

# Monbulk College

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| <b>Policy:</b>              | Child Safety & Mandatory Reporting |
| <b>Date Ratified:</b>       | November 2015                      |
| <b>Date of last Review:</b> | March 2016                         |

## **BASIC BELIEFS:**

Monbulk College:

- believes that all students have a right to feel safe and to be safe.
- believes that teachers have a duty of care, legal and moral responsibility to respond to serious incidences involving abuse and neglect of the children with whom we have contact, and to report instances that we believe involve 'child abuse'
- believes that child safety encompasses matters relating to protecting all children attending the College from harm
- is committed to all aspects of 'child safety' including a zero tolerance of child abuse.

## **AIMS:**

Monbulk College aims to:

- identify indicators that a child or young person may be in need of protection.
- make a report about a child or young person who may be in need of protection
- comply with reporting obligations under child protection law and criminal law and fulfil their duty of care.
- ensure that appropriate processes, supports and strategies are employed to support staff and students meet child safety requirements in accordance with the Child Safety Code of Conduct.
- provide support to any student disclosing incidents of child abuse

## **IMPLEMENTATION PROCEDURES:**

The following definitions are taken from the Ministerial Order 870: Child Safe Standards – Managing the Risk of Child Abuse in schools:

**Child abuse** includes:

- a) any act committed against a child involving:
  - i. a sexual offence; or
  - ii. an offence under section 49B(2) of the Crimes Act 1958 (grooming); and
- b) the infliction, on a child, of:
  - i. physical violence; or
  - ii. serious emotional or psychological harm; and
- c) serious neglect of a child.

**Child safety** encompasses matters related to protecting all children from child abuse, managing the risk of child abuse, providing support for a child at risk of child abuse, and responding to incidents or allegations of child abuse.

Throughout this policy, usage of the term 'staff' is inclusive of both employees and volunteers.

At Monbulk College:

- Staff employed by the College are required to have, either:
  - VIT registration (including a criminal records check)
  - Employee Working with Children's Check (including a criminal records check)
  - Volunteer Working with Children's Check (including a criminal records check)
  
- All staff are mandated by law to report signs of child abuse.
- New staff will be informed of 'Child Safety' responsibilities and procedures, including mandatory reporting, through the College's induction process
- All staff will be reminded of mandatory responsibilities regularly.
- All employed staff are required to undertake the DET Mandatory Reporting online learning module annually and provide satisfactory completion certification to the Professional Learning Leader
- Child Safety is supported through the organisational structures within the college, including, but not limited to:
  - Significant and Home Group teachers
  - Year Level Teams and Leaders;
  - Student Wellbeing Team, including a Coordinator, Adolescent Health Nurse, Social Worker, Guidance Officer, and allied health team.
  
- All concerns about child safety must be reported immediately to the Student Well-being Coordinator (SWC) and/or Principal class.
- The College will keep a record of all discussions about a student with whom there is a concern.
- "Forming a Belief"
  - If a belief has been formed by a staff member that a child has been or may be subjected to child abuse; a conversation and notes about student interviews must be retained by the staff member and/or SWC/Principal class.
  - If a staff member has formed a belief or concern that is not supported by SWC/Principal class, the staff member is still legally obliged to make a report
  - When forming this belief, it is not the responsibility of the staff member to make a judgement on the 'truthfulness' of the information received.
  
- A 'Child Safety Code of Conduct' is acknowledged in the Student Engagement Policy, complies with VIT registration and includes standards of how interactions between staff and students should occur within the college and promotes student safety.
- Monbulk College promotes strategies for child empowerment and participation through the Student Engagement Policy which outlines expected behaviour for students the College and all camps/excursions.
- The College is inclusive of respectful relationships, resilience building, child abuse awareness and prevention; and teaches this through its curriculum programs

- The staff member, SWC and/or Principal class may contact Child First to discuss the nature of the concern and obtain guidance prior to reporting to Child Protection
- The staff member, SWC and/or Principal class will contact Child Protection (Department of Health & Human Services - DHHS) by telephone as soon as possible to make an official notification on: **1300 369 536 or after school hours crisis line 131278**
- DHHS, or associated support or intervention services that visit the school following a notification, will interview staff and children only in the presence of Principal class or his/her nominee.
- All reports, information sheets and subsequent discussions and information are to be recorded and remain strictly confidential.
- All incidents to be monitored, and any subsequent signs or indications of abuse are also to be reported.
- As outlined in Ministerial Order 870, all staff members are mandated by law to report incidents of child abuse.
- Students who disclose to staff a desire to harm themselves or others, must be reported by staff to SWC and/or Principal class.
- Where a mandatory report has been made, support through the College (e.g. SWC, Employee Assistance Program) for students and staff will be accessed as required.
- This policy will be made available to the College community through the College website; and details/updates through the College Newsletter annually.

## Appendices

1. Monbulk College: Child Safe Leadership Statement

## References

- <http://www.education.vic.gov.au/school/principals/spag/safety/Pages/childprotection.aspx>
- <http://www.education.vic.gov.au/school/principals/spag/safety/pages/protection.aspx>
- Ministerial Order 870: Child Safe Standards – Managing the Risk of Child Abuse in schools:
- Monbulk College: Student Engagement Policy
- Monbulk College: Behaviour Management Policy

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| <b>Approved By</b>                               | School Council  |
| <b>Approval Authority (Signature &amp; Date)</b> | <i>M J Uren</i><br>27/4/2016                            |
| <b>Responsible for Review</b>                    | Assistant Principal – Policy and Planning Sub-Committee |
| <b>Next Review Date</b>                          | March 2017 (annually)                                   |



### **Monbulk College Leadership in a Child Safe Environment Statement**

Working with children can be very rewarding, and it brings additional responsibilities.

Leaders must act to protect children from abuse in our organisation, and build an environment where children feel respected, valued and encouraged to reach their full potential.

This requires a culture of child safety to be embedded throughout Monbulk College, so that child safety is part of everyone's everyday thinking and practice.

Such a culture is achieved through proactive leadership in demonstrating the appropriate values, attitudes and behaviours of an organisation.

A child safe environment is the product of a range of strategies and initiatives.  
Monbulk College will foster a culture of

#### **Openness Inclusiveness Awareness**

Children and adults should know what to do if they observe, or are subject to abuse or inappropriate behaviour.

All staff and volunteers must consider the safety of all children at Monbulk College; and recognise the importance and cultural safety for:

- Aboriginal children
- children from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds
- children with a disability