Victorian schools are required under the Child Safety and Wellbeing Act to ensure that they implement compulsory child safe standards to protect children from harm.

The following school’s VRQA policies and procedures should be read in conjunction with all the Child Safe Standards documented in this folder.

- Mandatory Reporting
- Student Wellbeing Policy
- Anti-Bullying & Anti-Cyber Bullying
- Excursions
- Incursions
- Camp
- External Providers
- Duty of Care
- On-site supervision
- Internet
- Working With Children Check
The Child Safe Standards

Background

On 26 November 2015, the Victorian Parliament passed the Child Wellbeing and Safety Amendment (Child Safe Standards) Bill 2015 to introduce seven child safe standards (the Standards) into law. The Standards apply to all organisations involved in child-related work in Victoria.

Ministerial Order No. 870 provides the framework for how schools will be required to comply with the Standards. Overall responsibility for ensuring compliance rests with the Victorian Registration and Qualifications Authority (VRQA).

The Ministerial Order specifies the following requirements for schools regarding Standard 1:

“\textit{The school governing authority must:}"

(a) develop strategies to embed a culture of child safety at the school;
(b) allocate roles and responsibilities for achieving the strategies;
(c) inform the school community about the strategies, and allocated roles and responsibilities;
(d) put the strategies into practice, and inform the school community about these practices; and
(e) periodically review the effectiveness of the strategies put into practice and, if considered appropriate, revise those strategies”

Ministerial Order No. 870 sets out these specific actions for schools to take to meet the child safe standards. The introduction of child safe standards form part of the Victorian Government’s response to the recommendations of the Betrayal of Trust report, which found that more must be done to prevent and respond to child abuse in schools.

The standards will promote cultures where protecting children from abuse is part of everyday thinking and practice in organisations.

The Child Safe Standards set out to create safe places for children to fully and actively participate in the life of the community benefiting everyone. Lalor Secondary College will ensure that the children in its care are protected to the best of its ability and in line with their duty of care and the compulsory child safe standards.
The Standards

To create and maintain a child safe school, we will comply with the following standards.

**Standard 1 - Good leadership & governance in child safe school** - strategies to embed a school culture of child safety, including through effective leadership arrangements

**Standard 2 - Commitment to Child Safety Policy** - a child safe statement of commitment to child safety

**Standard 3 – Code of Conduct** - a code of conduct that establishes clear expectations for appropriate behaviour with children

**Standard 4 – Human Resources Practices** - screening, supervision, training and other human resources practices that reduce the risk of child abuse by new and existing personnel

**Standard 5 – Reporting Child Abuse** - processes for responding to and reporting suspected child abuse

**Standard 6 – Identifying and Reducing Risks** - strategies to identify and reduce or remove risks of child abuse

**Standard 7 – Empowering Children** - strategies to promote the participation and empowerment of children.

*Ministerial Order No. 870* has set out the specific actions for schools to take to meet these requirements – *these are included in this folder.*

In complying with the child safe standards above, we will be mindful of the diversity of students and school communities and include the following *inclusion principles* as part of each standard:

- promoting the cultural safety of Aboriginal children
- promoting the cultural safety of children from culturally and/or linguistically diverse backgrounds
- promoting the safety of children with a disability

*(See Glossary of Terms for definitions)*

A cornerstone of the development of universal child safe procedures is the rights that are outlined in the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (CROC). CROC specifically recognises that children have a right to be protected from physical and mental harm and neglect and be able to enjoy...
the full range of human rights – civil, cultural, economic, political and social rights. An extract of the convention can be found below.

**United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child**

**Highlights of the convention**

- Every child has the inherent right to life, and states shall ensure to the maximum child survival and development.

- Every child has the right to a name and nationality from birth.

- Children shall not be separated from their parents, except by competent authorities for their wellbeing.

- States shall facilitate reunification of families

- By permitting travel into, or out of, their territories.

- Parents have the primary responsibility for a child’s upbringing, but states shall provide them with appropriate assistance and develop child care institutions.

- States shall protect children from physical or mental harm and neglect, including sexual abuse or exploitation.

- States shall provide parentless children with suitable alternative care. The adoption process shall be carefully regulated and international agreements should be sought to provide safeguards and assure legal validity if and when adoptive parents intend to move a child from his or her country of birth.

- Disabled children shall have the right to special treatment, education and care.

- Children are entitled to the highest attainable standard of health. States shall ensure that health care is provided to all children, placing emphasis on preventive measures, health education and reduction of infant mortality.

- Primary education shall be free and compulsory. Discipline in schools shall respect the child’s dignity. Education should prepare the child for life in a spirit of understanding, peace and tolerance.

- Children shall have time to rest and play and equal opportunities for cultural and artistic activities.

- States shall protect children from economic exploitation and from work that may interfere
with their education or be harmful to their health or wellbeing.

- States shall protect children from the illegal use of drugs and involvement in drug production or trafficking.
- All efforts shall be made to eliminate the abduction and trafficking of children.
- Capital punishment or life imprisonment shall not be imposed for crimes committed before the age of 18.
- Children in detention shall be separated from adults; they must not be tortured or suffer cruel or degrading treatment.
- No child under 15 shall take any part in hostilities; children exposed to armed conflict shall receive special protection.
- Children of minority and indigenous populations shall freely enjoy their own culture, religion and language.
- Children who have suffered mistreatment, neglect or exploitation shall receive appropriate treatment or training for recovery and rehabilitation.
- Children involved in infringements of the penal law shall be treated in a way that promotes their sense of dignity and worth and aims at reintegrating them into society.
- States shall make the rights set out in the convention widely known to both adults and children.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Term</th>
<th>Definition</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>The Act</td>
<td><em>Child Safety and Wellbeing Act 2005</em></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Aboriginal child</td>
<td>A person under the age of 18 who:</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• is of Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander descent</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• identifies as Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander, and</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• is accepted as Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander by an Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander community</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Child abuse</td>
<td>For the purposes of these standards, abuse constitutes any act committed against a child involving:</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• physical violence</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• sexual offences</td>
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<td></td>
<td>• serious emotional or psychological abuse</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• serious neglect</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Further explanation of these types of abuse is provided in the section ‘What is child abuse?’</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Children from culturally and/or linguistically diverse backgrounds</td>
<td>A child or young person who identifies as having particular cultural or linguistic affiliations by virtue of their place of birth, ancestry or ethnic origin, religion, preferred language or language spoken at home or because of their parents’ identification on a similar basis.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Child</td>
<td>A person who is under the age of 18 years.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Child safety</td>
<td>In the context of the child safe standards, child safety means measures to protect children from abuse.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Child safe organisation</td>
<td>In the context of the child safe standards, a child safe organisation is one that meets the child safe standards by proactively taking measures to protect children from abuse.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cultural competency</td>
<td>A set of congruent behaviours, attitudes and policies that come together in a system, agency or among professionals that enable them to work effectively in cross-cultural situations.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cultural abuse</td>
<td>Actions and attitudes that deliberately ignore, denigrate or attack the culture of a person or community.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Term</td>
<td>Definition</td>
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</tbody>
</table>
| Cultural safety for Aboriginal children                            | The positive recognition and celebration of cultures. It is more than just the absence of racism or discrimination, and more than cultural awareness and cultural sensitivity. A culturally safe environment does not ignore, challenge or deny cultural identity. Cultural safety upholds the rights of Aboriginal children to:  
• identify as Aboriginal without fear of retribution or questioning  
• have an education that strengthens their culture and identity  
• maintain connections to their land and country  
• maintain their strong kinship ties and social obligations  
• be taught their cultural heritage by their Elders  
• receive information in a culturally sensitive, relevant and accessible manner  
• be involved in services that are culturally respectful |
| Cultural safety for children from culturally and/or linguistically diverse backgrounds | An environment which is spiritually, socially and emotionally safe, as well as physically safe for children; where there is no assault, challenge or denial of their cultural or linguistic identity, of who they are and what they need. Efforts need to be made to ensure the culturally and/or linguistically diverse children and their families receive information in a culturally sensitive, relevant and accessible manner, including in relevant community languages. |
| Children with a disability                                         | A disability can be any physical, sensory, neurological disability, acquired brain injury or intellectual disability or developmental delay that affects a child’s ability to undertake everyday activities. A disability can occur at any time in life. Children can be born with a disability or acquire a disability suddenly through an injury or illness. Some disabilities may be obvious while others are hidden. |
| Organisation                                                        | The Child Safety and Wellbeing Act 2005 (the Act) will provide that the standards apply to ‘applicable entities’, which are defined in the Act as:  
• an incorporated body or association  
• an unincorporated body or association (however structured)  
• an individual who carries on a business and engages contractors, employees or volunteers to assist in the business in providing services or facilities |
Leadership in a child safe environment:

Working with children can be very rewarding, and it brings additional responsibilities. Peter Lalor Vocational College will act to protect children from abuse, and build an environment where children feel respected, valued and encouraged to reach their full potential. We do this by providing a culture of child safety embedded throughout our school so that child safety is part of everyone’s everyday thinking and practice. This culture has been achieved through proactive leadership in demonstrating the appropriate values, attitudes and behaviours of Peter Lalor Vocational College.

