

**Wyndham Community and Education Centre Inc
Policy and Procedure**

Policy name	Child Safety and Wellbeing Policy & Procedure (including Statement of Commitment)
Responsible person	Board, CEO, Child Safety Officer
Staff involved	All staff, volunteers and contractors
Review dates	2023
Related documents	<p><u>Legislation:</u> Child Wellbeing and Safety Act 2005 (Vic), Worker Screening Act 2020 (Vic), Children, Youth and Families Act 2005 (Vic), Commission for Children and Young People Act 2012 (Vic), Crimes Act 1958 (Vic), Worker Screening Regulations 2021 (Vic), Child Wellbeing and Safety Regulations 2021 (Vic), Charter of Human Rights and Responsibilities Act 2006 (Vic), Disability Act 2006 (Vic), Disability Regulations 2017, Education and Training Reform Act 2006 (Vic), Education and Training Reform Regulations 2017(Vic), Equal Opportunity Act 2010 (Vic), Multicultural Victoria Act 2011 (Vic), Health Records Act 2001 (Vic), Public Records Act 1973 (Vic), Racial and Religious Tolerance Act 2001 (Vic), Occupational Health and Safety Act 2004 (Vic), Ministerial Order 1359, Child Safe Standards -Managing the risk of child abuse in schools, Reportable Conduct Scheme (legislated from 1 July 2017), Victorian Institute of Teaching Act 2001 (Vic), Advancing the Treaty Process with Aboriginal Victorians Act 2018, Aboriginal Heritage Act 2006, Aboriginal Heritage Regulations 2018</p> <p><u>Policies:</u> Access & Equity Policy & Procedure, Complaints and Appeals Policy & Procedure, Privacy Policy & Procedure, Mandatory Reporting & Failure to Disclose Policy & Procedure, Staff Recruitment Policy & Procedure, Volunteer Recruitment Policy and Procedure, Critical Incident & Emergency Management Policy & Procedure, Equal Employment Opportunity Policy & Procedure, Records Management & Record keeping Policy & Procedure, Risk Identification & Management Policy & Procedure, Excursions Policy and Procedure, National Police Check, Working with Children Check and VIT Registration Policy and Procedure, Cyberbullying Policy and Procedure, Harassment, Discrimination, Victimisation and Anti-Bullying Policy & Procedure, Student Well Being and Duty of Care in Senior Secondary Program (SSP) (includes procedures for under-18s) Policy and Procedure, Student Safety and Welfare in VET Programs Policy & Procedure, Governance Policy and Procedure, Marketing, Advertising and Promotions Policy and Procedure, Quality Management & Continuous Improvement Policy and Procedure, Procedure for Dealing with Visitors to Wyndham CEC Premises, Responding to Disclosures of Family Violence Policy & Procedure, Disciplinary Action and Termination of Employment Policy and Procedure, Recruitment of Board</p>

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Members Policy and Procedure, Risk Identification & Management Policy and Procedure, Emergency Management Policy and Procedure, Decision Making Responsibilities for SSP & Youth Policy and Procedure.

Other:

National Principles for Child Safe Organisations, Victorian Child Safe Standards, Child Safety and Wellbeing Code of Conduct, Code of Conduct for Staff & Volunteers, Student Placement Procedure (VET), Structured Workplace learning Procedure (VETDSS), Structured Workplace Learning Procedure (Senior Secondary Program), Privacy & Your Rights flier, Critical Incident Form, Child Protection and Child Safe Standards (PROTECT) available at – <https://www.education.vic.gov.au/school/teachers/health/childprotection/Pages/default.aspx>

Failure to Protect information and fact sheet is available at - <http://www.justice.vic.gov.au/>

Failure to disclose information and fact sheet available at <http://www.justice.vic.gov.au/>

Step by Step Guide to Making a Report to Child Protection or Child FIRST, How to make a report to Child protection is available at www.dhhs.vic.gov.au

Overview of the Victorian Child Safe Standards, Child Safe standards resources <https://www.dhhs.vic.gov.au/publications/child-safe-standards>

A Guide for Creating a Child safe Organisation at <https://ccyp.vic.gov.au/child-safety/being-a-child-safe-organisation/>

Betrayal of Trust Report, United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child – www.unicef.org/crc

Royal Commission into child abuse – Final Report 15th December 2017 www.childabuseroyalcommission.gov.au

Royal Commission into child abuse – Support Services www.childabuseroyalcommission.gov.au/support-services

Mandatory Reporting eLearning Module (DET), “PROTECT”

Student Reference Group

Child Safety Toolkit: How to Create a Child Safe Organisation, Moores and Our Community (April 2018 Edition)

e-safety Commissioner at <https://www.esafety.gov.au>

Child Wise at <https://www.childwise.org.au>

The Guidelines for Non-School Senior Secondary Education Providers: Minimum Standards for Registration to Provide an Accredited Senior Secondary Course have been updated to reflect the requirement to meet child safe standards at <https://www.vrqa.vic.gov.au/childsafes/Pages/Other-Organisations.aspx>

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	VRQA- Guidelines to the minimum standards and requirements for School Registration VRQA- Non School Senior Secondary Providers- Child Safe resources at https://www.vrqa.vic.gov.au/childsafepages/resources.aspx ; Senior Secondary Education Manager's annual Self-Assessment, Skills First Quality Charter, Decision guide organisations MARAM framework, DET Community SSP (CVAL) Contract, DET VETDSS Contract, Victorian Aboriginal Affairs Framework (VAAF) 2018, Child Safety and Wellbeing newsletter, Staff PD Logs, Child Safety and Wellbeing Risk Plan, Child Safety and Wellbeing Risk Register
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Introduction

Wyndham Community and Education Centre (Wyndham CEC) is a not-for-profit Incorporated Association based in the City of Wyndham. Wyndham CEC delivers the Victorian Pathways Certificate (VPC) and the VCE Vocational Major to students aged 15-20 years. It provides a safe and inclusive learning environment for young people who may have been disengaged or are at risk of disengaging from education. Wyndham CEC is committed to supporting students to reach their personal, social and educational potential by providing the tools and skills to reflect, set goals and plan.

Wyndham CEC is committed to creating and maintaining a school in which all young people are safe from harm and to providing a safe and inclusive environment for all young people from all cultures and linguistically diverse backgrounds, and those with a disability.

