



Primary Only	Secondary Only	Combined Policy
Both Campuses	Taylor's Hill Only	Mernda only
Policy Type: Welfare		

RATIONALE

Child safety and wellbeing is based on the understanding that each person is created in the image of God and is precious in His sight. There is a Biblical imperative to ensure that children are treated with care and respect as modelled by Jesus Christ (Matthew 18:6; 19:14).

Gilson College provides a values-based education which focuses on the development of the whole child and where the home and school work in partnership to provide this education. In this context, there is a legislative and moral imperative that there is a zero tolerance for any forms of child abuse and where the school, through its teachers, provide duty of care to prevent child abuse, and take every precaution to avoid abuse happening.

Child Safety and wellbeing strategies need to be transparent, well understood and diverse, and take account of the increased level of risk associated with the specific nature of some activities and the vulnerability of particular groups, such as ATSI students, culturally and linguistically diverse students, disabled students, and other vulnerable students, including our overseas students (OS).

In this context, Gilson College will abide by the tenets of the Department of Education and Training (DET) *Four Critical Actions for Schools: Responding to Incidents, Disclosures and Suspicions of Child Abuse* (with the College's Fifth Critical Action: *Document your actions*), and *Responding to Suspected Child Abuse: A Template for all Victorian Schools*, which is referred to in this policy.

All teachers, other staff members, volunteers, contractors, other service providers and College Council members must understand and abide by the legal, professional, and moral obligations to implement all child safety and wellbeing policies, protocols and practices.

SCOPE

1. This policy applies to all staff, pastors, chaplains (if ministers of religion), contractors, volunteers, education practicum students, students and other stakeholders, including overseas students' homestay hosts, and those 18 years and over residing in homestay residences, and covers information about reporting allegations of:
 - inappropriate behaviour by a staff member causing harm to a child or group of children,
 - harm or suspected harm of a student by any other person.
2. In regard to the 'Betrayal of Trust' report 2014 criminal offences legislation, under the *Crimes Act 1958 (Vic.)* it also applies to Gilson College students 18 years of age or over.

DEFINITIONS AND LEGISLATION

Relevant Definitions

1. "Harm" means physical, sexual, emotional or psychological, abuse and neglect of children. Reference to a "child" or "children" is inclusive of children and young people up to the age of 17 years.
2. "Student" means a child, or young person 18 years or over enrolled at Gilson College.
3. "Reportable conduct" means the five types of 'reportable conduct' listed in the *Child Wellbeing and Safety Act 2005*: 1. sexual offences (against, with or in the presence of, a child); 2. sexual misconduct (against, with or in the presence of, a child); 3. physical violence (against, with or in the presence of, a child); 4. behaviour that causes significant emotional or psychological harm; 5. significant neglect.

Relevant Legislation

1. Gilson College is committed to:
 - implementing protective systems and practices;
 - planning safe and supportive environments and
 - responding appropriately to allegations of abuse and allegations of inappropriate behaviour toward children and young people in our care
2. Gilson College also has a duty of care to prevent child abuse and a legislated responsibility to promote the wellbeing, safety and protection of children and young persons, from all forms of harm. Gilson College recognises the principles of the child protection legislation below:
 - The Children, Youth and Families Act 2005 (as amended in 2011)
 - Child Wellbeing and Safety Act 2005
 - Commission for Children and Young People Act 2012
 - Working with Children Act 2005
 - Child Wellbeing and Safety Act 2005
 - The Charter of Human Rights and Responsibilities Act 2006
 - The Crimes Amendment (Grooming) Act 2014
 - Education and Training Reform Act 2006
 - Victorian Institute of Teaching Act 2001
 - Crimes Act 1958 (VIC)
3. Further, Gilson College is also accountable under the Child Safe Standards (as referenced) which were introduced in response to recommendations made by the Betrayal of Trust report. The Ministerial Order No. 1359 sets out the specific actions that all Victorian schools must take to meet the requirements in the Child Safe Standards.

IMPLEMENTATION

Child Safety and Wellbeing Statement of Commitment and Principles

1. Gilson College is committed to the safety and wellbeing of all children and young people. This will be the primary focus of our care and decision-making. A child safe environment is one where children and young people are safe and feel safe, and their voices are heard about decisions that affect their lives.
2. Every person involved in the College has a responsibility to understand the important and specific role he or she plays individually and collectively to ensure that the

wellbeing and safety of all children and young people is at the forefront of all they do and every decision they make.

