



# Henderson College

## Child Safety and Wellbeing Policy

Policy Version:	Description of Changes	Application
2015	Policy Constructed	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Staff</li><li>• Volunteers</li><li>• Contractors</li><li>• Board members</li><li>• Students on placement</li><li>• Students</li></ul>
3-2017	26/06/2017 All allegations reported to Commission for Children and Young People within 3 days	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• As Above</li></ul>
April 2022	Reviewed by Child Wise	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• As Above</li></ul>

This policy is reviewed at minimum every two years. The review process will seek contribution and feedback from employees, volunteers, students and parents and carers. Henderson College is committed to reviewing the Child Safety and Wellbeing Policy following a reportable incident. Changes may also be made to the policy following key legislative change or emerging best practice standards.

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# Henderson College

## Child Safety and Wellbeing Policy

### **PURPOSE:**

1. The purpose of this policy is to outline and provide guidance to the Henderson College community regarding Henderson College's commitment and overall approach to child safety.

### **BACKGROUND:**

1. Henderson College seeks to establish and maintain high-level professional standards in relation to all its activities and areas of responsibility. This includes all academic, student welfare, discipline and management issues.
2. This policy is in accord with the College's "Vision", "Mission" and "Philosophy" documents as published and in line with School Council Policy.
3. This policy is in line with the 11 Victorian Child Safety Standards.

### **SCOPE:**

This policy applies to all staff, contractors, volunteers, education practicum students, students and other stakeholders at schools operated by Seventh-day Adventist Schools (Victoria) Ltd.

In regard to the 'Betrayal of Trust' report 2014 Legislation, under the Crimes Act 1958 (vic) it also applies to Henderson College students 18 years of age or over.

#### **Responsibility**

To the Board of Directors, Seventh-day Adventist Schools (Victoria) Ltd.

#### **Point of Contact**

Principal or Education Director and approved authority.

### **ISSUES/COMMENT:**

#### ***Rationale:***

Child protection 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).

Henderson College provides a values-based education which focuses on the development of the whole child and where the home and school work together harmoniously 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 and take every precaution to avoid abuse happening.

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In this context, Henderson 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](#) 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 School Council members** must understand and abide by the legal, professional, and moral obligations to implement child protection and child safety policies, protocols and practices.

Henderson College is committed to:

- Implementing protective systems and practices that support the best interests of the child;
- Planning safe and supportive environments for children and
- Responding appropriately to allegations of abuse and allegations of inappropriate behaviour towards children and young people.

### **Commitment to Child Safety**

Henderson College has a zero-tolerance approach to all forms of child abuse, child harm or risk of harm. As an organisation, we recognise that all children have a right to be kept safe from abuse and harm and we are committed to upholding this moral and legal obligation at all times.

Henderson College seeks to minimise the risk of child abuse and harm to children and young people through our human resources policies and procedures including the provision of support and education to our staff; accessible feedback and complaints processes for children, young people and families and; the provision of support to community members who act in accordance with the intentions of this policy to prevent and respond to harmful situations.

### **Policy intent**

The overarching aim of the Child Safety and Wellbeing Policy is to help create an organisational culture that fosters child safety and wellbeing, reflecting that the best interests of young people are at the forefront of the College's decision making and delivery of education. Henderson College has zero tolerance to any, and all, harm and/or abuse of children and young people

The policy aims to reflect the 10 National Principles and to set the overarching framework that guides other child-safety related policies at Henderson College.

In addition, the policy aims to reflect the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child. The Convention is the foundation for child protection globally and recognises children's rights as human rights. Article 19 states, "Parties shall protect the child from all forms of physical or mental violence, injury or abuse, neglect, maltreatment or exploitation including sexual abuse."

Henderson College is committed to listening to the voices of children. All Henderson College staff and volunteers have a legal and moral responsibility to respond swiftly and appropriately to any allegations of harm and/or abuse to a child. We strive to create and uphold a culture where concerns for the safety and wellbeing of a child can be raised and managed in a timely and just manner.

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All staff, volunteers and contractors are required to acknowledge the Child Safety and Wellbeing Policy when they commence work at Henderson College and periodically thereafter.

As part of the intent of the policy, Henderson College has created a Statement of Commitment that affirms its commitment to creating an organisation and culture where young people feel respected, safe and encouraged to talk and be listened to when they have a worry or concern. The Commitment emphasises the College's zero-tolerance approach to child abuse and neglect and highlights the importance of actively listening to and empowering young people in upholding their safety and best interests. This Commitment will be displayed on the College website, included in all publications, duty statements and selection criteria, displayed in child friendly formats and referenced and distributed in induction and refresher training.

### **Statement of Commitment and Principles**

Henderson College is committed to ensuring the safety, welfare and wellbeing of children is maintained at all times during their participation in learning and other activities run by its schools. Henderson College will create a safe environment that includes procedures for responding to allegations and disclosures of reportable conduct of children and young people, based on the following principles:

- All children and young people have a right to safety and freedom from abuse and harm of any kind.
- 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.
- 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.
- The integrity of the family unit is respected but not to the detriment of the child or young person.
- 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.
- 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.

