

Child Safe Policy

Child Protection Program



Beaconhills
College

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.

This *Policy* is designed to be communicated through our public website as well as through other mediums such as newsletters, our annual report and as part of inductions for Board Members, staff and volunteers.

Beaconhills' *Child Safe Policy* forms the foundation of College's procedures, practices, decision-making processes and ultimately College's culture with respect to child safety.

Beaconhills' *Child Safe Policy* has been approved and endorsed by the College Board of Directors and is regularly reviewed by the Board.

OUR CHILD SAFE POLICY

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 Beaconhills
- 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.

Beaconhills College has a zero tolerance for child abuse and is 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 to maintain a child safe culture.

CHILD SAFE VALUES AND PRINCIPLES

Beaconhills 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 Safe 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 the Board, 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 at Beaconhills are registered community members involved in providing support, guidance and supervision directly to students; potentially with direct student contact during the normal course of providing their volunteer service.

Examples of College volunteer activities include registered community members supporting Beaconhills co-curricular events, coaching sporting teams or those assisting in classroom learning activities.

The Worker Screening Act 2020 (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 or
- contact by email or other electronic communication.

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

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 including:

- 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/carers and students to understand, identify, discuss and report child protection matters
- procedures for recruiting and screening Board of Directors , staff homestay families, and volunteers, third party contractors and external education providers
- procedures for reporting Reportable Conduct and/or misconduct
- pastoral care/Wellbeing 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 on the steps to take to protect, support and assist children after a disclosure of abuse
- guidelines with respect to record keeping and confidentiality
- policies to ensure compliance with all relevant laws, regulations and standards (including the a system for continuous review and improvement.

As a part of Beaconhills induction process, all staff, homestay families, and volunteers are required to complete a selection of training modules on the College Child Protection Program.

Additional, ongoing child protection training is provided at least annually.

Beaconhills' child safe officers support and supervise staff, volunteers, third party contractors and external education providers 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 Board, Headmaster/Executive Principal, child safe officers, staff , volunteers, third party contractors and external education providers, have a shared responsibility for contributing to the safety and protection of children. Specific responsibilities include:

The Board

The Board are required to ensure that appropriate resources are made available to ensure the Beaconhills' *Child Safe Policy* and the Child Protection Program is effectively implemented across the College. The Board are responsible for holding the Headmaster/Executive Principal and the College Executive Team accountable for effective implementation.

The Headmaster/Executive Principal

The Headmaster/Executive Principal is responsible, and accountable for, taking all practical measures to ensure that Beaconhills' *Child Safe Policy* and the Child Protection Program are implemented effectively and that a strong and sustainable child protection culture is maintained across the College.

Beaconhills' child safe officers

A number of staff members are nominated as Beaconhills' 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 Beaconhills and for assisting with coordinating responses to child protection incidents.

Homestay families

Beaconhills requires all homestay families to undergo a Child Safe Induction Program and are required to be familiar with the content of Beaconhills' *Child Safe Policy* and *Child Safe Code of Conduct* and their legal obligations with respect to reporting child abuse.

Volunteers

Volunteers at Beaconhills are registered community members who provide support, guidance and supervision to College programs and could potentially have direct student contact during the normal course of their volunteer service.

Examples of volunteer activities may include registered community members involved in College camps or excursions, coaching sporting teams or those assisting in learning activities, canteen, BBQ duty or Library support.

Beaconhills requires all volunteers to be familiar with its Child Protection Program, particularly this *Child Safe Policy* and our *Child Safe Code of Conduct*. All volunteers must be aware that they have legal obligations with respect to reporting child abuse.

All volunteers must register and complete the College approval process. Volunteers are identified via a Green Lanyard while on site or at events.

Each individual volunteering at the College is responsible for their own awareness of key child abuse risk indicators. All volunteers must be observant and raise any concerns they may have relating to child abuse with one of Beaconhills' child safe officers and/or with external agencies where required.

Third party contractors

All third party contractors engaged by Beaconhills are responsible for contributing to the safety and protection of children in the College environment. Third party contractors may include maintenance and building personnel, consultants, casual teachers, tutors and sports coaches as well as College cleaners.

This category 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 Beaconhills has arranged to deliver a specified course of study, which is part of the curriculum, to a student or students enrolled at the College. Course delivery may take place on College premises or elsewhere.

All external education providers engaged by Beaconhills are responsible for contributing to the safety and protection of children in the College environment.

Beaconhills requires all external education providers to be familiar with Beaconhills' *Child Safe Policy* and our *Child Safe Code of Conduct*. The College may include this requirement in written agreements between it and the external education provider.

REPORTING CHILD ABUSE CONCERNS

Our Child Protection Program provides the Board, staff, homestay families and volunteers with detailed guidance on how to identify key child abuse risk indicators and on how to report child abuse concerns to a Beaconhills child safe officer. It also contains detailed procedures on reporting of child abuse incidents to relevant authorities.

Staff, third party contractors, external education providers, volunteers, homestay families, students, parents/carers and other community members who have concerns that a child may be subject to abuse or grooming are asked to contact Beaconhills Senior Child Safe Officer, Yvonne Ashmore by calling 1300 002 225 or emailing: childsafecofficer@beaconhills.vic.edu.au

Communications will be treated confidentially on a 'need to know basis' and are managed in line with our *Privacy Policy* 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 Beaconhills 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.

Approved by the Board, October 2021.



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