

# HEATHERTON

CHRISTIAN COLLEGE



# CHILD SAFE POLICY

## **Introduction**

Heatherton Christian College is committed to promoting and protecting the interests and safety of children. We have zero tolerance for child abuse.

Everyone working at Heatherton Christian College is responsible for the care and protection of children and reporting information about child abuse.

## **Purpose**

The purpose of this policy is:

- To facilitate the prevention of child abuse occurring within Heatherton Christian College.
- To prevent child abuse within Heatherton Christian College.
- To ensure that all parties are aware of their responsibilities for identifying possible occasions for child abuse and for establishing controls and procedures for preventing such abuse and/or detecting such abuse when it occurs.
- To provide guidance to staff / volunteers / contractors as to action that should be taken when they suspect any abuse within or outside of the College.
- To provide a clear statement to staff / volunteers / contractors forbidding any such abuse.
- To provide assurance that any and all suspected abuse will be reported and fully investigated.

## **Policy**

Heatherton Christian College is committed to promoting and protecting at all times the best interests of children involved in its programs.

All children, regardless of their gender, race, religious beliefs, age, disability, sexual orientation and family or social background, have equal rights to protection from abuse.

Heatherton Christian College has zero tolerance for child abuse. Everyone working at Heatherton Christian College is responsible for the care and protection of the children within our care and reporting information about suspected child abuse.

Child protection is a shared responsibility between the Heatherton Christian College, all employees, workers, contractors, associates and members of the Heatherton Christian College community.

Heatherton Christian College will consider the opinions of children and use their opinions to develop child protection policies.

Heatherton Christian College supports and respects all children, staff and volunteers. Heatherton Christian College is committed to the cultural safety of Aboriginal children and

those from culturally and / or linguistically diverse backgrounds, and to providing a safe environment for children living with a disability.

If any person believes a child is at immediate risk of abuse, telephone 000.

Please refer to the Heatherton Christian College Child Protection and Mandatory Reporting Policy for details of the reporting process.

## **Procedures and Responsibilities**

### **Board**

The Board of Heatherton Christian College has ultimate responsibility for the detection and prevention of child abuse and is responsible for ensuring that appropriate and effective internal control systems are in place. The Board is also responsible for ensuring that appropriate policies and procedures and a Child Safety Code of Conduct are in place. (See Appendix 1)

### **Principal**

The Principal of Heatherton Christian College is responsible for:

- Ensuring that the procedures of the Heatherton Christian College Child Protection and Reporting Policy are followed;
- Ensuring that all staff, contractors and volunteers are aware of relevant laws, College policies and procedures, and the College's Child Safety Code of Conduct;
- Ensuring that all adults within the Heatherton Christian College community are aware of their obligation to report suspected sexual abuse of a child in accordance with these policies and procedures;
- Ensuring that all staff, contractors and volunteers are aware of their obligation to observe the Code of Conduct (particularly as it relates to child safety);
- Providing support for staff, contractors and volunteers in undertaking their child protection responsibilities.

### **Coordinators**

All Coordinators must ensure that they:

- Promote child safety at all times;
- Assess the risk of child abuse within their area of control and eradicate / minimise any risks to the extent possible;
- Educate employees about the prevention and detection of child abuse; and
- Facilitate the reporting of any inappropriate behavior or suspected abusive activity.

The College Executive should be familiar with the types of abuse that might occur within their area of responsibility and be alert for any indication of such conduct.

### **All Staff / Volunteers / Contractors**

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

- Familiarise themselves with the relevant laws, the Code of Conduct, Heatherton Christian College's policy and procedures in relation to child protection, and comply with all requirements;
- Report any reasonable belief that a child's safety is at risk to the relevant authorities (such as the police and / or the state-based child protection service) and fulfill their obligations as mandatory reporters;
- Report any suspicion that a child's safety may be at risk to their superior (or, if their superior is involved in the suspicion, to a responsible person at the College); and
- Provide an environment that is supportive of all children's emotional and physical safety.