We understand and implement our duty of care to all students, and we undertake reasonable measures of proper supervision and protection so that no student faces risks, injury or harm.

All Board members, staff, volunteers and contractors have a responsibility to prevent child abuse and respond appropriately to allegations.

Wyndham CEC will comply with Ministerial Order 1359: Implementing the Child Safe Standards – Managing the Risk of Child Abuse in Schools and School Boarding Premises (Ministerial Order 1359) and the Victorian Child Safe Standards (VCSS).

Purpose

Creating a child safe environment was part of the Victorian Government’s response to the report of the Parliamentary Inquiry into the Handling of Child Abuse (Betrayal of Trust Inquiry). Since then, and following the Royal Commission into Institutional Responses to Child Sexual Abuse (final report 15/12/17), the legislative environment has changed considerably.

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

This policy and procedure including the Statement of Commitment demonstrate Wyndham Community and Education Centre’s determination to work within commonwealth and state legislative frameworks to provide a child safe environment for children and families accessing programs and services.

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Wyndham Community and Education Centre (Wyndham CEC) supports the premise that children's safety is everyone's responsibility: staff; Board; and, volunteers. This includes listening to Wyndham CEC's children through establishing a Student Reference Group.

Commitment to Child Safety

Wyndham CEC is committed to child safety and welcomes all children, young people and their families.

Wyndham CEC wants children to be safe, happy and empowered and supports and respects children attending the Centre, as well as staff and volunteers.

Wyndham CEC is committed to the safety, participation and empowerment of all children and young people so that their voices are heard about decisions that affect their lives.

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

Wyndham CEC has **zero tolerance** of child abuse, and all allegations and safety concerns will be treated very seriously and consistently with our policies and procedures.

Wyndham CEC has legal and moral obligations to contact authorities when concerned about a child's safety.

Wyndham CEC is committed to preventing child abuse and identifying and managing risks early and removing or reducing these risks.

Wyndham CEC has robust HR and recruitment practices for staff and volunteers.

Wyndham CEC is committed to training and educating staff and volunteers on child abuse risks because child safety is a shared responsibility. Every person involved in Wyndham CEC has an important role in promoting child safety and wellbeing and promptly raising any issues or concerns about a child's safety.

Wyndham CEC is committed to the cultural safety of Aboriginal children, the cultural safety of children from culturally and/or linguistically diverse backgrounds, and to providing a safe environment for those unable to live at home, for children with a disability, lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender and intersex children and young people (LGBTQI) and other students experiencing risk or vulnerability. Inappropriate or harmful behaviour targeting students based on these or other characteristics, such as racism or homophobia, are not tolerated at Wyndham CEC, and any instances identified will be addressed with appropriate consequences.

Wyndham CEC has specific policies, procedures and training in place that support the management team, staff and volunteers to achieve these commitments. We are committed to regularly reviewing our child safe practices, and seeking input from our students, families, staff, and volunteers to inform our ongoing strategies.

If you believe a child is at immediate risk of abuse phone 000.

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Definitions

DEFINITIONS (mostly taken from *Child Safety Toolkit: How to create a child safe organization* (Moore's /Our Community April 2018); and, *A Guide to Creating a Child Safe Organisation* (CCYP)).

Child or young person means a person below the age of 18 years unless otherwise stated under the law applicable to the child.

Child abuse means all forms of physical abuse, emotional ill-treatment, sexual abuse and exploitation, neglect or negligent treatment, commercial (e.g. for financial gain) or other exploitation of a child or young person and includes any actions that results in actual or potential harm to a child.

Child-connected work means work authorised by the school governing authority and performed by an adult in a school environment while children are present or reasonably expected to be present.

Child protection/safety means any responsibility, measure or activity undertaken to safeguard children or young people from harm. It encompasses matters related to protecting all children from child abuse, managing the risk of child abuse, providing support to a child at risk of child abuse, and responding to incidents or allegations of child abuse.

Child-related work means working at or for a service, body or place, that usually involves direct contact with a child.

Child sexual assault is any act which exposes a child or young person to, or involves a child or young person in, sexual processes beyond his or her understanding or contrary to accepted community standards. Sexually abusive behaviours can include the fondling of genitals, masturbation, oral sex, vaginal or anal penetration by a penis, finger or any other object, fondling of breasts, voyeurism, exhibitionism, and exposing the child to or involving the child in pornography.

Contractors include, but not limited, to: maintenance and building personnel, consultants, casual teachers, case workers, tutors, sports coaches and cleaners.

Cultural abuse is when a child/young person's cultural worth, beliefs or practices are belittled, denying them access to their spiritual or cultural community, violating or preventing their spiritual or cultural practices.

Emotional and psychological abuse. The infliction of emotional or psychological harm is one of the most common forms of child abuse. This may involve conveying to a child or young person that they are worthless, unloved, inadequate or rejected, or causing a child or young person to frequently feel frightened or in danger. Emotional or psychological abuse often diminishes a child's or young person's sense of identity, dignity and self-worth, and the impact can be chronic and debilitating.

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Exposure to Family Violence Occurs when children and young people witness or experience the chronic domination, coercion, intimidation and victimisation of one person by another by physical, sexual or emotional means within a domestic relationship. Exposure to domestic violence can include watching or hearing a family member assault or threaten another member of the family, direct involvement (for example, trying to intervene or calling the police), or experiencing the aftermath of family violence, such as seeing physical indicators of abuse or observing parental depression.

Grooming occurs when communication or conduct is linked to the intention of facilitating the involvement of a child or young person in sexual behaviour with an adult. It can include, but is not limited to, developing special relationships with a child or young person; favouring or giving gifts to a child or young person; inappropriate interactions with children either in person or via forms of media and electronic devices; asking a child or young person to keep a secret of any aspect of their relationship; and testing of, or ignoring, professional boundaries or rules

Neglect is another form of child abuse. Neglect is a failure on the part of a caregiver to provide sufficient attention, responsiveness and protection that is appropriate to the basic needs of a child or young person to ensure that these needs are met. Neglect includes failure to provide adequate health care, supervision, clothing, nutrition or housing, as well as failing to meet a child's or young person's physical, emotional, social, educational and safety needs.

