



# Child Safety and Wellbeing Policy

This Policy is a direct response to Ministerial Order 1359

Endorsed April 2023

Review due June 2024

Reviewed annually by the Board of Directors and after any incident

- Available by request at Reception
- School Website

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**Orange Door (Child First) : 1300 369 146**

**DHHS Child Protection phone: 1300 369 391**

**DHHS Child Protection  
24hr emergency phone: 131 278**

**Police: 000**

- **Separate document**

# **Responding to and Reporting Concerns/disclosures regarding Child Abuse.**

Including

4 Critical Actions

that staff must begin immediately.

- Previously Mandatory Reporting

## Policy status and Review

The Principal for the College Executive and the Directors are responsible for reviewing and updating this Child Safety and Wellbeing Policy every 2 years and after every incident. The review will include input from Directors, Teachers, Parents, Carers and students.

- PCE = Principal for the College Executive

## Approval

Created date	March 2023
Consultation	Consultation on this policy is mandatory. Directors, staff, parents have been consulted.
Endorsed by	The Board of Directors
Endorsed on	April 2023
Next review date	June 2024

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## **Part 1 Introduction**

1. Our Commitment to Child Safety
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## **1. Our commitment to Child Safety**

Ghilgai is a child safe organisation. We welcome all children, young people and their families.

We are committed to providing environments where our students are safe and feel safe, where their participation is valued, their views respected, and their voices are heard about decisions that affect their lives. Our Child Safe policies, strategies and practices are inclusive of the needs of all children and students.

We have zero tolerance for child abuse and take proactive steps to identify and manage any risks of harm to students in our School environments.

We promote positive relationships between students and adults and between students and their peers. These relationships are based on trust and respect.

We take proactive steps to identify and manage any risk of harm to students in our School environment. When child safety concerns are raised or identified, we treat these seriously and respond promptly and thoroughly.

Particular attention is given to the child safety needs of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students and those from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds and students with disabilities and vulnerable students.

Inappropriate or harmful behaviour targeting difference, such as racism or homophobia, is not tolerated at our School, and any instances identified will be addressed with appropriate consequences.

Child Safety is a shared responsibility. Every person involved in our School has an important role in promoting child safety and wellbeing and promptly raising any issues or concerns about a child's safety.

We are committed to regularly reviewing our Child Safe practices, and seeking input from our students, families, staff, and volunteers and The Board in order to inform our ongoing strategies.

## **2. Purpose of this policy**

The Ghilgai School Child Safety and Wellbeing Policy demonstrates our School's commitment to creating and maintaining a child safe and child-friendly organization, a place where children are safe and feel safe.

This policy provides an overview of Ghilgai's approach to implementing Ministerial Order 1359 which sets out how the Victorian Child Safe Standards should apply in school environments.

It informs our School Community of everyone's obligations to act safely and appropriately towards children and guides our processes and practices for the safety and wellbeing of students across all areas of our work.

## **3. Scope of this policy**

It:

- applies to all School staff, volunteers and contractors whether or not they work in direct contact with students. It also applies to School Board members.
- applies in all physical and online school environments used by students during or outside of School hours, including other locations provided for a student's use (for example, a school camp) and those provided through third-party providers
- should be read together with our other Child Safety and Wellbeing policies, procedures, and Codes.





## **4. School documents belonging to this domain.**

- Duty of Care
- Our School Community Code of Conduct
- A Child Safety Code of Conduct for people doing child - connected work at Ghilgai.
- Responding to concerns/disclosure of Child Abuse – guidelines for all staff.
- Obligatory Reporting – notes for Teachers
- Safe Employment Practices
- Behaviour Management including Suspension/Expulsion
- Discipline Policy
- Student Supervision – on site
- Camps – Policy & Procedures
- Excursions – Policy & Procedures
- Restraint of Students
- Anti-Bullying Policy and Procedures
- An Integrated Policy for Incident Reporting
- First Aid Policy
- Attendance Policy
- Dress Code
- Adjustments for Individual Needs
- Complaints Policy
- Volunteers Policy
- Family Violence Support

## 5. Key definitions

### Duty of care

- The School has a responsibility to ensure reasonable care is taken to protect students from harm. The School's duty of care is non-delegable, that is the School cannot discharge its duty of care by delegating this responsibility to another person or entity.
- The School's non-delegable duty of care extends to ensuring the safety and welfare of students when they are engaged in off-site activities and when learning with another provider.
- The School as a legal entity can be sued for a breach of this duty.
- The School's duty of care is higher than that which applies to teachers.
- The School has a different and sometimes greater duty of care with respect to younger children and children with disabilities.
- The School has a responsibility to make sure all staff are aware of their legal obligations relating to their individual duty of care.
- The way in which the School's duty is discharged is through the leadership, decisions, actions (and omissions) of those designated as responsible persons.

Organisational child abuse: A specific duty of care lies with schools and other organisations that care for children. This duty, legislated in the *Wrongs Amendment (Organisational Child Abuse) Act 2017 (Vic)*, requires such organisations to prevent the physical and sexual abuse of children in their care committed by individuals associated with the organisation.

Child safety encompasses matters related to protecting all children and young people from child abuse, managing the risk of child abuse, providing support to a child at risk of child abuse and responding to incidents or allegations of child abuse.

### Child Abuse includes

a. any act committed against a child involving:

- i. a sexual offence; or
- ii. an offence under section 498(2) of the *Crimes Act 1958* (grooming) and the infliction on a child of

b. physical violence; or

- i. serious emotional or psychological harm; and
- ii. serious neglect of a child.

Ministerial Order 1395 defines a **child** as a child enrolled as a student at the School.

Everyone working with children and doing child connected work is required to be screened and to hold a current Working with Children check.

- The School is responsible for making sure all employees, volunteers, contractors and others who fall within the definition of those undertaking child connected work have a current check.
- The School must retain an up-to-date register of all Working with Children checks and have evidence of how the register is maintained.

**Child connected work** means work authorised by or on behalf of the governing board and performed by an adult in the school environment while children are present or reasonably expected to be present.

The **school environment** means any physical or virtual place made available or authorised by the governing board for use by a child during or outside school hours, including:

- a campus of the school;
- online school environments (including email and intranet systems); and
- other locations provided by the school for a child's use (including, without limitation, locations used for school camps, sporting events, excursions, competitions and other events).

**Child protection** is the statutory child protection service provided by the Department Health and of Human Services (DHHS), which can intervene to protect children and young people at risk of significant harm.

Sitting alongside the Victorian Child Safe Standards are the following mandated requirements

## 6. Roles and responsibilities

### Embedding a culture of Child Safety & Wellbeing

- Child Safety/Student wellbeing is at the heart of Steiner Education.
- The quality of our School culture depends upon the actions of each staff member, everyday.
- The Board of Directors are the guardians of School Culture. The College Executive and the Education Coordinator report monthly to them. All incidents are reported right away.