### **National Principles and Victorian Child Safe Standards for Child Safe Organisations**

The National Principles aim to support safe, happy and engaged children. To this end, the principles are:

1. Child safety and wellbeing is embedded in organisational leadership, governance and culture.
2. Children and young people are informed about their rights, participate in decisions affecting them and are taken seriously.
3. Families and communities are informed and involved in promoting child safety and wellbeing.
4. Equity is upheld and diverse needs respected in policy and practice.
5. People working with children and young people are suitable and supported to reflect child safety and wellbeing values in practice.
6. Processes to respond to complaints and concerns are child focused.

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7. Staff and volunteers are equipped with the knowledge, skills and awareness to keep children and young people safe through ongoing education and training.
8. Physical and online environments promote safety and wellbeing while minimising the opportunity for children and young people to be harmed.
9. Implementation of the national child safe principles is regularly reviewed and improved.
10. Policies and procedures document how the organisation is safe for children and young people.

While the National Principles are not mandatory, Henderson College aims to implement them to demonstrate its commitment to child safety and wellbeing. The College's aim is for young people, families and the broader Henderson College Community to feel confident that it will provide a safe environment where children's rights, needs and interests are met.

The Victorian Child Safe Standards set the minimum requirements and outline the actions organisations must take to keep children and young people safe. The Standards are:

1. Organisations establish a culturally safe environment in which the diverse and unique identities and experiences of Aboriginal children and young people are respected and valued
2. Child safety and wellbeing is embedded in organisational leadership, governance and culture
3. Children and young people are empowered about their rights, participate in decisions affecting them and are taken seriously. Equity is upheld and diverse needs respected in policy and practice.
4. Families and communities are informed, and involved in promoting child safety and wellbeing
5. Equity is upheld and diverse needs respected in policy and practice
6. People working with children and young people are suitable and supported to reflect child safety and wellbeing values in practice
7. Processes for complaints and concerns are child focused
8. Staff and volunteers are equipped with the knowledge, skills and awareness to keep children and young people safe through ongoing education and training
9. Physical and online environments promote safety and wellbeing while minimising the opportunity for children and young people to be harmed
10. Implementation of the Child Safe Standards is regularly reviewed and improved
11. Policies and procedures document how the organisation is safe for children and young people

### **Relevant Legislation**

Henderson College has a duty of care and a legislated responsibility to promote the wellbeing, safety and protection of children and young persons, from all forms of harm. Henderson College recognises the principles of the child protection legislation below:

- The Children, Youth and Families Act 2005 (as amended in 2011)
- Worker Screening Act 2020

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- 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)

Further, Henderson is also accountable under the *Child Safe Standards* 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.

## Definitions

Child abuse and neglect describe an act or omission which endangers a child's health, wellbeing and/or development. This can be a single event or a series of traumatic events and is rarely limited to one form of harm. Child abuse, and neglect can be perpetrated by parents, caregivers, other adults, and/or other children and young people. Where sexual abuse is perpetrated by children or young people, it is usually referred to as, 'sexually harmful behaviour'. An outline of the types of child abuse and neglect and related terms are outlined in the sub-sections below.

### Physical abuse

Physical abuse or injury may consist of any non-accidental form of injury or serious physical harm inflicted on a child by any person. Physical injury and significant harm to a child may also result from the failure of a parent, carer or responsible person to adequately ensure the safety of a child by exposing the child to extremely dangerous or life-threatening situations. Corporal punishment at Henderson College is strictly forbidden.

### Emotional abuse

Emotional abuse occurs when a child's parent, caregiver or any other adult repeatedly rejects the child or uses threats to frighten the child. This may involve children:

- Being repeatedly rejected, called names, or being put down
- Being frightened by threats, or
- Experiencing continual coldness to the extent that it significantly damages their physical, social, intellectual, or emotional development.

### Neglect

Neglect is the failure to provide for the child's basic needs for life to the extent that the child's health and development are, or are likely to be, placed at risk including:

- Food
- Clothing
- Shelter
- Medical attention, and
- Supervision or care.

### Sexual Abuse

Sexual abuse occurs when a person uses power, force, or authority to involve a child in any form of sexual activity. Behaviour that sex offenders engage in may include:

- Touching or fondling children
- Sending obscene or suggestive phone calls/texts to children

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- Exhibitionism and or voyeurism in front of children
- Exposing children to pornographic images, or
- Penetration with penis, finger or other object into the mouth, anus, or vagina.

### **Grooming**

Grooming is predatory behaviour designed to prepare a child under 16 years of age for sexual abuse. Many perpetrators of sexual offences against children purposefully create relationships with children and young people, their families, and carers to establish the conditions necessary for them to abuse the child. For example:

- Spending special time with a child e.g., in private settings, away from their family or peers, including online
- Isolating the child or young person from family or peers
- Giving gifts to a child
- Showing favouritism
- Allowing the child to step out of boundaries or rules, and
- Touching the child.