Physical abuse can occur when a person intentionally or recklessly uses physical force against, with or in the presence of a child or young person without their consent, which causes, or could cause, the child or young person harm. Physical abuse can also occur when someone intentionally or recklessly causes a child to believe that physical force is about to be used against them without their consent. Physical abuse can include hitting, punching, kicking, pushing or throwing something that strikes a child. It also includes behaviour, such as words or gestures, that causes a child or young person to believe that they are about to suffer physical abuse.

Racial discrimination occurs when person is treated less favourably, or not given the same opportunities, as others in a similar situation, because of their race, the country where they were born, their ethnic origin or their skin colour. Australian Human Rights Commission

Reasonable grounds for belief is a belief based on reasonable grounds (see below) that child abuse has occurred when all known considerations or facts relevant to the formation of a belief are taken into account and these are objectively assessed. Circumstances or considerations may include the source of the allegation and how it was communicated, the nature of and details of the allegation, and whether there are any other related matters known regarding the alleged perpetrator.

A reasonable belief is formed if a reasonable person believes that:

- (a) the child or young person is in need of protection,
- (b) the child or young person has suffered or is likely to suffer "significant harm as a result of physical injury," or
- (c) the parents are unable or unwilling to protect the child or young person.

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A 'reasonable belief' or a 'belief on reasonable grounds' is not the same as having proof, but is more than mere rumour or speculation.

A 'reasonable belief' is formed if a reasonable person in the same position would have formed the belief on the same grounds. For example, a 'reasonable belief' might be formed if:

- a) a child or young person states that they have been physically or sexually abused;
- b) a child or young person states that they know someone who has been physically or sexually abused (sometimes the child may be talking about themselves);
- c) someone who knows a child or young person states that the child or young person has been physically or sexually abused;
- d) professional observations of the child's or young person's behaviour or development leads a professional to form a belief that the child has been physically or sexually abused or is likely to be abused; and/or,
- e) signs of abuse lead to a belief that the child or young person has been physically or sexually abused.

School environment (4 Synnot St) means any physical or virtual place made available or authorised by Wyndham CEC governing authority for use by a child during or outside school hours, including:

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

Policy Context

The introduction of compulsory minimum Child Safe Standards (see appendix one) is part of the Victorian Government's response to the recommendations from the Betrayal of Trust Report. Legislation passed in Victoria gives the Commission for Children & Young People (the Commission) new regulatory powers to oversee and enforce compliance with the standards, giving the Commission the ability to request information and documents from organisations and, inspect premises where services are provided for children or young people. These standards were reviewed in 2019 and new standards have been introduced in line with the National Principles for Child Safe Organisations with the addition of a new standard relating to promoting the cultural safety of Aboriginal children for Victoria only.

It is critical that everyone at Wyndham CEC communicate and share with each other all that we learn about child protection to ensure best practice.

The VRQA will continue to be the main authority for Wyndham CEC on childsafe through the minimum standards for non-school senior secondary providers.

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Policy

Wyndham CEC is committed to a zero tolerance of child abuse. Wyndham CEC consistently works towards promoting an organizational culture of child safety.

This policy and procedure is intended to provide clear guidelines, principles and processes for staff, contractors and volunteers within Wyndham CEC, and for parents and children accessing a program or service at Wyndham CEC.

It provides a clear statement to staff and volunteers forbidding any such abuse and will take steps to identify and manage all cases of suspected abuse.

It is intended to empower children and young people who participate in Wyndham CEC programs or services. It includes responsibilities for the welfare of children outside of normal program contact hours such as camps, excursions, after-hours activities or structured workplace learning/ work placements.

The safety and well-being of children and young people is a priority for Wyndham CEC across all programs and services.

In Victoria, failure to report suspected or disclosed child abuse is a criminal offence. Failure to protect children and young people is also a criminal offence and people in authority can face penalties including 5 years imprisonment for failing to protect a child or young person.

Child Safe Standards

Standard 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.

Standard 2 - Child safety and wellbeing is embedded in organizational leadership, governance and culture.

Standard 3 - Children and young people are empowered about their rights, participate in decisions affecting them and are taken seriously.

Standard 4 - Families and communities are informed, and involved in promoting child safety and wellbeing.

Standard 5 - Equity is upheld and diverse needs respected in policy and practice

Standard 6 – People working with children and young people are suitable and supported to reflect child safety and wellbeing values in practice

Standard 7 - Processes for complaints and concerns are child focused

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Standard 8 – Staff and volunteers are equipped with the knowledge, skills and awareness to keep children and young people safe through ongoing education and training

Standard 9 – Physical and online environments promote safety and wellbeing while minimizing the opportunity for children and young people to be harmed

Standard 10 – Implementation of the national child safe principles is regularly reviewed and improved

Standard 11 – Policies and procedures document how the organization is safe for children and young people

Wyndham CEC's children and young people

This policy is intended to empower children and young people who are students or clients of Wyndham CEC programs and activities. Wyndham CEC involves children and young people when making decisions, especially about matters that directly affect them.

Wyndham CEC's people and community are diverse. Wyndham CEC works with people from all walks of life who reflect the broad diversity of the Victorian community. Through Wyndham CEC's service units, diverse people, expansive networks and strong partnerships, we are inclusive of the needs of all children and young people; particularly those who are vulnerable due to their age, family circumstances, disability, indigenous or CALD backgrounds, and lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender and intersex children and young people (LGBTI).

Procedure

Responsibilities

Child safety and protection is everyone's responsibility. At Wyndham CEC, the Board, staff, volunteers and contractors have a shared responsibility for contributing to the safety and protection of children. It is each individual's responsibility to be aware of key risk indicators of child abuse, to be observant, and to raise any concerns they may have relating to child abuse with one of Wyndham CEC's Child Safety Officer.

Board responsibilities

The Board takes an active role in promoting a child safe culture and works with the CEO and the Child Safety Officer to ensure compliance with Ministerial Order 1359 and implementation of the Child Safety and Wellbeing Policy & Procedure and the Child Safety and Wellbeing Code of Conduct.