3. This commitment to ensuring the safety, welfare and wellbeing of all children and young people in the College will be maintained at all times during their participation in learning and other activities in all College environments, including, but not limited to, at school, on excursions and camps, on outdoor education activities, and online.
4. Particular attention will be given to the inclusiveness and cultural safety of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children and young people, children and young people from culturally and/or linguistically diverse backgrounds, as well as the safety of children and young people with a disability, and other vulnerable children and young people, including overseas students (*Child Safe Standards 1 & 5*). See also *Anti-Bullying Policy* and *Diversity of Learners Policy*.
5. Gilson College has zero tolerance for child abuse and is committed to the protection of all children from all forms of child abuse.
6. At Gilson College, a child includes Gilson College students, visiting students and international students.
7. Child abuse includes sexual offences, grooming, physical violence, serious emotional or psychological harm, serious neglect, and a child's exposure to family violence.
8. Broader child safety issues arising from our common-law duty of care, as well as our institutional Child Safe Duty of Care, are dealt with through our Student Duty of Care Program.
9. If you have a belief or suspicion that a child is being, or has been, subjected to any form of abuse you must contact the Victorian Child Protection Service or, where you need guidance on making a report or have questions regarding child safety, contact one of the School's appointed Child Safety Officers – The Principal, Heads of Campus and Heads of Schools
10. Whenever there are concerns that a child is in immediate danger the Police should be called on 000.
11. Within the College, a best practice approach to creating a safe environment includes procedures for responding to allegations and disclosures of reportable conduct of children and young people, based on the following principles:
12. All children and young people have a right to safety and freedom from abuse of any kind.
13. All adults working with children and young people have a responsibility to care for them, to promote their wellbeing and to protect them from any form of reportable conduct.
14. When any action is taken to prevent, or respond to any type of reportable conduct, the welfare and wellbeing of the child or young person are the primary concerns.
15. The integrity of the family unit is respected but not to the detriment of the child or young person.
16. The dignity of persons involved in situations where reportable conduct is suspected or disclosed, should be respected and they should be treated with fairness, sensitivity, dignity and respect.
17. In the interests of justice, appropriate confidentiality should be maintained, with information that relates to suspected or disclosed abuse being provided only to those who have a right or a need to be informed.
18. In its planning, decision-making and operations Gilson College will:
 - a. Take a preventative, proactive and participatory approach to child safety
 - b. Value and empower children to participate in decisions which affect their lives
 - c. Foster a culture of openness that supports all persons to safely disclose risks of harm to children

- d. Respect diversity in cultures and child rearing practices while keeping child safety paramount
- e. Provide written guidance on appropriate conduct and behaviour towards children
- f. Engage only the most suitable people to work with children and have high quality staff and volunteer supervision and professional development
- g. Ensure children know who to talk with if they are worried or are feeling unsafe, and that they are comfortable and encouraged to raise such issues
- h. Report suspected abuse, neglect or mistreatment promptly to the appropriate authorities
- i. Share information appropriately and lawfully with other organisations where the safety and wellbeing of children is at risk
- j. Value the input of and communicate regularly with families and carers

Providing ongoing support:

1. Gilson College will provide ongoing support for children and young people impacted by abuse - either through disclosure or who are otherwise linked to suspected abuse, through the steps given for making a Student Support Plan, as detailed in *'Responding to Suspected Child Abuse: A Template for all Victorian Schools'*
2. Ongoing student support will be arranged by the relevant College Child Safety Officer
3. Steps or actions will include:
 - Provide support for the student during interviews
 - Establish a Student Support Plan
 - Establish a Student Support Group
 - Ensure ongoing review of the Student's Support Plan
4. Ongoing support will be provided by those such as the relevant College Child Safety Officer, trusted teachers, Level Leaders, Chaplains, Wellbeing Officers, and Counsellors.
5. Referrals may be made to relevant organisations, such as Headspace, GP, or child psychologist.

Risk reduction and management

1. The risk of child abuse occurring at Gilson College and on excursions, camps and other off campus environments will be reduced and managed through dissemination of this policy to all staff, contractors, volunteers, education practicum students, College students 18+ years of age, and other stakeholders, including overseas students' homestay hosts, and those 18 years and over residing in homestay residences, though:
 - a. training sessions
 - b. information session
 - c. the Gilson College website
 - d. Documents on SEQTA Teach (staff), SEQTA Engage (Parents) and SEQTA Learn (students)
 - e. Relevant, related policies such as, but not limited to, the *Internet Acceptable Use*, *Anti-Bullying*, and *Behaviour Management* policies, as well as the *College Child Safe Codes of Conduct* and the *College ICT Acceptable Use Agreements* will also be made available through:
 - i. The Gilson College website
 - ii. Documents on SEQTA Teach (staff), SEQTA Engage (Parents) and SEQTA Learn (students)
 - f. Employment advertisements and contracts will include a reference to the *College Child Safe Code of Conduct*

Individuals Roles and Responsibilities

The following are the specific roles and responsibilities, both individually and collectively, that will ensure compliance and adherence to child safety and welfare policies, practices in the College:

