



Child Safeguarding First Nation Students

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Constructed / Reviewed by: Dean of Child Safeguarding	
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1. Statement of Context and Purpose

The Child Safeguarding – First Nation Students Policy is set in the context of the mission and vision of St Kevin's College (the **College**), where we seek to live, learn and teach with the values of the Catholic Church and those of the College – compassion, integrity, and excellence. The College is committed to standards of excellence in the formation of young people. We lead through the values of the Gospel and in the spirituality of Edmund Rice. We strive with compassion and integrity to build a better world.

St Kevin's College provides this framework to establish a culturally safe environment where Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander identities are respected and valued. This framework is to inform decision-making so as to empower students and promote family participation, resulting in a child-safe culture where cultural heritage actively supports a student's ongoing safety and wellbeing.

2. Child Safety

The College is an inclusive school committed to providing a safe and educationally supportive environment for students where there is zero tolerance policy for child abuse. To support this safeguarding, the College complies with the Child Safe Standards and the requirement of the Ministerial Order No. 1359 – Implementing the Child Safe Standards – Managing the risk of child abuse in schools and school boarding premises.

3. Related Documents

Policies and Procedures

- Child Safety Code of Conduct
- Child Safeguarding (Safety and Protection) Policy and Procedures
- Child Safeguarding (Responding and Reporting) Policy and Procedures
- WWCC Policy and Procedures
- Student Voice and Participation Statement

- Reconciliation Action Plan (RAP)

Legislation, Regulations and Standards

- **Victorian Child Safe Standards:** Specifically, Standards 1 and 5, which require the College to establish a culturally safe environment and uphold equity by paying particular attention to the needs of Aboriginal children.
- **Ministerial Order 1359:** Specifically, Clause 5, which mandates the development of a policy detailing strategies to meet cultural safety requirements
- **Victorian Homestay Operational Requirements** (Department of Education)

4. Application

This Policy and its procedures apply to - for example, members of the Board, external members of Committees of the Board, employees, volunteers, contractors of the College, all staff (including the Principal, whether full time, part time or casual)

Inclusive of whether these activities for the College are undertaken during school hours or outside of school hours.

5. Definitions

Child Safe Standards	Means the standards made under Section 17 of the <i>Child Wellbeing and Safety Act 2005</i> (Vic). The aim of the Child Safe Standards is to promote child safety, ensure that child abuse is prevented, and ensure that allegations of child abuse are properly addressed.
First Nation Student	Any student at the College that identifies as Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander.
Cultural Safety/ Culturally Safe:	A culturally safe environment is one where Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people are treated with respect, empowered to actively participate in the organization, and supported in carrying out culturally significant tasks
MO 1359	Means <i>Ministerial Order No. 1359 – Implementing the Child Safe Standards – Managing the risk of child abuse in schools and school boarding premises.</i>
Staff	Means all person identified in Section 4 of this policy.

6. Overview

Cultural Safety and Identity

- Cultural safety is recognised as fundamental to a student's overall wellbeing and sense of security.
- The College acknowledges that systemic racism and historical abuse make Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students more vulnerable and less likely to disclose harm.

First Nations Officer (FNO)

- The FNO serves as a daily liaison for students and manages family and community involvement in College decision-making
- The FNO liaises frequently with partners in support of students living away from family
- The FNO oversees the homestay suitability for First Nation students', ensuring that these arrangements are appropriate, and support cultural safety
- The FNO is consulted and forms a part of the team around the child when managing child safe incidents associated with First Nation students
- The FNO provides information and support in connecting first nations students to support services

Core Objectives

- Students from Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander backgrounds are identified at the time of enrolment.
- The College educates staff on cultural safety strategies and incorporates these considerations into all policies.
- Family and community participation is encouraged to ensure cultural differences do not compromise a student's safety or wellbeing

7. Policy in Practice

Strategic Procedures and Initiatives

- The College implements a specific Reconciliation Action Plan (RAP) and engages with local Traditional Owners for guidance.
- Cultural expert advice is sought when developing child safety processes and addressing concerns raised by students and families.
- The College provides safe environments for families to voice concerns and help define safety solutions.
- The College works with partners (eg MITS (Melbourne Indigenous Transition School) and designated homestay families, and local elders) proactively in support of students
- Physical respect for culture is demonstrated through the display of the Aboriginal flag and acknowledgments of Traditional Owners on College grounds.
- The College participates in significant events such as National Sorry Day, Reconciliation Week, and NAIDOC Week

8. Exemptions

Nil

9. Consequences of Breach

Breaches of these Guidelines will be taken seriously.

The College will respond in accordance with its requirements under law, relevant industrial agreements, and its policies and procedures.

10. Concerns and Complaints

Any concerns arising in respect of these Guidelines should be raised with the College in first instance. The College will respond to such concerns in accordance with its *Complaints Resolution Policy*.

11. Acknowledgement and Review

Staff must annually acknowledge that they have read, understood, and agree to abide by this Policy. This acknowledged process will be implemented through the College's Learning Management System.

12. Where to get help?

For enquiries on this policy, contact the **Dean of Child Safeguarding**

For general policy enquires, contact the **Risk and Compliance Manager**

You can provide feedback on this policy by emailing policy@stkevins.vic.edu.au

For enquiries on the Colleges' handling of a breach of this policy, please contact the **Director of Governance**.