The Board members will:

- champion and promote a child safe culture within the Wyndham CEC community
- ensure that child safety is a regular agenda item at Board meetings
- undertake annual training on child safety
- approve updates to, and act in accordance with the Child Safety Code of Conduct to the extent that it applies to Board members

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- authorise the Child Safety and Wellbeing Policy & Procedure and Child Safety and Wellbeing Code of Conduct, and
- ensure that appropriate resources are made available to allow Wyndham CEC's Child Safety Policy and associated procedures to be effectively implemented.

CEO and Director responsibilities

The CEO and Directors of Wyndham CEC are responsible for ensuring that a strong child safe culture is created and maintained, and that policies and procedures are effectively developed and implemented including:

- dealing with and investigating reports of child abuse
- modelling a child safe culture that facilitates the active participation of students, families and staff in promoting and improving child safety, cultural safety and wellbeing,
- enabling inclusive practices where the diverse needs of all students are considered,
- reinforcing high standards of respectful behaviour between students and adults, and between students,
- facilitating regular professional learning for staff and volunteers (where appropriate) to build deeper understandings of child safety, cultural safety, student wellbeing and prevention of responding to abuse,
- monitoring the Child Safety and Wellbeing Risk Plan and Register,
- creating an environment where child safety complaints and concerns are readily raised, and no one is discouraged from reporting an allegation of child abuse to relevant authorities.
- ensuring that all adults within Wyndham CEC are aware of their obligation to report suspected sexual abuse of a child in accordance with these policies and procedures
- providing support for staff and volunteers in undertaking their child protection responsibilities

Manager responsibilities

All managers must ensure that they:

- Promote child safety at all times
- Assess the risk of child abuse within their areas of control
- Facilitate the reporting of any inappropriate behaviour or suspected abusive activities.

All other staff/volunteer responsibilities

All staff and volunteers share the responsibility for the prevention and detection of child abuse, and must:

- Familiarise themselves with the relevant laws, the Child Safety and Wellbeing Code of Conduct, and Wyndham CEC's Child Safety and Wellbeing Policy and Procedure in relation to child protection and comply with all requirements at all times.
- Participate in child safety training

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- Report any reasonable belief that a child's safety is at risk to the relevant authorities (such as the police and/or state-based child protection service) and fulfil their obligations as mandatory reporters (if applicable)
- Report any suspicion that a child's safety may be a risk to their supervisor (or, if their supervisor is involved in the suspicion, to a responsible person at Wyndham CEC)
- Provide an environment that is supportive of all children's emotional and physical safety.

Legislative responsibilities

Wyndham CEC takes its legal responsibilities seriously, including:

On 1 July 2017, the *Reportable Conduct Scheme* commenced in Victoria. Allegations of child abuse or misconduct involving children or young person (reportable conduct) made against employees, must be reported to the Commission for Children and Young People. This scheme does not override other legal obligations under Mandatory Reporting.

Failure to disclose: Reporting child sexual abuse is a community-wide responsibility. All adults in Victoria who have a reasonable belief that an adult has committed a sexual offence against a child or young person under 16 have an obligation to report that information to the police. This offence applies to all adults, not just professionals who work with children and young people.

Failure to protect: People of authority in the organisation will commit an offence if they know of a substantial risk of child sexual abuse by someone in the organisation and have the power or responsibility to reduce or remove the risk, but negligently fail to do so.

Grooming offences: Grooming is a criminal offence under the Crimes Act 1958. This offence targets predatory conduct undertaken by an adult to prepare a child or young person, under the age of 16, to engage in a sexual activity at a later time.

Any staff who are **mandatory reporters** must still comply with these responsibilities.

Child Safety Officer

Wyndham CEC has a Child Safety Officer – Lesley Nallawalla. Lesley undertakes regular professional development and has knowledge of child safety issues and is a point of contact and resource for staff, volunteers, children and young people who have questions or concerns, need advice or want to report an allegation of child abuse.

Lesley can be contacted at Head Office: 20 Synnot Street, Werribee VIC 3030

PH: 97424013

E: lesleyn@wyndhamcec.org.au

Wyndham CEC ensures that its children and young people and their families know their rights and how to access the Child Safety Officer and Wyndham CEC's complaints

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processes. The Child Safety Officer makes herself known to students annually as a point of contact.

Posters of the Child Safety Officer are displayed at all venues delivering child-related programs and services.

Staff and student induction processes include reference and introduction to the Child Safety Officer.

The Child Safety Officer will assist the management team to implement child safe practices and promote awareness of acceptable and unacceptable behaviour of students and staff.

The Child Safety Officer will also assist the Senior Secondary Education Manager to implement educational strategies and programs into the curriculum that promote healthy and respectful relationships.

The Child Safety Officer and the Senior Secondary Education Manager conduct regular student reference group meetings with students to discuss child safety.

Wyndham CEC surveys its children and their families and welcomes feedback from young people who access our programs and services. Through our feedback action plan we act on any concerns raised. Feedback and survey responses are tabled at Board level.

Professional Development

Training and education is important to ensure that everyone at Wyndham CEC understands that child safety is everyone's responsibility.

Wyndham CEC culture aims for all staff and volunteers to feel confident and comfortable in discussing any allegations of child abuse or child safety concerns.

Wyndham CEC will source Professional Development to train staff to identify, assess, and minimise risks of child abuse and to detect potential signs of child abuse.

The Child Safety Officer produces a quarterly Child Safety and Wellbeing newsletter highlighting different aspects of child safety. This is sent to all staff, volunteers including the Board. A version is also made available to SSP parents, guardians and students.

Wyndham CEC will ensure that staff and volunteers understand the commitment to child safety and that everyone has a role to play in protecting children and young people from abuse, as well as checking that their behaviour towards children is safe and appropriate.

Any inappropriate behaviour will be reported through appropriate channels, including the Department of Families, Fairness and Housing (DFFH) and Victoria Police, depending on the severity and urgency of the matter.

The Child Safety Officer will undertake relevant Professional Development (PD) in child safety as it becomes available. Resources will be shared with relevant staff.

The Senior Management Team is responsible for identifying relevant PD and ensuring staff undertake appropriate training.

