

Wyndham Community and Education Centre Inc Policy

Policy name	Child Safety and Wellbeing Policy (including Statement of Commitment)
Responsible person	Board, CEO
Staff involved	Child Safety Officer, all staff
Review dates	Approved: 7 July 2023 Next review date: December 2023

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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 is also a registered Training Organisation (RTO) and a registered Non-school Senior Secondary Provider, delivering the Victorian Pathways Certificate (VPC) and the VCE Vocational Major (VCE VM) to students aged 15-20 years. RTO programs are delivered to students aged-15 and up. 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 an environment in which all young people are safe from harm and able to learn in 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.

Wyndham CEC supports the premise that children’s safety is everyone’s responsibility. All Board members, staff, volunteers and contractors have a responsibility to prevent child abuse and respond appropriately to allegations.

Wyndham CEC complies with Ministerial Order 1359: Implementing the Child Safe Standards – Managing the Risk of Child Abuse in Schools and School Boarding Premises (MO1359) and the Victorian Child Safe Standards (VCSS).

Wyndham CEC’s community is diverse and includes people from all walks of life who reflect the broad diversity of the Victorian community. Wyndham CEC’s training programs 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 (LGBTQIA+).

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Policy

This policy and procedure including the Statement of Commitment demonstrate Wyndham CEC's determination to work provide a child safe environment for children and families accessing programs and services.

The VRQA is the main authority for Wyndham CEC on childsafe through the minimum standards for non-school senior secondary providers and RTO Child Safe Standards.

This policy:

- a) explains how Wyndham CEC implements MO1359 and the Victorian Child Safe Standards in our training environments;
- b) demonstrates our determination to provide a child safe environment for children and families accessing our educational programs and services;
- c) provides clear guidelines, principles and processes for staff, contractors, volunteers, and parents and children in education or training programs;
- d) is a clear statement to staff and volunteers forbidding any such abuse and will take steps to identify and manage all cases of suspected abuse;
- e) empowers children and young people who participate in our programs. Wyndham CEC involves children and young people when making decisions, especially about matters that directly affect them;
- f) includes responsibilities for the safety and wellbeing of children outside of normal program contact hours such as camps, excursions, after-hours activities, or structured workplace learning/ work placements.

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 **no 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.

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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. This includes a commitment to support all staff to understand the Standards and their application across all Wyndham CEC programs including its Non-School Senior Secondary Program and its RTO Programs. 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 (LGBTQIA+) 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.

Definitions

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 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.

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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.

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

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

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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.

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’s governing authority for use by a child during or outside school hours, including:

- a campus of the Senior Secondary Program,
- online 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)

RTO environment means any physical or virtual place made available or authorised by Wyndham CEC’s governing authority for use by a child during a VET program including:

- a campus of the VET Program,
- online environments (including email and intranet systems), and
- other locations provided for a child’s use (including, without limitation, locations used for excursions, incursions or other events)

About 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 enrolled in an education program or accessing a service or activity. Wyndham CEC aims to involve children and young people when making decisions, especially about matters that directly affect them.

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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 (LGBTQIA+). Wyndham CEC's children come from many of the above cohorts.

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 everyone'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 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 the implementation of and review 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
- review and approve updates to the Policy, and act in accordance with the *Child Safety Code of Conduct* to the extent that it applies to Board members
- 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 and Wellbeing 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;

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- 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; and
- providing support for staff and volunteers in undertaking their child protection responsibilities.

All other staff/volunteer responsibilities

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

- 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;
- 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;
- 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

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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 responsibilities

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 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 works with the Senior Secondary Education Manager and Director of Education 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 feedback we act on any concerns raised.

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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:

- 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 senior secondary 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.

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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;
- creating an environment that is respectful and inclusive of families from CALD and refugee backgrounds;
- 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; and
- supporting children and young people of same sex attracted, intersex and gender diverse.

Organisational leadership, governance, and culture

Wyndham CEC has this Policy which includes a commitment to child safety.

The organisation's strategies to ensure organisational leadership, governance and culture promote child safety at all levels of Wyndham CEC and include:

- a dedicated Child Safety Officer for the organisation who, with the CEO and senior management team, leads implementation of Ministerial Order 1359 and child safety practices;
- a Code of Conduct for Staff which 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;
- a *Child Safety Code of Conduct* which new and ongoing staff re-commit to annually at staff appraisals; and
- Annual child safety reviews by Wyndham CEC, including regular reporting from the CEO to the Wyndham CEC Board.