### **Exposure to Family Violence**

Family violence is behaviour by a person towards a family member that is:

- Physically or sexually abusive
- Emotionally (psychologically) abusive
- Coercive or in any way controls or dominates that family member and causes that family member to fear for their safety or wellbeing, or for that of another family member
- Causes a child to hear, witness or otherwise be exposed to the effects of the behaviour referred to above, or
- Exposes a child to family violence which includes seeing, hearing, or experiencing violence in a number of ways.

### **Sexually harmful behaviour**

Refers to harmful behaviour perpetrated by one child to another child. Harmful behaviours in children are often an indicator that they have experienced harm or neglect. Where sexually harmful behaviour occurs, organisations have a duty of care to both children. Note that in children under 10-years of age, such behaviour is usually referred to as sexually problematic behaviour.

### **Multi-dimensional harm**

Occurs where multiple abuse types are experienced at the same time e.g., sexual abuse also involves physical and emotional abuse.

### **Cumulative harm**

Cumulative harm refers to the effects of multiple adverse or harmful circumstances or events in a child's life. Cumulative harm may be caused by an accumulation of a single recurring adverse circumstance (such as unrelenting low-level care); or by multiple circumstances or events (such as persistent verbal harm and denigration, inconsistent or harsh disciplines and /or exposure to family violence).

### **Responding to incidents, concerns and allegations**

Henderson College aims to build a child safe culture where all staff, students and families feel safe to raise child safety concerns. Henderson College works to put in

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place mechanisms to ensure that all concerns are taken seriously, responded to promptly and thoroughly, and that reporting obligations are met.

Regardless of legislative standards Henderson takes the stance that all staff, volunteers, board members, contractors and students on placement have a moral and ethical obligation to report all concerns to authorities. This approach is reflected in our reporting procedure, which includes provisions for mandatory and voluntary reporting as well as being compliant with set reporting laws in Victoria. As a school we also seek to implement internal pathways and support to facilitate those obligations.

**Note: If a child is in immediate danger, call 000**

Any person who believes on reasonable grounds that a child is in need of protection must make a report to authorities.

As long as reports are made in good faith:

- it does not constitute unprofessional conduct or a breach of professional ethics on the part of the reporter
- the reporter cannot be held legally liable in respect of the report.

For specific Information on how to make a report refer to the **Child Safe Reporting Procedure**.

**Conduct of Staff, Contractors, Volunteers & Education Practicum Students**

All staff, contractors, volunteers and education practicum students must ensure that their behaviour towards and relationships with students reflect the standards of care reflected in this policy. Staff, contractors, volunteers and education practicum students must not cause harm to students.

While there are a range of legislative issues related to children under the age of 16 years of age, for the purposes of clarity, Henderson College employees will have no inappropriate contact with any student regardless of age.

**Inappropriate Behaviour**

If a student considers the behaviour of a staff member, volunteer, contractor, education practicum student or stakeholder in the school to be inappropriate, the student should report the behaviour to the:

- Principal or
- Child Safety Officer, School Counsellor, Chaplain or any other staff member.

It is the Child Safety Officers' and Principal's role to promptly manage the school's response to an allegation or disclosure of child abuse and ensure that the allegation or disclosure is taken seriously. It is also their responsibility to coordinate an appropriate response to child protection incidents including liaising with the police and other external agencies and responding to a student who makes or is affected by an allegation of child abuse.

In the event that one of the school's Child Safety Officers cannot perform their role, for example due to conflict of interest or absence, these duties must be performed by either another CSO or the Principal.

[See Child Safety Officer's role description](#)

The principal or their delegate will:

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- Monitor overall school compliance with these procedures where the allegation involves individuals other than staff, contractors, volunteers or education practicum students.
- 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
- Ensure an appropriate response to a child who makes or is affected by an allegation of child abuse (See **Appendix 2**)
- 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.

**PLEASE NOTE FOR ALL STAFF, CONTRACTORS, VOLUNTEERS OR EDUCATION PRACTICUM STUDENTS**

*You must not:*

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

**Mandatory reporting requirements**

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:

- registered medical practitioners
- a nurse
- a midwife
- registered teachers and early childhood teachers
- early childhood workers
- school principals
- out of home care workers
- youth justice workers
- registered psychologists
- people in religious ministry
- a member of the police force.

**Reasonable Belief**

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:

- a child or young person discloses that he or she has suffered or is suffering non accidental physical injury or sexual abuse
- a child or young person exhibits sexually abusive or age-inappropriate behaviour(s)
- someone else advises you that a child or young person has been sexually abused or non-accidentally injured, or

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- 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.

### **Crimes Act 1958 (Vic.)**

#### **The responsibility of all adults in Victoria including school students 18 years old or over**

In response to the [Betrayal of Trust](#) report three new 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.

#### **Failure to Disclose**

Any adult within Henderson 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.

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.

The obligation is to disclose that information to the Police as soon as it is practicable to do so.

Refer to Appendices 1 and 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.

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**

Any Henderson 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, students of Henderson 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.).

