



Chairo Christian School

Child Protection and Safety Policy

Policy Number: CHI-003.01

Back to [Table of Contents](#) Back to [Index](#)

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1. Preamble

- 1.1. All children are precious in the sight of God. The Bible indicates that the nurture of children is a high priority in the community with specific responsibility being given to parents (Ephesians 6:4; Deuteronomy 4:9). It is the responsibility of all members of the Chairo school community to love, and therefore protect, the students in their care. This love, as described in 1 Corinthians 13, must guide the words and actions of staff members as they stand in the place of parents.
- 1.2. This policy is a companion to other Chairo documents and should be read in conjunction with them, including:
 - *Child Safety Statement of Commitment;*
 - *Child Safety Strategy and Action Plan;* and
 - *Child Safety Code of Conduct*
- 1.3. Chairo is committed to the protection of all children from all forms of child abuse and demonstrates this commitment through the implementation of a comprehensive *Child Protection Program* designed to keep children safe. Child abuse includes sexual offences, grooming, physical violence, serious emotional or psychological harm, serious neglect and a child's exposure to family violence.
- 1.4. At Chairo, we have a zero tolerance for child abuse and are committed to acting in the best interests of children and to keeping them safe from harm. The school regards its child protection responsibilities to be of 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 maintaining a child safe culture.
- 1.5. Upon enrolment, the school enters into an agreement with parents/guardians to assist them in their God-given responsibility for the nurture of their children. The school strives to fulfill their contract to support parents but not to the detriment of the welfare of the student. It is part of the school's duty of care to ensure that students receive the protection that is due to them.
- 1.6. Students cannot be expected to know their rights nor to assert them if they became subject to abusive behaviours from another person. Therefore, in every action taken in response to a case of suspected child abuse, assault and/or neglect, the best interest of the student is of paramount consideration.
- 1.7. Other policies and procedures that relate directly to the health, safety, protection and welfare of students include the *Staff and Student Professional Boundaries Policy*, *Student Discipline & Behaviour Policy*, *Bullying (Students) Policy*, *Welfare Services Policy*, *Health and Wellbeing (Students) Policy*, *Christian Foundations Policy*, *Volunteers Policy*, *Visitors Policy*, *Staff Conduct & Professional Practice Policy*, *Occupational Health and Safety Policy*, *Child Protection Staff Training*, and *Recruitment and Selection Procedures*.

2. Child Safe Principles

- 2.1. Chairo'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:
 - All children have the right to be safe.
 - The welfare and best interests of the child are paramount.
 - The views of the child and a child's privacy must be respected.
 - The safety of children is dependent upon the existence of a child safe culture.



Chairo Christian School

- Child safety awareness is promoted and openly discussed within our school community.
- Procedures are in place to screen all staff members and direct-contact volunteers, including third party contractors and external providers who have direct contact with children.
- Child safety and protection is everyone's responsibility.
- Child protection training is mandatory for all Board members, staff members and direct-contact volunteers.
- Procedures for responding to alleged or suspected incidents of child abuse are simple and accessible for all members of the school community.
- 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.
- Children who have any kind of disability have the right to special care and support.

2.2. Direct-contact volunteers are those volunteers that are involved in providing support, guidance and supervision directly to students and who could potentially have direct unsupervised contact with students during the normal course of providing volunteer service. Examples of direct-contact volunteer activities may include volunteers involved in school camps and excursions, coaching sporting teams or assisting in learning activities.

3. Objectives

3.1. This policy provides the framework for:

- development of work systems, practices, policies and procedures to promote child protection within the school;
- creation of a positive and robust child protection culture;
- promotion and open discussion of child protection issues within the school; and
- compliance with all laws, regulations and standards relevant to child protection in Victoria.

4. Child Protection Program

4.1. Chairo is committed to the effective implementation of our *Child Protection Program* and to 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.

4.2. 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 staff members, volunteers (direct and indirect), parents and students to understand, identify, discuss and report child protection matters;
- procedures for recruiting and screening Board members, staff members and direct-contact volunteers;
- 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.

4.3. As a part of Chairo's induction process, all staff members and direct-contact volunteers are required to complete a selection of training modules relating to the content of our *Child Protection Program*. All staff members and all



Chairo Christian School

direct-contact volunteers (as well as Board members) are also provided with additional, ongoing child protection training.

- 4.4. Staff members and volunteers (direct and indirect), third-party contractors and external education providers are supported and supervised by Chairo's nominated Child Protection Officers to ensure that they are compliant with the school's approach to child protection.

5. Responsibilities

- 5.1. Child protection is everyone's responsibility. At Chairo, all Board members and staff members, as well as direct-contact volunteers, have a shared responsibility for contributing to the safety and protection of children. Specific responsibilities include:

- **Board members.** Each member of the Board is required to ensure that appropriate resources are made available to allow the school's *Child Protection and Safety Policy* and *Child Protection Program* to be effectively implemented within the school and are responsible for holding the Executive Principal and the executive leadership team accountable for effective implementation.
- **Executive Principal.** The Executive Principal is responsible and accountable for taking all practical measures to ensure that our *Child Protection and Safety Policy* and our *Child Protection Program* are implemented effectively and that a strong and sustainable child protection culture is maintained within the school.
- **Child Protection Officers.** A number of senior staff members are nominated as Child Protection Officers and 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.
- **Staff members.** All staff members are required to be familiar with the contents of our *Child Protection and Safety Policy* and our *Child Protection Program*, and with 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 Protection Officers.
- **Direct-contact volunteers.** All direct-contact volunteers, as defined in this policy, are required to be familiar with the contents of our *Child Protection and Safety Policy* and our *Child Safety Code of Conduct*, and with 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 Protection Officers.
- **Indirect volunteers.** Indirect-contact volunteers (or indirect volunteers) are those volunteers who are involved in providing support and services whilst not directly assisting a specific group of students. Indirect volunteers are not responsible for supervising students and would not have unsupervised contact with students during the normal course of providing the volunteer service. All indirect volunteers are responsible for contributing to the safety and protection of children in the school environment, and are required by the school to be familiar with our *Child Protection and Safety Policy* and our *Child Protection Program*. Examples of indirect volunteer activities may include assisting with school functions, school canteen and fundraising barbeques.
- **Service providers.** All third party contractors (service providers) engaged by the school are responsible for contributing to the safety and protection of children in the school environment. All service providers engaged by the school are required to be familiar with our *Child Protection and Safety Policy* and our *Child Protection Program*. The school may include this requirement in the written agreement between the school and the service provider.



Chairo Christian School

6. Reporting Concerns

- 6.1. Our *Child Protection Program* provides detailed guidance for Board members, staff members and direct-contact volunteers regarding how to identify key risk indicators of child abuse and how to report child abuse concerns to one of our nominated Child Protection Officers. It also contains detailed procedures with respect to the reporting of child abuse incidents to relevant authorities.
- 6.2. Third party contractors (service providers), external education providers, indirect volunteers, students, parents/carers or other community members who have concerns that a child may be subject to abuse are asked to contact the Campus Principal or one of the school's Child Protection Officers, whose responsibility it is to ensure that appropriate action is taken. Communications will be treated confidentially on a need-to-know basis.
- 6.3. Whenever there are concerns that a child is in immediate danger, the police should be called on 000.

7. Policy & Program Review

- 7.1. Chairo is committed to the continuous improvement of our *Child Protection Program*, which is regularly reviewed for overall effectiveness and to ensure compliance with all child protection related laws, regulations and standards.