Our child safe environment is the product of a range of strategies and initiatives. At Peter Lalor Vocational College, we foster a culture of openness, inclusiveness and awareness. Children and adults know what to do if they observe or are subject to abuse or inappropriate behaviour.

All staff and volunteers must consider the safety of all children, and recognise the importance of cultural safety for Aboriginal children, cultural safety for children from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds, and the safety of children with a disability.

Governance in a child safe environment:

Leadership at Peter Lalor Vocational College takes preventative, proactive and participatory approach to child safety issues. The safety and wellbeing of children in our school is of paramount consideration when developing activities, policies and management practices.

LEADERSHIP RESPONSIBILITIES:

Leadership at Peter Lalor Vocational College is responsible for embedding a culture of child safety, including the use of the tools provided by the education department. The leadership team takes the lead in protecting children from abuse, and are aware of child abuse allegations and risks, and take responsibility for ensuring an appropriate response.

Peter Lalor Vocational College will ensure that all allegations of child abuse and child safety concerns are treated very seriously. This includes complying with all legal requirements, including reporting suspicions of child abuse to police and/or child protection.

If you believe a child is at immediate risk of abuse phone 000.

IDENTIFY AND ANALYSE RISK OF ABUSE:

Peter Lalor Vocational College adopts an approach to prevent, detect and respond to child abuse risks. This includes a risk management strategy and policy that sets out how our school identifies, assesses, and takes steps to reduce or remove child abuse risks.

Please note: The Department of Health and Human Services provides risk management tools for school use.
IN ITS COMMITMENT TO CHILD SAFETY STANDARDS, PETER LALOR VOCATIONAL COLLEGE SCHOOL HAS:

DEVELOPED A CHILD SAFE POLICY
This child safe policy outlines our commitment to promoting children’s wellbeing and protecting children from abuse.

DEVELOPED A CODE OF CONDUCT
Peter Lalor Vocational College has developed a code of conduct which specifies the standards of conduct and care required when working and interacting with children. Teachers are regulated by the Victorian Institute of Teaching (VIT) under the Victorian Teaching Profession Code of Conduct.

The Victorian Institute of Teaching (VIT) developed the Code of Conduct as required by Part 2.6 of the Education and Training Reform Act 2006. The Code of Conduct is a set of principles or standards for the behaviour and conduct of all Victorian teachers in the Victorian Government Teaching Service and the non-Government sector.

The following principles are of particular relevance when using social media tools:

Principle 1.5: Teachers are always in a professional relationship with the students in their school whether at school or not. Teachers hold a unique position of influence and trust that should not be violated or compromised. They exercise their responsibilities in ways that recognise that there are limits or boundaries to their relationships with students.

Principle 1.7: Teachers work in collaborative relationships with students’ families and communities.

Principle 2.1: The personal conduct of a teacher will have an impact on the professional standing of that teacher and on the profession as whole.

While teachers can be friendly with students, parents and communities their relationship must always remain professional and should never be on a personal footing. It is important for teachers to consider the consequences of their actions. The world of social media can seriously damage reputations and propel bullying to new levels. Even with security settings in place, issues may still arise.

Peter Lalor Vocational College also has developed a specific Code of Conduct that encourages appropriate behaviour between children called the Student Code of Conduct.

CHOSSEN SUITABLE EMPLOYEES AND VOLUNTEERS
Peter Lalor Vocational College takes all reasonable steps to ensure that it engages the most suitable and appropriate people to work with children. Alongside the Department of Education and Training (DET) recruitment processes, it will ensure it includes:

- Selection criteria in job descriptions
- Police record and identity checks
- Working with Children Checks where required
- Face-to-face interviews
- Detailed reference checks from previous employers, including from the applicant’s most recent line manager

SUPPORTED, TRAINED, SUPERVISED AND ENHANCED PERFORMANCE
Peter Lalor Vocational College ensures that volunteers and employees who work with children have ongoing supervision, support and training so that their performance is developed and enhanced to
help protect children from abuse. In particular, the principal, leadership team and the child safety officer understand their responsibilities. Our child safety officer at Peter Lalor Vocational College is the person who has knowledge of child safety issues, and could be a point of contact for others who have questions or concerns or want to report an allegation of abuse.

**PROMOTED INCLUSION**

Peter Lalor Vocational College is inclusive to all children and families. In particular, establishes a culture that supports:

- cultural safety for Aboriginal children, for example by working in partnership with Aboriginal peoples and Aboriginal community controlled organisations
- cultural safety for children from culturally and/or linguistically diverse backgrounds, for example by using inclusive language and images in policy documents, and communications such as the website and newsletters
- the safety of children with a disability, for example by ensuring that Peter Lalor Vocational College is accessible to everyone and ensuring appropriate training and supervision of staff and volunteers working with children with a disability.

**EMPOWERED AND PROMOTED THE PARTICIPATION OF CHILDREN IN DECISION-MAKING**

Peter Lalor Vocational College promotes the involvement and participation of children in developing and maintaining child safe environments. Peter Lalor Vocational College provides opportunities for children to express their views on the student Code of Conduct, and then incorporate this feedback to improve our policies and practices. Ideas from children are sought through Junior School Council meetings; suggestion boxes and feedback sessions.

Peter Lalor Vocational College endeavours to listen to children and take their ideas or concerns seriously, particularly if they are disclosing abuse or concerns for their safety or the safety of other children.
Our commitment to child safety:
Peter Lalor Vocational College is committed to child safety. As a community we want children to be safe, happy and empowered. We support and respect all children, as well as our staff and volunteers. We are committed to the safety, participation and empowerment of all children. There is zero tolerance of child abuse, and all allegations and safety concerns will be treated very seriously and consistently with our robust policies and procedures. We meet our legal and moral obligations to contact authorities when we are worried about a child’s safety, which we follow rigorously.

Peter Lalor Vocational College is committed to preventing child abuse and identifying risks early, and removing and reducing these risks. We have robust human resources and recruitment practices for all staff and volunteers. Our school is committed to regularly training and educating our staff and volunteers on child abuse risks. As a community we support and respect all children, as well as our staff and volunteers. We are committed to the cultural safety of Aboriginal children, the cultural safety of children from a culturally and/or linguistically diverse backgrounds, and to providing a safe environment for children with a disability. Peter Lalor Vocational College has specific policies, procedures and training in places that support our leadership team, staff and volunteers to achieve these commitments.

If you believe a child is at immediate risk of abuse phone 000.