In the Henderson College context, this will include the principal, office staff and the business manager and may also extend to school counsellors, school chaplains and heads of schools.

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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](#).

### **Historical Abuse**

In all circumstances where historical abuse allegations are made which pertain to Henderson College, the School will cooperate fully with police or other statutory body investigations. Henderson College will also review its current policies and procedures in light of the findings of historical abuse investigations, to determine if there is learning that may strengthen protective approaches.

### **Grooming**

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.

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.

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

- 'Encourage' is defined to include suggestion, request, urge and demand. Encouragement includes but is not limited to offering money or gifts threatening harm. It can be done in person or by electronic communication, e.g. an adult asking a child to watch inappropriate material.
- 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](#).

## **Further guidance**

### **Code of Conduct**

The purpose of Henderson College's Code of Conduct is to clearly outline the expected standard of behaviour for all staff in their interaction with or in the presence of children and young people.

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Henderson College's Code of Conduct is shared with families and students to ensure they are aware of and can help facilitate the behavioural and environmental standards we expect our staff and community members to be able to operate against.

### **Empowerment and participation of children and young people**

Henderson College is committed to ensure the children and young people are informed and given opportunities to provide their views. Henderson College will work to regularly engage children and young people to provide feedback and shape the policies and programs within the school.

### **Informed families**

Henderson College recognises that informed families who are aware of our child safety processes and requirements are central to developing a child safe culture. We work hard to ensure families have access to our child safety materials, including this policy and Code of Conduct, as well as providing accessible feedback and complaints avenues.

Input from parents and carers, and students on our child safety approach is always welcome.

### **Equity and Diversity**

At Henderson College we believe that the safety of children is dependent on the existence of a child safe culture within our community and recognises the diverse circumstances of our students and their families. We are committed to providing environments where students feel safe and are listened to and respected regardless of their abilities, sex, gender, sexual orientation, cultural or economic background.

We have developed the following work systems, practices, policies and procedures designed to create a child safe culture including:

- a holistic approach to child protection through this Child Protection Program;
- the appointment of the School's Child Protection Officers;
- establishing key child protection principles in our Child Protection and Safety Policy;
- establishing clear expectations for appropriate behaviour with students through our Child Safety Code of Conduct;
- educating our staff and Direct Contact Volunteers through our Child Protection Training;
- clear procedures for reporting alleged or suspected incidents of child abuse;
- recognition that children from culturally diverse backgrounds have the right to special care and support including Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children;
- recognition that children who have any kind of disability have the right to special care and support; and
- clearly defining the roles and responsibilities of personnel involved in protecting children.

### **Students with a Disability**

The School has an obligation to students with a disability to ensure that they are afforded the same level of educational and pastoral care as any

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other student at the School and considers how each policy and procedure the School establishes and implements may affect students with a disability.

Henderson College is committed to ensuring that we fulfil our legal obligations including those related to discrimination and disability standards. The School recognises that students with a disability will not only require additional assistance to participate and engage in School activities in a safe and supportive manner, but also that there are specific child protection risks that arise in relation to students with a disability. This may include for example, stricter screening procedures and training for staff who assist students who require help with personal activities such as toileting or dressing.

As a result, the School has implemented specific risk controls in relation to the safety of students with disabilities. These include:

- specific screening and training for staff/volunteers that will have direct contact with students with a disability;
- written guidelines for staff and volunteers working with students with a disability;
- express, written permission from the parent/carer of a student with a disability where physical contact is required as part of their care; and alternative reporting avenues to suit the needs of students with a disability at the School.
- Students with a disability at the School may also require varied reporting avenues or systems to students without a disability and the School has considered this when creating and implementing its Procedures for Responding to and Reporting Allegations of Child Abuse.

### **Cultural and linguistic diversity**

Children from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds are children who identify as having particular cultural or linguistic affiliations by virtue of their place of birth, ancestry or ethnic origin, religion, preferred language or language spoken at home or because of their parents' identification on a similar basis. They include children of Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander descent that identify as being Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander.

Henderson College values and respects the racial and cultural diversity of our students and is committed to ensuring that the backgrounds of all students are sensitively recognised, catered for, celebrated and valued so that racial and cultural differences do not compromise a student's safety and wellbeing.

It is our policy that:

- we identify children from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds when they are enrolled in the School;
- we employ appropriate strategies to ensure the safety of these children as required;
- we encourage participation and empowerment of these children in the development of these strategies;
- we consider these children when developing and implementing policies and procedures related to child protection at the School; and
- We educate our staff about these cultural and linguistic differences and the strategies and procedures we have employed.

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## Managing child safety risks

Risk management means identifying the potential for an incident, abuse, harm or accident to occur and taking steps to reduce the likelihood or severity of its occurrence. Implementing risk management processes to prevent child safety risks is paramount in Henderson College.

Monitoring and reviewing risks regularly (including after incidents, near misses or complaints) is vital to ensuring the ongoing learning and improvement. Henderson College is committed to reviewing any systemic issues which may be contributing or hindering the organisation from being safe.

