where you need guidance on making a report or have questions regarding child safety, contact one of the College's appointed child safe officers. Whenever there are concerns that a child is in immediate danger the police should be called on 000.

Policy and program review

Beaconhills College 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.

Adopted by College Board 25 July 2016.

Update May 2019. Adopted 28 May 2019.