Our students:
This policy is intended to empower children who are vital and active participants at Peter Lalor Vocational College.
We involve them when making decisions, especially about matters that directly affect them. We listen to their views and respect what they have to say.
We promote diversity and tolerance in our school, and people from all walks of life and cultural backgrounds are welcome. In particular we:

- promote the cultural safety, participation and empowerment of Aboriginal children
- promote the cultural safety, participation and empowerment of children from culturally and/or linguistically diverse backgrounds
- ensure that children with a disability are safe and can participate equally

Our staff and volunteers:
This policy guides our staff and volunteers on how to behave with children in our school. All of our staff and volunteers must agree to abide by our code of conduct which specifies the standards of conduct required when working with children. All staff and volunteers, as well as children and their families, are given the opportunity to contribute to the development of the code of conduct.
Training and supervision:
Training and education is important to ensure that everyone in our school understands that child safety is everyone’s responsibility.
Our school culture aims for all staff and volunteers (in addition to parents/carers and children) to feel confident and comfortable in discussing any allegations of child abuse or child safety concerns. We train our staff and volunteers to identify, assess, and minimise risks of child abuse and to detect potential signs of child abuse.

We also support our staff and volunteers through ongoing supervision to: develop their skills to protect children from abuse; and promote the cultural safety of Aboriginal children, the cultural safety of children from linguistically and/or diverse backgrounds, and the safety of children with a disability.

New employees and volunteers will be supervised regularly to ensure they understand Lalor Secondary College School’s commitment to child safety and that everyone has a role to play in protecting children from abuse, as well as checking that their behaviour towards children is safe and appropriate (please refer to this school’s code of conduct to understand appropriate behaviour further). Any inappropriate behaviour will be reported through appropriate channels, including the Department of Health and Human Services and Victoria Police, depending on the severity and urgency of the matter.

Recruitment:
We take all reasonable steps to employ skilled people to work with children. We develop selection criteria and advertisements which clearly demonstrate our commitment to child safety and an awareness of our social and legislative responsibilities. Peter Lalor Vocational College understands that when recruiting staff and volunteers we have ethical as well as legislative obligations. We actively encourage applications from Aboriginal peoples, people from culturally and/or linguistically diverse backgrounds and people with a disability. All people engaged in child-related work, including volunteers, are required to hold a Working with Children Check and to provide evidence of this Check. Please see the Working with Children Check website <www.workingwithchildren.vic.gov.au> for further information.

We carry out reference checks and require proof of police record checks where applicable to ensure that we are recruiting the right people. Police record checks are used only for the purposes of recruitment and are discarded after the recruitment process is complete. We do retain our own records (but not the actual criminal record) if an applicant’s criminal history affected our decision making process.

If during the recruitment process a person’s records indicate a criminal history then the person will be given the opportunity to provide further information and context.

Fair procedures for personnel
The safety and wellbeing of children is our primary concern. We are also fair and just to personnel. The decisions we make when recruiting, assessing incidents, and undertaking disciplinary action will always be thorough, transparent, and based on evidence. We record all allegations of abuse and safety concerns using our incident reporting form¹, including investigation updates. All records are securely stored.

¹ Lalor Secondary College School Incident Report Form
² A person will not commit this offence if they have a reasonable excuse for not disclosing the information, including a fear for their safety or where the information has already been disclosed.

Further information about the failure to disclose offence is available on the Department of Justice and Regulation website <www.justice.vic.gov.au/home/safer-communities/protecting+children+and+families/failure+to+disclose+offence>. 
If an allegation of abuse or a safety concern is raised, we provide updates to children and families on progress and any actions we as a school take.

Privacy
All personal information considered or recorded will respect the privacy of the individuals involved, whether they be staff, volunteers, parents or children, unless there is a risk to someone’s safety. We have safeguards and practices in place to ensure any personal information is protected. Everyone is entitled to know how this information is recorded, what will be done with it, and who will have access to it.

Legislative responsibilities:
Peter Lalor Vocational College takes our legal responsibilities seriously, including:

- **Failure to disclose**: Reporting child sexual abuse is a community-wide responsibility. All adults in Victoria who have a reasonable belief that an adult has committed a sexual offence against a child under 16 have an obligation to report that information to the police.  
- **Failure to protect**: People of authority in our school will commit an offence if they know of a substantial risk of child sexual abuse and have the power or responsibility to reduce or remove the risk, but negligently fail to do so.  
- Any personnel who are **mandatory reporters** must comply with their duties.

Risk management:
In Victoria, organisations are required to protect children when a risk is identified (see information about failure to protect above). In addition to general occupational health and safety risks, we proactively manage risks of abuse to our children. We have risk management strategies in place to identify, assess, and take steps to minimise child abuse risks, which include risks posed by physical environments (for example, any doors that can lock), and online environments (for example, no staff or volunteer is to have contact with a child in organisations on social media).

Regular review:
This policy will be reviewed every two years and following significant incidents if they occur. We will ensure that families and children have the opportunity to contribute. Where possible we do our best to work with local Aboriginal communities, culturally and/or linguistically diverse communities and people with a disability.

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2 A person will not commit this offence if they have a reasonable excuse for not disclosing the information, including a fear for their safety or where the information has already been disclosed.

Further information about the failure to disclose offence is available on the [Department of Justice and Regulation website](https://www.justice.vic.gov.au/home/safer-communities/protecting+children+and+families/failure+to+disclose+offence).

3 Further information about the failure to protect offence is available on the [Department of Justice and Regulation website](https://www.justice.vic.gov.au/home/safer-communities/protecting+children+and+families/failure+to+protect+offence).

4 Mandatory reporters (doctors, nurses, midwives, teachers (including early childhood teachers), principals and police) must report to child protection if they believe on reasonable grounds that a child is in need of protection from physical injury or sexual abuse. See the Department of Health and Human Services website for information about [how to make a report to child protection](https://www.dhs.vic.gov.au/about-the-department/documents-and-resources/reports-publications/guide-to-making-a-report-to-child-protection-or-child-first).
Allegations, concerns and complaints:
Peter Lalor Vocational College takes all allegations seriously and has practices in place to investigate thoroughly and quickly. Our staff and volunteers are trained to deal appropriately with allegations. We work to ensure all children, families, staff and volunteers know what to do and who to tell if they observe abuse or are a victim, and if they notice inappropriate behaviour.

We all have a responsibility to report an allegation of abuse if we have a reasonable belief that an incident took place (see information about failure to disclose above).

If an adult has a reasonable belief that an incident has occurred then they must report the incident. Factors contributing to reasonable belief may be:

- a child states they or someone they know has been abused (noting that sometimes the child may in fact be referring to themselves)
- behaviour consistent with that of an abuse victim is observed\(^5\)
- someone else has raised a suspicion of abuse but is unwilling to report it
- observing suspicious behaviour

\(^5\) For example behaviour, please see An Overview of the Victorian child safe standards: <www.dhs.vic.gov.au/__data/assets/word_doc/0005/955598/Child-safe-standards_overview.doc>
Peter Lalor Vocational College is committed to the safety and wellbeing of children and young people. Our school community recognises the importance of, and a responsibility for, ensuring our school is a safe, supportive and enriching environment which respects and fosters the dignity and self-esteem of children and young people, and enables them to thrive in their learning and development.

This Code of Conduct aims to protect children and reduce any opportunities for child abuse or harm to occur. It also assists in understanding how to avoid or better manage risky behaviours and situations. It is intended to complement child protection legislation, Department policy, school policies and procedures and professional standards, codes or ethics as these apply to staff and other personnel.

The Principal and school leaders of Peter Lalor Vocational College will support implementation and monitoring of the Code of Conduct, and will plan, implement and monitor arrangements to provide inclusive, safe and orderly schools and other learning environments. The Principal and school leaders of Peter Lalor Vocational College will also provide information and support to enable the Code of Conduct to operate effectively.

All staff, contractors, volunteers and any other member of the school community involved in child-related work are required to comply with the Code of Conduct by observing expectations for appropriate behaviour below. The Code of Conduct applies in all school situations, including school camps and in the use of digital technology and social media.