Staff child safety and wellbeing training will be delivered at least annually for staff in senior secondary programs and will include guidance on:

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- Wyndham CEC's child safety and wellbeing policies, procedures, codes, and practices,
- completing the Protecting Children – Mandatory Reporting and Other Legal Obligations online module annually,
- recognising indicators of child harm including harm caused by other children and students,
- responding effectively to issues of child safety and wellbeing and supporting colleagues who disclose harm,
- how to build culturally safe environments for children and students,
- information sharing and recordkeeping obligations
- how to identify and mitigate child safety and wellbeing risks in the school environment.

Other professional learning and training on child safety and wellbeing, for example, training for our volunteers, will be tailored to specific roles and responsibilities and any identified or emerging needs or issues.

Cultural Safety

Wyndham CEC promotes the cultural safety of aboriginal, culturally & linguistically diverse, and, children of all abilities through its employment practices, professional development programs, networks and partnerships, and, through specialist staff working across the organisation including;

- creating an environment that is respectful of aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander cultures and that acknowledges the strengths of these cultures and respects them
- creating an environment that is respectful and inclusive of families from CALD background
- committing to making the environment safe and accessible for children and young people with a disability
- employing staff who are representative of our local community
- supporting children and young people of same sex attracted, intersex and gender diverse

Recruitment

Wyndham CEC takes all reasonable steps to employ skilled and qualified people to work with children and young people. Recruitment practices are in place to manage and reduce the risk of child abuse. Wyndham CEC's recruitment practices demonstrate a commitment to child safety and an awareness of its social and legislative responsibilities when recruiting staff, contractors and volunteers by developing selection criteria and advertisements that clearly demonstrate our commitment to child safety, and we interview and conduct referee checks on all potential employees and volunteers.

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Wyndham CEC's management team follows the *National Police Check, Working with Children Check and VIT Registration Policy and Procedures* for all people engaged in child-related work, including volunteers.

Wyndham CEC carries out thorough reference checks and security screening to ensure that the right people are recruited including a national police check prior to employment and review of their history of working with children. We will obtain at least 2 referee checks that include questions about this history.

In addition, Wyndham CEC has staff and volunteer induction programs, professional development and staff supervision arrangements (as required) that ensure a child-safe environment.

Staff job descriptions include a reference to the child safe standards.

Ongoing staff and volunteers will review and acknowledge their understanding of the *Child Safety and Wellbeing Code of Conduct* annually.

Privacy

All personal information considered or recorded will respect the privacy of the individuals involved, whether they be staff, volunteers, parents or children and young people, unless there is a risk to someone's safety.

Wyndham CEC collects, uses, and discloses information about children and their families in accordance with Victorian privacy laws, and other relevant laws. For information on how Wyndham CEC collects, uses and discloses information refer to the Privacy Policy.

Wyndham CEC has safeguards and practices in place to ensure any personal information is protected.

Risk Management

In Victoria, organisations are required to protect children and young people when a risk is identified (see information about failure to protect above). In addition to other organisational risks, Wyndham CEC proactively manages and reduces risks of abuse to children accessing programs and services.

Wyndham CEC has a Child Safety and Wellbeing Risk Management Plan in place to identify, assess, and take steps to minimise child abuse risks, which include risks posed by physical environments (for example, any doors that can lock), and online environments (for example, no staff or volunteer is to have contact with a child or young person in organisations on social media). Strategies include: providing effective leadership and governance; robust recruitment and induction processes, and ongoing access to professional development; program and service review processes; and, the appointment of a Child Safety Officer.

Wyndham CEC monitors and evaluates risks in relation to Structured Workplace Learning, Work Experience and Work Placements, excursions, camps and other after-hours activities.

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This policy will be reviewed annually and following any significant incidents or events as they occur. Wyndham CEC networks with relevant organisations that work with local Aboriginal communities, culturally and/or linguistically diverse communities and people with a disability.

Wyndham CEC's *Risk Identification and Management Policy and Procedure* is reviewed annually by the Board and Senior Management Team. The resulting *Child Safety and Wellbeing Risk Plan* is reviewed twice a year.

Structured Workplace Learning (SWL) and Work Experience (WE)

Standard nine of the Child Safe Standards requires Wyndham CEC to monitor and evaluate risks management strategies to ensure child safety in school environments.

The Senior Secondary Education Manager is responsible for developing and monitoring risk management strategies prior to any students undertaking Structured Workplace Learning (SWL) or Work Experience (WE).

What do I do? (Use the checklist at Appendix Two as a guide)

- If the child or young person is at immediate risk, call **000**
- If the victim is aged 16 or under, a report must be made to the relevant Child Protection Authority (DHHS) – call **1300 360 462** during business hours or **131278** after-hours (also see ChildFirst steps and Mandatory Reporting Policy and Procedure for guidance).
- If the victim is aged 17 or above, Wyndham CEC encourages reporting to the Police and will support the person if they choose to make the report.
- If a victim aged 17 or above discloses an offence that occurred when they were under 16 and the offence was committed by someone 18 or over, the offence must be reported to police unless the victim requests confidentiality. Any such report must be done with the relevant program manager, CEO or Child Safety Officer.
- If a victim aged 17 or above decides not to report the offence but details of the alleged perpetrator are known to the person who has had the offence disclosed to, consideration must be given to reporting the known details. The decision whether to report must be made in consultation with the direct manager, CEO and /or Child Safety Officer and must consider the potential risk to the community, the victim, and the age of the victim when the alleged offence occurred. All discussions and decisions must be documented using the Critical Incident Form.
- Report any allegations or concerns to the CEO, your direct Manager or the Child Safety Officer, immediately you become aware of an incident, event or allegation regarding a Wyndham CEC staff member, volunteer or contractor.
- The CEO or Deputy CEO will immediately suspend the staff member or volunteer while an investigation is undertaken.
- If an alleged perpetrator is a Wyndham CEC student or client, staff must consider reporting to Police. If there is reasonable belief that a child under 17 is at risk, a report

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must be made to Child protection who will liaise with Police. All decisions must be made with your direct manager, the CEO or Child Safety Officer.