1. **Adventist Schools Victoria (ASV) CEO, HR Manager, Board of Directors:** System Governance; Recruitment and Employment of staff including orientation to Child Safe policies and practices in ASV schools; ongoing Fitness to teach; Child Safety and Wellbeing policy development, implementation compliance, and training in system schools;
2. **All:** Adherence to College Child Safety and Wellbeing Policies and Procedures
3. **College Council:** College Governance; monitor Child Safety and Wellbeing Policies and Procedures compliance; monitor Staff training compliance; with ASV, monitor ongoing staff fitness to teach
4. **Principal:** Responsible for Reportable Conduct Scheme compliance; Child Safety Officer; Oversee employed staff training and compliance and adherence to Child Safety; inform potential employees about the College's Child safe practices including the Child Safe Code of Conduct
5. **Heads of Campus:** Child Safety Officer; Responsible for Reportable Conduct Scheme compliance; Staff Child Safety training; Education practicum students Child Safety training; Casual Staff training; monitor adherence to Child Safety; inform potential employees about the College's Child safe practices including the Child Safe Code of Conduct
6. **Heads of School:** Child Safety Officer; Responsible for Reportable Conduct Scheme compliance; Staff Child Safety training; Volunteers Child Safety training; Education practicum students Child Safety training, Casual Staff training as delegated; Monitor College staffs adherence to Child Safety
7. **Well-being Officer/s:** Child Safety Officers; Staff training, as delegated; 18 years or over Students' training, as delegated; some Student child safe education, as delegated
8. **College Education staff:** Adherence to College Child Safe Policies and Procedures; Keeping Safe: Child Protection Curriculum delivery
9. **Office manager or Delegate/s:** Ad Hoc staff Child Safe training e.g. contractors, and Overseas Students homestay hosts, and those 18 years and over residing in homestay residences; Management of registers for mandatory reporting training and WWCCs

Practices for Monitoring Adherence to the Principles and Practices of College Child Safety and Wellbeing Policies, as well as for Monitoring Ongoing Suitability for Child-related Employment

1. Child Safety and Child Welfare are regular items on College Council agenda
2. ADCOM (Principal, Heads of Campus, Heads of school) and Welfare Officers receive notice of, and monitor with relevant staff, child welfare reports that are entered into SEQTA
3. ADCOM and College Council receives and analyses the student and parent surveys annually
4. Registers kept of:
 - a. VIT Registration currency for teachers and Principal, Heads of Campus and Heads of Schools
 - b. Annual staff Mandatory Reporting training for education, pastoral and welfare staff

- c. Working With Children Clearance compliance and checking for all others
- d. Child Safe Code of Conduct signed by all
- 5. Annual staff orientation to policies, including Child Safety and Welfare policies and procedures, including signing the College Child Safe Code of Conduct (at the beginning of the school year), including each time policies are updated
- 6. Child Safety and Wellbeing policies and practices are a regular item during staff meetings or protected time meetings
- 7. Training occurs for of all new staff entering into College employment in the Keeping Safe: Child Protection Curriculum, whether of not they will actually teach it. (Register kept)
- 8. Regular classroom walk-throughs, and Evidence Based Observations are conducted
- 9. Welfare officers are delegated to conduct PD with staff each term on Child Safety and Wellbeing practices
- 10. Welfare officers train students aged 18 years and over in Child Safety and Wellbeing practices, and their responsibilities as adults; and train 17-year-olds before they reach 18.
- 11. An annual training session is held for all volunteers at the beginning of the school year before they are permitted to work in classrooms or other spaces where children will or may be present. WWCC is checked.
- 12. Training occurs for of all casual staff and education practicum students on the first day they attend the college for work. WWCC is checked
- 13. Training occurs for contractors before they commence work onsite. WWCC is checked

Child Safety and Wellbeing Standards

1. The Child Safe Standards form part of the Victorian Government's response to the parliamentary Betrayal of Trust Inquiry into the Handling of Abuse by Religious and Other Non-Government Organisations 2013. The focus of the standards is to help organisations to create and maintain environments that keep children and young people safe.
2. At the time of this policy review (Sept. 2021) the original standards continue to inform the College's Child Safe approaches.
3. It is noted that in 2021 the Victorian Government introduced the new Child Safety and Wellbeing Standards which will replace the original standards. The new standards will better protect children and young people, and support greater national consistency.
4. The new standards will come into effect from 1 July 2022 and Gilson College is working towards having these standards inform College policies, procedures, practices and culture by July 2022.
5. As has been the case with the original standards, Gilson college will raise awareness of all staff of their obligations under the new standards by providing annual training in regard to the Child Safety and Wellbeing Standards and our Child Safety and Wellbeing policies, procedures, practices, and culture.