**Acceptable behaviour:**

As staff, volunteers, contractors, and any other member of the school community involved in child-related work individually, we are responsible for supporting and promoting the safety of children by:

- upholding the school’s statement of commitment to child safety at all times and adhering to the school’s child safe policy
- treating students and families in the school community with respect both within the school environment and outside the school environment as part of normal social and community activities
- listening and responding to the views and concerns of students, particularly if they are telling you that they or another child has been abused or that they are worried about their safety/the safety of another child
- promoting the cultural safety, participation and empowerment of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students
• promoting the cultural safety, participation and empowerment of students with culturally and/or linguistically diverse backgrounds
• promoting the safety, participation and empowerment of students with a disability
• reporting any allegations of child abuse or other child safety concerns to the school’s leadership and/or child safety officer
• understanding and complying with all reporting or disclosure obligations (including mandatory reporting) as they relate to protecting children from harm or abuse
• if child abuse is suspected, ensuring as quickly as possible that the student(s) are safe and protected from harm

Unacceptable behaviours:

As staff, volunteers, contractors, and any other member of the school community involved in child-related work we must not:
• ignore or disregard any concerns, suspicions or disclosures of child abuse
• develop a relationship with any student that could be seen as favouritism or amount to ‘grooming’ behaviour (for example, offering gifts)
• exhibit behaviours or engage in activities with students which may be interpreted as abusive and not justified by the educational, therapeutic, or service delivery context
• ignore behaviours by other adults towards students when they appear to be overly familiar or inappropriate
• discuss content of an intimate nature or use sexual innuendo with students, except where it occurs relevantly in the context of parental guidance, delivering the education curriculum or a therapeutic setting
• treat a child unfavourably because of their disability, age, gender, race, culture, vulnerability, sexuality or ethnicity
• communicate directly with a student through personal or private contact channels (including by social media, email, instant messaging, texting etc.) except where that communication is reasonable in all the circumstances, related to school work or extra-curricular activities or where there is a safety concern or other urgent matter
• photograph or video a child in a school environment except in accordance with school policy or where required for duty of care purposes
• in the school environment or at other school events where students are present, consume alcohol contrary to school policy or take illicit drugs under any circumstances
Overview:

It is important for schools to have strong human resources practices to help protect children from abuse. At Peter Lalor Vocational College, we foster a culture of openness and inclusiveness, as well as being aware that people who may wish to harm children could target schools. We believe that robust human resources practices are a good way of reducing these risks. Human resources practices include the recruitment, training and supervision of all personnel.

To achieve this, we provide opportunities for employees and volunteers to develop and maintain skills to ensure child safety. This will support staff and volunteers to understand the importance of child safety and wellbeing, and enable them to consistently follow child safety policies and procedures.

Peter Lalor Vocational College reinforces our commitment to child safety by recognising the good work and practices of employees and volunteers in keeping children safe and protected.

Child Safety Officer:

Employees and volunteers are supported through the appointment of an individual child safety officer with specified ‘child-safe’ duties in their job description, including being the designated person to hear or be informed about all allegations or concerns, and providing support to other personnel. This will assist us in ensuring that child safety is prioritised, and that any allegations of abuse or safety concerns are recorded and responded to consistently and in line with (Department of Education and Training) DET legal requirements and policies and procedures.

The designated child safety officer also provides a single contact for children, parents and employees/volunteers to seek advice and support regarding the safety and wellbeing of children associated with your organisation.

Training and induction:

Training and education is an important tool to help people understand that child safety is everyone’s responsibility. Peter Lalor Vocational College’s employees and volunteers (in addition to parents/guardians and children) are supported to discuss child protection issues and to detect signs of potential child abuse.

Staff will receive induction and ongoing training. New staff will be provided support and information when they begin their new role, and existing staff provided support to develop new skills and knowledge to meet the requirements of their positions and expand their career options.

We believe that training and support promotes an awareness of the appropriate standards of care required to be met by employees and volunteers to ensure that Peter Lalor Vocational College meets its duty of care when providing services to children.
Our staff is committed to promoting the safety and wellbeing of children by signing Peter Lalor Vocational College’s Code of Conduct. Training provided will enhance the skills and knowledge of our employees and volunteers, and reduce exposure to risks.

**Employees and volunteers working with children will receive training in the following areas:**

- identifying, assessing and reducing or removing child abuse risks
- Peter Lalor Vocational College’s policies and procedures (including the Code of Conduct and Child Safe Policy)
- legislative requirements, such as obligations to report child abuse, reduce and remove known risks of child abuse, and to hold Working with Children Checks where required
- how to handle a disclosure or suspicion of abuse, including your organisation’s reporting guidelines
- cultural awareness training

**Training can be formal such as:**

- higher education training and accreditation
- training offered by external organisations
- training developed and delivered internally
- on-the-job training meeting key objectives

**Training can also be informal such as:**

- inviting other professionals to speak at meetings or functions
- inviting local Aboriginal Elders, Aboriginal community controlled organisations and community members to speak at meetings and events
- inviting local culturally and/or linguistically diverse community members to speak at meetings and events
- internal mentoring and coaching

**Supervision:**

Supervision of employees and volunteers is managed in a way that protects children from abuse and improves accountability and performance, without being onerous or heavy-handed. For instance, where practical, two staff members are present during activities with children. In particular, children with a disability may require additional supervision. As a matter of good practice, new employees and volunteers are supervised regularly to ensure they understand their role and learn skills, as well as to check that their behaviour towards children is appropriate. Any warning signs should be reported through appropriate channels, including Peter Lalor Vocational College’s internal reporting procedures (such as your child safety officer and leadership), the Department of Health and Human Services (child protection), or police if a child is believed to be at imminent risk.
Performance and development review:

A proactive performance development strategy is used to improve employees and volunteers skills and knowledge on child safety. This is also an opportunity to improve knowledge and skills in working with children, as well as recognising and responding to suspected abuse. Performance is measured against Peter Lalor Vocational College’s standards of conduct and care to ensure that employees and volunteers meet expected outcomes. These standards align with those of the Code of Conduct and Child Safe Policy so everyone can be aware of the expectations of our school and appropriate behaviour.

Code of conduct and disciplinary procedures:

Disciplinary procedures are accessible and transparent, and clearly demonstrate the consequences of breaches of the code of conduct. These procedures will be used if an allegation of child abuse is made, or a breach of the code of conduct is known or suspected. Employees and volunteers will be made aware of reporting and disciplinary procedures and how to communicate concerns regarding the improper behaviour of any person within Peter Lalor Vocational College. Members of our school will also be made aware of their duty to raise concerns about the behaviour of any person who may present a risk of child abuse, without fear of repercussions. Our Code of Conduct is to be publicly available. Children and their families will be encouraged to raise any concerns about the behaviour of any person, and can expect to be listened to and supported. Peter Lalor Vocational College’s disciplinary procedures clearly outline what employees or volunteers should do if they are concerned that their actions or words have been misunderstood, or they believe their concerns are not investigated in a timely manner.

Further information – Standard 4 Human resources:

*Screening, supervision, training and other human resources practices that reduce the risk of child abuse by new and existing personnel*

**DESCRIPTION:**

Organisations need to ensure that newly recruited and existing staff and volunteers understand the importance of child safety, are aware of the relevant policies and procedures, and are trained to minimise the risk of child abuse. This should be done by engaging various recruitment tools, and providing staff and volunteers with appropriate training and supervision to minimise the risk of child abuse.

It is important to note that the child safe standards are not intended to alter organization’s existing regulatory obligations in relation to the Working with Children Check.

**RATIONALE:**

The Working with Children Check is actively used by organisations and is an effective screening tool when hiring new staff and volunteers, and as an effective monitoring tool on an ongoing basis for relevant personnel. However, organisations can over-rely on the Working with Children Check at the expense of other essential recruitment processes such as reference checks, as well as ongoing support, supervision and training, all critical to managing and reducing the risk of child abuse.
HOW COULD YOUR ORGANISATION IMPLEMENT THIS STANDARD?
Examples of how your organisation could implement this standard include the following:

• Design and adhere to recruitment and selection processes that focus on:
  – factors that may indicate a risk to child safety, such as reluctance to undergo a Working with Children Check or to provide evidence of a Working with Children Check
  – understanding of child safety
  – understanding of and respect for Aboriginal culture
  – understanding of and respect for cultural and / or linguistic diversity
  – understanding of and respect for the needs of children with a disability
  – declaration of prior conduct, including of any disciplinary action taken against them by an employer, any finding of improper or unprofessional conduct by them by any court or tribunal of any kind, and/or any investigations they have been subject to by an employer, law enforcement agency, any integrity body, or similar in Australia or in another country
  – undertaking face-to-face interviews
  – police record checks (including personal identification checks)
  – checking referees and qualifications
  – use of probation periods
  – references to the organisation’s commitment to child safety in recruitment advertisements

• Regularly assess organisational child safety training needs, for example through questionnaires, or as part of regular performance review processes.