- Staff dealing with disclosures and suspected abuse can also seek secondary advice from West CASA - <http://westcasa.org.au> or Victoria Police Sexual Offences and Child Abuse Investigation Teams (SOCIT) on (03) 8398 9860

External Education Providers

- An External Education Provider is any organisation that the Wyndham CEC has arranged to deliver a specified course of study that is part of the curriculum, to a student or students enrolled at Wyndham CEC, for example an RTO delivering a VET course.
- The delivery of such a course may take place on Wyndham CEC premises or elsewhere.
- All External Education Providers engaged by Wyndham CEC are responsible for contributing to the safety and protection of children in the Wyndham CEC environment. A
- All External Education Providers engaged by Wyndham CEC are required to comply with the Victorian Child Safe Standards.

What about leaving children unattended?

In Victoria, it is an offence to leave a child or young person unattended for any longer than is reasonable, without making appropriate arrangements for the child's supervision and care. This includes leaving a child at home or in a car or anywhere else unattended.

In Victoria, there is no set age at which it is legal to leave a child unattended.

For more information see:

[Reporting child abuse - DHHS Services \(dffh.vic.gov.au\)](https://providers.dffh.vic.gov.au/changes-child-protection-law)

<https://providers.dffh.vic.gov.au/changes-child-protection-law>

Parent Line Victoria can also provide information on 13 22 89 between 8am and midnight, 7 days a week or view <http://www.education.vic.gov.au/about/contact/Pages/parentline.aspx>

Remember:

- Ring **000** if you believe a child is at immediate risk
- Report all allegations or incidents where there is a reasonable belief
- Follow the steps above
- Speak to the CEO, your Manager or Child Safety Officer to seek advice or guidance if you need to
- Complete and lodge an incident report for any event you report (follow the *Critical Incident and Emergency Management Policy and Procedure*)

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Allegations, Concerns and Complaints

Wyndham CEC fosters a culture that encourages staff, volunteers, students, parents, and the school community to raise concerns and complaints. This makes it more difficult for breaches of the code of conduct, misconduct or abuse to occur and remain hidden. Any breaches of child safety will be thoroughly and promptly investigated.

Wyndham CEC takes all allegations seriously and has practices in place to investigate thoroughly and quickly. Relevant staff and volunteers will be trained to deal appropriately with allegations.

Wyndham CEC works to ensure all children, young people, families, staff and volunteers know what to do and who to tell if they observe abuse or are a victim, and if they notice inappropriate behaviour.

Suspected abuse and reasonable belief

If a staff member or volunteer is concerned that a Wyndham CEC student or client aged under-18 is at risk of or, is experiencing sexual or other criminal abuse, they have a responsibility to report the matter to the Child protection Authority.

Factors contributing to reasonable belief may be (but are not limited to):

- a child or young person states they or someone they know has been abused (noting that sometimes the child or young person may in fact be referring to themselves)
- behaviour consistent with that of an abuse victim is observed
- someone else has raised a suspicion of abuse but is unwilling to report it
- observing suspicious behaviour
- observing grooming behaviour
- knowledge of inappropriate gifts
- inappropriate online behaviour and/ or inappropriate boundaries
- knowledge of secretive relationships

Wyndham CEC is committed to communicating our child safety strategies to the school community through:

- ensuring that key child safety and wellbeing policies are available on our website including the Child Safety and Wellbeing Policy (this document), Child Safety Code of Conduct, and the Child Safety Responding and Reporting Obligations (including Mandatory Reporting) Policy and Procedure,
- displaying PROTECT posters around the school
- updates in the Child Safety and Wellbeing Newsletter, and
- ensuring that child safety is a regular agenda item at school leadership meetings, staff meetings and school council meetings.

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Appendix One: Child Safe Standards

Standard 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. (This Principle is not included in the National Principles)*

- Wyndham CEC has a dedicated Child Safety officer in place who together with the CEO and management team leads implementation of the standards.
- Wyndham CEC conducts a child safety review annually
- Wyndham CEC reviews its child safety and wellbeing policy and procedure annually
- Wyndham CEC reviews & updates its risk management plan annually
- Wyndham CEC considers the diversity of its children, young people and families and their needs when developing supports and supervising children and young people
- Wyndham CEC has developed a statement of commitment
- Wyndham CEC has developed a quarterly Child Safety and Wellbeing Newsletter which is distributed to all within the organisation, including the SSP students and their parents/guardians
- Wyndham CEC has adopted the Racism. It stops with me! Campaign

Promoting the cultural safety of Aboriginal children and young people

- Cultural safety is “an environment that is safe for people: where there is no assault, challenge or denial of their identity, of who they are and what they need. It is about shared respect, shared meaning, shared knowledge and experience, of learning, living and working together with dignity and truly listening.” (Williams, R. 2008)
- For Aboriginal people “cultural safety and security requires the creation of:
- Environments of cultural resilience within Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities
- Cultural competency by those who engage with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities.” (AHRC Social Justice Report 2011)
- Wyndham CEC has created an environment respectful of Aboriginal culture by
 - o acknowledging traditional owners as a standard agenda item
 - o displaying aboriginal art
 - o displaying aboriginal flag, plaques and signs
 - o providing appropriate professional development to staff

Standard 2 – *Child safety and wellbeing is embedded in organisational leadership, governance and culture. (This is Principle 1 in the National Principles)*

- Wyndham CEC has a detailed Child Safety and Wellbeing Policy & Procedure which includes a commitment to child safety. This is also referenced in Wyndham CEC’s Strategic Plan and Risk Plan.
- Wyndham CEC reviews its policy annually
- Wyndham CEC reviews & updates its risk management plan annually
- Wyndham CEC informs all staff, volunteers students and young people of its Child Safe Policy & Procedure via the website and Share Point
- Wyndham CEC has a dedicated Child Safety officer in place who together with the CEO and management team leads implementation of the standards.
- Wyndham CEC has developed a statement of commitment

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- Wyndham CEC's Code of Conduct for Staff outlines clear expectations for appropriate staff behavior including with children/ students under the age of 18. The Code applies to all staff, volunteers and contractors.
- Wyndham CEC has a Child Safety and Wellbeing Code of Conduct which new staff sign and ongoing staff re-commit to annually at staff appraisals
- Wyndham CEC conducts a child safety review annually

Standard 3 – *Children and young people are empowered about their rights, participate in decisions affecting them and are taken seriously. (This is Principle 2 in the National Principles)*