Gilson College Child Safety and Wellbeing Code of Conduct

1. The child safe standards require that Gilson College, as a provider service for children, has a code of conduct that establishes clear expectations for appropriate behaviour with children. The Gilson College *Child Safe Code of Conduct* assists College leadership to enforce appropriate behaviour with children and young people in our school to help protect children from abuse.
2. Gilson college will raise awareness of all staff, including volunteers, of their obligations under the *College Code of Conduct* by providing annual training:
 - a. as part of induction training for new leadership members, staff and volunteers

- b. as part of refresher training for existing leadership members, staff and volunteers
 - c. to support and inform College protocols and reporting procedures should breaches of the code be suspected or identified
3. The Gilson College *Child Safe Code of Conduct* will be added to the College website and SEQTA Engage parent portal: Documents to
 4. inform parents/carers and other persons associated with the Gilson College what behaviour they can expect from the College leadership, staff and volunteers
 5. to support and inform organisational protocols and reporting procedures should breaches of the code be suspected or identified

Community Involvement (Child Safe Standard 4)

1. The College community is encouraged to participate in decisions and practices relating to Child Safety and Wellbeing, including the development and review of policies (Child Safe Standard 4: Family engagement).
2. Child Safety and Wellbeing principles, policies and practices will be communicated to the College community in a variety of ways, including (but not limited to):
 - a) Newsletter
 - b) Website
 - c) Parents and Friends Organisation
 - d) Information sessions
 - e) Focus groups

Staff and volunteers (Child Safe Standard 6)

3. To ensure that all staff, volunteers and contractors of the College, who work with children, meet Child safety standards the following shall be done:
 - a) Job advertisements will contain information relevant to child safety standards,
 - b) Applicants for paid employment will have child safety principles embedded into employment contracts
 - c) Applicants for volunteer positions will acknowledge the Child Safety and Wellbeing Code of conduct, provide two references and a completed Working With Children Check.
4. All staff new to the College will be induced into the Child Safety and Wellbeing principles and policies of the College, including the Child Safety and wellbeing Code of Conduct and this policy.
5. All staff, including members of the College Council, will receive annual training regarding the responsibilities, risks and policies pertaining to child safety and wellbeing (Child Safe Standard 8).

Physical and Online Environments (Child Safe Standard 9)

6. A policy relating to child safety and wellbeing online is under development.
- 7.

Mandatory Reporting Requirements

8. Mandatory reporting describes the legal obligation of certain professionals and community members to report incidences of child abuse. These people are called 'mandated reporters'. If the mandated reporters fail to report they may be fined and/or incarcerated. Section 182 (1) of the Children, Youth and Families Act 2005 (as amended in 2011) lists the following people as mandated to report:
 - a. a person who is registered as a teacher under the Education and Training Reform Act 2006 or has been granted permission to teach under the Act

- b. the principal of a Government school or non-Government school within the meaning of the Education and Training Reform Act 2006
- c. registered medical practitioner
- d. a nurse
- e. a midwife
- f. a member of the police force.

Reasonable Belief

1. A mandated reporter does not need to have proof to report any concerns that they have about the safety of a child under 16. Indicators that represent reasonable grounds to report a suspected offence include:
 2. a child or young person discloses that he or she has suffered or is suffering non-accidental physical injury or sexual abuse
 3. a child or young person exhibits sexually abusive or age-inappropriate behaviour(s)
 4. someone else advises you that a child or young person has been sexually abused or non-accidentally injured, or
 5. your own observations of the child or young person's physical condition or behaviours lead you to reasonably suspect that the child or young person has suffered or is suffering non-accidental physical injury or sexual abuse.

Abuse and Neglect Types Which Must Be Reported

1. physical abuse
2. sexual abuse
3. emotional abuse
4. neglect
5. medical neglect
6. family violence
7. human trafficking (including forced marriage).

Betrayal of Trust Legislation - Criminal Offences:

1. It is the responsibility of all adults in Victoria, including school students 18 years old or over to report sexual or physical abuse to police.
2. Gilson College will raise the awareness of all adults in the College of their obligations under this legislation by providing annual training to
 - All staff
 - College students 18 years old and above
3. In response to the Betrayal of Trust report five criminal offences have been introduced under the *Crimes Act 1958 (Vic.)*:
 - **failure to disclose** offence, which requires adults to report to the Police a reasonable belief that a sexual offence has been committed against a child
 - **failure to protect** offence, which applies to people in positions of authority within organisations, who knew of a risk of child sexual abuse by someone in the organisation and failed to reduce or remove the risk
 - **grooming** offence, which targets communication with a child or their parents with the intent of committing child sexual abuse.
 - **encouraging a child** under the age of 16 to engage in, or be involved in sexual activity.
 - **encouraging a child** aged of 16 or 17 who is under care, supervision or authority to engage in, or be involved in sexual activity.