• Ensure staff and volunteers understand the importance of cultural safety for Aboriginal peoples, for example by encouraging awareness of and ability to talk about Aboriginal history and stories.

• Support staff to build resilience and cope with child abuse incidences, for example through training and counselling.

• Regularly provide information, training and education for board members, staff and volunteers about child safety on a needs basis, including:
  – what child abuse is
  – how to identify and reduce child abuse risks
  – understanding and appreciating Aboriginal culture and other cultures and languages they may engage with in their role
  – the importance of ensuring culturally safe environments for children from culturally and/or linguistically diverse backgrounds, and how to promote this
  – the importance of ensuring safe environments for children with a disability, and how to promote this
  – what constitutes inappropriate behaviour between children, such as inappropriate sexualised play, bullying and fighting
  – what is inappropriate behaviour between children and adults, with reference to the code of conduct

• Induction processes to inform new staff and volunteers about child safety policies and processes, including the code of conduct.

• Provide ongoing training, support, supervision and performance management for all personnel. For example, ask specific questions about understanding of child safety protocols during performance review processes.
• Provide all personnel with training on how to ‘ask the question’ to children of all cultures and appropriate follow-up actions.iii

• Use culturally inclusive recruitment practices, for example by gaining advice from Aboriginal, culturally and/or linguistically diverse communities and people with a disability on position descriptions and selection criteria to increase the appeal of a position to these groups.

• Specifically welcome applications from Aboriginal peoples, people from culturally and/or linguistically diverse backgrounds and people with a disability.

• Ensure interview questions are asked which aim to uncover applicants’ understanding of child safety.

• During interviews, emphasise the culture of valuing child safety and the expectations of staff responsibilities, to underscore its importance to the organisation.

Successfully implementing this standard should result in organisations in which:

• interviews, police record checks (including identity checks), reference checks and Working with Children Checks (where necessary)iv are undertaken for staff and volunteers

• recruitment processes select appropriate staff and volunteers, and discourage inappropriate staff entering the organisation

• relevant staff and volunteers are trained in child safety, and understand and practice appropriate behaviour

• relevant staff and volunteers are aware of the risk of child abuse, how to identify inappropriate behaviours in other adults, indicators of abuse in children and how to respond

• staff and volunteers are aware of the organisation’s commitment to child safety and their duty of care requirements

• staff and volunteers can easily access and understand the organisation’s commitment to child safety and relevant policies

• staff and volunteers know how to ensure the cultural safety of and engage safely with Aboriginal children and children from culturally and/or linguistically diverse backgrounds

• staff and volunteers know how to ensure the safety of and engage safely with children with a disability
Rationale:
All children have a right to feel safe and to be safe. In schools, we have a legal and moral responsibility to respond to serious incidences involving abuse and neglect of the children with whom we have contact, and to report instances that we believe involve physical abuse, sexual abuse or neglect.

School staff have a duty of care to protect the safety, health and wellbeing of children in their care. If a staff member has concerns about the safety, health and wellbeing of children in their care they should take immediate action.

Aim:
To ensure that children’s rights to be safe are maintained and each child is protected against physical and sexual abuse, and neglect.

Implementation:

- All members of the Teaching Service are mandated by law to report signs or risks of harm, disclosures of abuse or neglect, or a reasonable belief a student is subjected to sexual abuse or physical harm.
- Mandatory reporters, who believe on reasonable grounds that a child or young person is in need of protection from physical injury or sexual abuse, must report their concerns to Department of Health and Human Services (DHHS) Child Protection.
- All other staff members who form a belief on reasonable grounds that a child or young person:
  - is in need of protection, should report their concerns to DHHS Child Protection or Victoria Police
  - is displaying sexually abusive behaviours and is in need of therapeutic treatment should report their concerns to DHHS Child Protection

- If staff have significant concerns for the wellbeing of a child or young person they should report their concerns to DHHS Child Protection or Child FIRST. (See attachment for process)
- In cases where staff have concerns about a child or young person, they should also discuss their concerns with the principal or a member of the school leadership team.
- New staff will be informed of mandatory reporting responsibilities and procedures as part of their induction procedure.
- Staff will be reminded of mandatory responsibilities annually.
- All concerns must be reported immediately to the Principal, or in his/her absence, the Assistant Principal.
- The Principal will keep a record of all discussions about a student with whom there is a concern.
If a belief has been formed by a staff member that a mandatory report must be made, a “Mandatory Reporting Information Sheet” available from the Principal must be completed and filed in the Principal’s office.

The teacher and/or the Principal class officer will contact the Department of Health & Human Services (DHHS) by telephone as soon as possible to make an official notification on:

- (03) 9479 6222 or after school hours crisis line 131278
- North-Western Region on 9488 9488

In the case of international students, the principal must notify the International Education Division of the Department on (03) 9637 2990 to ensure that appropriate support is arranged for the student.

Members of Department of Health & Human Services (DHHS), or associated support or intervention services that visit the school following a notification, will interview staff and children only in the presence of a Principal class member or his/her nominee.

All “Mandatory Reporting Information Sheets” remain filed in the Principal’s office.

All reports, information sheets and subsequent discussions and information are to be recorded and remain strictly confidential.

All incidents to be monitored, and any subsequent signs or indications of abuse are also to be reported.

While only mandated by law to report incidents of physical and sexual abuse, and neglect; teachers are also encouraged to report incidents of emotional abuse or neglect.

Students, who disclose to staff a desire to harm themselves or others, must be reported by staff to the principal.

Legal Obligations – see Appendix A

**Failure to disclose:**

Any staff member who forms a reasonable belief that a sexual offence has been committed by an adult against a child under 16 has an obligation to report that information to police. Failure to disclose the information to police is a criminal offence, except in limited circumstances such as where the information has already been reported to DHHS Child Protection.

This offence applies to all adults (not just professionals who work with children) who form a reasonable belief that that another adult may have committed a sexual offence against a child under 16 years of age and fail to report this information to Victoria Police.

*Failing to disclose a sexual offence based on concerns for the interests of the perpetrator or organisation (e.g. concerns about reputation, legal liability or financial status) will not be regarded as a reasonable excuse.*

**Failure to protect:**

This offence applies to person in a position of authority within an organisation who:

- knows of a substantial risk that a child under the age of 16, under the care, supervision or authority of the organisation will become a victim of a sexual offence committed by an adult associated with the organisation (e.g. employee, contractors, volunteer, visitor); and
- negligently fails to remove or reduce the risk of harm

*Within a school setting, a position of authority includes Principals and Assistant Principals and staff in institutional management positions (for example in government schools this includes Regional Directors and other senior managers).*
To be read in conjunction with Mandatory Reporting policy and procedures. The following provides for step-by-step procedures to follow with the child if the situation arises at school.

If a child discloses an incident of abuse to you:

- Try and separate them from the other children discreetly and listen to them carefully.
- Let the child use their own words to explain what has occurred.
- Reassure the child that you take what they are saying seriously, and it is not their fault and that they are doing the right thing.
- Explain to them that this information may need to be shared others, such as with their parent/carer, specific people in your organisation, or the police.
- Do not make promises to the child such as promising not to tell anyone about the incident, except that you will do your best to keep them safe.
- Do not leave the child in a distressed state. If they seem at ease in your company, stay with them.
- Provide them with an incident report form to complete, or complete it together, if you think the child is able to do this.
- As soon as possible after the disclosure, record the information using the child’s words and report the disclosure to your manager or your organisation’s child safety officer/champion, police or child protection.
- Ensure the disclosure is recorded accurately, and that the record is stored securely.