- To support child safety and wellbeing at Wyndham CEC, we work to create an inclusive and supportive environment that encourages students and families to contribute to our child safety approach and understand their rights and their responsibilities.
- Respectful relationships between students are reinforced and we encourage strong friendships and peer support in the school to ensure a sense of belonging through implementing our whole school approach to Respectful Relationships, our student Code of Conduct, our school values.
- We inform students of their rights through the issuance of the Student/Parent Handbook and give them the skills and confidence to recognise unsafe situations with adults or other students and to speak up and act on concerns relating to themselves or their peers. We ensure our students know who to talk to if they are worried or feeling unsafe and we encourage them to share concerns with a trusted adult at any time. Students and families can also access information on how to report concerns at reception and the Wyndham CEC website
- Wyndham CEC has a school lawyer who provides community education sessions which include information and support around abuse.
- Staff in collaboration with the Child Safety Officer, encourage children to speak up.
- Wyndham CEC's youth team provide children and young people with information about how to keep safe
- VCAL student reference group with Senior Secondary Education Manager and Child Safety Officer
- Wyndham CEC provides all relevant policies and procedures to students at enrolment and makes them available on the Website
- Wyndham CEC has a Student Code of Conduct that all students receive on enrolment which outlines student's rights and responsibilities
- Wyndham CEC conducts students surveys annually and at various times throughout the year to get feedback
- Wyndham CEC's SSP program conducts parent teacher interviews at least once a year (more if required on an individual basis)
- Establishment of an annual Student Reference Group (SRG)

Standard 4 – *Families and communities are informed and involved in promoting child safety and wellbeing. (This is Principle 3 in the National Principles)*

Our families and the Wyndham CEC community have an important role in monitoring and promoting children and young people's safety and wellbeing and helping children and young people to raise any concerns. To support family engagement, at Wyndham CEC we are

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committed to providing families and community with accessible information about our child safe policies and practices and involving them in our approach to child safety and wellbeing. We will create opportunities for families to have input into the development and review of our child safety policies and practices and encourage them to raise any concerns and ideas for improvement. We do this by:

- publishing this policy and our Child Safety and Wellbeing Code of Conduct on the Wyndham CEC website,
- publishing our Student Code of Conduct on the Wyndham CEC website,
- notifying parents/guardians of updates to our policies and procedures
- Implementing care team meetings that include parent, teacher, student and external case worker where required,
- child safety and protection posters are displayed in each classroom and office space.
- promoting activities and child safety updates to parents/guardians in the Child Safety and Wellbeing Newsletter
- including available support services on the Wyndham CEC website,
- ensuring support plans are reviewed by parents/guardians and students,
- scheduling Parent/Teacher meetings half yearly,
- conducting an annual survey feedback process with parents/guardians and students
- Wyndham CEC has developed a quarterly Child Safety and Wellbeing Newsletter which is distributed to all within the organisation, including the SSP students and their parents/guardians
- Wyndham CEC conducts students surveys annually and at various times throughout the year
- Wyndham CEC provides all young people and their families all relevant policies and procedures at their enrolment interview
- Wyndham CEC provides all relevant policies and procedures to students and young people at enrolment and makes them available on the Website
-

Standard 5 - *Equity is upheld and diverse needs respected in policy and practice. (This is Principle 4 in the National Principles)*

We value diversity and equity for all students and their families and staff.

- Wyndham CEC creates an environment respectful of Aboriginal culture by
 - o acknowledging traditional owners
 - o displaying aboriginal art
 - o displaying aboriginal flag
 - o providing appropriate professional development to staff

Promoting the cultural safety of children from CALD backgrounds

Victoria is a culturally diverse community made up of many different nationalities, cultural backgrounds, language and religious groups.

In Victoria, mandatory child safe standards have been introduced to help protect children from abuse in organisations. In complying with the standards, organisations must promote the cultural safety of children from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds.

- Wyndham CEC promotes the cultural safety of children and young people from CALD backgrounds by:

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- welcoming people from all cultures
- employing staff who represent CALD communities
- ensuring the environment reflects the diverse communities we work with
- respecting other cultures
- adopting Racism. It stops with me! Campaign
- demonstrating zero tolerance to discrimination, racism, homophobia and Islamophobia

Promoting the cultural safety of children with a disability

All children are vulnerable but some children need special care and protection to ensure they are safe – children with a disability have an increased risk of being abused.

In Victoria, mandatory child safe standards have been introduced to help protect children from abuse in organisations. In complying with the standards, organisations must promote the safety of children with a disability. It is our responsibility to uphold the legal and human rights of children with a disability to ensure they are safe when in our care.

- Wyndham CEC promotes the safety of children and young people with a disability by:
 - inclusive practices
 - ensuring accessible activities/programs
 - having a Disability Action Plan (DAP)
 - working with families around participation
- Wyndham CEC promotes the safety of children and young people from the LGBTIQ community by:
 - employing inclusive practices
 - demonstrating zero tolerance to discrimination
- Wyndham CEC has a Complaints Policy and Procedure that is available to all students and young people.

Standard 6 – *People working with children and young people are suitable and supported to reflect child safety and wellbeing values in practices. (This is Principle 5 in the National Principles)*

- Wyndham CEC has rigorous screening mechanisms in place including: VIT (Victorian Institute of Teaching) registration, Working with Children Checks; National Police Checks at point of employment; Referee checks (2) for all staff and volunteers
- Wyndham CEC's formal induction process includes setting expectations regarding appropriate behavior with all students, including those under 18.
- Wyndham CEC promotes child safety in its job advertisements
- Wyndham CEC has a statement regarding child safety in all Job Descriptions
- Wyndham CEC reviews its *National Police Check, Working with Children Check and VIT Registration Policy and Procedures* annually
- Wyndham CEC's Code of Conduct for Staff outlines clear expectations for appropriate staff behavior including with children/ students under the age of 18. The Code applies to all staff, volunteers and contractors.