### School leadership team

Our School leadership team (the College of Teachers Executive and the Board of Directors) is responsible for ensuring that a strong Child Safe culture is created and maintained, and that policies and practices are effectively developed and implemented in accordance with Ministerial Order 1359.

This team will:

- ensure effective child safety and wellbeing governance, policies, procedures, codes and practices are in place and followed
- model a child safe culture that facilitates the active participation of students, families and staff in promoting and improving child safety, cultural safety and wellbeing
- enable inclusive practices where the diverse needs of all students are considered
- reinforce high standards of respectful behaviour between students and adults, and student to student.
- promote regular open discussion on child safety issues within the School Community including at leadership team meetings, staff meetings and School Board meetings.
- facilitate regular professional learning for staff and volunteers (where appropriate) to build deeper understandings of child safety, cultural safety, student wellbeing and prevention of responding to abuse
- create an environment where child safety complaints and concerns are readily raised, and no one is discouraged from reporting an allegation of child abuse to relevant authorities.

## Sustained activities

- Regular planned occasions for Staff conversations regarding Child Safety/Behaviour. Regular Training for all, including the Board.
- Provision of ongoing opportunities for staff, students, parents and the School Community to engage with Child Safety issues. eg Class meetings, school gatherings, Newsletters.
- Members of the School Community (Teachers, Parents, students, visitors, contractors, volunteers) feel empowered to discuss Child Safety and raise any concerns about Child Abuse.
- Parent reporting/feedback is actively sought.
- Timetable for periodic review (including schedule, roles and reporting) of Child Safety related policies and practices at all levels – Staff, College of Teachers Executive and Directors.
- Consultation with Staff, and the wider School Community regarding Child Safety matters.
- Review after a potential risk is uncovered.
- Review after every incident.
- This document is reviewed annually by CTE and Directors with input from all staff and the School Community.
- Outcomes of all reviews are communicated to Parents. Recorded in minutes of College of Teachers Executive/Directors.

## Overview of Specific areas

- The Board of Directors is responsible for authorising the Child Safe standards policy, for overseeing its implementation and for managing the risk of child abuse.
- The Board and the Principal for the College Executive (PCE) are responsible for meeting the requirements of Ministerial Order 1359.
- The PCE and/or the Child Safety Champion (CSC) are the first point of contact for Child Safety concerns or queries and for coordinating responses to child safety incidents.
- The PCE is responsible for informing the School Community about this policy, and making it publicly available.
- The PCE is also responsible for ensuring appropriate arrangements for child safety (including, without limitation, clear and comprehensive policies, procedures, accountability mechanisms and communication strategies, including the Child Safety Register) are implemented, monitored and reviewed within the School.
- The PCE is responsible for ensuring all staff are aware of their legal obligations.
- All Staff, contractors and volunteers have a duty of care to protect children from harm and a responsibility to comply with the School's child safe standards policies and procedures. Staff sign a Commitment form annually.

## The Board of Directors

- are the guardians of School culture
- and are responsible for
  - endorsing this Safety & Wellbeing Policy
  - overseeing its implementation
  - managing the risks of Child Abuse

In performing the functions and powers given to them School Board members will:

- champion and promote a Child Safe culture with the broader School Community
- ensure that Child Safety is a regular agenda item at Board Meetings.
- undertake annual training on child safety, via the Child Safe Standards School Council Training slide presentation available on [PROTECT](#).  
In order to
  - affirm their obligations and responsibilities regarding Child Abuse to strengthen their vigilance regarding potential risks in the School environment to update and strengthen their awareness of the current Child Safe Standards.
- ensure that appropriate guidance and training is provided annually to the School Staff about
  - their individual and collective responsibilities for managing the risk of Child Abuse.
  - Child Abuse risks in the School environment
- ensure that the School provides user friendly, easy to understand materials for children and for teachers and make regular conversation opportunities for feeling safe – being safe conversations.
- When hiring new staff ensure that selection, supervision and management practices are child safe. (See Employment Procedure & Policy)
- Child Safety is a component of the monthly report by the Principal for the College of Teachers Executive. It enables the Directors to be satisfied that the people engaged in child-connected work perform appropriately in relation to Child Safety and that School Safe policies and procedures are followed.
- The BOD approves all updates to this policy.

## 2. The Child Safe Champion (CSC)

- Appointed by the College Executive and ratified by the Board of Directors.

The designated Child Safe champion is responsible for implementing the School's Child Safe standards policy and the mandated requirements of Ministerial Order 1359

Staff may seek advice from the Child Safe Champion if they have concerns about child safe matters and when considering whether to make a report about a child in need of protection.

### The Child Safe Champion

- is a source of support, advice and expertise to Staff on matters of Child Safety.
- liaises with all Staff and Board to maintain the visibility of Child Safety.
- organises induction and ongoing training for all Staff and volunteers.
- leads the development of the School's Child Safety culture, including being a Child Safety champion and providing coordination in communicating, implementing, monitoring, enhancing and reporting on strategies to embed a culture of Child Safety.
- ensures the school's Child Safe policies are known and used appropriately.
- ensures the School's Child Safety policy is reviewed as part of the Schools self-evaluation process and ratified by the Board.
- ensures this Child Protection Policy is available publicly and Parents are aware of the fact that referrals about suspected abuse or neglect may be made - and the role of the School in this.
- is alert to the specific needs of children in need, particularly those with special educational needs.
- fosters a culture of deep listening. Encourages staff to listen to the children and to take account of their wishes and feelings in any measures to protect them.
- Receives incident reports on behalf of the College of Teachers Executive.
- Files them in the School Behavioural Log or Incident Register.
- Checks Classroom Behavioural Log regularly and follows up with the Class Teacher/Specialist as required.
- Acts immediately if someone is in an unsafe position and manages the protection of all involved. Calls a special College Executive meeting to consider the incident and to plan the steps forward.
- If the incident involves an employee the CSO must remove this person from those at risk – this may mean other work / in another place – or go home. Directors informed immediately.



- Liaises with Education Coordinator who can assist teachers to deal with inappropriate behaviour - advice/group support/parent conversations.
- Stays in touch with issues/updates the Education Coordinator and the College Executive.
- Reports to Staff re incidents and the needs of specific children. Enables the whole Schoolbody to be supportive/protective/vigilant.
- If the incident is serious the CSC informs all staff right away via a circulatory note – so that everyone is aware/vigilant during the day.
- Keeps Directors informed and up to date.
- If the CSC is absent, then the two Emergency Leaders take on this role.
- In the event that the Child Safe champion is ineffectual or engaged in questionable behaviour then the concerned staff member should contact a College Executive member/School Emergency Leader or go directly to the Board – contact details available at Reception.
- At present the Education Coordinator is covering this role.