## Online environments

Henderson College is committed to ensuring online environments are safe and utilise a risk management lens in doing so.

## Training and Supervision

Training and education are important to ensure that everyone in the school understands that child safety is everyone's responsibility. Staff, volunteers and contractors (in addition to parents/guardians and children) need to feel confident and comfortable in discussing any allegations of child abuse or child safety concerns.

The school will provide suitable supervision and support to new staff and induction into the school's policies, codes and practices related to protection of children. It will ensure that these policies are available for staff reference, i.e., on SEQTA, and updated at regular and assigned intervals.

All staff members, volunteers and contractors will be required to sign the Code of Conduct for staff and others working with children when commencing employment at the school. A Staff members' suitability to continue in a child-connected role will be monitored as a compulsory component of staff management in the annual performance review.

All staff and volunteers will be required to complete the Protecting Children Mandatory Reporting and other Obligations training annually.

As a matter of good practice, new staff and volunteers will be supervised by CSO's regularly to ensure they understand the school's commitment to child safety, as well as checking that their behaviour towards children is safe and appropriate (refer to: [Code of Conduct Policy](#)).

The South Australian 'Keeping Safe: Child Protection Curriculum for students' P-10 will be integrated into subjects over the course of the year to ensure students readily understand and are aware of how to communicate and discuss child safety concerns.

Any warning signs should be reported through appropriate channels, including Henderson College internal reporting procedures (such as the Child Safety Officer and leadership), the Department of Health and Human Services (child protection), or police if a child is believed to be at imminent risk.

## Breach of Policy

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Where an employee is suspected of breaching any obligation, duty or responsibility within this Policy, Henderson College will begin documenting and educating staff members of their responsibilities. This may result in disciplinary consequences up to and including termination of engagement with Henderson College. Where the principal is suspected of breaching any obligation, duty or responsibility within this policy, the concerned party is advised to contact the ASV Education Director. Where any other member of the school community is suspected of breaching any obligation, duty or responsibility within this policy, the school is to take appropriate action, including in accordance with Child Protection – Reporting Obligations and the Henderson College Code of Conduct and/or contact ASV Melbourne.

The roles and responsibilities contained in the Child Safe Policy do not displace or discharge any other obligations that arise if a person reasonably believes that a child is at risk of child abuse.

### **Risk Management**

At Henderson College we are committed to proactively and systematically identifying and assessing risks to student safety across our whole school environment and reducing or eliminating (where possible) all potential sources of harm. We document, implement, monitor and periodically review our risk management strategies for child safety and ensure that the strategies change as needed and as new risks arise.

It is the Principal's responsibility to ensure that the set of procedures outlined are adhered to and that a response to allegations of child abuse is strictly monitored.

### **Continuous improvement**

Henderson College is committed to continuous improvement across our operations and practice, particularly in our approach to child safety. We are aware that our child safety journey will be long-term and are open to ongoing learning and improvement.

When reviewing our approach to child safety, including key documents, we seek the input of staff, young people and their families.

Any incidents, near misses or complaints are reviewed to assess strengths and required improvements across our service.

### **Records**

Henderson College records any child safety complaints, disclosures or breaches of the Child Safety Code of Conduct, and all documentation pertaining to an investigation is maintained in a secure locked cabinet. The principles of record keeping are:

- Notes and observations will be clear, easy to read and accessible. Documentation will include, dates, times, and location, as well as details of conversations with other staff, Board members, students on placement and contractors or the child and their family/carers.
- Reports will be accurate and impartial and without the use of derogatory or emotive language.

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- Detailed descriptions of the incident or concern, evidence and actions taken will include incident forms, reports made to authorities and any other follow-up actions will be completed.

Henderson College complies with legal obligations that relate to managing the risk of child abuse under the Children, Youth and Families Act 2005 (Vic.), the Crimes Act 1958 (Vic.) and the recommendations of the Betrayal of Trust report.

### **Accessibility of Policy**

This policy is accessible on the school website, the parent portal of SEQTA, Henderson College phone app and will be available on request from the school administration. Each new staff member, contractor, volunteer, education practicum student and other school stakeholder will be required to read this policy as part of their induction. Comprehensive training will be provided to all staff on an annual basis.

### **Awareness of Policy**

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.

### **Regular Review**

This policy will be reviewed every two years and following significant incidents if they occur. Where possible we will do our best to seek the input of local and diverse representatives of the school community.