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- Wyndham CEC has a Child Safety and Wellbeing Code of Conduct which new staff sign and ongoing staff re-commit to annually at staff appraisals
- Wyndham CEC reviews its Codes of Conduct regularly and sets a date in the schedule for review annually
- Wyndham CEC communicates the Code to all staff and volunteers Share Point and is included in the Induction for new staff and volunteers
- Wyndham CEC has rigorous safety screening processes and a dedicated youth-safe venue.
- Wyndham CEC's Induction process informs all new staff and volunteers of our *Child Safety and Wellbeing and Mandatory Reporting and Failure to Disclose or Protect Polices & procedures*

Standard 7 – *Processes for complaints and concerns are child focused. (This is Principle 6 in the National Principles)*

- Wyndham CEC has a Complaints Policy and Procedure that is available to all students and young people. All complaints will be taken seriously and acted on immediately
- Wyndham CEC has a school lawyer who provides community education sessions which include information and support around abuse
- Staff in collaboration with the Child Safety Officer, encourage children and young people to speak up
- Wyndham CEC's youth team provide children and young people with information about how to keep safe
- Student Reference Group with Senior Secondary Education Manager and Child Safety Officer meet quarterly

Standard 8 – *Staff and volunteers are equipped with the knowledge, skills and awareness to keep children and young people safe through ongoing education and training. (This is Principle 7 in the National Principles)*

- Wyndham CEC's Induction process informs all new staff and volunteers of our *Child Safety and Wellbeing and Mandatory Reporting and Failure to Disclose or Protect Polices & procedures*
- Wyndham CEC's *Child Safety and Wellbeing and Mandatory Reporting and Failure to Disclose Polices & Procedures* provide staff with clear guidelines as to how to respond to and report suspected child abuse.
- Wyndham CEC has a number of mechanisms for reporting including access to a staff member trained in child safe standards (Child Safety Officer)
- Wyndham CEC's formal induction process includes setting expectations regarding appropriate behavior with all students, including those under 18.
- Wyndham CEC promotes child safety in its job advertisements
- Wyndham CEC has a statement regarding child safety in all Job Descriptions
- Wyndham CEC has developed a quarterly Child Safety and Wellbeing Newsletter which is distributed to all within the organisation, including the SSP students, young people and their parents/guardians

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Standard 9 – *Physical and online environments promote safety and wellbeing whilst minimising the opportunity for children and young people to be harmed. (This is Principle 8 in the National Principles)*

- Wyndham CEC has a detailed *Cyberbullying Policy & Procedure* in place which includes links to online resources
- Wyndham CEC has a detailed *Harassment, Discrimination, Victimisation and Anti-Bullying Policy & Procedure*
- Wyndham CEC's school lawyer works with children and young people to promote community legal education workshops on cyber, online and mobile phone safety
- Wyndham CEC has internet filtering in place at all student locations to prevent access to potentially harmful material
- Wyndham CEC's computer rooms are monitored with security equipment and teachers are instructed to monitor student computer usage
- Wyndham CEC allows no access to computer rooms without a teacher being present

Standard 10 – *Implementation of the Child Safe Standards is regularly reviewed and improved. (This is Principle 9 in the National Principles)*

- Wyndham CEC reviews its Codes of Conduct regularly and sets a date in the schedule for review annually
- Wyndham CEC has a detailed Child Safety and Wellbeing Policy & Procedure which includes a commitment to child safety. This is also referenced in Wyndham CEC's Strategic Plan and Risk Plan.
- Wyndham CEC reviews its policy annually
- Wyndham CEC reviews & updates its risk management plan annually

Standard 11 – *Policies and procedures document how the organization is safe for children and young people. (This is Principle 10 in the National Principles)*

- Wyndham CEC has a detailed Child Safety and Wellbeing Policy & Procedure which includes a commitment to child safety. This is also referenced in Wyndham CEC's Strategic Plan and Risk Plan.
- Wyndham CEC reviews its policy annually
- Wyndham CEC informs all staff, volunteers, students and young people of its Child Safety and Wellbeing Policy & Procedure via the website and Share Point
- Wyndham CEC's Child Safety and Wellbeing Risk Plan identifies risk of child abuse and outlines strategies for removing risks.
- Wyndham CEC has rigorous safety screening processes and a dedicated youth-safe venue.
- The senior management team schedules two reviews of the Child Safety and Wellbeing Risk Plan annually and monitors it monthly
- Wyndham CEC reviews its Risk Plan annually with Board and other stakeholders
- Wyndham CEC's school lawyer works with children to promote community legal education workshops on cyber, online and mobile phone safety
- Wyndham CEC has a policy on cyberbullying which is reviewed annually

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- Wyndham CEC's Induction process informs all new staff and volunteers of our *Child Safety and Wellbeing and Mandatory Reporting and Failure to Disclose or Protect Policies & procedures*

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Appendix Two: What do I do? Step by step checklist

<p>Is the child/ student/ client 16 or under?</p>	<p>YES <input type="checkbox"/></p> <p>Notify child protection authority (in consultation with CEO, Manager or Child safety officer)</p> <p>Child protection authority will notify police when appropriate</p> <p>Support and referral for child</p> <p>Incident report to CEO</p>
<p>Is the student/ client 17 or over?</p>	<p>YES <input type="checkbox"/></p> <p>Support and referral for client</p> <p>Information re legal options</p> <p>If details of the alleged perpetrator are known, a decision whether to report must be made in consultation with the direct manager, CEO and /or Child Safety Officer</p> <p>Incident report to CEO</p>
<p>If the student/ client is currently 17 or over, were they under 16 at the time of the alleged offence?</p>	<p>YES <input type="checkbox"/></p> <p>If the offence was committed by someone 18 or above, the offence must be reported to Police unless the victim requests confidentiality. Any report to police must be done in consultation with the direct manager, CEO and /or Child Safety Officer</p> <p>Incident report to CEO</p>
<p>Is the alleged perpetrator a staff member or volunteer of Wyndham CEC?</p>	<p>YES <input type="checkbox"/></p> <p>Immediate report to CEO/ Deputy CEO</p> <p>CEO or Deputy reports to Police and cooperates with any investigation</p> <p>Immediate suspension of staff / volunteer from duties while investigation is undertaken</p>
<p>Is the alleged perpetrator a student or client of Wyndham CEC?</p>	<p>YES <input type="checkbox"/></p> <p>Immediate report to CEO/ Deputy CEO</p> <p>If child is under 17 and at risk of sexual abuse, report to Child Protection who will report to police if appropriate</p> <p>Consider a report to Police</p> <p>Support victim and refer to specialist services</p> <p>Incident report to CEO</p>

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