### **3. School staff and volunteers**

All staff and volunteers will:

- participate in Child Safety and Wellbeing induction and training provided by Ghilgai
- always follow the School's Child Safety and Wellbeing policies and procedures.
- act in accordance with our School Community Code of Conduct.
- identify and raise concerns about Child Safety issues in accordance with our Child Safety Responding and Reporting Obligations Policy and Procedures.
- follow the 4 Critical Actions for Schools when responding to an incident.
- ensure students' views are taken seriously and their voices are heard about decisions that affect their lives.
- implement inclusive practices that respond to the diverse needs of students.
- Sign – annually their commitment to Child Safety – Protection from Child Abuse.



## **Child Safety – Protection from Child Abuse Staff Commitment**

Ghilgai is committed to creating and maintaining a School in which all children are safe from harm.

In order to maintain an embedded culture of child wellbeing all staff must

- know their legal obligations under the Crimes Act.
- have read and understood our Child Safety and Wellbeing Policy
- have read and understood Mandatory Reporting via the online Mandatory Reporting e-module.
- report all unacceptable behaviour to the Education Coordinator or delegate right away.
- remove or reduce any potential risk of abuse to child's safety then report to the Education Coordinator.

Ghilgai asks all staff to confirm this commitment to Child Safety annually.

- I know and understand my responsibilities and I will uphold them in order to protect the children at Ghilgai from harm.
- I will, in the course of the School day, be observant and vigilant – on the lookout for subtle harmful behaviours.
- I will report any concerns/suspicious to the PCE right away.

Thank you for your vigilance  
The College of Teachers Executive

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Signature: \_\_\_\_\_

Date: \_\_ / \_\_ / \_\_

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## Part 2 Wellbeing Strands

1. Our Codes of Conduct
2. Managing Risks to Child Safety & Wellbeing
3. Establishing a culturally safe environment for Aboriginal & Torres Strait Islander students.
4. Student Empowerment
5. Family Engagement
6. Diversity & Equality
7. Suitable Staff & Volunteers
8. Child Safety – developing knowledge, skills and awareness.
9. Reporting Processes – raising concerns/complaints
10. Communications
11. Review of Child Safety Practices

# 1. Our Codes of Conduct

- **Our School Community Code of Conduct** sets the standards for onsite/offsite and online behaviour.

It describes appropriate behaviour between adults and students.

It also clarifies behaviour that is not acceptable.

We ensure that students know what is acceptable and what is not acceptable so that they can be clear and confident about what to expect from adults in the School environment.

- Our Child Safety Code for people doing Child Connected work at Ghilgai.
  - All staff receive this Code when they begin work at Ghilgai.
- Responding to concerns and disclosures of Child Abuse.
  - A resource for teachers, previously 'Mandatory Reporting'.

## 2. Managing Risks to Child Safety and Wellbeing

At Ghilgai we identify, assess and manage risks to Child Safety and Wellbeing in our physical and online school environments.

These risks are managed through our child safety and wellbeing policies, procedures and practices, and in our activity specific risk registers, eg for off-site overnight camps, adventure activities and facilities and services we contract through third party providers for student use.

### Foundations

Ghilgai has in place procedures to monitor risk and evaluate Risk Management strategies in order to ensure Child Safety in the School environment.

- The Directors and College of Teachers Executive develop and implement Risk management strategies regarding child safety in school environments.
- The School's risk management strategies regarding child safety identify and mitigate the risk(s) of child abuse in the School environment by taking into account the nature of each School environment, the activities expected to be conducted in that environment (including the provision of services by contractors or outside organisations), and the characteristics and needs of all children expected to be present in that environment.

The College of Teachers Executive maintains a culture of Risk awareness - in all School environments. Any identified risk is immediately noted and the risk removed or mitigated.

- All staff are required to remove risk immediately. This risk is reported to the Education Coordinator right away and recorded in the risk register.
- Different risk controls may be necessary for particular groups of children depending on the nature of the risk and the diversity characteristics of children affected by the risk.
- As part of its Risk Management strategy and practices, the Directors and College of Teachers Executive monitor and evaluate the effectiveness of the implementation of its risk controls regularly.
- Appropriate guidance and training is provided to the individual members of the Board and School staff annually, this concerns:
  - individual and collective obligations and responsibilities for managing the risk of child abuse;

- awareness of risks in the School environment.
- The Education Coordinator monitors School adherence to Student Safety via careful observation and conversations with individual staff members.
- A School culture of disclosure – obligatory reporting to the Education Coordinator.
- Education Coordinator checks Teachers Behavioural Log each week.
- Child Safety is an ongoing part of Staff/Teacher meetings via incident reviews/concerns for a class cohort or a student, perceived Child Safety risks. All teachers are involved in conversations on these topics.

## High Risk areas at Ghilgai and mitigation strategies

Ghilgai is a small Primary School – around 120 students.

- Classrooms stand alone and together form an arc – high visibility to see what is going on.
- No corridors/no rooms without windows/no doors without glass.

### 1. New employee

- Strict procedural steps followed prior to appointment and then careful monitoring.
- Mentored for 6 months
- Staff training
- Embedded culture of Child Safety awareness – vigilant staff.

### 2. One-on-One students alone with a teacher.

- Literacy/Numeracy/Instrumental teachers/tutoring
- All rooms have windows/visibility.
- Child Safe Code of Conduct - behaviour
- Signed Commitment to Child Safety – each staff member annually

### 3. Camps – Camp employees

- Careful Camp Risk Assessment including supervision of students at all times especially early wakers/children to toilets at night.
- Risk Management 5 weeks ahead – approved by Education Coordinator
- Staff Risk Assessment visit prior to Camp commencement
- Camp Policy – check for commitment to Child Safety

### 4. Swimming - Instructors/pool people

- 'Ghilgai only' change rooms
- Explicit supervision guidelines/staff adherence
- No child moves away from change area alone, group leaves together with specified adult.

### 5. Creeping Laissez faire/carelessness by staff/leadership

- Regular conversations re risk/duty of care – this topic must not sleep.
- Principal to College Executive reports to Board monthly - Child Safety is an integral part of this report.



## **6. Grooming/Failure to Protect/Betrayal of Trust**

- Regular conversations regarding risks in the School Community and Employee obligations under The Crimes Act.

## **7. Parents/Relatives/friends who come onto School premises to drop off or pick up children - including Playgroup parents.**

- Whole School vigilance on the whereabouts and purpose of all adults onsite.
- Visitors check in and lanyards.
- Parent information regarding Child Safety/Behaviour expectations given regularly.

## **8. Contractors onsite**

- Most jobs done in holidays
- Jobs in School time visually supervised by Property Manager.
- Constructors cannot arrive unexpectedly – advance notification required – details of job – arrival/departure time.

## **9. Special needs**

- High needs students known to all teachers – extra vigilance at all times.