Policy Approved by School Council

### **References**

- [Five Critical Actions for Schools](#)
- [Reporting Criteria: Failure to Disclose](#)
- [Mandatory Reporting eLearning Module](#)
- [Induction Checklist](#)
- [Responding Template](#)

### **Victorian Government**

- [Ministerial Order 1359: Child Safe Standard](#)

### **Department of Education and Training**

- [Mandatory Reporting eLearning Module](#)

### **Related legislation**

- [Children, Youth and Families Act 2005 \(Vic.\)](#)
- [Crimes Act 1958 \(Vic.\)](#)
- [Education and Training Reform Act 2006 \(Vic.\)](#)
- [Victorian Institute of Teaching Act 2001 \(Vic.\)](#)

### **Department of Justice and Regulations**

- [Failure to disclose offence](#)
- [Failure to protect offence](#)
- [Grooming offence.](#)

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## Appendix 1: Indicators of child abuse, child harm, risk of harm and neglect

There are many indicators of child abuse, child harm, a risk of harm and neglect. The presence of a single indicator, or even several indicators, does not mean that harm or neglect has occurred. However, the occurrence of an indicator or multiple indicators should alert employees and volunteers to the possibility of child abuse, harm and neglect. Equally, abuse, harm and neglect may occur without the presence of obvious indicators, so staff and volunteers should remain open and aware and utilise their professional judgment to assess risk.

The following list includes examples of indicators and is not exhaustive.

Abuse and Harm types	Indicators
<b>Physical</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Disclosure of harm</li> <li>• Bruises, burns, sprains, dislocations, bites, cuts.</li> <li>• Pressure marks from fingers</li> <li>• Bite marks</li> <li>• Location and extent of injury do not fit the explanation given</li> <li>• Fractured bones, especially in an infant where a fracture is unlikely to occur accidentally</li> <li>• Poisoning</li> <li>• Internal injuries</li> <li>• Showing wariness or distrust of adults.</li> <li>• Wearing long sleeved clothes on hot days (to hide bruising or other injury)</li> <li>• Demonstrating fear of parents and of going home; running away</li> <li>• Becoming fearful when other children cry or shout</li> <li>• Being excessively friendly to strangers</li> <li>• Being very passive and compliant</li> </ul>
<b>Sexual Abuse and Exploitation</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Child telling someone that sexual abuse has occurred</li> <li>• Complaining of headaches or stomach pains</li> <li>• Experiencing problems with schoolwork</li> <li>• Sexually transmitted infections</li> <li>• Genital injuries</li> <li>• Bleeding</li> <li>• Bite marks</li> <li>• Pregnancy</li> <li>• Displaying sexual behaviour or knowledge which is unusual for the child's age</li> <li>• Excessive masturbation which doesn't respond to boundaries</li> <li>• Showing behaviour such as frequent rocking, sucking and biting</li> </ul>

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	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Experiencing difficulties in sleeping</li> <li>• Persistent soiling or bed wetting</li> <li>• Having difficulties in relating to adults and peers</li> <li>• Unexplained absences, unexplained gifts or money are often signs of sexual exploitation</li> </ul>
<b>Emotional</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Disclosure of harm</li> <li>• Developmental delays</li> <li>• Displaying low self esteem</li> <li>• Tending to be withdrawn, passive, tearful</li> <li>• Displaying aggressive or demanding behaviour</li> <li>• Being highly anxious</li> <li>• Showing delayed speech</li> <li>• Fear of the dark, sleep disturbances</li> <li>• Acting like a much younger child, e.g. soiling, wetting pants</li> <li>• Displaying difficulties in relating to adults and peers</li> <li>• Avoiding home</li> <li>• Running away</li> </ul>
<b>Neglect</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Disclosure of neglect</li> <li>• Frequent hunger</li> <li>• Malnutrition</li> <li>• Poor hygiene</li> <li>• Inappropriate clothing, e.g. Summer clothes in winter</li> <li>• Left unsupervised for long periods</li> <li>• Medical needs not attended to; ill more than average</li> <li>• Abandoned by parents</li> <li>• Stealing food</li> <li>• Staying at school outside school hours</li> <li>• Often being tired, falling asleep in class</li> <li>• Abusing alcohol or drugs</li> <li>• Displaying aggressive behaviour</li> <li>• Not getting on well with peers</li> </ul>
<b>Family Violence</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Disclosure of family violence</li> <li>• Physical injuries</li> <li>• Concentration difficulties</li> <li>• Adjustment difficulties</li> <li>• Anxious or nervous</li> <li>• Depression</li> <li>• Fear of a parent or partner of parent</li> <li>• Isolation from friends and family</li> <li>• Unusual absences</li> </ul>

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	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Fear of conflict</li><li>• Violent outbursts</li><li>• Aggressive language</li><li>• Headaches, abdominal pain, stuttering.</li></ul>
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## **Appendix 2 - Responding to Allegations of Child Abuse - Support Plan**

### Critical Information

- In addition to reporting suspected abuse, as a school staff member you have a critical role in supporting students impacted by abuse and have a Duty of Care to ensure students feels safe and supported at school.
- Support can include direct support and referral to wellbeing professionals and community services and should involve the development of a Student Support Plan.
- Principals are responsible for ensuring students are supported during interviews at school conducted by Victoria Police or DFFH Child Protection and you may be required to respond to subpoenas to attend court.
- Support must be provided to any impacted staff members.

Experiences of child abuse can cause trauma and significantly impact on the mental health and wellbeing of children. In addition to reporting and referral into relevant authorities, as a school staff member you play a central role in addressing this trauma and have a Duty of Care to ensure that the student feels safe and supported at school.