Failure to Disclose

1. Any adult within Gilson College, including staff members and students of the College 18 years old or over, who forms a reasonable belief that a sexual offence has been committed in Victoria by an adult against a child under 16 must disclose that information to Victoria Police.
2. Failure to disclose the information to the Police is a criminal offence under Section 327 of the Crimes Act 1958(Vic.) and applies to all adults (18 years and over) in Victoria, not just professionals who work with children.
3. The obligation is to disclose that information to the Police as soon as it is practicable to do so, except in limited circumstances such as where the information has already been reported to DHHS Child Protection.
4. Refer to Appendix 2 for more information on when to report a concern that a child or a young person has been sexually abused, or is in need of protection from sexual abuse.
5. For further information about the 'failure to disclose' offence, see Department of Justice and Regulations – Failure to disclose offence and the Betrayal of Trust: Fact Sheet.

Failure to Protect

1. Any Gilson College staff member in a position of authority who becomes aware that an adult associated with their organisation (such as an employee, contractor, volunteer, sport coach, student of Gilson College 18 years old or over, or visitor) poses a risk of sexual abuse to a child under 16 who is in the care or supervision of the organisation, must take all reasonable steps to reduce or remove that risk. Failure to take reasonable steps to protect a child in the organisation from the risk of sexual abuse from an adult associated with the organisation is a criminal offence under Section 49C (2) of the *Crimes Act 1958 (Vic.)*.
2. In the Gilson College context, this will include the principal, heads of campus and the business manager and may also extend to heads of school, school counsellors, and heads of departments.
3. For further information about the 'failure to protect' offence, see Department of Justice and Regulations - Failure to protect offence and the Betrayal of Trust: Fact Sheet.

Grooming

1. The offence of grooming prohibits predatory conduct designed to prepare or 'groom' a child for future sexual activity and is contained in Section 49B (2) of *the Crimes Act 1958 (Vic.)*. The offence applies to communication with children under 16 years.
2. Grooming can be conducted in person or online, for example via interaction through social media, web forums and emails. The offence can be committed by any person aged 18 years or over. It does not apply to communication between people who are both under 18 years of age. For further information about the 'grooming offence', see Department of Justice and Regulation – Grooming offence and the Betrayal of Trust: Fact Sheet.

Encouraging

1. The offence of encouraging a child under the age of 16 to engage in, or be involved in sexual activity.
2. The offence of encouraging a child aged 16 or 17 under care, supervision or authority to engage in, or be involved in sexual activity.

Gilson College staff need to be aware of these 'Encouraging' offences because certain behaviour may constitute grooming and encouragement:

- i. 'Encourage' is defined to include suggest, request, urge and demand. Encouragement includes but is not limited to offering money or gifts or

- threatening harm. It can be done in person or by electronic communication, e.g. an adult asking a child to watch inappropriate material.
- ii. These offences do not require that the sexual activity be a criminal offence. E.g. if a child was encouraged to watch inappropriate material, the act of watching is not illegal, however the act of encouragement would amount to criminal conduct.

For more information about managing and responding to the risk of abuse, see Responding to Student Sexual Assault and Risk Management in the Department of Education and Training resources.

Reportable Conduct Scheme:

For greater detail please refer to the ***Gilson College Reportable Conduct Scheme – Victoria: Policy & Procedure*** document

Who is responsible to make a report under this scheme?

- The College Principal, Heads of Campus and Heads of School

Who can an allegation be made about under the scheme?

A reportable allegation can be made about any person over 18 years of age who is a Gilson College employee (including a religious leader and/or chaplain, welfare/well-being officer), a volunteer, a contractor or office holder of the College.

Allegations can be made about the conduct of people even if:

- they do not have direct contact with children
- the conduct occurred outside of their work.

What kind of conduct is reportable?

There are five types of 'reportable conduct':

1. sexual offences committed against, with or in the presence of a child
2. sexual misconduct committed against, with or in the presence of a child
3. physical violence against, with or in the presence of a child
4. any behaviour that causes significant emotional or psychological harm to a child
5. significant neglect of a child.

Under this scheme the College Principal, Heads of Campus and Heads of School must

1. Notify:

- He/She must notify the Commission within 3 business days of becoming aware of a reportable allegation.

2. Investigate:

- He/She must investigate an allegation – subject to police clearance on criminal matters.
- He/She must advise the Commission who is undertaking the investigation.
- He/She must manage the risks to children.

3. Update:

- Within 30 calendar days he/she must provide the Commission detailed information about the reportable allegation and any action you have taken.

4. Outcomes:

- He/She must notify the Commission of the investigation findings and any disciplinary action the head of entity has taken (or the reasons no action was taken).