## **10. Toilet visits**

- In Classes F/1/2 children attend toilets in pairs.

## **11. Yard Duty Roster**

- Duty teacher may not chat, proactive focus on student happenings.

## **12. Online occasions, teacher with class or students.**

- Always 2 students with a teacher

## Managing Risk

- Learning from incidents/near miss occasions/keeping a tab on concerns/strengthening our Child Safety measures.

### Strategies:

- College Executive monitors adherence to this policy ongoingly.
- Whole School Vigilance
  - All risks brought to the attention of all staff (except where constrained by privacy) Mitigation measures discussed. Adjustments to procedures and environments.
- Risk Management Register
  - kept by the Principal for the College Executive
  - to record all incidents and matters of concern
  - to note Risk Mitigation measures for each entry
  - dated and signed by Principal for College Executive
  - incidents tabled at the next College Executive meeting
  - tabled each term at Board Meetings or after happenings of concern.
  - if School policies or procedures were adjusted as a means of risk mitigation then the new measure must be approved by the Directors.

### **3. Establishing a culturally safe environment for Aboriginal & Torres Strait Islander students.**

Ghilgai School is committed to establishing an inclusive and culturally safe School where the strengths of Aboriginal culture and its values and practices are respected.

We think about how to provide every student with a positive experience in a safe environment.

We recognise the link between Aboriginal culture, identity and safety and actively create opportunities for Aboriginal students and their families to have a part in School planning, policies and activities.

We maintain a culturally welcoming environment:

- Ghilgai places the Aboriginal people at the heart of Australian History via
- We provide varied experiences to foster the childrens understanding of the First People of this Land.
- We invite descendants of the Ancient People to visit our School and share their culture with us.
- Whole School cultural celebrations link the children with the First Peoples of this Land.
  - Naidoc Week, Reconciliation Week, Sorry Day.
  - Cultural studies in all classes deepen the children's understanding of the People who dwelt in this Land before European settlement.
  - Classes attend excursions and exhibitions that highlight the strength and beauty of this ancient culture.

## 4. Student empowerment

At Ghilgai we work together to create an inclusive and supportive environment that

- encourages students and families to contribute to our child safety approach and understand their rights and their responsibilities.
- Respectful relationships between students are reinforced and we encourage strong friendships and peer support in the School to ensure a sense of belonging.
- We inform students of their rights through our whole school approach to Respectful Relationships and give them the skills and confidence to recognise unsafe situations with adults or other students and to speak up and act on concerns relating to themselves or their peers. We ensure our students know who to talk to if they are worried or feeling unsafe and we encourage them to share concerns with a trusted adult at any time.
- When the school is gathering information in relation to a complaint about alleged misconduct or abuse of a child, we will listen to the complainant's account and take them seriously, check our understanding of the complaint, support the student and keep them (and their parents and carers, as appropriate) informed about progress.

## **Nourishing activities to sustain a safe child centered environment.**

Ghilgai teachers work as a team. Individual teachers engage with students in informal and targeted conversation opportunities to nurture Student safety and wellbeing and to provide understanding (age appropriate) of

- Behavioural Expectations
- Healthy & Respectful relationships
- Resilience
- Safe behaviours – Anti Child Abuse

### **1. Behavioural Expectations**

The student's understanding of our behavioural standards and their participation in Community wellbeing is clarified and reinforced in many ways.

Via...

- Classroom conversations re positive behaviour
- One-on-One conversations with individuals needing support – Class Teacher/Education Coordinator/other Teachers
- Time slots at the weekly Whole School Sharing
  - Focused on a behavioural area needing attention
  - All teachers lead from time to time
- Literature that provides a catalyst for conversation. eg. the fruits/harm of greed/intimidation/manipulation. Stories that inspire/where values shine
- Sometimes positive behaviour is reinforced via Written Expression or Drawing.
- Conversations/activities centered on values eg. Gratitude/Kindness/Courage.

### **2. Healthy and Respectful Relationships**

- Ongoing – the above work provides a foundation for respectful relations.
- Buddies – Classes paired and planned activities together eg. Lunch/morning tea/activity
- Grouped activities especially Music/PE – Classes 1/2/3 together or Classes 4/5/6 together.
- Whole School participation in PE on special occasions.
- Weekly Whole School Sharing – students share special achievements – a piece of writing/craft work/Karate award etc or teachers tell of student achievement.
- Conversations/stories around inclusion eg students left out.
- Class 6 – Specialist Teacher for Human Sexuality (Unique U Program)
  - What respectful behaviour looks like. Changing moods – self regulation. Honouring one's own being/taking care of oneself.
- Cyber Safety – specialist – with children and parents.

### 3. Resilience

When self-esteem, inner wellbeing, confidence are actively nourished resilience grows.

'Bounce-Back' is activated in many informal/formal ways via

- Stories from real life and characters from World Literature.
- Written Expression and Drawing topics through which the child can explore this quality vicariously and strengthen himself.
- Class conversations recalling bounce back occasions/writing about these.
- PE – in a hundred different ways.
- Eurythmy – this art of movement strengthens the individual and fosters flexibility/resilience. Working on **s** complex geometrical form with classmates encourages the child to try and try again.
- Camps - living with classmates in a new environment
  - Challenging activities for individuals and teams.

### 4. Safe Behaviours – Anti Child Abuse

Ghilgai promotes the Child Safety standards in ways that are readily accessible, easy to understand and user friendly to children.

- For the younger child this means reinforcing protective behaviours via class conversations.
  - Appropriate touch
  - Five trusted people to talk to
  - If you feel uncomfortable – leave
  - Quiet assertiveness
  - Safe/unsafe places
  - Saying No
- For upper classes all of the above at a deeper level and 'new' topics.
  - Cyber Safety sessions Classes 4/5/6 & Parents with Specialist – information on false identity.
  - Specialist Teacher for Human Sexuality Class 6 (Unique U Program) – making children aware that 'nice people' may have hurtful intentions.
  - Feeling Safe information pages given to students in Classes 4/5/6 after basic introduction by Class Teacher, annually - After Parents have received their information pages and have had time to digest it.
- Co-working with Parents – Protecting children from Child Abuse - information for parents in Term 1 annually. Includes Feeling Safe – information for children. Parents of younger children cover this material with their children.

## 5. Family engagement

Our families and the School Community have an important role in monitoring and promoting children's safety and wellbeing and helping children to raise any concerns.

In order to support family engagement we are committed to providing them with our School's Child Safe documents and involving them in a whole School approach to Child Safety and wellbeing.

Families have input into the development and review of our Child Safety policies and practices and we encourage them to raise any concerns and ideas for improvement.

We do this by..