If a parent/carer says their child has been abused in the school or raises a concern:

- Explain that the school has processes to ensure all abuse allegations are taken very seriously.
- Ask about the wellbeing of the child.
- Allow the parent/carer to talk through the incident in their own words.
- Advise the parent/carer that you will take notes during the discussion to capture all details.
- Explain to them the information may need to be repeated to authorities or others, such as the school’s principal and/or Child Safety Officer, the police or child protection.
- Do not make promises at this early stage, except that you will do your best to keep the child safe.
- Provide them with an incident report form to complete, or complete it together.
- Ask them what action they would like to take and advise them of what the immediate next steps will be.
- Ensure the report is recorded accurately, and that the record is stored securely.
You need to be aware that some people from culturally and/or linguistically diverse backgrounds may face barriers in reporting allegations of abuse. For example, people from some cultures may experience anxiety when talking with police, and communicating in English may be a barrier for some. You need to be sensitive to these issues and meet people’s needs where possible, such as having an interpreter present (who could be a friend or family member).

If an allegation of abuse involves an Aboriginal child, you will need to ensure a culturally appropriate response. A way to help ensure this could include engaging with parents of Aboriginal children, local Aboriginal communities or an Aboriginal community controlled organisations to review policies and procedures.


If you believe a child is at immediate risk of abuse phone 000.

**Legal responsibilities:**
While the child safe standards focus on organisations, every adult who reasonably believes that a child has been abused, whether in their school or not, has an obligation to report that belief to authorities.

The **failure to disclose** criminal offence requires all adults (aged 18 and over) who hold a reasonable belief that a sexual offence has been committed in Victoria by an adult against a child under 16 to disclose that information to police (unless they have a reasonable excuse not to, for example because they fear for their safety or the safety of another).

More information about failure to disclose is available on the Department of Justice and Regulation website: <www.justice.vic.gov.au/home/safer+communities/protecting+children+and+families/failure+to+disclose+offence>

While failure to disclose only covers child sexual abuse, all adults should report other forms of child abuse to authorities. Failure to disclose does not change mandatory reporting responsibilities.


**Mandatory reporters** (doctors, nurses, midwives, teachers (including early childhood teachers), principals and police) must report to child protection if they believe on reasonable grounds that a child is in need of protection from physical injury or sexual abuse.

Background:

All government school staff will be made aware of their legal responsibilities. As part of the government school principal contract, government school principals are required to plan, implement and monitor arrangements to ensure the safety, security and wellbeing of students. Creating safe places for children to fully and actively participate in the life of the community benefits everyone. Peter Lalor Vocational College ensures that the children in its care are protected to the best of its ability and in line with their duty of care and the compulsory Child Safe standards. These Child Safe Standards are compulsory for all organisations providing services to children, and aim to drive cultural change in organisations so that protecting all children from abuse is embedded in the everyday thinking and practice of leaders, staff and volunteers. This will assist organisations to:

- prevent child abuse
- encourage reporting of any abuse that does occur
- improve responses to any allegations of child abuse

The Child Safe Standards also strongly promote the safety of Aboriginal children; children from culturally and/or linguistically diverse backgrounds and the safety of children with a disability.

Definition:

Whenever a student–teacher relationship exists, the teacher has a special duty of care. This is defined as: “A teacher is to take such measures as are reasonable in the circumstances to protect a student under the teacher’s charge from risks of injury that the teacher should reasonably have foreseen.” (Richards v State of Victoria (1969) VR 136 at p. 141) As part of that duty, teachers are required to supervise students adequately. This requires not only protection from known hazards, but also protection from those that could arise (that is, those that the teacher should reasonably have foreseen) and against which preventive measures could be taken.

School authorities in breach of the duty of care may be liable for injuries inflicted by one student on another, as well as for injuries sustained by a student.

Schools normally satisfy the duty of care by allocating responsibilities to different staff. For example, the principal is responsible for making and administering such arrangements for supervision as are necessary according to the circumstances in each school, and teachers are responsible for carrying out their assigned supervisory duties in such a way that students are, as far as can be reasonably expected, protected from injury. This duty extends to intervention in single-sex areas if need be by a teacher of the other gender.
Rationale:

In addition to their professional obligations, principals and teachers have a legal duty to take reasonable steps to protect students in their charge from risks of injury that are reasonably foreseeable.

Aims:

To ensure that staff have an understanding of their duty of care to students, and behave in a manner that does not compromise these legal obligations.

Implementation:

Although the general duty is to take reasonable steps to protect students from reasonably foreseeable risks of injury, specific (but not exhaustive) requirements of the duty involve providing adequate supervision in the school or on school activities as well as providing safe and suitable buildings, grounds and equipment.

A teacher’s duty of care is not confined to the geographic area of the school, or to school activities, or to activities occurring outside the school where a student is acting on a teacher’s instructions. The duty also applies to situations both before and after school where a teacher can be deemed to have ‘assumed’ the teacher pupil relationship.

Quite apart from mandatory reporting requirements, a teacher has a concurrent duty of care to protect a student from harm that is reasonably foreseeable. A breach of this duty of care may lead to legal action being taken against the individual teacher or teachers concerned. A breach of this duty of care will be established if a teacher or principal failed to take immediate and positive steps after having acquired actual knowledge or formed a belief that there is a risk that a child is being abused or neglected, including sexual abuse.

The teacher’s duty of care is greater than that of the ordinary citizen in that a teacher is obliged to protect a student from reasonably foreseeable harm or to assist an injured student, while the ordinary citizen does not have a legal obligation to respond.

Whilst each case regarding a teacher’s legal duty of care will be judged on the circumstances that occurred at the time, the following common examples may be times when a teacher has failed to meet their legal duty of care responsibilities to their students:

- arriving late to class or leaving a class early
- arriving late to scheduled timetabled yard duty responsibilities
- failing to act appropriately to protect a student who claims to be bullied
- believing that a child is being abused but failing to report the matter appropriately
- being late to supervise the line-up of students after the bell has sounded
- leaving students unattended in the classroom
- failing to instruct a student who is not wearing a hat to play in the shade
- ignoring dangerous play
- leaving the school during time release without approval
- inadequate supervision on a school excursion

Staff members are also cautioned against giving advice on matters that they are not professionally competent to give (negligent advice). Advice is to be limited to areas within a teacher’s own
professional competence and given in situations arising from a role (such as careers teacher, year level coordinator or subject teacher) specified for them by the principal.

Teachers must ensure that the advice they give is correct and, where appropriate, in line with the most recent available statements from institutions or employers. Teachers should not give advice in areas outside those related to their role where they may lack expertise.

**Risks to students outside the school environment:**

Legal cases establish that a teacher’s duty of care does not start nor end at precise times during the day. The approach generally taken is that a teacher’s duty applies irrespective whether the risk occurs in or outside the school environment. However, the important issue in all cases will be whether the school took **reasonable steps to protect the student from the risk**.

Risks outside the school environment may sometimes call for immediate and positive steps by a school depending on the age of students, urgency and threat of injury. Consider for example, if a live power line came down outside the school, no emergency workers had arrived, and primary children are about to be dismissed to walk home. No school would allow the children to walk out to that danger unsupervised.

There will be a number of other situations where the school will be under a duty to take reasonable steps. In some instances, the school’s control over the activity may require it to take more active measures to satisfy the requirement that it take reasonable steps. For example, a known bully on a school bus may require the school to suspend or refuse to transport the bully. In other instances, the school may not control the activity, and the reasonable measures available to it will be limited. For example, fights at a local train or bus stop between students from rival schools may involve informing the police, contacting the other school to implement preventative measures, and notices to parents and students.

Staff are responsible for their students at all times.

The following instructions and notices **apply to all staff**.

**Classroom Supervision:**

Teachers must **not** leave the classroom unattended at any time during a lesson.