Online Safety during COVID-19 Remote Learning

The COVID-19 Pandemic has led to the need for extended periods of remote teaching and learning, bringing associated risks for child safety.

1. Gilson College will protect students from harm online during remote learning times as far as it is reasonably able. The safety, wellbeing and best interests of our students are of primary importance.
2. The College will ensure the health and safety of staff in accordance with the College
3. COVID-19 Support documents:
 - a. *Supporting Your Child in Off-Campus Learning – For Parents,*
 - b. *Supporting Staff With Remote Learning*
 - c. *Professional Expectations of Staff during Remote Learning*
 - d. *Regular communication letters/emails to parents.*

Occupational Health and Safety

1. Gilson College will protect students from harm as far as it is reasonably able. The safety, wellbeing and best interests of our students are of primary importance.
2. The school will ensure the health and safety of staff in accordance with Occupational Health and Safety legislation.
3. Refer to the College *OH&S Policy*

Codes of Conduct:

Staff, Contractors, Volunteers and Education Practicum Students, College Students 18+ years of age, & other Stakeholders

1. Staff, contractors, volunteers and education practicum students, Gilson College students 18+ years of age, and other stakeholders must not cause harm to any student.
2. All staff, contractors, volunteers and education practicum students, Gilson College students 18+ years of age, and other stakeholders in the school, including overseas students' homestay hosts and those 18 years and over residing in homestay residences, must ensure that their behaviour towards and relationships with all students reflect proper standards of care for students in accordance with the *ASA and VIT Codes of Conduct*, and *Gilson College Child Safe Protection Code of Conduct*.

Dealing with Inappropriate Behaviour

1. If a student considers the behaviour of a staff member, volunteer, contractor, education practicum student, Gilson College student 18+ years of age, or other stakeholder in the school, including overseas students' homestay host and those 18 years and over residing in homestay residences, to be inappropriate, the student should report the behaviour to the:
 - Principal or
 - College Child Safety Officer, Wellbeing officer, Counsellor, Chaplain or any other staff member.

Dealing with Information about Sexual Abuse, Harm and any other Inappropriate Behaviour

1. If a staff member receives a report of inappropriate behaviour about another staff member, contractor, volunteer, education practicum student, Gilson College students 18+ years of age, or stakeholder in the school, including overseas students' homestay host and those 18 years and over residing in homestay residences, that the student considers inappropriate, the staff member receiving the report must immediately make a mandatory report and report it verbally and then in writing to the Principal.

- Where the Principal is the subject of the report of inappropriate behaviour, the staff member must make a mandatory report then provide verbal information followed by a written report to the Director of Education Seventh-day Adventist Schools (Victoria) Ltd.

Procedures for Responding to Allegations of Child Abuse for all Staff, Contractors, Volunteers, Education Practicum Students, College Students 18+ years of age, & other Stakeholders

- The procedures listed below will be followed for all forms of child abuse as defined under Definitions and Legislation Section above (P.1) of this policy (reference Education Training and Reform Act 2006).
- The procedures apply to allegations or disclosures of child abuse made by or in relation to a child, school staff, visitor or other person including overseas students' homestay host and those 18 years and over residing in homestay residences, while connected to a school environment.
- The procedures will be followed taking into account the diversity characteristics of the students and the school community.
- For Gilson College this would include, but not limited to, sensitivity towards religious, ethnic and linguistic diversity and vulnerable students requiring further learning support.
- It is important to note that 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, such as mandatory reporting.
- The table below defines overall leadership authority at College and Adventist Schools Victoria level:

Authority
Adventist Schools Victoria CEO, or his/her delegate
1. Monitor overall school compliance with these procedures where the allegation involves staff, contractors, volunteers or education practicum students.
2. Manage an alternative procedure for responding to an allegation or disclosure if the person allocated responsibility cannot perform under clause 11(3)(c)(i) his or her role.
3. Make, secure, and retain records of allegation of child abuse and the response to it where the allegation involves staff, contractors, volunteers or education practicum students.

Authority
School Principal or his/her delegate
1. Monitor overall school compliance with these procedures where the allegation involves individuals other than staff, contractors, volunteers or education practicum students.
2. Promptly manage the school's response to an allegation or disclosure of child abuse and to ensure that the allegation or disclosure is taken seriously
3. Ensure an appropriate response to a child who makes or is affected by an allegation of child abuse (See Appendix 3)
4. Make, secure and retain records of allegation of child abuse and the response to it

where the allegation involves individuals other than staff, contractors, volunteers or education practicum students.

Gilson College will follow the ***Four Critical Actions for Schools: Responding to Incidents, Disclosures and Suspicions of Child Abuse*** every time an adult in the College community become aware of an instance of, or risk of abuse. The College also requires that a **Fifth Critical Action: Document your actions** be followed. (See also *The Five Critical Actions...POSTER displayed in strategic places around the College.*) This includes reporting later, any new information to authorities.