- having our Child Safe policies readily available – Website/Reception.
- newsletters that inform families and the School Community about any significant updates to our Child Safe policies/processes/strategies/initiatives that we take to ensure Student safety.
- distribution of supportive Child Safe articles with the regular Newsletter.
- class Cohort Parent meetings – an opportunity for Teachers to raise awareness of this area of wellbeing.
- whole School gatherings - as needed.
- distribution of Parent/Child information annually.

# Child Safety Information for Parents & Students

## Schedule

- Staff meeting – familiarization with Child Safe documents. Wk 2/3
- Conversation regarding information for Parents/students.
- Distribution of Parent Information pages
- Distribution of student information pages to Classes 4/5/6. Wk 8/9
- This procedure is scheduled in the School calendar.
- New students in existing classes – this information is in their enrolment pack.





## Student Wellbeing at Ghilgai

9<sup>th</sup> March 2023

Dear Ghilgai Parents,

Ministerial Order 1359 is a anti child abuse/child safety directive to Schools, which aims to minimise the possibility of Child Abuse in all school environments.

Family engagement is most important.

The attached information will assist you to have protective conversations with your children.

Att 1 – Overview of material provided.

Att 2 - Protecting Children from Abuse – Information for Parents

Att 3 - Feeling Safe – Information for Ghilgai students/Classes 4/5/6.

Sincerely  
Ruth  
for the College Executive





## Child Safety in Schools - Overview

Ministerial Order 1359 is an anti child abuse/child safety directive to all Schools.

It lists 11 basic areas of risk that must be covered by School Policy & Procedures.

**Parent involvement** - includes information for Parents and Students.

- Protecting children from Abuse – information for Parents. (Att 2)
- Feeling Safe – information for Ghilgai students. (Att 3)

This information is drawn from the Anti-Child Abuse Resource Material provided by the Victorian Registration & Qualifications Authority.

- Please read it but do not give the student's information pages to your child yet.

## Supporting students in Classes 4/5/6 to feel safe.

During the school day the Class Teacher facilitates many spontaneous conversations around general wellbeing – in Class Community conversations and in the course of resolving social difficulties.

In the coming weeks the Teachers of Classes 4/5/6 will find a way to foster a few conversations about 'Feeling Safe – being safe'.

At the appropriate time the Class Teacher will share the Feeling Safe Information pages with the children in these classes and give each child a copy of these pages in an envelope.

We hope that they might support your child in the difficult and delicate area of personal safety and that they might be a catalyst for family conversations on this topic.

If you have any concerns regarding this pathway please contact the Education Coordinator.

### **Supporting students in Classes 1/2/3 to feel safe.**

The children in the lower classes will not receive these pages.

The Class Teachers will facilitate conversations around the following themes. They reinforce proactive behaviours that support each child's personal safety and wellbeing.

- Appropriate touch
- Five trusted people to talk to
- If you feel uncomfortable – leave.
- Quiet assertiveness
- Safe/unsafe places
- Saying No

Our current Anti Child Abuse policy "On being a Child Safe School' Ministerial Order 1359 – is on our website.

It will soon be replaced by our Schools response to Ministerial Order 1359.

We would welcome comments in this domain.

Warm Wishes

Ruth

for the College Executive





## **Protecting Children from Abuse – information for parents**

### **Get the Facts**

As adults we all play a critical role to protect children from harm.

As a parent or carer you have the primary responsibility for protecting and caring for your own children and supporting them to build relationships that are safe and respectful.

You also play a critical role in identifying and responding to suspected abuse within the community. In fact it may amount to a criminal offence if you fail to report suspected sexual child abuse.

### **Reporting Abuse**

#### **What should I do if I suspect that my child has been abused?**

If you believe that your child has been abused, or is at risk of being abused contact Victoria Police

immediately via the local police station or on 000 if it's an emergency.

#### **What should I do if I suspect another child has been abused?**

If you suspect that a child has been abused, or is at risk of abuse (such as physical abuse, family violence or neglect) you should report immediately to the Department of Health and Human Services (DHHS) Child Protection (see contact detail at the end of this fact sheet)

- If you suspect that a child has been sexually abused, you must also report your concerns to the Victoria Police. You may be committing a criminal offence if you fail to do so.
- You should report even if you're not sure. It is the role of authorities to investigate your concerns and determine if any further action needs to be taken.
- Parent and carers are also often in a position to protect the friends of their children. This is because children are most likely to disclose their experiences of abuse to their peers, who in turn may share this with their own parents and carers.
- If your child talks to you about their friend, and you suspect that the child is being abused or is at risk of being abused, you should act. You may be the only adult in a position to act and your response may be critical in protecting that child's safety.

## **What should I do if I suspect that a child is being abused and authorities have previously investigated and dismissed my report?**

If you have new grounds for believing that a child is being abused, you should make another report to DHHS Child Protection or Victoria Police. Every report is critical to protecting a child as it builds evidence and helps authorities to gain a clearer understanding of risks to the child.

## **What happens to my child if someone at the school suspects that my child has been abused?**

All staff members at your child's school are required to report suspected child abuse to DHHS Child Protection and, in some circumstances, to Victoria Police.

Your child's school will contact you as soon as possible, unless they have been advised not to do so by DHHS Child Protection and/or Victoria Police.

Where appropriate the school will work with you to ensure that your child is provided with support, which may include referring them to wellbeing professionals.

## **When is it a criminal offence to not report suspect abuse?**

Any adult may face criminal charges if they believe that another adult has committed a sexual offence against a child under 16 years of age and does not report this information to the police.

## **Facts on Child Abuse**

### **What is Child Abuse?**

Child abuse:

- can include physical abuse, sexual abuse, grooming, emotional or physiological harm, neglect or family violence
- does not have to involve physical contact or force (eg, child sexual abuse can include talking to a child in a sexually explicit way)
- can be committed by any member of the community, including someone within a child's family or someone within the school setting.

The trauma associated with child abuse can significantly impact upon the wellbeing and development of a child. This is why it is critical that we all respond immediately to any form of suspected abuse.

## **What are the signs that a child has been abused?**

There are a range of physical and behavioural indicators of child abuse.

Most importantly you should act if you notice anything that causes you to form a reasonable belief that a child has been, or is at risk of being abused, including (but not limited to):

- a change in a child's behaviour (e.g. withdrawal, regressive behaviour, or non-age appropriate sexual behaviours)
- physical indicators of abuse (e.g. unexplained bruises, welts, signs of malnutrition)
- an inappropriate relationship between an adult and a child (e.g. inappropriate physical contact, unexplained gifts or phone/email contact).

## **The School's role**

### **How must schools respond to suspected child abuse?**

All staff in Victorian schools are obligated to respond to any incident or suspicion of child abuse as outlined below:

#### **1. Respond to the emergency**

Address any immediate health and safety needs (eg. administer first aid or contact emergency services).

#### **2. Inform authorities**

Report any reasonable belief that a child has been, or is at risk of being abused to the DHHS Child Protection or Victoria Police.

