

# Child Safe

## Policy

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Policy owner :	Manager People and Capability, Executive Team
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Related policies and documents:	William Angliss Staff Code of Conduct, Victorian Public Sector Code of Conduct, William Angliss Student Code of Conduct, Records Management for HPRM Users Procedure, Student Duty of Care Policy & Procedure, Responding to and Reporting Child Abuse Procedure, Child Wellbeing and Safety Act 2005 Welfare and Accommodation Arrangements for International Students Under the Age of 18 Procedure

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## Purpose

To ensure the Institute complies with the current legislated Child Safe Standards (the Standards) by providing a safe place where children are protected to the best of the Institute's ability and enabling them to actively participate in Institute activities.

## Coverage

This policy applies to all staff and students and particularly to students under 18 years of age who are deemed children under the Child Safe Standards.

## Policy

The Institute is committed to protecting children from harm and providing a safe environment in which they can participate and learn. This extends to protection from physical, sexual, emotional and psychological harm, whether in person or on-line, and protection from neglect. This commitment is championed and modelled at all governance levels of the Institute.

The Institute has a diverse staff and student population, and so its commitment includes cultural safety for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children, cultural safety for children from culturally and/or linguistically diverse backgrounds, safety for children with a disability and children who identify as gender diverse or same sex attracted. In particular, the importance of inclusion is recognised as well as the harm caused by discriminatory behaviour and practices. This is enhanced by relevant communication and involvement with families and community about the Institute's approach to child safety.

In relation to staff and students, the Institute has a zero tolerance approach to child abuse. As a guiding principle, the protection of the child is the primary concern.

The Institute will:

- Maintain and regularly review implementation of the Child Safe Standards and the conduct of staff, students and contractors regarding appropriate behaviour towards children;

- Take appropriate action where the behaviour towards children by staff, students or others is inappropriate including reporting the behaviour to Police or the relevant Child Protection agency, along with making a report of 'reportable conduct' to the Victorian Commission for Children and Young People where required;
- Undertake a risk management approach to identify, remove or reduce the risk of harm or abuse to children in online and physical environments, and review risks regularly (on renewal of this policy or earlier if required);
- Undertake screening of new staff and ensure relevant background checks are completed, with induction and supervision of new staff to include their responsibilities to child safety and wellbeing;
- Provide ongoing education and training of staff in aide of supporting culturally safe environments and building the knowledge to recognise indicators and reduce the risk of harm or abuse to children;
- Maintain effective complaint handling processes to enable staff to report concerns about suspected harm or abuse to children and encourage a 'see something, say something' approach;
- Maintain safety processes that are accessible and child-focused, so that children are informed of their rights and able to raise concerns about inappropriate behaviour in a manner that is taken seriously and appropriately responded to;
- Ensure staff understand their obligations to store and retain full and accurate records of any incidents of inappropriate behaviour or allegations of child abuse that occur.

## Definitions

**Child/children** refers to young people up to the age of 18 years.

**Child abuse** means physical abuse, sexual abuse, emotional or psychological abuse or neglect.

**Physical abuse** consists of non-accidental forms of injury or serious physical harm inflicted on a child including beating, shaking, burning and assault with implements.

**Sexual abuse** occurs when a person uses their authority or power over a child to engage in sexual activity, including exploitation through pornography or prostitution.

**Emotional/psychological abuse** occurs when a child is repeatedly rejected, isolated or frightened by threats or witnesses family violence and includes hostility and derogatory name-calling. Psychological or emotional abuse may occur with or without other forms of abuse.

**Neglect** includes failure to provide a child with an adequate standard of nutrition, medical care, shelter, clothing or supervision where the health or development of the child is significantly impaired or placed at serious risk.

**Cultural safety** means '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'<sup>1</sup> (Williams, R. 2008)

**Harm** is used to describe an event that is possibly less detrimental than 'abuse' but it still not in the interest of a child's safety or wellbeing. Both harm and abuse are damaging.

## Legislative and/or Institute Management Context

This policy enables WAI to comply with regulatory and management instruments including but not limited to:

- Responding to and Reporting Child Abuse Procedure
- Victorian Child Safe Standards and relevant state based child protection legislation
- William Angliss Staff Code of Conduct
- Victorian Public Sector Code of Conduct
- William Angliss Student Code of Conduct
- Victorian Charter of Human Rights and Responsibilities and relevant state based equivalent where applicable
- Student Duty of Care Policy & Procedure
- Welfare and Accommodation Arrangements for International Students Under the Age of 18 Procedure

<sup>1</sup>Williams, R. (2008), *Cultural safety; what does it mean for our work practice?* Australian and New Zealand Journal of Public Health, 23(2)213-214.

## Non-compliance

Established breaches of the Institute's Child Safe Policy and any associated procedures will be met with disciplinary action and may result in dismissal. Proven non-adherence may also result in the initiation of legal investigations where breaking the law prescribes legal action.