It is **not** appropriate to leave students in the care of ancillary staff, voluntary staff, parents or trainee teachers (At law, the Duty of care cannot be delegated)

It is **not** appropriate to leave students in the care of external education providers for example incursions (At law, the Duty of care cannot be delegated)

In **an emergency situation** use the phone for the Principal or Assistant Principal or contact the teacher in the next room (if appropriate – send another student for assistance)

**No student should be left unsupervised outside the classroom** as a withdrawal consequence for misbehaviour. Withdrawal is to be conducted by sending a student to a colleague’s classroom, or to the Assistant Principal or Principal or by following the school’s Student Behaviour Management Plan. Any action taken should be accompanied by documentation and appropriate follow up.
Movement of Students:

Care needs to be taken in allowing students to leave the room to work in other areas of the school. Use of students as monitors outside the room during class time must only occur with the approval of the Principal or Assistant Principal. Discretion is to be used when allowing students to visit the toilet during class time.

Yard supervision:

Yard supervision is an essential element in teachers' duty of care. It is now clearly established that in supervising students, teacher's duty of care is one of positive action.

Be aware that students are usually less constrained and more prone to accident and injury than in a more closely supervised classroom.

Be aware that yard duty supervision within the school requires the teacher to fully comply with DET guidelines and brings with it an increased duty of care. It is a teacher’s responsibility to be aware of these guidelines and duty of care responsibilities. Teachers are also expected to follow school policy whilst on yard duty.

Teachers rostered for duty are to attend the designated area at the time indicated on the roster. Teachers on duty are to remain in the designated area until the end of the break period or until replaced by the relieving teacher, whichever is applicable.

The handing over of duty from one teacher to another must be quite definite and **must occur in the area of designated duty**. Where a relieving teacher does not arrive for duty, the teacher currently on duty should send a message to the office, **but not leave the area until replaced**.

No changes to the yard duty roster are to be made without the approval of the Assistant Principal.

Be alert and vigilant - intervene **immediately** if potentially dangerous behaviour is observed in the yard - enforce behaviour standards and logical consequences for breaches of safety rules.

You should always be on the move and highly visible.

Excursions, Incursions and Camps: *(also refer to comprehensive policy for each)*

Be aware that students are usually less constrained and more prone to accident and injury than in a more closely supervised classroom.

Be aware that an incursion with an external provider does not absolve supervision duties of the teacher, including first aid duties. A teacher must be present at all times and remain the person designated with duty of care responsibilities.

Be aware that camps and excursions outside the school require the teacher to fully comply with Department of Education and Training (DET) guidelines and bring with it an increased duty of care. It is a teacher’s responsibility to be aware of these guidelines and remain the person designated with duty of care.

Be aware that excursion and camp activities require the teacher to ensure that the venue and transport adhere to DET guidelines.

Be aware that school policy is for students to be counted on and off transport and at other times on a regular basis whilst on excursion or camp activities.
The teacher in charge will have copies of all confidential medical forms and permission notes with contact details. A copy of this material will also be kept at school.

Arrangements will be made for students not attending to continue their normal program at school under supervision of another classroom teacher.

The teacher in charge or designated teacher of an excursion or camp will carry a mobile phone and a first aid kit.

If the return time from an excursion or camp is delayed, the teacher in charge will contact the school to inform the Principal of the new arrival time so that parents can be contacted and a senior staff member will remain at school until they arrive.

If crossing roads, students are to use designated crossing points. Staff are to walk to the middle of the crossing to ensure visibility and orderly crossing. Other staff control the flow of students across the road.

*All staff must follow the DET guidelines when organising an excursion, incursion or camp. All procedural steps contained in the School camping, excursions and incursions Policy and Procedure outlines must also be followed.*

**Informing Staff of the legislative liability of Duty of Care:**

All staff will be informed of their legal requirement via:-

- A copy of this document will be provided to each member of staff at the first staff meeting at the commencement of the school year, and will be placed on the intra
- New staff will be informed of their Duty of Care as part of the school’s Induction Program
- Duty of Care will be an agenda item at staff meetings and staff will be directed to familiarise themselves with section Student Safety of the Victorian Government Schools Policy Advisory Guide.
- Staff will complete a risk assessment including duty of care when completing planning for camps, excursions and incursions.
- Staff will be directed to the student wellbeing policy annually
Description:
Peter Lalor Vocational College has adopted a risk management approach by identifying and considering child safety risk(s) based on a range of factors including the nature of activities undertaken with children, physical and online environments and the characteristics of children - including the cultural safety for Aboriginal children; children from culturally and/or linguistically diverse backgrounds and the safety of children with a disability.
It covers both ‘business as usual’ risks at school and risks posed by specific activities such as excursions and overnight trips and camps. Where risks are identified, Peter Lalor Vocational College institutes measures to reduce or remove them. Please refer to the school’s Excursion, Incursion, External Providers, Anti-Bullying & Anti-Cyber Bullying, Internet, On-Site Supervision, Camps and Duty of Care policies.

RATIONALE:
Peter Lalor Vocational College has an active approach to its duty of care in protecting children and tend to have a risk management approach and a commitment to continuous improvement. Additionally, implementation of a risk management approach is part of Peter Lalor Vocational College’s recognition of its legal responsibilities to ensure the safety of children.

PETER LALOR VOCATIONAL COLLEGE IMPLEMENTS THIS STANDARD BY:
• Ensuring clear and accessible processes for evaluating risks posed by situations and activities appropriate to Peter Lalor Vocational College, its size and resources, physical and online environments, and the characteristics of its children.
• Developing, recording and communicating clear processes for removing risks to children (for example, rules on online communications – included in the Internet and Anti-bullying and Anti-cyber bullying policies.
• Providing relevant staff and volunteers with training in identifying child abuse risks, for example blocked-off/out-of-sight spaces (especially rooms with doors that can be locked), overnight stays, and opportunities for physical contact, such as sports coaching and personal care.
• Engaging methods for continual improvement in how risks are managed by learning from past lessons, including policy review and staff training.
• A risk management approach driven through endorsement and ownership by management, including responsibility for risk identification and response in position descriptions.
• Ensuring supervision requirements for staff and volunteers who work with children.
• Instituting processes for periodic review of risk management approaches and/or processes and following any incidents.
• Recognising and adapting to the needs of particular children and communities, including Aboriginal children, culturally and/or linguistically diverse children and children with a disability. For example, acknowledgement that greater staff or volunteer to child ratios may be needed for some children with a disability.

• Recognising and addressing risks to Aboriginal children which might exist because of their experiences, for example if a child does not feel safe identifying as Aboriginal, or if there is an inadequate response to self-identification.

• Recognising and addressing risks to children with a culturally and/or linguistically diverse background, which might exist because of their experiences, for example increased communication with families may be necessary to build trust and understanding of organisational activities.

• Recognising and addressing risks for children with a disability, for example communication barriers when telling an adult they feel unsafe.

• Having a central reporting and advisory contact (Child Safety Officer) for staff to raise concerns and get advice about what to do if they need to report suspected abuse.

• Including statements about shared responsibility for management of risks in all position descriptions.

• Having a consistent risk management approach across the school.

• Including discussion about apparent risks or ‘near misses’ in staff/team meetings and areas for improvement.

• Rostering staff with appropriate experience and qualifications to manage high risk environments.

By successfully implementing this standard Peter Lalor Vocational College will be a school in which:

• Situational risks are considered and understood by all staff

• Steps are put in place to reduce risks where possible

• Risk management approaches are regularly reflected on and improved

  Specific risks to Aboriginal children are identified, assessed and mitigated

• Specific risks to children from a culturally and/or linguistically diverse background are identified, assessed and mitigated

• Specific risks to children with a disability are identified, assessed and mitigated
The child safe standards aim to protect children from abuse in organisations. Under the Act, child abuse includes five categories of abuse as outlined below.6

While the standards apply specifically to child abuse, organisations should look to promote children’s health and wellbeing in a broader sense.

