



Mount Erin College

Child Safe Policy

Child Safe Standards

Mount Erin College is a Child Safe School. Our College is committed to safety and wellbeing of all children and young people. We value all students as individuals and their diversity. This will be the primary focus of our care and decision making.

Mount Erin College is committed to providing a Child Safe environment where children and young people are valued and feel safe, and their voices are heard about decisions that affect their lives.

Our College takes a preventative, proactive and participatory approach to Child Safety to ensure that the safety of children is promoted, child abuse is prevented and allegations of child abuse are properly responded to. Mount Erin College has zero tolerance for child abuse.

Definition

All children have the right to feel safe and to be safe all the times, but safety does not just happen.

Mount Erin College promotes a Child Safe organisation we take deliberate steps to protect children from physical, sexual, emotional, psychological and cultural abuse, and neglect. The following terms are defined as:-

Physical

This means intentionally causing, or threatening to cause, physical injury to a child, or inadvertently causing injury as a consequence of physical punishment or physically aggressive treatment of a child. The injury may take the form of bruises, cuts, burns or fractures.

Sexual

A child is sexually abused when any person uses their authority over the child to involve the child in sexual activity. Child sexual abuse involves a wide range of sexual activity including fondling genitals, masturbation, any form of penetration voyeurism and exhibitionism.

Sexual exploitation is considered a specific form of sexual abuse because children, by virtue of their age and development, are unable to give informed consent. Sexual exploitation of children takes different forms. It can include children being involved in sexually exploitive relationships, exposing a child to pornography, receiving money, goods, drug or favours in exchange for sex with one or more adults, or being exploited in more 'formal' forms of sex work. In all cases, those exploiting the children have power over them by virtue of their age, gender, physical strength, economic or other resources, such as access to drugs or gifts.

Emotional and Psychological

This occurs when a person engages in inappropriate behaviours, such as rejecting, ignoring, humiliating, isolating, threatening or verbally abusing a child, or allowing others to do so. Because this kind of abuse does not leave physical injuries, it is often hidden and underestimated.

Neglect

This means failing to meet a child's basic needs, such as providing adequate food, drink, shelter, clothing, supervision, hygiene and medical attention.

Racial, Cultural, Religious

This is conduct that demonstrates contempt, ridicule, hatred or negativity towards a child because of their race, culture or religion. It may be overt, such as direct racial vilification or discrimination, or covert, such as demonstrating a lack of cultural respect, attitude and values, and awareness, knowledge and understanding, or failing to provide positive images about another culture.

PURPOSE

Mount Erin College's Child Safe Policy sets out the school's approach to creating a Child Safe organisation where children and young people are safe and feel safe; and provides the policy framework for the school's approach to the Child Safe Standards.

WHO DOES THIS POLICY APPLY TO?

It takes many components to build a Child Safe organisation, at Mount Erin College children experience interactions (directly and indirectly) between staff, volunteers, contractors, children and young people.

This Policy will apply across a range of school activities including incursions, Excursions, Camps and sporting events as well online communication at school and outside of school hours.

A Child Safe Culture

Mount Erin College's culture encourages staff to raise, discuss and scrutinise concerns making it more difficult for abuse to occur and remain hidden.

Supporting documentation

The College's Wellbeing Committee and the Student Services Wellbeing Team have a key role in monitoring the College's Policies and Procedures in relation to the Child Safe Standards as well as to intervene and develop appropriate actions to support and monitor students at risk.

Child Safety is a standing item for discussion at Staff Meetings.

Management is open and approachable to all staff concerns related to Child Safety.

A clear process outlines the schools intervention procedures for early, intermediate and intensive intervention

Personnel understand their Responsibilities in relation to the Child Safe Code of Conduct

School Leaders and managers will ensure that each person understands their roles responsibilities and behaviour expected in protecting children and young people from abuse and neglect.

Staff will comply with the College's Code of Conduct.

The College's Code of Conduct sets out clear awareness of the difference between appropriate and inappropriate behaviour. Refer also to the Victorian Institute of Teaching, Victorian Teachers Professional Codes of Conduct and Ethics

Human Resources Practices and Training

Mount Erin College applies best practice standards in the recruitment and screening of staff and will take all reasonable steps to ensure that it engages the most suitable and appropriate people.

Mount Erin College will ensure that Staff Induction and training programs are a vital part of our commitment to safeguarding children and young people from abuse and neglect.

All prospective staff and volunteers are required to undergo National Criminal History Records check and maintain a valid Working with Children Check and /or current VIT Registration Card.

Reporting a Child Safety Concern or Complaint

Mount Erin College has clear expectations for staff and volunteers in making a report about a child or young person who may be in need of protection. Immediate action should include reporting their concerns to the DHHS Child Protection or another appropriate agency and notifying the Principal or a member of the school leadership team of their concerns and the reasons for those concerns.

Risk Reduction and Management

Mount Erin College believes the wellbeing of children and young people is paramount, and is vigilant in ensuring proper risk management processes. The school recognises there are potential risks to children and young people and will take a risk management approach by undertaking preventative measures.

Listening to Children

Mount Erin College has developed a safe, inclusive and supportive environment that involves and communicates with children, young people and their parents/care givers. We encourage the child and parent/care givers involvement and engagement that informs safe school operations and builds the capability of children and parents/care givers to understand their rights and their responsibilities.

Confidentiality and Privacy

Considerable importance is placed on safeguarding the confidentiality and privacy of information about particular children and their families. The collection, use and storage of information is included in school policies.

Breeches

Breeches of Duty of Care and Mandatory Reporting Obligations are identified in the specific policies.

Policy Evaluation and Review

This policy was last updated on May 2018 and is scheduled for review on May 2020.

Definitions

A full list of definitions for Ministerial Order No. 870 is available at www.vrqa.vic.gov.au/childsafes

Child abuse includes:

- Any act committed against a child involving – a sexual offence

or

- an offence under section 49B(2) of the *Crimes Act 1958* (grooming)

- The infliction, on a child, of- Physical violence

or

- Serious emotional or psychological harm

- Serious neglect of a child

Child safety encompasses matters related to protecting all children 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.

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

- a campus of the school

- online school environments including email and intranet systems

- 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

School staff means:

In a government school, an individual working in a school environment who is:

- employed under Part 2.4 of the *Education and Training Reform Act 2006 (ETR Act)* in the government teaching service or

- employed under a contract of service by the council of the school under Part 2.3 of the ETR Act or

- a volunteer or a contracted service provider whether or not a body corporate or any other person is an intermediary

REVIEW CYCLE

This Policy was last updated and approved by the College Board in August 2019 and is scheduled for review in 2021.