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

- ensuring that key child safety and wellbeing policies are available on the website including the *Child Safety and Wellbeing Policy* (this document);
- updates in the Child Safety Newsletter; and
- ensuring child safety is a regular agenda item at Board meetings.

Student and child empowerment

To support child safety and wellbeing at Wyndham CEC, we work to create an inclusive and supportive environment that encourages students to contribute to our child safety approach

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and understand their rights and their responsibilities. Our strategies to empower our students include:

- listening to senior secondary students through establishing a Student Reference Group;
- displaying PROTECT posters around the organisation, including child safety and protection posters;
- reinforcing respectful relationships between students, encouraging strong friendships and peer support in the school to ensure a sense of belonging through implementing our approach to Respectful Relationships and our student Code of Conduct;
- informing students of their rights by issuing the Student Handbook, which seeks to 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;
- ensuring our students know who to talk to if they are worried or feeling unsafe and encouraging them to share concerns with a trusted adult at any time. Students and families can also access information on how to report concerns:
 - o at reception;
 - o in the Child Safety Reporting Procedure on the School's website;
- encouraging children to speak up;
- conducting students surveys annually and at various times throughout the year; and
- providing all relevant policies and procedures to students at enrolment and making them available on the Website, including the *Student Code of Conduct* which outlines student's rights and responsibilities.

Family and community involvement

Our families and the school 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 engagement of families, Wyndham CEC provides families and the school 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 School 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;
- providing community education sessions which include information and support around abuse;
- promoting activities and child safety updates to parents/guardians in the Child Safety and Wellbeing Newsletter;
- including available support services on the website,
- ensuring support plans (as required) are reviewed by parents/guardians and students;
- promoting community legal education workshops on cyber, online and mobile phone safety;
- scheduling Parent/Teacher meetings half yearly (senior secondary students);

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- conducting an annual survey feedback process with parents/guardians and students
- providing all young people and their families all relevant policies and procedures at their enrolment interview, and making them available on the website.

Equity and diversity

Wyndham CEC promotes the cultural safety of Aboriginal, culturally & linguistically diverse, children and students, and children and students of all abilities through its employment practices, professional development programs, networks, and partnerships, and, through specialist staff working in the school 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; and
- supporting children and young people of same sex attracted, intersex and gender diverse.

Promoting the safety of children from CALD backgrounds

Victoria is a culturally diverse community made up of many different nationalities, cultural backgrounds, language and religious groups. Wyndham CEC promotes the cultural safety of children and young people from CALD backgrounds by:

- 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; and
- demonstrating zero tolerance to discrimination, racism, homophobia and Islamophobia.

Promoting the 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. 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); and
- working with families around participation.

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Promoting the safety of children with gender or sexuality diversity

Wyndham CEC promotes the safety of children and young people from the LGBTQI+ community by:

- employing inclusive practices; and
- demonstrating no tolerance to discrimination, harassment, victimisation or bullying.

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.

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.

Ongoing suitability

We have the following strategies to ensure ongoing suitability of staff and volunteers to work with children at Wyndham CEC:

- professional development and staff supervision arrangements (as required) that ensure a child-safe environment;
- ongoing staff and volunteers review and acknowledge their understanding of the *Child Safety and Wellbeing Code of Conduct* annually;
- rigorous screening mechanisms in place including: VIT (Victorian Institute of Teaching) registration, Working with Children Checks; National Police Checks at point of employment; and referee checks (2) for all staff and volunteers;
- reviews of the National Police Check, Working with Children Check and VIT Registration Policy and Procedures annually;

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- clear expectations for appropriate staff behavior including with children/ students under the age of 18 in the Code of Conduct for Staff. The Code applies to all staff, volunteers and contractors;
- staff re-commit to the *Child Safety and Wellbeing Code of Conduct* annually at staff appraisals; and
- review of Codes of Conduct regularly and a date in the schedule for review 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, any camps and other after-hours activities.

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.

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Structured Workplace Learning (SWL) and VET Practical Placements

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

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

The VET Coordinator is responsible for developing and monitoring risk management strategies prior to any students undertaking a Practical Placement. A Practical Placement means the placement of a student in a workplace to develop or reinforce skills relevant to their training, whether or not that work experience is voluntary or mandated as a program requirement and whether or not that placement is undertaken with the Student's own employer or a host organisation. The VET Coordinator will follow the Student Placement Procedure (VET).

