



### **Definition**

St Margaret's Berwick Grammar is defined as Berwick Campus and Officer Campus.

### **Rationale**

Child Safe *Standard 3: A code of conduct that establishes clear expectations for appropriate behaviour with children*, has four specific requirements.

They are that the code of conduct:

1. has the objective of promoting child safety in the school environment
2. sets standards about the ways in which school staff are expected to behave with children
3. takes into account the interests of school staff (including other professional or occupational conduct that regulate particular school staff such as registered teachers), and the needs of all children
4. is consistent with the school's child safety strategies, policies and procedures as revised from time to time.

St Margaret's Berwick Grammar is a child safe environment. The school actively promotes safety, wellbeing and inclusion of all students, and all staff are committed to protecting students from abuse or harm in the school environment. Individual student concerns are acted upon in a sensitive and timely manner, and information and strategies shared on a need-to-know basis within the school. The school cultivates clearly articulated and reinforced core values on which all communication is based.

All staff and volunteers of St Margaret's Berwick Grammar make every attempt to create a inclusive, supportive and cooperative environment conducive to learning and quality teaching. They are also required to observe child safe principles and expectations for appropriate behaviour towards and in the company of children. Policies, procedures and training links on Nexus support our leadership team, staff and volunteers to achieve these commitments

### **Principal, Council and School Executive**

The Principal, Council and School Executive are responsible and committed to achieving all strategies in relation to embedding a culture of child safety and is a standing agenda item at Council meeting each August and weekly Executive meetings. Child safety policies are ratified and communicated in the principal staff briefing letters. Policies are reviewed every 3 years or as circumstances dictate and located on Nexus and the school website for staff, students and the broader community. The Governing body Independent Schools Victoria (ISV) provides Child safety standard updates and online training, ISV website and email updates to embed a culture of Child safety at St. Margaret's Berwick Grammar.

Fulfilling the roles and responsibilities contained in the procedure does not displace or discharge any other obligations that arise if a person reasonably believes that a child is at risk of child abuse.

New employees, volunteers and contractors undergo a staff induction which emphasises duty of care, our 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. Any inappropriate behaviour will be reported through appropriate channels, including the Department of Families, Fairness and Housing (DFFH) and Victoria Police as soon as it is practicable to do so, unless the person has a reasonable excuse for not doing so, depending on the severity and urgency of the matter. Please refer to the school's *Child Protection, Mandatory Reporting and Reportable Conduct Policy*. All staff are required to complete the online training module on *Protecting Children – Mandatory Reporting and Other Obligations*.

Some key principles that should guide an adults behaviour when undertaking child-connected work include:

- the adult/child relationship should be professional at all times
- an adult's response to a child's behaviour or circumstance should be commensurate with the child's age and vulnerability and the adult's responsibility for the care, safety and welfare of the child
- an adult should not be alone with a child unless there is a line of sight to other adults
- an adult should not initiate or seek physical contact or contact with children outside school.

### **Acceptable behaviours**

All staff and volunteers are responsible for supporting and promoting the safety, participation, wellbeing and empowerment of our children by:

- adhering to the school's *Child Safe Policy* and upholding the school's commitment to child safety at all times
- taking all reasonable steps to protect children from abuse
- treating everyone in the community fairly and with respect
- 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 or the safety of another child
- promoting the cultural safety, inclusion, participation, empowerment and the needs of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children e.g. be never questioning an Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander child's self-identification
- promoting the cultural safety, inclusion, participation, empowerment and the needs of children with culturally and/or linguistically diverse backgrounds e.g. by having zero tolerance of discrimination
- promoting the cultural safety, inclusion, participation, empowerment and the needs of LGBTIQ+ children e.g. by having zero tolerance of discrimination
- promoting the safety, inclusion, participation, empowerment and the needs of children with a disability (and their families) taking into account the impact of physical and intellectual disability, trauma and disadvantage on the learning process
- different and sometimes greater measures may need to be taken for younger students or students with disabilities
- ensuring as far as practicable that adults are not left alone with a child
- reporting any allegations of child abuse to the school's leadership team or child safety officer
- reporting any child safety concerns to the school's leadership team or child safety officer

- understanding and complying with all reporting obligations as they relate to mandatory reporting and reporting under the *Crimes Act 1958*
- if an allegation of child abuse is made or is suspected, ensuring as quickly as possible that the student is safe and protected until the allegation is resolved.
- reporting to the Victorian Institute of Teaching (VIT) any charges, committals for trial or convictions in relation to a sexual offense by a registered teacher, or certain allegations or concerns about a registered teacher.

### **Unacceptable behaviours**

All staff and volunteers of the school community involved in child-related work must not:

- ignore or disregard any concerns, suspicions or disclosures of child abuse
- develop a 'special' relationship with any student that could be seen as favouritism e.g. the offering of gifts or special treatment for specific children or any 'grooming' behaviour
- exhibit behaviours or engage in activities with children which may be construed as unnecessarily physical or inappropriate e.g. inappropriate sitting on laps
- put children at risk of abuse e.g. by locking doors, being alone with a child, unless the child and staff member are visible by others, the door is open or ajar so that the child and staff member can be seen or heard
- initiate unnecessary physical contact with children or do things of a personal nature that a child can do for themselves, such as toileting or changing clothes
- engage in open discussions of a mature or adult nature in the presence of children
- use inappropriate language, express personal views on culture, race or sexuality in the presence of children
- discriminate against any child because of their disability, age, gender, race, culture, vulnerability, sexuality or ethnicity
- have any online contact with a child or their family through personal or private contact channels or use any personal contact details such as phone numbers, social networking sites or email addresses, (including, but not limited to, social media, instant messaging, texting etc.), except where that communication is reasonable in all the circumstances, related to school work or co-curricular activities (excursion, International Tours etc.) or where there is a safety concern or other urgent matter
- photograph or video a child without the consent of the parent or guardians
- work with children whilst under the influence of alcohol or illegal drugs
- in the school environment or at other school events where students are present, consume alcohol contrary to school *Drug and Alcohol* policy or take illicit drugs under any circumstances
- ignore or disregard any suspected or disclosed child abuse.

**By observing the standards, you acknowledge your responsibility to adhere to the child safe principles and expectations for appropriate behaviour towards and in the company of children and immediately report any breach of this code.**

**I agree to adhere to this Child Safety Code of Conduct Policy.**

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

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

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

**Reference**

Child Safe Policy

Child Protection Mandatory Reporting and Reportable Conduct Policy

**Responsibility**

Principal, Vice Principal

**Policy Location**

Nexus and Website

**Policy Review**

This Policy is published on Nexus and the School website

Issued:

Reviewed: June 2021

October 2021

February 2022