This section outlines actions that schools must take, where deemed appropriate, to support students who are impacted by child abuse, including:

- Working together and planning support
- Engaging Allied Health and wellbeing professionals
- Referring to non-school based supports
- Providing developmentally and culturally appropriate support
- Providing support for impacted school staff members
- Supporting students in interviews conducted at school
- Responding to subpoenas or court attendance
- Responding to complaints or concerns

In the context of sexually harmful behaviour school staff have a Duty of Care to support all students who are impacted by the abuse – this will include the students who were subjected to the abuse, the students who perpetrated the abuse, and any students who witnessed or were otherwise impacted by the abuse. For more information please refer to the Sexually Harmful Behaviours Reporting Procedure.

### **Working Together and Planning Support**

Providing holistic support to address the trauma and wellbeing issues associated with child abuse is best achieved through careful planning and working in partnership with wellbeing professionals, parents/carers and educators.

If a student is impacted by suspected abuse, and it is deemed appropriate, school staff must:

- establish regular communication between staff and the child's parent/ guardian/carer (if this is appropriate) to discuss a child's progress wellbeing and the effectiveness of planned strategies
- convene a Student Support Group to plan on-going monitoring, support, and follow-up of the child's health and wellbeing (Student Support Groups usually comprise school wellbeing staff, teachers,

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allied health professionals and where appropriate the student and/or their parent/carer)

- Implement a [Student Support and Safety Plan](#), which documents the planned support strategies and includes timeframes for review (where possible, these support strategies should be informed by allied health and wellbeing professional with expertise in addressing child abuse and trauma).

### **Engaging Allied Health and Wellbeing Professionals**

Where appropriate school staff should engage allied health and wellbeing supports and services to meet the wellbeing needs of the child impacted by abuse, including:

- wellbeing staff members
- allied health and wellbeing professionals engaged by the student and families.

Allied health and wellbeing professionals can provide:

- intensive support to children and their families
- critical input into Student Support Plans
- advice to school staff members on how to appropriately support the student.

**Each Seventh-day Adventist School** must contact the Head Office and also refer to the support services that may be locally available.

The Head Office may provide further support by contacting **ADSAFE** on:

- Phone: +61 2 9847 3488
- Fax +61 2 9847 3499
- Post – ADSAFE Ltd, PO Box 966, Wahroonga NSW 2076

### **Referring to External Supports**

School staff can also refer to the wide range of non-school based support services, which specialise in providing tailored support and advice for children impacted by abuse.

For example, the Centres Against Sexual Assault (CASA) provide expert support for victims of sexual assault and HeadSpace can provide tailored support for children whose mental health is impacted by exposure to abuse.

For details on where to go for further support, see: [Counselling/Support Organisations](#)

**All schools** can contact their local government for advice on available local services.

### **Providing Developmentally and Culturally Appropriate Support**

Whilst a child's background should not impact on a decision to report suspected abuse, school staff need to be sensitive to a child's individual circumstances when providing support and working with families impacted by abuse.

Seventh-day Adventist Schools Victoria will, "take account of the diversity of all children", including (but not limited to) the needs of:

### **Children with disabilities**

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When supporting a child with a disability who has been impacted by child abuse it is critical to consider the child's:

- chronological age, developmental age and their cognitive functioning in order to tailor developmentally appropriate support strategies
- vulnerability to ongoing abuse (children with disabilities disproportionately fall prey to child abuse, in particular child sexual abuse) when considering the need to make a further report and/or implement risk mitigation strategies.

### **Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Children**

When supporting an Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander child who has been impacted by child abuse it is essential that school staff provide culturally appropriate support. This will include liaising with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander support services who can arrange appropriate support for the child and advise on culturally appropriate support strategies.

### **Children from Culturally and Linguistically Diverse (CALD) backgrounds**

When supporting a child from CALD backgrounds who has been impacted by child abuse it is essential that schools provide culturally appropriate support. However, this should not detract from ensuring the child's safety and wellbeing.

Where possible schools should work with relevant cultural support services (ensuring that the confidentiality of the student and family is maintained) and engage an interpreter when communicating with the student's family if needed.

### **Students with refugee backgrounds**

When working with children from refugee backgrounds who have been impacted by child abuse it is important to recognise that they (and their families) may also be experiencing trauma, dislocation and loss. This trauma may significantly affect family wellbeing and parenting capacity and whilst these issues also require sensitive consideration, they should not detract from ensuring the child's safety and wellbeing (or impact on decisions to report suspected abuse).

School staff should consider contacting services that specialise in providing support to refugees (ensuring that the confidentiality of the child and their family is maintained).

Schools should also engage an interpreter when communicating with the student's family if needed.

### **International students**

Principals must ensure appropriate measures are taken for the welfare of international students. This may require additional support given that the child's family may not be present to provide support within the home environment.

For details on who must be contacted in the event that an international student is involved in suspected abuse, see: [Reporting if the incident, suspicion or disclosure relates to an international student](#)

### **Providing support for other impacted children**

It can be stressful for other children involved in any incidents, disclosures or suspicions of child abuse. Principals must ensure that other impacted children are offered and provided appropriate support.