ACTION 1: Responding to an emergency

1. If there is no risk of immediate harm go to ACTION 2.
2. If a child is at immediate risk of harm you must ensure their safety by:
 - a. separating alleged victims and others involved
 - b. administering first aid
 - c. calling 000 for urgent medical and/or police assistance to respond to immediate health or safety concerns
 - d. identifying the Child Safety Officer as the contact person at the school for future liaison with Police.

Where necessary you may also need to maintain the integrity of the potential crime scene and preserve evidence.

ACTION 2: Reporting to authorities

1. As soon as immediate health and safety concerns are addressed you must report all incidents, suspicions, and disclosures of child abuse as soon as possible. Failure to report physical and sexual child abuse may amount to a criminal offence.
2. If the source of suspected abuse is from within the school:
 - You **must report** all instances of suspected child abuse involving a school staff member, contractor or volunteer to **Victoria Police**.
 - You **must also report internally** to:
 - i. Principal
 - ii. Seventh-day Adventist Schools Victoria on +61 3 9264 7730
3. If the source of suspected abuse is from within the family or community:
 - You **must report** to Department of Families, Fairness and Housing (DFFH) - Child Protection
4. If a child is considered to be in need of protection from child abuse, or at risk of being harmed (or has been harmed) and the harm has had, or is likely to have, a serious impact on the child's safety, stability or development:
 - You **must also report** all instances of suspected sexual abuse (including grooming) to Victoria Police.
 - You **must also report** internally to:
 - i. Principal and/or Child Safety Officer and
 - ii. Seventh-day Adventist Schools Victoria on +61 3 9264 7730

ACTION 3: Contacting parents/carers

The Principal/Child Safety Officer **must** consult with DFFH - Child Protection or Victoria Police to determine what information can be shared with parents/carers.

They may advise:

1. **not to contact** the parents/carers (e.g. in circumstances where the parents are alleged to have engaged in the abuse, or the child is a mature minor and does not wish for their parents/carers to be contacted)

2. **to contact** the parents/carers and provide agreed information (this must be done as soon as possible, preferably on the same day of the incident, disclosure or suspicion).

ACTION 4: Providing adequate and ongoing support

1. Gilson College will provide ongoing support for children impacted by abuse, either through disclosure or who are otherwise linked to suspected abuse, through the steps given for making a Student Support Plan, detailed in ***Responding to Suspected Child Abuse: A Template for all Victorian Schools***
2. Ongoing student support will be arranged by the relevant Child Safety Officer (ADCOM member)
3. Such steps/actions will include:
4. Provide support for the student during interviews
5. Establish a Student Support Plan
6. Establish a Student Support Group
7. Ensure ongoing review of the Student's Support Plan
8. Ongoing support will be provided by those such as the relevant Child Safety Officer, trusted teachers, Level Leaders, Wellbeing Officer, Chaplains, and counsellors.
9. Referrals may be made to relevant organisations, such as Headspace, GP, child psychologist etc.

ACTION 5: Document your actions

1. You **must** keep clear and comprehensive notes relating to incidents, disclosures and allegations of child abuse using the ***Responding to Suspected Child Abuse: A Template for all Victorian Schools***.
2. Your aim should be to provide as much information as possible
3. These records will be helpful in making a report of the abuse to the relevant authorities
4. This information may be sought at a later date if the matter is the subject of court proceedings
5. These notes may also later assist you if you are required to provide evidence to support their decisions
6. Each record relating to incidents, disclosures and allegations of child abuse will be
7. filed against in child's or young person's record in the College student management system – SEQTA, and
8. will be accessible only to the Executive team: Principal, Heads of Campus and Heads of School, or appropriate others as designated by the principal

If it is believed that a child is not subject to abuse, but significant concerns remain for the student's wellbeing, Gilson College will take further action including making a referral or seeking advice from CHILD FIRST (in circumstances where the family are open to receiving support), or to DFFH Child Protection or Victoria Police.

Procedures for Responding to Allegations of Child Abuse for Younger Students and People from Culturally and linguistically Diverse Backgrounds

The procedures outlined below will be followed, taking into account the diversity characteristics of the students and the school community.

For Gilson College this would include, but not limited to, sensitivity towards religious, ethnic and linguistic diversity and vulnerable students requiring further learning support.