### **Employment of New Personnel**

Heatherton Christian College undertakes a comprehensive recruitment and screening process for all workers and volunteers which aims to:

- Promote and protect the safety of all children under the care of Heatherton Christian College;
- Identify the safest and most suitable people who share Heatherton Christian College's values and commitment to protect children; and
- Prevent a person from working at Heatherton Christian College if they pose a risk to children.

Heatherton Christian College requires all workers / volunteers to pass through the College's recruitment and screening process prior to commencing their engagement with Heatherton Christian College.

Persons applying for a role as a teacher with Heatherton Christian College must be registered with the Victorian Institute of Teaching.

Heatherton Christian College may require applicants to provide a police check in accordance with the law and as appropriate before they commence working at Heatherton Christian College and during their time with Heatherton Christian College at regular intervals.

Once engaged, workers / volunteers must review and acknowledge their understanding of this policy.

## **Training and Supervision**

Training and education is important to ensure that everyone in our organisation understands that child safety is everyone's responsibility.

Our College culture aims for all staff and volunteers (in addition to parents / carers and children) to feel confident and comfortable in discussing any allegations of child abuse or child safety concerns. We train our staff and volunteers to identify, assess and minimise risks of child abuse and to detect potential signs of child abuse.

We also support our staff and volunteers through ongoing supervision to:

- Develop their skills to protect children from abuse;
- Promote the cultural safety of Aboriginal children, the cultural safety of children from linguistically and / or diverse backgrounds, and the safety of children with a disability.

New employees and volunteers will be supervised regularly to ensure they understand our organisation's commitment to child safety and that everyone has a role to play in protecting children from abuse, as well as checking that their behaviour towards children is safe and appropriate (please refer to the Child Safe Code of Conduct to understand appropriate behaviour further).

## **Risk Management**

Heatherton Christian College will ensure that child safety is a part of its overall risk management approach.

## **Grievance Procedures**

Policies and Procedures are in place if staff, volunteers, children or their families have concerns about the College's leadership in regard to child safety. Positive, clear and effective processes for resolving grievances between the College and community members assists in the building of strong relationships, dispels anxiety and ultimately provides students with an enhanced learning environment. Please see the Heatherton Christian College Grievance Policy for additional information.

## **Review**

This policy will be reviewed as part of the College's three-year review cycle. Following every reportable incident, a review shall be conducted to assess whether the College's child protection policies and procedures require modification to better protect children under the College's care.

## References

Further information about the failure to disclose offence is available on the Department of Justice and Regulation website:

[www.justice.vic.gov.au/home/safer+communities/protecting+children+and+families/failure+to+disclose+offence](http://www.justice.vic.gov.au/home/safer+communities/protecting+children+and+families/failure+to+disclose+offence)

Further information about the failure to protect offence is available on the Department of Justice and Regulation website:

[www.justice.vic.gov.au/home/safer+communities/protecting+children+and+families/failure+to+protect+offence](http://www.justice.vic.gov.au/home/safer+communities/protecting+children+and+families/failure+to+protect+offence)

See the Department of Health and Human Services website for information about how to make a report to child protection:

[www.dhs.vic.gov.au/about-the-department/documents-and-resources/reports-publications/guide-to-making-a-report-to-child-protection-or-child-first](http://www.dhs.vic.gov.au/about-the-department/documents-and-resources/reports-publications/guide-to-making-a-report-to-child-protection-or-child-first)

For an overview of the Child Safe Standards, please see An Overview of the Victorian Child Safe Standards:

[www.dhs.vic.gov.au/\\_data/assets/word\\_doc/0005/955598/Child-safe-standards\\_overview.doc](http://www.dhs.vic.gov.au/_data/assets/word_doc/0005/955598/Child-safe-standards_overview.doc)

### Note:

Where the term 'Aboriginal' is used it refers to both Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples. Indigenous is retained when it is part of the title of a report, program or quotation. Throughout this paper we refer to 'Aboriginal peoples' rather than 'Aboriginal people' to reflect the plurality and diversity of Victorian Aboriginal communities.