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## Providing Support for Impacted School Staff Members

It can also be stressful for staff involved in any incidents, disclosures or suspicions of child abuse. Principals must support impacted staff members to access necessary support.

School staff requiring wellbeing support can contact Head Office Seventh-day Adventist Schools Victoria and/or ADSAFE on

Head Office, Seventh-day Adventist Schools Victoria

- Phone: +61 3 9264 7730

ADSAFE

- Phone: +61 2 9847 3488
- Fax +61 2 9847 3499
- Post – ADSAFE Ltd, PO Box 966, Wahroonga NSW 2076

## Supporting Children who are Interviewed at School

All children (including children who are alleged to have perpetrated abuse) must be independently supported in any interviews conducted by Victoria Police or DFFH Child Protection at school.

Where possible and appropriate the child's parent/carer should be present for these interviews. However, if this is not appropriate or practicable the Principal (or delegate) may be identified as the independent person or support person for the child for the purpose of the interview.

### Police interviews

In the event that Victoria Police schedule an interview with a child at the school, the Principal (or delegate) must advise the child's parent/carer (where advised to be appropriate) as well as:

- Head Office Seventh-day Adventist Schools Victoria on +61 3 92647730

### Police interviews at school where the child is the alleged victim or witness

The information below includes critical detail on when and how police interviews are conducted at school and what role the Principal (or delegate) should play if they are nominated as the support person.

- Police should only interview children at school as a matter of urgency or necessity.
- A request must be made to the Principal (or delegate) who must be advised of the reason for the interview.
- The child's parent/carer should be present where it is practical and appropriate to make these arrangements. If the parent/carer is not able to be present, an independent person must be present during the interview (the role of the independent person is to ensure the child understands what is happening and to provide support).
- Principals (or delegate) may, if necessary, act as an independent person where the child is a victim, unless they believe it will place them in a conflict of interest to do so.
- As an independent person, school staff must refrain from providing their opinions or accounts for events during interviews.

### Police interviews at school where a student has allegedly abused another child

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- If the police need to speak with a student who has allegedly abused another child this should preferably be done in the presence of the parent/carer, or another independent person that is not a school staff member.

### **DFFH Child Protection interviews at school**

DFFH Child Protection may conduct interviews of children at Victorian schools without parental knowledge or consent of the parent/carer (although this will only occur in exceptional circumstances and if it is in the child's best interests to proceed in this manner).

The information below includes critical detail on when and how DFFH Child Protection interviews are conducted at school and what role the Principal (or delegate) should play if they are nominated as the support person.

- DFFH Child Protection will notify the school staff of any intention to interview a child at the school. This may occur regardless of whether the school staff member is the source of the report to DFFH Child Protection.
- When DFFH Child Protection practitioners arrive at the school, the school Principal (or delegate) should ask to see their identification before allowing DFFH Child Protection to have access to the child. See Visitors in School Policy.
- Children should be advised of their right to have a supportive adult present during interviews. If the child is too young to understand the significance, a supportive adult should be provided even though they may not have consented or requested this to occur.
- A staff member may be identified as a support person for the child during the interview.
- Prior to the commencement of the interview, the DFFH Child Protection practitioner should always authorise the staff member of the school to receive information regarding DFFH Child Protection's investigation. This could be conducted verbally or in writing using the relevant DFFH Child Protection proforma.
- As an independent person, school staff must refrain from providing their opinions or accounts for events during interviews.

### **Complying with Subpoenas or Court Attendance**

- A subpoena / witness summons is a Court Order that compels you to produce documents, or attend Court and give evidence, or to do both of these things.
- You are usually issued with a subpoena / witness summons because one of the parties to the legal proceedings believes that you may have information / documentation that is relevant to the legal proceeding.
- If an SDA Schools Victoria staff member receives a subpoena / witness summons in the context of their employment please contact Head Office Seventh-day Adventist Schools Victoria on +61 3 92647730

### **Responding to Complaints or Concerns**

There may be concerns or complaints about the school staff's management of an incident, in particular by parents/carers. This is a very stressful time for parents/carers, and concerns that they do not believe have been dealt with fairly may quickly escalate.

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As a first step school staff must consider whether the complaint raises any concerns about unreported abuse and/or risk of abuse. You must follow the Four Critical Actions: Responding to Incidents, Disclosures or Suspicions of Child Abuse if **any** new information comes to light which leads you to believe that a child may be subject to, or at risk of any unreported abuse.

If you have questions, concerns or complaints about the process followed, please contact Head Office Seventh-day Adventist Schools Victoria on +61 3 9264 7730.

### **Related Documents**

- [Child Safe Risk Management Policy](#)
- [Child Safety Officer](#)
- [Child Safe Code of Conduct](#)
- [Child Safe Reporting Procedure](#)
- [Sexually Harmful Behaviours Reporting Procedure](#)

[Child Safety Poster](#)

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