Students and parents will be introduced to these documents and urls in a variety of ways:

1. **PROTECT Posters** will be displayed in all classrooms and around the College on Notice Boards so students will see and read easily that everyone has the right to be safe and protected from abuse.
https://www.education.vic.gov.au/Documents/about/programs/health/protect/ChildSafeStandards_Poster.pdf
2. **Protect Easy English for Primary Students booklet** will be available in all classrooms and the library, and the pdf version added to SEQTA student portal
https://www.education.vic.gov.au/Documents/about/programs/health/protect/EasyEnglish_PrimarySchool_FactSheet.pdf
3. **Protect Easy English for Secondary Students booklet** will be available in all classrooms and the library, and the pdf version added to SEQTA student portal
https://www.education.vic.gov.au/Documents/about/programs/health/protect/EasyEnglish_SecondarySchool_FactSheet.pdf
4. **Protecting Children from Abuse Translated Information** URL is provided here for parents of diverse ethnicities and will be provided to parents via SEQTA
<https://www.education.vic.gov.au/parents/safety/Pages/child-protection.aspx>

NOTICE FOR ALL STAFF, CONTRACTORS, VOLUNTEERS OR EDUCATION PRACTICUM STUDENTS

You must not:

1. prohibit or discourage the reporting of an allegation of child abuse to a person external to the school
2. state or imply that it is the victim's responsibility to inform the police or other authorities of the allegation
3. make or require a judgement to be made about the truth of the allegation of child abuse
4. prohibit the making of records in relation to an allegation or disclosure of child abuse

PRIVACY AND CONFIDENTIALITY:

Privacy and Data Protection Act 2014

1. This Act applies to all forms of recorded information or opinion about an individual who can be identified, including photographs and emails. It establishes standards for the collection, handling and disposal of personal information and places special restrictions on 'sensitive information', **such as incidents relating to incidents, disclosures and allegations of child abuse.**
2. Gilson College leadership, the school council, and staff must abide by legislative privacy requirements in relation to how personal information is collected, used, disclosed and stored, and
3. be reasonable and fair in how this information is treated, not only for the benefit of staff and students, but also to protect the school's reputation
4. Refer to the *Gilson College Privacy Policy*

CONTACTS:

DFFH - CHILD PROTECTION

Northwest Division 1300 664 9777 (Taylors Hill and Mernda Campuses)

After hours, weekends, public holidays 13 12 78

<https://services.dffh.vic.gov.au/child-protection>

CHILD FIRST

Taylors Hill: 1300 138 180

Mernda: 1800 319 355

VICTORIA POLICE

000 or contact our local police station

Taylors Hill: Caroline Springs Police Station 03 9361 4700

Mernda: Mernda Police Station 03 9216 1200

Accessibility of Policy

1. This policy is accessible on the school website and will be available on request from the school administration.
2. Each new staff member, contractor, volunteer, education practicum student and other school stakeholders will be made aware of the policy as part of their induction
3. Comprehensive training will be provided to all staff on an annual basis.

Awareness of Policy

1. Staff, contractors, volunteers, education practicum students, students and parents will be made aware of the policy by its display on the school website and in the Staff Handbook.

References

[Four Critical Actions for Schools](#)

[Reporting Template](#)

Victorian Government

[Ministerial Order 870: Child Safe Standards](#)

[Ministerial Order 1359](#)

Department of Education and Training

[Mandatory Reporting eLearning Module.](#)

Related legislation

The Children, Youth and Families Act 2005 (as amended in 2011)

Worker Screening Act 2020

Commission for Children and Young People Act 2012

Child Wellbeing and Safety Act 2005

The Charter of Human Rights and Responsibilities Act 2006

The Crimes Amendment (Grooming) Act 2014

Education and Training Reform Act 2006

Victorian Institute of Teaching Act 2001

Crimes Act 1958 (VIC)

Department of Justice and Regulations

[Failure to disclose offence](#)

[Failure to protect offence](#)

[Grooming offence](#)

[Organisational Duty of Care to prevent child abuse](#) (See College *Duty of Care Policy*)

Related Gilson College policies, registers, plans and templates

1. *Child Safe Protection Code of Conduct*
2. *Duty of Care Policy*
3. *Mandatory Reporting Policy*
4. *Anti-Discrimination and Harassment Policy*
5. *Anti-Bullying Policy*
6. *Internet Acceptable Use Policy*

7. *OH&S Policy*
8. *Community Complaints and Appeals Policy Privacy Policy*
9. *Child Safe Abuse Response Report Template*
10. *Child Safe Five Critical Actions Child Abuse Poster*
11. *Child Safe Leadership and Governance Periodical Review Plan*
12. *Child Safe Risk Management Policy and Risk Register*
13. *Reportable Conduct Scheme – Victoria: Procedure*
14. *Management of Records Policy*

This policy was last shared with Taylors Hill staff in Apr 2022

This policy was last shared with Mernda staff in Apr 2022

This policy was revised and checked by ADCOM Jun 2022

This policy was ratified by the College Council Jun 2022

This policy was updated Jun 2022

This policy is due for review in 2023 (Annually)