## APPENDIX A: CHILD SAFETY CODE OF CONDUCT

### CODE OF CONDUCT FOR EMPLOYEES, VOLUNTEERS AND CONTRACTORS WORKING WITH CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE

The Board, College Executive Team, staff, volunteers and contractors at Heatherton Christian College are required to abide by this Code.

Under the Principal, the Leadership Team will:

1. Be responsible for the overall welfare and wellbeing of staff and volunteers;
2. Be accountable for managing and maintaining a duty of care towards staff and volunteers;
3. Nominate a Child Protection Officer(s) to provide information and support to all staff, volunteers, children, young people and their carers regarding child protection matters.

All people involved in the care of children on behalf of Heatherton Christian College will:

1. Work towards the achievement of the aims and purposes of the College;
2. Be responsible for relevant administration of programs and activities in their area;
3. Maintain a duty of care towards others involved in these programs and activities;
4. Establish and maintains a child-safe environment in the course of their work;
5. Be fair, considerate and honest with others;
6. Treat children and young people with respect and values their ideas and opinions;
7. Act as positive role models in their conduct with children and young people;
8. Be professional in their actions;
9. Maintain strict impartiality;
10. Comply with specific College guidelines and policies on physical contact with children;
11. Respect the privacy of children, their families and teachers/carers, and only disclose information to people who have a need to know;
12. Maintain a child-safe environment for children and young people;
13. Operate within the policies and guidelines of Heatherton Christian College; and
14. Contact the police if a child is at immediate risk of abuse (call 000)

No person shall:

1. Shame, humiliate, oppress, belittle or degrade children or young people;
2. Unlawfully discriminate against any child;
3. Engage in any activity with a child or young person that is likely to physically or emotionally harm them;
4. Initiate unnecessary physical contact with a child or young person, or do things of a personal nature for them that they can do for themselves;
5. Be alone with a child or young person unnecessarily and for more than a very short time;
6. Develop a 'special' relationship with a specific child or young person for their own needs;
7. Show favouritism through the provision of gifts or inappropriate attention;
8. Arrange contact, including online contact, with children or young people outside of the College's programs and activities;
9. Photograph or video a child or young person without the consent of the child and his/her parents or guardians;

10. Work with children or young people while under the influence of alcohol or illegal drugs;
11. Engage in open discussions of a mature or adult nature in the presence of children;
12. Use inappropriate language in the presence of children; or
13. Do anything in contravention of the College's policies, procedures or this Code of Conduct.

### **The Victoria Teaching Profession Code of Conduct**

Teaching staff at Heatherton Christian College are also bound by the Victoria Teaching Profession Code of Conduct. The Code of Conduct has been developed for and by the Victoria teaching profession. It identifies a set of principles which describe the professional conduct, personal conduct and professional competence expected of a teacher by their colleagues and the community.

### **What will happen if you breach this Code of Conduct**

If you breach this Child Safety Code of Conduct you will face disciplinary action, including and up to termination of employment or cessation of engagement with Heatherton Christian College.

By observing these standards, you acknowledge your responsibility to immediately report any breach of this code to Heatherton Christian College Child Safety Officer(s) or the Principal.

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

## APPENDIX A: CHILD SAFETY CODE OF CONDUCT

### CODE OF CONDUCT FOR EMPLOYEES, VOLUNTEERS AND CONTRACTORS WORKING WITH CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE

I agree to adhere to this Code of Conduct

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Signature: \_\_\_\_\_

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

#### Child Safety Policy

I have read, understand and accepted the standards and expectations of the Board, College Executive Team, staff, volunteers and contractors at Heatherton Christian College, as detailed in the Heatherton Christian College 'Child safety Policy'.

Signature: \_\_\_\_\_

Date: \_\_\_\_\_