#### **3. Contact parents/carers when appropriate**

Contact parents/carers once authorities advise that it is safe and appropriate to do so.

Ideally parents/carers will play a central role in providing support for their children, however schools will be instructed not to contact parents/carers in circumstances where this may impede an investigation or place the child at greater risk.

#### **4. Provide ongoing support for all children impacted by the abuse**

Provide appropriate support for all children impacted by abuse. This will likely include ongoing counselling from professionals. The child's ongoing support will be documented in a Student Support Plan.

## **Are the staff at my child's school required to report Child Abuse?**

Yes – all staff at your child's school are required by law to report any reasonable belief that a child has been abused, or is at risk of abuse.

In some circumstances, it may be a criminal offence for school staff to fail to report child abuse to the authorities.

## Protecting my Child

### What can I do to help educate and protect my child from abuse?

Have a chat to your child and make sure that he or she knows that no one is allowed to threaten, hurt or touch them in a way that makes them feel uncomfortable.

Every relationship should be respectful and no one should behave in a way that makes them feel unsafe or afraid.

Your child's school will also be supporting your child in learning about their rights to be safe and respected. Victorian government schools are teaching the *Respectful Relationships* program which promotes positive attitudes and behaviours and is aimed at preventing family violence.

### What should I talk about when I explain Child Safety to my child?

There are some things you can do at home to build your child's understanding of safe and respectful relationships including:

- talking openly with your child about their feelings and relationships
- being sure that they understand you will listen and act if they are concerns about how anyone is treating them
- using the correct names for body parts and having age-appropriate conversations about touching and sexual activity
- letting your child know that adults should never harm or act in a sexual way with any child.

## Keeping children safe outside of the home or school

You play a critical role in ensuring that your children are spending time in safe places.

In Victoria all people who are working with your children such as coaches and music teachers need to have a current *Working With Children Check*.

You may like to check that any staff and volunteers spending time with your child after school hours and on weekend have a valid *Working With Children Check*.

If you think that you may need some help to keep your children safe from harm and support their healthy development, it is important you find some help. Visit the Victorian Government's Better Health Channel for information on seeking support:

<https://www.betterhealth.vic.gov.au/health/healthyliving/parenting-support-to-help-prevent-abuse>

## Further Information

### Where can I go for more information and support?

You can contact DHHS Child Protection and Victoria Police directly to discuss any concerns you may have for the wellbeing of a child.

**Child Protection DHS – 9843 6000**  
**Out of hours 24/7 – 131 278**

If you have any concerns about your child or another child at your child's school talk/write to the Education Coordinator or College Executive member at the School about your concerns. You can also raise this matter with DHHS Child Protection and the Victoria Police.

For more information on:

- the role of the School in preventing and managing child abuse: [www.education.vic.gov.au/protect](http://www.education.vic.gov.au/protect) - source of this fact sheet
- indicators of abuse, visit [www.education.vic.gov.au/protect](http://www.education.vic.gov.au/protect)

If you are concerned or unsure about your School's response and/or would like to talk to someone outside of the School please contact:

- Independent Schools Victoria ([www.is.vic.edu.au/who-we-are/contact-us/](http://www.is.vic.edu.au/who-we-are/contact-us/))





Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Ghilgai is committed to providing every child with a Child Safe School environment and is committed to a vigorous proactive Child Safety culture.

To: \_\_\_\_\_ (Trusted Teacher or Education Coordinator)

- I would like to meet and speak about a concern.
- I have attached notes regarding my concerns
- I have emailed my concern to [edadmin@ghilgai.com.au](mailto:edadmin@ghilgai.com.au)

Signed: \_\_\_\_\_

- Put this in a sealed envelope addressed to the person you need and ask Reception to pass it on.



# Responding to children and young people's disclosures of abuse

## Listen, reassure and respect

### Listen

- Move to a suitable environment, free of distractions.
- Be calm and patient—allow for the child or young person to be heard.
- Let the child or young person use their own words—avoid asking leading questions.
- Avoid “quizzing” the child or young person about details of the abuse.
- Don't be afraid of saying the “wrong” thing. Listening supportively is more important than what you say.

### Reassure

- Reassure the child or young person that it is OK that they have told you what's been happening.
- Address any concerns about the child or young person's safety.
- Reassure the child or young person that he or she is *not* at fault, and *not* the cause of any distress you may feel.

### Respect

- Respect that the child or young person may only reveal some details.
- Acknowledge the child or young person's bravery and strength.
- Avoid making promises you can't keep—manage the child or young person's expectations.
- Explain to the child or young person that in order for them to be safe you will need to report their experience to someone else.

## What happens next?

### If a child or young person discloses abuse, you should report it to the relevant authorities.

Mandatory reporting requirements vary throughout Australian states and territories. For information about mandatory reporting requirements including who is mandated to report, see *CFCA Resource Sheet Mandatory Reporting of Child Abuse and Neglect* <[www3.aifs.gov.au/cfca/publications/mandatory-reporting-child-abuse-and-neglect](http://www3.aifs.gov.au/cfca/publications/mandatory-reporting-child-abuse-and-neglect)>

State and territory contact details for reporting abuse and neglect are available on the *CFCA Resource Sheet Reporting Abuse and Neglect: State and Territory Departments Responsible for Protecting Children* <[www3.aifs.gov.au/cfca/publications/reporting-abuse-and-neglect](http://www3.aifs.gov.au/cfca/publications/reporting-abuse-and-neglect)>



## **Feeling Safe – information for Ghilgai students**

### **Get the facts**

This fact sheet is about making sure you know how to keep safe. It gives you the facts about what to do if someone is hurting you or your friends or making you feel unsafe.

### **What are your rights?**

- Everyone has the right to feel safe and be protected.
- No one is allowed to threaten you, hurt you or touch you in a way that makes you feel uncomfortable.
- No one should behave in a way that makes you feel unsafe or afraid, including anyone in your family, anyone at school or anywhere else in the community.

### **How do I know if something is wrong?**

- Every relationship should be respectful.
- It is wrong for anyone to hurt you or make you feel unsafe, uncomfortable or afraid.
- Remember a person doesn't have to physically hurt or touch you to be doing the wrong thing.
- Even if you are not sure, if something doesn't feel right you should tell an adult who can help you.

### **What should I do if I feel unsafe?**

- Tell an adult – telling someone won't get you in trouble.
- If you feel threatened, unsafe, or if you feel uncomfortable about how someone is touching, talking to you, or treating you, you should tell a trusted adult.
- You can tell a teacher or any adult at your school. They will be able to help you.
- You can also tell your parent, carer, or any family member or adult you trust.
- Even if the person who is making you feel like this has asked you not to tell anyone, you should still talk to an adult. It is more important that you are safe and protected.