Physical violence
Physical violence occurs when a child suffers or is likely to suffer significant harm from a non-accidental injury or injuries inflicted by another person. Physical violence can be inflicted in many ways, including beating, shaking, burning or use of weapons (such as, belts and paddles).

Possible physical indicators:
• Unexplained bruises
• Burns and/or fractured bones

Possible behavioural indicators:
• Showing wariness or distrust of adults
• Wearing long sleeved clothes on hot days (to hide bruising or other injury)
• Fear of specific people
• Unexplained absences
• Academic problems

Sexual offences
Sexual offences occur when a person involves the child in sexual activity, or deliberately puts the child in the presence of sexual behaviours that are exploitative or inappropriate to his/her age and development. Child sexual abuse can involve a range of sexual activity including fondling, masturbation, penetration, voyeurism and exhibitionism. It can also include exposure to or exploitation through pornography or prostitution, as well as grooming behaviour.7

Possible physical indicators:
• Presence of sexually transmitted diseases
• Pregnancy
• Vaginal or anal bleeding or discharge

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Possible behavioural indicators:
- Displaying sexual behaviour or knowledge that is unusual for the child’s age
- Difficulty sleeping
- Being withdrawn
- Complaining of headaches or stomach pains
- Fear of specific people
- Showing wariness or distrust of adults
- Displaying aggressive behaviour

Serious emotional or psychological abuse
Serious emotional or psychological abuse occurs when harm is inflicted on a child through repeated rejection, isolation, or by threats or violence. It can include derogatory name-calling and put-downs, or persistent and deliberate coldness from a person, to the extent where the behaviour of the child is disturbed or their emotional development is at serious risk of being impaired. Serious emotional or psychological abuse could also result from conduct that exploits a child without necessarily being criminal, such as encouraging a child to engage in inappropriate or risky behaviours.

Possible physical indicators:
- Delays in emotional, mental, or even physical development
- Physical signs of self-harming

Possible behavioural indicators:
- Exhibiting low self-esteem
- Exhibiting high anxiety
- Displaying aggressive or demanding behaviour
- Being withdrawn, passive and/or tearful
- Self-harming

Serious neglect
Serious neglect is the continued failure to provide a child with the basic necessities of life, such as food, clothing, shelter, hygiene, medical attention or adequate supervision, to the extent that the child’s health, safety and/or development is, or is likely to be, jeopardised. Serious neglect can also occur if an adult fails to adequately ensure the safety of a child where the child is exposed to extremely dangerous or life threatening situations.

Possible physical indicators:
- Frequent hunger
- Malnutrition
- Poor hygiene
- Inappropriate clothing
Possible behavioural indicators:

- Stealing food
- Staying at school outside of school hours
- Aggressive behaviour
- Misusing alcohol or drugs
- Academic issues

**Call the police on 000 if you have immediate concerns for a child’s safety.**


Aboriginal cultural safety

Aboriginal children are significantly over-represented in institutions including child protection, youth justice and out-of-home care systems. The reasons for this are complex and influenced by past policies like forced removals, the effects of lower socio-economic status and differences in child rearing practices and intergenerational trauma. Additionally, impacts of abuse are heightened for Aboriginal children who may not feel culturally safe enough to report abuse.

Organisations need to consider cultural safety of Aboriginal children across the implementation of all the standards. This overview includes non-exhaustive examples of how organisations could do this for each standard.

Cultural safety for children from a culturally and/or linguistically diverse background

There is a lack of data on the incidence of abuse of children from culturally and/or linguistically diverse backgrounds. However, it is understood that these children face unique risks leading to their involvement with child protection services, including distrust of social service providers. Culturally and/or linguistically diverse children, particularly those from refugee or asylum seeker communities, are also more likely to have experienced trauma or displacement and loss (or have parents who have) before coming to Australia. Culturally and/or linguistically diverse children and families may also experience communication barriers when it comes to reporting abuse and knowing where to go for support.

Organisations need to consider cultural safety of culturally and/or linguistically diverse children across the implementation of all the standards. This overview includes non-exhaustive examples of how organisations could do this for each standard.

Children with a disability

People with a disability have the same rights and responsibilities as other members of the community and should be empowered to exercise those rights and responsibilities. In particular, people with a disability have the same rights as other members of the community to live free from abuse.

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10 Consultations with Aboriginal organisations about development of the child safe standards.


13 s 5(2) Disability Act 2006.
Children with a disability have an increased risk of being abused compared with children without a disability. A number of factors may contribute to the risk of abuse including physical impairments or difficulties with speech and communication, memory, literacy, vision and hearing impairments, and reliance on caregivers. People with a disability often receive less sexual education than their peers. These factors may also contribute to poor recognition of abuse of children with a disability.¹⁴

Children with a disability are also less likely to receive the protection and support they need if they have been abused.¹⁵ Children with a disability are very diverse, with a wide range of needs depending on the nature of their disability and the individual characteristics and circumstances of the child.

Organisations need to consider the safety of children with a disability across the implementation of all the standards. This overview includes some examples of how organisations could do this for each standard.

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DESCRIPTION:
Peter Lalor Vocational College ensures children feel safe and comfortable in reporting concerns or allegations of abuse. We have implanted a simple and accessible processes that help children understand what to do if they want to report abuse, inappropriate behaviour or concerns for their safety. All staff at Peter Lalor Vocational College will have an awareness of children’s rights and adults’ responsibilities regarding child abuse.

RATIONALE:
Children often do not report abuse because they feel uncomfortable or they do not know how to raise their concerns or allegations of abuse. Some organisations do not have simple and accessible processes assisting children to understand their rights and how to report concerns regarding their safety.

PETER LALOR VOCATIONAL COLLEGE WILL IMPLEMENT THIS STANDARD BY:
- Providing children with child-appropriate and accessible information about what child abuse is, their rights to make decisions about their body and their privacy, that no one has a right to injure them, and how they can raise concerns about abuse. Information can be included in our welcome packs, information sessions and posters, as well as on the school website.
- Ensuring information and processes for reporting concerns are accessible to all children. Peter Lalor Vocational College has policies and procedures that are able to be accessed and understood by children with a disability.
- Ensuring information and processes for reporting concerns are culturally appropriate for Aboriginal children. A way to help ensure this could include engaging with parents of Aboriginal children, local Aboriginal communities or an Aboriginal community controlled organisation to review information and processes.
- Considering access and culturally appropriate language, photographs and artwork for Aboriginal children, children from culturally and/or linguistically diverse backgrounds and children with a disability when drafting communications materials.
- Translating school information (including information about children’s rights, child safe policies, statement of commitment and reporting and response procedures) into relevant community languages, including relevant Aboriginal languages if appropriate.
- Gathering feedback from children, for example through surveys, focus groups, story time and social media, about whether they would feel safe and taken seriously if they were to raise concerns, and implement improvements based on this feedback.
- Enabling children to express their views and make suggestions on what child safety means to them, and on child safe policies, reporting and response procedures, and acknowledge and act upon these where possible. For example, views could be gathered through suggestion boxes and feedback sessions.
- Ensuring services are accessible for people with a disability, for example provide appropriate communication aids such as hearing loops if required.
- Training relevant staff and volunteers on methods of empowering children and encouraging children’s participation.
- Ensuring Aboriginal children are accepted when identifying as Aboriginal, and that staff and volunteers understand appropriate responses to children identifying as Aboriginal.
- Encourage participation and empowerment of children in other school activities, such as decision making.
- Raising awareness in the community about children’s rights, for example through staff conversations with families and communications such as websites and newsletters.

**We aim to successfully implement this standard so that Peter Lalor Vocational College is a school in which:**

- reporting procedures for when a child feels unsafe are accessible for all children
- children understand what child abuse is, and their rights (age appropriate)
- children understand how to report an allegation of abuse or concern for their safety to the organisation, a trusted adult and external bodies (for example, the police)
- children feel safe, empowered and taken seriously if they raise concerns
- children feel empowered to contribute to the school’s understanding and treatment of child safety
- children’s reports of concern are responded to appropriately
- all staff understand how to empower children and encourage their participation