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 but remains part of the school environment when Wyndham CEC's child safety obligations apply.
- All External Education Providers engaged by Wyndham CEC are responsible for contributing to the safety and protection of children in the Wyndham CEC environment.
- All External Education Providers engaged by Wyndham CEC are required to comply with the Victorian Child Safe Standards.
- Wyndham CEC ensures through its contractual arrangements that all External Education Providers engaged by Wyndham CEC are responsible for contributing to the safety and protection of children and are required to comply with MO1359.

Allegations, Concerns and Complaints

Wyndham CEC has a *Complaints Policy and Procedure* that is available to all students. All complaints will be taken seriously and acted on immediately and in a child-friendly manner.

Wyndham CEC fosters a culture that encourages staff, volunteers, students, parents, and community members 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.

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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.

Child safety knowledge, skills and awareness

Training and education is important to ensure 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 trains Staff to identify, assess, and minimise risks of child abuse and to detect potential signs of child abuse. Staff child safety and wellbeing training is delivered at least annually and includes guidance on:

- The 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 and Board members, is tailored to specific roles and responsibilities and any identified or emerging needs or issues.

The Child Safety Officer undertakes relevant Professional Development (PD) in child safety as it becomes available. Resources are shared with Staff.

The CEO is responsible for identifying relevant PD and ensuring staff undertake appropriate training.

Child safety in physical and online environments

To ensure child safety in all environments, Wyndham CEC:

- has policies and procedures about cyberbullying, online conduct and online safety, harassment, discrimination, victimisation and anti-bullying;

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- works with children and young people to promote community legal education workshops on cyber, online and mobile phone safety;
- has internet filtering in place at all student locations to prevent access to potentially harmful material;
- Monitors computer rooms with security equipment and instructs teachers to monitor student computer usage; and
- does not allow access to computer rooms by students without a teacher being present.

Visitors

- To mitigate risk and help protect children and young people all visitors to Wyndham CEC, must report to Administration to register as a visitor, wear the Visitor lanyard provided, and should not enter classrooms without authority or permission.

Review of child safety practices

- Wyndham CEC conducts a child safety review:
 - o annually regarding risk management strategies, risk controls and risk treatments; and
 - o after any significant incident or annually, of this Policy, our Reporting Procedure and other child safety practices.
- This review is led by the CEO, which is reported to the Wyndham CEC Board.
- 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 members of the Wyndham CEC Board. A version is also made available to School parents, guardians and students.
- Wyndham CEC has a Child Safety Risk and Incident Register so we can analyse complaints, concerns and safety incidents as part of our continuous improvement approach to child safety.

Implementation

- Wyndham CEC has developed a statement of commitment, and this Policy which are reviewed by the Board annually.
- Wyndham CEC has rigorous safety screening processes and a dedicated youth-safe venue for its senior secondary program.
- Wyndham CEC's Child Safety and Wellbeing Risk Plan identifies risk of child abuse across all of Wyndham CEC, and outlines strategies for removing risks.
- The CEO 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

To ensure our child safety commitments and practices are understood, our induction process informs all new staff and volunteers of our *Child Safety and Wellbeing Policy and Procedure*.

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Related Documents

Legislation:

Child Wellbeing and Safety Act 2005 (Vic), Worker Screening Act 2020 (Vic), Children, Youth and Families Act 2005 (Vic), Crimes Act 1958 (Vic), Child Wellbeing and Safety Regulations 2021 (Vic), Charter of Human Rights and Responsibilities Act 2006 (Vic), Disability Act 2006 (Vic), 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).

Policies:

Access & Equity Policy & Procedure, Complaints and Appeals Policy & Procedure, Privacy Policy & Procedure, Mandatory Reporting & Failure to Disclose Policy & Procedure, Staff Recruitment Policy & 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 Safety and Welfare in VET Programs Policy & 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 Members Policy & Procedure, Risk Identification & Management 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), 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

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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”

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 -

<https://www.vrqa.vic.gov.au/childsafe/Pages/Other-Organisations.aspx>

VRQA- Non School Senior Secondary Providers- Child Safe resources at

<https://www.vrqa.vic.gov.au/childsafe/Pages/resources.aspx>; Skills First Quality Charter, DET Community (CVAL) Contract, DET VETDSS Contract, Child Safety and Wellbeing newsletters, Staff PD Logs, Child Safety and Wellbeing Risk Plan, Child Safety and Wellbeing Risk Register.