### **What should I do if I am worried that someone I know is unsafe?**

- Tell an adult you trust.
- You can tell a teacher or any adult at your school.
- They will be able to help your friend or the person you are worried about.
- You can also tell your parent, carer, or any family member or adult that you trust.
- Even if the person who you are worried about has asked you not to tell anyone, you should still talk to an adult. It is more important to make sure that your friend is safe and protected.

### **What will happen if I tell an adult at the school that I feel unsafe, or that I think my friend is unsafe?**

- Adults at your school must listen to your concerns and help.
- In some cases the adult at school may need to tell another adult about your concerns so that you, or the person you know can be protected.
- Adults at your school can provide you with support and make sure that you don't have to deal with this alone.

### **What if I don't feel like I can talk to anyone at my school?**

- If you don't feel like you can talk to an adult at your school, you can talk to your parent or carer.
- If you don't feel like you can talk to your parent or carer, you can talk to another adult within your family. This may be an aunt, uncle, a step-parent, or a grandparent.
- If you don't feel like you can talk to any of these adults, you should still try and find an adult that you can trust, and that you can talk to.
- You don't need to deal with things on your own.

### **There are many people who can help you. Here are some suggestions:**

- visit eHeadspace (which provides an online and a 9am-1am telephone support service) [www.eheadspace.org.au](http://www.eheadspace.org.au) or 1800 650 850
- call KidsHelp Line on 1800 55 1800 or visit for 24 hour support
- call or visit your local police station or call 000.

**Kids Helpline 1800 55 1800**

**- Open all day and all night**

## **6.Diversity and equity**

As a Child Safe organisation, we celebrate the rich diversity of our students, families and Community and promote respectful environments that are free from discrimination. Our focus is on wellbeing and growth for all.

We recognise that every child has unique skills, strengths and experiences to draw on.

We pay particular attention to individuals and groups of children and young people in our Community with additional and specific needs. This includes tailoring our Child Safety strategies and supports to the needs of:

- Aboriginal children and young people
- children from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds
- children and young people with disabilities
- children unable to live at home or impacted by family violence
- international students
- children and young people who identify as LGBTIQ+.

## Embracing difference – practising inclusion

The Principal for the College Executive oversees the shaping and maintenance of a support program for each vulnerable child.

- The Class Teacher puts together this report in the first week of the child's schooling at Ghilgai and at the next staff gathering speaks about this child and potential needs.
- Whole School vigilance and support regarding this child is thus activated.
- Buddy support activated – in the first week the buddy class and the new child's class meet for lunch/morning tea.
- 'Ever green' support activated – two class 6 students assigned to this child to nourish their wellbeing and act as 'guardians'.
- At Whole School Sharing – all new children are honoured with a lovely pencil. The Class Teachers introduces the child – says a few words about the child's favourite activities/pets/achievements etc.
- Class carer notified and a couple of parents meet the new parent/family for a cuppa and chat. Maybe a class gathering for coffee at a local café.
- Classroom seating adjusted so that the new child has a supportive peer either side.
- Perhaps a Class gathering in the park after School – parents & children.
- Ghilgai Students encouraged to smile and say welcome/good day to the new child using their name. Coached by Class Teacher.
- New Child Summary – after 2 weeks – each teacher who takes the child writes their observations on the page. Success, difficulties, unfriendly student/s Who?  
Next staff meeting the wellbeing of this child again reviewed.

## **7.Suitable staff and volunteers**

At Ghilgai we apply robust child safe recruitment, induction, training, and supervision practices to ensure that all staff, contractors, and volunteers are suitable to work with children.

### **Staff recruitment**

When recruiting staff, we follow the ground rules laid down in our Employment Policy.

When engaging staff to perform child-related work, we:

- sight, verify and record the person's Working with Children clearance or equivalent background check
- All Teachers must be VIT registered
  - Interview with 3 referees
  - Meet the prospective employee at School – personally – at least twice.
- collect and record:
  - proof of the person's identity and any professional or other qualifications
  - the person's history of working with children
  - references that address suitability for the job and working with children.

### **Staff induction**

All newly appointed staff will be expected to participate in our Child Safety and wellbeing induction program. The program will include a focus on:

- the Child Safety and Wellbeing Policy (this document)
- the Our School Community Code of Conduct
- Behavioural guidelines for people doing Child Connected work
- any other Child Safety and wellbeing information that School leadership considers appropriate to the nature of the role.

## Ongoing supervision and management of staff

- All staff engaged in child-connected work will be supervised appropriately to ensure that their behaviour towards children is safe and appropriate.
- Staff will be monitored and assessed to ensure their continuing suitability for child-connected work by their mentor who reports to the PCE regularly.
- Regular professional conversations with the PCE.
- Inappropriate behaviour towards children and young people will be managed swiftly and in accordance with our School and our legal obligations. Child safety and wellbeing will be paramount.
- Directors will be notified of any concerning behaviour immediately.



## Safe Employment Practices (from our Employment Policy)

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

### Foundations

- Ghilgai has in place strong employment procedures that promote Child Safety in the School environment and reduce the risk of Child Abuse.
  - See separate document – Child Safe Employment Practices.
- Each job or category of jobs for School staff that involves child connected work has a clear statement that sets out:
  - a) the job’s requirements, duties and responsibilities regarding child safety
  - b) the job applicants qualifications, experience and attributes in relation to Child Safety.
- All applicants for jobs that involve child connected work for the School are informed about the School’s Child Safety practices and the Ghilgai Child Safety Code of Conduct.
- All new employees are required to sign a Commitment to Child Safety annually – see Page 19.
- The School makes every effort to gather, verify and record the following information about a person whom it proposes to engage to perform child connected work:
  - b) Working with Children Check status, or similar check;
  - c) proof of personal identity and any professional or other qualifications;
  - d) the person’s history of work involving children; and
  - e) references that address the person’s suitability for the job and working with children.
- Ghilgai ensures that appropriate supervision or support arrangements are in place in relation to:
  - a) the induction of new School Staff into the School’s policies, Codes, practices, and procedures governing Child Safety and child connected work; and
  - b) monitoring and assessing a job occupant’s continuing suitability for child connected work.
- Child Safety is an ongoing topic at Directors meetings, these updates and conversations enable the Directors to be satisfied that people engaged in child-connected work perform appropriately in relation to Child Safety.

To be 'satisfied', it is not necessary that the Board make each decision about the selection and supervision of School staff engaged in child-connected work. Board needs to be satisfied about the appropriateness of the School's arrangements that regulate or guide the people who make such decisions for or on behalf of the School about child safety matters and child-connected work.

### **Suitability of volunteers**

All volunteers are required to comply with our Volunteers Policy which describes how we assess the suitability of prospective volunteers and outlines expectations in relation to child safety and wellbeing induction and training, and supervision and management.

## **8. Child safety**

### **- developing knowledge, skills, and awareness for all Staff & Volunteers.**

Ongoing training and education are essential to ensuring that Staff understand their roles and responsibilities and develop their capacity to effectively address Child Safety and wellbeing matters.

In addition to the Child Safety and wellbeing induction, our Staff participate in a range of training and professional learning to equip them with the skills and knowledge necessary to maintain a Child Safe environment.

Child Safety and wellbeing training is delivered annually and includes guidance on:

- Ghilgai's Child Safety and wellbeing policies, procedures, codes, and practices
- the completion of [Protecting Children – Mandatory Reporting and Other Legal Obligations](#) online annually
- recognising indicators of Child Harm including harm caused by other children and students
- responding effectively to issues of Child Safety and wellbeing and supporting colleagues who disclose harm
- how to build culturally safe environments for children and students
- information sharing and recordkeeping obligations
- how to identify and mitigate Child Safety and wellbeing risks in the School environment.

Other professional learning and training on Child Safety and wellbeing are tailored to specific roles and responsibilities and any identified or emerging needs or issues.

## **Training for the Board of Directors**

To ensure our Board is equipped with the knowledge required to make decisions in the best interests of student safety and wellbeing, and to identify and mitigate child safety and wellbeing risks in our school environment, the Board is trained at least annually. Updates in specific areas given as needed.

Training includes guidance on:

- individual and collective obligations and responsibilities for implementing the Child Safe Standards and managing the risk of Child Abuse
- Child Safety and Wellbeing risks in our School environment
- the Child Safety and wellbeing policies, procedures, codes and practices of Ghilgai School.
- Via the slide presentation on PROTECT.

## Training for Staff and ongoing volunteers

- Ongoing familiarity of Policy & Procedures.
  - Staff meetings
  - In Staff news sheet
  - Via individual conversations with employees/ College Executive/Education Coordinator.
  - Mentor to Mentoree
  - Via review of incidents at staff meeting or meeting called for this purpose.
  - Via Mandatory Reporting e-module

### Obligatory e-module Mandatory Reporting – Term 1 annually

- All staff must update annually via e-module in Term 1.
- This is not an option. It is an obligation related to duty of care. It is part of each employee's contribution to our Safe Schools Practices.
- The E/C must be given the certificate of completion. This is uploaded onto the School list.
- Emails are sent out regularly to all staff with details of how to access the e-module.
- This can be arranged at School in School hours.

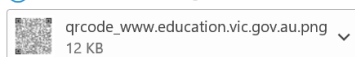
FW: Mandatory reporting link



enrol@ghilgai.com.au  
To: enrol@ghilgai.com.au

Mand Reporting email

You forwarded this message on 10/04/2022 11:32 PM.



Hi to all,

For **Mandatory Reporting** e-module:

Please see attached QR code that will take you to the page or the link below.

[Child protection in early childhood: online learning \(education.vic.gov.au\)](https://www.education.vic.gov.au/child-protection-in-early-childhood/online-learning)

## **9. Reporting processes – raising concerns/complaints**

Ghilgai fosters a culture that encourages Staff, volunteers, students, Parents, and the School Community to raise concerns and complaints. This makes it more difficult for breaches of the Code of Conduct, misconduct or abuse to occur and remain hidden.

We have clear pathways for raising concerns and complaints and responding procedure - this is documented in our School's Complaint Policy. It can be found on our website and is available at Ghilgai Reception.

This Policy covers all complaints and concerns and should be used to address complaints and concerns of Child Abuse made by, or in relation, to a child or student, school staff, volunteers, contractors, service providers, visitors or any other person while connected to our School.

- If there is an incident, disclosure, allegation or suspicion of Child Abuse, all staff and volunteers and Directors must follow our Child Safety Responding and Reporting Obligations found in Responding to a concern/disclosure of Child Abuse.
- Our Anti Bullying Policy covers the School's response to student physical violence or other harmful behaviours.

## 10. Communications

The School makes regular and frequent public statements to demonstrate our commitment to Child Safety and to raise an awareness of the School Community's collective responsibility to ensure all children are safe from harm.

### Communication with Parents

All our Child Safety and Wellbeing documents are readily available – to Staff/Parents/Carers via Reception or our Website.

- Information/articles on Child Safe topics included in fortnightly Newsletter - as needed and via targeted letters/meetings/emails.
- Class Community meetings provide another avenue of communication with Parents and an opportunity for conversation.
- Protecting Children from Abuse – information for parents is emailed to parents in Term 1 with Feeling Safe – information for Ghilgai students. Parents are asked to gradually work through the content of document with their children.
- The Students of classes 4/5/6 receive Feeling Safe – information for Ghilgai students – later in Term 1.

### Communication with Staff

- Policy Folder (paper copies) available in Reception area and via a digital site.
- Policy or part thereof emailed to staff from time to time – follow up to an incident/preparation for a discussion/update/review at Staff meeting.
- Ghilgai requires all staff to confirm in writing when appointed and thereafter on an annual basis that they know their legal obligations regarding Child Safety and that they have read and understood the School's Child Safe standards policies and procedures.

## **Communication with Students**

- Conversations with Class Teacher – formal/informal – informative - as needed and age appropriate – also clarifications and follow up to incidents. Education Coordinator may be involved as needed.
- Children to know that Behaviour Standards are not arbitrary - that our School has a Code of Conduct upheld by all staff.
- Students in Classes 4/5/6 given Feeling Safe information for Ghilgai students. Term 1 annually after introduction by Class Teacher.
- Updates/guidance given at Whole School Sharing as needed.

## **Communication with the Board**

- The Education Coordinator reports monthly to the Board of Directors and Child Safety and Wellbeing is a regular item of each report. Reports immediately regarding concerns/suspensions/disclosure of Child Abuse.

## **Privacy and information sharing**

Ghilgai collects, uses, and discloses information about children and their families in accordance with Victorian privacy laws, and other relevant laws. Our Privacy Policy provides further detail.

## **Records management**

We acknowledge that good records management practices are a critical element of Child Safety and Wellbeing and manage our records in accordance with our Privacy Policy.



## **11.Review of Child Safety practices**

At Ghilgai we have established processes for the review and ongoing improvement of our Child Safe policies, procedures, and practices.

We

- review and improve our policy every 2 years or after any significant Child Safety incident.
- analyse any complaints, concerns, and safety incidents to improve policy and practice. We maintain a Complaints Log.
- act with transparency and share pertinent learnings and review outcomes with School staff and our School community and the Board.

## **Policy review**

Reporting on the implementation of this Policy & Procedures is a component of the regular monthly report given by the Principal for the College Executive to the Board.

The Board reviews the Child Safe Standards Policy annually and after any incident.

The Board periodically reviews strategies in place for Student Safety. They also co-work with the College Executive when adjustments are required.

